

Chapter 4 – Climbing the High End of the Ladder: the Ascension of Syrians and Greeks into the Power Élite

When Pero Tafur, a Castilian travelling in the East¹⁰¹², visited Cyprus in 1436, he witnessed the outcome of a court intrigue against one of King John II's favourites, Giacomo Urri. In the event, the Cypriot court took collective action to curtail Urri's influence. Tafur relates:

The morning of the next day, there was a great murmuring among all the people, and everyone armed themselves, especially the Cardinal and Lady Agnes, his sister, against the King, [wanting] to kill or arrest a favorite that he [the King] had, whom they called Jacobo Guiri [James Gurri], a judge by profession. The King fled to a fortress which they call the Citadel, which is at the end of the city, and there they laid siege around him and held such resolve with him that he should set his favorite aside from him, and that he [the favorite] should not enter his court for a year; and so the King swore to it and it was immediately accomplished, and they lifted [their siege] from over him¹⁰¹³.

This episode delves deeply into the topic we shall discuss in this chapter: the ascendance of Syrian and Greek newcomers into the Cypriot power élite and their influence on the power balance in the highest government circles. Giacomo Urri was a Syrian, a member of the new aristocracy, who had come to wield influence with King John II. Was his influence resented because of his origins? How did he reach this influential position? And, more importantly, how powerful were the newcomers, be they Greeks, Syrians or Western foreigners, in relation to the old nobility? Was Urri rather an exception, while the old nobility was still in control, or did the ascendance of men from the new aristocracy actually change the power constellations?

An examination of the Cypriot power élite and its development during the fifteenth century is necessary in order to

answer these questions. For the purpose of the analysis, I will understand power élite as defined by John Haldon¹⁰¹⁴: a »power élite« or »ruling group« [means] a leading fraction of the economically dominant social strata, those who shared a situation in respect of access to political/ideological power and influence¹⁰¹⁵«. The power élite, therefore, comprises the small group of people who wielded executive power. In this chapter, I will ask who these men in power were, how they reached their positions, and if the newcomers actually managed to tip the power balance or change government structures.

In order to conduct such an analysis, however, an overview of the power structures and hierarchies within the Lusignan government is necessary. We can discern the importance of individual statesmen only if we know which role certain decision making organs and offices played in the ruling of the state. I will therefore provide a short introduction of power structures at the Lusignan court before turning to the analysis of the power élite itself.

The power structures at the Lusignan Court consisted in a complex web of administrative state institutions and their head officials, the great crown offices and the personal relationships between the king as the centre of power and his followers and advisors. Documents registering decisions taken in the kingdom of Cyprus unveil two power circles that assisted the king in crucial matters: the royal council and the *Haute Court*, the High Court. These are two distinct institutions¹⁰¹⁶. However, it is not always easy to distinguish them, and in some cases they even seem to conflate. The royal council consisted of advisors whom the ruler trusted. They played a significant role in government; they advised the king in matters of importance and witnessed treaties¹⁰¹⁷. The

1012 Tafur, Cyprus (Nepaulsingh) 1-8.

1013 Tafur, Cyprus (Nepaulsingh) 19. Cf. 38 for the original: *Otro dia de mañana levantose un grant rumor en todo el pueblo, e todos se posieron en armas, el Cardenal principalmente, e Madama Ynes su hermana, e algunos de los grandes del Reyno contra el Rey por le matar, o prender un privado que llamava[n] Jacobo Guiri, e por ofiçio auditor. El Rey fuyo a una fortaleza que esta enc abo de la çibdat, que llaman la Cibdad, e alli lo çercaron, e tovieron tal Partido con el, que echase de si el privado, e que no[n] entrase en su corte por un año e ansy lo juro el Rey, e luego se cumplio, e levantaronse de sobrel.* Cf. p. 19.

1014 Cf. p. 19.

1015 Haldon, Social Élités 172. A rather more uncouth definition can be found in Mills, Power Élite 283: »the power elite is composed of men whose positions

enable them to transcend the ordinary environments of ordinary men and women; they are in positions to make decisions having major consequences«.

1016 Edbury, Franks 75 has rightly stressed that the Haute Court should not be confused with the royal council.

1017 During Peter I's rule, the council's importance is illustrated by its mobility: members of Peter I's council accompanied him on his travels to Europe. Two documents drawn up in Rome on 20 May 1368 designate the assembled witnesses as *consilarii nostri*, see Mas Latrie (ed.), Histoire II 302. 308. For the role of the royal council during Hugh IV's and Peter I's reign, cf. Grivaud, Le roi Pierre I^{er} (forthcoming).

Haute Court, on the other hand, theoretically constituted the assembly of all royal liegemen. It possessed the authority to decide about enfeoffments and other transactions regarding crown estates, but it also administered justice for the nobility, and in some cases, it witnessed treaties. Although all the king's liegemen could participate, the Haute Court often only consisted of a few men who generally belonged to the most influential men on the island¹⁰¹⁸. Since the Haute Court was newly constituted every time it convened, its members could vary from one day to the next¹⁰¹⁹. Membership in the royal council, on the other hand, seems to have endured as long as the counsellors enjoyed the king's favour.

The workings of the council emerge in a particularly pronounced way from a source that was discovered only recently: a protocol concerning King Janus' divorce trial from the year 1407. This document lies in the archives of Padua, and Christina Kaoulla has recently edited it as part of her doctoral thesis. She has kindly shared her as yet unpublished work with me¹⁰²⁰, so that I am able to draw on this source here.

The document in question (*Perg. 5685 part. 7*) protocols the statements of the witnesses summoned to provide information on Janus' marriage with Anglesia Visconti, which the king wished to annul. The interviews were held in August 1407 and the witnesses were called on to remember the preparational proceedings for the marriage¹⁰²¹. Even if we must assume that the witnesses rendered a biased version of the story of the marriage¹⁰²², their statements shed light on the dealings and the importance of the royal council from various perspectives.

Membership in the royal council was an official status. This becomes clear from a statement by Johannes Cristali, who was the prior of the king's chapel during this period. On being asked a particularly detailed question of the proceedings, he responded that »he is neither a member of the king's council, nor does he know what men discuss with the king in the council¹⁰²³«. The council members were the king's most trusted followers and at least the young king Janus, in 1399 sixteen years of age, usually followed their advice¹⁰²⁴. However, because of their knowledge, others addressed them if they wanted to know what was going on at the court, and the council seems to have been a good source for rumours. Johannes Vasageri, another cleric, on being asked

from whom he knew that the king had been duped with the wrong bride in his marriage, answered, »by someone who is in the royal council, who must have known well his [i. e. the king's] secrets¹⁰²⁵«. This was also the reason why the most secret deliberations concerning the marriage included only some few handpicked councilors. Three of the witnesses declared that the Lord of Beirut John of Lusignan, who was the regent for the young king in 1399, had especially asked them to a secret session early in the morning in the king's personal chambers¹⁰²⁶. When the admiral Jean Babin mentioned that it would be appropriate to include also other councilors, John responded:

You have seen a lot of the royal council's decisions that are made public, prior to the right time, of which we others are astounded from where the publication came. And finally, if the affair touched the kingdom, they could be called. However, this affair touches only the person of the king and he may well accept a wife out of his own will and not out of the will of others¹⁰²⁷.

It is possible that other factors played a role for John's decision of secrecy, such as that the other council members might have contradicted his advice, but the passage still shows the importance of the councilors on the intersection between the king and the population.

In general, the protocol creates the picture of familial and intimate situations of deliberation between the king and his councilors who each influenced the proceedings with their own opinion and personality. The regent John of Beirut stands out as the most influential personality by far. The conversations are ridden with intrigues and the councilors do not hesitate to make jokes in between, even at the expense of the king¹⁰²⁸.

In addition to these situations behind the scenes, counsellors acted as ambassadors and took part in the sessions of the Haute Court¹⁰²⁹. Moreover, a member of the council possibly had to preside over the Haute Court in the king's absence. The assizes indicate that originally the constable or the seneschal should have filled this position. They were also supposed to rule the court when matters had to be discussed apart, that is, without the king¹⁰³⁰. Indeed, when the Haute Court met after Peter I's murder, this rule was still intact¹⁰³¹.

1018 Livre des remembrances (Richard) xxiv; Edbury, Franks 75-76; Edbury, Kingdom 186. For a detailed description of the tasks of the Haute Court, see Edbury, Feudal Nobility of Cyprus 281-287.

1019 Thierry Ganchou in Ganchou, Rébellion 132 n. 106 suggests that the Haute Court had a fix member constellation, but this is not confirmed by the sources, see for example two documents from August 1452 in Documents chypriotes (Richard) 154-155. Different men took part in each session.

1020 Kaoulla, Quest for a Royal Bride.

1021 Kaoulla, Quest for a Royal Bride 9.

1022 Cf. Kaoulla, Quest for a Royal Bride 91.

1023 Kaoulla, Quest for a Royal Bride § 489: *ipse non est de consilio regis, nec scit, quid loquantur homines cum rege de consilio*. English translations by Kaoulla.

1024 Kaoulla, Quest for a Royal Bride 106, §§ 9. 68. 178. 195. 328. 354.

1025 Kaoulla, Quest for a Royal Bride § 449: *respondit ab uno, qui est de consilio regis, qui deberet scire bene secreta sua*.

1026 Kaoulla, Quest for a Royal Bride §§ 133. 249. 566.

1027 Kaoulla, Quest for a Royal Bride §136: *Vos vidistis multa facta in consilio secreto, que fuerunt publicata, ante tempus, de quibus nos alii mirabamur unde processerat publicatio. Et ulterius, si factum tangerit regnum, ipsi possent vocari. Sed, factum hoc tangit personam proptiam regis et bene potest accipere uxorem ad voluntatem suam et non ad voluntatem aliorum*.

1028 See e. g. Kaoulla, Quest for a Royal Bride §§ 135. 136. 327.

1029 E. g., in 1390, Pierre de Caffran went to Genoa for negotiations with the Mahona (Mas Latrie [ed.], Histoire II 420-421). Counsellor Pierre Le Jeune acted as a member of the Haute Court in 1410, when ambassadors were sent to Famagusta in order to negotiate with the Genoese. The same counsellor witnessed a tax dispense for the Hospitallers in 1411 (Mas Latrie [ed.], Histoire II 498-499. 495). A treaty with Genoa in 1414 designates all Haute Court members as royal counsellors (Sperone [ed.], Real Grandezza 142).

1030 See below A 1.1.1, pp. 165-166 and A 1.1.3, pp. 167-168 and Machaut, Capture (Shirley) 202.

1031 Machaut, Capture (Shirley) 202 and n. 8.

In 1420, however, this had changed. Other members of the royal council now took pride of place. Pierre Le Jeune, then admiral of Cyprus, presided over the Haute Court when it met concerning the affairs of the noblewoman Alice Prevost. Similarly, the Haute Court decided on the legitimacy of an estate purchase made by Odet Bousat in 1452. Then, Jacques de Fleury presided in his function as *chef de conseil*. In both cases, the king had appointed the liegeman to act as his lieutenant. Both men were royal counsellors¹⁰³². Council members therefore quite naturally fulfilled important roles in the workings of the Haute Court.

The Haute Court in turn experienced a changeful history during the second half of the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries. The institution acquired particular importance in the decades after Peter I's death. When Peter I was murdered by his vassals in January 1369, the Haute Court convened to decide about the future of the kingdom. In this case, the Haute Court was indeed a gathering of all the royal liegemen, as prescribed by the assizes. The vassals determined the kingdom's new course collectively. The Haute Court reacted explicitly to Peter I's authoritarian regime by confirming the rules which Cypriot kings had to follow: inter alia, the Haute Court had to be convened at least once a month¹⁰³³. In the next decades, and particularly under James I, the importance of the Haute Court certainly grew. In this period, the Haute Court decided on foreign affairs as well as fiefs and estate transactions, which were more every-day matters. Foreign affairs were conducted by a circle of Haute Court members numbering between three and eight men, and usually two or three witnesses¹⁰³⁴. Fief issues, on the contrary, were usually organized by the minimum number of two or at the most three members of the Haute Court¹⁰³⁵. This phenomenon is still perceivable in the middle of the fifteenth century¹⁰³⁶.

However, the importance of the Haute Court diminished by the 1430s at the latest, as it became more and more intertwined with the royal council during John II's reign. It is conspicuous that in eleven of the sixteen Haute Court documents preserved for the period 1432 to 1457, royal counsellors alone acted as the Haute Court. Moreover, an Italian document from 1439 designates the royal council as *secreta corte*¹⁰³⁷. If this is a direct translation from the original French text, the designation suggests that the Haute Court and the council actually conflated in these years, the council taking

over the affairs of the Haute Court almost entirely. This process must have been connected to the strengthening of the council during John II's reign. It has been stated that John II was probably mentally not able to reign independently¹⁰³⁸. The development of the royal council under his rule supports this claim strongly.

The council was already important at the beginning of John II's reign. This is evident from the influential role it played during the negotiations for Anne of Lusignan's marriage in 1432¹⁰³⁹. In the following years, the council not only took over all the proceedings of the Haute Court, but even achieved some sort of institutionalization: the new office of *chef de conseil*, who was the king's right-hand man, was created. Jean Richard has interpreted this as proof of the beginning of a »véritable conseil« in Cyprus¹⁰⁴⁰. The council's official position is confirmed by sources from abroad: in 1453, Alfonso of Aragón wrote a letter »to the respectable, magnificent nobles, beloved and devoted to us, the [members] of the council of the most illustrious King of Cyprus¹⁰⁴¹«, and the instructions to Hospitaller knights who went as ambassadors to Cyprus regularly include the royal council explicitly as negotiation partner¹⁰⁴². The Haute Court therefore still existed in the 1440s and 1450s and it had to be convened for certain decisions, but its personnel consisted almost entirely of John II's counsellors. The council's designation as *secreta corte* even hints that the names of the institutions themselves might have merged, leaving the council in control of the kingdom.

The above discussion suggests that the decision makers in the kingdom could be found among the members of the royal council and the Haute Court. However, we must keep in mind that other influential personae at court might not have appeared in official decisions. Female members of the royal family, for example, could be influential without ever appearing in Haute Court sessions. King Janus' sister Agnes of Lusignan, for instance, was very powerful at the beginning of John II's reign¹⁰⁴³.

Many members of the royal council and of the Haute Court held office. Some counsellors, however, apparently lacked such honours. Pierre Le Jeune for example is mentioned simply as *consiliarius regis* in 1410 and 1411. He seems to have become admiral of Cyprus only in 1415¹⁰⁴⁴. Hugh Soudain, too, was just a counsellor in 1427. He became

1032 Remembrances de la haute court (Viollet) 3 (612); Documents chypriotes (Richard) 155.

1033 The meeting and the reestablished rules are described in two documents: an ordinance drawn up on the day of Peter's death, and the preface of the new edition of the assizes prepared as a reaction to Peter's actions before his death, which describes the meeting of the Haute Court on that same day. See Ibelin, *Livre des Assises* (Edbury) 733-737; Machaut, *Capture* (Shirley) 202-206. 206-208 (Peter Edbury's translation of the ordinance).

1034 See Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire II* 420. 428.

1035 See the enfeoffments in 1374 in Otten, *Féodalité* 91-92.

1036 See for example Sperone (ed.), *Real Grandezza* 166-169. Jean Richard has argued that the Haute Court had lost its importance under James II, as only ever two members of his council, acting as Haute Court, assisted him in every-day duties, see *Livre des remembrances* (Richard) xxvi. But in the light of the above information, this was no new development.

1037 Documents chypriotes (Richard) 139-157; MCC, PDc 2669.2 fol. 40^r.

1038 Hill, *History III* 527-528; Ganchou, *Rébellion* 104. 109; Kaoulla, *Queen Elena* 124-125.

1039 Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire III* 15-23. For a more detailed discussion of these negotiations, see below, ch. 4.2.1.

1040 Documents chypriotes (Richard) 129.

1041 Cerone, *La politica orientale 787: als spectables magnifichs nobles amats et devots nostres los del Consell del Ullustrissimo Rey de Cipre*. Cf. Ganchou, *Rébellion* 124.

1042 Hospitaller Documents (Luttrell et al.) nos 230. 250. 273.

1043 See ch. 4.2.1.

1044 Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire II* 495; Rudt de Collenberg, *Études de prosopographie* nos 55. 69; Kouroupakis, *Hē Kypros kai to megalo schisma ap. β-35-36*, p. 447-448; β-83, pp. 529-530 (John XXIII); *Remembrances de la haute court* (Viollet) 3 (612).

the kingdom's chamberlain as late as in 1432¹⁰⁴⁵. It was therefore not necessary to hold an office in order to become part of the royal council. Men who had attained the status of royal counsellor, however, were often later appointed to an influential office.

However, this does not necessarily infer that offices were only an empty hull, expressing the holder's prestige without any additional meaning. In contrast, most offices at the Lusignan court and in the administration had a great import on the kingdom's power balance.

The Lusignan kings appointed crown officers, such as the seneschal, constable, marshal, chamberlain and butler. In the first half of the fourteenth century, King Hugh IV even revived the same offices for the kingdom of Jerusalem¹⁰⁴⁶. Jean Richard and especially Peter Edbury have suggested that these crown offices were merely a means to honour the powerful, void of any executive meaning by the fourteenth century¹⁰⁴⁷. This is only true in part for the fifteenth century. The seneschal for example lost its importance between the 1370s and the 1420s. After this time, the kings did not award this office anymore, and other officers took over its tasks. The butler underwent a similar development, though this office was at least awarded honorary during the middle of the fifteenth century. The constable is not often visible in the sources but seems to have retained his executive function as army commander. The chamberlain and the marshal, in contrast, were important offices that comprised distinct executive tasks. The chamberlain was responsible for the kingdom's finances, while the marshal undertook the upkeep of the army¹⁰⁴⁸.

In addition to the traditional crown offices, the Lusignan government system possessed officials who led crucial administrative institutions that had developed in the Levant or even in Cyprus. For this reason, the chronicler Machairas called these the *offices of Cyprus*¹⁰⁴⁹.

Finances in the public (as well as the private royal) domain were the responsibility of the so-called royal *secrète*, which derived its name as well as part of its working structure from its Byzantine predecessor institution¹⁰⁵⁰. Its head official was the *bailli de la secrète*. The division of tasks between the chamberlain and the *bailli de la secrète* is not entirely clear, but they always exist parallel to each other. The police

forces in turn were headed by the viscount of Nicosia. He was governor and royal lieutenant of Nicosia, and therefore represented royal power¹⁰⁵¹. The viscount was responsible for the upkeep of social order and presided over the court of the *burgesses*¹⁰⁵². The *auditeur* also counted among the most influential officials. He was the state prosecutor, though his exact responsibilities remain rather unclear during the fifteenth century. In any case, men with considerable power occupied it¹⁰⁵³. Various institutions collected in the *hotel du roi* administered the royal household and its estates¹⁰⁵⁴. The *maître de l'hotel or bailli de la court*¹⁰⁵⁵ was the head of the royal household and therefore took over tasks that had formerly pertained to the seneschal¹⁰⁵⁶. In addition to the constable and the marshal, two officers of *Cyprus* were concerned with the military: the *turcopolier* must have commanded the *turcopolos*, who were originally troops of light cavalry and archers recruited probably among Oriental Christians and Muslims who had converted to Christianity¹⁰⁵⁷. His responsibilities remain in the dark during the period under consideration¹⁰⁵⁸. The admiral commanded the kingdom's fleet, though from the reign of Peter II on we never find admirals executing tasks at sea. Perhaps the Cypriot fleet declined in those years¹⁰⁵⁹. Nevertheless, admirals still seem to have been important officers until the end of Lusignan times.

