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Benefits Granted to Slaves or Domestic Servants by their Masters on Lusignan Cyprus: Evidence from the Notarial Deeds, 1362–1458

Korzyści świadczone niewolnikom lub służbie domowej przez ich panów na Cyprze Lusignanów: dowody z aktów notarialnych z lat 1362–1458

Abstract

This paper examines the evidence gleaned from Venetian and Genoese notarial deeds prepared on Cyprus during the period 1362-1458 to examine and discuss the relations between domestic slaves or servants, usually but not invariably female, and their masters, predominantly male. Some of these deeds were wills, containing bequests to servile women who had probably been in long term sexual relationships with their owners and to the illegitimate children who had been born from such relationships. Some of the apprenticeship contracts drawn up in Famagusta, the chief port of the island, also concern illegitimate children born to female slaves or maidservants, who were apprenticed at the owner's expense for a number of years to a master craftsman so as to learn a trade and make a living on their completion of the apprenticeship. Some owners

bequeathed houses to women other than their wives, either as a gift or else stipulating their right to reside in them. Sometimes moveable property such as furniture, bedding, silver or valuable objects were bequeathed, or even sums of money. Clearly at least some masters wished to provide for their mistresses and illegitimate children, thereby ensuring their welfare after their own deaths. By way of comparison, in Genoa masters who had sired illegitimate children with their female slaves frequently avoided paying for their upbringing, differing in this respect. Yet even on Cyprus concern on the part of masters for slaves or servants was not standard practice. Evidence from the fifteenth century Cypriot chronicle of Leontios Makhairas shows that slaves were sometimes treated cruelly, even to the point of driving them to suicide.

Keywords: servants, slaves, owners, Venetians, Genoese, wills, manumissions, benefits, executors

Abstrakt

Niniejszy artykuł analizuje dowody zebrane z weneckich i genueńskich aktów notarialnych, sporządzonych na Cyprze w latach 1362–1458, w celu zbadania i omówienia relacji między niewolnikami domowymi lub służącymi (na ogół kobietami) a ich właścicielami (zazwyczaj mężczyznami). Niektóre z tych aktów były testamentami zawierającymi zapisy na rzecz niewolnych kobiet, które prawdopodobnie pozostawały w długotrwałych związkach seksualnych ze swoimi właścicielami, oraz na rzecz nieślubnych dzieci, które urodziły się z tych związków. Niektóre umowy o naukę zawodu sporządzone w Famaguście, głównym porcie na wyspie, również dotyczą urodzonych przez niewolnice lub służące nieślubnych dzieci, które były przyuczane na koszt właściciela przez kilka lat do rzemiosła, aby po wyuczeniu mieć źródło zarobku na życie. Niektórzy właściciele zapisywali domy kobietom innym niż ich żony albo jako prezent, albo zastrzegając sobie w nich prawo do zamieszkania. Czasami zapisywano w testamencie majątek ruchomy, taki jak meble, pościel, srebro, cenne przedmioty, a nawet sumy pieniędzy. Najwyraźniej przynajmniej niektórzy panowie chcieli zapewnić swoim kochankom i nieślubnym dzieciom dobrobyt po własnej śmierci. Dla porównania: w Genui sytuacja przedstawiała się zgoła inaczej, gdyż tamtejsi panowie, którzy spłodzili nieślubne dzieci ze swoimi niewolnicami, często unikali łożenia za ich wychowanie. Jednak nawet na Cyprze troska panów o niewolników lub służących nie była standardową praktyką. Dowody z XV-wiecznej cypryjskiej kroniki Leontiosa Makhairasa pokazują, że niewolnicy byli czasem traktowani okrutnie, nawet do tego stopnia, że popełniali samobójstwa.

Słowa kluczowe: służący, niewolnicy, właściciele, Wenecjanie, Genueńczycy, testamenty, manumisje, świadczenia, wykonawcy testamentów

Slaves were to be found on Lusignan Cyprus as in all other parts of the Mediterranean World during the later Middle Ages, and there were two slave markets on the island, one in Famagusta, the principal port, and another in Nicosia, the capital. Domestic servants were also to be found in the houses of the nobility and of others wealthy enough to afford them. The extant notarial deeds covering the mid-fourteenth to the mid-fifteenth century, drawn up by one Genoese and two Venetian notaries contain valuable documentation on some aspects of the relations between slaves, domestic servants and their masters, even though imbalances in space, time and ethnicity must be borne in mind. These deeds originate exclusively from Famagusta, giving no indication of how slaves or servants were treated elsewhere on Cyprus. In addition, they cover only the periods 1362–1371 and 1445–1458 from the mid-thirteenth to the mid-fourteenth century, a total of 22 years in all. Finally, the masters and slave owners discussed were Latin Christians, so it is not known how non-Latin masters and slave owners treated their slaves.

