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# Success or Failure? Multicultural Education on Lusignan Cyprus, An Island Kingdom at the Crossroads of Several Cultures

## Sukces czy porażka? Edukacja wielokulturowa na Cyprze Lusignanów, wyspie-królestwie na styku kilku kultur

## Abstract

In this paper the kinds of education available to the population of the Lusignan Kingdom of Cyprus, founded in 1192 following the island's conquest by King Richard I of England during the Third Crusade, shall be discussed. The extent to which Latins and Greeks on Cyprus made use of the education available on the island or pursued studies abroad on account of the lack of suitable schools of further education, a theme that has relevance today, will be dealt with, as will differences in the education received by the clergy, Latin and Greek, and by lay persons, given that much though by no means all of the education on offer was offered by members of the clergy, Latin or Greek. The availability of libraries, language education, especially when one considers that Arabic was widely spoken on Cyprus as well as Greek and the Romance languages, and the phenomenon of Cypriot students studying abroad will also be examined

and discussed. Trends and developments in education on Cyprus will be analysed within a wider contemporary European context. The subjects studied by most students going abroad, law, theology, medicine, and art, as well as the reasons why they were studied will also be examined. Finally, the shortcomings of the education available in Cyprus, what was done to remedy such shortcomings and to what extent these attempts succeeded is a theme running right through this paper.

**Keywords:** education, schools, teachers, libraries, universities, translations, grammar, scholarships

## Abstrakt

Niniejszy artykuł omawia typy edukacji dostępnej dla ludności Królestwa Cypru pod rządami Lusignanów, państwa założonego w 1192 roku po zdobyciu wyspy rok wcześniej przez króla Ryszarda I Lwie Serce w trakcie jego wyprawy do Ziemi Świętej, którą historycy później nazwali III wyprawą krzyżową. Zostanie poruszona kwestia, w jakim stopniu Łacinnicy i Grecy na Cyprze korzystali z dostępnej na wyspie edukacji lub podejmowali studia za granicą z powodu braku odpowiednich szkół wyższego szczebla. Omówione zostaną także różnice w edukacji otrzymywanej przez duchowieństwo, zarówno łacińskie, jak i greckie, oraz osoby świeckie, zważywszy na fakt, że znaczna, choć nie cała, część dostępnej edukacji była oferowana przez członków duchowieństwa, łacińskiego lub greckiego. Przeanalizowana zostanie dostępność bibliotek, edukacji językowej, zwłaszcza biorąc pod uwagę, że na Cyprze powszechnie używano arabskiego, greckiego i języków romańskich, oraz obecność cypryjskich studentów podejmujących studia za granicą. Trendy i rozwój edukacji na Cyprze zostaną przeanalizowane w szerszym, współczesnym kontekście europejskim. Przedmiotem analizy będą również przedmioty wybierane przez większość studentów wyjeżdżających za granicę, takie jak prawo, teologia, medycyna i sztuka, a także powody, dla których były one studiowane. Ponadto zostanie również poruszony temat bolączek związanych z dostępną na Cyprze edukacją, działań mających na celu ich uzupełnianie oraz stopnia efektywności takich prób.

**Słowa klucze:** edukacja, szkoły, nauczyciele, biblioteki, uniwersytety, tłumaczenia, gramatyka, stypendia

## Introduction

The Lusignan kings ruled Cyprus between the years 1191–1474, following the conquest of the island from Byzantium by King Richard I of

England during the Third Crusade. Under their rule a multicultural society developed. It included Latins, namely people of French, Italian and Spanish origin, who comprised the ruling group and numerous merchants and artisans, Greeks, the majority population mainly based in the countryside, but also various denominations of Oriental Christians and Jews. The various religious and ethnic groups educated their members in the religious and cultural traditions of their group. The extant source material on education, however, concerns Latins and Greeks. Therefore, this paper will examine and discuss their education and how it developed over time during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Reference will be made to the schools and teachers imparting education to the Latins and Greeks as well as to the library collections that existed in Cyprus in the possession of prominent individuals. The different opportunities for education available to the clergy and laity among both Latins and Greeks will be examined. The education of Cypriots outside Cyprus and the reasons why they went abroad to study will also be discussed.

## Education on Cyprus and its Limitations

The earliest information on education in Lusignan Cyprus derives from the Foundation Rule of the Greek monastery of Our Lady of Makhairas in the Nicosia district, completed in 1210. A chapter of the rule states that the boys of the laity should not come to the monastery to learn sacred texts before beginning to grow a beard. It also states that boys wishing to become monks can be placed in a specially designated cell in the monastery to learn the divine offices, the psalter "and all the other services."[1] Other major Greek monasteries like St George of Mangana near Nicosia or the monastery of Neophytos the recluse near Paphos must have had similar arrangements, but no contemporary evidence survives. The education offered by Greek monastic schools was based on the Scriptures and the rhetorical traditions of the Church, especially homiletics as formulated by Gregory Nazianzus and John Chrysostom of Cappadocia and the epitomes of the classical religious authors, lexica, and grammars available in Cyprus. Such monastery schools functioned on Cyprus throughout the Lusignan and later Venetian periods. The well-known

1 Nicholas Coureas (ed.), *The Foundation Rules of Medieval Cypriot Monasteries: Makhairas and St Neophytos* (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2003), 109, Chapter 115.

