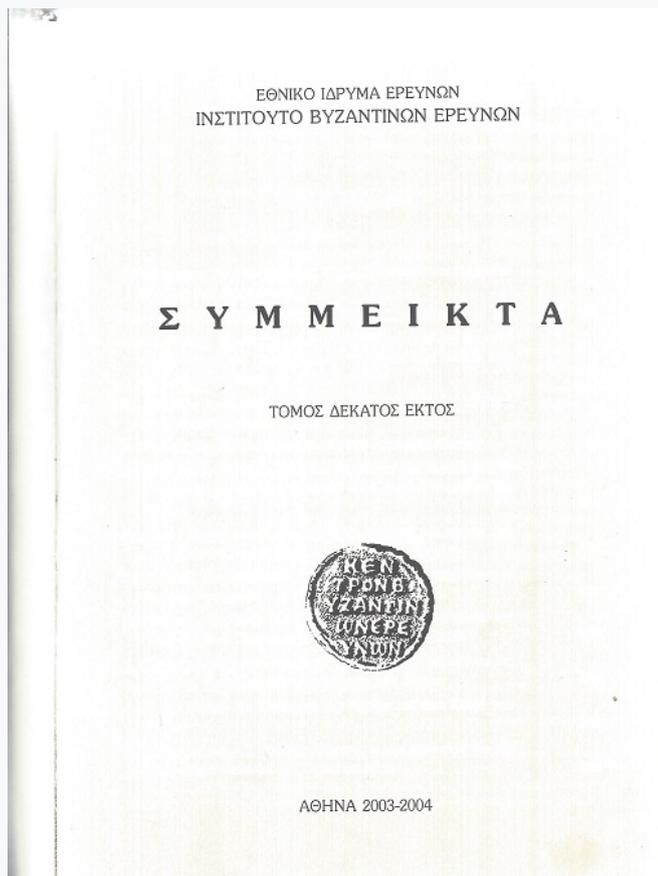


## Byzantina Symmeikta

Vol 16 (2003)

SYMMEIKTA 16



### Cyprus and Euboea in the mid-Fourteenth Century

N. COUREAS

doi: [10.12681/byzsym.905](https://doi.org/10.12681/byzsym.905)

Copyright © 2014, N. COUREAS



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

#### To cite this article:

COUREAS, N. (2008). Cyprus and Euboea in the mid-Fourteenth Century. *Byzantina Symmeikta*, 16, 87–100.  
<https://doi.org/10.12681/byzsym.905>

NICHOLAS COUREAS

CYPRUS AND EUBOEA IN THE MID-FOURTEENTH CENTURY

Venice was the linchpin in the formation of commercial and other relations between Cyprus and Euboea, known as Negroponte during the later middle ages, in the course of the fourteenth century. By this time there was a strong Venetian presence on both those predominantly Greek islands as a result of its political and commercial penetration of the Eastern Mediterranean area from the twelfth century onwards, as regards which the third crusade of 1191 and the fourth crusade of 1204 acted as catalysts. Venetian merchants had begun trading in Cyprus while the island was still a Byzantine province, but their presence there was consolidated and reinforced after King Richard of England conquered the island in 1191 and eventually granted it to Guy of Lusignan, the dispossessed king of Jerusalem, who founded a French Roman Catholic dynasty which was to rule the island for the next three centuries. By the beginning of the fourteenth century Venice together with Genoa was the major trading power on the island. The Venetians had a *baiulo* in Famagusta, which by then had become the chief commercial port of Cyprus, and communities of merchants trading and residing in other cities of the island, such as Limassol and Nicosia itself, the island's capital<sup>1</sup>.

Euboea came under the influence of Venice somewhat later, as a result of the fourth crusade and the subsequent partition of continental Greece and many of the Greek islands among the victorious Latin powers, Venice included, which had taken part in it. Under the terms of the treaty of 1209 the Venetians obtained suzerainty over the so-called *tiers* of Euboea, the three companions of Boniface de Montferrat whom

---

1. W. HEYD, *Histoire du Commerce du Levant au Moyen Age*, Amsterdam 1962, vol. 1, 281-284, 307-308, 359-365; G. HILL, *A History of Cyprus*, Cambridge 1940-1952, vol. 1, 306, vol. 2, 205 and note 4, 214; Eutychia ΠΑΠΑΔΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ, Οί πρώτες ἐγκαταστάσεις Βενετών στην Κύπρο, *Σύμμεικτα* 5, 1983, 303-332; D. JACOBY, The Rise of a New Emporium in the Eastern Mediterranean: Famagusta in the late Thirteenth Century, *Μελέται και Υπομνήματα* 1, 1984, 143-179.