Benefits granted to slaves

The first part of the paper will concentrate on slaves, predominantly on manumissions, unconditional or conditional, and on manumissions including gifts in cash or goods. The earliest deeds to be discussed are those of the Venetian notary Nicola de Boateriis, resident in Famagusta between the years 1360–1362. On 7 June 1361 a carpenter from Famagusta named Julian of Tyre, whose ancestors clearly originated from Latin Syria, granted unconditional manumission to his slave John of Neapolis the son of Michael Cuçonadi, who originated from ‘Romania’, namely continental Greece or the Aegean area, in return for the many good services the latter had performed for him. Several months earlier, on 15 October 1360, Julian had made a will, which suggests that he felt he would die soon, something that possibly impelled him to manumit John of Neapolis. In the will he also manumitted two more Greek slaves, Yiannis from Nauplion and Demetris from Demotika.¹ This example of a carpenter who manumitted three slaves shows that slaves on Cyprus were not owned exclusively by the wealthy. On 9 March 1361 Guglielmo Cassellarius, a Venetian resident in Famagusta, emancipated unconditionally

1 *Nicola de Boateriis notaio in Famagosta e Venezia (1355–1365)*, ed. Antonio Lombardo (Venice: Comitato per la Pubblicazione delle Fonti Relative alla Storia di Venezia, 1973), nos. 25, 75 and 156.

his slave Nicholas of Negroponte (Euboea) the son of Peter. Three days later, on 12 March 1361, the executors of the will of another Venetian resident of Famagusta named Jacobus de Bochasiis de Ferrara confirmed that he had manumitted his slave, also named Nicholas of Negroponte, who was also granted 50 white bezants from the testator's assets.² (This had been done according to the will Jacobus had made on 24 February 1361. In this will Jacobus also emancipated another Greek slave named George of Xagora, but without granting him a sum of money or any other gift. The executors of Jacobus's abovementioned will confirmed the emancipation of George of Xagora on 13 March 1361.³

Female as well as male slave were on occasion emancipated by their owners. On 25 May 1362 Theodore of Coron, a Greek from the Peloponnese resident in Famagusta, emancipated his slave Eudocia of Sancto Teodoro unconditionally. The Venetian Marcus Mauroceno, a merchant in Famagusta, emancipated unconditionally his slave Anna de Romania on 13 July 1362, mentioning in the relevant deed that he had bought her from the Venetian Sir Antonio Babin, residing in Famagusta, for 120 white bezants on 6 February 1360.⁴ The spice merchant Nasimbene de Çanbonis from Ferrara, also resident in Famagusta, emancipated his Greek slave Eirene de Vulnero on 27 August 1362, according to the same format as that employed in Marcus Mauroceno's deed of emancipation for Anna mentioned above. The Venetian Sir Nicholas Coffin emancipated three Greek female slaves in his will of 23 June 1362. The first one named Crusi was granted 100 white bezants and a small silver belt, the second one named Maria was granted 50 white bezants and the third one named Eirene, originating from Negroponte, was granted 25 bezants. The manumission of all three was conditional, they had to serve Coffin's Armenian wife Isabella of Laiazzo for the remainder of her life.⁵

Another conditional manumission was that granted by Fetus Semitecolo, a Venetian resident of Famagusta, in his will of 26 June 1362. According to its provisions, his Greek slave John de Vira was emancipated on condition that he continued to serve his master for one year from the date of the will. Fetus emancipated another of his Greek slaves, Demetrius of Romania, in a deed of manumission with the same date and under the same condition, namely that Demetrius should continue to serve him for one more year. In both these documents Fetus cites the

2 *Ibidem*, nos. 52–53.

3 *Ibidem*, nos. 53–54 and 157.

4 *Ibidem*, nos. 165 and 173.

5 *Ibidem*, nos. 167 and 181.

good of his relatives' souls and his own and the remission of his sins as his reasons for manumitting his slaves.⁶ This reason, found in other acts of manumission, might also reflect the high mortality the visitation of the plague in Cyprus in 1361 caused among people, and their corresponding anxiety to make amends and prayers before death.⁷ Perhaps Fetus did not expect to die very soon, however, hence the condition that his abovementioned slaves should continue to serve him for another year prior to gaining their freedom.

