

# A Threat to Invade Cyprus: Pope John XXII, Walter of Brienne Duke of Athens, and the Latin East in 1331

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## Abstract

The Brienne family first laid claim to the throne of Cyprus in the 1260s. The family subsequently rose high in the service of the Angevin kings of Naples and continued to assert their claim from time to time, but they seem never to have been a serious threat to Lusignan rule. Nevertheless, recently discovered papal letters demonstrate that as late as 1331 there were concerns that Walter VI of Brienne, duke of Athens, would divert to Cyprus a planned expedition against the Catalans occupying his duchy. Although King Robert the Wise of Naples was the rival of King Hugh IV of Cyprus for the title of king of Jerusalem, the letters also reveal that Pope John XXII called upon Robert to prevent such an invasion, as other newly uncovered letters show the pope to have done when the Genoese threatened to send invasion fleets to the island in 1317 and 1328. The new letters are published in an appendix.

## Keywords

Walter VI of Brienne – Hugh IV Lusignan – Duchy of Athens – Kingdom of Cyprus – Pope John XXII – Catalans – Robert the Wise – Genoa

The Brienne family collected territorial claims. First there was Count Walter III, who married the daughter of King Tancred of Sicily and died in 1205 trying to make good his claim to the crown of Sicily.<sup>1</sup> It is by no means clear that his heirs ever tried to revive his rights to the Regno, although in the next

1 G. Perry, *The Briennes: The Rise and Fall of a Champenois Dynasty in the Age of the Crusades, c. 950-1356* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 36-46.

generation it was said that it was the ambition of Walter III's posthumous son Walter IV in Sicily that was the cause of the friction between Frederick II and his father-in-law, John of Brienne. John, who until that point had been king of Jerusalem and went on to become emperor in Constantinople, was Walter III's younger brother and hence Walter IV's uncle.<sup>2</sup>

Then there was Cyprus. The Brienne family's assertion that the island kingdom rightly belonged to them began in the 1260s, and, as this paper shows, some newly discovered papal letters from 1331 that are presented here for the first time suggest that even then their claim was by no means forgotten. The story begins in the early 1230s when Count Walter IV married Maria of Lusignan, the elder sister of King Henry I and, at the time, heiress-presumptive to the kingdom of Cyprus.<sup>3</sup> Walter died a prisoner of the Muslims in the mid-1240s, and on Henry's death in 1253 the throne of Cyprus passed to his infant son, Hugh II. For several years Henry's widow, Plaisance of Antioch, acted as regent, but when she died in 1261, the regency passed to Henry's nephew, the son of Isabella, his other sister. This man, who is generally known as Hugh of Antioch-Lusignan, became king of Cyprus on the death of his cousin Hugh II in 1267 and reigned as Hugh III until his own death in 1284. What seems to have happened in 1261 is that Isabella, who at the time was next in line to the throne of Cyprus, – her elder sister Maria had died in the meantime – waived her rights to act as regent in favour of her son. In Acre, the principal city in what remained of the kingdom of Jerusalem, the situation was more complex. The titular king was Conrad of Hohenstaufen, Frederick II's grandson, but Conrad never went to the Holy Land. It was accepted there that the regency for the absentee monarch should be his closest heir in the East, and in the early 1260s, as the representative of a junior line of the royal dynasty of Jerusalem, that person was the underage Hugh II of Cyprus. That raised the issue of who should be regent for the regent. For a while it was his aunt Isabella, but when she died in 1264, two rival claimants emerged. Isabella's son Hugh of Antioch-Lusignan found himself challenged by his cousin, Hugh of Brienne, the son of Walter IV and Maria of Lusignan. Hugh of Brienne's case was based on the fact that his mother had been older than her sister Isabella and so he was in the senior line.

2 *The Chronique d'Ernoul and the Colbert-Fontainebleau Continuation of William of Tyre*, eds. P.W. Edbury and M. Gaggero, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 2:§252; Perry, *The Briennes*, 66. In addition, King John had ambitions to become king of Cilician Armenia, but these collapsed with the death of his Armenian wife and their child in 1220, and John's cousin, Erard, seemingly with John's connivance, tried to become count of Champagne. G. Perry, *John of Brienne: King of Jerusalem, Emperor of Constantinople, c. 1175-1237* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 80-88, 111-114.

3 Perry, *The Briennes*, 89-91.

Hugh of Antioch-Lusignan's riposte was that he had been born before Hugh of Brienne and so was senior and sought to back up his case by appeals to precedent from the succession to fiefs. Irrespective of the legal merits of the case, Hugh of Antioch-Lusignan was clearly better connected and was able to offer more in terms of military assistance, and so it should be no surprise that the court found in his favour.<sup>4</sup>

The dispute concerned more than simply the regency of Acre. Whoever won would be confirmed as heir-presumptive to Cyprus. It is not known whether the young king, Hugh II, was in poor health and not thought likely to live long at the time of the dispute, but in the event he died in 1267. Hugh of Brienne is said to have been away from Cyprus just then, and Hugh of Antioch-Lusignan was duly crowned on Christmas Day 1267. Hugh of Brienne then travelled to the West – he was there by April 1268<sup>5</sup> – and, so far as is known, neither he nor any of his heirs ever set foot on the island again.