All the aforementioned officials participated in the ruling of the state in differing degrees, though a hierarchy between the offices can be discerned only tentatively. In many cases the exact power of an office also depended on its holder's personality. This enabled the importance of an office to change. The *turcopolier* Jean de Brie, for example, was king Peter II's second in command and became head regent after the king's death, while his predecessor Jacques de Nores was an important member of the power élite, but by far not the first man in the kingdom. Perrin Pelestrin on the other hand, *turcopolier* between 1432 and the 1450s, moved at the margins of the highest power circles¹⁰⁶⁰. The influence of an office therefore depended to a certain degree on the personality of its holder and his relationship to the ruler.

However, the viscount for example was a crucial post until the end of Lusignan rule, providing its holder with extensive executive power. The viscounts usually belonged to the

1045 Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire* II 518-521, III 15-16, n. 1.

1046 Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) § 88; Edbury, *Kingdom of Cyprus* 181.

1047 Edbury, *Kingdom of Cyprus* 184; Edbury, *Franks* 70-71. 85; *Livre des remembrances* (Richard) xix.

1048 For a detailed analysis of the development of the various crown offices and their importance in the fifteenth century, see appendix I.

1049 Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) § 88.

1050 *Griechische Briefe* (Beihammer) 104-117; Coureas, *Economy* 118-119.

1051 At the beginning of Lusignan rule, there was also a viscount in Famagusta. However, later on officers with the same duties were called *bailli* instead of viscount in all towns except the capital, see Edbury, *Franks* 76; Edbury, *Kingdom* 193-194.

1052 For the court des bourgeois, see Nicolaou-Konnari, *Greeks* 21-26. 29-30.

1053 Mas Latrie interestingly does not mention the *auditeur* in his analysis of the history of Cyprus (Mas Latrie [ed.], *Histoire* I), although he appears in the documents.

1054 *Livre des remembrances* (Richard) xi-xvii, xviii-xix and n. 44; *Documents nouveaux* (Mas Latrie) 443; Nicolaou-Konnari, *Greeks* 21-26. 29-30.

1055 See e.g. Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire* II 526; Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire* III 18; *Documents chypriotes* (Richard) docs II, X.

1056 *Livre des remembrances* (Richard) xviii.

1057 Richard, *Les turcopolos* 261-264. Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire* I 133-134, merely says that the *turcopolier* was an officer separate from the marshal and commanded indigenous troops.

1058 Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire* III 536; cf. Richard, *Les turcopolos* 266-267.

1059 Coureas, *Admirals* 128. Coureas also states that Cyprus did not have a regular fleet any more.

1060 For Jacques de Nores, see Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) §§ 129. 147. 607; Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire* III 771; Bustron, *Historia* (Mas Latrie) 292. For Jean de Brie, see Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) §§ 563. 599. 610. 620; Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire* II 372. 396-398. 412. 420. 428. 436; Bustron, *Historia* (Mas Latrie) 346. 350. 352. For Perrin Pelestrin, see *Documents nouveaux* (Mas Latrie) 380. Cf. Rey, *Familles de Ducange* 692.

nucleus of the power élite; they were royal counsellors and prominent members of the Haute Court. The *auditeur* similarly seems to have been awarded to powerful men. These men were part of the power élite, as were the chamberlains and marshals. The *maître de l'hotel* and the *bailli de la secrète*, on the other hand, seem to have been spring boards for social climbing¹⁰⁶¹. Therefore, although the influence wielded by a certain office holder was a flexible matter, a tentative hierarchy of office can be ascertained. Generally, the *maître de l'hotel* and the *bailli de la secrète* can be considered to be on a level beneath offices such as the viscount, the *auditeur*, the chamberlain, *turcopolier*, and marshal. Importantly, the type of office held was not arbitrary: men held either military or civil office. Interchange of personnel between the two sectors does not seem to have occurred often¹⁰⁶², suggesting that men with a certain expertise were wanted for both areas.

In general, the power centralized in the royal council and the Haute Court and the executive power concentrated in the offices were highly intertwined. Men who held influential office were often also royal councillors and frequent members of the Haute Court. A search for the powerful and the shifts in the power balance will therefore have to take account of the members of the royal council and the Haute Court as well as of officials undertaking important executive tasks, without forgetting the men and women behind the scenes who wielded the most informal power within the power élite.

How, then, did the power élite at the Lusignan court develop in the context of the fifteenth-century social changes? Since a detailed examination of the whole period under consideration is impossible, I will conduct a comparison between two thirty-year intervals: the 1370s to 1390s and the 1430s to 1450s. These two intervals exemplify the social changes arising in the fifteenth century in a particularly marked way. Moreover, they feature a good availability of sources; the middle of the fifteenth century in particular reveals a high density of documents. I analyse both intervals chronologically, divided into smaller time periods. Finally, I will sum up the results in a comparison of both intervals.

The sources concerning the power élite are above all official documents recording treaties between Cyprus and the trading republics or other important proceedings of the Haute Court, as well as letters to royal counsellors and state officials (see below). However, we have to distinguish between extraordinary diplomatic proceedings and every-day business conducted in the Haute Court, since they relate to political

power on different levels. The structure of the documents varies, but they always mention the statesmen acting as witnesses, usually together with the date and the place¹⁰⁶³. All documents meticulously mention the witnesses' office and/or title. They therefore enable us to trace the careers of high state officials and their involvement in state matters¹⁰⁶⁴. Information from the chronicles of the period will supplement the documents.

Just as during the analysis of marriage alliances¹⁰⁶⁵, I will use Social Network Analysis to visualize the structures. The participation of individuals to various political events will be mapped by way of two-mode networks, i. e. graphs with two sorts of nodes. The graphs visualize the Haute Court sessions or ratifications of state treaties as one node sort (the event, shown as dark grey squares), and the persons taking part in these events as the other node sort (the agents, shown as light grey spots). The analysis will generally remain on the level of the two-mode-network, as the information garnered from the sources does not allow either the transformation into a one-mode-network or a sensible use of measures such as *centrality* or *betweenness*, which mathematically calculate an individual's status within the group¹⁰⁶⁶. An exception are the sources between the 1430s and 1450s. Being much more numerous, these sources sometimes allow for mathematical analysis, which I will demonstrate below (see ch. 4.2). Complementary to Social Network Analysis, I use timelines to visualize who was in power over which period, and at which moments we find power vacuums and breaks in the power élite.

4.1 The 1370s to 1390s

4.1.1 From Peter I to Peter II

Our analysis begins with a fascinating power constellation, as the early 1370s were shaped by the consequences of King Peter I's murder. The regicide led to a power struggle that resulted in the Genoese-Cypriot war (1372-1374), which is usually interpreted as the beginning of the decline of Lusignan rule¹⁰⁶⁷. I will analyse this period in detail, since the upheavals in these years offered space and possibilities for social mobility and the first Syrians appeared in highest power circles at the end of this period¹⁰⁶⁸.

1061 For a detailed description of these offices, their functions and hierarchies, see appendix I.

1062 To my knowledge, the only two men who changed from one sector to the other were Jean de Brie, who was first *turcopolier* and later seneschal, and Thomas of Morea, who was appointed chamberlain and soon after marshal. However, Thomas was an exceptional case, anyway, and Jean could have been promoted to show that he actually was the king's second in command. For Jean de Brie, see ch. 4.1.2. For Thomas of Morea, see ch. 4.2.2.

1063 E. g. Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire II* 307-308: *Datum et actum in Roma, anno Nativitatis Domini millesimo trecentesimo sexagesimo octavo, mense Maii, die vicesima, presentibus dilectis et fidelibus [...] consiliaris nostris, testibus ad premissa vocatis.*

1064 The protocol for the order of names is not entirely transparent – present members of the royal family are certainly mentioned first, see e. g. Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire II* 289. 420. 428. Then probably the most prestigious men follow. However, we do not know if every document follows this rule, nor whether the protocol in fact mirrored the actual power balance. Thus, we will have to interpret the order of names with care.

1065 Cf. ch. 3.3.

1066 Cf. De Nooy et al., *Exploratory Analysis* 103-108 and p. 22.

1067 Edbury, *Franks* 85; Rudt de Collenberg, *Domē kai proeleusē* 810-811.

1068 I have outlined the following argument recently also in Salzmann, *Stability or Chaos*.

The basic story is well-known and quickly told: Peter I had been murdered by a group of his most important supporters, probably even including his own brothers James and John. The reasons for this collective regicide have been discussed¹⁰⁶⁹: the nobles probably feared Peter would drive the island state into ruin with his never-ending taste for war. He had also favoured Western foreigners who had come to take part in his crusade. This probably made the Cypriots fear for their property. Moreover, Peter may have gone out of his mind in the time preceding his murder. Machairas relates some strange incidents in which Peter treated his vassals outrageously¹⁰⁷⁰, but it is unclear how many stories like these we should attribute to official propaganda after the murder. Be this as it may, on the day of the murder, Peter's brother John was proclaimed regent for the late king's small son Peter II, who was to succeed his father on the throne once he came of age¹⁰⁷¹. However, John was opposed by Peter I's widow Eleanor, who wanted to avenge her husband's death. By siding with the Genoese, who invaded Cyprus on the pretext of taking revenge for Peter I, she obtained her goal: her late husband's murderers were executed, and in 1375 she had John killed, which left her in control of her son Peter and the kingdom¹⁰⁷². But who were the people supporting John and Eleanor? And who ruled the kingdom after Peter's death? Do we find any significant instances of social mobility in this period?

Let us turn back to 1369 and the aftermaths of Peter's murder. John then was the head of a powerful group of men who had been active in Cypriot politics for many years¹⁰⁷³. The Haute Court assembled on the day of Peter's murder to decide about the fate of the kingdom. A protocol of this session informs us about the men who were prominent in these decisions¹⁰⁷⁴: the Haute Court chose Philippe de Ibelin as lieutenant for the seneschal James, Peter's second brother, who had gone immediately to Famagusta to secure the population's oath on behalf of the new king. Philippe de Ibelin had been prominent in Cypriot politics from the beginning of Peter I's reign¹⁰⁷⁵. As an Ibelin, he was a member of the most important family of the kingdom after the Lusignans. Jacques de Nores, *turcopolier* of Cyprus, in turn fulfilled the important

function of spokesman for the community of liegemen¹⁰⁷⁶. He, too, had been one of Peter I's most important advisors during the entirety of his reign¹⁰⁷⁷.

The nobles not only decided about the succession in the kingdom during this session. They also assigned a commission to revise their laws, the *assizes*. This measure was supposed to protect them from royal abuse such as Peter I had committed. The commission comprised sixteen members. It featured some of the most important statesmen of the previous years. Peter Edbury has pointed out that all the king's murderers took part in it. They were Philippe de Ibelin himself, Jean de Gaurrelle and Henri de Gible¹⁰⁷⁸. Raymon Babin, Thomas de Montolive, Jean de Morphou and Simon Tenouri also took part. They had all been members of the inner power élite under Peter I, serving as advisors, ambassadors, and military commanders¹⁰⁷⁹.

Thus, almost all the prominent statesmen from Peter's rule held on tightly to the reins of power after his death. All those men, that is, who were of Cypriot descent. In contrast, with the king's death the foreigners who had been Peter's favourites lost their stance in Cypriot politics¹⁰⁸⁰. Philippe de Mézières and Guido da Bagnolo, two of Peter's most well-known foreign advisors, were not in Cyprus at the time and never returned to the island¹⁰⁸¹. Jean Monstri, a Genoese who had been chamberlain of Cyprus under Peter I, was arrested under the pretext of his affair with Philippe de Ibelin's wife, and later came to death during an attempt to escape from prison¹⁰⁸². Others, such as Bremond de la Voulte, had long before left Cyprus of their own accord and their estates on the island were confiscated. An exception was Piero Malocello, who was still chamberlain in 1373¹⁰⁸³.

The men of John's inner circle were the true power holders on the island during the following years. This is evident among other things from a letter of congratulation sent from Pisa for Peter II's crowning on 15 May 1372. Apart from the king, the letter was sent to John, »the regent of the island of Cyprus, brother and dearest friend¹⁰⁸⁴« as well as to Philippe de Ibelin, Raymon Babin, Jean de Morphou and Thomas de Montolive. It was also addressed to a certain Jacchetto the marshal and to Jean de Montolive, the bailo of Famagusta¹⁰⁸⁵.

1069 See e.g. Richard, *Revolution* 108-123; Edbury, *Murder* 219-33.

1070 Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) §§ 259-281.

1071 Ibelin, *Livre des Assises* (Edbury) 734.

1072 Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) §§ 311-316. 355-357. 551-554.

1073 In his dissertation on the Feudal Nobility of Cyprus (1192-1400), which has recently been made accessible online, Peter Edbury has also thought about the men and women who were in power in this time, though in his work these developments are the end of the analysis of the Cypriot nobility in the first centuries of Lusignan reign, see Edbury, *Feudal Nobility of Cyprus* 208-210. 214-219.

1074 Ibelin, *Livre des Assises* (Edbury) 733-734; cf. Machaut, *Capture* (Shirley) 202-206.

1075 See e.g. Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) § 100.

1076 Ibelin, *Livre des Assises* (Edbury) 733-734.

1077 See e.g. Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) §§ 119. 123. 126. 127. 147. 162. 163. 190. 193. 202-205. 214; Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire* II 289-290. 292. 307-308.

1078 Ibelin, *Livre des Assises* (Edbury) 732.

1079 Machaut, *Capture* (Shirley) 205-206; Ibelin, *Livre des Assises* (Edbury) 734. 736-737. For the history of these men during Peter I's reign, see e.g. Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire*, II 289-290. 230. 233. 292. 307-308; Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) § 108; Schabel, *Bullarium Cyprium* III, no. u-281. I have also discussed these men's role during Peter I's reign in Salzmann, *Stability or chaos*.

1080 Edbury, *Feudal Nobility of Cyprus* 190. 209-220, has also pointed to this development.

1081 For Philippe, see Mézières, *Songe du viel Pelerin* (Blanchard) LXVII-LXIX; Edbury, *Feudal Nobility of Cyprus* 218. For Guido, see Bacchelli, *Guido da Bagnolo*.

1082 Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) §§ 180. 190. 283. For his position as chamberlain, see Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire* II 291. 308. Cf. Edbury, *Feudal Nobility of Cyprus* 218.

1083 Edbury, *Murder* 229; Edbury, *Feudal Nobility* 214. 217; Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire* II 425.

1084 Mas Latrie (ed.), *Nouvelles preuves* II 7: *bailo insule Cipri, fratri et amico karissimo* [sic!].

1085 Mas Latrie (ed.), *Nouvelles preuves* II 7-8. I have not been able to identify Jacchetto.

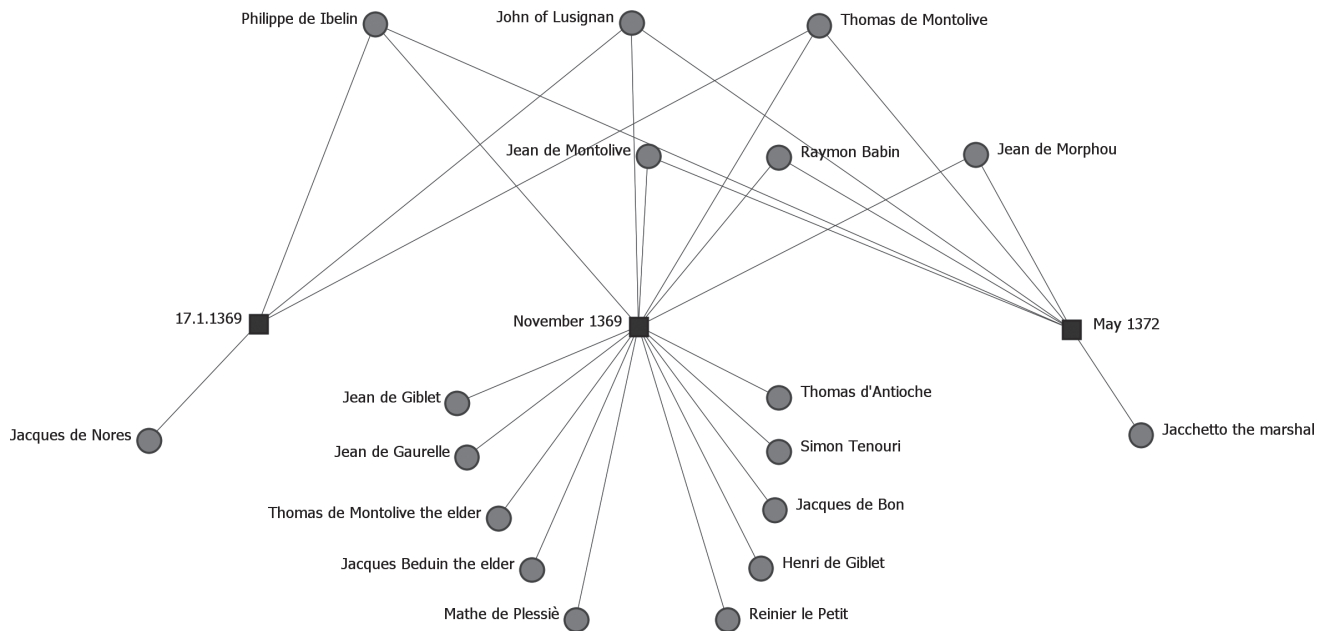


Fig. 12 Power élite 1369-1372.

This list shows clearly that the men in charge were mostly the same as three years before and, indeed, the same men who had already been in power at the beginning of Peter I's reign.

This situation is visualized in **figure 12**. It depicts the men who were party to the three crucial events and sources we have just discussed: the Haute Court session on the day of Peter's death, the commission on the assizes and the Pisan letter to Cyprus in 1372. Men who took part in only one of the events are shown beneath the line of square event nodes, while men party to more than one of these events are depicted above the line. The graph therefore collects the small group of the most powerful men above the line of square nodes. Those men who took a prominent part in the described events and received correspondence from foreign powers were clearly controlling politics on the island. The stability of this group and the loss of power on the part of the foreigners is illustrated in the timeline in **figure 13**. It shows clearly how most of the power élite from Peter I appear continuously in the sources until 1372, while the foreigners, apart from Piero Malocello, disappear one by one after 1369.