Venice had allowed to establish themselves on the island after 1204. Venice also appointed a *baiulo* there from 1216 onwards in the commercially important city of Chalcis<sup>2</sup>. The Latin emperor Baldwin II of Constantinople in 1248 placed the *tierciers* of Euboea under the suzerainty of Prince William de Villehardouin of Achaia<sup>3</sup>. As a result of Baldwin's grant, the *tierciers* were now subject to both Venice and the prince of Achaia, a somewhat paradoxical situation that contained the potential for conflict. This did not take long to materialize, and from 1255 onwards Prince William and the Venetians were at war over the control of Euboea, for with the death of the *tiercier* Carintana della Carceri without heirs the two other *tierciers* wished to apportion his holdings between them in direct contravention of feudal law. As their feudal overlord, Prince William of Achaia was not prepared to countenance this and came into conflict with the *terciers*. They solicited and obtained Venetian support in the ensuing war with Prince William, which lasted from 1256 to 1262 and spread to the Peloponnese<sup>4</sup>.

A peace treaty was concluded in 1262, for after Prince William's defeat and capture at the battle of Pelagonia by the Byzantine emperor Michael Paleologos and the latter's recapture of Constantinople in 1261 all parties sought to mend their differences in view of the Byzantine resurgence. Euboea continued to remain nominally under the suzerainty of the princes of Achaia right into the fourteenth century, but the Venetians improved their position. After 1256 the Venetian quarter in Chalkis was enlarged, Venice continued to collect a customs tax known as the *commercium maris* throughout Euboea, and was well placed to extend her authority over the island by degrees in the fourteenth century. The *tierciers* depended increasingly on Venetian protection against the Catalans, who entered Greece at the start of the fourteenth century, took over the Duchy of Athens from the de la Roche family whom they had annihilated in battle, and invaded Euboea in 1317<sup>5</sup>. Princess Machaut of Achaia was unable to dislodge them and they withdrew only when a Venetian fleet arrived. Successively weakened by interne-

---

2. HEYD, *Commerce*, 281-282; J. Longnon, The Frankish States in Greece, 1204-1211, in *A History of the Crusades*, ed. K. M. SETTON, Philadelphia/Madison 1969, vol. 2, 239-240.

F. THIRIET, *La Romanie vénitienne* [Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 193], Paris 19752, 87, 93-95.

3. D. JACOBY, *La Féodalité en Grèce médiévale les «Assises de Romanie», sources application et diffusion* [Documents et recherches 10], Paris-The Hague 1971, 22-23, 186.

4. LONGNON, Frankish States, 245-246; Jacoby, *Féodalité*, 190-191; THIRIET, *Romanie*, 123, 150-152;

5. HEYD, *Commerce*, 441, 469; LONGNON, Frankish States, 247-248, 253; JACOBY, *Féodalité*, 192-193, 196-197; P. TOPPING, The Morea, 1311-1364 in *A History of the Crusades*, ed. K. M. SETTON, Philadelphia/Madison 1975, 3, 67, 107-108; K. M. SETTON, The Catalans in Greece, 1311-1380, in *IBIDEM*, 176-179; THIRIET, *Romanie*, 162-163.

cine quarrels and by Catalan and Turkish raids on Euboea in the first half of the fourteenth century, the *terciers* came to regard Venice as the only effective protector of the island. Venice placed garrisons in the forts and cities of the island after 1317 and by the early fourteenth century there was an important colony of Venetian citizens there<sup>6</sup>. The peace treaties of 1319, 1321 and 1331 ended hostilities between Venice and the Catalans, and the last treaty specifically prohibited the Catalans from making new treaties with the Turks or assisting them in raids against Euboea and the smaller Aegean islands under Venetian dominion. Raids conducted regularly against Euboea by Turkish pirates based in the emirates of the eastern Aegean seaboard from the second quarter of the fourteenth century onwards, to an extent where the Venetian *baiulo* was compelled to pay them tribute, were among the developments that made Venetian protection all the more imperative and facilitated the gradual extension of their control<sup>7</sup>. With the purchase of Larmena in 1342 from its heirs, Venice established direct rule over the northern part of Euboea, in 1365 it finally wrested control of Karystos in the same area from the Catalans, and in 1383 and 1390, following the deaths of two *terciers*, it extended its rule over the entire island<sup>8</sup>.

Both Cyprus and Euboea were important in the Venetian trading network. Following the fall of Acre and Tyre, the last Latin strongholds in Syria and Palestine, to the Muslims in 1291 Cyprus in general and the port of Famagusta in particular acquired increasing importance in the carrying trade between Western Europe and the Eastern lands, for papal prohibitions of direct trade with Muslim countries such as Egypt and Syria impelled western merchants to frequent Christian ports such as Famagusta in Cyprus or Laiazzo in Cilician Armenia for the purchase of eastern luxury articles, especially spices. Cypriots profited from this trade chiefly as middlemen, although the demand for Cypriot primary products such as salt, wheat, wine and above all sugar also increased steeply in the fourteenth century<sup>9</sup>. Euboea was important to Venice as a distribution centre for western textiles and woollens throughout continental Greece, while it also exported timber, hides, acorns and wax. Silk from Thebes in

---

6. HEYD, *Commerce*, 468-469; JACOBY, *Féodalité*, 196-198; TOPPING, *The Morea*, 114-115, 121; SETTON, *The Catalans*, 184-186; Elizabeth ZACHARIADOU, *Trade and Crusade, Venetian Crete and the Emirates of Menteshe and Aydin (1300-1415)* [Library of the Hellenic Institute of Byzantine and Postbyzantine Studies 11], Venice 1983, 95.