By the early 1270s Hugh of Brienne had taken service with Charles I of Anjou in the kingdom of Sicily. Charles granted him the county of Lecce, once held by his ancestor King Tancred, but refused to allow him to take the greater prize, the principality of Taranto. From then until his death in 1296 he played an active role as an Angevin supporter.<sup>6</sup> Hugh had not given up hope of acquiring Cyprus, however, and in 1275 Pope Gregory X wrote to King Charles urging him in the interests of Christian solidarity to prevent Hugh's planned invasion of Cyprus.<sup>7</sup> Nothing more is known of this project. Then in 1289 Hugh offered King Alfonso III of Aragon rights of suzerainty over Cyprus if he would install him on the throne. The circumstances of this offer are not entirely clear, but it looks as if this was a diplomatic ploy in the ongoing struggle between the Aragonese and the Sicilian Angevins that had begun in 1282 at the time of the Sicilian Vespers. If Hugh thought Alfonso could put him on the throne, he was being unrealistic; perhaps he thought that if Cyprus were drawn into the war, that might in some way benefit the Angevin cause, which was then at a low ebb.<sup>8</sup>

4 P.W. Edbury, "The Disputed Regency of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1264-6 and 1268," *Camden Miscellany* 27 (1979), 1-47, at 4-8; Perry, *The Briennes*, 100-101.

5 Perry, *The Briennes*, 102.

6 J. Dunbabin, *The French in the Kingdom of Sicily, 1266-1305* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 143-144; Perry, *The Briennes*, 125-134.

7 *Bullarium Cyprium*, eds. C. Schabel, J. Richard, and C. Perrat, 3 vols. (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2010-2012), 2:96-98 no. 1-12.

8 E. Lourie, "An Offer of the Suzerainty and Escheat of Cyprus to Alphonso III of Aragon by Hugh de Brienne in 1289," *English Historical Review* 84 (1969), 101-108; Perry, *The Briennes*, 132.

The idea that Cyprus could be used as a pawn in the conflict between the Aragonese and the Angevins resurfaced in the treaty of Caltabellotta in 1302, when it was proposed that the Briennes might surrender their claim and so give an Aragonese acquisition of Cyprus a semblance of legality.<sup>9</sup> Slightly later, in 1308, we find a French suggestion, mentioning the Brienne claim to the Cypriot throne, that Cyprus should be transferred to a younger son of the king of France as part of a plan to recover the Holy Land.<sup>10</sup> No wonder Amaury of Tyre, who had seized power there in 1306 and whose position was none too secure, was apprehensive at the thought of a French-led crusade arriving in Cyprus.<sup>11</sup>

But if Sicily and Cyprus were not enough, there was also the duchy of Athens. Charles of Anjou had built up his power and influence in the Frankish lands in southern Greece, and in 1277 Hugh of Brienne married Isabella de la Roche, the sister of successive dukes of Athens, John (1263-1280) and William (1280-1287). They had two children, Walter v and a daughter named Agnes. On the death of Duke William his underage son Guy II inherited the duchy, and William's widow, Helena Doukaina, acted as regent. Two years later, in 1291, Hugh, himself by now a widower, married Helena and for a few years before his own death aided her in her rule. In 1308 Guy II died childless. Two cousins, the heirs of Guy's aunts, contested the succession. Walter v, the son of Isabella, was challenged by Eschiva of Ibelin, the titular lady of Beirut who was then living in Cyprus. In contrast to his father's experience in the 1260s, it was Walter who would have seemed by far the more suitable candidate, and it was he who duly took charge as the new duke of Athens.<sup>12</sup> His rule proved brief. On 15 March 1311 he was killed in the decisive battle at Halmyros by the mercenary army we know as the Catalan Company.<sup>13</sup>



Walter v's son, Walter vi of Brienne (Walter II of Athens), was a child at the time of his father's death. His mother, Jeanne de Châtillon, took him and his

9 *Bullarium Cyprium*, 2:282-283 no. 0-59.

10 Pierre Dubois, "Opinio cujusdam suadentis regi Franciae ut regnum Jerolimitanum et Cipri acquireret pro altero filiorum suorum, ac de invasione Egipti et de dispositione bonorum ordinis Templariorum; et in fine sunt aliqua de vita Bonifacii pape octavi. 1308": *Vitae Paparum Avenionensium hoc est historia pontificum Romanorum qui in Gallia sederunt ab anno Christi MCCCIV usque annum MCCCXCIV*, ed. Stephanus Baluzius; new ed. G. Mollat, 4 vols. (Paris: Letouzey, 1914-1927), 3:154-162, at 161.

11 P.W. Edbury, *The Kingdom of Cyprus and the Crusades 1191-1374* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 123.

12 Perry, *The Briennes*, 137.

13 *Ibidem*, 138-140.

sister to the kingdom of Naples where Walter's inheritance included the county of Lecce. As the dispossessed heir to the duchy of Athens, he could look to both the king of Naples, Robert I the Wise (1309-1343), and the papacy for support, but it was to no avail. In the early years after 1311 Walter's maternal grandfather, Gaucher de Châtillon the constable of France (d. 1329), took the lead in trying to organize the recovery of the duchy. The political situation in Italy meant that initially there was little Robert could do, and so Pope Clement V turned instead for assistance to the Hospitallers, newly ensconced on Rhodes. But no military campaign took place, and by 1316, when the new pope, John XXII, was elected, the Catalan regime was securely established. From 1319 onwards its alliance with Venice and the persistent refusal of the Venetians to help their opponents precluded any serious attempt at expelling the Catalans.<sup>14</sup> In the early 1320s Walter, whose holdings in southern Italy meant that he was numbered among the leading barons in the kingdom of Naples, married Beatrice of Taranto, the daughter of King Robert's brother Philip, the titular emperor of Constantinople. The Neapolitan Angevins – King Robert, Emperor Philip, and their other brother John of Gravina, who in 1322 had become prince of Achaia – then, together with Walter, planned a three-pronged attack on their enemies in Greece. The results were expensive and inconsequential and added to Walter's existing financial and legal difficulties.<sup>15</sup>

