

A Land for Strangers

Non-Native Individuals and Communities in Cyprus

edited by Carlotta Brignone, Lorenzo Calvelli,
Giulia Gollo, Lorenzo Mazzotta

French Consuls in Cyprus, 1840-70 Their Roles and Impact, with Archival Evidence

Lucie Bonato

Université Paris Nanterre, France

Abstract The archives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs recorded actions taken by the consuls, and those remain a principal source of the history of Cyprus. Since the French Consulate was the most important in the nineteenth century, at least until the 1870s, the role of its consuls was of great consequence. The study of the correspondence of several of these between 1840 and 1870 (Fourcade, Goepf, Tastu, Doazan, Saintine, Darasse, Du Tour, Maricourt or Colonna Ceccaldi) shows that they were very active, because they had to face numerous situations in areas of trade, agriculture, taxes and customs duty – which they managed to resolve successfully in favour of the French colony, the protégés and also all of the Christians and the Maronites in particular. The consuls had real power and even obtained the replacement of some Ottoman officials whom they denounced, even if it was at the request of the Greek population. Furthermore, many showed deep humanity and also played an active role in works of public interest, such as the organisation of the Larnaca quarantine and water supply, etc. Finally, the role of the consuls in the discovery of Cyprus' archaeology can be underlined due to the fact that some of them were interested in collecting objects either for themselves or for the Louvre Museum.

Keywords Ottoman Cyprus. Larnaca. French consuls. Protection of France. Archaeology of Cyprus.

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1 Introduction

In the middle of the nineteenth century, Cyprus was surviving in wretched conditions under the yoke of the Ottoman Empire. The island suffered above all from an inefficient administration and a particularly oppressive taxation system. Peasant farmers were subjected to very heavy taxes due to the methods of collection, under a system of tenant farming with annual adjudication to the highest bidder that aimed to collect taxes to be paid to the Porte; and at the same time, those farmers were also seeking to become wealthier by any means. But there was also taxation due to the needs the Empire had to face because of insurrections, especially in Montenegro (1857-62) and Crete (1866-69), not to mention the cost of the Crimean War (1853-56). Under pressure from its allies, Turkey had undertaken reforms leading to modernisation based on the Western model in order to struggle against the decline of the Empire (the Tanzimat period).¹ The imperial charter, *Khatt-i-cherif of Gülkhâne*, in 1839 enumerated the reforms to be undertaken, among them the abolition of farming taxes; the introduction of a new tax system; the freedom to dispose of land assets; improvements to the judiciary system; and also, higher salaries for civil servants and officials. Paul Dumont (1989, 459) summarised the reforms by saying:²

Centralisation administrative, modernisation de l'appareil étatique, occidentalisation de la société, sécularisation – avec bien des restrictions – du droit et de l'enseignement.

In 1856, the *Hatt-i-humayun* amplified reforms by guaranteeing equality for all Ottoman citizens without distinction of religion or nationality, with large concessions allowing minorities freedom of worship and the right to enjoy traditional immunities.

Between 1840 and 1870, the main Cypriot port of Larnaca saw a succession of eleven consuls and acting consuls: Dagobert Fourcade (May 1840-July 1845); Théodore Goepp (1845-February 1849); Eugène Tastu (1849-September 1852); Félix Hélouis (acting from March to

¹ Tanzimat means reorganisation. The period ended in 1876, the year when the first Constitution of the Empire was promulgated. For the chronological definition of the Tanzimat period (1839-76), cf. Aymes 2010, 4-9. The period we intend to study in France's consular archives does not cover these dates entirely, but the object here is not to seek how reforms were applied in Cyprus. Furthermore, after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 which led to the end of the Second Empire, France's position in Cyprus notably declined to England's benefit.

² "Centralised administration, modernisation of the apparatus of State, westernisation of society, and secularisation – with many restrictions – in law and education". If not otherwise specified, all translations are by the Author.

October 1852); Jules Doazan (1852-July 1856); P. Gérardy-Saintine (acting from 1856-March 1857); Paul Darasse (1857-November 1860); Édouard Du Tour (1860-March 1862); Louis Dumesnil de Maricourt (1862-August 1865); Charles de Vienne (acting from 1865 to February 1866); and Tiburce Colonna Ceccaldi (1866-December 1869). What role did those French officials play in the history of the island? What influence did they have? And in what domains? Did they succeed in their mission? An examination of consular correspondence³ provides answers to those questions.

If the traditional vocation of the consul was limited to economic and commercial activities until the Revolution, one has only to study the correspondence exchanged between Larnaca, Paris and Constantinople for understanding how their prerogatives evolved after the decree dated 14 February 1793 that attached the consuls to France's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During their residency they represented French sovereignty and spoke freely with local authorities, with other officials in the Consular Corps, and with representatives of the Latin and Orthodox churches. Their role was gradually enhanced with diplomatic functions that were supportive yet different: they undertook negotiations, ensured respect for personal security and safeguard of interests, and also took the defence of French subjects in the event of conflicts⁴ whether the nationals (then known as 'the Franks') were settled inside the consular circumscription or merely in transit.

3 Letters exchanged with the Ministry in Paris are kept in the Centre des Archives diplomatiques du ministère des Affaires étrangères at La Courneuve, and divided between Correspondance Commerciale et Consulaire, Larnaca (abbreviated in the notes as CCC L) and Correspondance Politique du Consul, Turquie, Larnaca (abbreviated in the notes as CPC TL). Letters exchanged with the Embassy in Constantinople are kept at the Centre des Archives diplomatiques de Nantes under the reference Fond Constantinople, series D, Larnaca (abbreviated as the notes FCDL). The 'shelf-mark' reference of the reserve being 166PO/D/43, we have merely added the box number. Because the archives kept in Nantes since 1862 are not folioed, the number of the missive is indicated. Embassy letter drafts carry an indication according to where they were written (Pera or Therapia).

4 French nationals permitted to live in the Empire had numerous advantages, among them exemption from taxes payable by Muslims and minorities, the possibility of a ruling by a consular court, liberty of travel, trade, and freedom of worship. All French nationals settled in the Levant could claim consular protection once registered at the chancellery. The act of registry obliged French nationals to accept the authority of the Consul in police matters. France's representatives were also the colony's administrators, acting as the notary public, marine administrator and registrar, delivering passports and visas, and also serving as the tax collector dealing with revenue corresponding to acts of a fiscal nature, and also as the treasurer or payer in their constituency of all budgetary outlays by the State (Dislere, de Mouy 1893).

The Capitulations regulating the status of foreigners in the Ottoman Empire⁵ had given France the possibility to extend its protection⁶ not only to certain foreigners without representation, like the Swiss, the Hellenes⁷ or else the Persians,⁸ but also to Ottoman subjects who were employed for the utility of the nation. Called *barataires*, the latter included dragomans, *kavas* (guards) and sometimes household servants, and they held a patent, the *bérat* which gave them their collective name. They were considered as *protégés* and shared the same police immunity and commercial privileges as the Franks. They also had other advantages, both fiscal (in particular, they were exempt from certain fees as the capitation tax) and judicial (in civil and commercial affairs it became possible to obtain a ruling in a consular court). The status of the *barataires* was strictly controlled and this protection was periodically reassessed by the governors, who did not take kindly to subjects of the Porte escaping their jurisdiction: governors repeatedly made requests for certain *protégés* to be struck off the register kept by the consul.⁹

Apart from that legal protection, the Sultan had granted France religious protection for the Catholics of the Ottoman Empire, ensuring freedom of worship, security for pilgrims and the safeguard of holy places.¹⁰ Sometimes that protection was not so straightforward, as was notably the case with the affair known as the flag of Jerusalem,

5 After the Republic of Genoa (in 1352), France was the first to be granted these privileges by the Sultan.

6 This protection was “un lien juridique qui rattache une personne à un État et la fait jouir de certains droits et privilèges dérivés de la qualité de national de cet État, sans lui conférer la qualité de national ni le statut personnel qui en dépend” (a judicial link that attached a person to a State and caused that person to enjoy certain rights and privileges derived from the quality of a national of that State, without conferring on the person the quality of a national or the personal status that depends on this. Arminjon 1903, 262).

7 That is to say, the subjects of the new Greek State recognised as independent by the Conference of London dated 3 February 1830. On the Hellenes and France's protection in Cyprus: Bonato 2006, 145-8.

8 The Minister of Persia in Constantinople lobbied the Embassy of France in 1860 and in 1863 so that Persian nationals settled in Cyprus or in transit there could come under French Protection (FCDL 29, Therapia, 24 July 1860, ff. 96-7; Darasse, 20 August 1860, ff. 117-18 and Maricourt, 1 March 1863, no. 40).

9 The number of *protégés* was determined by consular ruling and depended on the importance of the representation (Rey 1899, 288). The archives keep a list drawn up in July 1865 by Louis Dumesnil de Maricourt: France employed and protected around twenty-five subjects of the Sultan, Greeks and Turks, as dragomans, *kawas* or prosecutors (FCDL 30, 18 July 1865, no. 144).

10 In 1673, by the sixth Capitulations, Louis XIV obtained that the Catholic religion would be protected by France throughout Ottoman territory. The privilege was confirmed in 1740 by the seventh Capitulations which additionally authorised repairs to Christian sanctuaries.

which on numerous occasions led to protests from the Porte.¹¹ In September 1860, Darasse advised the Embassy that the Pasha had received orders from Constantinople to refuse entrance into the island's ports to captains of vessels flying the flag of Jerusalem. The Embassy informed him that their search for documents had been unsuccessful, and none had been found that established those rights, and so it was worth waiting for the Embassy and the Porte to reach agreement on the matter before any action was taken against the vessels. Darasse exposed the arguments to the governor, who yielded to his objections.¹²

There was one unofficial protection that the consuls sometimes applied, that of the orthodox Greeks, but when a consul intervened he would do so only with the greatest caution.¹³ The Greeks repeatedly made applications to the Consulate of France, to the point where Darasse would report that he was continually importuned and obliged to forbid their entry into his Consulate:¹⁴

Si je devais intervenir pour exiger le redressement de toutes les infamies et injustices commises par l'administration locale et toutes les fois que les chrétiens me le demandent, je n'aurais plus le loisir de m'occuper des intérêts de nos nationaux.

When he deemed it necessary, the consul would restrict himself to informing the Ambassador while sending a formal letter to the Pasha. In 1860, for example, he informed the Marquis de La Valette that Isham Bey had been sent from Constantinople to conduct an inquiry into the condition of the Christians in Cyprus.¹⁵ Under penalty, Christians had to sign declarations that were drafted in advance by

11 Until 1847 and the restoration of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem by Pius IX, the *Custodia Terræ Sanctæ* delivered navigation patents and vessels flew the flag of Jerusalem, i.e. the red St. George's Cross of the Crusades against a white background. The Porte consented to the Order of Friars Minor putting vessels to sea that transported friars, pilgrims and fresh supplies for the missions, and the vessels navigated under the protection of France's consular agents. The Friars, however, would deliver patents to Catholic ship owners claiming to be under France's protection whatever their nations. It was only after 1847 that patents were granted more parsimoniously (Blanchard 1938, 553-4).

12 FCDL 29, 8 September 1860, ff. 124-5 and 128 (without date).

13 Article 9 of the *Treaty of Paris* dated 30 March 1856 stipulated that the Powers in no case had the right to interfere, either collectively or separately, in the Sultan's relationships with his subjects, nor in the interior administration of his Empire.

14 "If I were to intervene to demand redress for all the infamies and injustices committed by local administration, and do so every time that the Christians ask me to, I would no longer have time to care for the interests of our own nationals" (FCDL 29, 1st September 1859, f. 47).

15 FCDL 29, 20 August 1860, ff. 117-18.

the *mudir* (chef of a district), and which stated that everything was for the best. One civil servant, wlier than his colleagues first collected the signatures before he drafted the declaration above the names!

Consuls based in Larnaca were assisted by agents from Nicosia, where the governor was in residence, and from Limassol.¹⁶ They reigned over the French colony, which in July 1863 comprised 55 adults and 23 children.¹⁷ In their majority, the French nationals were merchants, landowners, clerks, artisans and craftsmen, and also doctors. Even if Larnaca was a place of little importance, compared to Beirut, or Smyrna for instance, the Consul de France held a rather remarkable position in that he has the largest European community. Darasse would declare in 1859 that his influence was dominant and that:¹⁸

Ce consulat pourrait, le cas échéant, assumer un rôle décisif. Tout ce qui est grec à Chypre (les trois cinquièmes de la population au moins) est dévoué à la France et n'espère aujourd'hui qu'en elle.

2 French Protection

2.1 Security of Persons

Guaranteeing personal security could simply be a matter of placing a Consulate guard at the disposal of a prelate visiting the island,¹⁹ but the consuls quite often had closer involvement and intervened directly if the live of French nationals or *protégés* came under threat. While calm usually reigned in Cyprus, a few sporadic incidents are mentioned however. This was notably the case after the signature of the *Khatt-i-cherif of Gülkhâne*. In 1841, the first 'reformist' Governor Talat Effendi²⁰ attempted to apply reforms particularly in taxation,²¹

16 The Nicosia agency was created in 1845 at the request of Fourcade (CCC L 20, 28 August 1845, f. 19). Discontinued for a time, the Limassol agency was reinstated in 1856 and its agent was Hyacinthe Mantovani, an Italian doctor (FCDL 28, Doazan, 25 June 1856, f. 389 and Pera, 13 October 1856, f. 432). The Famagusta agency created in 1865 was only short-lived.

17 Maricourt, CCC L 22, 20 July 1863, ff. 133-4.

18 "This consulate could if necessary take on a decisive role. Everything that is Greek in Cyprus (three fifths of the population at least) is devoted to France and today their hopes lie in her alone" (FCDL 29, 14 July 1859, f. 20).

19 The Guardian of The Holy Land was accompanied by a Consulate guard during his tour in 1840 (CCC L 20, Fourcade, 19 June 1840, f. 152).

20 On the first years of the Tanzimat reforms in Cyprus, see Michael 2013.

21 Apart from personal taxes there was tax on agricultural products, animal herds, contributions in kind in time of war and multiple levies instituted legally or not by the governors. The *rayas* had also taxes payable to the Orthodox Church.

but without great success because he had no financial means at his disposal to put the new laws into effect as intended, and he was confronted by a great deal of inertia among dignitaries anxious to preserve their privileges and interests. In March, much “fermentation” (agitation) was manifested in Paphos without any certain identifiable cause, and then it was the turn of the Turks in Larnaca and Nicosia to purchase all the powder and lead to be found in the bazaars so that they might defend themselves against the Greeks, whom they suspected of wanting an uprising. Fourcade thought this was no doubt a *manœuvre* by the Primates, sowing the seeds of trouble among the people to urge the latter into demonstrating what they would later explain as refusals of the new administrative and financial systems.²² In June Fourcade reported that the administration was without strength; that old punishments had been abolished without replacement; that “le bâton ne fait plus son office” (the stick no longer does what is expected of it) especially with regard to the Turks,²³ and that thefts and murders were committed with impunity. So, there was a general malaise on the island, and the consul made it his duty to keep an attentive watch over the security of the French colony.