7. HEYD, *Commerce*, 538; Setton, *The Catalans*, 180.

8. HEYD, *Commerce*, 452; JACOBY, *Féodalité*, 198, 200-201; SETTON, *The Catalans*, 186.

9. D. JACOBY, Το Εμπόριο και η οικονομία της Κύπρου (1191-1489), in *Ιστορία της Κύπρου*, 4. *Μεσαιωνικό Βασίλειον, Ενετοκρατία*, 1, ed. Th. ΠΑΠΑΔΟΠΟΥΛΛΟΣ, Nicosia 1995, 402-431.

continental Greece, grain, and cotton, salt and raisins transported to Euboea from the duchy of Athens were also exported, while low-value cargos such as hides, timber and cereals were transported between Crete, Salonica and central Greece by ships which regularly called in at Euboea<sup>10</sup>.

Cyprus and Euboea were both significant in the Venetian trading network, but nonetheless trade between the two islands was limited, for Euboea did not have the proximity to Cyprus enjoyed by Venetian Crete or Hospitaller Rhodes<sup>11</sup>. One also notes that the published notarial deeds of the fourteenth century that record trade transactions taking place on Cyprus present a marked imbalance as regards transactions concerning Euboea. The published deeds of the Genoese notaries Lamberto di Sambuceto and Giovanni di Rocha who were resident in Famagusta, and which cover the end of the thirteenth century and the first decade of the fourteenth century contain a total of over 1500 documents, but only three in connection with Euboea, and all concern Venetians resident on Euboea as opposed to indigenous Greeks of the island. One of these concerns a procurator appointed in the presence of the Venetian *baiulo* of Famagusta originating from Euboea, the second concerns the sale of a ship owned by a Euboean, and the third concerns a loan taken out by a caulker from Euboea<sup>12</sup>. None of them seem to have been resident on Cyprus. They simply had business of a transient nature in the port of Famagusta.

The first of the three notarial deeds in the registers of the Genoese notary Lamberto di Sambuceto concerning Euboeans and Cyprus is a deed of 31 May 1300<sup>13</sup>. It records the sale of a ship by public auction to the Genoese resident of Famagusta Matthew of Clavaro, who purchased it for the sum of 1,500 white Cyprus bezants. The seller was Homobonus Aicardus, a resident of Euboea who had entrusted the ship to his son Andreas. Andreas died without making a will while in Antalia, a port on the coast of Asia Minor opposite Cyprus, and so Homobonus decided to have the ship sold on Cyprus through the agency of his procurator Andreas of Andelo and of

10. THIRIET, *Romanie*, 337-341.

11. N. COUREAS, Commercial Relations between Lusignan Cyprus and Hospitaller Rhodes in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, *Mesogeios* 4, 1999, 103-117; IDEM, Commercial Relations between Lusignan Cyprus and Venetian Crete in the Period 1300-1362, *Επιτηρίδα Κέντρου Επιστημονικών Ερευνών* 26, 2000, 141-155.

12. Actes passés à Famagouste de 1299 à 1301 par devant le notaire Génois Lamberto di Sambuceto, ed. C. DESIMONI, *Archives de l'Orient Latin*, Paris 1884, vol. 2, nos. CXXVII and CXXXVII; *Notai Genovesi in Oltremare: Atti rogati a Cipro da Lamberto di Sambuceto (Gennaio-Agosto 1302)*, ed. R. PAVONI [Collana Storica di Fonti e Studi 49] (henceforth CSFS), Genoa 1987, no. 100.

13. Actes passés à Famagouste, no. CXXVII.

Nicholas Zugno, the *baiulo* of the Venetians for the whole of Cyprus. Zugno had the ship sold by public auction at the Venetian *loggia* of Famagusta by Gregory, the court officer (*platearius*) of the Venetian commune, and Matthew acquired it as the highest bidder. The second notarial deed concerning Euboeans and Cyprus is one of 7 June 1300<sup>14</sup>. According to its contents, Lady Donia Cavitorendi, the wife of John Pileti, appointed as her procurator Nicholas of Bonosemblante, a resident of Euboea, in the presence of her husband John Pileti and of the Venetian *baiulo* Nicholas Zugno who has been mentioned above. The deed was drawn up in the Venetian *loggia* of Famagusta and was witnessed by the Venetian Armoratus Blancus and by Symon Becharius of Euboea, but unfortunately it does not make clear whether Nicholas of Bonosemblante was to act for Lady Donia in Cyprus, in Euboea or in both places. It is clear from both the above deeds that Venetians of Euboea, while not necessarily resident on Cyprus, had interests on the island and were including it in their commercial activities.