Cypriot literary figure George Lapithes taught the Scriptures at such schools in around 1340.[2]

Such schools nonetheless had their limitations. Those Greeks desirous of obtaining a broader based secular education could hardly find it on Cyprus and had to go abroad. A salient example is George of Cyprus, the future Patriarch Gregory II of Constantinople. Born in around 1240, he acquired the rudiments of learning from his parents. He then attended a school in Nicosia hoping for a better education, but was disappointed to find that the teachers there taught nothing besides "the usual and humble elements of letters." This impelled him to leave and enter a school catering for the Latin population, where he attempted to master grammar taught in Latin. He encountered great difficulty in mastering this "strange and bastard tongue" as he described it and so left Cyprus for Nicaea in Byzantine Asia Minor. There, despite initial difficulties, he successfully completed his education and pursued an ecclesiastical career, serving as Patriarch of Constantinople between the years 1283–1289.[3]

Latins were also disenchanted with the standards of education offered on Cyprus. In a report written in 1249 the papal legate Eudes of Châteauroux observed that Cyprus lacked church schools for the teaching of grammar and philosophy, despite the decision to found such schools taken at the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215. This decision stipulated that every cathedral should have a teacher of grammar and every diocese a professor of theology for the education of the clergy. As the decision had not been implemented on Cyprus the clergy there were described as "the blind leading the blind." Obstacles such as distance from places possessing schools, the bad condition of the roads and the perils attendant on travelling by sea were also mentioned as thwarting access to education. Eustorge, the incumbent Latin archbishop of Nicosia, was given strict instruction to provide for teachers of grammar and theology in Nicosia. The suffragan bishops of Limassol, Famagusta and Paphos were likewise instructed to provide for teachers of grammar at their

2 Gilles Grivaud, *Entrelacs chyprois: Essai sur les lettres et la vie intellectuelle dans le royaume de Chypre 1191–1570* (Nicosia: Moufflon Publications, 2009), 34–35; Stathis Birdachas, *Koinonia, politismos kai diakybernese sto benetiko kratos tes Thalassas* (Salonica: Vanias Publications, 2011), 171 and note 1.

3 Vasiliki Nerantzi-Varmazi (ed.), *Syntagma byzaotinon pegon kypriakes historias, 4os-15os aionas* (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 1996), 136–137; George Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940–1952), vol. 3 (1948), 1068 and 1105; Costas N. Constantinides, *Higher Education in Byzantium in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries (1204–ca. 1310)* (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 1982), 25–26.

cathedral churches.[4] The Hospitallers on Rhodes, which they conquered from the Byzantines in 1309, had a similar problem. According to the Hospitaller historian Giacomo Bosio, under Grand Master Jacques de Milly (1454–1461) it was decided to hire a teacher to teach Latin to the Hospitaller clergy daily and to lead the church choir.[5]

Schools of grammar and theology were indeed established on Cyprus and George of Cyprus's attendance of one of them, as mentioned above, constitutes evidence of this. Nevertheless, their educational standards were still below par. In a Latin provincial synod held in Nicosia in June 1313 the papal legate Peter de Pleine Chassaigne denounced the ignorance of the local Latin clergy, who were deficient in lection of texts and in reading music. They were told to learn these subjects soon, as well as to improve their grasp of grammar, to understand what was being said or sung in church and not end up ignorant of ideas like the laity. Citing the Bible, the legate observed that 'the Lord often seeks and does not find it in these areas as would be proper, [asking] through the prophet [Isaiah 33.18]; 'Where is the learned? Where is he that pondereth the words of the Law?' Despite these remonstrations, the level of education of the island's Latin clergy continued to show defects. As late as 1392 the papal authorities were demanding that the canons of the cathedral of Famagusta should sit exams in Latin to ascertain whether they had a satisfactory knowledge of the language.[6]

## Education overseas as a supplement to education on Cyprus

Cypriots or persons resident in Cyprus were not necessarily obliged to receive their education in the island, and this is especially true of the Latin clergy. As early as 1204 the papal legate, Cardinal Peter Capuano, wrote a letter to the incumbent Latin archbishop of Nicosia and the suffragan Latin bishops of Paphos, Limassol and Famagusta stating that in accordance with their own advice permission would be granted to the canons of Latin churches on Cyprus to go abroad for up to five years to study theology, so long as a replacement could be found for them

4 Christopher Schabel (trans.), *The Synodicum Nicosiense and other Documents of the Latin Church of Cyprus, 1196–1373* (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2001), 160–163.

5 Zacharias Tsirpanlis, "Hellenike kai Latinike Paideia sten Rhodo (14os – 16os ai)," in *He Rhodes kai hoi Noties Sporades sta chronia ton Ioanniton Hippoton (14os – 16os ai)* (Rhodes: Ekdose Grapheiou Mesaionikes Polis Rhodou, 1991). XV, 341–412.

6 Schabel, *Synodicum*, 210–211 (VI); Grivaud, *Entrelacs*, 39–40.

whilst abroad. Such canons would continue receiving their incomes while studying "for the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth, because he is the angel of the Lord of hosts" [Malachi 2.7].[7]

Latin clerics based in Cyprus continued to study abroad even after the implementation of the legate Eudes of Chateauroux's instructions in his report of 1249. In February 1328 the Latin canon Leodegard de Nabinaux received permission from Pope John XXI to receive his ecclesiastical incomes for up to five years while studying abroad in a *studium generale*, as major schools of theology of the Roman Catholic Church were called. The pope granted similar permission in October 1328 to the canon John de Montolif to study in such a *studium* for a period of three years. Following his studies overseas Leodegard de Nabinaux became a canon of Nicosia in 1333, dean of the cathedral of Nicosia in 1340 and finally bishop of Famagusta, an office held from 1348 until his death in 1365. His progress affords an indication of the career opportunities available for educated clergy. Sometime before November 1374 Cyprus had acquired its own school of theology, for a letter of Pope Gregory XI of 12 November 1374 alludes to a Franciscan school of theology in Nicosia, even if it was probably not considered the equal of major European *studia* in cities like Paris, Oxford, Cambridge and their equivalents in southern France or North Italy.[8]

Sometimes schooling on Cyprus was followed by study abroad. One example is Eudes de Cancaliis, a Latin cleric born in the Latin East before the fall of Acre and Tyre in 1291, first went to school in Cyprus and then continued his studies in Europe. There he acquired a doctorate in Law and taught this subject for many years in the bishopric of Narbonne in southern France. On returning to Cyprus, he served as canon in the churches of Paphos and Famagusta, treasurer of the church in Nicosia and finally as bishop of Paphos, an office Pope Benedict XII granted him in 1337 and which he held until his death sometime before early 1357. The Franciscan friar John de Chevaigné constitutes another example. Making use of the facility the Franciscans in Cyprus had of sending two students overseas for further study at the Franciscan *studium* in Paris he went there after studies in Cyprus and in Lyon. In November 1374 Pope Gregory XI wrote to John de Calore, dean of the University of Paris, asking him to promote John de Chevaigné to that university's chair of theology, and