Events in the Empire had affected Cyprus more than once, whether it was the assassination of the English and French consuls in Jeddah (June 1858), the Druze massacre of the Maronites in Lebanon (between March and July 1860), or the Muslim massacre of Christians in Damascus (9-18 July 1860). Those events, and the arrival of senior civil servants placed in residence in Cyprus after the killings in Syria, had kindled tension between Greeks and Turks, especially in Nicosia (Bonato 2004, 133-9). On 4 July, a Turkish corvette arrived from Beirut transporting several dozen Druze as well as Tahir Pasha, the former *Ferik* (the lieutenant-general or general of a military unit) of Damascus, who had been sentenced to exile in Cyprus. Further exiles arrived on 10 August (64 Druze and Turks from Damascus and Saïda).²⁴ A year later, Du Tour reported that Nicosia had been transformed into a city of fanatics where the Turks were grouped around Tahir Pasha and his house was used for daily meetings. On 31 August 1861 he wrote:²⁵

22 CCC L 19, 22 March 1841, f. 201.

23 CCC L 19, 26 June 1841, ff. 213-16.

24 CPC TL 1, Du Tour, 10 August 1861, f. 241.

25 “Every day at any moment, on all corners of the streets, Christians are insulted and beaten in the most atrocious manner; besides, impunity is certain for the perpetrators, as the Christians are so frightened they dare not testify on behalf of their coreligionists” (CPC TL 1, 31 August 1861, ff. 248-50 and FCDL 29, 6 September 1861, ff. 221-8).

Tous les jours à chaque instant à chaque coin de rue les Chrétiens sont injuriés & bâtonnés de la manière la plus atroce l'impunité est d'ailleurs assurée à ces sicaires car les Chrétiens sont tellement effrayés qu'ils n'osent pas aller témoigner en faveur de leurs coreligionnaires.

According to Du Tour, the only solution to restore calm was to depose the *Tombrouk agassi*, (Chief of Police), and dissipate the troublemakers, meaning from eighty to one hundred people; he suggested they be transferred to Famagusta so that their stay would be not a reward but a real punishment. As for Tahir Pasha, he proposed Larnaca or Limassol as the latter's place of residence. His recommendations were the subject of a joint missive from the French and English Consulates sent to their respective Embassies.²⁶ Tahir Pasha was transferred to Chios on 3 December 1862 and the *Tombrouk agassi* was removed.²⁷

Displaced populations, especially Circassians, were another worry for the consuls. Russian expansion towards the Mediterranean, which had begun in the eighteenth century, had always been resisted by the people of the Caucasus. After a series of uprisings they had to accept it, and the date of 21 May 1864 traditionally marks the end of the great Caucasian War that began in 1816 and led to huge emigration: between four and seven hundred thousand Caucasians were forced into exile in the Ottoman Empire, where they were dispersed throughout. In November 1860, between one thousand and fifteen hundred Circassians were sent in the island at the request of the Nicosia's *Mejlis* (Great Council) to make up for the lack of manpower that followed Greeks fleeing harassment by the Turks. The Circassian community had a wide reputation for making trouble and the Christians hoped the French Embassy would take steps. But the Embassy refused to intervene due to the considerable number of Circassian *émigrés*; nor did it wish to hinder another point in the Empire if surveillance was going to be more difficult.²⁸ A new influx of Circassians in October 1864 was the object of a detailed report from Maricourt.²⁹ Larnaca's inhabitants were alarmed by the Circassians' notorious reputation and also believed they suffered from contagious diseases, and they crowded outside consular residences in the hope the *mudir* would refuse entry to the vessels. Foreign agents, and a few

26 CPC TL 1, 29 September 1861, f. 251.

27 CPC TL 1, 20 January 1862, f. 265 and CCC L 22, 9 March 1862, f. 027.

28 FCDL 29, Darasse, 27 August 1860, f. 119 and Therapia, 3 September 1860, ff. 123-4.

29 FCDL 30, 14 October 1864, no. 120 and 28 October 1864, no. 122. See also Bonato, Emery 2010c, 129-33, and Bonato 2015, 195.

inhabitants armed with rifles, kept watch to prevent the immigrants from disembarking, but the Circassians were in such a miserable state that they were allowed to set foot ashore and then quarantined in a heap. In the days that followed, confusion reigned. Armed Turks roamed through the European quarter, and Maricourt appealed to the naval forces stationed in Beirut, as he was authorised. On 13 October the frigate *L'Impétueuse* appeared in the bay at Larnaca to bring calm. Five hundred Circassians were led to Nicosia – of whom merely two hundred were reported to have survived. Others were dispersed across the island. One small group founded a village on the Akrotiri peninsula in the district of Limassol. Many succumbed to an onslaught of malaria due to the proximity of outlying marshes. By the end of the century its inhabitants numbered eighty, and today only the name of the village, Cerkez (Cherkess: other name of the Circassians) recalls those painful events.

The Cretan Revolt (1866-69) had repercussions in Cyprus. The Porte instructed the Hellenes to leave Imperial land within two weeks, and then granted a new delay. In May 1866, Governor Saïd Pasha acted as if nothing had changed, and either hastened the Hellenes' departure from the island or had them imprisoned by Larnaca's *mudir*. The Greek consul, Margaritis, who could obtain nothing at all from the governor, requested the assistance of Colonna Ceccaldi.³⁰ Some consuls also intervened by drawing the governor's attention to the fact that his attitude was contrary to the Sultan's orders. In the end, Saïd Pasha cancelled his directives and "l'affaire en resta là" (there the matter ended).

There were other, more personal matters that led to consuls becoming involved in some occasions. On 15 August 1841, a Muslim named Mehmet Kirimli entered the home of a French national, Thomas Péry, in an attempt to assassinate him.³¹ According to law, the residence of a foreigner or *protégé* was inviolable, and so there was cause to punish the attacker in order to ensure that the security of all Europeans would be respected by the Turks. The governor would satisfy Fourcade's request: Mehmet Kirimli was sentenced to a caning of 50 blows, increased to 200, for having violated the home of a Frenchman. The affair was perhaps someone simply settling a score, but another in 1856 involved the French State through its Nicosia representative Vice-Consul Adolphe Laffon, who had to take refuge with his family in Larnaca after the consular agency had been set ablaze on several occasions. Saintine refused his return to Nicosia, for Laffon's family was still under threat, with fires started in Larnaca itself, close to their home, in November and December.

30 FCDL 30, 10 May 1867, no. 22.

31 CCC L 19, 27 August 1841, ff. 225-7. See Bonato 2006, 149-51.

Finally, it was not until April 1857 that Darasse authorised Laffon to return to his house with all assurances from the governor as to his security.³² In February 1861, Du Tour had occasion to report an attempted poisoning, this time concerning a Swiss national who was a French *protégé*, a mechanic named Jacques Horlacher. A Hungarian *émigré* named Mohamed Ali was suspected, a man whose expulsion had been decided by the governor on the findings of the consul.³³ All the above incidents illustrate decisive intervention by the French consuls.

2.2 Safeguard of Interests

2.2.1 Property and Land Tax

Most French nationals settled in Cyprus were merchants and some were considered landowners.³⁴ In the period under consideration, private ownership of land did not exist, since under religious law the land belonged to the Sultan, and this situation presented two obstacles: there were no rights of succession, disposal or donation (no legal transmission of property to family other than one's own children), no more than there was the right to mortgage property; only what was constructed or planted on those properties could be disposed of (tenant farmers could not mortgage their land to borrow capital, and loans were made at exorbitant rates, which prevented progress in agriculture.)

As for foreigners, no acquisition of land was possible, yet there were still certain European residents in Cyprus considered as landowners. With the assistance of a system of subtleties enabled by Turkish law, those Europeans had acquired properties either confiscated during the persecutions of 1821,³⁵ or reposessed from debtors, or else through marriage, since Turkish law could grant property to women. Foreigners marrying female subjects of the Sultan who were Christians benefited from the nationality of their

32 FCDL 28, Saintine, 20 September 1856, ff. 411-29; 6 October 1856, ff. 430-1; 3 November 1856, f. 433; 14 November 1856, ff. 436-7; 3 December 1856, ff. 451-2 and Darasse 15 April 1857, ff. 495-8.

33 FCDL 29, 20 March 1861, ff. 178-9.

34 FCDL 26, Maxime Raybaud (Consul from May 1836 to March 1839), 14 October 1837, ff. 436-7.

35 After the Greek uprising to obtain independence, the Governor of Cyprus, Kuchuck Mehmet, in the belief that events would be precipitated on the island, requested that the Sultan send reinforcements and, to avoid any potential revolt, he proceeded to arrest and execute over 450 persons, Greek dignitaries and prelates, including the island's Archbishop.

spouses – the women remained Ottomans – and could purchase lands and houses which could be handed down by the same artifices (Arminjon 1903, 94). It would seem that existing tolerances on the part of the authorities dated back a long time, but beginning in around 1830 the *kadis* (Muslim judges) had no longer wished to deliver titles bearing the names of Europeans. The law had been circumvented, and land had been purchased in the names of Ottoman subjects (*prête-noms*, i.e. nominees): the latter then issued retractions, and the letters they drafted indicated the real owners' names; the letters were then registered at the chancery of the Consulate of the country of the real purchaser. This use of nominees was often a source of conflict, as the *rayas* (non-Muslim subjects of the Sultan) rented out the lands they cultivated and claimed as their own. In addition, those property acquisitions still remained subject to Turkish law.

Landed property was a matter that provided the administration of the Porte with food for thought, because property tax (tithe) was paid by everyone, and in 1832-33 a land census had already been undertaken in Cyprus (Aymes 2004, 142-4). At the end of September 1840, Fourcade received a despatch from the Embassy alerting him that the Porte was complaining about French nationals refusing to allow the land registry have details of property they possessed in the names of their wives or mothers-in-law, with the result that they were not paying the corresponding taxes.³⁶ Fourcade gathered the 'five or six' French landowners concerned, and recommended that they should not oppose the land registry except if they had observed that the latter was abusing its powers. It does seem, however, that the European landowners showed little inclination to reply favourably to requests from the local authorities, and in June 1841 the Porte was obliged to send an official memorandum to the Ambassadors in Constantinople.³⁷

On 18 February 1856, the *Hatt-i-Humayun* was the prelude to a relaxation in landed property legislation. There was a necessity for precise regulation³⁸ to facilitate transactions, but also to develop the country's prosperity, i.e. to promote activity that added value to the agricultural sector, and to encourage trade and so increase fiscal revenue in support of the constantly increasing expenditure of the Empire. There was also the matter of putting an end to the growing number of frauds.

In 1859, with 'property rights' of Europeans contested by the governor, the French sent a petition to Napoleon III to request the

³⁶ FCDL 27, Constantinople, 27 September 1840, f. 176.

³⁷ FCDL 27, translation, 11 June 1841, f. 218.

³⁸ There was a first step in 1858 with the adoption of a land tax code (Aristarchi Bey 1873, 7-64, Young 1906, 45).

execution of the *Hatt-i-humayun*. While the Embassy upheld their initiative in theory, it made it known that it was “inopportun” (inconvenient) to raise a matter whose principle was an already-acquired right.³⁹ The fundamental reform was acted in 1867 when three laws were promulgated. The new legislation conformed more or less to the codes of Europe, definitively establishing «indigenous» property rights and at the same time recognising foreigners’ rights to landed property, leaving it to each country to approve the protocol appended to the law. For French subjects it took effect on 9 June 1868. In the same way as the Sultan’s subjects, French nationals would have property rights. In return, they were obliged to abide by the laws of the Empire, duly pay contributions and, finally, accept the arbitration of Ottoman civil tribunals in the event of dispute.

A few landed property matters called for Embassy assistance in order to be settled. In 1857, Saintine reported that the farmers of Georges Lapierre, the most important French landowner on the island, were not paying their rents.⁴⁰ He appealed to the governor, who refused to intervene because the law did not permit Europeans to possess land in the Ottoman Empire. A letter from the Vizier was sent to the governor to draw his attention to the fact that he could not abolish a traditional custom of the country that had force of law, and was also about to pass into Ottoman law.

There was also the Santi Mattei affair, which mobilised the efforts of Darasse for over one year.⁴¹ This family, originally from Genoa or Corsica, had been on the island for several generations and its surviving members, three brothers and sisters, requested naturalisation at the French Consulate because the governor had taken steps to strip them of their assets and auction off their property, given that certain deeds were in their grandfather’s name and, according to the law, could not be inherited, and other title deeds had been lost. Several letters from the Vizier were necessary, notably concerning the lost deeds, for which public testimony would have to be admitted as sufficient evidence by the *Mejlis* of Nicosia. In this way the Santi Mattei family was able to keep its property, which reassured other European landowners worried about the legality of their own title deeds.

As for Colonna Ceccaldi, it fell to him to defend “un Français des plus honorables, agriculteur distingué” (a most honourable Frenchman and distinguished farmer) namely Georges Bernard, to guarantee

39 FCDL 29, Darasse 25 April 1859, ff. 6-8 and Therapia (illegible date), f. 15.

40 FCDL 28, 9 February 1857, ff. 459-64 and 31 May 1857, ff. 525-6.

41 FCDL 29, 28 August 1859 ff. 28-33; 5 October 1859, ff. 51-5; 17 October 1859, ff. 58-9; 4 November 1859, ff. 63-4; 30 May 1860, ff. 83-6; 27 August 1860, f. 120; 2 September 1860, f. 122; 19 October 1860, ff. 141-4; 17 November 1860, f. 147.

his right to his 'property'.⁴² In 1855 Bernard had bought lands (near the Turkish village of Sinda) from the government designating two nominees, Kristofi and Janco Pieridi (for Pierides) who were subjects of the Porte. And then in 1862, Bernard had rented this land to four of the village's inhabitants. Three years later, Bernard wanted to sell the property to farmers from the neighbouring village of Lissi, but the people from Sinda lodged a complaint with the *Mejlis* of the province, deeming that Bernard had wrongly acquired the property in 1855. Their case was thrown out and a *mazbata* (minutes of meeting session) recognised Bernard as the legitimate owner.

All landowners were required to pay the landed property taxes – the tithe – and these received the full attention of the Consuls, who also intervened in the island's administration. We should recall that since the conquest of Cyprus, taxes raised in the island were extremely varied, as elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire; their distribution was very inequitable, and they were collected through a farming system which gave way to all kinds of profligacy. The Consuls continually denounced the fiscal system and its glaring inequalities, condemning the manner of tax collection which often showed unheard-of cruelty. Implementing this great fiscal upheaval engendered by reforms, as indeed it was, would take several decades.

In Cyprus the first step was the abolition of tax-farming in 1839. That reform, however, met with resistance from Greek and Turkish Primates, who would lose their tax exemptions and the power they wielded over the population, so much so that the tithe was still subject to a leasing in 1869. In 1855, Darasse sent the Embassy a report on schemes conceived by a Greek Primate to the detriment of the Empire's Treasury during the adjudication of the tithe on the island. The Pasha was furious that the Consul would intervene in this kind of affair, even though his participation resulted in new judgements to the benefit of the Treasury, to the tune of 800,000 piastres. Darasse would congratulate himself for thwarting the farmers' manoeuvres just when the Porte was going to take out a new loan to pay war costs.⁴³

For as long as the tithe was paid by all landowners, no dissent was possible, and the Consuls had little freedom of action. At the beginning of 1842, Fourcade was solicited by the governor on the question of instigating a new tax on property detained by the French. The Consul could not refuse to collaborate, but he wanted this tax to replace the tithe, and ascertain that French property was taxed at its correct value. He therefore queried the governor as to the methods of taxation but was met with 'complete silence'. It seems

⁴² The affair was described in CPC TL 2, 25 May 1866, ff. 80-4 and in more detail with documentary evidence in FCDL 30, 25 May 1866, no. 10.