The final notarial deed from Cyprus concerning someone from Euboea is one of 23 February 1302 from the notarial registers of the Genoese Lamberto di Sambuceto<sup>15</sup>. It states that the caulker John of Negroponte (Euboea), who was the son of Michael of Negroponte, acknowledged the receipt of 300 white bezants given to him *in commendam* by Maceus of Clavaro, a Genoese burgess of Famagusta who was acting as the agent of James of Zanterius of Messina in Sicily. John intended to invest this money in a trading venture in Limassol, although the deed does not unfortunately tell us what commodities he intended to buy there, simply stating that he was free to invest the money in the manner he considered as most profitable. On his return to Famagusta he was to return the borrowed capital together with two thirds of the profits to Maceus, who would in turn forward them to James of Zanterius. The fact that John was entitled to keep one third of the profits is noteworthy, given that the eastern Mediterranean was considered a high-risk area in which the borrowers in *commendae* contracts were usually entitled to only one fourth of the profits, but the relative shortness of the journey from one Cypriot port to another involved a minimum of risk and probably explains the favourable terms granted to John<sup>16</sup>. The fact that John was a caulker by trade places him in that group of Venetians known as the *popolari*, who were sailors, artisans or small tradesmen constituting the majority of the Venetians

---

14. Actes passés à Famagouste, no. CXXXVII.

15. CSFS, no. 100.

16. E. ASHTOR, *Levant Trade in the Later Middle Ages*, Princeton 1983, 43.

mentioned in the deeds of Lamberto di Sambuceto. They were not usually resident on Cyprus, but were simply visiting the island on business of a passing nature<sup>17</sup>.

There may have been other Euboeans resident on Cyprus at this time, but as pointed out above Genoese notaries would not have had many Venetians or subjects of Venice as clients, and there are no published notarial deeds drawn up by Venetian notaries for early fourteenth-century Cyprus. Two Venetian documents of 13 May 1310, however, illustrate clearly how both Euboea and Cyprus formed part of an integrated Venetian trading area. In the first document the Venetian duke of Crete, the castellans of Coron and Modon in the Peloponnese, and the *baiuli* of Armenia, Euboea and Cyprus were instructed to enforce a decree voted by the Venetian senate in the previous April which allowed merchants to load pepper and other commodities of the eastern Mediterranean destined for Venice but not to unload them at Adriatic ports other than Venice<sup>18</sup>. It affords an example of the co-operation that the government of Venice could secure between an independent Venetian duke of the Cyclades under the suzerainty of the Frankish princes of Achaia, the duke of Crete, an official appointed by Venice to govern its largest possession, and lesser Venetian officials, namely the *baiuli* and castellans mentioned above, so as to further Venetian interests. Such instances of co-operation were by no means a feature peculiar to the early fourteenth century, for they occurred from the early thirteenth century onwards, as soon as Venice acquired her Aegean and Mediterranean possessions in the wake of the Fourth Crusade of 1204. This particular document, however, is interesting in the specific context of relations between Cyprus and Euboea, inasmuch as it records an instance in which the Venetian *baiuli* in both Cyprus and Euboea had to enforce a Venetian decree in conjunction with other Venetian officials and two Venetian dukes within the wider Venetian trading area extending from the southern Peloponnese to Cyprus and Cilician Armenia.

The second document, a letter to Belleto Faletro, the Venetian *baiulo* on Euboea, and his counsellors, instructed them to publicise the decree summoning the Venetian patrician Giovanni Sanudo to appear within the next three months before the College and the *Quarantia* of Venice in person. Sanudo in command of two armed galleys had been active as a pirate in the waters of Cyprus and Cilician Armenia, robbing people

---

17. M. BALARD, Οι Γενουάτες στο Μεσαιωνικό Βασίλειο της Κύπρου, in *Ιστορία της Κύπρου*, 4, *Μεσαιωνικόν Βασίλειον, Ενετοκρατία*, 1, ed. Th. ΠΑΠΑΔΟΠΟΥΛΛΟΣ, Nicosia 1995, 284; IDEM, Les Vénitiens en Chypre dans les années 1300, *BF* 12, 1987, 594-596.

18. F. THIRIET, *Délibérations des Assemblées vénitiennes concernant la Roumanie*, Paris-The Hague 1966, vol. 1, no. 211.

in both these kingdoms. As a result of his activities Venetians subjects in both these kingdoms had been seized and held as hostages<sup>19</sup>. The *baiulo* was told to publicise this decree in Sanudo's house and the public square within eight days following the arrival at Euboea of the galley bearing these instructions. Furthermore, if Sanudo failed to appear within the stated time limit, they would proceed against him as if he had confessed his guilt. The reference to Sanudo's house in Negroponte indicates that this Venetian patrician had a residence in the Venetian quarter of the city of Chalkis, while his nefarious activities in Cypriot waters show that pirates as well as *bona fide* merchants exploited fully the Venetian trading area established after 1204, which encompassed both Cyprus and Euboea. The lords of Euboea who were allied to Venice and even the Venetian *baiulo* raided the littorals of the remaining Byzantine possessions, while Genoese and Greek pirates likewise scoured the seas and coastlines of Euboea and nearby areas such as Thessaly and the island of Andros. As for those islands of the Cyclades under the rule of Venetian nobles, they too were bases for intrepid pirates venturing as far as Cyprus and Cilician Armenia in search of plunder, and Sanuto's piratical activities must be placed in this wider context<sup>20</sup>.