In 1322 Pope John had declared the Catalan company excommunicate, but on 14 June 1330 he went much further and ordered the proclamation of a crusade to be led by Walter to recover Athens from the Catalans.<sup>16</sup> The preaching was to take place in the kingdom of Naples and the dioceses that comprised Romania, and what was on offer was the same indulgence as for crusades to Jerusalem. In August 1331 Walter's crusading expedition, which according to Giovanni Villani numbered 800 knights and 500 footsoldiers, sailed from Brindisi for Epiros, capturing the island of Lefkada and the port of Vonitsa.<sup>17</sup>

14 A. Luttrell, "The Latins of Argos and Nauplia: 1311-1394," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 34 (1966), 34-55, at 34-36; N. Housley, *The Avignon Papacy and the Crusades, 1305-1378* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 16-17; K. Polejowski, "The Hospitallers of Rhodes and Attempts to Recover the Duchy of Athens by the Counts of Brienne after 1311," in *Islands and the Military Orders, c.1291-1798*, eds. E. Buttigieg and S. Phillips (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 139-145; Perry, *The Briennes*, 142-143.

15 P. Lock, *The Franks in the Aegean* (London: Longman, 1995), 128-129; Perry, *The Briennes*, 163-164.

16 *Diplomatari de l'Orient català, 1301-1409: Col·lecció de documents per a la història de l'expedició catalana a Orient i dels ducats d'Atenes i Neopàtria*, ed. A. Rubio y Lluç (Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 1947), nos. 120, 150; *Jean XXII. Lettres communes*, ed. G. Mollat, 16 vols. (Rome: BEFAR, 1904-1946), no. 49924, cf. no. 49836.

17 Giovanni Villani, *Nuova cronica*, ed. G. Porta, 3 vols. (Parma: U. Guanda), 2:753. For evidence that Vonitsa was already in Neapolitan hands earlier in 1331, see A. Luttrell,

The army also attacked the city of Arta, forcing the despot to acknowledge the suzerainty of the king of Naples. The army then advanced on the duchy of Athens where the Catalans avoided a direct confrontation but instead waited until the campaign ran out of momentum. In 1332 Walter was back in Italy, his attempt to regain his duchy another expensive failure.<sup>18</sup>

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Walter's crusade has not attracted much attention from historians. The account given here follows the standard modern accounts. Recently, however, Chris Schabel found a cache of four hitherto unknown letters sent out by Pope John XXII on 20 June 1331 that bear on this expedition [Appendix, nos. 5-8].<sup>19</sup> They are addressed to King Robert, Philip of Taranto (with a copy to Prince John of Achaia), Walter of Brienne, and Louis, duke of Bourbon. They tell the same story: Duke Louis has drawn the pope's attention to Walter's supposed intention to invade Cyprus; the pope does not believe this to be true, but even so the king and his brothers are to make sure it does not happen; Walter is similarly warned not to do any such thing, and Louis is informed of the letters the pope is sending.

Clearly the pope's disbelief was fully justified: indeed, quite recently, in April 1331, he had issued an indult in favour of Walter allowing him to choose his own confessor "pro omnibus qui concomitabant eum in partibus Romaniae."<sup>20</sup> At the time of writing, however, just a few weeks before the crusade expedition began, Walter was in the process of amassing a sizable army; if it had gone to Cyprus, it would not have been the first time a crusade had been diverted to attack a friendly Christian power. Various possible scenarios come to mind. Perhaps the simplest is that Walter and his Neapolitan supporters

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"Guglielmo de Tocco: Captain of Corfu: 1330-1331," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 3 (1977), 45-56, at 48-49.

18 The fullest narrative account is provided by Giovanni Villani, *Nuova cronica*, 2:753-754. See also K.M. Setton, "The Catalans in Greece, 1311-1380," in *A History of the Crusades*, ed. K.M. Setton, 6 vols. (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1955-1989), 3:189-190; Idem, *The Papacy and the Levant, 1204-1571*, 4 vols. (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1976-1984), 1:452; D.M. Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros, 1267-1479: A Contribution to the History of Greece in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 97-98; Perry, *The Briennes*, 165.

19 For an explanation of how it happened that these letters – 'hidden in plain sight' in the papal registers – have been overlooked, see C. Schabel, "Aimery de Nabinaud, OFM (†1326), Counsellor of Henry II, Bishop of Paphos, Papal Diplomat between Cyprus and Armenia, and Debtor," *Perspectives on Culture* 39/4 (2022), forthcoming, n. 1.

20 *Jean XXII. Lettres communes*, no. 53433.

were allowing the rumour to spread that Walter wanted to employ the army he was assembling to reclaim Cyprus as a way of allaying fears in Epiros and Athens, the true goal of the expedition. Alternatively, it could reflect a sense of insecurity at the Lusignan court. If Giovanni Villani's figures are to be believed, Walter's army would have posed a serious challenge to the military resources at King Hugh's disposal.<sup>21</sup> That Hugh was bothered by Walter's activities is indicated by a later papal letter dated 24 July 1333 in which the pope reassured the king that the renewal of the privileges that Clement v had conceded to Walter's father in connection with the indulgence granted those who had joined him with the aim of reconquering Athens – presumably a reference to the crusade privileges set out in the bull of 14 June 1330 – are not to be understood as being in any way prejudicial to the interests of Cyprus [Appendix, no. 9].

All this needs to be seen against the background of recent developments concerning Cyprus. In January 1330 Hugh's eldest son, Guy, had married Maria, the daughter of Louis of Clermont, duke of Bourbon. Louis, a grandson of Saint Louis, had for a number of years been a leading enthusiast at the French court for a crusade to recover the Holy Land. The marriage meant that if ever a French-led crusade did arrive in the East, the idea that it might supplant the Lusignans in favour of a member of the French royal family was now far less likely.<sup>22</sup> It also explains the concern of Louis of Bourbon in alerting the pope to Walter's supposed invasion plans. Louis was a powerful figure, and, in writing the letters, Pope John, who in any case would have regarded it as his duty to preserve peace among the Christian rulers, may have felt he was too important to be ignored.