⁴³ FCDL 28, 14 July 1855, f. 344 and 20 August 1855, ff. 347-52.

that the governor did not follow the orders of the Porte but rather the opinions of his Greek advisors, who wished the Europeans to bear the financial costs that were the *rayas*' affair. In August 1864, Khalet Bey discussed property tax with Maricourt:⁴⁴

Il s'agissait de faire payer aux Européens et aux employés des Consulats sur une note de leurs biens et de leurs revenus, fournie par eux-mêmes, un impôt foncier de 3%.

Having received no instructions, Maricourt turned to the Ambassador who gave a pragmatic answer: only pay this tax if the *rayas* pay it. He then turned to the Minister who requested that he maintain the *status quo*, since the regulation of foreigners' rights to acquire property was under negotiation. Whatever the circumstances, since Khalet Bey had just been replaced the measures were abandoned, at least temporarily, like all the others.

Concerning the *protégés*, Darasse intervened in favour of the two employees of the Limassol agency in 1857 after the Porte had presented to the Ambassadors a project that entailed payment, under the name "impôt foncier" (land tax therefore payable by all) the taxes that existed previously: wealth tax, often arbitrary, the national debt (variable depending on the year), aid to Candia (special circumstances tax), employees' wages, and capitation tax. But the Consular Corps rebelled, stating that in Cyprus only the tithe existed as property tax, and they refused to comply. The governor, however, asked Darasse to have the two Consular agency employees in Limassol settle this 'land tax' whereas those under French protection had never paid anything other than the tithe. Finally, the Embassy informed the Consul he should only agree to them paying this if the other employees of all the Consulates did so, to which no-one consented.⁴⁵ And so this attempt to introduce a new tax went unheeded.

Acting most often unofficially since negotiations were ongoing, the Consuls therefore followed Embassy directives with some success in their vigilant observation of matters concerning the interests of nationals and their *protégés* who owned property on the island of Cyprus.

⁴⁴ "It was a matter of making the Europeans and Consulate employees, on the basis of a note, supplied by themselves, of their assets and incomes, a landed property tax of 3%" (FCDL 30, 3 August 1864, no. 109; 17 August 1864, no. 111).

⁴⁵ FCDL 28, 12 May 1857, ff. 512-20; 5 September 1857, f. 545; 17 October 1857, ff. 553-7 and Therapia, 30 July 1857, f. 542; 3 October 1857, f. 548; 17 November 1857, f. 569.

2.2.2 Commerce: Agriculture, Navigation, Customs, and the Monetary System

A large part of the consuls' attributions consisted in assisting French merchants. In the mid-nineteenth century, exportation was the principal Cypriot commerce, while imports represented much less: the island was too poor, too sparsely populated for any great consumption of articles coming from Europe. Exports were closely linked to agricultural products,⁴⁶ the facilities offered by navigation,⁴⁷ and relationships with Customs.

2.2.2.1 Agriculture

Ever since ancient times the island of Cyprus had been famous for its fertile soil. Under the yoke of the Ottoman Empire however, its cultivation had been deteriorating and by the nineteenth century only a small area of land was cultivated. Despite sometimes abundant harvests, agricultural machines and techniques were still rudimentary, and farming had to face several evils: chronic droughts, like those in 1845 and 1847, destruction by locusts,⁴⁸ and a lack of manpower.⁴⁹ To all of that, one could add the negligence of short-sighted Turkish governors because they allowed peasants to cultivate the land without any directives; at most, their involvement was limited to banning exports of cereals in the event of penury, or commandeering produce during the conflicts with which the

46 Manufactured items' share of industry was marginal, and embroidery, Indienne textiles, cotton fabric, pottery and distilleries made only a small contribution to exports.

47 The role of the consul in matters of damage during shipping or in the event of a shipwreck is not examined in this study. We can simply observe that the consul systematically intervened in a legal role in representing the interests of proprietors, shipowners, and insurers. As the magistrate who was custodian of the rights of those absent, the consul received the ship captain's recourse demanding compensation for damage, mandated experts who would list the damage and losses, and authorised and verified repairs. The consul could authorise sale of the goods, and in the case of jettison the chancellor verified the remaining cargo. Consuls had to deal with numerous stranded vessels and wrecks. Cf. For example the interventions of Maricourt in Bonato, Emery 2010c, 178-84.

48 See below.

49 Peasants were in a catastrophic situation. In years of famine, they had to take on more debts to pay taxes and when crops were good, they were taxed more heavily. Although the *rayas* were forbidden to leave the island, many of them were forced to flee.

Empire had to cope.⁵⁰ Cereals – wheat, barley and vetches – were agriculture's primary crops, and these were exported principally to Syria when harvests were sufficient to cater to domestic needs. The island's other resources were essentially wines – the most famous, Commandaria, was exported to Europe – with Muscat, raki and red table wines despatched to the Levant. Cotton enjoyed considerable although temporary expansion in the American Civil War (1861-65), because the crops were almost entirely exported. Silk represented the majority of Cyprus' exports to Marseille; olive oil was sold only in the Levant due to its lack of refinement; carob, used to distil spirits but also serving as animal fodder, was exported mainly to Russia; madder, or alizarin, used in compounds for dyeing, was being increasingly cultivated in this period (Fourcade, Bonato 2000, 168-79).

2.2.2.2 Navigation

Cyprus is situated only a short distance from the coasts of Turkey, Egypt, and Syria, and so lies at the heart of a network of maritime routes with Malta and the islands of the archipelago. The island has several ports: Larnaca, through which most trade passed, but also Limassol, Kyrenia, the closest point to Karamania, and Paphos and Famagusta, where activity was marginal. Since time immemorial, Cyprus afforded safe anchorage for navigators, whether to shelter from the area's frequent storms or to find protection against pirates; and the island also made replenishments possible at reasonable cost, so trade had always flourished. For a long time, there was no regular link with the island, but Cypriots enjoyed close relations with Marseille, Genoa, Trieste, and Livorno. And then came a revolution with the arrival of steam vessels and a return to safety in the Mediterranean after pirates had for a decade been hunted down without pity by French and English squadrons. Suddenly, trade between Europe and the mainland trading ports called *Échelles* – there were established European businesses to be found in Beirut, Jaffa, Tartus, Tripoli and Alexandretta – was conducted directly, which precipitated the decline of Cypriot commerce. The downturn increased again after 1845.⁵¹

50 In 1862, the island provided supplies of barley that were taken aboard four chartered vessels in Constantinople bound for Montenegro. It must be noted that the events taking place in France could affect Cypriot trade: when the Revolution in February 1848 instituted the Second Republic (putting an end to the July Monarchy), shipments destined for France and Italy were almost totally paralysed (CCC L 20, Goepp, 24 June 1848, f. 150).

51 CCC L 20, Goepp, 28 mai 1846, f. 48.

In 1840, the *Österreichischer Lloyd* in Trieste introduced a Constantinople-Beirut route via Smyrna, Rhodes and Cyprus. Although irregular and relatively costly, this sea-link was particularly convenient. In 1843, the *Messageries Maritimes* company based in Marseille had thoughts of establishing a line between Alexandria and the Syrian ports,⁵² but the *Peninsular and Oriental Company* would be the first (in 1847) to open a competitive sea-route between Constantinople and Beirut that called on Smyrna, Rhodes and Larnaca.⁵³ Its existence, however, was short-lived (it was abandoned only two years later). Other countries attempted a liaison with Cyprus, but without success: in 1862 the Russians and the Italians, in 1866 the Egyptians, and the Spanish in 1867.⁵⁴

So, imports from, and exports to, France transited under an Austrian flag, most often via warehouses in Alexandria, Beirut and Smyrna, and then via small Turkish, Arab or Greek vessels whose navigation, without charts or compasses, inspired no confidence at all.⁵⁵ The consuls had arguments for alerting the Ministry because France's trading position in Cyprus was weakening. In addition, the reputation of the *Lloyd* company was not enough to guarantee trade for Cyprus: for one, the company had no competition and set high prices; nor did it take much care over the merchandise it transported, and vessels foundered several times. The *Messageries* twice refused to establish a line serving Cyprus (1859 and 1865),⁵⁶ stating that the elements of freight to be collected in Larnaca seemed insufficient. In April 1867, Colonna Ceccaldi in turn requested further examination of the matter but, unfortunately, he went unheeded.⁵⁷ Several private shipping companies nevertheless showed a desire to open a direct route from Marseille to Larnaca, such as *Régis Ainé*, *Bazin* or *Touache*.⁵⁸ Their efforts turned out to be short-lived also, however, ceasing quickly because of a price-war with the *Messageries* over Levant destinations. The situation certainly affected the destiny of French citizens settled in the country, because the means of communication were of the utmost importance.

⁵² CCC L 19, Fourcade, 18 November 1843, f. 307.

⁵³ CCC L 20, Goepf, 9 December 1847, f. 114.

⁵⁴ Respectively: FCDL 29, Du Tour, 22 January 1862, f. 272; 11 February 1862, f. 278 and CCC L 22, Colonna Ceccaldi, 18 February 1866, f. 266; 21 July 1867, ff. 326-7.

⁵⁵ CCC L 22, Colonna Ceccaldi, 1st June 1869, ff. 426-9.

⁵⁶ Correspondence from the Ministry to Darasse, CCC L 21, 6 August 1859, ff. 220-1; to Maricourt, CCC L 22, 14 June 1865, f. 230.

⁵⁷ FCDL 30, 16 April 1867, no. 20.

⁵⁸ CCC L 22, Maricourt, 23 March 1863, ff. 73-4 and Vienne, 19 December 1865, ff. 258-60.

2.2.2.3 Customs

The consuls found themselves dealing most often with the Customs administration, not only to ensure that tariffs were respected, but consequently the freedom of trade itself: customs agents had nothing against foodstuffs being taken on board on the pretext of a shortage on the island.⁵⁹ Moreover, the right of customs officials to examine manifests had always been a source of conflict, and the consuls had to keep a close watch on everything that went on.

In the Ottoman Empire, customs duty was regulated by trade conventions signed between the Porte and western nations, and these were renewed periodically. Sometimes the Ministry appealed to the consuls when tariffs were due to expire: the tariff drawn up on 5 December 1850 was valid until the date of 1 March 1855, and Doazan was requested to convey improvements to be made for a satisfactory conclusion.⁶⁰

When Fourcade took up his posting, the convention then in effect, signed in 1838, stipulated among other things that before they left the island, goods intended for export were liable to a 9% tax to be applied in replacement of all the taxes previously raised inside the country for sales permits, tolls etc. Since inland taxes had never existed in Cyprus, this 9% tax was contested by the merchants. Russia, moreover, was bound by an older treaty and had not signed the 1838 convention, which meant that Russian traders and their *protégés* were exempt from duty on goods leaving the country. The first article of the 1838 convention guaranteed all nations the advantages from which the most favoured would benefit, and so Fourcade authorised French merchants to refuse to pay this tax. The consequence was smuggling on such a scale that customs officers were unable to stop it and preferred to negotiate with traders and settle for smaller but assured profits (3% to 4%). When the Russo-Turkish treaty expired in July 1844, the consul took steps to restore equality between merchants, and in October the Porte ordered that Russian merchants should pay the same duties as the others.⁶¹ Later, all the consuls would have trouble with Customs and obtain satisfaction after letters from the Vizier: Goepp regarding prices for cotton, wool and the Commandaria wines; Maricourt for the wool tariff that Customs wished to impose, but based on the duty that was

59 In 1840, by order of the Council of Nicosia, Customs, on the pretext of famine in the island, opposed the loading of flour, wheat and barley sent by French merchants. In the eyes of Fourcade, this was a violation of the Trade Treaty between France and the Porte (CCC L 19, 29 August 1840, f. 160).

60 CCC L 20, 15 December 1854, f. 308.

61 CCC L 19, 28 July 1841, f. 222; 10 April 1842, f. 249; 1st October 1843, f. 295; 21 August 1844, f. 327 and 1st October 1844, f. 333.

most advantageous for the officials themselves; Colonna Ceccaldi for a matter of *teskere* (document) certifying that excise taxes had been paid and then annulled for having been too generously distributed.⁶²

Nor should we forget that, since Customs taxes were farmed out and there were many cases of abuse that obliged the consuls to intervene. Saintine reported in 1856 that the Customs had been attributed against payment of a sum of 1,800,000 piastres, or 600,000 piastres more than the previous year. So, the Customs officer had to increase prices to reimburse the sum he had advanced. Darasse also intervened in 1857: Kiani Pasha had authorised the Customs officer to modify (to his advantage) the domestic trade taxes and the Europeans had to pay in the same way as subjects of the Porte. A letter from the Vizier was sent to the governor, who took no notice of it. In February 1863, Maricourt openly accused the Customs Director Şevket Bey of delivering false *teskere* to merchants, to smuggle goods, to use money collected by Customs to purchase goods that were resold for profit, without any trace of them in the registry (although the profits were shared with the accountant's son-in-law!) The result was that the European consuls had to complain to the Pasha and alert their Embassies.⁶³

And finally, the consuls had to guarantee free trade with the Lazaret administration, and establish quarantines which, although they were efficient, were sometimes organised in haphazardly.⁶⁴ For example, in 1845, a year after the plague had disappeared from the Empire, vessels arriving from ports in Syria and Caramania – where most trade was conducted – were immobilised for two weeks in Larnaca while Smyrna and Constantinople freely went about their business. Goepp underlined the incoherence of the situation and also the prejudiced suffered, because ships no longer halted at Larnaca and thereby avoided two weeks of inactivity as well as public health taxes.⁶⁵ Not only was the circulation of merchandise hindered, but the health taxes made prices higher, and only the Lazaret's receipts increased. Where the Ottoman government was concerned, the interests of the island came second.

62 Respectively: CCC L 20, Goepp, 6 September 1845, ff. 20-3; FCDL 29, Maricourt, 16 May 1862, no. 12; FCDL 30, Colonna Ceccaldi, 30 September, no. 12.

63 FCDL 28, Saintine, 16 November 1856, ff. 440-7; Darasse, 1st May 1857, ff. 507-9 and FCDL 29, Maricourt, 19 June 1863, no. 62.