This situation seems to be quite stable if we believe the documents. However, John and his group were not unopposed. The chronicles tell us that supporters of Queen Eleanor,

Peter I's widow, tried to gain aid from the pope and other Western rulers to oust John from power as early as 1370. On the occasion of Peter II's coronation as king of Jerusalem in 1372, Machairas mentions how Eleanor tried to influence her son to issue fiefs to her supporters. However, the Haute Court pressured the young king into relinquishing his ability to dole out fiefs until his twenty-fifth birthday, thus preventing him from giving freely to his mother's followers¹⁰⁸⁶. Peter Edbury has shown that at least a great part of Eleanor's supporters were foreigners, such as a Catalan named Alfonso Ferrand, the Byzantines Joannes Laskares Kalopheros and George Monomachos, the Lombard Giacomo di San Michele, Francis of Marin, a Genoese, and another Catalan named Francis Saturno. In contrast to John, Eleanor therefore did not enjoy the support of any of the Cypriot nobility¹⁰⁸⁷. She did not have any success in the power struggle during these first years, and John and his group of supporters were firmly in power.

The war with the Genoese changed this situation radically. Machairas' chronicle describes the usual figures undertaking important actions at the start of the war: John and James of Lusignan led military expeditions, and Jean de Morphou acted as ambassador¹⁰⁸⁸. However, the occupation of Famagusta by the Genoese was not only the turning point of the war,

1086 Machairas, *Exégèsis* (Dawkins) §§ 311-15. 327. 354-355. Edbury, *Feudal Nobility of Cyprus* 224 has interpreted this episode as a milestone of the conflict between John and Eleanor, since John lost his official power as regent with Peter II's accession to the throne, and Eleanor could finally attempt to exert some influence over her son. However, this influence was evidently directly curbed by John's followers in the Haute Court.

1087 Edbury, *Feudal Nobility of Cyprus* 228-229. During the war with the Genoese, the *Chronicle of Amadi* also mentions Eleanor's confessor Glimin de Narbonne acting in her interests, see Amadi, *Chronique (Mas Latrie)* 467; *The Chronicle of Amadi* (Edbury/Coureas), § 953. Ferrer i Mallol, *La reina*

314-315. 318, shows that other Catalans, such as Luis and Ramón Resta as well as a certain Joan Desbosc, were all part of the royal household in these years, though we do not know if they took the Queen's side. Ferrer i Mallol also offers a detailed analysis of other Catalan supporters to Queen Eleanor, though most of them only travelled to Cyprus intermittently, such as for example her procurators in Catalonia, Jaume Fiveller and Lleó Marc. The former fetched Eleanor from Rhodes when she had been exiled by Peter II, and acted as her advocate at the Cypriot court, see Ferrer i Mallol, *La reina* 312. 315. 317-320.

1088 Machairas, *Exégèsis* (Dawkins) §§ 377. 382. 388-389. 391. 434. 468. 509.

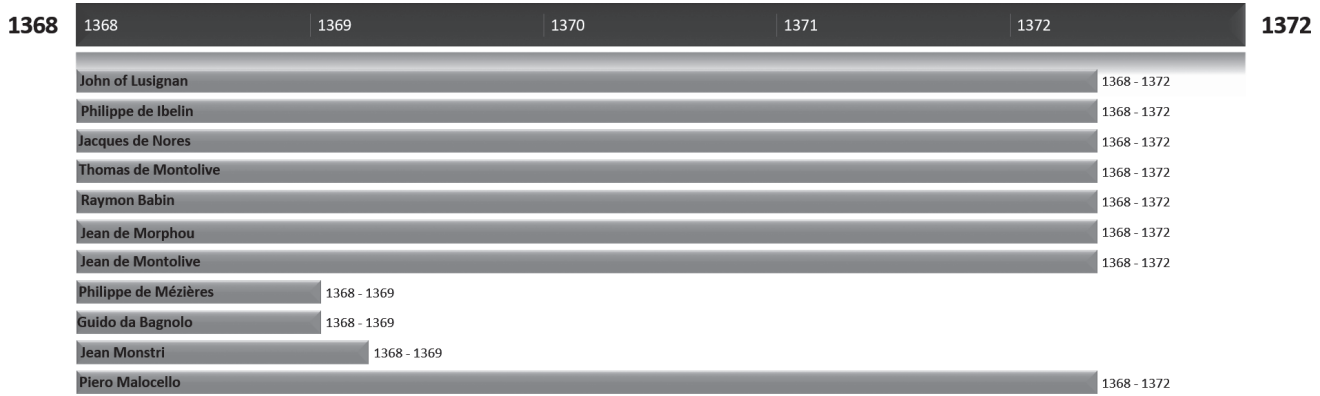


Fig. 13 Power élite 1368-1372, timeline.

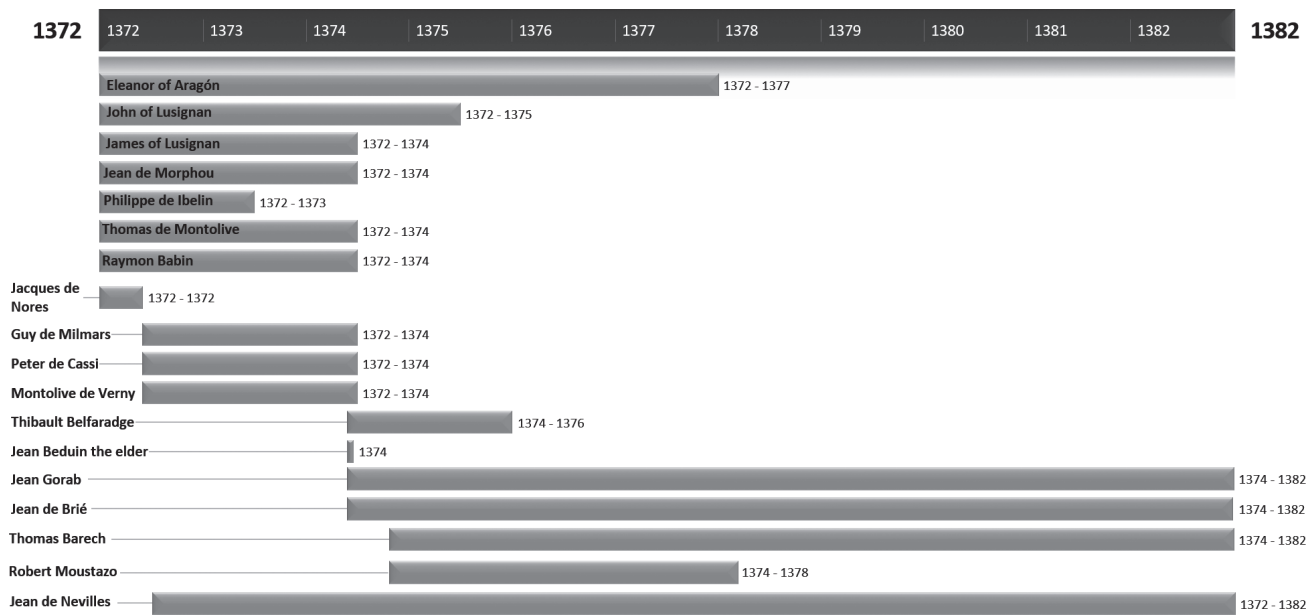


Fig. 14 Power élite 1372-1382, timeline.

but also heralded the breakdown of the power structures that had characterized the preceding years. Above all, the Genoese executed Henri de Giblet, Jean de Gaurrelle, and even the powerful Philippe de Ibelin for murdering King Peter I¹⁰⁸⁹. By the end of the war many other power holders had been removed. The Genoese exiled James of Lusignan and Thomas de Montolive, who was marshal of the kingdom of Cyprus by then¹⁰⁹⁰. Machairas records Jean de Morphou and Raymon Babin as other prominent exiles, in their case to Chios¹⁰⁹¹. Jacques de Nores, the *turcopolier*, who by that time must have been an old man, is last heard of in 1372¹⁰⁹².

Other powerful men, who had not been part of the highest power circle before the conflict, but who had played major roles during military operations in the war, were also expelled from the island: Guy de Milmars, who was the Cypriot admiral, along with Peter de Cassi and Montolive de Verny¹⁰⁹³.

The only person to remain in power after the war was John of Lusignan himself. However, in 1375 John was soon killed on behalf of Queen Eleanor¹⁰⁹⁴, who was seemingly left in triumphant control of the situation. This complete demise of the old power élite is illustrated in the left part of the timeline in **figure 14**. The timeline shows the development of

1089 Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) § 423.

1090 Mas Latrie (ed.), *Nouvelles preuves* I 73. In 1383, a Thomas de Montolive was *bailli de la secrète* and marshal of Jerusalem, but whether this is the same man as the *auditeur*, is impossible to say, see Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire* II 396.

1091 Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) § 542. We have no other confirmation for this event, apart from the indirect evidence that both stop appearing in the sources after 1374. For Jean de Morphou cf. Hill, *History* II 395.

1092 Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) § 349.

1093 Mas Latrie (ed.), *Nouvelles preuves* I 72-74. The Genoese had made the exile of both Peter de Cassi and Montolive de Verny an explicit presupposition for peace in the treaty of 1374, see Sperone (ed.), *Real Grandezza* 105.

1094 Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) § 554.

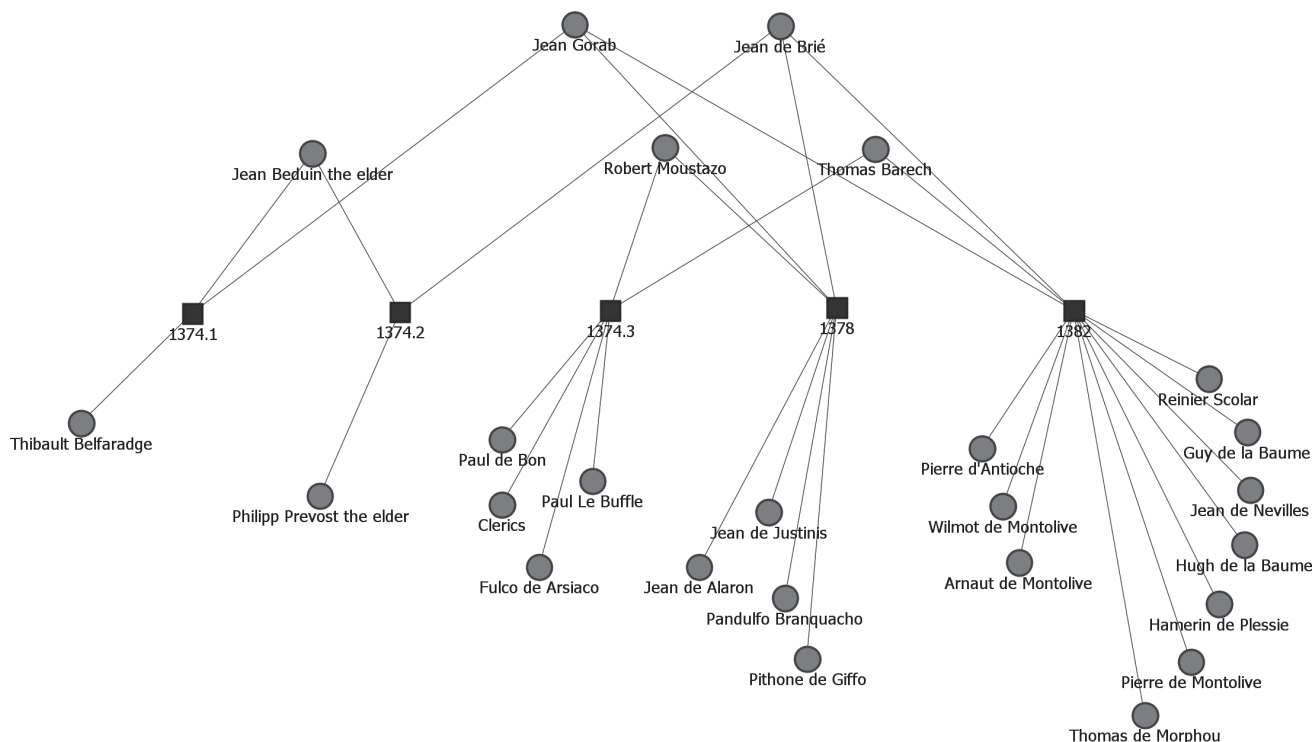


Fig. 15 Power élite 1374-1382.

the power élite in the decade between 1372 and 1382. The abrupt end of the old power structures in 1374/1375 can be seen very clearly.

How was this power gap filled, we may ask? Did Eleanor try to place all her supporters into high positions? How strong was her influence on the young Peter II? Unfortunately, very few sources remain from the years directly after the war. Even the chronicles are largely silent. The only detailed episode they recount is the rise and fall of Thibault Belfaradge, a Melkite Burgess who had been already in Peter I's service¹⁰⁹⁵. Thibault had risen to some prominence during the war with the Genoese, and had provided numerous services to the king and his uncles. He is said to have gained permission to recruit men of arms in Venice in order to besiege Famagusta, which he did without success. But apparently, the king's favour was such that he knighted Thibault and granted him various estates as fiefs. Indeed, Thibault was part of the Haute Court in a fief granting as early as 1374¹⁰⁹⁶. According to the chronicles, at this point Thibault became overly greedy and desired to become lord of the castle of Korykos. Peter II refused. Thibault then took revenge on the king's confessor, who had advised Peter on the matter, killing both the confessor and the viscount of Nicosia, who happened to be accompanying him. Consequently, Thibault was himself put to death¹⁰⁹⁷.

Though we have no way of confirming the veracity of this account, the story of Thibault's quick rise and fall hints to the fact that the power vacuum created by the war allowed room for newcomers to rise to the top.

Indeed, very gradually, we see a new group of nobles emerging to take up important positions, though the limited information at our disposal does not permit us to discern if they were Eleanor's supporters or not. Their group is illustrated both in the timeline in figure 14 and the graph in figure 15. The sources which let us glimpse the careers of these men are two enfeoffments from 1374 (square nodes 1374.1 and 1374.2 in fig. 15), the peace treaty concluded with Genoa in 1374 (square node 1374.3), similarly the treaty against Genoa between Cyprus, Milan and Venice in 1378 (node 1378), and finally Machairas' list of the twelve men who reigned Cyprus as regents after Peter II's death (node 1382). Again, men who took part in more than one of these events are shown above the dark grey, square line of nodes.

The group emerging from these sources is interesting. At least two, if not three men were newcomers like Belfaradge¹⁰⁹⁸: Thomas Barech testified to the peace treaty with the Genoese in 1374. Machairas calls him a Greek Burgess, probably because he was a Melkite, but his name suggests a Syrian origin¹⁰⁹⁹. After Peter II's death, Thomas became one

1095 Bullarium Cyprium III (Schabel et al.) no. v-200.

1096 Otten, Féodalité 91; for the men at arms and the fiefs given to Thibault, see Machairas, Exégésis (Dawkins) §§ 564-565; Amadi, Chronique (Mas Latrie) 481-482; Amadi, Chronicle (Coureas/Edbury), § 985.

1097 For Thibault's story, see Machairas, Exégésis (Dawkins) §§ 556-575; Bustron, Historia (Mas Latrie) 339-346; Amadi, Chronique (Mas Latrie) 481-486.

1098 Cf. Edbury, Feudal Nobility of Cyprus 232.

1099 Sperone (ed.), Real Grandezza 108. For this phenomenon, see p. 37.

of the twelve regents who administered the kingdom until James I arrived in Cyprus¹¹⁰⁰. Jean Gorab in turn came from a new, undoubtedly also Syrian family. He had been *maître de l'hôtel* under Peter I and became *auditeur* of Cyprus in 1378 at the latest. He had been part of the Haute Court in 1374, when the Genoese Giacomo Grillo received a fief¹¹⁰¹. One Robert Moustazo witnessed both the peace treaty in 1374 and the treaty against Genoa in 1378¹¹⁰². Unfortunately, we know nothing else about him and he does not appear in later sources. Considering his family appears only from the 1350s onward¹¹⁰³, we might speculate that he too was one of the fortunate winners of the power struggle which followed the war. Another man probably belonged to this group, although he is not visible in the Haute Court sources: the Syrian Nicholas Billy according to Machairas was *bailli de la secrète* in 1374¹¹⁰⁴.

However, the most important person who appears on the scene in the years after the war came from one of the oldest noble families on Cyprus: Jean de Brie, first attested as *turcopolier* of Cyprus in the peace treaty in 1378. On that occasion, Jean swore on the bible as Peter II's lieutenant. Just like Jean Gorab, Jean de Brie is attested as member of the Haute Court during fief issues as early as 1374. After Peter II's death, he would be the first of the thirteen regents of the kingdom, the other twelve acting as his advisors¹¹⁰⁵. Jean de Nevilles was another important figure. He, too, came from an old family and was viscount of Nicosia perhaps as early as 1369 or, more likely, by the early 1370s. He is visible in **figure 15** only once, as regent after Peter II's death, but together with the other men mentioned, he would play a leading role in the times to come¹¹⁰⁶.

All these men, apart from Thomas Barech, had already started their careers under Peter I – Jean de Brie as naval commander, Jean Gorab as *maître d'hôtel*, Jean de Nevilles probably as viscount of Nicosia. Therefore, though they were newly ascended into the highest power élite, they had been in Cypriot politics for a considerable time. It is noteworthy that four, if not five of these men (Thomas Barech, Jean Gorab, Robert Moustazo, Thibault Belfaradge and Nicholas Billy) were newcomers. This testifies to the possibility of social rise within the power vacuum created by the end of the Genoese war. The new men mostly seem to have followed career paths within the administration. Apart from Thibault Belfaradge, they were not concerned with military matters,

a phenomenon that persisted into the fifteenth century (see below ch. 4.2.2). Despite the careers of *homines novi*, however, the king's second in command, Jean de Brie, was still a progeny of an old Cypriot family.

Whether these men were Queen Eleanor's supporters is impossible to say, except for Belfaradge who, at least in Machairas' version, was King Peter II's favourite and certainly not the Queen's¹¹⁰⁷. One point stands against the assumption that these men were close to the queen: when Peter II emancipated himself from his mother and had her sent back to Aragón in 1380¹¹⁰⁸, all the aforementioned men remained in place. Their period of power is especially well visible from the timeline in **figure 14**, which illustrates how the old power élite disappeared in 1374/1375, while these new men slowly appear in the sources from 1374 on, staying in power at least until 1382. Many of them should hold the reins even much longer than that, as we shall see shortly.

4.1.2 The Reign of James I

Just as his father, Peter II was more short-lived than his power base. When he died without heirs in 1382, all the men of the new power élite were part of the regency council, which according to Machairas consisted of thirteen knights headed by Jean de Brie. The composition of this group is rather interesting. Some were members of the power élite of the preceding years, such as Jean Gorab, Jean de Nevilles, and Thomas Barech. Five of the men (Guy de la Baume, Perrot and Wilmot de Montolive, Hamerin de Plessie and Thomas de Morphou) seem to have been exiled to Genoa and to have returned to Cyprus before 1382¹¹⁰⁹. Apart from Gorab and Barech, all members of the council came from old families (Pierre d'Antioche, Thomas de Morphou, Hamerin de Plessie, Wilmot de Montolive, Pierre de Montolive, Arnaut de Montolive, Hugh de la Baume, Guy de la Baume, cf. **fig. 15**, square node 1382)¹¹¹⁰. The only council member not identifiable as a member of an old family is Reinier Scolar¹¹¹¹. It is striking how few families were represented – the Montolive play a great role with three representatives, Hugh and Guy de la Baume were brothers, and Thomas de Morphou and Hamerin de Plessie probably stemmed from different branches of the same family¹¹¹². Thus, it seems that after Peter II's death, the island was in the hands of a rather small power elite, the

1100 Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) § 599.