A word is in order here regarding the deeds of manumission drawn up by Nicola de Boateriis in which the slaves were emancipated upon payment of a price, usually around 150 white bezants, and in one case, that of the female slave Nicola from Negroponte, for as much as 300 white bezants. This, moreover, was taking place at a time when the average price of slaves in Famagusta was in the region of 130 white bezants. The relatively inflated price paid to the owner in such cases of manumission at a price, clearly reflects the desire of the slaves or their relatives paying such sums to secure the freedom of the slaves in question, a significant proportion of whom originated from the island of Negroponte. In such cases the owners were practising exploitation. Indeed, Benjamin Arbel has suggested plausibly that the persons manumitted in this manner had been captured as slaves so that they could be offered later on for redemption.⁸

The deeds drawn up by the Venetian notary Simeone the priest of San Giacomo dell' Orio, covering the years 1362–1371, also contain examples of slaves manumitted conditionally or unconditionally, or manumitted with gifts. In his will of 23 April 1363, the Venetian Nicoletus Darduino emancipated his female slave named Kali. She may have originated from Negroponte, given that in the same will he bequeathed 50 gold ducats to the poor of this island. Another interesting feature of his will is the provision made for his illegitimate daughter Christina, whom the executors were to arrange to be married, paying such expenses from his assets

6 *Ibidem*, no. 169.

7 Philippe de Mézières, *The Life of St Peter Thomas*, ed. J. Smet (Rome: Institutum Carmelitanum, 1954), 97–100.

8 *Nicola de Boateriis notaio in Famagosta e Venezia (1355–1365)*, nos. 48, 56, 60, 77, 90, 100, 123, 154, 164 and 172; Benjamin Arbel, „Slave Trade and Slave Labor in Frankish Cyprus (1191–1571)”, *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* XIV (1993): 157–158; Nicholas Coureas, „Cyprus and Euboea in the mid-Fourteenth Century”, *Byzantina Symmeikta* XVI (2008): 96–100.

as they saw fit.⁹ In some notarial deeds the testators specify that their illegitimate sons or daughters were by a female servant or slave. Clearly in such cases the fathers of such natural children by their slaves or servants were anxious to provide for them, something to be discussed in greater detail below.

The abovementioned Fetus Semitecolo enfranchised unconditionally all his remaining slaves, male and female, in a will dated 10 February 1363, without specifying their number, ages or ethnicities.¹⁰ In his will of 8 November 1369, the Venetian merchant and resident of Famagusta Giovanni Contareno bequeathed to his former female slaves Kali and Theodora 50 bezants each but only if they were prepared to accompany his wife and executor Jacoba wherever the latter might wish. Both slaves have Greek names, but in the absence of a specified place of origin it is uncertain whether they were Greek, for the owners and even the sellers of slaves sometimes gave Greek or Latin names to slaves belonging to other ethnic groups. Contareno also enfranchised his slave George, but on condition that he should serve Jacobina for one more year.¹¹ The Venetian Çaninus Ranfo, a merchant living in Famagusta, manumitted his slave Antonio Ranfo in his will dated 20 July 1371, also bequeathing him 25 Venetian ducats were he to go to Venice, a sum he would forgo if he did not journey there. Clearly Çaninus Ranfo was bequeathing this sum as an incentive for Antonio to depart from Cyprus to Venice, perhaps for some business Çaninus had there, although the reasons why Antonio should go to Venice is not stated. A rare case of a female testator manumitting her slave is provided by Iacoba also called Rosa, the widow of the abovementioned Giovanni Contareno. In her will of 1 April 1370, she emancipated unconditionally a female slave of hers named Eirene.¹²

Some of the slaves appearing in the deeds of the Venetian notary Simeone the priest of San Giacomo dell' Orio acquired gifts along with their freedom. According to the testament drawn up by Michael Çaubach, also known as Costas from Candia on Venetian Crete, all his female and male slaves not enfranchised up until then were to be freed. Three male

9 Catherine Otten-Froux, „Un notaire vénitien à Famagouste au XIVe siècle. Les actes de Simeone, prêtre de San Giacomo dell' Orio (1362–1371)”, *Thesaurismata* XXXIII (2003), no. 13.

10 *Ibidem*, no. 177.

11 *Ibidem*, no. 185; Danuta Quirini-Poplawska, „The Venetian Involvement in the Black Sea Slave Trade (Fourteenth to Fifteenth Centuries)”, in: *Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Eastern Mediterranean (c. 1000–1500 CE)*, eds. Reuven Amitai and Christoph Cluse (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 217), 278.