It is noteworthy, moreover, that the *La Pratica della Mercatura*, written by Francesco Balducci Pegolotti, a Florentine employee of the famous Florentine banking house of Bardi does not mention Euboea at all in the section covering Famagusta, Cyprus, in which the weights, measures and currencies of the various countries or cities trading with Cyprus are given together with their Cypriot equivalents. Euboean weights and measures are mentioned only in the sections on Sicily, Apulia, Florence and Venice itself, all parts of the Italian Peninsula<sup>21</sup>. Yet the published notarial deeds of the Venetian notary Nicola de Boateriis, who was resident in Famagusta from 1360 to 1362, contain 185 documents from Cyprus, 18 of which concern Euboea or Euboeans on Cyprus<sup>22</sup>. The fact that Euboea and its inhabitants appear more frequently in the documents of de Boateriis than in those of di Sambuceto and di Rocha is in part because the latter, as Genoese notaries, would have had fewer Venetian clients than the Venetian notary de Boateriis. Other considerations, however, must also be taken into account. It was in the course of the fourteenth century that

---

19. THIRIET, *Assemblées*, no. 212 and p. 295 (Appendix) no. 212.

20. HEYD, *Commerce*, 442-445.

21. F. B. PEGOLOTTI, *La Pratica della Mercatura*, ed. A. EVANS, New York 1970, 77-102, 113, 145, 167, 198.

22. Nicola de Boateriis, *notaio in Famagusta e Venezia (1355-1365)*, ed. A. LOMBARDO, Venice 1973, nos. 2-3, 18, 36, 52-54, 60, 71, 77-78, 100, 103, 123-124, 152, 157, 167.

Venice completed the process of extending and consolidating its influence over the whole of Euboea. As stated above, not until 1365 were the Catalans expelled from Karystos, and Venice did not control Euboea completely until 1390<sup>23</sup>. On examining more closely the 18 documents alluding to Euboea in the notarial registers of de Boateriis, one observes that eleven, that is well over half of the total, refer to Euboeans living on Cyprus as slaves<sup>24</sup>. The Catalan, Turkish and Genoese raids and warfare conducted in the Aegean area from the second decade of the fourteenth century onwards wreaked devastation on Euboea as well as on other parts of Greece and greatly increased the proportion of Greeks sold as slaves throughout the slave markets of the eastern Mediterranean, including those of Cyprus. The above factors account for the increased contacts between Euboea and Cyprus in the fourteenth century.

The Venetian notary Nicola de Boateriis, who was working in Famagusta between 1360 and 1362, drew up six notarial deeds from Cyprus mentioning Euboeans in contexts other than those regarding the sale or manumission of slaves<sup>25</sup>. Five of these documents concern the provision of loans, and in two of the documents regarding loans there is mention of a Venetian ambassador to the king of Cyprus. The ambassador in question represented John Sanudo, the Venetian duke of Naxos, and the Venetian community of Euboea, although it is unclear whether the Venetians of Euboea despatched such ambassadors to the kings of Cyprus on a regular or on an *ad hoc* basis. The first document is dated 1 September 1360<sup>26</sup>. According to its provisions, the Venetian ambassador Franceschino Miolo, a resident of Euboea who had been sent to Cyprus by the Venetian community there and by Duke John Sanudo of Naxos, reached an agreement with James Capella, a Venetian of Crete, to send some men from Famagusta in Cyprus to Euboea on the ship of James Capella. The latter agreed to make over to the ambassador one third of the transportation fees given to him by the men journeying to Euboea, and he was to give him the money in Famagusta on pain of having to pay him 100 white Cyprus bezants if he defaulted on the deal. James also promised to repay Franceschino Miolo an additional 50 white bezants that he had borrowed from him. Franceschino Miolo is mentioned in another two loan transactions for this period<sup>27</sup>. In the first one, a deed of 7 October 1360, he

---

23. JACOBY, *Féodalité*, 200-201; TOPPING, *The Morea*, 114-115; SETTON, *The Catalans*, 186; ZACHARIADOU, *Trade and Crusade*, 14-15, 95-96.

24. *de Boateriis*, nos. 2, 52-54, 60, 77-78, 100, 123, 152, 157, 167.

25. *de Boateriis*, nos. 3, 18, 36, 71, 103, 124.

26. *de Boateriis*, no. 3.