7 Schabel, *Synodicum*, 284, no. 5 [3].

8 Nicholas Coureas, *The Latin Church in Cyprus 1313–1378* (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2010), 26, 232–233 and 325.

mentioning how he had studied theology for eight years, five of which had been spent at the schools of theology in Cyprus and Lyon.[9]

The Dominicans, the second great mendicant order of the Roman Catholic Church, had a school in Nicosia on Cyprus. Thomas Aquinas taught there from 1266 until the spring of 1268. Following the fall of Acre and Tyre in 1291 to the Muslims the Dominicans obtained permission to send two to three friars each year to Rome or Lombardy to complete their studies in theology. In 1306 the Dominican Nicholas de Marsilly recalled teaching the works of Thomas Aquinas at the school in Nicosia as part of the curriculum. Sporadic references exist to Franciscans who had taught in the Franciscan schools of Nicosia and Famagusta, such as Raimondo de Albaterra in 1338, John de Carmesson in 1366 and perhaps Christopher of Cyprus in 1460. In around 1340–1342 the Franciscan Peter Frumenti taught theology in Famagusta. In September 1321, moreover, Pope John XXII appointed the Franciscan Matthew of Cyprus as a member of the committee set up in Rome to examine aspects of Marino Sanudo Torcello's treatise on the crusades, evidence that the level of education offered at the Franciscan schools in Cyprus was considered satisfactory.[10] Little evidence exists for schools or educational activity of the other monastic and mendicant orders in Cyprus, such as the Augustinian canons, Praemonstratensians, Cistercians, Benedictines, and Carmelite friars. Nonetheless some were highly educated, such as the Augustinian William Goneme, who acquired a doctorate of theology in Nicosia in 1433 before departing for Rome to complete his studies. He was appointed Latin archbishop of Nicosia in 1463. The Carmelite Nicholas Audeth, a Cypriot of Syrian extraction, joined the Order in 1495, studied at their house in Nicosia and continued his studies in Italy, where by 1510 he had become a lecturer in theology at the University of Parma.[11]

## Multilingualism in Education

Besides the clergy, merchants visiting or resident in Cyprus had use for education and especially the services of educated interpreters. The Augustinian friar James of Verona, who visited Cyprus in 1335, remarked

9 Coureas, *Latin Church 1313–1378*, 171, 197–198 and 343.

10 Christopher Schabel, "Elias of Nabinaux, Archbishop of Nicosia, and the Intellectual History of Later-Medieval Cyprus," in *idem.*, *Greeks, Latins, and the Church in Early Medieval Cyprus* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), VIII, 35–52; Coureas, *Latin Church 1313–1378*, 294; Grivaud, *Entrelacs*, 38–39.

11 Grivaud, *Entrelacs*, 39.

that the Cypriots, while mainly Greek speaking, also spoke the Saracen and Frankish tongues, namely Arabic and the Romance languages. The German cleric Ludolph von Suchen, resident in Cyprus between the years 1336 and 1341, remarked that on account of its location at the borders of the Christian world Cyprus was a mandatory stop for merchants and pilgrims the world over. Because of this, numerous languages were spoken there and taught at special schools, although unfortunately he does not specify their location or say anything about those teaching in them.[12] The Byzantine scholar Athanasios Lependrenos in a letter written in 1350 to his counterpart Nicephoros Gregoras observed that Cypriots knowledgeable in three languages and able to translate Latin and Arabic into Greek could be found, an observation that corroborates Ludolph of Suchen's remark on the language schools in Cyprus. The fifteenth century Greek Cypriot chronicler Leontios Makhairas opined that whereas Greek and Syriac had been used in Cyprus prior to the Latin conquest of 1191, afterwards people began to learn French, so that Cypriot Greek was corrupted and barbarized to a degree that made it incomprehensible to non-Cypriots.[13]

Clerics as well as merchants found uses for translations. The Spanish Dominican and scholar of Arabic Alfonso de Buenhombre who resided in Famagusta from 1339 to 1442 translated religious works from Arabic into Latin to provide Catholic missionaries in the eastern Mediterranean with suitable materials. Large numbers of eastern Christians from Egypt and Syria were living in Famagusta at this time. In February 1341 he dedicated to Cardinal Peter de Sotomayor a history of St Anthony's life he had discovered in a manuscript that was found in the Coptic monastery of the saint in Famagusta. Buenhombre ardently wished to draw closer together Roman Catholics and eastern Christians. He lamented the fact that few of the mendicants in Famagusta knew Arabic, while few eastern Christians knew Latin. In consequence of this Arabic-speaking Christians had no access to the works of the great fathers of the Latin Church such as Isidore of Seville and St Thomas Aquinas while Latin Christians likewise had no access to the works of the Egyptian anchorite fathers and of Ephraim the Syrian. This was a deficiency that translations could remedy.[14]

12 Claude Delaval Cobham (trans.), *Excerpta Cypria: Materials for a History of Cyprus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 17 and 20.

13 Nerantzi-Varmazi, *Syntagma*, 167; Leontios Makhairas, *Recital concerning the Sweet Land of Cyprus entitled 'Chronicle,'* ed. and trans. Richard M. Dawkins, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932), vol. 1, 142–143, para. 158.