64 The creation of the Lazaret and the consuls' action are mentioned below.

65 CCC L 20, 4 September 1846, f. 62.

2.2.2.4 The Monetary System

We can refer briefly here to the monetary system⁶⁶ and *kaime*, i.e. the paper currency whose impact on the price of foodstuffs was particularly important. In the course of its history, the Ottoman Empire had seen numerous wars whose expense could not be covered by taxes alone. To counter the poor state of its Treasury, the Empire had recourse to two mechanisms that had their dangers: alteration of its currency, and, beginning in 1839, the emission of *kaime* that consisted of interest-bearing treasury bonds redeemable at a fixed date. In principle it was guaranteed by the coins collected, but that had no real result and, since the bond was handwritten, it had a great disadvantage: it was easy to counterfeit. So *kaime* quickly declined greatly in value against coin currency when citizens lost all confidence in the former as a means of payment. As early as 1844, a reform was decided to withdraw unseemly coins and depreciated paper currency from circulation, and new gold and silver coins were introduced. But no withdrawals could be made, and so, in the Empire, not only the newly emitted coins circulated but also *kaime* and foreign money like the French Napoléon, sovereigns, or the thaler of Maria Theresa of Austria. Exchange operations in the hands of local bankers went through a period of extraordinary fluctuation.

In a context of costs incurred by war and revolt that the Empire had to face from 1853 onwards, the introduction of *kaime*, plus short-term, high-rate borrowings from local banks, and foreign loans, came one after the other. In 1862, at last a genuine plan for recovery was drawn up with a budget that provided for a decrease in public spending, a new loan from London for the withdrawal of *kaime*, and the creation of a central bank. Yet the Porte's finances were so strained that other loans followed, and in 1876 the Ottoman Empire had to declare itself bankrupt.

Transformations in monetary systems are not put into effect without crises in the price of foodstuffs, and repercussions were felt heavily in Cyprus: for one thing, there were sizeable price increases at the same time as efforts to restore balance between currency value and food prices remained sterile; another factor was forced borrowing, and consequently great difficulties in the raising.⁶⁷ In 1860, Darasse alerted the Embassy that the new tariff for currency was causing widespread discontent, since the imposed decrease generated a loss

⁶⁶ See for example: Thobie, Kançal 1995 and Kuneralp 2002.

⁶⁷ In 1861 the island received approximately 2,000,000 piastres in *kaime* that were to be for trade and taxes (FCDL 29, Du Tour 20 October 1861, f. 246). According to Maricourt the sum was around 1,500,000. In addition, he announced that the inhabitants had been asked for 2,400,000 piastres for another forced loan taken out in 1859 (CCC L 22, 2 April 1862, f. 032).

of some 10% to 40% and the markets were totally unsettled. He had to ask the Pasha for a three-month delay so that merchants might have the time to clear their old accounts.⁶⁸ In 1861, a mixed Commission to fix the legal rate for currencies was set up by Du Tour and the other members of the Consular Corps at the request of the governor.⁶⁹ When Maricourt took up his appointment, the situation was total anarchy, and exchange operations between the different means of payment left the field wide open to speculators, and consequently prices increased as dizzily as the cost of living. In March 1863, Governor Tevfik Pasha informed the consuls of the legal provisions desired by the Porte and the value of the currencies in circulation in Cyprus, and demanded this measure's application to foreigners. As some coins were highly overpriced when compared with their real value, Maricourt informed the governor that he could not accept his demands except on several conditions, and that in particular the price of foodstuffs should remain fixed and stable. Tevfik Pasha had no time to give his reply because he was replaced in April by Khalet Bey, who was much more active: by July 1863 he was already having talks with Maricourt, who inspired him to form the mixed Commission for foods and supplies charged with establishing a fair tariff, i.e. to determine prices for foodstuffs in accordance with those for currencies, and to ensure their application. Each foreign consulate, as well as the *rayas*, had sent a delegate, and the Commission was presided by the *mudir*. It was difficult putting the body to work, and in August already, the mixed Commission was showing its limitations. Its directives were not followed, prices continued to increase, and the public was showing its disapproval. But the reason above all was that the authorities continued to preoccupy themselves solely with maintaining currencies at their reduced values without acting on the price of foodstuffs, especially those of primary necessity whose prices were their main responsibility. And so Maricourt continued to refuse to obey requests for the French and their *protégés* to conform to government measures. Finally, after several meetings, the governor admitted that in return, the price of foodstuffs and manpower should be lowered, the mixed Commission would have to meet again to draw up a new tariff, *zapties* (policeman) would be made available to ensure it was respected, and at last the Customs Director would be formally instructed to forbid exportation of first necessities designated by the Commission. On 30 August Maricourt asked nationals to obey the government's decree and alert him to abuse.

⁶⁸ FCDL 29, 20 April 1860 ff. 78-9.

⁶⁹ But the *kaime* 'invasion' had annihilated all the measures that this commission was able to take (FCDL 29, 20 October 1861, f. 246).

Any control that the mixed body exercised over pricing did not last long, for in December 1863 Maricourt informed the Ambassador that the Commission had stopped functioning, that markets had been deserted, and that nothing remained to put an end to increasing prices. Heeding the people's complaints and believing he was acting together with the authorities and for the good of the population, Maricourt thought of another system that would earn him the fury of his superior, because he would galvanise all his colleagues into action against the former. With the *mudir*, Maricourt decided it would be more efficient to transfer the powers of the Commission into the hands of a single responsible person – who could only be the *mudir* – and he took the initiative to write to the governor to that effect. It provoked a general outcry. The members of the Commission, of course, found this interference in their prerogatives to be unacceptable. In mid-February 1864, Maricourt was obliged to alert the Ambassador of this incident, which produced a scathing reply: he had meddled with the administration of domestic matters that went completely beyond him. From now on the hectic increase in prices would go unchecked, with nothing to prevent devaluation of the currency or the enrichment of speculators.⁷⁰

2.2.3 Assistance in Matters of Justice

In the event of dispute, it was the status of the plaintiffs and defendants that determined the appropriate tribunal. In disputes between French nationals, the jurisdiction of the Consular Court, France's instrument of justice in the Ottoman Empire was unarguable. It was presided by the consul, who at the same time was the intermediary and arbiter for all kinds of litigation or infraction (under both civil and commercial law), and the person who adjudicated in the name of the sovereign.⁷¹ In civil and trade or commercial conflicts that could arise between foreigners of different nationalities, a convention drawn up in 1820 between France, England, Russia and Austria, and to which the other powers adhered tacitly, established mixed judicial commissions to pronounce judgements at first instance – with the exception of

70 Voluminous correspondence from Maricourt: CCC L 22, 2 April 1862, f. 32; 4 August 1862, ff. 49-56; 2 July 1863, ff. 125-31; 21 August 1863, ff. 138-44; 17 February 1864, ff. 167-70; FCDL 29, 15 September 1863, no. 69; 4 January 1864, unnumbered.

71 All judgements rendered by the Consular Court could be appealed before the Royal Court of Aix. The penalties applied were those provided for by the law in France.

criminal affairs.⁷² Finally, in the case of litigation between an Ottoman subject and a French national, Article no. 26 of the Capitulations in 1740 had recognised, with only a few exceptions, the jurisdiction of the *Mekeme* (judicial tribunal), i.e. the official seat of the *kadi* in each *kaza* (district) which dispensed justice at first instance, whatever the causes, according to Muslim laws. The most serious infractions and crimes, and also appeals, were brought before the *Mejlis-i Kebir* (Superior Council or Grand Council) of the island in Nicosia, and its President was the governor.⁷³ The reputation of the local tribunals, however, which Westerners unhesitatingly qualified as fanatical and prejudiced, caused French nationals to accept only the jurisdiction of their consul. The *protégés* as well preferred the consular court, even in certain affairs where their adversaries were *rayas*. It goes without saying that affairs opposing *barataires* who were *protégés* of two different nations would turn out to be particularly inextricable, and it is easy to understand that at times there were discussions showing the disadvantages there could be when France intervened in disputes that involved subjects of the Ottoman Empire.⁷⁴

Gradually, the Ottoman authorities attempted to unify the law so that their subjects, whether Muslim or not, and foreigners settled in the Empire, would be heard according to the same law. One of the first measures was to modify the attributions of the courts by separating the causes, with the creation of two specific tribunals, the Court of Commerce and the Criminal Court. They were the first two steps taken towards secular justice. The consuls were encouraged by their superiors to refer all affairs implicating subjects of the Sultan to those newly created Ottoman courts. In addition, different codes were adopted: the Penal Code as early as 1840, – revised in 1851 and replaced in 1858 by a new text founded on the laws of France – then the Code of Commerce in 1850 (revised in 1861), the Code of Commercial Procedure in 1861, and Maritime Commerce in 1863. Many difficulties arose after Consular Courts were involved, and in dispensing justice the consuls devoted their time in several domains, among them testimony from Christians, or else the constitution of the Court of Commerce and the Criminal Court.

72 These commissions, accepted by custom, were above all exceptional tribunals and, in the event a plaintiff's appeals were rejected, the commissions were powerless to pronounce sentences if the plaintiff had not given a prior undertaking to accept the decision and given securities.

73 The composition of this Supreme Court varied. In 1863 it was made up of twelve members: eight Muslims, three Greeks and one Armenian (CPC TL 1, Maricourt, 6 June 1863, f. 369).

74 The case of Adrien Santi Mattei, a French *protégé*, versus the Russian *protégé* Antonio Jannaki was an example of this (CCC L 22, Maricourt, 20 February 1865, ff. 210-15 and Bonato, Emery 2010c, 192-3).

2.2.3.1 Christian Testimony

Beginning in 1856, Christians would be admitted as witnesses in civil litigation against Turks.⁷⁵ However, the governors refused to accept Christian testimony because in their opinion it was not clearly explained in the *Hatt-i-humayun*.⁷⁶ In 1858, the Greeks appealed to Darasse for the principle to be applied. A letter from the Vizier was sent to the governor so that he would order the *mudirs* of each *kaza* to accept testimony given by Christians. The *kadis*, however, refused to accept this, and the Pasha decided that in all hearings where a Christian testified, the instance would be considered in front of the *Mejlis* of each *kaza*.⁷⁷

The above is illustrated by an affair that took place in 1860.⁷⁸ A *raya* shepherd from the village of Lissi named Philippi sold his mule at the Saint George's fair to another *raya* from Limassol. A Turk saw the animal and claimed it belonged to him, relying on false witnesses. The aggrieved buyer turned against the shepherd who sold the animal. The affair was raised in Nicosia in front of the Pasha. The Turk arrived with the perjurers, all Muslims, and they were heard. The shepherd Philippi invoked the testimony of every inhabitant in his village, but no-one listened to them because they were Christians. The Pasha then had the idea of hearing testimony from the animals! He had the Turk's female mule brought in, and also the shepherd's male animal, on the theory that if the male went towards the female mule, then the animal was indeed his! In fact, the male mule had travelled for four or five days with the female mule to reach Nicosia, and naturally turned towards the female. And the case was judged: the shepherd was sentenced to repay the price of the sale, together with court costs, and sent to prison. Philippi then appealed to the French consul. Written testimony was demanded from the inhabitants, and it was unanimously in favour of the shepherd. The Pasha released Philippi, waived the payment of costs, and wrote to Darasse that he will re-examine the case. A few days later the governor died and was replaced by Kairullah Pasha, who submitted the affair to the *Mejlis*, but all revision of the case was refused. Finally, a letter was sent from the Vizier to conclude the affair in a manner that amounted to justice. Later, in April 1867, English vice-consul T.B. Sandwith was questioned by his superiors on the condition of the island's Christians and mentioned: "their evidence is refused in all the tribunals when

⁷⁵ According to Fourcade, in the case of litigation between *rayas*, Christian testimony is accepted. But not when one of the adversaries is Turk (Fourcade, Bonato 2000, 157-8).

⁷⁶ FCDL 28, Darasse, 11 May 1857 f. 510; 3 September 1857, f. 544.

⁷⁷ FCDL 28, Darasse, 19 September 1858 f. 634; 2 November 1858 f. 640.

⁷⁸ FCDL 29, Darasse, 27 September 1860 ff. 138-9; Pera, 23 November 1860, f. 148.

given against Mussulmans" (Luke 1989, 217). In Cyprus, finally, there was no guarantee that justice would be done.

2.2.3.2 The Mixed Court of Commerce (*Mejlis-i Tijaret*)

The consuls of France played a part in the constitution of this body in particular, and this tribunal was entrusted with affairs opposing Ottoman subjects and foreigners, and made up of government employees and European merchants nominated by the former. In 1841, Fourcade reported that Governor Talat Effendi had taken measures for the creation of a trade tribunal, but without giving any particularities, and so the Minister indicated that it would not be possible for France to defend a jurisdiction where there was no clear definition of its attributions. The creation of the institution was finally abandoned, at least temporarily.⁷⁹ Fragments of information scattered among the consular correspondence allow a reconstitution of the chaotic existence of that tribunal in the course of the decades that followed.

On 1 September 1853, Jules Doazan announced that a mixed tribunal had been created in Larnaca.⁸⁰ It seems that it was only at the end of 1854 that this tribunal was effectively established by the governor. Djemal Pasha wished its seat to be in Nicosia, but it was impossible to find a sufficient number of competent members and he was obliged to organise the tribunal in Larnaca, where it operated like a European court, but presided by the *mudir*, with a delegate sent by each Consulate to constitute a body of representatives, half of them Muslims and the other half Christians.⁸¹ A few months later, Djemal Pasha left Cyprus and, while waiting for the new governor to arrive, the *Mejlis* of Nicosia suspended the Court of Commerce in Larnaca, with the result that the Embassy had to obtain a letter from the Vizier urging Governor Osman Pasha to take all necessary measures for the Court to immediately re-open its sessions.⁸²

In 1857, Darasse advised the Embassy that the Consular Corps, at the request of Governor Kiani Pasha, had appointed six foreign merchants to sit as judges in the mixed Court of Commerce at Larnaca, alongside six merchants who were subjects of the Porte. Kiani Pasha, however, had the intention of having appeals sent to be heard by the *Mejlis* of Nicosia, which was contrary to custom since they were usually heard before the mixed tribunal in Constantinople;

⁷⁹ CCC L 19, 28 February 1841, f. 195; 8 May 1841, f. 208 and 27 May 1841, f. 209.

⁸⁰ CPC TL 1, 1st September 1853, f. 156.

⁸¹ FCDL 28, Doazan, 24 January 1855, f. 308; 2 April 1856, f. 379.

⁸² FCDL 28, Doazan, 11 June 1855, f. 336; Therapia, 10 July 1855, f. 340.

the matter should therefore be sanctioned in justice, since the Code of Commerce due for promulgation contained special dispositions in this respect.⁸³

There was question of reorganising the tribunal in February 1861, but when faced with the difficulties, the *Mejlis* in Nicosia renounced.⁸⁴ A few months later, in October, Édouard Du Tour bragged of reshuffling the institution; Governor Mehmed Khairullah Pasha lost interest in its affairs.⁸⁵

In 1863, Louis de Maricourt explained that this tribunal was only operational for a time, and that commercial suits between Europeans and *rayas* were brought before the *mudir*.⁸⁶ The following year, in August 1864, the consul had talks with Governor Khalet Bey on the subject of this Court of Commerce whose reorganisation had been mooted again, with plans to house it in Nicosia and, above all, the governor had the 'pretension' to compose a new tribunal of exclusively Muslim elements. This was inadmissible for the Ambassador, who asked Maricourt to insist for the new Court to be organised in a satisfactory manner. Finally, Khalet Bey surrendered to Maricourt's arguments and agreed to the organisation of the Court in Larnaca.⁸⁷

In that rapid exposé there is evidence that, for foreigners, the Court of Commerce was not the instrument that should allow arbitration of their differences with Ottoman subjects, and that it was still preferable to appeal to the Consular Court to settle their affairs. In 1873, the Court was transferred to Nicosia by the then governor, Veis Pasha, much to the chagrin merchants from the West. It was definitively reinstalled in Larnaca in February 1874 (Hill 1952, 210 fn. 19). While mixed Courts of Commerce instituted by the Ottoman government in the major cities – particularly Constantinople, Beirut, Smyrna and Alexandria – seem to have operated in a regular manner, this was far from the case in Cyprus, for they were presided necessarily by Turks, and "little improvement could be expected from change" (Lang 1878, 275).