27. *de Boateriis*, nos. 18, 36.

undertook to repay the nobleman Raynucius Geno 20 gold ducats outstanding from an initial sum of 50 gold ducats, which he had borrowed for purchasing a quantity of drapery. Franceschino had repaid 30 gold ducats already, and now promised to pay another 10 which should have been paid by the preceding August, which he would repay by next January, as well as the final ten ducats, which he promised to pay by next August. In the second transaction, a notarial deed of 29 October 1360, Franceschino appears as the principal guarantor of the Istrian Franciscus Calcagno, who had been lent 25 white Cyprus bezants when in great need by the Venetian nobleman Graciano Georgio. Franciscus Calcagno promised to honour Franceschino's pledge regarding this loan.

By late 1361 there was a new ambassador on Cyprus representing the interests of the Venetians of Euboea and their subjects, a certain Marco Dulceboni who is described in a notarial deed of 13 October 1361 as 'a burgess of Nigroponte'<sup>28</sup>. This ambassador had lent 30 white Cyprus bezants to three inhabitants of Euboea who needed the money to cover the expenses of their journey to Cyprus and other expenses at the court of the king of Cyprus. The document does not unfortunately tell us the exact purpose of their visit, but the three persons concerned, Iani Pavlacha, his wife Theologu and his mother-in-law Maria of la Thana have Greek-sounding names, something which indicates that Cyprus was visited not only by Venetians resident in Euboea but also by Greeks. The three Greeks acknowledged receipt of the loan from the ambassador and promised to repay him within eight days following their arrival back in Euboea. The final deed concerning loans taken out or advanced by inhabitants of Euboea on Cyprus is dated 27 April 1361<sup>29</sup>. A certain Cyriac of Negroponte had borrowed 54 *hyperpera*, the standard currency of Venetian Crete, from Franco Marino of Candia, who was clearly a Venetian of Crete operating in Cyprus. Cyriac promised to repay Marino 24 *hyperpera* within 15 days of reaching Candia in Crete on board the vessel of a certain Marc Padavin of Coron, which was due to set sail there from the port of Famagusta, while the remaining 30 *hyperpera* would be repaid within 15 days following on from the first 15-day period. As his guarantor Cyriac appointed another inhabitant of Euboea, George of Negroponte. This contract, with its references to a borrower and guarantor from Euboea, a Cretan creditor and a ship belonging to someone from Coron, a Peloponnesian harbour under Venetian rule, is illustrative of the geographically diverse and far-flung Venetian trading sphere, which facilitated commercial exchanges between persons of diverse places of origin.

---

28. *de Boateriis*, no. 103.

29. *de Boateriis*, no. 71

The raids and warfare visited upon Euboea from the second decade of the fourteenth century onwards by both Christian and Muslim powers, as a result of which many inhabitants of the island were carried off into slavery, merit a more detailed examination. In 1317 the forces of the Catalan Alfonso Fadrique, an illegitimate son of King Frederick II of Sicily, invaded Euboea, and these included Turkish mercenaries from the emirates of Mentеше and Aydin on the eastern Aegean coast. Only by the despatch of a Venetian fleet were these invaders expelled, and in 1319 the Venetians came to terms with Alfonso. The Turks, however, having started their raids, continued them. They attacked Euboea in 1325 and in 1326, probably at Alfonso's instigation. Large numbers of Turks raided the island in 1328 and again in 1330, by which time the Peloponnese and other Aegean islands were also being raided. In 1332 the Venetians were discussing whether their *baiulo* on Euboea should come to terms with the Turks, and in the same year, following large-scale Turkish raids, the island began paying an annual tribute to them<sup>30</sup>.

The naval leagues organised by Venice, the papacy, the Hospitallers and the kingdom of Cyprus from 1333 onwards secured several victories at sea against the Turks and led to the capture of Smyrna in 1344, but Turkish piratical raids continued nonetheless<sup>31</sup>. In 1339 the Turks appear to have raided Euboea, and the Venetian *baiulo* was instructed to come to an agreement with them<sup>32</sup>. Turkish raids provoked concern at this time on Cyprus itself, and in 1341 King Hugh IV sent the Latin bishop of Limassol, Lambertino della Cecca of Bologna to Venice and to the papacy urging them to organize measures against the Turks. He reported that the Turks had caused widespread destruction throughout the Aegean and Mediterranean, killing the Christian populations and selling them into slavery, while the Byzantine historian Gregoras in describing Turkish piratical raids in the same period stated that the emir of Aydin invaded the Aegean with his fleet and spread terror throughout the Peloponnese, Rhodes, Crete, Thessaly and Euboea<sup>33</sup>. Even during the peace negotiations of 1349 between ambassadors of the emir of Aydin and the papacy at Avignon, in which Venice and Cyprus did not participate, the Venetians protested to the pope that the Turks had begun raiding Euboea and the Peloponnese. A new calamity was visited on

---

30. HEYD, *Commerce*, 538; TOPPING, *The Morea*, 114, 121; SETTON, *The Catalans*, 186; Zachariadou, *Trade and Crusade*, 14-15, 17, 22.