The marriage marked a significant shift in Cypriot diplomacy. After his restoration in 1310, King Henry II had promoted a series of royal marriages that put Cyprus in the Aragonese orbit. In 1315 his sister Maria had married King James II of Aragon, and there seems to have been a real possibility that that union would in due course lead to James or a child of his by Maria ascending the Cypriot throne. It was not to be: the marriage was childless, and Maria died

21 The Cypriot sources do not allow a realistic assessment of the manpower at Hugh's disposal around 1330. In 1291 Henry II is variously said to have brought 100 or 200 knights from Cyprus to the defence of Acre, which, even allowing for the need to keep men in reserve on the island, suggests that the 800 knights said to have been in Walter's forces was well in excess of the Cypriot knighthood. Marino Sanudo, "Liber secretorum fidelium crucis," in *Gesta Dei per Francos, sive orientalium expeditionum et regni Francorum Hierosolymitani historia*, ed. J. Bongars, 2 vols. (Hanover: Wechel, 1611; photographic reprint with an introduction by J. Prawer, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 2:230-231; "Chronique d'Amadi," ed. R. de Mas Latrie, *Chroniques d'Amadi et de Strambaldi*, 2 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1891-1893), 1:221.

22 Edbury, *The Kingdom of Cyprus*, 143-144.

before her brother Henry. However, Maria's marriage was followed in 1316 by the marriage of Henry's niece to Ferrand, the younger son of King James I of Majorca, who almost at once died trying to make good his claim to Achaia, and by Henry's own marriage in 1317 to Constance, the daughter of the King Frederick of Sicily (Trinacria).<sup>23</sup> At least in the early part of his reign, Hugh IV, who had become king in 1324, had evidently decided that it was more in his interests to align himself with the French rather than their Aragonese rivals. It also meant that he could expect a more sympathetic reception from the papacy, which had been consistently hostile to the Aragonese in the island of Sicily and the Catalans in Athens.

Another recent development was the settlement of a series of disputes between Cyprus and Genoa that stretched back to the early years of the century. The latest negotiations had begun at least as early as 1327, and the peace was eventually concluded in February 1329. This was followed by a compromise dealing with outstanding claims the following year that was formally promulgated by Pope John on 13 January 1331. In theory at least, that should have put an end to the hostility and the Genoese *guerre de course* in Cypriot waters that had rumbled on for many years, although as Jean Richard, who published the 1331 compromise, noted, in 1338 it was necessary to draw up a new treaty which dealt *inter alia* with a riot in Famagusta that occurred at some point in that same year (1331). It is also true that the treaty was with the then dominant Guelf party, and that their Ghibelline opponents were specifically excluded.<sup>24</sup> Two more hitherto overlooked papal letters discovered by Schabel, one of them dated 20 April 1328, the other probably from the same date or thereabouts, shed light on the pressures that led to the 1329 treaty [Appendix, nos. 3-4].<sup>25</sup> In the first the pope wrote to the governing authorities in Genoa instructing them to put a stop to plans to invade Cyprus. In the second King Robert of Sicily was told to use his influence with Genoa to the same end. It is hard to know what lay behind these letters. It could be that it was simply a matter of 'sabre

23 Edbury, *The Kingdom of Cyprus*, 136-139. See also Idem, "Une version génoise de l'histoire chypriote (v. 1250-1320): le Codex Cocharelli," in *De la Bourgogne à l'Orient: mélanges offerts à Monsieur le Doyen Jean Richard*, eds. J. Meissonnier et al. (Dijon: Académie des Sciences, Arts et Belles-Lettres de Dijon, 2020), 547-555, at 553.

24 L. de Mas Latrie, *Histoire de l'île de Chypre sous le règne des princes de la maison de Lusignan*, 3 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1852-1861), 2:166-179, at 171; J. Richard, "Le 'compromis' de 1330 entre Gênes et Chypre et la guerre de course dans les eaux chypriotes," *Atti della Società ligure di Storia Patria*, n.s., 53 (2013), 17-36. Cf. *Bullarium Cyprium*, 3:138-139 no. 1-447.

25 The manuscript is damaged, and the second letter has only part of the dating clause. While the wording and subject-matter would indicate that they were written at the same time, it should be noted that, unlike the four letters from 1331, they are not juxtaposed in the register.



rattling' on the part of the Genoese to induce the Cypriots to be more accommodating to their demands in the negotiations that were already in progress. Alternatively, the Genoese may have been planning a further episode in the *guerre de course*, sending galleys to prey on shipping in Cypriot waters and raid coastal settlements. It is also possible, although without further evidence probably unlikely, that the Genoese really were planning a serious invasion of the island as indeed happened in 1373. Whatever the truth, no more is heard of the planned attack.