2.2.3.3 The Criminal Court (*Tahkik Mejlisi*)

The creation of this tribunal, which escaped the jurisdiction of religious authorities, was belatedly announced by Constantinople on 14 September 1861. Exactly two years later, in a despatch dated 14

⁸³ FCDL 28, 3 April 1857, ff. 492-3 and Pera, 24 April 1857, f. 500.

⁸⁴ FCDL 29, 7 February 1861, ff. 172-3 and Pera, 16 March 1861, f. 176.

⁸⁵ CCC L 21, 15 October 1861, f. 329.

⁸⁶ CPC TL 1, 6 June 1863, f. 368.

⁸⁷ CPC TL 2, 12 August 1864, f. 18; 19 August 1864, ff. 24-5.

September 1863, the Ambassador advised Maricourt that the Porte had informed him of a tribunal, devoted to criminal affairs between foreigners and Ottoman subjects, and with the *mudir* at its head, that had just been set up in Larnaca. And since that Court “pourrait être utile” (might be of use) Maricourt was invited to favour it.⁸⁸ All the consuls adhered to this measure and agreed to cooperate; and Maricourt would repeatedly send French subjects or their *protégés* there. Very rapidly, as early as the beginning of 1864, it turned out that the practice of this tribunal was discriminatory, and that justice was done more rapidly when the plaintiffs were Turks.⁸⁹ While the creation of an impartial criminal court had raised great hopes, it was obvious that the successful operation of such a court would take some time; and so Westerners were disappointed and their initial reactions were negative.

Reforms in the judiciary domain undeniably encountered difficulties when they were applied in Cyprus: neither of the two new tribunals (the Court of Commerce and the Criminal Court) functioned correctly, despite the goodwill manifested by certain governors, particularly Zia Pasha who, in 1862, demanded – unsuccessfully – that civil and religious causes be judged separately.⁹⁰ Ottoman courts, which were hostile to European interests, had a very bad reputation. It was no surprise that claims between European and Ottoman subjects continued to be brought before their respective consuls, as had been the tradition. One must add that judges sitting on the *Mejlis* of Nicosia were not remunerated and purchased their office from Constantinople, which left their moral principles open to doubt. That organisation – one tribunal per district, with a Court of Appeal in Nicosia, and tribunals in Larnaca for judging commercial and criminal affairs – would last until the arrival of the English in 1878. The consular judiciary system that operated in parallel was abandoned on 7 January 1879, unilaterally, by means of a decree from the English High Commissioner. On 17 January the High Court of Justice was created. None of the powers protested against this English decision even though the Sultan could not transfer the sovereignty of consular justice.⁹¹

Correspondence shows the consuls had mainly recourse to the Department or the Embassy for affairs of a commercial nature, and only disputes implicating *protégés* were delicate to handle. Even if some of the cases could be settled directly with the Pasha, the most

⁸⁸ FCDL 29, 25 September 1863, no. 71.

⁸⁹ FCDL 30, 2 January 1864, no. 81.

⁹⁰ FCDL 29, Maricourt, 24 July 1862, no. 22.

⁹¹ It made Paul Dislere comment that the occupation of Cyprus was indeed a true annexation (Dislere, de Mouy, 1893, 114).

complicated issues made it necessary to exchange despatches that today allow us to grasp some affairs that were particularly complex, but also to understand the relationships existing between plaintiff, defender and arbiter. As a general rule, the Department recommended “la plus grande circonspection” (the greatest circumspection).⁹² The affairs that did not necessitate the sole intervention of the consuls were systematically referred to the Turkish courts: one had only to “veiller à ce que bonne justice soit faite” (take care that good justice be done).⁹³

Some affairs found themselves suspended for decades: perpetual changes in governorship, plus ill-will on the part of some of the latter, or else that of some Greek prelates, would prevent their timely conclusion.⁹⁴ At this point we can examine an affair that began in 1821 and reached its conclusion in 1858. It demanded the joint efforts of all the consuls in what is known as the “créance Bernard” (Bernard letter of credit).

In 1821, in order to face the needs of the country, Archbishop Kiprianos took out a loan, borrowed from several European merchants.⁹⁵ The loan was never paid back because the Archbishop was executed by the Turks in the month of July. Ever afterwards, the creditors continuously requested succeeding governments to reimburse the advance, and a trial was held in Nicosia in 1839, when Clairambault occupied the post of consul.⁹⁶ The Greek clergy refused to recognise the debts and declared them to be false, because the amounts were so high that any reimbursement would have weighed too heavily on the island’s finances.

Among the creditors were several French merchants including one Gabriel Bernard. He had advanced six hundred *Talaris* (the ‘thaler’ of Maria Theresa of Austria) and the sum was guaranteed by the tax on the island’s cotton. To recover what he was due, after the death of his father, his son Georges continued the claims and requested Fourcade’s intervention in February 1845. And so Fourcade asked the Ambassador to have the Vizier send him a letter, as the local authorities had up until then rejected all debt obligations of the kind. It was only in October that year that Goepp received the

⁹² CCC L 19, Pera, 25 August 1840, f. 158.

⁹³ CCC L 19, Fourcade, 25 October 1840, f. 172.

⁹⁴ This was the case with the ‘Georges Diab affairs’ (1839-57) which whose complexity and the personality of the character exhausted the patience of a number of consuls (Bonato 2008, 170-93).

⁹⁵ Until 1821, the Archbishop was the only person to manage Church finances and those of the Greek community. He also had the right to raise taxes.

⁹⁶ Bernard Louis Bienvenue de Clairambault was consul from 1839 to 1840 (FCDL 28, Doazan, 3 May 1853, f. 178).

document that urged the governor to examine Georges Bernard's claim.⁹⁷ For his part, the English consul Niven Kerr (in post 1843-49) had also taken some action with the governors to have the debts recognised, in particular the sum owed to the English vice-consul of the period, Antonio Vondiziano. After intervening several times with the governor and his Embassy, Kerr finally saw his perseverance rewarded when in 1848 he obtained a *firman* (written order from the Sultan that commanded obedience by the whole world) attributing the creditor with the reimbursement of 87,492 piastres. Georges Bernard, of course, lodged a new claim with Goepp who, in turn, alerted the Ambassador.⁹⁸ The consul left his posting without seeing the result of the actions he had undertaken, and in January 1849 his successor Eugène Tastu asked for a *firman* drafted in exactly the same terms as the one that had permitted the settlement of the debt to Vondiziano. He only obtained a letter from the Vizier (in June) to which the Archbishop opposed new arguments to the governor, effectively saying that if the note was recognised as genuine, then there was something odd about it.⁹⁹

Other attempts were made later, by Doazan in May 1853 and June 1856, by Saintine in February 1857, by Darasse in March 1857... which came after the Porte had recognised the claim as valid.¹⁰⁰ It would take several letters from the Vizier for the affair to be examined further after the Archbishop had refused to appear before the *Mejlis*.¹⁰¹ Finally, there is a letter from another creditor, Alexandre Lapierre, that confirms he had obtained satisfaction also.¹⁰² To settle these debts, the Christian community was asked to contribute, since the various sums had been divided up among the inhabitants in the form of taxes.

It has to be admitted that foreign powers' preservation of their jurisdiction rights in settling disputes, and in ruling on offences and crimes committed by their subjects inside the Ottoman Empire, was perhaps the most important privilege that the Sultan granted.

⁹⁷ FCDL 27, Fourcade, 27 February 1845, ff. 368-9; 30 April 1845, f. 366; Constantinople, 27 October 1845, f. 385.

⁹⁸ FCDL 28, 10 February 1848, ff. 5-6.

⁹⁹ FCDL 28, 14 January 1849, ff. 26-7 and Constantinople, 18 June 1849, f. 78.

¹⁰⁰ FCDL 28, Doazan, 3 May 1853 (this letter went back over the entire dossier), ff. 178-83; 20 June 1856, f. 388; Saintine, 9 February 1857, f. 459; Darasse, 28 March 1857, ff. 488-9; Pera, 12 March 1857, f. 483.

¹⁰¹ FCDL 28, Therapia, 18 May 1857, f. 523; Darasse, 15 June 1857, ff. 531-6.

¹⁰² FCDL 28, 14 November 1857, ff. 584-5.

3 Religious Protection

Like the protection of national subjects and *protégés*, religious protection covered persons at the same time as their interests and edifices, and especially the freedom of worship for Latins, Maronites and also, much more unofficially, those whose religion was Orthodox (Bonato 2006, 170-94).

3.1 Protection of the Latin Patriarchy

France had five “public establishments” under its protection: the convents of the Franciscans in Nicosia and Larnaca, the Capuchin convent in Larnaca, the Maronite convent in Saint Elias¹⁰³ and as from 1848, the convent of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Apparition in Larnaca (Béraud 1986-87; 1989).

3.1.1 Reconstruction of the Terra Santa Church of the Convent in Larnaca¹⁰⁴

When Fourcade took up his post, the Catholic church dedicated to Notre-Dame-des-Grâces was in danger of collapse, and the Franciscan fathers feared the building could not be saved. They thought it preferable to construct a new edifice half-way between Larnaca town and Marina. They even thought of using materials from Larnaca’s Capuchin convent (abandoned and gradually destroyed after the death of the last priest in 1791), but this was refused by the Ministry.¹⁰⁵ The Bishop of Fez, a Papal legate in Egypt and Custodian of the Holy Land then on a visit to Cyprus, asked for the aid of the consul in obtaining the *firman* required to carry out the project. But the situation of Christian edifices in Muslim territories was closely watched by the authorities. In principle, restorations had to be identical and built with the same materials. The Ambassador had little optimism, having obtained merely a letter from the Vizier requesting favourable recommendation from the local authorities and ordering

103 CCC L 18, Antoine Vasse de Saint-Ouen (in post 1834-36), 17 September 1835, f. 379. The Maronite convent of Saint-Élie (Prophitis Elias) is situated above the village of Ayia Marina, north-west of Nicosia. Consul Alphonse Bottu wrote that it offered the image of misery (FCDL 26, undated (probably 1833), f. 96).

104 The church and convent were founded in 1596, principally as shelter for Latin pilgrims visiting the Holy Land. In 1724 they were replaced by more spacious buildings (Béraud 1990, 118).

105 Pouradier Duteil-Loizidou 1991, 217 and CCC L 20, 11 July 1842, ff. 257-8; 18 January 1843, f. 274.

an enquiry as to the state of the building and the urgency of the work to be done.¹⁰⁶ But the Catholic community had already acquired the land, and foreign governments participated financially, and as a result Fourcade's approaches, after a year of efforts, were finally crowned with success: the Porte delivered the *firman* that authorised construction of the edifice. To thank the consul, the friars invited him to lay the first stone of the new church, Sainte-Marie Regina Pacis, on 10 July 1842.¹⁰⁷ In 1844 Fourcade stepped in again on behalf of the Terra Santa fathers and made his own modest contribution towards the cost of laying the path that led to the church,¹⁰⁸ which was completed in 1848.

3.1.2 The Convent of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Apparition

Fourcade also worked on the founding of this new religious establishment. Placed under the protection of France, it had to contain a French school devoted to the education of young girls – for whom no system of education existed on the island – and a dispensary.¹⁰⁹ The conception of the project involved Paolo Brunoni, an Italian pontifical missionary who would obtain (from the *Association de la Propagation de la foi* in Lyon) the financial and tactical resources necessary to launch an enterprise of this kind (Béraud 1983). On 2 December 1844, four nuns landed in Larnaca, but it was only in May 1845 that Fourcade announced the Convent's creation.¹¹⁰ Difficulties rapidly arose, however, since Governor Darbaz Aga interrupted work at the insistence of a few Muslim and Greek 'fanatics' upset by the arrival of new Latin priests and clerics who pre-empted some of their prerogatives.¹¹¹ Authorisation was again granted a few months later by the newly arrived Governor Hassan Pasha, on condition that Goepf produced a *firman* permitting the construction of the new edifice. The Embassy sent the document a month later.¹¹² The Sisters took

106 CCC L 20, 19 June 1840, f. 152 and FCDL 27, Constantinople, 16 August 1840, f. 112.

107 CCC L 20, 11 July 1842, f. 257.

108 CCC L 20, 30 June 1844, f. 324.

109 This creation falls into the context of French missionary activity which was very significant in the nineteenth century. The congregation of Saint Joseph of the Apparition was established in 1832 by Émilie de Vialar.

110 CPC LC 1, 4 January 1844, ff. 174-5. The countries that contributed benevolently to this foundation were Austria, Russia, for an unknown sum, France 9,000 Francs, Louis-Napoléon 10,000 Francs (Béraud 1990, 113 and CPC LC 1, 15 May 1845, f. 194).

111 FCDL 27, Goepf, 6 March 1846, ff. 405-7.

112 FCDL 27, 6 March 1846, f. 409 and Constantinople, 6 May 1846, f. 414.

possession of their building in 1848, and five years later a chapel and a dispensary completed the institution. The enterprise was no doubt the first cultural action that France had encouraged in Cyprus in the nineteenth century and this like what happened in the Ottoman Empire, where a great many institutions were created, then managed, by religious orders and sometimes by individuals.

3.1.3 Freedom of Worship

The Terra Santa friars made few appeals to the consuls regarding their freedom to practise their religion. In 1943, the Terra Santa convent in Nicosia made its bells peal, much to the annoyance of the Turks.¹¹³ The Custodian of the convent thought he was threatened and, fearing an assault on the convent, he appealed to Fourcade to intervene. The chancellor sent to the convent reported that matters had been greatly exaggerated, as only one individual had expressed words that could be construed as a menace. So, “l’affaire du clocher” (the bell tower affair) concluded with the governor reprimanding the disruptive element in front of the Custodian Father and the Consulate Chancellor.¹¹⁴

Also in Nicosia, this time in 1857, Darasse was summoned to help the Terra Santa priests when the shots fired on Holy Saturday were forbidden by the governor. He had to intervene with the latter to explain that this was an old tradition that was part of the religious service, and that the Capitulations did not allow for its prohibition. In the end, the governor authorised the custom.¹¹⁵

3.2 The Protection of Maronites

Cyprus had seen Maronites settle on its territory as early as the eighth century after they had suffered persecution in Syria. While emigration continued until the island was conquered in 1571, it totally ceased afterwards, and under the Venetians the population did not exceed between seven and eight thousand. They survived under Muslim rule but their numbers gradually declined; no doubt one could also mention exile to Mount Lebanon, conversion to Islam, and assimilation by Orthodox Greeks as factors (Papadopoulos 1965, 86-7). In 1847, the community numbered merely 649 souls, living

113 In Cyprus, a peal of bells was “contrary to custom” (Hill 1952, 397). However, a few monasteries and churches possessed one or more bells.