12 Otten-Froux, „Un notaire vénitien à Famagouste au XIVe siècle”, nos. 193 and 197.

slaves of his named Demetris, Costas and Theodore were granted 10 white bezants each. Furthermore, his male slave Yiannis was bequeathed 300 white bezants while his female slave Eudocia received 50 white bezants, with another female slave named Maria granted 10 white bezants. The reasons why the sums given to these slaves varied are not stated. One can presume length or quality of service, or perhaps some unstated kinship.¹³

Another female testator named Dimença, the widow of the White Venetian Faraximatus Semitecolo, made grants for slaves in her will of 9 March 1363. She emancipated a female slave of hers named Kali from Gallipoli, bequeathing her 25 white bezants to enable her to get married. Appointing as her executor her son Fetus, she granted his female slave Eudocia 100 bezants to help her get married, also stipulating that the expenses on Eudocia's account incurred by Fetus, amounting to 234 bezants, should be reimbursed to him. She also granted ten bezants to Renica, a female slave of Fetus, as well as ten bezants each to two unnamed female slaves belonging to the daughter of a woman named Nacle. Finally, she bequeathed 15 white bezants to Demetrius, a slave of her son.¹⁴ These donations are interesting for several reasons. Firstly, the testator was female, unlike the predominantly male testators recorded in the notarial deeds. Secondly, all but one of her gifts in money were to female slaves, some of whom did not even belong to her. Thirdly, the gifts made to slaves not belonging to her, and who were not going to be emancipated, constitute proof that slaves in Famagusta could receive gifts from persons other than their own owners, although such persons must have been closely connected to the owners in order to become acquainted with their slaves and made bequests to them.

The 'White Venetian', a designation given to non-Latin Christians under Venetian protection, Fetus Semitecolo, who was of Syrian extraction, also contains an interesting provision regarding his slaves in his will of 3 April 1363. Fetus has already been mentioned above as the son of the widowed Dimença Semitecolo. He emancipated all his slaves, male and female, granting each of his emancipated male slaves the sum of 50 white bezants and to each of his emancipated female slaves 100 white bezants. It is not stated why the female slaves were to receive twice as much as their male counterparts, but one plausible explanation is that the greater sum was given to them by way of a dowry for their future marriages.¹⁵ The will of the Venetian merchant and resident of Famagusta

13 *Ibidem*, no. 4.

14 *Ibidem*, no. 5.

15 *Ibidem*, no. 6.

Antonio Bartolomei, dated 12 April 1363, likewise contains interesting provisions regarding sums bequeathed to slaves or to their children. Antonio bequeathed 150 bezants to Caterina, his illegitimate daughter by his female slave Margarita, so as to enable her to get married. Were Caterina to die before marriage his sum would go to the executors. Here one has a clear case of a testator acknowledging his illegitimate child by a slave and making provision for her. Antonio bequeathed the above-mentioned Margarita 50 white bezants, stating that on her emancipation she would also receive a fully furnished bed with its bedding. In addition, he stipulated that Margarita should be sent to Venice to stay in the residence of a certain Vetor Muse at his own expense until she should acquire her freedom. If she were unwilling to do this, then she would not be emancipated. Clearly, Antonio wanted the mother of his illegitimate daughter Caterina to leave Cyprus. Given that he was married with a legitimate daughter, perhaps Margarita's continued presence on Cyprus was an embarrassment.¹⁶

The will of Giovanni del Zastel, citizen of Venice, burgess of Famagusta and inhabitant of the same city, dated 10 October 1364, likewise granted gifts to slaves and former slaves, but the emancipation of the latter was conditional. He bequeathed 50 white bezants to his former slave Eirene, and another 50 to her namesake Eirene, the slave of a lady named Fine who was the sister of a certain man named Costa. He bequeathed 50 bezants apiece to his female slaves Maria and Caterina, 50 bezants to his male slave Torsoletus and 25 bezants to his male slave Theodore. As a condition for their emancipation, he decreed that all his male and female slaves would not be sold but would serve his executors for one year after the date of his death, and would then be freed.¹⁷

Emancipations of slaves appear infrequently in the notarial deeds of Antonio Folieta, a Genoese notary resident in Famagusta in the mid-fifteenth century. The enslavement of Greeks had declined greatly by this time on account of legislation passed in Sicily and in lands of the kingdom of Aragon during the early fourteenth century forbidding the use of Greek slaves and their sale to Muslims, even if this legislation was fitfully applied.¹⁸ This prohibition, however, did not include Bulgarians, Russians, Circassians and other inhabitants of the Black Sea region, even if like the Greeks they were Orthodox Christians, for they continued

16 *Ibidem*, no. 8.

17 *Ibidem*, nos. 19 and 175.