14 Grivaud, *Entrelacs*, 65.

## Libraries in Lusignan Cyprus

Then as now libraries constituted a fundamental component of education, and the issue of the availability of libraries in Lusignan Cyprus must be addressed. The extant sources, although offering valuable information, are exiguous and concern chiefly the Latin Church and its clergy. Two bishops of the Latin Church recorded as possessing libraries were Eudes de Cancaliis, bishop of Paphos between the years 1337 and 1357, and Guy d'Ibelin, a Dominican friar who was bishop of Limassol between the years 1357 and 1367, and who belonged to the most prominent noble family in Cyprus. The library of the former, whose social origins are unknown and who was possibly a Catalan in ethnic origin, included among its books a missal, an ordinary, an anthology of the saints titled *Flores sanctorum*, and the encyclopaedic work of Bartholomew of England titled *de proprietatibus rerum*. In addition, it included a small medical treatise titled *Liber de urinis* by the Jewish doctor Isaac ben Solomon, a resident of Kairouan in present day Tunisia, translated by Constantine the African and considered one of the most famous works of the medical school near Salerno in Naples. The presence of this work attest to the dissemination of Jewish medieval medical knowledge in Cyprus, and Jewish physicians are recorded as resident in Cyprus. The small number of books in Eudes' library, however, indicates a person of limited literary interests.[15]

The library of Bishop Guy de Ibelin shows indubitably a person of broader literary interests, even if in this case also one cannot speak of someone with profound intellectual curiosity. They included a journal for the use of preachers, later sold for the paltry sum of four bezants to Thomas Foscarini, archdeacon of Nicosia and a collector of papal taxes, and of a large conspicuous breviary that Guy used to keep in his private chapel. The books in question numbered 52 all told. This was a modest number compared to corresponding libraries of certain Latin bishops in the West, but comparable to the 60 books possessed by Guy de Bagnolo, the Venetian physician of King Peter I. Besides, it compared favourably to the eight volumes containing 18 works in the possession of the Byzantine monk in Constantinople Joseph Bryennios. The only book not pertaining to religion in Guy's library was a treatise on medication for horses, which testifies to his aristocratic social background and to his equine interests as the owner of three race horses and two pack horses.

15 Coureas, *Latin Church 1313–1378*, 291 and 293; Nicholas Coureas, "He iatrike sten Kypro kata ton Mesaiona," in *He iatrike sten Kypro apo ten arkhaioteta mekhri ten anexartesia*, M. Vryonidou-Yiangou, ed. (Nicosia: Laiki Bank Publications, 2006), 111–112, 116 and 141.

All the other books fall into three main groups. The first has works on theology and philosophy, including two volumes of St Thomas Aquinas' *summae theologicae*, some of his other works, various commentaries on Peter Lombard's *Sentences* and on Aristotle, a treatise on logic by Walter Burleigh, the same author's commentary on Aristotle's *Physics* and numerous source-books on *quaestiones* and *quodlibeta*. Peter Lombard's four books of the *Sentences* formed the standard theological textbook in western universities during the later medieval period. Among the commentaries Guy owned are included those of the Dominican Robert Holcot, who lectured in Oxford during the years 1331–1333, the Augustinian hermit Thomas of Strasbourg who lectured in Paris during the years 1334–1335, commentaries by an anonymous author and those by a certain Bernadina, possibly the Cistercian or 'Bernadine' John of Mirecourt who likewise lectured in Paris during the years 1344–1345.[16]

The second group is made up of books serving as aids to preaching, collections of sermons or *exempla* supplemented by works on hagiography and mystical theology. As for the third group, this consisted of volumes of canon law, Gratian's Decretals, the *Sextus* of Pope Boniface VIII with some commentaries on it, and a treatise on those sins that should be remitted before the archbishop. The books, notwithstanding their legal content, reflect the concern of a diocesan rather than an inclination towards studying canon law, while the more numerous books of sermons and of theological speculation reflect Bishop Guy's training as a Dominican friar in their house in Nicosia. One notes that among the latter group is a collection of sermons attributable to Peter de la Palude, titular Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem from 1329 until 1342, whom Guy may have known given that prior to becoming patriarch Peter de la Palude had been the Dominican master of theology at the University of Paris. The school the Dominicans maintained at their house in Nicosia was mentioned by Friar Nicholas de Marsilly in 1306 when recounting his recollections on the teaching of St Thomas Aquinas' works there as part of their course. There was also a school of theology attached to the Franciscan house in Nicosia. The fact that a Latin who was native to Cyprus was educated at the Dominican house in Nicosia and went on to become a bishop of Limassol shows that this school functioned as an

16 Jean Richard, "La bibliothèque d'un évêque dominicain de Chypre," in: *idem*, *Les relations entre l'Occident et l'Orient au Moyen Age* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 1992, 19993), VI, 447–454; Grivaud, *Entrelacs*, 54, 81 and 85; Schabel, "Elias of Nabinaux," 45.

educational centre for Latin Cypriot clergy, fulfilling their educational requirements, as did the corresponding Franciscan school of theology.[17]

The period of writing of these books shows that most were written in the first half of the fourteenth century. None postdate this period and very few antedate the early thirteenth century, an indication that Bishop Guy did not wish to acquaint himself directly with the works of the early fathers of the church, being satisfied with the summary transmission he could find in the thirteenth and fourteenth century works in his possession. Furthermore, this bishop did not trouble to acquire works written after his formative educational years in the Dominican house of Nicosia. The time frame of his library is significant in offering possible proof that the Dominicans of Cyprus, within and outside their order, were engaged in the regular production of books, although they were inevitably less than up to date in relation to the western houses. No classical or historical works indicating that the bishop was in the vicinity of the Holy Land and the world of classical Greece are included. He possessed one treatise, the 'liber aulmorozii' seemingly translated from Arabic, but the Dauphin notary Anthony Michel de Voiron who drew up the inventory of these books unfortunately disfigured its title in transcribing it. All told the collection belonged to a moderately learned and dutiful prelate who lacked outstanding intellectual ability.[18]

Together with the libraries of the two Latin bishops discussed above mention must be made of that of Guy de Bagnolo, the Venetian physician of King Peter I and King Peter II of Cyprus between the years 1360–1364. This physician was also interested in philosophy, astronomy, history, and oratory, and in this last field he had differences of opinion with the famous Italian poet Petrarch. Bagnolo's wide range of interests was reflected in his library, numbering 60 books as mentioned above, which was transferred in 1368, one year before the physician's death, to Italy, where an inventory of its contents was made in 1380. Included in his library collection were 38 medical manuscripts that included a good number of translations from Arabic works, seven works of the physician Galen, a work of Hippocrates and an additional twelve works of

17 Richard, "La bibliothèque," 449–450 and 454; Jean Richard, "Culture franque, culture grecque, culture arabe, dans le royaume de Chypre au XIII[e] et au début du XV[e] siècle," in *idem*, *Francs et Orientaux dans le monde des croisades* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2003) XXI, 241; John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968, 19982), 454 and note 5; Jean Dunbabin, *A Hound of God: Pierre de la Palud and the Fourteenth Century Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 53–91.