114 FCDL 27, 4 August 1843, ff. 322-3 and CCC L 20, 1st October 1843, f. 294.

115 FCDL 28, 15 April 1857, ff. 495-8.

mainly in five entirely Maronite villages, namely Kormakitis (227), Asomatos (90), Karpasia (56), Ayia Marina (42) and Kambyli (34), with the others being in Larnaca and Marina (100), Nicosia (80) and Limassol (20).¹¹⁶ The Maronites were the most wretched population on the island, as the Greek bishops had sovereignty over them which had been granted by *firman*s they solicited in the decade 1810-20. Marriages, baptisms, and burials of Maronite Catholics were subject to payments that had to be made to Greek ecclesiastical authorities, otherwise the Maronites' churches were closed. So Maronites were paying twice for the most important acts of their lives – since they were also paying their own ministers – and they were also heavily taxed by the Greeks, who were responsible for allocating the taxes that the Porte collected.

The Maronites would regularly lodge complaints with the consuls of France. In 1840, then again in 1842, Fourcade turned to the Embassy which, while awaiting the result of its approach to the Porte, asked him to permit the population to refuse the Greek prelates' demands for 1842, an authorisation that was renewed for the year 1843.¹¹⁷ In July the Embassy obtained a *firman* from the Porte that asked the governor for information on the financial burdens imposed on the Maronites. At the end of November, Fourcade received the response given by the Porte: it was not a tax but an appeal for donations, and so it was easy for the Maronites to refuse it.¹¹⁸ And so Fourcade, with the aid of the French Embassy, succeeded in putting an end to the Greek clergy's pretensions and, in a way, restored the independence of the Maronite Church. Fourcade would pursue his efforts, obtaining the principle of a Maronite seat on the *Mejlis* of Nicosia.¹¹⁹ After Fourcade left, Théodore Goepp continued to act on behalf of the Maronites thanks to the quality of his relationship with the Pashas.

In 1863, Maricourt visited the Maronite villages, making particular efforts to encourage the inhabitants, for whom he felt great compassion. At Ayia Marina he ordered the rehabilitation of a church, and then lodged an official protest with the governor: the inhabitants of Kormakitis had been requested to pay a coal tax for the troops, whereas the Greeks, who also dealt in coal, were

116 This very precise census reported by Goepp was carried out by abbot Michele Cirilli (the Maronite Vicar-General) in an inquiry requested by the *Propaganda Fide* in Rome. The aim was an exact survey of Roman and Maronite Catholics settled in Cyprus (CCC L 20, 28 June 1847, ff. 94-6).

117 FCDL 27, 1st July 1842, f. 285. The Embassy's despatch dated 15 August 1842 is not in the archive. We learned of it from a reference in a later letter (FCDL 27, Constantinople, 20 February 1843, f. 303).

118 FCDL 27, Constantinople, 24 July 1843, f. 317 and 24 November 1843, f. 326.

119 CPC LC 1, 15 May 1845, f. 195.

not liable to pay the tax at all.¹²⁰ As for Colonna Ceccaldi, after a journey in January 1868 he drew the governor's attention to unfair tax allocations with differences between Greek and Maronite villages of the same district.¹²¹

3.3 The Protection of Orthodox Greeks

By the Küçük Kaynarca Treaty of 1774 Russia had proclaimed itself the protector of Orthodox Christians, but had to abandon its pretensions when the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1856. The consuls of France therefore endorsed the Orthodox Greeks, although unofficially. For example, in 1858 the Greeks in Nicosia approached Darasse as they wished to add a bell to the Phaneromeni church despite the Pasha's opposition. Darasse obtained a letter from the Vizier stating that they could add a bell to all their churches. The Pasha would in fact allow only one, in the Metropolitan church of Nicosia.¹²²

3.3.1 The Case of the *Linobambaki*

After Cyprus was conquered in 1571, Christians were treated so badly by the Turks that some had no alternative but to convert to Islam. These 'Turkish' converts secretly professed their Christian religion and were known popularly as *linobambaki*, meaning 'neither linen nor cotton'. A new wave of apostasy took place after the Greek Revolution began in 1821. The situation had become so intolerable that the island saw a significant exodus, to Greece, Italy and sometimes France. Among the Orthodox Greeks and the Maronites who could not go into exile, a certain number, once again, had to recant. Twenty-five years later, with abuses and discrimination having disappeared, a few 'renegades' appealed to Goepp for French protection so that they could become Christians again. There was no guarantee that this kind of interference was possible: Goepp showed he was sympathetic, while avoiding taking a position on the matter; he asked the Ambassador for directives, and received a recommendation to promise nothing and intervene on their behalf only if their lives were in danger.¹²³ In May 1846, he saved a Greek *raya* woman from the clutches of the Turks: she had been forced to become a Muslim, and after her husband's death she was determined to leave Cyprus with

¹²⁰ CPC TL 1, 5 November 1863, ff. 379-85.

¹²¹ CPC TL 2, 3 February 1868, ff. 157-62.

¹²² FCDL 28, 19 September 1858 ff. 634-5 and 2 November 1858, ff. 640-1.

¹²³ CCC L 20, 22 December 1845, f. 34.

her three children, who had been baptised in secret. She took refuge in the Consulate, and at night Goepp made sure she safely boarded a Greek ship bound for Smyrna.¹²⁴

Once the Christians' situation improved, the renunciation of one's religious beliefs should have become a thing of the past. Yet in June 1847 Goepp observed that "les séductions et les mauvaises passions" (seductions and unhealthy passions) were giving rise to conversions every year.¹²⁵ In November there was a delicate affair to settle when he had to 'save' a Maronite woman who had been blinded by love and renounced her faith before she saw reason. With the Pasha's approval, Goepp had her brought to Larnaca, where she was placed in a French household. Encouraged by his success, the consul decided to rid Cyprus once and for all of apostasy and after he obtained permission from the governor, Christians were forbidden to change their religion and the decision was made public throughout the island.¹²⁶

In December 1863, Maricourt pressed the Governor on behalf of a villager from Ayia Marina. The young man had reverted to his Christian faith, and been ill-treated and forcibly enlisted in the Turkish Army, despite the fact that he had paid the tax exempting him from conscription. The *Mejlis* having confirmed he should be enlisted, the consul wrote to the ambassador, who advised him not to take the matter further, as he should have known that whenever 'occult Christians' returned to their former religion they were unable to escape compulsory enlistment.¹²⁷

Finally, at the request of the Archbishop Sophronios, a unique case was reported to the Embassy in 1868 by Gustave Laffon, then the Consulate's administrator. A Greek from Varosha named Leftéri - he was raised in the home of a *linobambaki* - was married to a Greek woman and had been paying the capitation tax for five years. He was considered a Muslim by the authorities and sent to prison before he was enlisted and circumcised, which aroused the indignation of the Greek population.¹²⁸ The fate of the unfortunate Leftéri is unknown, but the drama was the subject of an article above the byline *Impartial* in the French journal *La Turquie* dated Thursday 7 January 1869. However, the French Embassy had not remained inactive and the

¹²⁴ CCC L 20, 30 May 1846, ff. 53-4.

¹²⁵ CCC L 20, 28 June 1847, f. 95.

¹²⁶ CCC L 20, November 1847, ff. 110-11.

¹²⁷ FCDL 29, 14 December 1863, "particulière" and FCDL 30, Pera, 7 January 1864, "particulière".

¹²⁸ FCDL 30, 16 December 1868, no. 52.

Porte sent a request to Saïd Pasha for a complete report on the affair, with the recommendation that he should intervene 'with moderation'.¹²⁹

Reference to nineteenth century consular correspondence shows that France's representatives, working with quite remarkable zeal, made attempts to improve the miserable conditions in which Christians of the period were living. They tried also to limit the decline in the Christian population over a period of intense emigration that left agriculture in difficulty with no little impact on trade with Europe.

4 Measures of Public Interest

The new provincial administration had much to do following the great reforms sponsored by the Porte. A few governors, however, sometimes proposed improvements of more local interest; the consuls not only approved but even contributed their assistance at times. In 1841, Talat Efendi took decisions concerning the creation of a hospice in Larnaca and the road improvements because communications and travel between different points of the island was lengthy and tedious.¹³⁰ Some of his successors also tried to act for the common good and have greater involvement in their tasks, with a view to taking Cyprus into a new era. A few timid alterations or attempts at improvement were signalled by Maricourt, from whom we learn that the governors had orders to implement more modest measures 'of material order'. First there was Ziya Pasha who, in April 1862, explained to the consul (on his protocol visit to the Seraglio) that the Porte had given assignments to complete three projects: drain the marshes, develop cotton, and destroy locusts. Also desirable were the creation of a regular maritime route between Constantinople and Larnaca; the creation of an annual two-week September fair in Nicosia; and a postal service between Larnaca and Nicosia. Needless

129 FCDL 30, handwritten note from the French Embassy's drogman Perruchot de Longeville dated 12 January 1869.

130 CCC L 19, Fourcade, 28 February 1841, f. 195. Concerning the road, nothing was undertaken. In December 1864 there was still question of establishing a passable road and the new Governor Taïb Pasha arrived with a Polish engineer named Jordan who was a French *protégé* employed by the Porte. To finance the project a special tax was introduced, and the labouring peasants had to work without wages. Finally, lengthy debates were held in the Nicosia *Mejlis* without any decision being reached (CPC TL 2, 16 December 1864, ff. 55-6 and CCC L 22, 20 April 1865, f. 222). In September 1868 the topic of the road was again on the table. A new tax was raised and both foreigners and *protégés* were asked to contribute to it. While Colonna Ceccaldi tended to accept the payment, given the modest sums involved, although other consuls refused, the Ministry was categorical in its refusal: the treaties stated that nationals were exempt from all charges of this nature (CCC L 22, 2 September 1868, f. 386 and 10 September 1868, f. 393).

to say, none of those 'honourable' ideas came to fruition.¹³¹ His own successor Khaled Bey also had 'ideas', in particular to create a market to promote raising cattle in Nicosia. That intention also fell on deaf ears, but Khaled Bey continued to improve sanitary conditions in the bazaars of Larnaca, and also widen streets and pavements. He would also reorganise the harbour, port-service having previously amounted to "une affreuse anarchie" (a frightful anarchy).¹³² As for Colonna Ceccaldi, we learn from him that two projects were envisaged by the Ottoman government, namely the organisation of Larnaca into a municipality that would render great services – certain situations were emergencies, like town cleanliness, water distribution, wharf construction and landings – and the creation of an agricultural credit bank (agriculture was being devoured by money-lenders with interest rates of between 18% and 36%). The context for the municipality was chaos, and it was the same for the farmers' credit bank, which had no capital of its own. Developments came in a 'Turkish' manner and the result was what was most feared: 600,000 piastres went towards offsetting administration costs. The consul would conclude:¹³³

En réalité, les réformes progressistes de la Turquie se transforment en mesures fiscales mais n'aboutissent aucunement.

Some of the public interest measures were the subject of information notes sent to the Embassy and Ministry, in particular because the consuls had taken an active part in their introduction. Mostly they concerned the war against locusts, creating quarantine hospitals (the 'lazarets'), draining marshland, and bringing clean water to Larnaca and Marina.

4.1 Locusts

These were a recurrent theme in consular correspondence, as it was thought at the time that swarms of desert locusts were brought by winds blowing in from Egypt and Syria. In actual fact, the first English reports indicated that those insects were indigenous. Locusts lay their eggs in isolated places whose access is difficult, and from May to June each female is capable of laying a hundred eggs, which

131 CPC TL 1, 24 April 1862, f. 284 and CPC TL 1, 12 May 1862, ff. 293-4.

132 CPC TL 2, 5 October 1864, ff. 29-30.

133 "In reality, the progressive reforms of Turkey are being transformed into fiscal measures but with absolutely no outcome" (CCC L 22, 28 June 1869, ff. 436-9; CPC TL 2, 28 June 69, f. 196; FCDL 30, 9 June 1869, no. 61).

hatch in February or March the following year.¹³⁴ In 1842, the Turkish government, which until then had refused to lead the struggle, raised a tax in kind of 600,000 kg of locust eggs. The Archbishop of Nicosia asked the consuls and their nationals to set the example.¹³⁵ Yet the measure never met much success with peasants and in 1844, merely 120,000 kilos had been registered, against the 500,000 that were supposed to be gathered (Fourcade, Bonato 2000, 179). In 1847, Goepp made a special commitment to the egg-hunt and urged the French to take part, setting the example himself; the governor meanwhile finally took steps of his own and demanded a tax payable in a number of insect-eggs in proportion to the size of the taxpayer's fortunes. The following year he introduced a subscription to purchase eggs, weigh them in public (4,000 tonnes), and throw them into the sea.¹³⁶ In 1856, Doazan reported that the governor led a successful campaign of 40 days against the locusts, writing:¹³⁷

On pourra démentir l'assurance des ulémas disant que Dieu seul peut enlever les fléaux qu'il envoie aux peuples pour les châties.

By 1860, unfortunately, nothing was resolved; the governor had indeed set up commissions to destroy the locusts, but nothing worked due to the inertia of an administration: it was just when the peasants went to work in the fields – with insects already in the air because it was too late – that they were given orders to collect the eggs. And if they could not collect them, they had to pay. Darasse wondered, “Ils paient et que devient l'argent?” (They are paying, but what has become of the money?).¹³⁸ Maricourt was particularly prolix on this subject.¹³⁹ By 1862 no decision had been taken, but that year an ingenious system perfected and experimented by Richard Mattei (the largest landed proprietor in Cyprus and Prussian vice-consul) revealed itself to be efficient although extremely expensive, because it made too many traps necessary. Other measures were clearly fanciful, like the one that consisted in using water from Konya, whose miraculous properties were said to attract birds that would then exterminate the locusts... In April 1863, the “fortes têtes du medjilis”

134 See for example: Gordon-Cumming, 1883 and Burke 1888.

135 CCC L 19, Fourcade, 28 February 1842, f. 246.

136 CCC L 20, 6 March 1847, f. 79; November 1847, f. 111 and 8 January 1848, f. 118.

137 “One is able to deny the assurances of the Ulemas who say that God alone can take away the plagues he sends down on the people to punish them” (FCDL 28, 17 May 1856, f. 387).

138 CCC L 21, 19 July 1860, ff. 269-70.

139 CPC TL 1, 24 April 1862, f. 286; 12 May 1862, ff. 291-2; 10 April 1863, f. 350; 2 May 1863, ff. 354-5.

(strong-heads of the *Mejlis*) were recommending methods that were anything but useful – “la poudre, le feu et l’eau bouillante” (powder, fire and boiling water) – while Governor Tevfik Pasha was acting more pragmatically by raising another locust-egg tax. But he, too, ordered them to be thrown into the sea, and the currents washed them back onto beaches where the insects hatched and invaded Marina... Still in 1863, in May the new Governor Khaled Bey arrived, saying that he too had been charged with ridding the country of locusts. But his ideas were aberrations, and it was again question of working miracles with water, this time from Mecca:¹⁴⁰

Il s’agit seulement de faire boire aux corbeaux le liquide sacré. Dès qu’ils en auront goûté, ces oiseaux inspirés d’en haut, ne manqueront pas de dévorer jusqu’au dernier les insectes dont il a plu au Prophète d’infester cette malheureuse île.