1101 Edbury, *Murder* 220. 227; Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire* II 372; Otten, *Féodalité* 91.

1102 Sperone (ed.), *Real Grandezza* 108; Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire* II 372.

1103 Cf. ch. 2.1, p. 52.

1104 Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) § 563.

1105 Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire* II 372. 420. 428. 436; Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) § 599; Otten, *Féodalité* 92. Cf. Edbury, *Feudal Nobility of Cyprus* 231-232.

1106 Bustron, *Historia* (Mas Latrie) 277 says he took over the office from Henri de Giblet, when Peter I quarreled with him and had him put into prison. But he later wants him to have taken over the office only in 1376, after Thibault of Belfaradge had killed his (nameless) predecessor, see 345. In Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) § 436 he turns up as viscount during the conflict with the Genoese in 1372.

1107 Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) §§ 556-575.

1108 Hill, *History* III 426.

1109 Edbury, *Feudal Nobility of Cyprus* 240-241.

1110 Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) § 599. Cf. Edbury, *Feudal Nobility of Cyprus* 231, who also points out that the men of old noble families dominated the regency council.

1111 Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) § 599. Reinier's origins are very unclear. His family does not appear in the usual Cypriot sources, such as the *Lignages d'Outremer*, and there is only one other man with the same surname mentioned by Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) § 563: Daniel Scolar was one of the knights who were not exiled from Cyprus after the Genoese war in 1374.

1112 Cf. ch. 2.1, p. 51 and n. 455.

members of which had either been in power for a long time or represented powerful old families. This fact is all the more interesting considering that this group chose to reject James of Lusignan as their new king.

According to Lusignan tradition, James was the rightful heir to the throne, being the defunct king's nearest relative. However, at the time of Peter II's death, he was still a captive of the Genoese, who had forced him into exile after 1374. The Cypriot chronicles relate that the council wanted to accept James as king nonetheless but was worried about the concessions he would have to make to the Genoese to secure his release. Those worries were exploited by the brothers Wilmot and Pierre de Montolive, who convinced the council to let them handle negotiations with the king. According to the deal they brokered, the council would accept James only if the Genoese should release him without conditions. If that was not the case, Peter II's sister Margaret would succeed him and marry a Cypriot noble – according to Machairas, Pierre secretly hoped he would be the fortunate husband¹¹¹³.

However, by studying the acts of the Genoese notary Giovanni Bardi, Cathérine Otten and especially Chris Schabel have proven that James' rejection must have had a much broader base than described by the chroniclers¹¹¹⁴. Bardi accompanied the galleys which brought James to Cyprus in summer 1383, and he records that they were greeted by projectiles when they tried to land in Paphos. At the same time, peasants in the countryside reported that the powerful in Paphos had threatened to hang them should they acclaim James as king¹¹¹⁵. Later on, Bardi relates that negotiations were taken up between the »gouvernours« (*gubernatores*, also called *rebelles* (»rebels«) or *inimici* (»enemies«) at other times¹¹¹⁶) and James and the Genoese. These negotiations failed. Unfortunately, the »rebels« are not further identified. The only names mentioned are those of Pierre de Montolive and Jean de Tiberiade who went to James as ambassadors¹¹¹⁷. But the whole situation illustrated by Bardi suggests that most of the Cypriot élite must have supported the so-called rebellion. Some of James' friends and supporters are occasionally mentioned in the sources, but they are fleeting references. The only exception was the commander of Keryneia, Luke de Antiaume, who openly supported James¹¹¹⁸. The Genoese certainly estimated the support for king James as rather feeble, as they decided soon not to release him and to take him back to Genoa¹¹¹⁹.

Nevertheless, a year later the situation had changed. The power élite decided to accept James as king and sent for him to be brought from Genoa, despite the harsh terms he had agreed to: Cyprus lost the town of Famagusta permanently

to the Genoese and would have to pay huge reparatory sums to Genoa for decades. Again, the chronicles present this as a direct decision of the knights who had repented their actions. However, Machairas also mentions that James sent Arnaud de Milmars from Genoa to promise estates and money to those who should support him. It is therefore likely that James bought his kingdom from his future vassals as well as from the Genoese. The aspirant king surely chose to grant amnesty to all the rebel faction, except for Pierre and Wilmot de Montolive and a small group of their supporters. These men, who are said to have staunchly refused to accept James, were eventually beheaded¹¹²⁰. Thus, apart from a small group of rebels who probably served as scapegoats, the Cypriot power élite mostly survived King James' coronation unscathed. If we believe Machairas, they were even richer than before, as James honoured them with fiefs and titles¹¹²¹. Drawing on these powerful and experienced men instead of opposing them was probably the easiest way for James to build and secure his power base. The situation was to solidify in the long run: we find many of the council members from 1382 in high offices or as part of the Haute Court even in the 1390s¹¹²².

The development between 1382 and the 1390s is visualized in **figure 16**, which shows the five Haute Court documents preserved from James I's reign (again in dark grey, square nodes), and the nobles who sat in these parliamentary sessions (in light grey spots), as well as the regency members from 1382 (related to the square node 1382) and the knights involved in the negotiations in summer 1383 (related to node 1383). The Haute Court surely made many more important decisions in these years, but the only existing documents concern the conclusion of a new treaty with the republic of Venice on 2 October 1389, admiral Pierre de Caffran's embassy to Genoa in 1390 where he negotiated new conditions for the payments due to the Genoese, the ratification of this new Cypriot-Genoese treaty on 9 November 1391, John of Lusignan's appointment as James I's procurator for foreign affairs on 16 August 1395, and the ratification of another contract with Venice from 1396 on 18 October 1397¹¹²³. Thus, they are all related to important decisions concerning foreign policy, and we can assume that the members of the Haute Court who were present belonged to the most important men in the kingdom.

The graph reveals that at least half of the regents from 1382 were still in power: Jean de Brie above all was still part of the Haute Court in 1390, 1395 and 1397. He was then prince of Galilee as well as *turcopolier*¹¹²⁴. Jean Gorab and Jean de Nevilles sat in the Haute Court, too. Gorab continued to be *auditeur*, but had acquired the title of Sire of Caesarea,

1113 Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) §§ 599-612.

1114 Otten, *Retour manqué passim*; Schabel, *Like God from Heaven*, especially 382-383. 386. 389.

1115 *Actes de Famagouste* (Balard et al.) 293-294.

1116 *Actes de Famagouste* (Balard et al.) 262-264. 294.

1117 *Actes de Famagouste* (Balard et al.) 295.

1118 *Actes de Famagouste* (Balard et al.) 263. 296-297.

1119 *Actes de Famagouste* (Balard et al.) 333.

1120 Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) §§ 607-612.

1121 Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) § 620.

1122 Cf. Edbury, *Hē Politikē Historia* 138.

1123 Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire II* 416-418. 420-421. 423. 428-429. 436 n. 3.

1124 Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire II* 420. 428. 436.

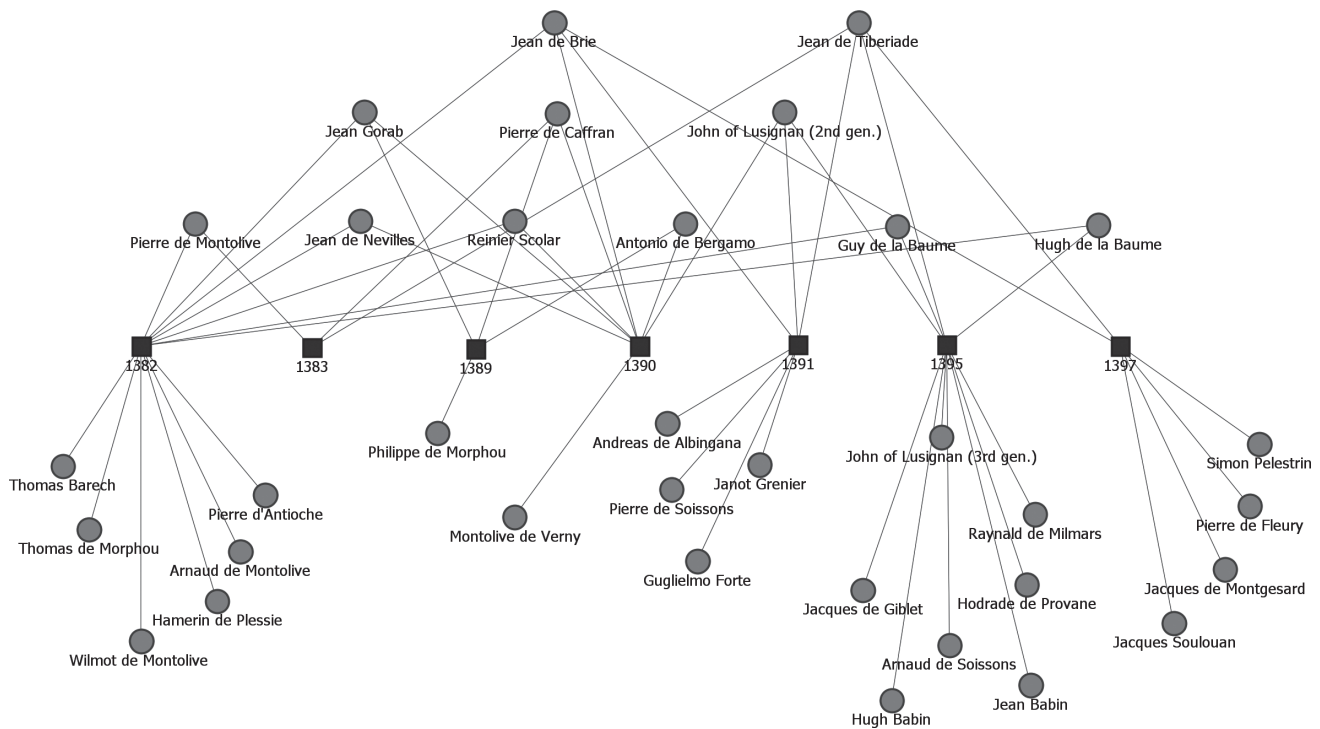


Fig. 16 Power élite 1382-1397.

while Nevilles is recorded as Sire of Arsur¹¹²⁵. Perhaps he had grown too old to fulfil the office of viscount. He died on 11 January 1391¹¹²⁶. Others of the 1382 council held important positions: Reinier Scolar was *bailli de la secrète* and Sire of Bethsan in 1390, while Hugh de la Baume and his brother Guy bore the honourary titles of constable and marshal of Jerusalem and sat in the Haute Court in 1395. We cannot say what role they really played in politics, but their titles show that James strove to honour them¹¹²⁷. The list shows that James generally awarded several titles in these years, though these do not seem to have been hereditary, a fact that would emphasize their honorary character¹¹²⁸.

Apart from the former regents, others who had been involved in the events of 1382 also acquired positions of power, seemingly without consideration for the different sides they had taken: Pierre de Caffran, the admiral, who had already been James' valuable advisor in 1382, went on embassies to Genoa twice (1387, 1390) and witnessed the new contract with Venice in 1389¹¹²⁹. Jean de Tiberiade, on the other hand, who had represented the rebels in 1382, was sent as ambassador to Genoa only one year before Caffran's

first voyage in 1386 and sat in the Haute Court as marshal of Armenia in 1397. James I's nephew John of Lusignan, seigneur of Beyruth, went on an important embassy to Western Europe for him in 1395 and sat in the Haute Court both in 1390 and 1391¹¹³⁰.

Some men are recorded by the graph only once as members of the Haute Court. But this should not deceive us – they could be important politicians all the same. We know that some of them had important offices: Arnaud de Soissons had obviously succeeded Jean Gorab as *auditeur* and Raynald de Milmars was marshal of Cyprus when they sat in the Haute Court in 1395. Both seem to have been exiled to Genoa in 1374¹¹³¹, and would thus belong to the old élite, who had probably returned to Cyprus with James I, like Pierre de Caffran. Strangely, Luke de Antiaume, who had so openly supported James in 1383, does not appear in the later sources at all.

Conversely to the 1370s, all the men mentioned came from old Cypriot families¹¹³², except for two foreign functionaries, Antonio de Bergamo and Hodrade Provane, who both came from Piemonte and occupied the office of *cam-*

1125 Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire II* 416. 420. 428. 436 and n. 3.

1126 Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire II* 398 complements a lacuna in a document concerning the viscount of Nicosia from 13 February 1391 with the name Nevilles, but this is not possible, because Nevilles died on 11 January 1391, see Imhaus, *Lacrimae Cypriae* no. 283.

1127 For Reinier, see Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire II* 412. 420; for the de la Baume brothers, see Mas Latrie, *Histoire II* 428. A similar case is that of Jean Babin, who is designated as *camerarius* of Armenia in 1395, when he was part of the Haute Court, see Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire II* 428.

1128 Cf. Edbury, *Feudal Nobility of Cyprus* 246-249 and esp. Edbury, *Franks* 85, who thinks that the titles were meant to return to James I's court a glamour it had lost after the Genoese war.

1129 Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire II* 413. 418. 420.

1130 For both men, see Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire II* 412. 423. 428. 436. 438-439.

1131 Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire II* 428; Mas Latrie (ed.), *Nouvelles preuves I* 74. A certain Renaut de Milmars was among the exiled. He could be our Raynald. This is perhaps also the same person as Arnaud de Milmars, who came to Cyprus on behalf of James in order to promise the nobles new estates.

1132 Cf. Edbury, *Hē Politikē Historia* 141.

*erarius*¹¹³³. It seems, therefore, that in contrast to the 1370s, when there was space for social mobility, the ranks of the power élite closed under James I, restricting access to the old and faithful families of the nobility. Those newcomers who had climbed the social ladder in the seventies remained in their position until their deaths but, except for Nicholas Billy, none of them managed to establish a noble family that lasted over the next decades¹¹³⁴. Only at the end of the period, some newcomers appear. The 1397 agreement records Pierre de Fleury as viscount of Nicosia (the office formerly occupied by Jean de Nevilles) and Jacques Soulouan as *camerarius* of Cyprus, both influential offices. We can assume that they belonged to a new generation of officials¹¹³⁵. While Pierre belonged to an old noble family, Jacques Soulouan perhaps was a Syrian¹¹³⁶. About other witnesses and members of the Haute Court such as Guillaume Fort or Andreas de Albingana (see **fig. 16**) we cannot say anything except that they must have been prestigious enough to be invited to those crucial sessions.

All in all, then, James I's reign was characterized by a stable and sizeable power élite. This élite had astonishingly far-reaching roots, partly into the 1360s and 1370s. Some of its members had been the king's antagonists in 1382 and had been in power long before these events. They stayed in politics for several decades, despite all the upheavals. Others had accompanied James I into exile in Genoa and had then acquired positions of power during his own rule. Whether there were any animosities between these men with very different histories unfortunately cannot be discerned. But it is noteworthy that so many of these men, whether exiled or not, played crucial roles in Cypriot politics for many decades in a time which saw great disruptions. Stability under James I also existed in the sense of social mobility: while some newcomers of Greek or Syrian ascent had attained power in the 1370s, only very few are found in the highest circles of power in the 1380s and 1390s. This seems to have been a restrictive conservative reaction to the chaotic situation and the shooting star careers during the 1370s.

4.2 The 1430s to 1450s

4.2.1 From Janus to John II

I shall now proceed to analyse the period between roughly 1430 and 1455. This stretch of Cypriot history is particularly suitable for analysis since we have many documents, even if the chronicles have little to say. The documents illuminate the proceedings of the Haute Court above all. In comparison to the period previously under examination, they are much more numerous: 31 documents for the time between 1427 and 1457 were found in various state archives, some of which are as yet unedited¹¹³⁷. The documents can be roughly divided into three categories: the largest group (eighteen documents) concerns every-day matters of the Haute Court, such as bestowals of fiefs, the transfer of slaves and money between the crown and its vassals or matters of inheritance¹¹³⁸. Eleven documents are comparable to documents from the fourteenth-century period: they relate to official state acts such as the appointment of Hugh of Lusignan as the king's procurator (both under Janus and John II) or negotiations towards a treaty with the Venetian republic in 1454. There is also an official letter from the Genoese republic to various notables that is similar to the Pisan letter from 1372¹¹³⁹. The third category encompasses only two documents concerning events which demanded for a highly representative function from their witnesses: Anne of Lusignan's marriage agreement and the notification of her engagement on 1 January 1432¹¹⁴⁰. Though these events resemble other state acts, the participants here were not necessarily statesmen involved in practical politics, but also church dignitaries and other notables. According to their nature, the sources shed light on different aspects of the power élite.

Our starting point is the last years of King Janus' reign. These years, and the first years of John II's reign, saw a stable power élite which guided the kingdom through the period of uncertainty after the devastating battle of Chirokitia. Even so, one of its most prominent members was not regularly based in Cyprus: Janus' brother Hugh de Lusignan. According to Machairas, Hugh ruled the kingdom when Janus was taken captive by the Mamluks in 1426. Having been appointed cardinal by Pope Martin V in 1426, Hugh transferred to Rome as soon as Janus returned from Cairo in 1427¹¹⁴¹. Before

1133 For Antonio, see Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire II* 416-418. 420-421. Mas Latrie, *Prise d'Alexandrie* 283 n. 34 suggested that Antonio already served as Peter I's ambassador in 1366 based on the mention of a certain clerk Antonio in Machaut, but this identification has been doubted by Edbury who argues that Antonio only appears on Cyprus at the end of the 1370s, see Machaut, *Capture* (Shirley) 99 and n. 14. For Hodrade, see Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire II* 428-429. Imhaus, *Lacrimae Cypriae* 93 makes Hodrade Provane the son of a certain Balian Provane, who was supposed to have had the fief of Comy according to Darrouzès, *Notes pour servir II* 50-51. But the MS cited by Darrouzès calls him *Embalin* and very probably refers to Yblin Provane, who lived in the fifteenth century and had the fief of Comy, as can be seen from *Livre des remembrances* (Richard) no. 174. For his origin from Piemonte, see Rudt de Collenberg, *Études de prosopographie* 558. Cf. chs 2.3.1 and 2.3.5.

1134 See ch. 2.1, p. 54.

1135 Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire II* 436 n. 3.

1136 See ch. 2.2, p. 72.

1137 See **tab. 5**, p. 181.

1138 See e.g. *Documents chypriotes* (Richard) 139-157; MCC, PDc 2669.2 fols 29^v-31^r. 40^v-42^r.

1139 See e.g. Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire II* 518-521; Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire III* 1-3; *Documents nouveaux* (Mas Latrie) 380; Otten, *Féodalité* 71.