1328 was not the first time that the pope had written to Robert calling on him to induce the Genoese to put a stop to a planned attack on Cyprus. In 1317 there had been a similar instance – again the papal letters to Robert have not previously been noticed – and on that occasion the pope's efforts at mediation led, in 1319, to a truce intended to give time for the points at issue to be resolved [Appendix, nos. 1-2].<sup>26</sup>

The letters addressed to King Robert in both 1317 and 1328 are to be explained by his position with regard to Genoa. Conflict between the Ghibellines and Guelfs in Genoa had erupted into civil war in 1314. In 1316 the Guelfs emerged victorious but were then besieged by their Ghibelline opponents and their Milanese allies. Encouraged by the pope, Robert, generally seen as the most powerful papal supporter in Italy, then intervened to support the Guelfs, who in 1318 gave him, together with the pope, the lordship of the city. His position was renewed in 1324 for a further six years, and his officers only left Genoa in 1335.<sup>27</sup> So in 1317 and 1328 the pope clearly expected Robert to be able to use his authority in Genoa to curb the activities of the Genoese, just as in 1331 he expected him to be able to restrain his vassal, Walter of Brienne. It is nevertheless extraordinary that Pope John should in quick succession, in 1328 and 1331, tell Robert to prevent two separate invasions of Cyprus from occurring. As the grandson of Charles I of Anjou, the first Angevin king of Sicily, Robert claimed to be the rightful king of Jerusalem, a title hotly disputed by the Cypriot Lusignans, and as a result there was no natural rapport between the two monarchies. But although he clearly relished his title 'king of Jerusalem', Robert showed scant inclination to involve himself in crusades to the East or in any other form of military intervention in the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>28</sup>

So should Hugh IV have been worried by reports that Walter of Brienne was preparing to invade? While it is true that the Brienne claim to Cyprus had had

26 For other papal correspondence, from 1317 and 1319, see *Bullarium Cyprium*, 3:37 nos. 1-19-20 and 52 nos. 1-80-81.

27 S.A. Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese, 958-1528* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 195-199; S. Kelly, *The New Solomon: Robert of Naples (1309-1343) and Fourteenth-Century Kingship* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 220-227.

28 Kelly, *The New Solomon*, 210-213.

a way of cropping up in the surviving documentation from time to time, Hugh would have known that Neapolitan military involvement in Latin Romania in recent years had been largely ineffectual, and that Robert of Naples never looked like recovering the island of Sicily. For these reasons alone, Walter cannot have looked dangerous. What was more, relations with Genoa had been patched up, and, thanks to his son's marriage, Hugh now had a good relationship with the French monarchy, while it was unthinkable that Walter would have turned to the only viable alternative, the Aragonese, for support. Hugh was therefore well placed in the diplomatic landscape of the time. Had he considered Walter a threat, he would surely have confiscated his ancestral lands in Cyprus. But as they were still in Walter's possession at the time of his death in 1356, he evidently did not do so.<sup>29</sup>

### Appendix: Pope John's Letters Concerning Invasion Threats to Cyprus

by Chris Schabel

1. 15 March [1317], Avignon. Pope John XXII writes to King Robert of Sicily for good reason, informing him that he heard that the Genoese were raising a fleet to send against Cyprus and King Henry [II] and that out of fear of danger and loss he has written to the Genoese urging them to abstain from this, for the pope is ready to have the king of Cyprus satisfy their reasonable demands or to have justice served.

Manuscripts: Reg. Vat. 109, ff. 23vb-24ra, no. 99 (v); Cambrai, Médiathèque d'agglomération de Cambrai, 538, f. 128vb, no. 365 (C).

Calendar: A. Jamme and L. Vallière, "Production et distraction des registres pontificaux. L'enquête sur un manuscrit de lettres de Jean XXII conservé à Cambrai," *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes* 173 (2015-2017), 95-205, at 191 (inscriptio, incipit, and date only).

Carissimo in Christo filio Roberto regi Sicilie illustri.

Audito, fili carissime, quod dilecti filii commune<sup>30</sup> civitatis Januensis faciebant armatam quam in Cyprum<sup>31</sup> ad ag[V 24ra]grediendum carissimum in Christo filium nostrum Henricum<sup>32</sup> regem Cyprie<sup>33</sup> (!) illustrem velle mittere dicebantur, nos,

29 For the Brienne estates, see É. Poncelet, "Compte du domaine de Gautier de Brienne au royaume de Chypre," *Bulletin de la commission royale d'histoire* 98 (1934), 1-28.

30 commune] comune V.

31 cyprum] ciprum V.

32 henricum] h V.

33 cyprie] ciprie V(!).

periculis atque dispendiis que ex armata huiusmodi, si forte procederet, poterant verisimiliter formidari occurrere<sup>34</sup> cupientes, eisdem communi<sup>35</sup> per apostolicas litteras efficaci exhortatione suasimus ut ab armata predicta et regis aggressura predicti penitus abstinerent, cum parati essemus penitus sibi satisfieri facere<sup>36</sup> debite per regem eundem de hiis in quibus teneri<sup>37</sup> sibi rationabiliter appareret, alioquin in ipsum et terram eius procedere iustitia mediante. Speramus autem quod commune<sup>38</sup> ipsum nostris annuet exhortationibus in hac parte.

Que omnia non sine causa tibi providimus intimanda.

Datum Avinione, Idibus Martii.<sup>39</sup>

2. 4 April [1317], Avignon. Pope John xxii writes to King Robert of Sicily for good reason, rehearsing the previous letter and stating that the Genoese have responded that they will refrain from sending a fleet and invading until 1 March 1318, although they do not speak for Genoese living far away from the city and surroundings. If King [Henry II] does not satisfy them by the deadline, they shall proceed as needed. The pope is also writing to King [Henry] to urge him to make sure that the Genoese are content by the deadline.

Manuscripts: Reg. Vat. 109, ff. 32vb-33ra, no. 132 (v); Cambrai, Médiathèque d'agglomération de Cambrai, 538, f. 109rb-va, no. 299 (C).

Calendar: Jamme and Vallière, "Production et distraction des registres pontificaux," 183-184 (inscriptio, incipit, and date only).

Carissimo in Christo filio Roberto regi Sicilie illustri.