18 Richard, "La bibliothèque," 450; Schabel, "Elias of Nabinaux," 44; Grivaud, *Entrelacs*, 81.

philosophy, among them Aristotle, Avicenna, Averroes, and John of Damascus, seven works of astronomy including the Almagest of Claudius Ptolemaeus and three works of geometry. All these works, drawn from the Arabic, Latin and Greek literary traditions, indicate how on Cyprus secular persons as well as clergy could possess libraries encompassing a wide range of interests and reflecting a broadly based education. Even so, one must remember that Guy de Bagnolo is an isolated example of a secular person with such a library in Cyprus, and he himself was not native to the island.[19]

Crete affords useful comparisons with Cyprus regarding libraries. It was similar in size to Cyprus, with a predominantly but not wholly Greek population and under Venetian rule since 1211, when Venice seized it in the wake of the Fourth Crusade. Literary instruction was offered by teachers of Latin and Italian, of Greek, mainly priests, and in Hebrew, and as with Cyprus there are recorded libraries and manuscript collections. An inventory of 1417 of the manuscripts in the possession of the Franciscans on Crete shows that they had 195 manuscripts in their library of scientific works, almost all in Latin. In 1370 the prior of the Augustinians in Crete placed two Greek manuscripts in the hands of the prior of the daughter house of the Greek monastery of Mt Sinai, located in Candia, the Cretan capital, so that the latter could sell them. There were medical manuscripts on Crete as well, for in 1358 the cleric Ludovico di Costula of Parma sold eight volumes of medicinal and philosophical texts to a physician practising in Candia for 62 Venetian ducats. These volumes included a work by Galen, one by Pietro d'Abono called the Conciliator, and additional works by Guillielmo da Piacenza, Giovanni da Masseni, Avicenna, and Giovanni Serapion. Even before the arrival of Greek refugees on Crete following the Ottoman capture of Constantinople in 1453 Greek teachers are mentioned quite often in the extant sources and there were well known Greek Cretan poets such as Stephanos Sachlichi and Leonardo della Porta. Even if the literary man Manuel Calecas writing from Crete to Manuel Raoul in Cyprus stated that "Cyprus too was an ancient homeland of the Greeks, and not unworthy of them in the literary word," he nonetheless eventually decided to study in Italy on account of the poor cultural environment Cyprus offered. Most Byzantine men of letters leaving Constantinople in the later 15th century preferred Crete

19 Grivaud, *Entrelacs*, 54 and 81–84.

to Cyprus, founding Greek schools and boosting the dissemination of Greek letters on renaissance Crete.[20]

## Education in the Later Lusignan and Venetian Periods

Education in the later Lusignan period suffered the same problems as in the earlier period, namely the island's inability to meet demand in full, which impelled Cypriots and others based in Cyprus to study abroad. As in the earlier period such students could obtain scholarships. A salient example was the scholarship fund established in 1393 by the admiral of Cyprus Peter de Cafrano, which enabled four Cypriot students every year to pursue studies at the University of Padua in Italy in the disciplines of law, medicine, theology, and the fine arts. The provisions of this will, composed in March 1393, stipulated that the sum of 5,000 ducats were to be deposited in the lending fund of the Commune of Venice (*columna mutuorum Comuni Venetiarum*) drawing interest of three per cent per annum. This yearly interest amounting to 150 ducats would then be invested by the trustees of the will to yield an annual sum of 200 ducats, to be divided by four among the four Cypriot student beneficiaries. Students would be chosen by a five-man committee headed by the vicar of the Latin archbishop of Nicosia, the other four being three of the deceased's relations and the head of the Carmelite friars on Cyprus. Although this fund was meant to contribute towards the creation of a Cypriot administrative and professional class educated according to Venetian norms, and one observes here that in 1405 Venice annexed Padua, it was only partially successful. This was because only some of the Cypriot beneficiaries returned to Cyprus on their graduation, the remainder remaining in Italy to pursue careers there.[21]

This scholarship funding continued right into the later eighteenth century. Not all beneficiaries of the grants were indigent. On the contrary, many of them originated from the most prominent noble families of Lusignan Cyprus and were interconnected among themselves. Among

20 Sally McKee, *Uncommon Dominion: Venetian Crete and the Myth of Ethnic Purity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 116–121; Grivaud, *Entrelacs*, 34–35; Nerantzi-Varmazi, *Syntagma*, 175.