1140 Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire II* 526 n. 2; Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire III* 15-16, n. 1.

1141 Rudt de Collenberg, *Cardinaux* 83; Machairas, *Exègèsis* (Dawkins) §§ 687. 697-699.

Hugh left, Janus appointed him as his official procurator in foreign affairs, just as James I had done with his nephew John¹¹⁴². Hugh was then absent from Cyprus for many years. He seems to have influenced Cypriot politics nonetheless (see below).

Other members of the power élite were more involved in current every-day politics, although sources on these routine interactions are scarce. Hugh's appointment as royal procurator was witnessed by three influential men, who were to play crucial roles in Cypriot politics for the following fifteen to twenty years: Jacques de Caffran, Badin de Nores and Hugh Soudain. Jacques was admiral Pierre de Caffran's son. Pierre himself had been influential under James I (see above). Jacques had married Margarita de Milmars in 1412¹¹⁴³. He is therefore a classical representative of an old noble family, married to the scion of another such clan. In 1427, he must have been middle-aged, and he was already marshal of Cyprus. Badin de Nores, in turn, was marshal of Jerusalem. According to Machairas, Badin had served as Henry of Lusignan's advisor in the battle of Chirokitia. A few years later, he was sent on important missions to Poland and Italy¹¹⁴⁴. As with Jacques de Caffran, Badin was a member of an old, influential noble clan. He married Maria de Crolissa before 1432¹¹⁴⁵, and thus forged a connection to a newer, but rising line of nobles. Hugh Soudain, in contrast, very probably came from a Syrian family. He was a White Genoese and seems to have wielded his connection with the Genoese and with Famagusta actively for his personal affairs¹¹⁴⁶. Hugh Soudain was the only social climber in this circle that we distinguish from Hugh of Lusignan's appointment as procurator in 1427. Though this is only a single document, and there are no other sources for the last years of Janus' reign, the documents from the early 1430s reveal that these three men, together with some others, must indeed have played important roles at the end of Janus' reign, as they were still in power during John II's rule.

The beginning of John II's reign reveals a confusing source situation as far as the members of the royal council were concerned. Jacques de Caffran, Hugh Soudain and Badin de Nores were certainly part of it. However, the other constitutive members of the royal council in these years are unclear, since the sources reveal diverse information¹¹⁴⁷. When John II was proclaimed king after his father's death in 1432, he was

still considered a minor at eighteen and required a regency council. Machairas tells us that John's second cousin Peter of Lusignan became the head regent, while eleven other men constituted the council (Philippe of Lusignan, Carceran Suarez, Jacques de Caffran, Jacques de Fleury, Hugh Soudain, Giacomo Urri, Perrin Pelestrin, Hector de Balion (Palu?¹¹⁴⁸), Mateo Rames, Francis Tzarneri and Jean Salah). Machairas then states that Badin de Nores was added to the group of forty counsellors when he returned from his embassy to Poland¹¹⁴⁹. This figure does not seem to have been questioned, although none of the other contemporary sources mention forty counsellors. Moreover, none of the chronicles based on Machairas replicate this figure¹¹⁵⁰. A closer look at the Machairas chronicle reveals that this passage is contained only in MS O¹¹⁵¹, so that we might question if the manuscript was mistaken. The Greek numeral for forty, μ', can be very similar to β' (two) in minuscule handwriting¹¹⁵². Probably the scribe misread ιβ' (twelve) for forty, as the number of counsellors he numbered just before this passage is exactly a dozen. This number would also make much more sense than forty since it had tradition in Cypriot regencies, as for example in the council after Peter II's death¹¹⁵³.

This corresponds much better to the evidence of other sources, too. The number of witnesses to Anne of Lusignan's engagement contract for example is thirteen with Peter of Lusignan, and the enumeration ends with the mention that they were the king's councilors¹¹⁵⁴, although it is not clear whether all participants are meant or only the last group which consisted of lay persons (or even only the last two witnesses who were the only ones without a title). However, the two groups from the chronicle and Anne's marriage agreement do not exactly coincide. The agreement mentions five clerics¹¹⁵⁵ and eight laymen. The latter mostly coincide with the men named by Machairas, excepting the *maître de l'hotel* Henri de Giblet. Instead of the five clerics, Machairas has Jean Salah, Francis Tzarneri, Philippe of Lusignan, Carceran Suarez and Jacques de Fleury. The overlap of the two enumerations is illustrated in **figure 17**. Perhaps the Machairas chronicle is mistaken in its enumeration of the council members. This is in fact probable, since the passage marks the beginning of the later appendix to the chronicle and cannot be securely dated, although it must have been added considerably later¹¹⁵⁶. However, even if the marriage agreement indeed mentioned

1142 Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire II* 518-521.

1143 Rudt de Collenberg, *Études de prosopographie* no. 61.

1144 Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) §§ 658. 679. 681 705. In § 705, Machairas wrongly suggests that Badin was sent to Constantinople to find a bride for John II, instead of Poland. See Hill, *History II* 494.

1145 Rudt de Collenberg, *Études de prosopographie* no. 109.

1146 See ch. 2.2, p. 69.

1147 Edbury, *Hoi teleutaioi Louzinianoï* 193 refers to some of the counsellors, but not all of them.

1148 The text in MS O reads *dampalion*, see Machairas, *Exégésis* (Konnaré/Pierès) 460.

1149 Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) § 704-705; Machairas, *Exégésis* (Konnaré/Pierès) 460.

1150 Neither Amadi, *Chronique* (Mas Latrie) 515-516, nor Bustron, *Historia* (Mas Latrie) 371 nor Strambaldi, *Chronique* (Mas Latrie) 287, and n. 4 have this

episode – Strambaldi notes that there was a lacuna in the text he translated (and there is actually the same remark in MS R in Machairas, see Machairas, *Exégésis* (Konnaré/Pierès) 36).

1151 Machairas, *Exégésis* (Konnaré/Pierès) 460.

1152 Cf. Gardthausen, *Griechische Paläographie* Taf. 11; Harrauer, *Handbuch Paläographie*, Textband 148-149. 160-161.

1153 See above, p. 110. Documents chypriotes (Richard) 129 has a council of six persons, referencing Hill, *History III* 497. But Hill also has the forty counsellors, although he mentions only six men by name.

1154 Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire III* 16: *ipsius serenissimi principis consiliariorum*.

1155 Antonio, bishop of Paphos, Nicolay, bishop of Famagusta, Bartholomeus, bishop of Hebron, Jacques de Margat, deacon of St Sophia in Nicosia, and Jean Frogerius, archdeacon of the same church.

1156 See p. 26.

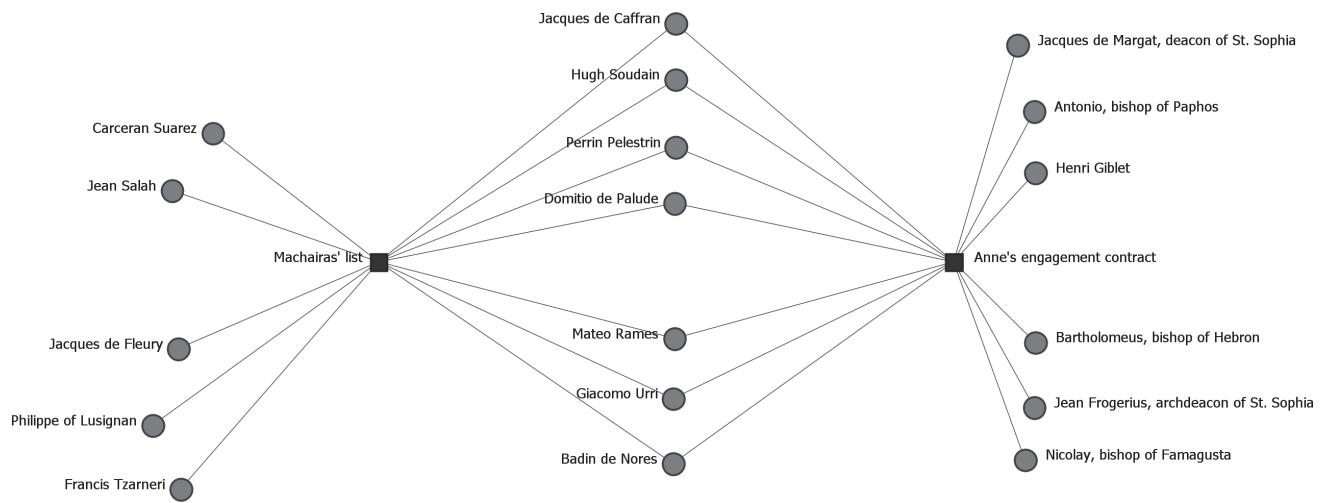


Fig. 17 Council at the beginning of John II's reign.

all twelve advisors correctly, they were not all active in politics over the next years, while others mentioned by Machairas certainly were.

Of all the men mentioned above, Peter of Lusignan was the most important figure to leave politics. Peter was the head regent according to Machairas, but he took part in very few events after Janus' death. He witnessed Hugh of Lusignan's second appointment as procurator in 1432 and was party to Anne of Lusignan's engagement agreement as well as one of the recipients of her engagement notification (cf. fig. 18)¹¹⁵⁷. Afterwards, however, Peter disappears without a trace. He did not die until many years later (1 February 1451¹¹⁵⁸). George Hill suggested that he withdrew from politics after his cousin's successful accession to the throne¹¹⁵⁹. This would be a strange move, however, given that he could have pursued a career as royal advisor. Perhaps an unknown intrigue lies behind these data. In any case, Peter of Lusignan was no longer a member of the power élite after 1432. Moreover, none of the clerics mentioned in the marriage agreement played any role in politics.

The Haute Court documents, however, illustrate very clearly who pulled the strings. Seven documents – the transmission of the *prasteio* Tragovouni to Piero Podocataro in 1435 (cf. Tab. 5, doc. (and node) 1435), a privilege awarded to Isabeau Visconte (doc./node 1432.2), and official matters such as Hugh of Lusignan's two appointments as royal procurator (docs/nodes 1427, 1432.3), the report on the marriage negotiations for Anne of Lusignan in 1433 (doc./node 1433), her engagement contract (doc./node 1432.1), and its notification (doc./node 1432.2) – reveal information about the period until 1435¹¹⁶⁰.

The report on the marriage negotiations for Anne of Lusignan is particularly revealing. Anne was to marry Louis of Savoy, and a Savoyard embassy visited Cyprus from September to November 1433. The ambassadors wrote a detailed report for their lord, the duke of Savoy¹¹⁶¹. They describe how they were received by the Cypriots and who led the negotiations. On their way to Nicosia, they were welcomed by Jacques de Caffran and Badin de Nores, the two marshals (of Cyprus and Jerusalem), and eventually lodged in Giacomo Urri's house. Later, the king and his council received the ambassadors. The council then conducted the actual negotiations, albeit without the king. It consisted of Jacques de Caffran, Badin de Nores, the chamberlain Hugh Soudain, Jacques de Fleury, *auditeur* and *maître de l'hotel*, and Giacomo Urri¹¹⁶². These are exactly the five men (along with Carceran Suarez) who appear most frequently as decision makers in the other sources until the group changed in a certain sense in 1436, when Giacomo Urri fell victim to an intrigue and had to leave the court for at least a year, as has been mentioned above. This situation is visible in figure 18. It depicts all the participants in the events between 1427 and 1435 in a two-mode network (the events are again in dark grey square nodes, the participants in light grey spot nodes). As in the graphs analysing the 1390s, individuals who participated in more than one event are depicted above the line of event nodes, and individuals present at only one event are below the square nodes. The more events a person took part in, the higher their node is located.

Jacques de Caffran clearly participated in most events in figure 18 (five events), closely followed by Badin de Nores and Hugh Soudain (four events), Giacomo Urri, Jacques de Fleury, Carceran Suarez and Peter of Lusignan (three events).

1157 Mas Latrie (ed.), Histoire II 526 n. 2.; Mas Latrie (ed.), Histoire III 1-3. 15-16, n. 1.

1158 Papadopoulos, Historia 4,1 genealogy table II.

1159 Hill, History III 534, n. 6.

1160 Mas Latrie (ed.), Histoire II 526, n. 2; Mas Latrie (ed.), Histoire III 1-3. 15-16 n. 1. 17-18; Documents chypriotes (Richard) doc. I; MCC, PDc 2669.2 fols 29^v-31^r.

1161 Mas Latrie (ed.), Histoire III 17-23.

1162 Mas Latrie (ed.), Histoire III 17-18.

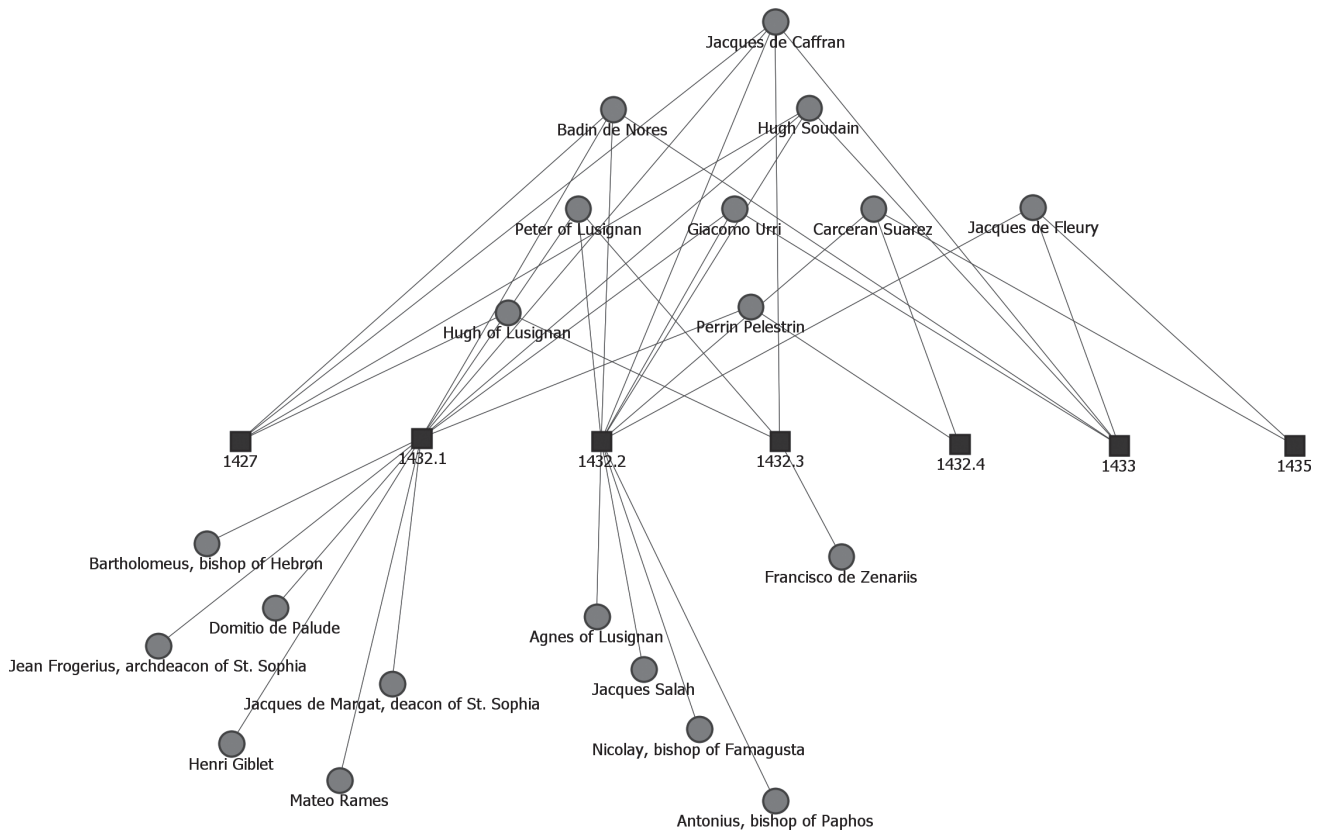


Fig. 18 Power élite 1427-1435.

Hugh of Lusignan and Perrin Pelestrin also figure in more than one event. Peter of Lusignan took part in Anne's engagement contract in 1432, while Jacques de Fleury and Giacomo Urri both only appear in the sources from 1432 on, which is why they are not as well represented as the others. Nonetheless, they can be seen as members of the inner circle of powerful men. Carceran Suarez apparently played just as central a role as Urri or Fleury, but we will see below that this was not actually the case. Suarez was a Castilian who had come to Cyprus in 1426 and saved King Janus' life in the battle of Chirokitia. He was rewarded with marriage to King Janus' bastard daughter and became admiral of Cyprus¹¹⁶³. The case of Perrin Pelestrin is a strange one: Perrin was present at the engagement contract and witnessed the privilege awarded to Isabeau Visconte in 1432 as viscount of Nicosia, which was usually a powerful office (see fig. 18). He then, however, disappears completely from the sources until 1448, when he emerges as the *turcopolier* (see tab. 5, doc. 1448 and fig. 19). If we can believe Machairas, Perrin was still quite young in 1426, when he is mentioned as *bachliotēs*, as squire¹¹⁶⁴. The man in 1432-1433 could therefore certainly be the same as the one in 1448, but his long absence from the sources is still noteworthy. Nevertheless, both Suarez

and Pelestrin should be numbered among the power élite in the early 1430s, even if they were not as close to the inner nucleus as the five men mentioned above.

In contrast, all others involved in Anne's engagement agreement and as addressees of her engagement notification did not participate in the usual political decisions of the day. This is the case for Antonius, the bishop of Paphos, for example, or Henri de Giblet. This can be seen from figure 18, but also from figure 19, which gives an overview of all the documents/events and their participants between 1427 and 1457. This figure is slightly more complicated than the other graphs, but it provides a more comprehensive view of the developments. I will come back to it in due time.

The inner circle of five powerful men (Jacques de Caffran, Badin de Nores, Hugh Soudain, Jacques de Fleur and Giacomo Urri) is also visible in figure 20, which illustrates the situation as a one-mode network: the men taking part in one and the same event are linked to each other here. The nodes representing them are weighted according to their *total-degree centrality*. This measure computes the number of edges connecting a node to other nodes, called its *degree*¹¹⁶⁵. The more connections a node has to others, and the greater the value of these edges, the more central it is. I have

1163 See ch. 2.3.4, p. 82.

1164 Machairas, *Exégésis* (Dawkins) § 665.

1165 Networks with directed edges count in-degrees and out-degrees. Our edges here are not directed, which is why I use the total-degree, which counts every connection between the nodes.