18 Aysu Dincer, „Enslaving Christians: Greek Slaves in Late Medieval Cyprus”, *Mediterranean Historical Review* XXXI (2016), 5–6.

to be traded right down to the mid-fifteenth century. Furthermore, the closure of the Black Sea in the mid-fifteenth century on account of the Ottoman conquests drove up the price of slaves greatly, both on Cyprus and throughout the Mediterranean.¹⁹ Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the first three acts of manumission in Folieta's deed are unconditional, even if no gifts in cash or kind are attached. All three acts declare that the slavery introduced by the law of nations contravened natural law whereby all persons were born free. Nonetheless, it provided the remedy of emancipation.

The first act dated 14 March 1453 concerned the emancipation of a Bulgarian male slave named Joseph, who was 18 years old and had been bought in Turkey. His owner, a White Genoese of Syrian extraction named James of Jubail, was emancipating him with the consent of his father Peter. The second act dated 22 December 1453 concerned the emancipation of the female Circassian slave named Elena, who was 27 years old. Her owner Vincent Savina, a citizen of Genoa and the son of Paul. Acknowledged the numerous benefits he had received from her as additional justification for freeing her from servitude. In the third act dated 9 February 1456 another citizen of Genoa named Ieronimus de Loreto the son of Francis emancipated his Russian slave Maria, 24 years of age, likewise citing the many services and benefits received from her as a reason for freeing her. All three slaves originated from lands near or bordering the Black Sea. None were ethnically Greek.²⁰ One possible exception to this rule was the instance of Chiriacus de Strovili. He was manumitted conditionally in a deed whereby Petrus de Camardino, as executor of his deceased brother Giovanni, sold for 23 Venetian ducats the rights he had over Chiriacus, formerly Giovanni's slave, to Andreas Justinianus. Giovanni had freed Chiriacus on condition that he should serve him and his years over the next seven years, an obligation now transferred to Andreas. Chiriacus was possibly a Cypriot of Greek ethnicity originating from Strovili, a *casale* located to the west of Famagusta.²¹

19 Quirini-Poplawska, „The Venetian Involvement in the Black Sea Slave Trade”, 270–286; Johannes Pahlitzsch, „Slavery and the Slave Trade in Byzantium in the Palaeologan Period”, in: *Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Eastern Mediterranean (c. 1000–1500 CE)*, eds. Reuven Amitai and Christoph Cluse (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2017), 176–177.

20 *Gènes et l'Outre-Mer : Actes notariés rédigés à Chypre par le notaire Antonius Folieta (1445–1458)*, eds. Michel Balard, Laura Balletto, Catherine Otten-Froux (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2016), nos. 41, 69 and 144.

21 *Gènes et l'Outre-Mer*, no. 200; Gilles Grivaud, *Villages désertés à Chypre (Fin XIIe – Fin XIXe siècle)* (Nicosia: Archbishop Makarios III Foundation, 1998), nos. 162, 455 and 557.

One slave who received a particularly generous bequest was the natural daughter of a testator named Ianinus Ratus, originating from the French bishopric of Corbeil. In his will dated 3 November 1453, he stated that for the good of his soul he was bequeathing to an illegitimate daughter of his 70 gold Venetian ducats, corresponding to roughly 280 white bezants. He had conceived her with a Russian slave named Maria, belonging to Lord Imperialis Justiniani, and the daughter had been born on the Aegean Island of Chios, a Genoese possession at the time. Ianinus did not know his daughter's name because he had been absent at the time of her birth. Clearly, he was sentimentally attached to this daughter, despite her illegitimate status and his ignorance of her name.²²

It is clear from the above that owners wishing to grant benefits to their slaves had various options at their disposal. They could emancipate their slaves unconditionally, conditionally, sometimes providing gifts in cash or kind to the enfranchised slaves. On occasion they even granted gifts in cash or kind to slaves belonging to others. More female than male slaves received such benefits, reflecting the fact that the slaves likeliest to be emancipated were domestic servants who had the opportunity to get to know their owners directly. Not all slaves on Cyprus, however, had the good fortune to receive benefits from their owners. The fifteenth century Cypriot chronicler Leontios Makhairas, himself of Greek ethnicity, states that the Cypriots deserved to lose Famagusta, the island's principal port, to the Genoese as a result of the Genoese invasion of 1373. Indeed, they deserved to lose all of Cyprus to them on account of their sins. These included their cruel treatment of the Greek slaves brought over to Cyprus for sale on account of the piratical raids against Greece and the Aegean area, a cruelty that drove them, unable to withstand these torments and hunger, to suicide. It is noteworthy that Makhairas states nothing about the treatment of slaves who were not Greek. Nevertheless, his testimony affords evidence concerning owners who were unkind towards their slaves.