31. N. HOUSLEY, *The Avignon Papacy and the Crusades, 1305-1378*, Oxford 1986, 24-36.

32. ZACHARIADOU, *Trade and Crusade*, 41.

33. L. de MAS LATRIE, *Histoire de l'île de Chypre sous le règne des princes de la maison de Lusignan*, Paris 1852, vol. 2, 180-181; ZACHARIADOU, *Trade and Crusade*, 41-43.

Euboea in 1351, when war broke out between Venice and Genoa. A Genoese fleet sailing from Chios surprised and pillaged Chalkis, the island's capital, and besieged the Venetian possession of Oreos in northern Euboea. The deeds of de Boateriis refer to an Euboean slave on Cyprus who had been captured by the Genoese, probably at around this time<sup>34</sup>.

Famagusta along with Candia in Crete, Rhodes and Theologo in Asia Minor was one of the major slave markets of the fourteenth century, yet the notarial deeds of de Boateriis concerning Euboean slaves invariably refer to the manumission, not the sale, of such slaves. In the first of these documents, a deed of 29 August 1360, Franceschino Miolo, the ambassador of the Venetians on Euboea and of the Duke of Naxos who has been mentioned above, bought by public auction in Nicosia the Euboean slave Demetrios Argomataris and forthwith granted him his freedom<sup>35</sup>. Two Venetian vergers of the Venetian commune in Famagusta witnessed this deed, which is the only reference we have to slaves being sold in Nicosia, and the public auction was conducted by an officer of the king, something suggesting that a slave market may have existed in Nicosia as well as Famagusta. The deed does not mention the price paid for manumitting Demetrios, but the fact that he was purchased by the ambassador of the Venetian commune of Euboea indicates that the commune may have been active in ransoming Euboeans enslaved and then taken to Cyprus. One notes that Marcus Dulceboni, the ambassador who succeeded Franceschino Miolo, is mentioned as a witness in the deed of 11 July 1361 recording the manumission of a Euboean named Demetrios, the son of George Protholati of Negroponte from the area of Xanti, the second witness present being the doctor James of the city of Belluno<sup>36</sup>. George had been manumitted by his master, Constantine of Priore, on payment of the sum of 160 white Cyprus bezants, and one notes that in half of the ten deeds from Cyprus recording the manumission of Euboean slaves the slave himself purchased his freedom from servitude.

The sums paid by slaves from Euboea to purchase their freedom were in general considerably higher than the average purchase price for slaves sold on Cyprus in the mid-fourteenth century. In a deed of 30 March 1361 a certain Michael Cuticha of Euboea was granted freedom by his master, who in this instance was also from

---

34. *de Boateriis*, no. 124; HEYD, *Commerce*, 502-503; SETTON, *The Catalans*, 196; ZACHARIADOU, *Trade and Crusade*, 56.

35. *de Boateriis*, no. 2; B. ARBEL, *Slave Trade and Slave Labor in Frankish Cyprus (1191-1571)*, *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 14 (old series vol. 24), 1993, 157-158.

36. *de Boateriis*, no. 77.

Euboea<sup>37</sup>. The deed states that the master was a certain Demetrios Cuticha from the *casale* of Arachi (Arachne?) in Euboea, which was located in the area of the River Lilandi (Lilantios), and that he was manumitting Michael on account of the affection he bore for his nephew Nicholas. Yet Demetrios acknowledged receipt of 140 white Cyprus bezants from Michael, who had clearly purchased his freedom notwithstanding any affection Demetrios may have had for his nephew Nicholas. In a deed of 5 October 1361 the doctor James of the city of Belluno, who has been mentioned above, granted freedom to his Euboean slave Demetrios from Martello in Euboea in return for 100 white bezants that the latter had given him<sup>38</sup>.

Two deeds of 15 November 1361 recount how the merchant Paul Colonna of Candia, a Venetian from Crete resident in Famagusta, manumitted his slave Maria of Negroponte in return for the sum of 130 white bezants given to him by Maria's father, Demetrios of Callafati of Negroponte<sup>39</sup>. The second of these two deeds specifically states that Maria had been captured by the Genoese, something which probably took place when the Genoese attacked Euboea and laid siege to the Venetian possession of Oreos in 1351, as is mentioned above. Demetrios had paid half the sum to Paul on Cyprus, and he undertook to pay the outstanding half in Crete within two months of his arrival there, on pain of having to pay an annual rate of 20% interest on all his goods if he defaulted on this obligation. The most extortionate price paid by an Euboean slave for obtaining freedom is to be found in a deed of 15 April 1362<sup>40</sup>. It states that Nicholas the son of the late Demetrios of Negroponte was required to pay his mistress Lucia of la Cava, wife of the late John of Traina and resident in Famagusta, the sum of 300 white bezants to obtain manumission, although in practice he paid 200 bezants and was relieved of having to pay the outstanding balance of 100 so long as he made sure that he left the confines of Famagusta and even of Cyprus itself within the next six months, failing which he would be liable to pay the balance. The reasons behind this strange clause are not given.

