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Travels in the Island of Cyprus

The Abbé Giovanni Mariti wrote an account of the condition of Cyprus in 1769, almost 100 years after the final conquest of the island by the Ottoman Turks. Mariti travelled widely around the island in the seven years during which he served there as a consular official, and as well as recounting his own visits to towns, villages and monasteries, he describes contemporary events such as the outbreak of plague in 1760 and the failed insurrection against the Turks in 1764. This English translation, first published in 1895, also provides contemporary eye-witness accounts of the sieges of Nicosia and Famagusta which ended Venetian rule in 1570-1, and of the torture and death of the Venetian commander of Famagusta, Marcantonio Bragadino, a story which has passed into legend.

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*With Contemporary Accounts of the Sieges of
Nicosia and Famagusta*

GIOVANNI MARITI



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IN THE
ISLAND OF CYPRUS

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN OF
GIOVANNI MARITI

BY
CLAUDE DELAVAL COBHAM, C.M.G.
B.C.L., M.A. UNIV. COLL. OXON.

*WITH CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS OF THE SIEGES OF
NICOSIA AND FAMAGUSTA*

Cambridge :
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PREFACE

THE Ottoman Conquest of Cyprus in 1571 found, no less than the British Occupation of 1878, a goodly number of chroniclers, some of them eyewitnesses of the events which they described.

Of the three hundred years which elapsed between these two noteworthy dates in Cypriot history we know very little. Visitors came and went, complained of the heat and the discomforts of travel, and commented with more or less acumen on the information which filtered to them through their interpreters.

But to two writers we can appeal as authorities, both residents, intelligent men, and directly interested in knowing the true condition of the island. The first, the Abbé Giovanni Mariti, was for some years an official of the Imperial and Tuscan Consulates, and published at Lucca in 1769 his *Viaggi per l'isola di Cipro*. The second, Cyprianos, a native, and Archimandrite of the archbishop of Cyprus, published at Venice in 1788 his *Chronological History of the Island of Cyprus*. I have printed in the *Excerpta Cypria* a translation into English of the account given by the latter of Cypriot affairs between 1571 and 1788. In the present volume I have given an exact rendering of the former, adding (in Chapters XXVI—XXVIII) in a rather more compressed form the substance of Chapters IX—XI of the second volume of

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Preface

Mariti's later work *Viaggio da Gerusalemme per le coste della Soria* (Livorno, 1787).

My task was nearly done when I obtained copies of the anonymous versions in French (Paris, 1791) and English (London, 1791). Both are scarce books, but even were this not so I should not regret the trouble I have taken in placing before the reader an accurate rendering of the Italian original. The French translator scarcely pretends to follow Mariti's text, and tries to cover the bareness of his author's narrative with purple patches of his own, impertinent or superfluous. The Englishman renders literally from the Frenchman, without a hint that he has never seen the Italian original. (See pp. 3, 36, 44, 55, 65, 251, &c.) I have not seen the German version by C. G. Hase, Altenburg, 1777.

The Abbé Mariti arrived in Cyprus from Leghorn February 2, 1760, and left it on his return to Florence, October 6, 1767. His work owes little to previous writers on Cyprus: he had read Bordone, Lusignan and probably Meursius, but he relies almost entirely on his own notes of what he had seen and heard. And herein lies its value, for he is observant and conscientious. The book stands as the best account of the condition of Cyprus in the third quarter of the last century, and as such I leave it, hardly attempting by additions or corrections to bring it up to date. I have left most names of places in his own spelling, indicating in the index, which is new, their present equivalents. Turkish words appear as modern Oriental scholars would have them transcribed.

The Piastre of Mariti's time was equal to 3 *lire*, 6 *soldi*, 8 *danari*, Florentine money, which we may reckon as 3 francs (French) or half a crown (English) of that day. The *oke* (now $2\frac{1}{2}$ Eng. lbs.) was $3\frac{3}{4}$ Florentine pounds: the *cantar* (180 Cyprus okes) was 100 *rotoli* of $6\frac{7}{8}$ Fl. lbs. (or $687\frac{1}{2}$ Florentine pounds): the *couza* (now 9 English quarts) contained 5 Florentine *fiaschi*: 4 *couze* or 20 *fiaschi* making a *barile*.

It would be well that as many as possible of the original

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sources of Cypriot history were made accessible to Englishmen in their own tongue. Of so desirable a work I offer this volume as a small instalment. But that dedications are out of date it would certainly be inscribed, with affectionate respect, to F. M. VISCOUNT WOLSELEY, under whose wise and spirited rule Cyprus entered on a new era of peace and prosperity.

LARNACA, *December 12, 1895.*

NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION

For this second edition I have recast Chap. III with the help of Mariti's later *Dissertation on the Ancient City of Citium* (Livorno, 1787), the rest of which I have condensed as Chapter XXIX.

Mariti's scheme allowed no more than a couple of pages to the Sieges of Nicosia and Famagusta, so I hope the reader will welcome the two narratives with which, by way of an appendix, I have completed the volume. I prefix to them notes on their authors, as well as on other less known accounts of these most noteworthy events.

C. D. C.

THE ATHENÆUM,
October 1, 1908.