Benefits granted to servants and those related to them

Servants as well as slaves were part of the labour force in Lusignan Cyprus and there are various references to them in the notarial deeds of the period under discussion. In this respect Cyprus resembles other Western or Western ruled societies of the Later Middle Ages. In Venice

22 *Gênes et l'Outre-Mer*, no. 66.

masters and mistresses held ties of strong affection to servants of the opposite or the same sex, bequeathing goods, capital or dowries to their servants or sums of money.²³ But there is another side to the coin. The price of slaves went up in Cyprus, especially after the middle of the fifteenth century as explained above, so servants were possibly cheaper than slaves. In medieval Genoa servants could be had simply by granting them food and clothing, not salaries, while female domestic slaves working as servants in wealthy households could be made to serve as concubines. Poor girls and boys from the region of Liguria employed as servants were cheaper than expensive exotic slaves, driving them out of the market.²⁴ Perhaps a similar process was at work on late medieval Cyprus. On Cyprus masters and mistresses likewise had various options at their disposal if they wished to grant them benefits. Nevertheless, the main distinctions recorded in the notarial deeds are between servants receiving sums in cash, either in in bequests or other forms of documentation, servants or their relations receiving gifts in kind, property or even the benefit of becoming apprenticed and thereby learning a trade.

In his will of 24 February 1361 Jacobus de Bochasiis de Ferrara, mentioned above in connection with the manumission of two slaves, also bequeathed 30 white bezants to a certain Giovanni de Silavista for having served him during the time he had been in Jacobus's employment.²⁵ Bertolotus de Carvacere, a citizen of Venice and resident of Famagusta who was planning to travel to the Holy Places for the remission of his sins and feared to die intestate while travelling, made a will on 14 April 1364 in which among other bequests he granted 40 white bezants to his domestic servant (*famulus*) George. In 1362 the Venetian Nicoletus Contareno the son of Marcus drew up his will while ill, bequeathing eight white bezants to his female servant Caterina and another 20 white bezants to his domestic servant (*famulus*) Vitali.²⁶ Perhaps domestic servants in general received greater sums than other types of servants on account of their relative proximity to their masters or mistresses. Hence Giovanni Contareno, the son of the Venetian nobleman Dardi Contareno, bequeathed in his will dated 8 November 1369, left 50 white

23 Joanne M. Ferraro, *Venice, History of the Floating City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 78.

24 Steven A. Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese, 958–1528* (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 102.

25 Otten-Froux, „Un notaire vénitien à Famagouste au XIVE siècle”, no. 157.

26 *Ibidem*, nos. 18 and 181.

bezants apiece to his female servants Dopna Palma and Margerita, who were staying with him at the time.²⁷

Normally these wills do not state the explicit duties and occupations of servants receiving bequests, but there are exceptions. In the will that he drew up on 20 July 1371 the Venetian merchant Çaninus Ranfo, also mentioned above in connection with the emancipation of some slaves, bequeathed 25 white bezants to Dame Çana, who was serving him at the time. In addition, he bequeathed ten white bezants to Dame Maria, formerly a servant of his executor Bertolinus de Carpano of Venice. He bequeathed three golden ducats to his scribe, corresponding to 12 white bezants, one golden ducat to Liberali de Monte who was the skipper of his ship and one golden ducat to his sailor Antonio. From this will one learns that the testator besides being a Venetian merchant also owned a ship. As in previous cases, however, the largest monetary bequest was granted to the woman who was serving him in a domestic capacity.²⁸ Maria was another female domestic servant granted four Venetian ducats, that is approximately 16 white bezants, by her master Giovanni Antonio de Schanavino de Moneglia in his will of 9 July 1457. Giovanni, who described her as a former servant of Pagano de Marinis now serving him, stated that he was granting her this sum for the good of his soul and on account of her services towards him.²⁹

Masters on occasion bequeathed properties to servants or those related to them. In his will dated 12 April 1362, Iacomelus Viadro, a Venetian resident of Famagusta, appointed Simon Dacre, a Venetian barber also living in Famagusta as his sole executor. Informing him that all his assets were to be bequeathed in equal shares to the three brothers Georginus, Domenicus and Nicolinus, illegitimate sons of his whom he had conceived with his servant Marussa of Famagusta, he stipulated that Viadro was to administer their inheritance until his abovementioned sons reached the age of majority. When asked whether he had a lawful wife, he answered in the affirmative, adding however that he had not been living with her at the time of her death, nor was he on familiar terms with her. When asked whether he had any children by his wife, he answered in the negative. It is apparent that the testator, estranged from his lawful wife, was in a relationship with a female servant of his by whom he had had three illegitimate sons, to whom he now bequeathed all his property. He left nothing to his servant Marussa, which suggests

27 *Ibidem*, no. 185.