In 1867, Governor Saïd Pasha, aided by the Archbishop, raised a tax of one kg of eggs per taxpayer and sent an expedition numbering 1,800 men into the fields, which ensured a good harvest. A few years later (1871) the insects seemed to have disappeared, but their extermination was in appearance only. It was not until 1883 that the English administration decided it was better to destroy live locusts rather than hunt their eggs.

4.2 Quarantines and Lazarets

In public health matters the consul had an informatory role of prime importance. Above all he had a duty to alert ship commanders to sanitary instructions and the rights that were payable, not forgetting his obligation to extensively control the application of the laws that governed his nation’s vessels. He closely followed the quarantine rules so that vessels of all nations would submit to the same rules and benefit from the same derogations.

In the course of the first half of the nineteenth century, the island’s inhabitants had to face several epidemics of plague (1800-01, 1813, 1832, 1835), smallpox (1849) and cholera (1831 and 1865) that ships had imported from coasts to the west (Panzac 1996). In 1827 quarantine was organised in Cyprus at the instigation of Consul Edmond Méchain (in post 1817-29) who continuously used his influence

140 “It is only a matter of making the crows drink the holy liquid. As soon as they have tasted it, these birds with inspiration from on high will not fail to devour every last one of the insects with which it has pleased the Prophet to infect this wretched island” (CPC TL 1, 2 May 1863, f. 355).

to impose basic health measures.¹⁴¹ Funds were collected to enable this new institution to operate, through a voluntary subscription to which the Europeans and the ship captains contributed. After an aborted attempt in 1832, it was finally in 1835 that the Greek, Turkish and French communities created a lazaret at their own expense. The quarantine service began in close collaboration with the French consuls: sanitary rules were laid down; a director was appointed; and thereafter the quarantines were organised, with all suspect vessels obliged to anchor in Larnaca. Agencies were set up in Limassol and Famagusta, but Kyrenia, which concentrated relations with Caramania, was not concerned (for reasons unknown.)

Because the consuls had responsibilities regarding the health situation, they took the liberty to intervene in the institution's administration. In 1855 the sanitary measures adopted by the Lazaret were in Doazan's opinion insufficient. Vessels arriving from an Egypt stricken by cholera were obliged to quarantine for seven days beginning on the date of the patent, not from the date of departure until free navigation in Larnaca, which reduced the quarantine to five days. Moreover, the latest reorganisation had abolished the director's post at Limassol and so ships berthed there without going into quarantine. The Embassy transmitted the information to the High Council for Health in Constantinople, and orders were issued: masters of vessels could not take their patent until leaving port, and the director of the Port of Limassol would be replaced by an official presenting guarantees of the capabilities the post required.¹⁴² In 1865 it was the entire Consular Corps that obtained an extension of the quarantine duration (ten days instead of five, depending on the port of origin), after the inhabitants had sent delegations to the consuls and local authorities. The Embassy, however, disapproved of the measure, as the doctors in charge of the quarantine had instructions that were to be respected to the letter unless referred to the administration on which they depended. Charles de Vienne was invited to avoid actions of this kind and to use his influence to make his colleagues understand a particular incompatibility: steps like those are not the responsibility of the Consular Corps.¹⁴³

Finally, we can note the petition dated 23 June 1866 that was addressed to the Consular Corps in Larnaca by European residents and *protégés* (66 persons) demanding that the quarantine be moved some distance away: the walls of its buildings touched the city and

141 CCC L 16, 3 March 1827, f. 122.

142 FCDL 28, 10 July 1855, ff. 342-3 and Therapia, 7 August 1855, f. 341 (wrongly classified).

143 FCDL 30, 13 November 1865, no. 150; 26 November 1865, no. 151 and Pera, 9 December 1865, no. 88.

represented a danger to public health. The petition also demanded that, in the event of an emergency, the director of the institution would be authorised to temporarily quarantine all travellers arriving from countries that were suspect, until such time as the director received his instructions. The reason being that orders took time to arrive, due to the conditions of navigation and the unreliable nature of communications with Constantinople.¹⁴⁴ It results from the above examples that a consul's powers in health matters were of prime importance, and that their interventions were efficient.

4.3 'Cyprus Fevers' and the Draining of Marshland

There was only one endemic disease on the island referred to as 'fever' (actually malaria), and from which most westerners suffered after an infection due to the presence of marshes close to Larnaca, Limassol and Famagusta. Health officials were almost powerless, despite realising there was a link between the poor quality of the air in the marshes and sickness in the population. They understood also that climatic conditions played a role and that foreigners were most affected, but they were unaware that mosquitoes were hosts to a parasite (Alphonse Laveran would discover that in 1880, and Ronald Ross would prove it in 1897). As early as the 1830's, Consul Bottu had attempted, in vain, to convince authorities to drain marshland efficiently, but his efforts were fruitless because the governors refused to take the matter seriously (Bergia 1997, 333). On 6 July 1863, Maricourt sent a missive relating to "une souscription pour le dessèchement de deux marais à Larnaca" (A subscription for the drainage of two marshes in Larnaca), but on 6 December, by another letter, he gave reasons that "ont empêché le consul d'y souscrire" (prevented the consul from subscribing to it). Those letters addressed to the *Direction des Fonds* are unfortunately untraceable today. Finally, it was not until 1875 that a first marsh near Larnaca was dried up at the request of the French consul Baron Pierre Alfred Dubreuil, thanks to the action of Governor Aziz Pasha.¹⁴⁵

4.4 The Waters of Larnaca

In 1855 Doazan raised the question of supplying Larnaca with water. He was no doubt thinking of the problem posed by ships that berthed to replenish their supplies of fresh water. The city had been connected

¹⁴⁴ FCDL 30, Colonna Ceccaldi, 24 June 1866, no. 11.

¹⁴⁵ CPC TL 2, 4 July 1875, f. 239.

to several springs since 1740, when Békir Pasha caused an aqueduct to be built, but it had never been maintained properly and by now it was in ruins, leaving Larnaca with no water fit to drink. Doazan, “sur les instances des pauvres gens de ce pays” (at the insistence of the poor people of this country), formed a fund-raising commission in Larnaca and Nicosia and handed the treasurer 90,000 piastres, a sum to which he largely contributed. Doazan would relate how work was progressing:¹⁴⁶

Le 9 juillet, cent ouvriers se trouvaient réunis à six kilomètres de Larnaca pour commencer les réparations que le défaut d'architecte m'imposait la charge de diriger. Pour m'acquitter de cette mission, je me rendais sur les lieux, presque tous les jours à 3 heures du matin et ne rentrais qu'à onze heures et midi par une chaleur de 40 degrés. Afin de ménager les fonds insuffisants, je dus appeler la population à venir tous les dimanches, ouvrir les canaux ; mon appel fut toujours entendu ; car j'ai compté jusqu'à 1200 personnes chaque fois. Après sept mois d'un travail assidu, j'ai eu la satisfaction de ramener une eau claire et limpide dans nos deux villes, jusqu'à la quarantaine bâtie sur le rivage où les bâtiments peuvent maintenant s'approvisionner facilement.

For his action – he was also responsible for the construction of a fountain in Marina – Doazan was awarded a decoration with the medal Medjidié fourth Class. When he received his posting to Panama in July 1856, he regretted he had been unable to conduct “des travaux d'utilité publique” (works of public interest) satisfactorily, as his efforts were in the interest of not only Cyprus but also shipping.¹⁴⁷ Finally, we can note that in 1859 Darasse obtained a letter from the Vizier with instructions to allow vessels to take on water without subjecting them to any kind of tax.¹⁴⁸ All the same, the works undertaken by Doazan did not suffice: in 1863 Maricourt wrote that the aqueduct was “dégradé et mis à découvert” (impaired and exposed).¹⁴⁹

146 “On July 9, one hundred labourers found themselves gathered six kilometres from Larnaca to begin the repairs that the failings of the architect gave me the responsibility to conduct. To perform this task, I went out to the site almost every day at three o'clock in the morning, returning only at half past eleven in a heat of forty degrees. To use the insufficient funds sparingly, I was obliged to appeal to the population to come out every Sunday to open the channels; my appeal was always heard; for I counted up to 1200 persons each time. After seven months of assiduous labour I had the satisfaction of bringing clear and limpid water back to our two cities as far as the quarantine built on the shore where the buildings can now be supplied with ease” (FCDL 28, 11 June 1855, ff. 338-9).

147 FCDL 28, 1st July 1856, f. 399.

148 FCDL 29, 4 March 1859, f. 2.

149 CCC L 22, 18 April 1863, f. 82.

4.5 The Customs Landing

Maricourt believed it was his duty to intervene when facing the problem of the Customs landing. On several occasions he had mentioned that the site where inspections were carried out was less than convenient and rather distant from the place where passengers and goods arrived at the wharf. In June 1863, a note from the General Administration for Indirect Taxation indicated that Customs should designate a site devoted to inspection of passengers' personal effects. There were rumours that it would be placed at the Customs landing, which seemed inadequate to the consul. He proposed that the inspections should take place closer to the centre of Larnaca, and even voiced the idea of moving Customs. In June the following year, still no decision had been taken. Maricourt solicited the Ambassador, who turned to the Director General of Customs in Constantinople, who then questioned the Director of Customs in Larnaca... Following the same path in reverse, the response reached Maricourt in August: the current building was totally adapted to inspections by officials and the site that had been proposed was too far away. The Ambassador concluded:¹⁵⁰

Je ne puis donc que vous inviter à laisser tomber cette affaire.

5 Consuls and Archaeology

The nineteenth century was one of rivalry between the great powers, and Cyprus did not escape being influenced by the agitation – military, political and economic – that affected the east of the Mediterranean. But not only that. It saw the broad movement of interest for the Orient that had excited the curiosity of Europeans ever since the Era of the great Discoveries. For reasons of prestige, western nations desired to play a role in the discovery of the Hellenic and Oriental civilisations: mass education was encouraged, museums were founded, and exhibitions were organised on a regular basis. In that context of European competition, acquiring antiques designed to enhance the collections of the great museums saw the French State vying with England, Prussia and Italy for domination. Until then, archaeological activity on the island of Cyprus had been relatively marginal, with peasants proposing their finds in the fields to antique-dealers, the representatives of foreign nations, and travellers.

Several consuls were actively engaged in Cypriot archaeology. In 1845, Dagobert Fourcade and Théodore Goepp lent assistance to the

150 “I can therefore only invite you to drop the matter” (FCDL 29, 19 June 1863, no. 62 and Therapia, 13 July 1864, no. 62; 20 August 1864, no. 65).

historian Louis de Mas Latrie in the course of digs – albeit summary – that he caused to be executed in Dali (the ancient city of Idalion), from which he brought back a dozen sculptures or fragments of sculptures that are today kept in the Cabinet des Médailles in Paris (Amandry, Hermery, Masson 1987).

Louis de Maricourt, in the company of his brother Charles, was the first European official to search for Cypriot antiques for his own pleasure, and not for profit. It was said that in his family's tradition, when taking an evening walk in the northerly part of the hilly country bordering Larnaca's Salt Lake from north to south, he and his brother would unearth little terracotta heads, and it was this that encouraged them to hire workers for digs on a larger scale (Bonato 2010b, 115-17). The 'finds' belonged to a deposit of terracotta objects that revealed the presence of a sanctuary for worshippers of the female divinity traditionally called *Artemis Paralia* (Maillard 2023). The Maricourt collection, which was considerable according to his contemporaries, represented only a tiny part of what had to be the ex-voto of the sanctuary, which was later entirely emptied by pillagers. The consul's collection was divided amongst his heirs, and only some thirty fragments were recovered in 1898 from one of Maricourt's sons. Today they are kept at the Louvre Museum in Paris.

As a matter of prestige, the consul wanted also to play a role in removing the *Vase d'Amathonte*, a colossal vase like a limestone monolith over six feet high and ten feet in diameter. It lay in the courtyard of the Aphrodite sanctuary at the summit of the Acropolis of Amathonte. In 1862, Melchior de Vogüé took possession of it in the name of France while heading an archaeological mission considered as the follow-up to Ernest Renan's *Mission de Phénicie*.¹⁵¹ In March 1865, Maricourt notified the Ministry that the British vice-consul, Horace P. White, had caused the demolition of the wall surrounding the vase so that he could examine it. This made it necessary for France to quickly take steps to avoid seeing the vase displayed at the British Museum! A young architect named Edmond Duthoit – he had accompanied Vogüé in 1862 – was assigned by France's *Ministre de la Maison de l'Empereur et des Beaux Arts* to organise transport for the vase. The Ministry of the Navy ordered a rear-admiral named d'Aboville to remove the vase, and in June he appeared in Larnaca Bay aboard his vessel *La Magicienne*. Maricourt, who did not know that Duthoit had arrived, took matters into his own hands and on June 24 he went to Amathonte "avec tout le consulat" aboard the naval vessel. The removal was a failure because the vase turned out to be much too heavy, and would have compromised the stability of the ship. Early in September, the Ministry of the Navy advised Charles de

151 On *Mission de Vogüé*, see Bonato, Dondin-Payre 2017.

Vienne, the acting consul after Maricourt had died of cholera only a month previously, that two vessels had orders to meet up in Limassol. Transporting the vase to the seashore was a remarkable exploit for the period (Bonato 2010b, 117-19); and the *Vase d'Amathonte* finally went on display inside the Louvre Museum on 16 July 1866.

Meanwhile, in July 1865, Maricourt had alerted Duthoit to the discovery near Limassol of headstone slabs with Latin and French inscriptions that dated from the thirteenth century.¹⁵² The Turks had plans to destroy them. Duthoit went to Limassol at the end of August, making drawings of the stones, and they turned out to belong to a small Christian church located in Polemidhia. Duthoit recommended to the Foreign Affairs Ministry that they be removed. Recovering the slabs was hindered by the action of the governor, and Charles de Vienne had to request for a letter from the Vizier to be sent to the Embassy.¹⁵³ The slabs are today preserved in Paris at the Cluny Museum and at the Louvre Museum.

