

Benjamin Arbel, Evelien Chayes, and Harald Hendrix, eds. *Cyprus and the Renaissance (1450–1650)*.

Mediterranean Nexus 1100–1700 1. Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2013. 470 pp. €95. ISBN: 978-2-503-54192-1.

For approximately four centuries, from 1191, when it was captured by Richard I, the Lionheart, of England during the Third Crusade, until 1570, when the Ottoman Turks conquered it, Cyprus shared in the political, religious, economic, and cultural history of the Latin West, with the Frankish Lusignan dynasty ruling from 1192 to 1473 and then the Venetian Republic until the debacle of 1570. The volume under review treats the latter part of this period, essentially Cyprus under Venetian domination in the Italian Renaissance, bringing together an excellent set of essays stemming from a conference at the University of Cyprus in November 2009.

The Renaissance philosopher Francesco Patrizi figures in two of the essays, that of Gilles Grivaud's study of the manuscripts Patrizi acquired during his stay in Cyprus (1561–68) and that of Angel Nicolaou-Konnari on Patrizi's association with Cypriot scholars and intellectuals in Cyprus and Italy, especially Giacon and Pietro de Nores. Many other major cultural figures, such as Gian Vincenzo Pinelli, Sperone Speroni, and Torquato Tasso play a role in the tale Nicolaou-Konnari tells. As one would expect, Venetian officials influenced Cypriot culture in significant ways, from Archbishop Filippo Mocenigo trying to implement the reforms of the Council of Trent (as studied by Evangelia Skoufari) to the archaeological and urbanistic initiatives of the *provveditore generale* Giovanni Matteo Bembo (as

explored by Lorenzo Cavelli). Roman, rather than Cypriot, artistic and architectural history takes central place in Enrico Parlato's article on the activities of the well-known Cypriot cardinal Ludovico Podocataro. Fascinating is Evelien Chayes's study of the dealings of the Cypriot merchants and suspect heretics Marco and Andrea Zaccaria with the Inquisition, various academies in Italy and Cyprus, and the book trade between Cyprus and Europe. The great news blockbuster of the volume, however, is Chris Schabel's exposé of Francesco Loredano's long-influential seventeenth-century *Historie de' re Lusignani* as a tissue of fabrications and plagiarisms, or, as Schabel puts it, "a knight's tale." Cyprus claimed its place in Italian Renaissance literature with the mysterious visit of Francesco Marcolini in 1546–48, explored by Paolo Procaccioli, with the literature surrounding the fall of Famagusta covered by Paola Cosentino, and with Carlo Alberto Girotto's discussion of Anton Francesco Doni's (d. 1574) poem in ottava rima usually called *Guerra di Cipro*. Finally, the volume contains an essay on Cypriot wildlife in Renaissance writings (Benjamin Arbel) and a study by Daniele Baglioni proving that the strongest Romance influence on Cypriot Greek was medieval French rather than any Italian vernacular.

In short, this is a valuable volume for students of Renaissance art, literature, intellectual history, language, and religion. Cyprus not only was the easternmost frontier of Renaissance culture in the Mediterranean, but also a factor in the creation of this culture.

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