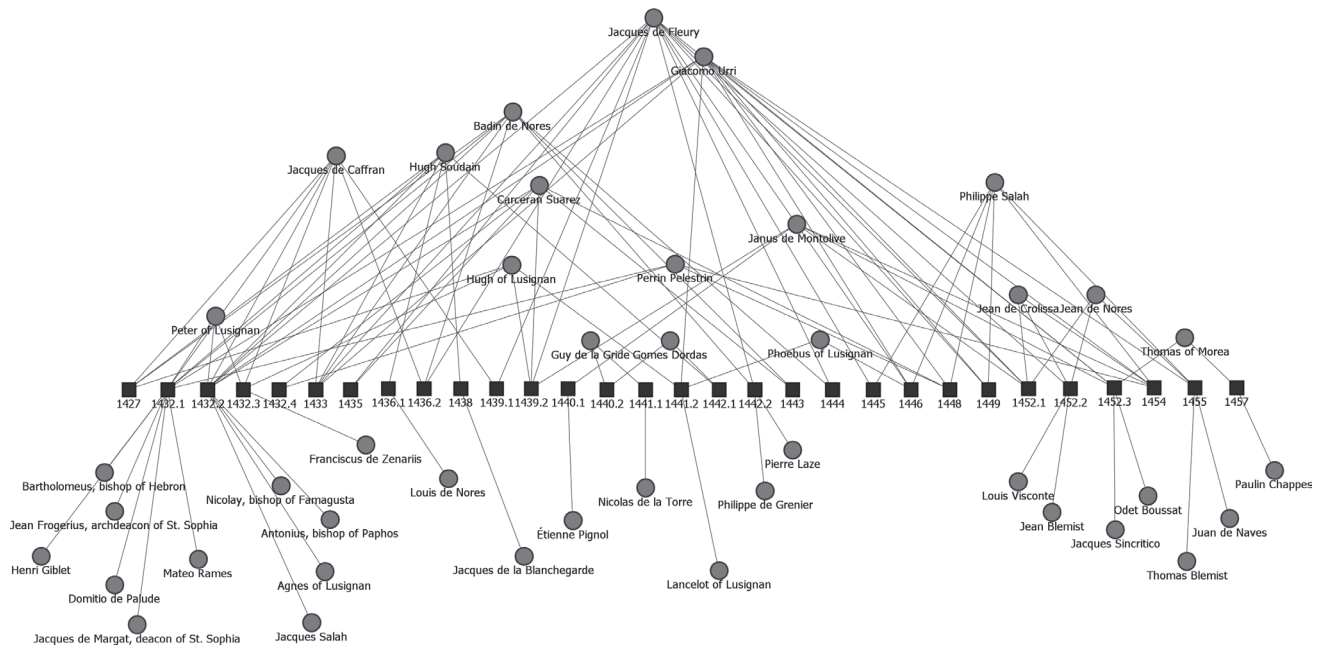


Fig. 19 Power élite 1427-1457.

already used this measurement in the analysis of marriage alliances in chapter three. It is based on the assumption that a person who has many connections to others and is even multiply connected with them (for example by taking part more than once in the same events with the same person), is a central figure in a social group¹¹⁶⁶. Therefore, the men who participated in the greatest number of interactions with other actors¹¹⁶⁷ are depicted with the biggest nodes. The five counsellors with Peter of Lusignan are certainly the most central, because in general they participated together in the same events.

The visibility of this close nucleus of five counsellors is even clearer in the next graph (fig. 21). It shows the same situation as figure 20, but omits Anne of Lusignan's marriage documents, including only the Haute Court decisions until 1435. As a result of this computation, Peter of Lusignan loses his central position, because he did not take part in any of the Haute Court sessions after 1432. Only the actors who influenced every-day politics remain. This figure also reveals that Carceran Suarez was certainly not as central as Urri or de Fleury, although he took part in as many events as they did according to figure 20 (which includes the marriage documents): Suarez never sat in sessions together with the other five counsellors (apart from one joint session with de Fleury).

We should not, however, forget other powerful actors who may not appear in the Haute Court documents. The

Savoyard ambassadors, for example, related how they visited the king's aunt Agnes and princess Anne herself twice in the course of the negotiations. Agnes promised to do everything in her power to conclude the marriage, because it was dear to her heart¹¹⁶⁸. The ambassadors do not describe how far Agnes' influence actually extended, but Tafur also mentions her among the most influential people at court¹¹⁶⁹. We may therefore safely conclude that her word was of high account, although she never took part in Haute Court sessions and is not usually visible in our graphs (apart from the margins of fig. 18 and fig. 20, because she was a recipient of Anne's engagement notification).

Hugh of Lusignan is another such case. Hugh's situation was singular since he was absent from Cyprus most of the time. He appears to have been influential, nonetheless. When he indeed sojourned in Cyprus in 1436, Tafur mentioned him as one of the most powerful people at court, together with Agnes of Lusignan¹¹⁷⁰. Moreover, the Hospitallers included him in their negotiations with John II in this period without hesitation¹¹⁷¹. A Genoese document from 1441 even called him the main administrator of the royal court¹¹⁷². Hugh therefore took pride of place when he was in Cyprus. However, he also actively pursued Cypriot politics when he sojourned in Western Europe. He led negotiations with Venice and Genoa and in 1440 he negotiated John II's first marriage to Medea of Montferrat¹¹⁷³.

1166 Freeman, *Centrality in Social Networks* 219-221.

1167 The links to men with whom they participated in more than one event are computed to count twice or three times, etc.

1168 Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire III 18: et lors respondit ladite dame Agnès qu'elle y feroit toute sa puissance, car estoit la chose du monde qu'elle desiroit plus.*

1169 Tafur, *Cyprus (Nepaulsingh)* 11. 19.

1170 Tafur, *Cyprus (Nepaulsingh)* 12. 19.

1171 Hospitaller Documents (Luttrell et al.) no. 132.

1172 Bliznjuk, *Genuesen* no. 60.

1173 Hill, *History III 526; Balletto, Tra Cipro, Genova e Venezia* 86-91.

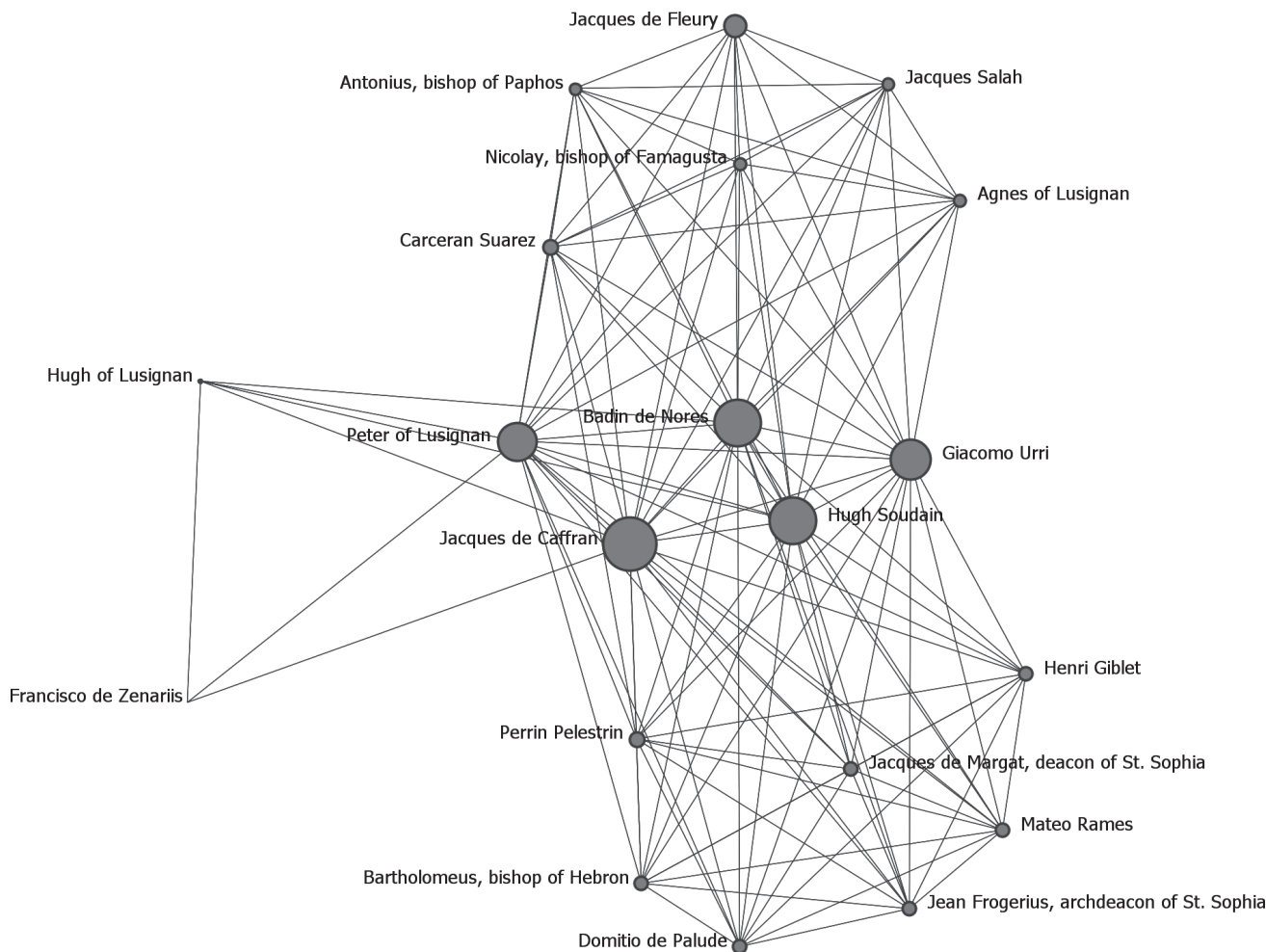


Fig. 20 Power élite 1427-1435, total degree-centrality.

The review of the power élite in the early 1430s permits some interesting conclusions. It was a stable and tightly knit group, probably highly influenced by two members of the royal family, Agnes and Hugh. Three of its members (Jacques de Caffran, Jacques de Fleury and Badin de Nores) came from established noble families, while Giacomo Urri and Hugh Soudain were more or less recent social climbers. The Syrian and White Genoese Hugh Soudain was probably a second generation noble – a relative of his, Ligier Soudain, had sat in the Haute Court as early as 1410¹¹⁷⁴. The Syrian Giacomo Urri in turn seems to have been the first in his family to attain high office. Perhaps his position as new man caused the intrigue to which he fell victim in 1436. As has been mentioned above, the court gathered to have him expelled from the king's presence for at least a year¹¹⁷⁵. Unfortunately, Tafur does not relate any reasons for this antipathy, other than that Urri was the king's favourite. Did disdain concerning his ethnic origin

play a role? We do not know. Fact is that Urri disappears from the sources until 1441, when he witnessed a treaty in Genoa¹¹⁷⁶. The exile therefore does not seem to have harmed him in the long run. Urri's later temporary downfall notwithstanding, the power constellation in the 1430s illustrates that some newcomers were able to achieve power, although the greater part of the power élite was still firmly in the hands of important members of the old nobility.

4.2.2 The 1440s and 1450s

The power élite of the 1430s maintained its stable constellation until the beginning of the 1440s, when a generation change occurred, as three old members of the council disappear from the sources. Jacques de Caffran appears for the last time in 1440. His testament is dated 10 April 1445¹¹⁷⁷,

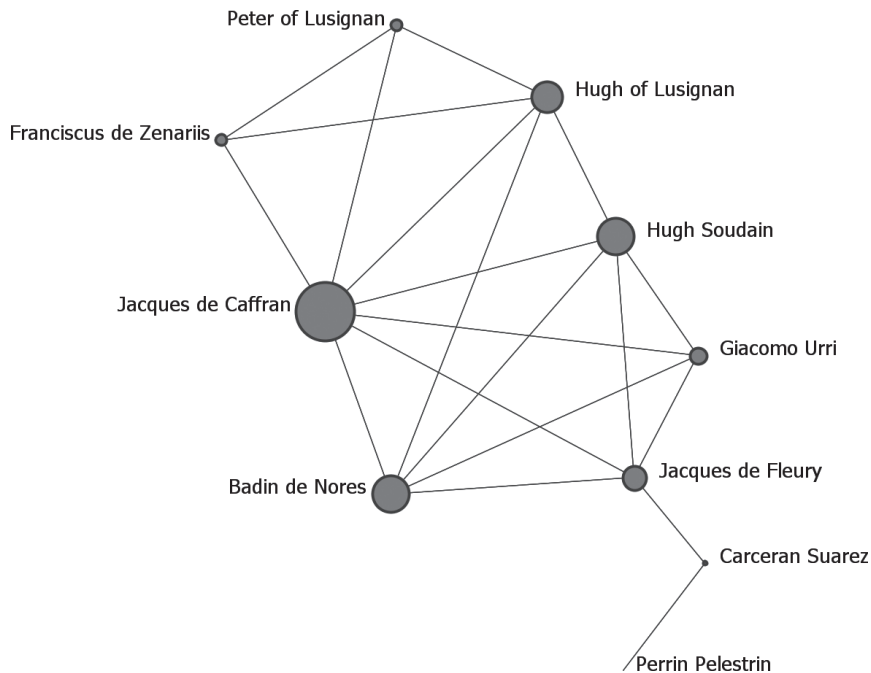
1174 Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire II* 495. 499.

1175 Tafur, *Cyprus* (Nepaulsingh) 11. 19 and cf. p. 101.

1176 Sperone (ed.), *Real Grandezza* 166; cf. Balletto, *Tra Cipro, Genova e Venezia* 90.

1177 Ganchou, *Rébellion* 113.

Fig. 21 Power élite 1427-1435 without Anne of Lusignan's marriage documents, total degree-centrality.



so we may assume that he died soon after. Hugh Soudain vanishes after 1442, and Badin de Nores after 1444¹¹⁷⁸ – both must have been quite old at the time (cf. **fig. 19**). With their disappearance, the power structures changed. The ruling group was not as stable as it was in the 1430s. Men like Carceran Suarez and Giacomo Urri remained in power, but many others joined the group more or less fleetingly, making for a less densely connected power élite. This de-centralization was accompanied by the rise of several Syrian and Greek newcomers (see below).

The decentralization of the power élite can be illustrated through a comparison of **figure 18**, **figure 21** and **figure 22**. **Figure 18** and **figure 21** show the men of the power élite in the early 1430s. They reveal the small power élite that I have analysed in the preceding subchapter. **Figure 22** in turn shows a two-mode network of all the men taking part in decisions between 1440 and 1449: there is no such close-knit group of decision makers as in the 1430s. More men take part in just one or two sessions of the Haute Court¹¹⁷⁹. It would not be sensible to convert this two-mode network into a one-mode network, such as has been done for the 1430s in **figure 21**, since there are not enough strong relations to constitute a significant graph.

The most important phenomenon of the 1440s, however, is best visible in **figure 19**: Jacques de Fleury, already powerful in the 1430s, became by far the most powerful man of the kingdom. He took part in the greatest number of decisions and therefore dominates the graph. If we believe that John II had a weak personality and administered his kingdom badly – and the sources indeed point in that direction¹¹⁸⁰ – then de Fleury was probably even more powerful than the king and wielded great influence over him.

Thierry Ganchou has recently studied Jacques' career in great detail¹¹⁸¹. I will therefore outline only the most important points to illustrate his power. Jacques' extraordinary rise can be discerned from around 1438/1439, and therefore some years before the retirement of his distinguished colleagues from the Haute Court. John II made Jacques de Fleury *count of Jaffa* probably in 1438, but in 1439 at the latest, reviving this old title from the kingdom of Jerusalem¹¹⁸². The title, however, was only the symbolic expression of his influence. In terms of power, he held the important – and hitherto never heard of – position *chef de conseil*, which has been discussed in the introduction to this chapter¹¹⁸³. Jacques held this position at least from the summer of 1439, and not from the 1450s onwards, as edited sources until now suggested¹¹⁸⁴. He remained in this position until his retreat from power in ca. 1454.

1178 Hill, *History III* 497 cites a document that attests to Badin de Nores' influence even at that date: the Venetian government recommended to its ambassador to Cyprus to get in touch with Badin, because he was all-powerful with the king.

1179 This is the case for Guy de la Grède and two Catalans, Gomes Dordas and Nicolas de la Torre (Documents chypriotes [Richard] 148. 150-151).

1180 Cf. e.g. Ganchou, *Rébellion* 151, and especially n. 165, who cites instructions to the Genoese ambassador Vernazza to Savoy in 1456. Vernazza was supposed to press the duke to open marriage negotiations with the Cypriots for his son Louis, and one reason the Genoese gave for the urgency of the

request was the bad administration the island had been submitted to for many years.

1181 Ganchou, *Rébellion*, passim, but especially 105-109. 119-123.

1182 Ganchou, *Rébellion* 106-107.

1183 See p. 103.

1184 See MCC, PDc 1669.2 fol. 40^v: a document from 1439 mentions Jacques as *civitan di nostra secreta corte* ('chief of our secret court'). Documents chypriotes (Richard) doc. X mentions his office for the first time in 1452. Griवाद, *Petite chronique* 328, n. 65, already noticed that he was called governor of the kingdom (and therefore, member of the council) in 1438 and 1441.

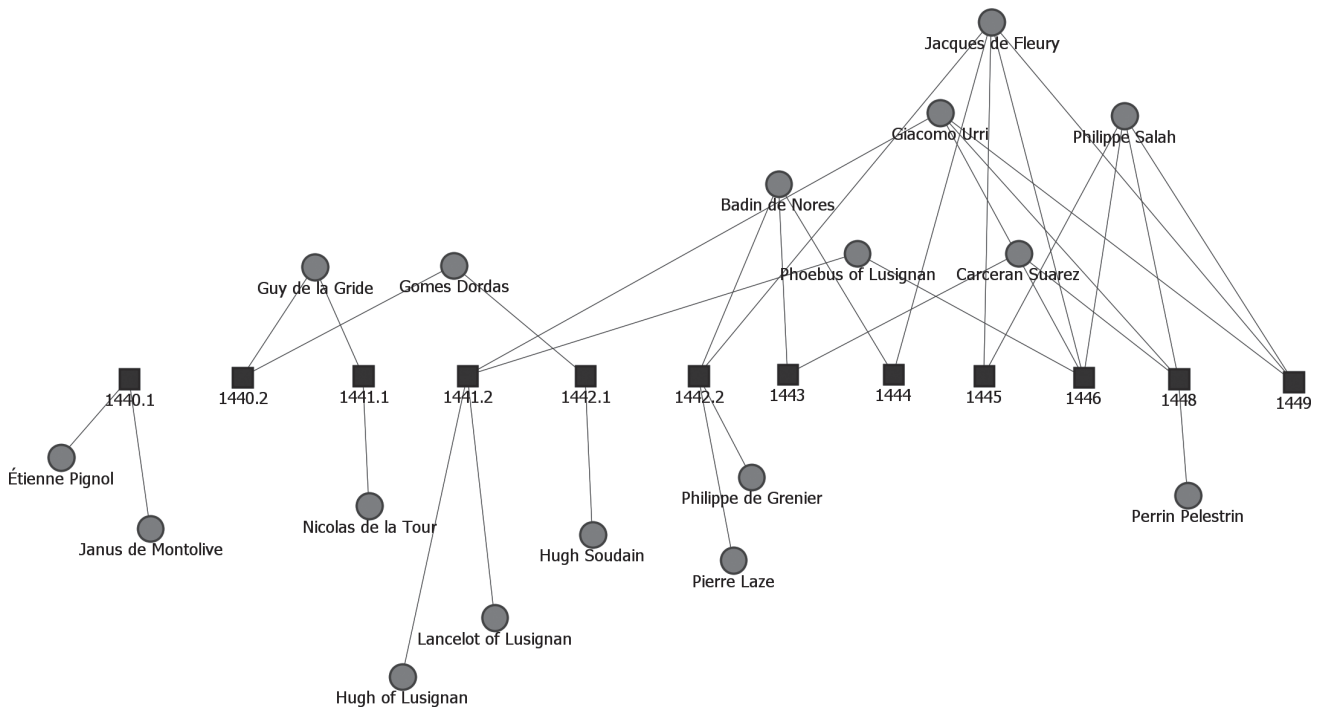


Fig. 22 Power élite 1440-1449.