21 Agamemnon Tselikas, "He diatheke tou Petro di Cafrano kai hoi praxeis epiloges Kyprion phoiteton gia to panepistemio tes Padovas (1393, 1436–1569)," *Epeteris Kentrou Epistemonikon Ereunon*, 17 (1987–1988): 261–292; Bianca Betto, "Nuove ricerche su studenti ciprioti all'Università di Padova (1393–1489)," *Thesaurismata*, vol. 23 (1993): 40–80; Grivaud, *Entrelacs*, 41.

these families were included relative newcomers of Greek or Syrian origin, such as the Podocataro, the Urri and the Careri, three families from which numerous beneficiaries of the grant originated. An examination of the records of those obtaining scholarships reveals that on occasion the number of beneficiaries exceeded the standard number of four. On such occasions, however, the sum each beneficiary received was reduced correspondingly. The beneficiaries, moreover, had the option of pursuing post-graduate studies in subjects other than the one they had graduated in. Nor was this the only scholarship for Cypriot students wishing to study abroad. In 1556 the Latin archbishop of Nicosia established another scholarship fund enabling three Cypriot students annually to study at Italian schools or universities. Among them was the University of Bologna, although it never attracted Cypriot students on the same scale as Padua.[22] Cretan and Rhodian students likewise studied at the University of Padua. In 1471, moreover, a poet named Laudivio Zacchia joined the Hospitaller Order and was granted a scholarship to study in Bologna or at some other university, on condition that he returned to Rhodes on completing his studies. Few Rhodians studied at Padua compared to Cypriots and Cretans, but then Rhodes had a far smaller population, around 8.000 in the mid-fifteenth century as compared to over 100.000 each for Cyprus and Crete.[23]

An attempt to improve the quality of education available on Cyprus itself was made under King James II, the penultimate ruler of Cyprus from 1464 to 1473. He brought Cypriot professors from overseas to found a school in Nicosia for the education of the children of the Cypriot nobility. A memorandum sent from Cyprus to the Venetian government in 1490, by which time Venetian rule had been established there, alludes to how under King James II a teacher of public instruction was paid a salary of 100 ducats per annum, with one to two such teachers being employed on the island. An echo of this measure is found over a century later in 1601 when Duke Charles Emmanuel II of Savoy, then planning the conquest of Cyprus from the Ottomans who had captured it in 1570, promised to found and maintain schools of clerical and secular learning in all the towns of Cyprus if he succeeded in conquering it. The assizes of the kingdom, the law code applied in the Court of Burgesses of Nicosia and the courts under its jurisdiction, also decreed that the parents of minors

22 Betto, "Nuove ricerche," 48–69 and 80; Grivaud, *Entrelacs*, 40.

23 Tsirpanlis, "Hellenike kai Latinike Paideia," 344–345, 356 and 407; Peter Edbury, *The Kingdom of Cyprus and the Crusades* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 14–15; Charalampos Gasparis, *Physiko kai Agrotiko Topeio ste Mesaionike Krete* (Athens: Goulandris-Horn Foundation, 1994), 40–41.

who attended school to acquire some degree of specialization were liable to pay the fees if the student in person failed to pay them in full, or any money that he had borrowed to pursue a course of study. This measure clearly aimed to compel parents to pay for their children's studies if the latter attempted to avoid paying their tuition fees or living expenses.[24]

The teaching of Arabic is attested in late Lusignan Cyprus. The chronicle of George Boustronios, written in the early sixteenth century and recounting the island's history from the death of King John II in 1458 to the Venetian incorporation of Cyprus to its overseas territories in 1489, recounts how during the civil war of 1460–1464 between the supporters of Queen Charlotte and those of her brother James, the future King James II, Mamluk troops supporting the latter kidnapped the two sons of a priest named Phantes. The boys were then brought to Nicosia, where, after being compelled to learn Arabic, they were then converted to Islam. The fact that they were brought to Nicosia for instruction in Arabic indicates the existence of a school or at least of teachers of Arabic in the capital. Perhaps following the Mamluk invasion of 1426, the defeat of King Janus of Cyprus at the battle of Khirokitia and the reduction of the kingdom to tributary status it was deemed necessary to offer instruction in Arabic for those Cypriots entrusted with dealings with the new Mamluk suzerains of Cyprus.[25]

## Secular Education in Venetian Cyprus

Shortly after the abdication of Catherine Corner in 1489 and the imposition of direct Venetian rule the local nobles and urban residents submitted various requests to the Venetian authorities in the years 1490–1491 or a little earlier. Among them was the provision of a teacher of grammar for the children of the nobles and urban residents of Nicosia. This request was a sequel to the request submitted to Venice in 1487 by Thomas Ficard, the emissary of Queen Catherine in Venice, in 1487, who on arriving there in July 1487 requested the dispatch to Cyprus of "uno magistro bombarderio et uno magistro putiorum". Venice appears to have responded to Ficard's initial request, for on receiving the subsequent requests sent in the years 1490–1491 the Venice authorities responded

24 Hill, *History*, vol. 3, 646 and note 4 and 841; Nicholas Coureas (trans.), *The Assizes of the Lusignan Kingdom of Cyprus* (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2002), Codex One, 170, Article 209, Codex Two, 337, Article 207.

25 Nicholas Coureas (trans.), George Boustronios, *A Narrative of the Chronicle of Cyprus 1456–1489* (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2005), 100, para. 60).

that a few years earlier they had approved the yearly salary for a teacher of grammar, amounting to 40 ducats in cash along with 25 demijohns of wine and 25 measures of barley. This salary, however, was too low to attract suitable applicants, and as the option of sending their children to Venice for their education was too costly for the nobles and urban residents of Nicosia they continued to remain without instruction. Finally, Venice, accepting the second request submitted, issued instructions for the hiring of a teacher with the salary of 80 ducats per annum plus an additional 20 ducats payable in wine and grain, which in fact was the salary drawn by teachers of grammar previously under the Lusignans. This salary, if paid, seems to have been reduced subsequently, for in 1556 the accounts prepared by the fiscal office known as the camera record a salary of 60 ducats per annum for the teacher of grammar in Nicosia. Nevertheless, a Venetian document dated 1560 records the payment of an annual salary of 80 ducats to the teacher of grammar in the town of Limassol.[26]