Sicut iam tibi scripsisse [V 33ra] meminimus, audito pridem quod dilecti filii potestas, abbas populi, gubernatores civitatis et communis,<sup>40</sup> necnon consilium et comune Janue armatam seu navalem exercitum in Ciprum mittere et carissimum in Christo filium nostrum Henricum regem Cipri ac terram eius invadere disponebant, nos per apostolicas litteras Januensibus suasimus antefatis ut ab armata facienda contra regem ipsum ac invasione et aggressionem terre sue penitus abstinere curarent, cum parati essemus regem requirere memoratum ut illos de omnibus de quibus sibi adversus eum iusta<sup>41</sup> querela competeret<sup>42</sup> efficaciter contentare curaret, et in hoc regem ipsum

34 occurrere] occorre C.

35 communi] comuni V.

36 penitus sibi satisfieri facere] facere sibi satisfieri V.

37 teneri] om. C.

38 commune] comune V.

39 avinione idibus martii] avinione idus martii C; ut supra V.

40 communis] comunis V.

41 iusta] iuxta C.

42 competeret] competenter C.

sperabamus nostris beneplacitis pariturum, alioquin – quantum cum Deo possemus – Januensibus assisteremus eisdem qualiter absque belli discrimine possent quod iustum existeret<sup>43</sup> importare.

Et ecce Januenses ipsi tanquam obedientie filii huiusmodi nostris litteris responderunt quod a faciendo contra regem predictum armatam seu navalem exercitum et ab invasione terre ipsius usque ad Kalendas Martii proxime venturi anni Domini millesimi CCC<sup>i</sup> XVIII<sup>i</sup> quantum esset in comuni Januensi et personis singularibus Janue vel in districtu morantibus penitus abstinerent. Non tamen includebant in hoc particulares seu singulares offensiones si per Januenses fierent in remotis partibus constitutos. [C 109v] Hoc autem responsum sub illa spei fiducia prebuerunt quod rex ipse interim iuste contentet eosdem, alioquin elapso termino contra ipsum et gentem suam prout viderint expedire procedent.

Nos autem dicto regi per alias nostras litteras responsionem intimamus huiusmodi suadentes eidem quod medio tempore Januenses ipsos sic studeat contentare quod nulla sibi restare possit de illorum aggressionem<sup>44</sup> suspicio et nos in defectum eius illis assistere contra ipsum iustis remediis non cogamur.

Que omnia in tuam ex causa providimus notitiam deducenda.

Datum *ut supra*<sup>45</sup> <Avinione, II Nonas Aprilis>.

3. 20 April 1328, [Avignon]. Pope John XXII writes to the rulers of Genoa, relating that he has heard a rumour that some Genoese are preparing a fleet to invade Cyprus, which would offend divine majesty, assist the enemies of the Christian name, and perhaps cause bodily loss and danger to souls. The pope urges the addressees to have their fellow citizens desist, but if King Hugh [IV] of Cyprus or his subjects have harmed the Genoese, the pope shall do what he deems expedient to have the king do satisfaction.

Manuscript: Reg. Vat. 114, f. 190vb (rubric) and f. 249rb (mutilated letter).

*Rubric:* <sup>va</sup>Vicario, capitaneo, abbati populi, duodecim sapientibus, ac consilio<sup>cat</sup> Communi Januensibus quod faciant desistere cives suos ab invasione regis Cipri.

*Letter:* Vicario, (capi)taneo, . . . abbati populi, duodecim sapientibus, (con)silio, et communi Janue(nsibus).

Rumor implacitus et infestus perduxit nuper ad nostri apostolat(us) auditum quod ad invasionem et offension(em) regni Cypri, ubi catholice fidei viget cultu(s), per aliquos concives vestros paratur cum arm(a)torum multitudine – quod vix credere poss(umus) – stolium galearum.

43 existeret] existerent C.

44 aggressionem] aggregatione C.

45 ut supra] *om.* C.

Sane, quia ex hiis, si – quod ab(sit) – procederent, magestas offenderetur Alti(ssimi), crucis hostibus ac blasfemis Christiani (nominis) ministraretur materia exultandi, et (cum hoc) varia corporum et rerum dispendia et animarum amarius deploranda pericula, quibus o(b)viari salubriter cupimus, possent sequi, un(i)versitatem vestram monemus, rogamus, et hortam(ur) in Domino Ihesu Christo quatenus, premissis et alis que presentis qualitas temporis ingerit considerant(er) attentis, predictos convices vestros a dictis inv(a)sionibus et offensionibus, si ad eas se dispos(uis)sent vel dispo-nerent forsitan, desistere pen(itus) faciatis.

Nos autem, si carissimus in Christo filius noster Hugo Cypri rex illustris aut sui subditi vobis vel eisdem concivibus iniurias irrogarint, super satisfactione inde prestanda de(bite) sumus parati apud eundem regem prout opo(r)tunum extiterit et expedire videbimus in(ter)ponere more patris benivoli et ut precaventur filiorum incomodis partes nostras.

Datum XII Kalendas Maii, anno duodecimo.

4. ca. 20 April 1328, Avignon. Pope John XXII writes to King [Robert] of Sicily as above, *mutatis mutandis*, asking and urging the king to induce the Genoese to acquiesce to the pope's orders and warnings.

Manuscript: Reg. Vat. 114, f. 201ra (rubric) and f. 346rb-va (mutilated letter).

*Rubric:* Eidem regi Sicilie quod inducat commune Januenses ut desistant ab armata quam parant contra regem Cipri.

*Letter:* R(egi Sicilie).

Rumor implacidus et infestus p(er)duxit nu(per) ad nostri apostolatus auditum quod c(ives ali(qui) Januenses ad invasionem et offensio(nem) reg)ni Cypri parant cum armatorum multitud(ine, quod) vix credere possumus, stolium galearum. San(e, quia ex) premissis, si – quod (absit) – procederent, mai(estas) offenderetur Altissimi et alia corporum et a(nim)arum va(ria) pericula, quibus obviari salubriter cup(imus, possent) sequi, nos dilectos filios . . rectorem, . . vi(carium), . . capitaneum, . . abbatem populi, . . duod(ecim sa)pien(t)ibus, consilium, et communi Januenses (per alias) nostras litteras exhortamur ut concives suo(s, si ad) hoc disposuissent vel dispo(n)erent forsi(tan), omnino desistere faciant a premissis.