Jacques' all-powerful influence on the king is also visible in the formulae used in the documents. The procurator for Hugh of Lusignan from 1439 calls him »the most illustrious Dominus Jacques de Fleury, count of Jaffa« (*illustrissimo Domino Iacopo de Flori, comite Ioppensis*¹¹⁸⁵). The designation *illustrissimus* was usually reserved for members of the royal family¹¹⁸⁶! Other documents in the following years confirm that de Fleury used it regularly, however. The ratification of a treaty with Genoa on 28 February 1442 not only mentions Jacques as the first man after the king, as Ganchou has noted, but also calls him »illustrious dominus Jacques de Fleury, count of Jaffa, and governour of the Cypriot kingdom« (my emphasis; *Illustris Domini Dni Iacobi de Flori Comitis Ioppensis, et Regni Cypri Gubernatoris*). The rest of the Haute Court, in contrast, follows as »magnificent and glorious knights [...] counsellors, and his present liegemen, who constitute his royal high court« (my emphasis; *et Magnificorum, ac Spectabilium Militum [...] Consiliariorum, et Homiliorum suorum praesentium, et eius altam Curiam Regiam facientium*¹¹⁸⁷). Jacques is most decisively separated from the other members of the Haute Court, who are designated in the usual way. Moreover, Richard and Ganchou have shown that de Fleury's special position is confirmed by the extraordinary privileges accorded to him in these years by John II¹¹⁸⁸.

In the face of de Fleury's power, the influence of other men pales, but there are nonetheless some interesting developments. New personalities gradually appear, overlapping with the retreat of the older men from power. Some of these new men remained in power until the late 1450s. The first was Janus de Montolive, a member of an old noble family. He was *auditeur* as early as 1439, when he witnessed Hugh of Lusignan's newest appointment as the king's procurator (cf. **tab. 5**, doc. 1439.2). He confirmed a privilege for Jacques de Fleury in 1440 (doc./node 1440.1). Then we do not hear anything about him for some time. He only reappears in 1452, when he contributed to a fief privilege for Odet Bousat (doc./node 1452.1), and then stayed active until 1454 (see **fig. 19**, which shows his involvement in the long run, and **fig. 23**, which illustrates his activities in the 1450s)¹¹⁸⁹. Janus' relative Galesius de Montolive was influential in the Latin Church in the same period. He became archbishop of Nicosia in 1442. Two years earlier, Galesius had gone to Genoa as Cypriot ambassador¹¹⁹⁰. Perhaps both Montolive advanced each other's careers, although Janus enjoyed the king's favour more than his brother, whom John II did not accept as archbishop¹¹⁹¹.

Janus and Galesius were the only members of the old nobility whose career flourished in the early 1440s¹¹⁹². New-comers from Syrian and Greek families, on the other hand,

1185 Sperone (ed.), *Real Grandezza* 165.

1186 Cf. ch. 1.2, p. 40.

1187 Sperone (ed.), *Real Grandezza* 166; cf. Ganchou, *Rébellion* 107.

1188 Documents chypriotes (Richard) 128-130; Ganchou, *Rébellion* 107. 119-123.

1189 Sperone (ed.), *Real Grandezza* 164-165; Documents chypriotes (Richard) docs IV, X; Documents nouveaux (Mas Latrie) 380.

1190 Balletto, *Tra Cipro, Genova e Venezia* 89.

1191 See ch. 6.1, p. 144.

1192 Two other nobles appear in the sources, but they were not particularly influential. The *bouteiller* of Cyprus Philippe de Grenier was sent as ambassador to Genoa along with Galesius in 1439/1440, and even witnessed the ratification of said treaty in 1442 as part of the Haute Court (doc. 1442.2), but

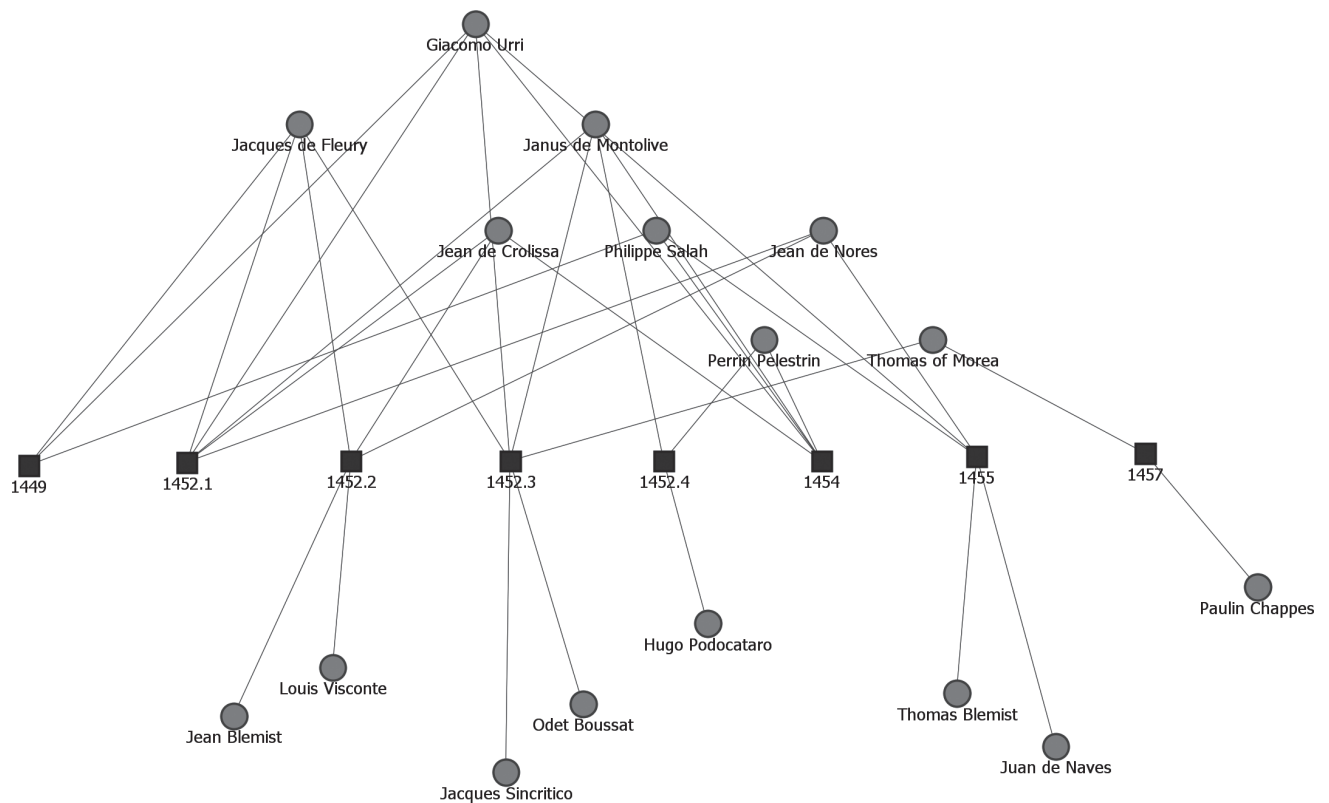


Fig. 23 Power elite 1449-1457.

seem to have risen especially in the early 1440s, even if they are only partly visible in the documents of the Haute Court. An interesting case is Philippe Salah. Philippe had worked as a secretary in the royal *secrète* for many years, inter alia drafting fief documents¹¹⁹³. In 1445, however, he not only functioned as the secretary during the confirmation of Piero Podocataro's fief privileges, but also witnessed the document as a member of the Haute Court and as *bailli de la secrète*¹¹⁹⁴. Later, he relinquished the drafting of documents to others and concentrated on his function as a member of the Haute Court¹¹⁹⁵.

Parallel to Philippe's career was that of Piero Podocataro himself. One of Jean Podocataro's sons, Piero is attested as a royal secretary in 1435 when he obtained a fief from John II. He was therefore a royal vassal as early as the mid-1430s. By 1442, Piero had risen to the office of *bailivio curiae regis*, i.e. *maître de l'hotel du roi*. He witnessed the ratification of the Genoese treaty in February 1442 in the exercise of

this office¹¹⁹⁶. In 1444, Piero bought one half of the *casale* Paralimni and is also mentioned in the sales contract as *maître de l'hotel*¹¹⁹⁷. In the following years, we do not hear anything about him, but he was sent on an embassy to the Mamluks in 1453 and played an important role as an ambassador in the civil war in the 1460s¹¹⁹⁸.

Piero witnessed the 1442 ratification of the Genoese treaty together with his brother Hugo Podocataro, who is designated as royal counsellor on the occasion. Hugo was probably younger than Piero and he seems to have started his career by serving as an ambassador in the negotiations for this same treaty in 1440. He was still enrolled as a student in the university of Padua in 1439, reading *ius civile*¹¹⁹⁹. If he really was in Genoa in 1440, he probably went there directly from Padua. Hugo is not otherwise visible in our graphs, since he did not act as a member of the Haute Court. This is strange, since he was a royal counsellor. However, he went on a number of embassies to Europe in the following years, so perhaps he

he probably died in 1444 (Mas Latrie [ed.], *Histoire* III 22; Sperone [ed.], *Real Grandezza* 166; Iorga, *Notes et extraits* IV/II 421; Grivaud, *Petite chronique* 330; Balletto, *Tra Cipro, Genova e Venezia* 89). Another noble, Pierre Laze, witnessed the Genoese treaty ratification, but did not hold an office, and does not appear in later sources either. A man of the same name had been viscount in 1427, when he is mentioned in a manuscript marginal note, but if this was actually the same person, he did not manage to keep the office, as it was given to Perrin Pelestrin in 1433 at the latest, see Darrouzès, *Notes pour servir* III 225; Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire* III 15. 16 n. 1.

1193 Documents chypriotes (Richard) 141-151.

1194 MCC, PDc 2669.2 fol. 32^v.

1195 Documents chypriotes (Richard) 152-157.

1196 MCC, PDc 2669.2 fol. 32^v; Sperone (ed.), *Real Grandezza* 166. He was, though, not member of the Haute Court, but a simple witness.

1197 MCC, PDc 2669.2 fols 28^v-29^v.

1198 Hill, *History* III 522; Bustron, *Diëgësis* (Kechagioglou) 72-78.

1199 For his studies, see Blizn'uk, *Gumanitarnyj fond* 134. According to Rudt de Collenberg, *Cardinaux* 113, he was part of the negotiations in Genoa from November 1440 on, together with Domenico de la Palu. But as so often, Rudt de Collenberg does not prove his point, and I have not found any information about this in other sources. Clarification could surely be found in the Genoese archives. For the ratification in 1442, see Sperone (ed.), *Real Grandezza* 166.

was not often present in Cyprus. Hugo became *bouteiller* of Cyprus only in 1455¹²⁰⁰, one of the offices that indeed were merely empty hulls. It simply expressed the holder's prestige and was not attached to executive power¹²⁰¹. Perhaps Hugo's influence was therefore restricted to the realm of foreign affairs. He certainly was not a regular member of the inner circle of counsellors, in contrast to Philippe Salah.

All the new men in the government between the 1430s and the 1450s came from families who were strongly interrelated, as we have seen in chapter three. These families were to maintain their power and social status in some cases into the sixteenth century¹²⁰². As at the end of the fourteenth century, most new men in power were civilians. They were connected either to administrative issues of the court or followed the new career path of studying at the university, and therefore offered the crown valuable expertise.

Conspicuously, all the men in question, including Hugh Soudain and Giacomo Urri (and except perhaps for Philippe Salah), were White Genoese. This is an interesting development, since Genoa had great influence on the island from 1374 onwards. The stance adopted by the Cypriot government towards Genoa was therefore of great significance. Moreover, it was of vital importance how Cyprus positioned itself between the two arch enemies Genoa and Aragon, in particular from the beginning of the fifteenth century, as the kingdom of Aragon increased its activities in the Eastern Mediterranean¹²⁰³. The question arises, therefore, whether the affiliation with Genoa played a role for the rise of these Syrians and Greeks, and whether they pursued politics which suited the republic.

The first influential statesman in question, Hugh Soudain, unfortunately keeps to the shadows as far as his political connections with Genoa are concerned. However, Hugh's daughter lived in Famagusta and had married into Genoese families twice. Moreover, Hugh himself had invested money in Genoa¹²⁰⁴. This hints at a good relationship between Hugh and the republic, even though nothing is known on the official political level. Giacomo Urri provides us with more information. Firstly, although his father was a White Genoese, Giacomo and his brothers acquired this status only in 1441¹²⁰⁵. Giacomo was already an influential member of the royal council in 1433. His position as royal counsellor did not therefore arise directly from his official association with Genoa. Instead, Genoa probably took care to associate with the wealthy and powerful for its own advantage¹²⁰⁶.

This was supposed to be a win-win situation – the wealthy White Genoese profited from the republic's tax and jurisdiction privileges, while the republic seems to have expected at least friendly relations and at best political support. When Giacomo Urri became Helena Palaiologina's close confidant and party to her anti-Genoese policy (see below), the Genoese captain of Famagusta denounced him as a traitor: »one of our Genoese, Giacomo Urri, who betrayed us¹²⁰⁷«. Although he was a White Genoese, Giacomo had not pursued a policy favorable to the republic, and this made him a traitor in the eyes of the latter.

Hugo Podocataro, on the other hand, seems to have been more closely intertwined with the Genoese and their politics. His first visible action on the political level was his participation in the negotiations with the republic from 1439 to 1441 (see above). Hugo travelled to Famagusta as the king's procurator in order to confirm Genoa's jurisdiction over the White Genoese in 1450, and in 1452 he again represented the king before the Genoese and listened to their complaints about Cypriot infringements of the 1441 treaty¹²⁰⁸. In 1454, Hugo went on an embassy to Genoa, where he stayed for more than half a year and concluded many business transactions for his fellow nobles¹²⁰⁹. During his stay, he exchanged permissions of procuracy with the Genoese Jacopo Centurione¹²¹⁰. On 3 November 1455, Hugo gave the same Jacopo, who was on his way to Genoa, another license to act as his procurator. The document was drawn up in Famagusta¹²¹¹. Centurione also took official letters from the king to Genoa – perhaps Hugo had gone to Famagusta in order to give him these letters. At this point, Jacques de Fleury had already tried to usurp the throne (see below)¹²¹². Jacques was in exile in Famagusta, conspiring with the Genoese about the next steps to gain power. Thierry Ganchou has suggested that Hugo Podocataro went to Famagusta to meet Jacques de Fleury. This is possible, but there are no direct indications in this direction. If Podocataro did meet Fleury there, this would confirm and enhance Hugo's pro-Genoese stance. In any case, he was in Famagusta again on 22 November to supervise the payment of royal Cypriot debts to Genoa¹²¹³. The frequency of Hugo's interactions with the Genoese strongly indicates special relations with the republic. Hugo Podocataro seems to have been *the* man in the Cypriot kingdom for negotiations with Genoa. Hugo's brother Piero, on the other hand, who was just as influential in Cypriot politics as his brother, did not participate in these events at all.

1200 For the embassies, see Balletto, *Tra Cipro, Genova e Venezia* 93; Rudt de Collenberg, *Les premiers Podocataro* 139-141. For Hugo as *bouteiller*, see Folieta, *Actes* (Balard et al.) no. 124.

1201 See A 1.1.5.

1202 See ch. 3.3, pp. 94-95 and ch. 2.2, pp. 67-72.

1203 See below, and for Aragon's activities in the Eastern Mediterranean, see ch. 2.3.4.

1204 See ch. 2.2, p. 70.

1205 Ganchou, *Rébellion* 145, n. 145.

1206 Otten-Froux mentions this strategy also in connection with the possibility of investments in the Genoese *banco di San Giorgio*, see Otten, *Investissements* 118.

1207 The document is in ASG, SG, *Primi Cancellieri*, busta 88, doc. 285. The quote is taken from Ganchou, *Rébellion* 143: *uno traditore nostro zenoveize Jacobo orri*.

1208 Mas Latrie (ed.), *Histoire* III 60-64; Folieta, *Actes* (Balard et al.) no. 28.

1209 Otten, *Investissements financiers* 118 and n. 48.

1210 Balletto, *Tra Cipro, Genova e Venezia* 94.

1211 Folieta, *Actes* (Balard et al.) no. 124.

1212 See p. 124.

1213 Ganchou, *Rébellion* 140-141 and n. 130; Folieta, *Actes* (Balard et al.) nos 133. 134.

Therefore, the status of the ascending men as White Genoese does not seem to have been a direct cause for their rise in Cypriot politics. However, it did not impede their careers, either. Instead, the new men's rise depended on their personal affairs and wealth. In some cases, their careers may have been based on their families' loans to the crown for the ransom of King Janus, for which the crown was indebted to them¹²¹⁴. Unfortunately, no sources confirm this explicitly. In any case, riches were also conducive to being accepted as Genoese citizens. However, the Genoese republic expected a friendly stance towards its policies as a reward for this privilege. In how far the Cypriot men fulfilled these expectations was up to them: while Hugo Podocataro was heavily involved in Genoese connections, Giacomo Urri decided to pursue a policy contrary to Genoese expectations.

Let us return to the power élite of the 1440s and examine another important event in these years: the arrival of Queen Helena Palaiologina¹²¹⁵. It has long been known that Helena, who married John II in 1442, played an important role in politics¹²¹⁶. However, her influence is most strongly felt in the 1450s. A crucial conflict arose between the queen and the greatest statesman of the last twenty years, Jacques de Fleury, in this period. Thierry Ganchou has recently studied this conflict minutely, aiming to clarify the circumstances of Jacques de Fleury's rebellion against the queen in 1455¹²¹⁷. I will therefore only discuss the facts that illustrate the power balance around the queen and the workings of the power élite until the end of John II's reign.

Helena married John II in February 1442. She was then 14 years old. Her presence seems to have been felt in the same year in church circles. There are some hints that she was the cause for John II's refusal to accept Galesius de Montolive as the new archbishop, an affair with repercussions in church politics¹²¹⁸. Helena acted as John II's proxy in administrative matters as early as 1444, when John consented to her sale of the Paralimni estate to Piero Podocataro, Thomas Urri and Isabella Salah¹²¹⁹. In the following years before 1450, Helena seems to have formed her own power base, as she gathered strong supporters about her in order to pursue her own politics.