In 1491 the members of the urban assembly of Famagusta likewise submitted via their representative Giovanni Andreuci a request for the appointment of a teacher of grammar for their children, with an annual salary of 400 bezants payable by the state "as happens in all the cities of the Serenissima". Venice approved the request, but with the proviso that the teacher's annual salary would be only 250 bezants. As the bezant was worth only one tenth of the Venetian ducat, the teacher in Famagusta would receive less than his counterparts in either Nicosia or Limassol, which explains why "mal se attrova persona docta et idonea." Because of this, in 1507 the urban assembly of Famagusta submitted a new request, stating that even though the teacher's salary had already increased to 50 ducats per annum it proposed an additional increase, but in kind as opposed to cash. This proposed increase would consist of 80 measures of wheat and 50 demijohns of wine, whereby the salary of the teacher in Famagusta would resemble that of his counterpart in Nicosia. The urban assembly of Famagusta also undertook to monitor this teacher's performance and so decide every three years whether to renew his contract or replace him if he were unsatisfactory. The accounts of the fiscal office known as the camera, already mentioned, state for the year 1556 that he

26 Evangelia Skoufari, *Cipro veneziana (1473–1571): Istituzione e culture nel regno della Serenissima* (Rome: Viella Libreria Editrice, 2011), 133 and 134 note 14; Grivaud, *Entrelacs*, 42.

continued to draw an annual salary of 50 ducats, which suggests that the proposed increase, albeit in kind, had not been given.[27]

It is interesting to note by way of comparison that in the year 1510 Latin and Greek burgesses on Rhodes, numbering 29 in total, submitted a request before the Council of the Hospitaller Order for the hiring of a teacher of Latin and Greek grammar for all children, rich and poor. They proposed the transfer from Famagusta in Cyprus of a certain Mattheus Laurus, reputed to be "highly educated in both tongues." In terms of salary, he would be paid 150 Rhodian florins from the public treasury, 50 Rhodian florins from the Grand master's private purse and another 100 Rhodian florins from the 29 burgesses who had applied for this teacher, although only for a biennium. It is not known whether Mattheus Laurus accepted the offer to transfer from Famagusta to Rhodes and teach there, but the salary offered to him compared favourably to the annual salaries received by teachers in Candia on Crete and in Famagusta at the beginning of the sixteenth century, amounting to around 100 Rhodian florins or slightly above this sum.[28]

Under Venice there was a demand for instruction in Greek as well as in Latin or Italian, a situation resembling that in Crete, as mentioned above. In 1552 the representatives of the inhabitants of Kerynia, the *protopapas* (head priest) Porphyrios Trypsis and Baliarios Pontos, informed the Venetian authorities that within Kerynia "there were many who wished to learn letters but were unable to do so on account of the lack of teachers of Greek and Latin". Subsequently the appointment was approved "of two teachers, one for Greek and another for Latin, so that their children could learn Greek and Latin letters." It should be understood here that the references to Latin and Latin letters probably refer to Italian. The teachers' salaries, payable by the *camera fiscale* of Nicosia, were not to exceed 25 ducats per annum for each teacher. Whether such teachers were appointed in Kerynia, or if so appointed whether their contracts were renewed, is questionable. The accounts of the *camera fiscale* for the year 1556, already mentioned above, does not record any salary given to them, an indication that their employment, if ever begun, had in fact ceased. In 1521, the urban assembly of Famagusta had also pointed out the need to create a school in the town with instruction in Greek,

27 Louis de Mas Latrie, *Histoire de l'île de Chypre sous le règne des princes de la maison de Lusignan*, 3 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Imperiale, 1852–1861), vol. 2 (1855), 491, no. 17; George S. Ploumides, "Kanonismoi tes nesou Kyprou (Capitola dell'isola de Cipro)," *Dodone* (1987) Annexe no. 32, 51 and 85; Skoufari, *Cipro veneziana*, 134; Grivaud, *Entrelacs*, 42.

28 Tsirpanlis, "Hellenike kai Latinike Paideia," 398–406.

for use by the young people of the community who would use this language daily. The salary of this teacher, set at 25 ducats annually plus 25 measures of wheat, was one half of the salary drawn by the teacher of the school offering instruction in Latin (or Italian) that was already in existence. This difference in salary is perhaps attributable to the fact that the solvent Greek citizens of the town willing and financially able to send their children to attend the school offering instruction in Greek were fewer, and perhaps not as wealthy, than their Latin opposite numbers. In Cyprus, as elsewhere, indigence limited educational opportunities.[29]

One person benefiting from the education offered in Famagusta under the Venetians was Solomon Rodinos. Ethnically Greek and originating from the village of Potamiou in the district of Limassol, he attended school in Famagusta, possibly the one located near the Latin cathedral church of St Nicholas, in 1530. According to his son Neophytos, a well-known Cypriot prose writer of the seventeenth century, his father in Famagusta learnt 'a little bit of letters, grammar and poetry, and of the Italian language.' Neophytos recounts how his father, who witnessed the conquest of Cyprus in 1570 by the Ottomans, as well as the natural and human devastation that followed, wrote a chronicle of these events in simple diction, and accompanied by illustrations, although this has not survived unfortunately. Nevertheless, Neophytos Rodinos' testimony on the instruction offered in Famagusta is invaluable in showing how the schools there were accessible to persons of a secular background, and in his father's case to persons of a rural background.[30]

Some of those teaching in Cyprus originated from abroad, mainly Italy. In the summer of 1521 Sebastiano Foscarini, a counsellor of the Venetian government, arrived in Cyprus to teach philosophy and logic, remaining there until the summer of 1523. He was then appointed a counsellor of the kingdom of Cyprus, as Cyprus continued to be described by the Venetians, for reasons of diplomatic prestige, even after its annexation in 1489. Nearly thirty years after Foscarini's arrival, in 1552, Giovanni Giustiniani, a scion of the aristocratic Venetian family of that name established in Crete, was invited to come to Cyprus and to teach there, but friends of his dissuaded him from doing so on account of his advanced years and he eventually died in Italy. Another teacher from overseas arriving in Cyprus to teach was an unnamed Fleming mentioned by the German voyager Charles Fürer as teaching the liberal arts in Famagusta.