Cu(m tamen), si carissimus in Christo filius noster Hugo Cypri (rex) [346va] vel sui subditi eisdem Januensibus in(iurias irrogar)int, parati simus apud eundem re(gem super sat)isfactione prestanta debita interponere, (prout expedire) videbimus, partes nostras.

Quocirca (tuam roga)mus excellentiam attentius et hor(tamur quatenus is)tos Januenses ut nostris acquiescant (mandatis et salu)taribus monitis efficaciter indu(-cere tua excelle)ntia non amittat.

Datum Avinione (- ann)o duodecimo.

5. 20 June 1331, [Avignon]. Pope John XXII writes to King [Robert] of Sicily, relating that Duke Louis of Bourbon informed him via a letter that Duke Walter of Athens is planning to use the fleet prepared for the recovery of the duchy to invade Cyprus and oppose King H[ugh IV], the duke of Bourbon's relative by affinity. Although the pope does not believe it, since he heard him say otherwise *viva voce*, lest seduced by perverse counsel he change his mind, the pope asks the king of Sicily to restrain him and not to assist.

Manuscript: Reg. Vat. 116, f. 122vb, no. 464.

*Eidem regi <Sicilie>.*

Dilectus filius nobilis vir Ludovicus dux Borbonesii nobis per suas litteras intimavit <quod> dilectus filius nobilis vir Galterius dux Athenarum cum armata sua, quam ad recuperationem eorum que de ducatu suo occupata noscantur indebite ac tuendum id quod de illo <possidet> preparare dicebat, carissimum in Christo filium nostrum H. regem Cypri illustrem, cum quo dictus dux Borbonesii affinitatem contraxisse noscitur, molestare disponebat et invadere regnum suum. Et licet non credamus dictum ducem Athenarum ad hoc intendere, cum ab eo contrarium audiverimus viva voce, tamen ne, si forsan perverso seductus consilio suum mutasset propositum, hoc presumeret attemptare, circumspectionem regiam rogamus attente ut, scandala que possent ex hoc subsequi consideranter attendens, eundem ducem a tali proposito substrahat sibi que ad hoc exequendum nullum subsidium vel favorem impendat.

Datum XII Kalendas Julii, anno XV.

6. 20 June 1331, [Avignon]. Pope John XXII writes similar letters to Prince [Philip] of Taranto and to Prince John of Achaia.

Manuscript: Reg. Vat. 116, f. 122vb, no. 465.

Principi Tarentino.

Si forsan dilectus filius nobilis vir Galterius dux Athenarum cum armata sua, quam ad recuperationem eorum que de ducatu suo occupata dicuntur indebite ac tuendum que in illo possidet parare dicitur, vellet perverso seductus consilio carissimum in Christo filium nostrum H. regem Cypri illustrem seu regnum suum, sicut coniecturare dicuntur aliqui, molestare, quod tamen non credimus, cum contrarium ab ipso audiverimus viva voce, nobilitatem tuam attentius deprecatur quatinus ipsum a tali proposito, per quod nos et Apostolicam Sedem graviter offenderet, subtrahas nec ad illud quomodolibet exequendum sibi subsidium vel favorem impendas.

Datum *ut supra* <XII Kalendas Julii, anno XV>.

*In eundem modum* Johanni principi Achaye.

7. 20 June 1331, [Avignon]. Pope John XXII writes a similar letter to Duke Walter of Athens, specifying that the pope spoke to him about this when he was in the pope's presence and the duke answered the pope to the contrary. John states that the duke cannot do otherwise without seriously offending the pope and the Apostolic See.

Manuscript: Reg. Vat. 116, ff. 122vb-123ra, no. 466.

Galterio duci Athenarum.

Dilectum filium nobilem virum Ludovicum [123ra] ducem Borbonesii audivimus informatum tue intentionis existere carissimum in Christo filium nostrum H. regem Cypri illustrem <et> regnum suum cum stolio quod preparare diceris molestare. Et licet haec<sup>46</sup> credamus falso sibi suggesta fuisse, cum tibi, fili, dudum in nostra presentia constituto locuti fuerimus super hoc et quod nobis contrarium respondens memoriter teneamus, ex abundantiam tamen nobilitatem tuam requirimus, sano tibi nichilominus consilio suadentes quatinus eundem regem regnumque suum non temptes impresentiarum aliquatenus molestare, sciturus quod non absque gravi nostra et Apostolice Sedis offensa posses contrarium attemptare.

Datum *ut supra* <XII Kalendas Julii, anno XV>.

8. 20 June 1331, [Avignon]. Pope John XXII writes to Duke [Louis] of Bourbon, relating that although he does not believe that Duke Walter of Athens intends to do what the duke of Bourbon claimed in his letter, since the duke of Athens said otherwise in the pope's presence, just in case, he is writing the above letters to King R[obert] of Sicily, to his brothers the princes of Taranto and Achaia, and to the duke of Athens.

Manuscript: Reg. Vat. 116, f. 123ra, no. 467.

Duci Borbonesii.

Licet non credamus dilectum filium nobilem virum Galterium ducem Atheniarum (!) ad illa quomodolibet intendere que tue nobilitatis littere continebant, cum ab eo contrarium audiveramus dudum in nostra presentia constituto, ex abundantiam tamen carissimo in Christo filio nostro R. regi Sicilie illustri et dilectis filiis nobilibus viris . . . Tarentino et Achaye principibus, germanis suis, scribimus ut eum a tali proposito, si forsitan in illo esset, retrahant et ad illud exequendum nullum prestant subsidium vel favorem, eidem duci scribentes nichilominus quod ad id aliquid non attemptet si nostram et Apostolice Sedis vitare velit offensam.