28 *Ibidem*, no. 193.

29 *Gênes et l'Outre-Mer*, no. 212.

that she had died in the meantime, even if this is not explicitly stated.³⁰ Sir Andreas Catalano of Candia in Crete, the son of Franguli and a Venetian resident in Famagusta, was another testator who made a bequest to an illegitimate child he had conceived with a female slave of his. In his will dated 22 May 1364 he bequeathed to his natural daughter, born of his slave Maria, the sum of 50 *hyperpera* as well as an annual allowance of 25 measures of corn. Clearly, he wished to provide for her, despite her illegitimate status and the fact that her mother had been a slave.³¹

The acts of the abovementioned Genoese notary Antonio Folieta have several documents regarding servants in Famagusta, with reference to benefits conferred upon them by their masters. A deed of 12 July 1452 records how Marium of Famagusta, a former servant of the late Marcus Schandar, appointed the notary Andreas del Fero as her procurator, authorising him to handle all matters and disputed that might arise with anyone over the inheritance of the late Marcus. She did this on the advice of her neighbours, Nicholas de Neviles and Vasili of Famagusta. One observes here that Nicholas de Neviles was the husband of Gozi, a daughter of Marcus Schandar, according to an earlier deed dated 20 June 1452. Clearly contention did arise, for on 3 December 1453 Andreas del Fero reached an agreement with a certain Joseph Mathoc, referred to as the tutor and guardian of Jacobina the daughter of Nicolinus Schandar, who was clearly related to Marcus Schandar. According to its terms, Marcus's property would be divided equally between Jacobina and Marium, described here as Marcus Schandar's concubine. According to the terms of this agreement, moreover, Gozi, now described as a widow (*ihera*) was excluded from any share of the inheritance, something that she nonetheless acquiesced in. Clearly Marcus had made provision for his concubine Marium in his will, something contested, to begin with at least, by his daughter Gozi.³²

Two more deeds are apprenticeship contracts for the illegitimate sons of persons living in Famagusta. In the first deed dated 15 October 1452 Nicolinus Cigala, a burgess of Famagusta, agreed to grant his natural son James, who was around nine years old, as an apprentice to the master of adzes Symon Paysano de Corniliano who would teach him his trade. James, who consented to this arrangement, was to stay apprenticed to Symon for the next ten years and not to leave without the latter's permission. Symon for his part promised to have his apprentice James fed,

30 *Nicola de Boateriis notaio in Famagosta e Venezia*, no. 158.

31 Otten-Froux, „Un notaire vénitien à Famagouste au XIVe siècle”, no. 192.

32 *Gènes et l'Outre-Mer*, nos. 10, 12, and 68.

clothed and shod over the same period of time, in sickness and in health, and to teach him his trade.³³ In the second deed dated 23 October 1453 Peter Villa, a resident of Famagusta, apprenticed his natural son Augustine, aged around ten, over the next six years to Gregorio Italiano, the owner of a ship. Augustine was to serve Gregorio as a servant both at home and on board his ship, guarding his possessions without fraud and not departing without his explicit permission. Gregorio in turn undertook to provide food, drink and clothing for Augustine during the time of his apprenticeship.³⁴ The mothers of the two illegitimate boys mentioned above are not mentioned, but it is reasonable to assume that they were servants or even slaves of the fathers who had them apprenticed so that they could earn a living on reaching adulthood. These apprenticeship contracts bear similarities with apprenticeship contracts in late medieval Genoa in two respects. The first is that the persons apprenticed were boys, and the second concerns the terms of service, ten and six years respectively. In Genoa six years was a standard term of apprenticeship, but skilled caulkers and shipwrights needed longer terms, a parallel with Cyprus where the abovementioned James was apprenticed for ten years to become a master of adzes. Likewise in Genoa females seem to have been excluded from apprenticeship contracts, with only a few recorded as training in this manner.³⁵

In his will of 29 February 1456 Ieronimus de Loreto, a citizen of Genoa, made several provisions for male and female servants. He bequeathed 50 white bezants to Yana, the daughter of Franca Litra, who at that time was serving a certain Maria de Reymondo. He also bequeathed to Lichinus, a male domestic servant of his, 100 white bezants and a pair of stirrups that he had in his house, although this was to be given to him at the discretion of Maria, a former servant of his. The allusion in this will and in others mentioned above to former servants shows that testators sometimes maintained contact with the persons who had served them even after the latter had left their service.³⁶ More unusual is a contract of 7 April 1456, according to the provisions of which Timothy the archbishop of Tarsus and of the Nestorian church of SS Peter and Paul granted a long lease lasting for 29 years of a house situated in Famagusta and belonging to the same church to Antonio Cigala, a citizen of Genoa, and to Andriola, an illegitimate daughter of his he had conceived with Maria,

33 *Ibidem*, no. 25.