29 Ploumides, "Kanonismoi," 70 and 89; Skoufari, *Cipro veneziana*, 134; Grivaud, *Entrelacs*, 42.

30 Grivaud, *Entrelacs*, 269–271.

Of all teachers coming to Cyprus from abroad, however, the one causing the most trouble for the Venetians was the Rhodian James Diassorinos, who studied in Chios, Zante and finally Venice, where he also worked as a pharmacist and thereby acquired some medical knowledge. On arriving in Cyprus in late 1561 he began teaching grammar and theology in Nicosia from 1562 onwards. He acquired popularity among the Greeks by teaching them the glories of classical Greece, as well as by offering medical services. He used his popularity to turn people against Venice, for he harboured ambitions to overthrow the Venetian government in Cyprus, invite the Ottomans to invade and then to rule the island as an Ottoman governor. But the Venetians got wind of his plans through a Cretan agent who had gained his confidence. In late 1562 or early 1563 they had him arrested in Paphos and brought to Nicosia. The popular demonstrations in his favour following his entry to the capital impelled the Venetian authorities to have him tried, sentenced, and strangled on the night following his arrival. The popularity he acquired by teaching shows how on Cyprus education could be used for political as well as cultural ends, even if he constitutes an isolated and ultimately unsuccessful example.[31]

It is noteworthy that under the Venetians interest in the Arabic language was rekindled in 1539, despite the conquest of the Mamluk sultanate in 1517 by the Ottomans and so the end of Mamluk suzerainty over Cyprus. In that year the Venetian Council of Ten sent letters to the local administration of Cyprus, instructing them to hire suitably educated Copts in Nicosia, Famagusta or elsewhere on Cyprus as teachers of Arabic. This would be done to promote the learning and dissemination of the contents of Arabic medical treatises in manuscript form in the possession of the Coptic monastery in the Pentadaktylos Mountains, the subsequent Armenian monastery of Sourp Makar. Suitable persons would receive an annual salary of 20 Venetian ducats for a biennium, with the prospect of their services being extended indefinitely if this was considered justifiable.[32]

31 Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, vol. 2, 491 note 2; Cobham, *Excerpta Cypria*, 28; Hill, *History*, vol. 3, 773–775, 801 and note 6 and 839–841; Grivaud, *Entrelacs*, 36–37 and 42–43; Birdachas, *Koinonia, Politismos kai Diakybernese*, 115–117.

32 Aikaterini Aristeidou (ed.), *Anekdota engrapha tes kypriakes historias apo to kratiko arkheio tes Benetias*, 4 vols. (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 1990–2003), vol. 4 (2003), 271–274, no. 137.

## Ecclesiastical Education in Venetian Cyprus

Ecclesiastical education on Cyprus under Venice exhibits continuity with the earlier Lusignan period. According to a request submitted to Venice in 1490 by the urban assembly of Nicosia via the Venetian lieutenant on Cyprus the Latin cathedral churches in Nicosia, Famagusta, Limassol and Paphos had from way back appointed preachers to instruct the Gospels, as well as teachers of grammar to instruct the deacons and the other ordained clergy celebrating the divine offices. The urban assembly requested the Venetian government to continue this practice, a request that was approved, with instructions issued for its implementation. In March 1507 the urban assembly of Nicosia also submitted a request for the appointment of a preacher to the Latin cathedral church of the Holy Wisdom in Nicosia, with an annual salary of 30 ducats, as well as the appointment of a teacher of grammar to the same cathedral. One observes that the preacher's salary was one half that of the teachers of Latin in secular schools in the capital.[33]

The Greek Church under the Venetians likewise continued to offer education. In 1521 the urban assembly of Nicosia forwarded a request to the Venetian authorities for the instruction of the Greek clergy and laity of Cyprus, which sought to compel the abbots of all Greek monasteries on the island to contribute in accordance with their means for a sum of 100 ducats to be raised every year. This would constitute the annual salary of two educating clerics entrusted with educating the children of the people "so that the clouds of ignorance can be blocked and the laity as much as the clergy might enter the road of truth and of moral living." The Venetian authorities approved this request, although only one cleric was employed in receipt of an annual salary of 50 ducats, paid by the Greek abbots. Other measures taken included the obligation every Greek bishop had to employ a preacher "with enough learning in theology so as to preach the divine Word to the Lord's people," so that the Greeks, like their Latin counterparts, might have people able to explain the Gospels to them. The application of these measures is confirmed in the instance of Manolis the son of the Priest Michael, who for five years received instruction in the monastery of Hagioi Anargyroi (SS Cosmas and Damian) in Nicosia, even if he was not an apt pupil, as he himself admitted. Symeon of Leuka offers another example of someone receiving

33 Louis de Mas Latrie, "Documents nouveaux servant de preuves à l'histoire de l'île de Chypre sous le règne des princes de la maison de Lusignan," in : *Collection des documents inédits: Mélanges historiques*, vol. 1 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1882), 531 [III]; Skoufari, *Cipro veneziana*, 134–135; Ploumides, "Kanonismoi," 31–32 and 81.

instruction in a Greek monastery. He is recorded as having learnt letters at the monastery of Our Lady of Krinea, a daughter house of the monastery of St George of Mangana, the wealthiest Greek monastery in Venetian Cyprus.[34]

## Conclusion

Education in Latin, Greek and Arabic was available on Cyprus for most if not all the Lusignan period as well as throughout the period of Venetian rule, which ended with the Ottoman conquest of the island in 1570. Nevertheless, it is clear from the above that the island was deficient in specialized education, a problem that was never fully remedied in situ and which compelled Cypriots and others based in Cyprus to pursue further studies overseas, mainly in the theological schools, universities, and other centres of higher learning in France and above all in Italy. The phenomenon of Cypriots fortunate enough to obtain scholarships or having the wherewithal to pursue studies abroad at their own expense was not confined to the Lusignan period. On the contrary, it continued into the Venetian and well into the Ottoman periods of the island's history.

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34 Skoufari, *Cipro veneziana*, 135–136; Darrouzès, "Notes pour servir à l'histoire de Chypre," IV, *Kypriakai Spoudai*, 23 (1959): 33–34; Grivaud, *Entrelacs*, 34–35.

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