From the seven deeds of de Boateriis where the price of manumitted slaves is recorded it transpires that the average price paid amounted to 159 white Cyprus bezants. From a table published by B. Arbel listing the sale price of slaves recorded in the notarial deeds of de Boateriis, it transpires that from the twenty-four transactions where a sale as opposed to a manumission price is given an average sale price of 127

---

37. *de Boateriis*, no. 60.

38. *de Boateriis*, no. 100.

39. *de Boateriis*, nos. 123, 124.

40. *de Boateriis*, no. 152; ARBEL, *Slave Trade and Slave Labor*, 158.

white Cyprus bezants is obtained<sup>41</sup>. Therefore owners manumitting their slaves extorted from them considerably more than they could obtain by selling them, and were clearly exploiting their slaves' desire to obtain freedom. One also notes that of the seven documents in *de Boateriis* recording prices paid by slaves to obtain manumission, no less than five concern slaves from Euboea, and that the average price paid by Euboean slaves to obtain manumission was 166 white bezants, somewhat higher than the overall average price for manumission mentioned above. It would appear that Euboean slaves on Cyprus had a particular desire to obtain their freedom and to return to their far-off homeland. Their owners exploited this desire accordingly, while the harsh treatment meted out to Greek slaves on Cyprus must have only increased their wish to obtain freedom. The fifteenth-century Cypriot chronicler Leontios Makhairas vividly describes their sufferings in the mid-fourteenth century, stating that as slaves and captives were brought from the ravaged Greek lands to the islands, including Cyprus, their owners were so hard-hearted towards them that the slaves were throwing themselves to death from the rooftops, throwing themselves into pits or even hanging themselves on account of their hunger and the torments they were made to suffer<sup>42</sup>.

Not all the slaves on Cyprus, however, had cruel masters, and five of the ten deeds of *de Boateriis* recording the manumission of Euboean slaves mention three cases in which they were manumitted without having to offer payment, and two in which they were manumitted on their master's death and were left sums of money. The Euboean slave Demetrios Argomataris, mentioned above, was effectively ransomed by Franceschino Miolo, the Venetian ambassador to Cyprus for Euboea and the duke of Naxos, without being asked to offer any payment. According to a notarial deed of 9 March 1361, a Venetian resident of Famagusta named William Casellarius manumitted his slave Nicholas, the son of the late Peter of Negroponte, on account of the latter's loyal and faithful service towards his master, and no manumission price is mentioned<sup>43</sup>. In a deed of 22 July 1361 Canicus Trivixanus, a verger of the court of the Venetians in Famagusta manumitted his female slave Cali, the daughter of the late John, a barber of Negroponte, without asking for payment but on condition that she continued to live with him so long as he was alive, for after his death she would be free to come and

---

41. ARBEL, *Slave Trade and Slave Labor*, 184-190.

42. LEONTIOS MAKHAIRAS, *Recital concerning the Sweet Land of Cyprus, entitled 'Chronicle'* ed. and transl. R. M. DAWKINS, Oxford 1932, vol. 1, 464, §482.

43. *de Boateriis*, no. 52.

go as she pleased<sup>44</sup>. In his will of 24 February 1361, James of Bochasii of Ferrara not only manumitted his Euboean slave Nicholas of Negroponte, but also decreed that he should be given 50 white bezants from his effects, and instructed the executors of his will to draw up a charter of manumission. Another Euboean beneficiary of James' will was a certain Nicholas Imperiali, a free man who was clearly of some importance, since of the four persons who witnessed the will he appears first on the list of witnesses given at the end of the document. He was bequeathed the sum of four gold florins.<sup>45</sup> Finally there is the will of Sir Nicholas Coffin, a prominent Venetian resident of Famagusta, of 23 June 1362. Sir Nicholas in his will manumitted the female slave Herine (Eirene) of Euboea and left her the sum of 25 white bezants, to be paid to her from the proceeds of his goods<sup>46</sup>.

The notarial deeds of *de Boateriis* prove that by the mid-fourteenth century Euboeans were present on Cyprus not only as slaves who had been sold on the island but also as free men, although the overwhelming majority of the free persons from Euboea resident on Cyprus would have been members of the Venetian community of Euboea as opposed to native Greeks. The strong commercial Venetian presence on Cyprus in conjunction with Venetian control of Crete, Coron and Modon in the Peloponnese, and of Euboea itself by the mid-fourteenth century had created the preconditions for the operation of an international trading network throughout all the above territories. This was made up chiefly but by no means exclusively of Venetian citizens and subjects of Venice living and trading throughout the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean area, and as Turkish and particularly Ottoman power grew in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Venice came to be regarded increasingly as the only power that could effectively protect the region from the Ottoman advance.

---

44. *de Boateriis*, no. 78.

45. *de Boateriis*, no. 157.

46. *de Boateriis*, no. 167.