34 *Gênes et l'Outre-Mer*, no. 59.

35 Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, 276–277.

36 *Gênes et l'Outre-Mer*, no. 150.

a woman in his service. Andriola was only 18 months old at the time, hence the need for a long lease. The rent payable annually amounted to 40 bezants in the currency of Genoese Famagusta and was to be paid to the archbishop or his representative by Antonio himself, by Andriola or by some other person acting on their behalf. This agreement would cease to be valid if Antonio or any of the parties liable to pay rent ceased to pay it, the house reverting unencumbered to the Nestorian Church. The archbishop promised not to increase the rent during the specified period, while Antonio for his part promised to maintain the house in good condition. At the end of the 29-year term, Antonio promised to return the house to the archbishop or to the Nestorian Church with all improvements made to it, although he also had the option of returning it before the expiry of the 29-year lease.³⁷

Antonio Cigala, son of the late Lanzarote, made detailed provisions for the abovementioned Maria who had been in his service, for Andriola and for other illegitimate children he had had by Maria in his will dated 20 July 1456. He undertook to have Maria, described here as being of Circassian extraction, to Antonio de Villafranca, promising to grant as a dowry, 2000 bezants, of which 40 would be given in Venetian ducats and the remainder in textiles, gold, silver and furniture. He stipulated that this dowry was to be paid out of his goods, the value of which Antonio de Coronato and Peter de Gravano would estimate jointly. He also stipulated that Maria would be married according to the customs of Genoa and through the offices of Antonio de Coronato. Regarding the house in Famagusta that he had leased for a 29-year term from the Nestorian Church, as mentioned above, he stipulated that Andriola should gain possession of it and that the annual rent of 40 bezants was to be paid to the church by her or her lawful representative from moneys of his in the possession of Peter de Gravano. Furthermore, he decreed that the said house should be rented for a higher sum and that the revenues from this rent should be placed in the Court of the Syrians, to accumulate there to the benefit of the said Andriola.³⁸

Antonio Cigala made provision for other illegitimate children of his in his will. He decreed that his natural son Ciprianus who resided in Genoa, whom he had conceived with his maidservant Maria, should be fed and clothed from his own assets and should receive support to attend a school of grammar. If, God willing, he attained the age of twenty, he should be given 100 ducats from Antonio's goods, so that he could travel

37 *Gênes et l'Outre-Mer*, no. 156.

38 *Ibidem*, no. 179.

by sea and enjoy himself and could always, wherever he might go from any place or journey, be supported in the house and from the goods of Antonio. He also affirmed his conviction that his former maidservant Maria, who was living with him, was pregnant and expecting a child by him. He decreed that if the baby born as a result were masculine, he should be raised at his expense and should be given 100 Venetian ducats on reaching the age of twenty, being treated in all other respects in the same manner as his abovementioned son Ciprianus. If, however, the baby born happened to be feminine, he decreed that she should be raised, fed and clothed from Antonio's goods. Should she, God willing, reach the age of fourteen, she should be married with the expenses paid from Antonio's goods and should be given by way of a dowry 3.000 bezants in the currency of Famagusta, in cash. This will in particular, with its detailed provisions, shows the extent to which some persons went to provide for their servants, even making provision for children not yet born.³⁹ In this respect Antonio was very different from those masters or owners who had pregnant slaves or maidservants and were unwilling to pay Pammatone, the hospital for abandoned new born foundlings, to raise such children. Despite the imposition of fines on the fathers of these babies and of various penalties on the mothers who were free women who had refused to reveal the father's identity, this hospital continued to be flooded with foundlings. This was a vivid testimony to the indifference or inability of their fathers and mothers to care for them.⁴⁰

It is clear from the above that those who had servants as well as slaves could make provision not only for them, but also for illegitimate children they had by these servants. It is noteworthy that in the case of servants those conferring benefits were always male and the recipients were mostly maidservants or their illegitimate children of either sex. As in the case of slaves, one should not assume that all masters made provisions for their servants or any children they might have had by them. Some testaments simply make no mention of servants or slaves receiving benefits. Whether this was because the masters or owners acting as testators were indifferent to their fate, or simply did not possess any servants or slaves, is a question that cannot be answered.

39 *Gênes et l'Outre-Mer*, no. 179.

40 Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, 304–305.

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