Datum *ut supra* <XII Kalendas Julii, anno XV>.

<sup>46</sup> haec] hoc *a.c. MS.*

9. 24 July 1333, Avignon. Pope John XXII writes to King Hugh [IV] of Cyprus, expressing his special affection for the king and assuring him that the privilege the king heard that Pope Clement V granted the late Walter [V] of Brienne, father of Walter [VI] of Brienne, by which those going to assist in the acquisition of the lands of the duchy of Athens would receive a crusading indulgence, which the king heard that Pope John confirmed and expanded to include all of Walter's lands in Romania and elsewhere,<sup>47</sup> if it is so, does not apply to Cyprus or to lands subject to it, on pain of excommunication.

Manuscripts: Reg. Aven. 43, f. 579v, no. 568 (A); Reg. Vat. 104, ff. 474v-475r, no. 1489 (V).

Summaries: *Jean XXII. Lettres communes*, no. 60871; *Bullarium Cyprium*, 3150-151 no. r-497.

Carissimo in Christo filio Hugoni regi Cipri illustri, salutem.

Ea sit in tue libro memorie, fili carissime, inscripta tenaciter fiducie plenitudo quod nos, qui tam in te quam in ceteros catholicos reges et principes orbis terre cunctosque<sup>48</sup> alios fideles ex dispositione Christi, qui eorundem fidelium caput<sup>49</sup> existit, patris officium – quamquam immeriti – exercemus, et Sancta Romana Ecclesia, mater tua, te, reverentem filium et devotionis alumnium, ob intuitum reverentiae filialis quam nobis ut patri et ipsi Ecclesie tanquam matri exhibes, tueque devotionis affectum quem ad utrumque nostrum gerere comprobaris, nos quidem ex paterne dictaque mater ex matere suavitate dulcedinis speciali et tenera dilectione, prosequimur et fovemus, culminis tui robur appetimus, tuique regni felicitatis commoda<sup>50</sup> sinceris affectibus affectamus. Et quamvis tanta sit eiusdem Ecclesie benignitatis et gratie affluentia consueta quod se petentibus exhibet in favoribus propitiam et in gratiis liberalem, est tamen eius circumspectionis tam cauta maturitas quod sane intelligit ut quod plerumque indulget ad gratiam vel favorem non trahatur ad iniquitatis compendium vel resultet in alterius detrimentum. Unde, cum contingit, diligentius informata provide modificationis remedia impendere non postponit.

Presentate siquidem nobis tue magnitudinis petitionis series in nostre mentis consistorium introduxit et nobis etiam patefecit quod ad tui auditum relatio fidedignorum perduxerat quod felicis recordationis Clemens papa V predecessor noster quondam Gualterio<sup>51</sup> comiti de Brena, patri dilecti filii nobilis viri Gualterii comitis de Brena,

47 Hugh may have heard a misinterpretation of Reg. Vat. 95, f. 233r (14 June 1330): "... omnibus vere penitentibus et confessis qui ad partes Romanie cum dicto duce contra s<c>ismaticos invasores et detentores eiusdem ducatus vel alicuius eius partis ... indulgemus que per sedem eandem concedi consuevit transfretantibus in subsidium Terre Sancte."

48 cunctosque] orbis terre *add. sed exp. V.*

49 caput] capud *A.*

50 commoda] comoda *V.*

51 gualterio] galterio *A.*



per privilegium suum indulsit ut euntes in ipsius patris adiutorium ad acquirendas ducatus Athenarum terras illam assequerentur indulgentiam que transfretantibus in Terre Sancte subsidium a Sede Apostolica est concessa, quodque sub nomine nostro ad supplicationem dicti Gualterii privilegium confirmationis vel renovationis antedictum, illudque ad omnes tam Romanie quam alias terras ipsius Gualterii, ut dicitur, extendimus et duximus ampliandum.<sup>52</sup> Quare nobis devote ac humiliter supplicasti ut, cum huiusmodi extensio et ampliatio prefati privilegii possent, ut asseris, tibi tuoque regno Cipri magnum imposterum preiudicium generare, apostolicum in hac parte oportune provisionis remedium adhibere de ipsius sedis potestatis magnitudine multaque clementie rectitudine dignaremur.

Nos igitur, pro tua dictique regni tui ac regnicolarum securitate, intendentes tibi et eis efficaciter et paterne consulere ac de sufficientis cautele presidio utiliter providere, auctoritate apostolica declaramus<sup>53</sup> quod numquam de intentionis nostre processit affectu quod<sup>54</sup> [V 475r] huiusmodi extensio seu ampliatio dicti privilegii, si per nos facte fuerunt, se ad idem regnum Cypri<sup>55</sup> seu ad aliquas terras sibi subiectas extenderent quoquomodo. Quod si forsitan occasione privilegii seu extensionis huiusmodi quispiam contra prefatum regnum Cypri seu terras tibi subiectas iamdictas aliquid presumeret quomodolibet attemptare, incurrat excommunicationis sententiam eo ipso, a qua nisi dumtaxat in mortis articulo preterquam a nobis vel a sede predicta non possit absolutionis beneficium obtinere.

Nulli ergo *etc.* nostre declarationis infringere *etc.*

Datum Avinione, viiii Kalendas Augusti, anno decimoseptimo.

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- 52 ampliandum] ampliandam A.  
 53 declaramus] delaramus a.c. V.  
 54 quod] quod *add.* (f. 475r) V.  
 55 cypri] cipri V.