These supporters came from various contexts. In 1451 at the latest, her milk brother Thomas of Morea, reportedly of low descent, became chamberlain of Cyprus. We may suppose that Helena was the driving force behind this promotion. It has been surmised that Thomas additionally held the post of marshal, an exceptional honour, as men usually did not hold more than one office at a time. This would have added even more savour to this quick promotion, but it seems to me that Thomas did not hold both positions simultaneously¹²²⁰. In any case, the Genoese captain who reported on the queen's politics in 1455 numbered Thomas among the Queen's most ardent supporters. In addition, he mentioned Jacques Sincritico, the Queen's – and later also the King's – personal doctor, and Giacomo Urri¹²²¹. Urri must have been an important man to win over. From 1448 at the latest, he was viscount of Nicosia and, in contrast to Jacques Sincritico and Thomas of Morea, he had been in Cypriot politics for many years. Giacomo was even called »one of the greatest [men] at court and very close to the Queen¹²²²« shortly before his death in 1458¹²²³.

Queen Helena needed these supporters to further her own ends. Helena obviously thought that the Cypriot kingdom should seek strong alliances with the Aragonese, Genoa's arch enemies. She probably hoped to reduce Genoese influence in Cyprus, which had been oppressive since 1374. In order to further her aim, Helena strongly supported the marriage plans of the Aragonese Juan de Naves. The notable de Naves, well-known to King Alfons V, had come to Cyprus in 1450 because he had fallen in love with the countess of Roucha, one of the late King Janus' illegitimate daughters¹²²⁴. Genoese reports on Cyprus show that this marriage was of great political significance: the captain of Famagusta deplored the match and saw it as a hostile act against Genoa¹²²⁵. The match probably met with opposition at court, too, because Juan de Naves finally did not marry the countess, but instead Anna de Verny, scion of a well-known Cypriot noble family. Anna's parents, Thomas de Verny and his wife, were Helena's avid supporters. Anna herself was chamber woman to Helena's daughter Charlotte while her mother fulfilled the same function for Helena. Thomas de Verny is not visible in

1214 See ch. 2.2, esp. pp. 68, 72.

1215 Ganchou, *Rébellion* 109.

1216 Christina Kaoulla has refuted this claim in an essay from 2006 (Kaoulla, Queen Elena), but Thierry Ganchou, *Rébellion*, has been able to show convincingly that Helena indeed possessed influence at court and pursued her own politics, see Ganchou, *Rébellion*, *passim*.

1217 Ganchou, *Rébellion*.

1218 Hill, *History III* 527. For the church affair, see ch. 6.1, p. 144.

1219 MCC, PDc 2669.2 fols 28^v-29^r.

1220 For the latest example of this common opinion, see Ganchou, *Rébellion* 127. The chronicles designate Thomas as chamberlain (see Bustron, *Historia* [Mas Latrie] 374; Bustron, *Diēgēsīs* [Kechagioglou] 4-10 and Grivaud, *Petite chronique* 332). The most exact date given for this office is in the small Greek chronicle edited by Grivaud, which reports him leading the military excursion against Anamur on 1 June 1451. Later sources register him as marshal, such as Paulin Chappé's appointment as ambassador to Europe in January 1452 and the list of *luoghi*-holders in Genoa from 1454 (Codex Diplomaticus [Gudenus] 309-310; Ganchou, *Rébellion* 141 n. 130). None of the sources mention both offices together. If Thomas had actually held both at the same

time, this would surely have been registered, as the documents are always very precise concerning offices. Therefore, it seems to me that he must have changed office before January 1452.

1221 The document is to be found in ASG, SG, Primi Cancellieri, busta 88, doc. 285. For a discussion of the passage, see Ganchou, *Rébellion* 143.

1222 Otten, *Une enquête 251: unus ex maioribus curie et multum astrictus Regine*.

1223 Documents chypriotes (Richard) 151-152. The chronicles also attest Giacomo's great influence in these years. According to Bustron, when King John's bastard son James (later James II) had been deprived of the archbishopric after murdering Thomas of Morea, he sought Urri's advice, who was supposed to find a remedy for his situation. Although this did not come to pass, the incidence shows Urri's influence. When James returned from his self-sought exile in Rhodes, he had Urri murdered in revenge. This murder is reported in the small fifteenth century chronicle edited by Gilles Grivaud, further testifying to the importance of Urri's person, see Bustron, *Diēgēsīs* (Kechagioglou) 4-12, 16-18; Grivaud, *Petite chronique* 334.

1224 Ganchou, *Rébellion* 123.

1225 Ganchou, *Rébellion* 141-142.

Haute Court circles, but his connection to Helena via his wife is attested in the chronicles¹²²⁶.

The Genoese sources give the impression that Juan de Naves was the most influential person at the Cypriot court in this period, especially after his marriage in October 1454. The Genoese captain calls him the »sole ruler of their court¹²²⁷« and reports that he started to attack Genoese ships from February 1455 onwards. The Genoese could no longer set foot on Cyprus (other than Famagusta) without possessing a safe conduct issued by him¹²²⁸. Thus, Juan de Naves certainly seems to have wielded a high degree of executive power. It is unclear, however, how powerful he was within the Haute Court and the council, since he does not appear in many Haute Court privileges¹²²⁹.

Regardless of just how much influence Juan de Naves had, the queen certainly pursued her pro-Aragonese politics. Ganchou has shown that Helena started planning the wedding of her only daughter Charlotte with a prince from the Aragonese realm as early as 1449. Since John II did not have a legitimate son, this prince would become the ruler of the island someday. The match therefore had great political significance, and Helena intended to use it in order to strengthen relationships with Aragon. This excited the opposition of other members of the power élite, notably Jacques de Fleury, who opposed this marriage, and desired Charlotte to marry her cousin Louis de Savoy – a safe and traditional choice¹²³⁰.

Matters did not come to a head until 1455. Jacques de Fleury, by then Helena's sworn enemy, decided to do his utmost to check the queen's influence in the summer of this year. He tried to seize power in the kingdom, although it is not clear how he proposed to achieve this. But Jacques' coup d'état failed, and he had to flee to Famagusta and later to Rhodes with his family, in order to save himself. De Fleury had lost the power struggle against the queen¹²³¹. He had dominated Cypriot politics for almost twenty years. Ganchou suggests that Janus de Montolive and Jean de Crolissa, *maître de l'hôtel* since 1452, were of Jacques' party. This is reasonable, as Janus disappears from the sources in 1455, only to reappear after Helena's death, when he is recorded as marshal of Cy-

prus – the same office Thomas of Morea held until his death. Jean de Crolissa ceded his office to Giacomo Urri, Helena's favourite, in December 1455 at the latest¹²³². Other than these conjectures however, there is no information whatsoever on Jacques de Fleury's accomplices¹²³³. In any case, the queen had won the field.

Helena's supporters did not have much time to enjoy their power. A series of untimely deaths from 1456 on destroyed Helena's power base: Juan de Naves died in 1456¹²³⁴. Jacques Sincritico probably died on 28 March 1457¹²³⁵. A third incident had even more crucial consequences. In December 1456, Helena's daughter Charlotte had married John of Coimbra. However, the sources suggest that he did not get on well with Helena, and he died suddenly on 21 June 1457. Some sources accuse Helena of poisoning him. This acquires credibility from the consequences of his death: John II's bastard son James killed Helena's confidant Thomas of Morea as an act of revenge for his sister¹²³⁶. When King John II then deprived James of his fief, James asked Giacomo Urri for help, because he was influential with Queen Helena. However, this did not yield favourable results, and in April 1458, James also murdered Giacomo Urri, allegedly because he had failed to help him regain Helena's favour. It is very conspicuous that James had two of Helena's most important supporters killed within a year. Helena herself followed Urri into the grave on 11 April 1458¹²³⁷.

Although John II and the Haute Court tried to hold James responsible for these murders, this could not change the fact that the power élite which had governed the island in the mid-fifties was no more. The up-side for men such as Jacques de Fleury and possibly Janus de Montolive was that they could return to Cyprus – at least both are attested on the island in the years after Helena's death¹²³⁸. However, the power balance had seriously shifted towards John II's bastard son James and his supporters. In the following civil war, James would eventually gain the upper hand and control the island until his death in 1473. Almost all the members of the 1450s power élite decided to support Charlotte. Some later switched over to James, but most of the power élite under his reign consisted of men of his own entourage¹²³⁹.

1226 Ganchou, Rébellion 131; Darrouzès, Notes pour servir II no. 61; Bustron, Diègèsis (Kechagioglou) 30.

1227 The document lies in the Genoese state archive, under ASG, SG, Primi Cancellieri, busta 88, doc. 740. The quote has been taken from Ganchou, Rébellion 131, n. 104: *totum regimen curie ipsorum*.

1228 Codex Diplomaticus (Gudenus) 618-620; Ganchou, Rébellion 138-140.

1229 In December 1455, however, he is indeed mentioned as the first of the Haute Court witnesses, see Ganchou, Rébellion 147; Richard, Privilège 132. But in 1457, at the time the next preserved document was drafted (doc. 1457, Documents chypriotes [Richard] doc. XII), Juan was already dead (see below).

1230 Ganchou, Rébellion 132-135. Genoese opposition against these plans or at least attempts to gain influence at court at the time may be seen in the fact that in the year 1454, the bank of Genoa especially reserved between 150 and 200 *luoghi* for various members of the power élite: Janus and Galesius de Montolive, but also Jean de Clorissa and even Thomas of Morea were considered. If the Cypriots ever took up on the offer is unclear, see Otten, Investissements financiers 118. For the term *luoghi* and its meaning, see p. 66 and n. 604.

1231 Ganchou, Rébellion 156-169.

1232 Ganchou, Rébellion 164.

1233 A certain Jean de Nores had appeared in the Haute Court documents around 1452, just as Jean de Crolissa (see fig. 23). But he is without office, and

whether he took a stance in this conflict, and if so, on which side, is not known. See Documents chypriotes (Richard) docs X, XI; Documents nouveaux (Mas Latrie) 380.

1234 Grivaud, Petite chronique 333; Ganchou, Rébellion 147.

1235 At least the Italian short chronicle edited by Grivaud registers that *el savio maestro Zacco*, the wise master Zacco, died, who knew both Greek and Latin letters. It is very probable that Sincritico is meant, see Grivaud, Petite chronique 334.

1236 Bustron, Diègèsis (Kechagioglou) 6-10; Hill, History III 536.

1237 Ganchou, Rébellion 182; Grivaud, Petite chronique 334; Bustron, Diègèsis (Kechagioglou) 4-12. 16-18. 34. It is unknown which stance the *bailli de la secrète* Philippe Salah took in the matter, but in any case, he, too, died in December 1456 according to the short chronicle, see Grivaud, Petite chronique 333.

1238 Cf. Ganchou, Rébellion 183-184.

1239 Bustron, Diègèsis (Kechagioglou) 86 enumerates Charlotte's supporters during James' siege of Kyrenia in 1460. Among them are Jacques de Fleury, Jean de Montolive, Perrin Pelestrin, Phoebus of Lusignan, Bernardo Riosec, Hector de Chivides, and some members of the de Nores family. Men such as Andrea Corner, Guillaume and Jean de Ras as well as Morphou de Grenier later changed sides, but at least Perrin Pelestrin, Jean de Montolive and Ber-

4.3 Conclusion

A comparison of the two periods under analysis is revealing in various respects. Generally, the basic power structures did not change between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Small groups of powerful men with knowledge of civil or military matters assisted the ruler and were rewarded for their assistance by an enhancement of their power. The power élites were small, and the same men dealt flexibly with matters of both internal as well as external politics¹²⁴⁰.

However, the analysis has shown that the power élites themselves were changing. Syrians and Greeks from the new aristocracy ascended into the highest echelons of the power élite and influenced the power balance considerably. Members of the new aristocracy first ascended into high positions in the power vacuum after the Genoese war. Men such as Jean Gorap or Thomas Barech held important office and were part of the regency after Peter II's death. However, in contrast to the years after 1430, these men were isolated phenomena. Apart from Nicholas Billy, they did not establish their families in the highest echelons of society¹²⁴¹. Moreover, it seems that the old nobility gained the upper hand again under James I, closing its ranks against social climbers for some years at least.

The situation was different between the 1430s and 1450s. More Syrians and Greeks became important officials in this period. All of them had a long era of influence – Giacomo Urri and Hugh Soudain in particular were active over two decades and more. Urri was not only part of the power élite, but one of the most important players of his time. Moreover, these Syrians (and Greeks) of the 1440s and 1450s were all part of the same extended group, related by blood and marriage¹²⁴². They therefore differed essentially from the isolated cases at the end of the fourteenth century, and their network mirrored the dense connections between old noble families, as shown in chapter three. Consequently, most of the families behind these powerful men of the 1440s remained in high circles over the next decades at least¹²⁴³. Syrians were much more prominent in the power élite than Greeks. This is especially true for the earlier period, when all the *homines novi* were Syrians. They were still the majority in the middle of the fifteenth century. Other than the Podocataro brothers and Jacques Sincritico, only Syrians achieved important careers. As has been mentioned before, the reasons for this phe-

nomenon can only be hypothesized, but they were probably connected to the wealth Syrians had acquired through trade. It is not clear if their political power resulted directly from their loans to the crown for the ransom of King Janus, but it is obvious that all new men in power possessed great wealth¹²⁴⁴.

The rise of Syrians and Greeks in the 1440s did not signify the abrupt and total disempowerment of members of the old nobility. Men such as Jacques de Fleury, Jacques de Caffran, Badin de Nores and Janus de Montolive continued to wield great influence. As before, they also constituted a group related through intermarriage¹²⁴⁵. But their group was by no means as numerous as during the era of Peter I or James I, and they had to accept a strong group of newcomers occupying even highest office. Jacques de Fleury's exceptional power during the late 1430s and 1440s suggests that the corrective balance of a powerful homogeneous group of nobles controlled by the king was missing. This probably made the rise of new men easier.

Old nobles and new aristocrats not only differed in their origins and marriage relations. They also followed different career paths. Members of the old nobility in the fourteenth as well as in the fifteenth century essentially took two different routes to power. They either pursued military careers, such as Pierre and Jacques de Caffran or Badin de Nores, or they rose within the king's household, occupying posts such as the *maître de l'hotel* and the post of *auditeur*, as did Jacques de Fleury.

Syrians and Greeks, in contrast, were not connected to the military at all, except for Thibault Belfaradge, who came to power through raising military troops. Some made their careers in the civil service similar to members of the old nobility. Jean Gorap was in domestic service as Peter I's *maître de l'hotel* before he became *auditeur*, following a similar career to Jacques de Fleury fifty years later. Other Syrians and Greeks actually took the route which has come to be considered classical for their group¹²⁴⁶: they worked as secretaries in the royal *secrète* before ascending to offices such as the *bailli de la secrète* (Philippe Salah) or the *maître de l'hotel* (Piero Podocataro). They were creatures of the royal court who must have been very much part of its every-day life and immersed in its networks. They therefore generally occupied the so-called offices of Cyprus in contrast to the crown offices, because the former were closely connected to the administration. The

nardo Riosec went into exile with Charlotte (see Rudt de Collenberg, *Études de prosopographie* no. 209). Hector de Chivides and Jacques de Fleury both died in the following years. Therefore, not many of the very high officers actually went over to James. Haute Court decisions in 1468 and 1469, as well as the executors of James' testament illustrate his circle of supporters. It was comprised of some Cypriots and members of the old élite, but then mostly Catalans. See Bustron, Diégésis (Kechagioglou) 150 and *Livre des remembrances* (Richard) nos 145-185, where we find the following men: Morphou de Grenier, Jean de Ras and Andrea Corner of the élite before James II, but then Juan Tafur, Juan Perez Fabriguez, Juan Aronio, Pedro d'Avila, Rizzo di Marino, Nicholas Morabit, Geronimo Salviati, Sasson de Nores, Jaime Zaplana, and Muzio di Constanzo. Of these men, only Sasson de Nores came from Cyprus. The rest were Catalans, or, in Salviati's case, Italian. Cf. Edbury, *Hoi teleutaioi Louzinianoï* 224.

1240 There was no difference between the circles involved in extraordinary events like state treaties or the appointment of procurators, and every-day matters. As can be seen from the comparison between the 1430s, 1440s and 1450s (see **figs 18-19. 21-23**), very much the same men participated in the respective events, although every-day business sometimes figured less well-known men.

1241 See ch. 2.1, p. 54.

1242 Cf. ch. 3.3, from p. 94.

1243 See chapter 2.2, from p. 67.

1244 See ch. 2.2, p. 72.

1245 See ch. 3.3, p. 96-98.

1246 Cf. Nicolaou-Konnari, *Encounter* 230-235.

case of the chamberlain Hugh Soudain, however, illustrates that they could also occupy crown offices.

In contrast to those careers which were strongly intertwined with the royal household itself, Giacomo Urri, Jacques Sincritico and Hugo Podocataro chose the new path of education open from the end of the fourteenth century: they studied in Padua. The higher education and learning of these men must have stood out, meeting the growing necessity for professional knowledge¹²⁴⁷. This was a path full of possibilities, although the numbers of students suggest that by far not all men who decided on this education later occupied highest positions at court¹²⁴⁸. Interestingly, nobles from old families did not choose this path at all.

In many cases, the designation to an office was simply the consequence of the power Syrians and Greeks already wielded. Thibault Belfaradge was given office after he had raised troops at his own expense. Giacomo Urri, Hugh Soudain and Hugo Podocataro all first appear as royal counselors without a distinct office. This reveals something of the

nature of these men's careers: essentially, they gained power unofficially. It resulted from their wealth, their education and their connections. However, the social mobility of these men and their influence had to be labelled and integrated into an already existing system. They received offices, titles and also knighthood in order to maintain the existing social system. This is very much the same strategy that Guido Castelnuovo has examined for the duchy of Savoy, which faced similar developments of social mobility and professionalization in the first half of the fifteenth century¹²⁴⁹.

In conclusion, social mobility existed in both periods under analysis. However, it particularly upset the power balance in the 1430s to 1450s. This period differed crucially from the fourteenth century, since the newcomers created a network of successful families which supported each other's ascent. Syrians and Greeks came to power in ways differing from the old nobility, using new possibilities such as studies at Padua university. They were nevertheless successfully integrated into the old system of offices and knightly honour.

1247 The difference of their learned approach to complicated questions is wonderfully visible in the protocol of King Janus' divorce trial from 1407. During the questioning of the witnesses, the learned Syrian Jean Careri gave answers which were inspired by the laws of Cyprus (Kaoulla, *Quest for a Royal Bride* § 584), while the knight Simon Pelestrin at one point even refused to answer

the same question, reasoning that he was a knight, not a clergyman (*respondit quod miles est et non clericus*, see Kaoulla, *Quest for a Royal Bride* § 517).

1248 See Blizn'uk, *Gumanitarnyj fond* 134-135.

1249 See Castelnuovo, *Ufficiali* 17-18. 345-348 and p. 70.