Tiburce Colonna Ceccaldi, Maricourt's successor, organised transport to France for numerous artefacts as part of his attributions as Consul (Bonato 2018). Apart from the Limassol tombstones, there was a cannon from the reign of François I^{er} that was situated on the ramparts of Famagusta, and also numerous objects discovered by Edmond Duthoit in July 1865 at Golgoi.¹⁵⁴ Today they are in the Louvre Museum. During his posting in Cyprus, Ceccaldi threw himself into the adventure of archaeology on his own behalf (Bonato 2019). In the middle of 1866, in the company of his brother Georges, he began digs on the outskirts of Larnaca and in the region of Salines. In 1867 more commercial reasons led him to take an interest in Dali, just when the peasants, encouraged by the increasingly higher prices offered by the consuls, had given great impetus to excavations, and many had entirely abandoned working in the fields as a much less lucrative occupation. In 1867 Ceccaldi's first campaign focused on the site's two acropolises, *Mouti tou Arvili* and *Ambelliri*. The most important object recovered was a limestone statue of a woman representing Aphrodite or a Ptolemaic princess in the guise of the goddess, an offering in the sanctuary dating from the third century BC. In January 1868, excavations began in the necropolises spread around the site of Idalion, and tombs were opened on a large scale by the peasants. Several hundred were searched under orders from Colonna Ceccaldi, and provided him with numerous vases, terracotta objects and ceramics, glassware, jewels, lamps and other bronze artefacts. In their

152 See Duthoit's correspondence in Bonato, Dondin-Payre 2017, 316-17 and 322-3.

153 FCDL 30, 29 November 1865, no. 153; 12 January 1866, no. 157 and Pera, 21 December 1865, no. 85; 12 January 1866; 14 January 1866, no. 87.

154 On Duthoit's mission in Cyprus, see Bonato 2001.

writings the Colonna Ceccaldi brothers mention several sites where digs were carried out or where articles they purchased originated, notably Trikomo where two large-sized statues were discovered: the *Dame de Trikomo*, representation of the Great Goddess of Cyprus dating from the middle of the sixth century BC, in a purely Cypriot style, and a goddess with a turreted crown, also representing the Great Goddess of Cyprus and dating from the second half of the fourth century BC. Today the 'Colonna Ceccaldi Collection' bought by the Louvre in several lots between 1869 and 1872 contains 381 items (32 stone sculptures, 178 terracotta and 99 vases).

Amathonte, Idalion, Salines... all of them names that bring to mind French archaeological research in Cyprus, for which the year 1862 marked the true beginning with the arrival of the first State-financed mission, a corollary of the renaissance of territorial conquest in the sciences and increasing demand from western museums. But as interesting as they were, French activities in the early 1860s were merely the first stages of the harvests reaped in the decade 1865-75, when in the Ottoman Empire a *firman* only was necessary to obtain authorisation for a dig, but also to carry away the antiques discovered as a result (the law on antiques was promulgated in 1874). During those ten years, which were dominated by the personality of United States Consul Luigi Palma di Cesnola, there were scenes of tombs being pillaged in a frenzy, encouraged by the development of the antiques market. As a result, thousands of Cypriot antiques were brought to light and dispersed throughout the world.

6 Conclusion

The years 1840-70 were a period of transition, during which the Ottoman Empire went through an intensive reorganisation of its administration. In Cyprus, the initiatives taken as early as 1830 seemed confused to say the least, and putting them into effect was extremely complicated. The governors had instructions to implement the reforms desired by the Sultan, and it was recommended that the consuls provide assistance. In 1856 Doazan received orders from the Embassy: he was to report the effect produced by the terms of the *Hatt-i-humayun* and give his opinion concerning the accomplishment of some of its improvements.¹⁵⁵ Opposition was total: the governor, the *kadi* and the *ulemas*, the bishops, the Europeans and the Levantines, all of them lost their privileges. Only the *rayas* seemed to rejoice but they were not daring enough to show it, one of the problems being that the evidence of Christians had never been admissible.

¹⁵⁵ FCDL 28, 2 April 1856, ff. 374-85.

Doazan's main recommendation was to make the religious element of the institutions disappear, with the *Mejlis* composed of elected members, half of them Muslims and the other half Greeks (including one Maronite). Its president would remain a Turk, and be appointed by the executive body. The most astonishing proposal was to install a European auditor with each governor. Doazan, aware that none of his proposals was really feasible, closed with this observation:¹⁵⁶

Le pays comprend parfaitement qu'il n'est pas encore complètement préparé pour les institutions qu'il vient de recevoir et que le Hat ne pourra jamais être appliqué sans l'intervention des Européens.

Indeed, for lack of means and energy, and due to great resistance on the part of the primates and officials, the impact of the reforms was even less than moderate.

Between 1840 and 1865, the place that France occupied in Cyprus was preeminent, and recognised by the population and foreign officials alike. And the consuls would underline this. In 1861, when the paper currency *kaime* was distributed, Du Tour was questioned 'by many Greek and Turkish persons' who wished to be sure that they had to pay that tax.¹⁵⁷ Certain requests were of a more personal nature, and exiled Muslims in particular sought to obtain the French Embassy's mediation with the Porte. In 1857, Darasse forwarded a grievance from the *muschir* (general-in-chief), Ahmed Pasha, who hoped for a reprieve, and in 1866 Charles de Vienne sent the grievance of the former *kaimakam* (governor of a province) of Jeddah.¹⁵⁸ Darasse would even state that the Turks came to his home to complain, imploring his support, like Ariff Effendi, a member of the *Mejlis* in Nicosia who wished to be appointed as the *malmudir* (director of finance), while others solicited the title of *kavas* to benefit from French protection.¹⁵⁹ The Embassy, however, did not want to be involved in such domestic matters; if it did intervene, it would only be unofficially, and with no guarantee of success.

In April 1864, Maricourt began alerting his superiors to the decline of France's position to England's benefit. And it was indeed during that period that the British became increasingly visible: naval vessels, but also merchant ships began appearing more and more

156 "The country perfectly understands that it is not yet entirely prepared for the institutions that it has just received, and that the Hat can never be put into effect without the intervention of the Europeans" (FCDL 28, 2 April 1856, f. 382).

157 FCDL 29, 20 October 1861, f. 246.

158 FCDL 28, Darasse, 23 November 1857, ff. 571-4 and FCDL 30, Vienne, 8 January 1866, no. 155.

159 FCDL 28, 16 April 1858, f. 598; 23 June 1860, ff. 90-3.

often in the bay at Larnaca. And in January 1865, Maricourt observed with dismay that French trade for the year 1864 had been bested by English commerce due to the disenchantment of France's merchant navy.¹⁶⁰ Other warning signs could be seen, like the appointment in 1863 as the director of the Larnaca branch of the Imperial Ottoman Bank of Robert Hamilton Lang (landowner who served on several occasions as British vice-consul and full consul in 1871 but only for a few months). Maricourt's impressions were confirmed by a bitter Colonna Ceccaldi in 1868, who said the nation was "en pleine décadence" (in full decline) and that:¹⁶¹

Elle ne comporte plus qu'un ou deux commissionnaires, quelques employés et petits marchands, et deux ou trois agriculteurs, les autres sont en proie aux expédients, ont leurs terres hypothéquées ou sont à la veille de les vendre.

Like most of his predecessors, he drafted a detailed report on the deplorable situation in Cyprus to try and create greater Ministry interest in his circumscription which, if it was well managed, would be potentially a 'possession' of prime importance.¹⁶² Darasse had already stated the Greeks were ready to accept a foreign power and that they preferred France,¹⁶³ and Maricourt was writing that Cyprus could again become a "grenier d'abondance, la perle de l'Orient" (a granary of abundance, the pearl of the Orient).¹⁶⁴ Above all, Colonna Ceccaldi was underlining the fact that Cyprus should not 'escape' action by France, for under a better administration it would again be:¹⁶⁵

Une position magnifique, une terre de promission, une des plus riches contrées de l'Orient.

He exposed what should be put into effect: 1. To divide taxes equitably between Constantinople (salt flats' production, Customs revenue, poll tax) and the island (tithe, various other contributions). These would serve public utilities and also the Army and justice. 2. To

160 CPC L 2, 29 April 1864, ff. 13-15; CCC L 22, 25 January 1865, ff. 208-9.

161 "It now has but one or two shipping agents, a few employees and small merchants, and two or three farmers; the others are prey to expedients, with their lands mortgaged, or else they will sell them tomorrow" (CCC L 22, 23 March 1868, no. 35, f. 370).

162 CCC L 22, 6 July 1867, ff. 307-25.

163 FCDL 29, 23 June 1860 f. 93.

164 CCC L 22, 20 April 1865, f. 225.

165 "A magnificent position, a promised land, one of the richest countries of the Orient" (FCDL 30, copy of letter to Paris, 2 April 1867, no. 14, not kept at La Courneuve, not folioed).

reform the courts. 3. To accomplish the most urgent infrastructures (the irrigation system, the roads and ports). 4. To endow public education. 5. And finally, to destroy the locusts, “le plus grand fléau du pays... après le Gouvernement turc” (the greatest plague of the country... after the Turkish government). Tiburce Colonna Ceccaldi considered himself to be ‘a conscientious agent’ whose duty was to seek a solution to the Oriental Question, no less, which to him could be summarised as:¹⁶⁶

Dans l'autonomie progressive des populations de races diverses que renferme l'Empire ottoman.

He ended by recommending that those measures should be entrusted to a new man, but one who would be difficult to find in Turkey. He therefore proposed to:¹⁶⁷

Rechercher les moyens de séparer sans secousse violente Chypre non de l'Empire Ottoman mais de l'administration de Constantinople et d'indiquer la possibilité d'y établir un état de choses normal, conforme à la fois aux intérêts généraux de l'Europe et aux besoins, aux droits légitimes du pays.

His words anticipated the signature on 7 July 1878 of a *firman* ratifying the *Cyprus Convention* which had granted England administrative control over the island. In another report, and comforted by his military experience, Colonna Ceccaldi drew up the list of the island's fortresses in case of “éventualités non irréalisables” (non-unfeasible eventualities).¹⁶⁸ He tarried on the subject of Famagusta, which could be taken very easily because its weaponry was out of order. And he would even go so far as to propose taking Cyprus if an opportunity for France presented itself in the Orient!

From the study of their correspondence, an abundant and easily obtainable source, it becomes obvious that the consuls were the cornerstone of the French presence in Cyprus: they were at the centre of a network, and were unavoidable intermediaries between Ministry, Embassy, colony, French travellers, *protégés*, island authorities, foreign colleagues, representatives of the Church and even the

166 “Being in the progressive autonomy of the populations of various races enclosed within the Ottoman Empire” (CCC L 22, 6 July 1867, f. 309).

167 “Search for the means to separate Cyprus without a violent shake, not from the Ottoman Empire but from the administration of Constantinople, and indicate the possibility of establishing there a normal state of things, conforming at once to the general interests of Europe, and to the needs, the legitimate rights, of the country” (CCC L 22, 6 July 1867, f. 325).

168 CPC TL 2, 10 May 1867, ff. 125-30.

population. The Capitulations had granted them an exceptional power, and everything – isolation, slowness of communications, rivalries between European states, the sometimes anarchic situation of their circumscription – incited the consuls to play a more important role, one that over the centuries had largely overtaken its initial brief to defend French trade and navigation in foreign waters. The role grew with the constant expansion of commercial relations, and their freedom from the jurisdiction of their territory of residence allowed the consuls to combine those economic functions with activities in legal and political spheres. For confirmation, one only needs to consult the *Guide pratique des consulats* (published in 1851): it contains no fewer than 780 pages.

The consuls' direct contacts with governors and high officials of the Empire were continual, courteous and good, and consuls were requested to be conciliatory and show moderation. Those official relations allowed them to be watchful over the privileges granted by treaty, and also enabled them to ensure that the need for reforms was still a concern of the country's authorities, as well as those improvements that were in the population's general interest. And still they had to preserve harmony with France. They did that so well that certain governors would ask for advice, and assistance, from the consuls, to the point where they would take no decision without consulting them, or at least, that is what Doazan and Maricourt said of Osman Pasha and Khalet Bey.¹⁶⁹ But it was not always that way, and certain pashas were very guarded over rescinding privileges granted to foreigners in the Levant with a disregard for the country's customs and traditions, often contrary to regulations and treaties.

Du Tour depicted Khairoula Pasha as a governor attached to creating all kinds of difficulties, delays and denials of justice for the French, who were treated more poorly than the *rayas*.¹⁷⁰ And Maricourt had to resort to "un langage plein d'indignation et de menaces" (language filled with indignation and threats) to obtain what he wished when talking to Tevfik Pasha.¹⁷¹ When obstacles prevented the representatives of France from exercising their prerogatives correctly, they had the Embassy intervene officially with the Porte so that the latter would take action with the local authorities; there would then be a succession of letters from the Vizier to obtain, among other things, the removal of local officials. The examples are numerous: Doazan and Campbell, the English consul, caused the revocation of the Limassol *kadi*, Mehemet effendi, "l'ennemi

169 FCDL 28, Doazan, 1st December 1855, f. 364 and Maricourt, CPC L 2, 5 October 1864, f. 30.

170 FCDL 29, 14 February 1862, f. 279.

171 CCC L 22, 16 March 1863, f. 66.

acharné des Européens" (the bitter enemy of the Europeans), for his insulting words against the Allies;¹⁷² in December 1860, Du Tour had the director removed from the quarantine after he had allowed himself some vexatious manoeuvres in verifying the health permits of ships of the Imperial Navy;¹⁷³ and Maricourt obtained the removal of the interim *mudir* of Larnaca, Kuffi effendi, who inspired little confidence, and caused another to be appointed, Mustapha effendi, a man who was:¹⁷⁴

Honnête, actif, énergique et très disposé à ne recevoir ses inspirations que du Consulat de France.

While the consuls obtained many concessions, there was one request that was never granted, and that was the transfer of the Nicosia government to Larnaca, where the island's activities were located. It was requested repeatedly, particularly by Doazan, but the Sublime Porte always maintained that there was no seraglio in the Cyprus *Échelle*.¹⁷⁵

On rare occasions, the consuls acted in lieu of the Ottoman authorities. In 1860, after the events in Lebanon, a brig flying the Ottoman flag and carrying Druze, Arabs and other "musulmans de la pire espèce" (Muslims of the worst kind), all coming from Egypt, attempted to land its cargo after being driven back from Rhodes by an English corvette. Darasse took charge of the matter:¹⁷⁶

Les autorités agissaient d'abord mollement mais elles ont dû promptement se mettre à mes ordres, et je puis dire sous mes ordres. La cargaison est restée à bord, des vivres ont été embarquées par mes soins et à mes frais et j'ai suivi la nuit le brick voguant vers Beyrouth afin que les passagers ne débarquassent pas sur quelque autre point du littoral.

As for Du Tour, he took pride in maintaining order in Larnaca and reorganising the *Mejlis* with England's vice-consul, while the

¹⁷² FCDL 28, 1st December 1855, ff. 364-5.

¹⁷³ FCDL 29, 19 September 1861, f. 232; 18 December 1861, f. 267; Therapia, 9 October 1861, f. 235; Pera, 20 January 1862, f. 271.

¹⁷⁴ "Honest, active, energetic and highly disposed to receive his inspirations only from the Consulate of France" (CCC L 22, 21 August 1863, f. 143).

¹⁷⁵ FCDL 28, 24 January 1855, f. 308 and Pera, 12 February 1855, f. 310.

¹⁷⁶ "The authorities acted with slackness at first, but they had to submit promptly to my instructions, and do so, I might say, by my order. The cargo remained on board; victuals were taken on as I ensured, and at my expense; and at night I followed the brig sailing to Beirut, so that its passengers did not disembark at any other point of the coast whatever" (FCDL, 29, 20 August 1860, ff. 117-18).

governor remained locked away in his harem.¹⁷⁷ Rarely did consuls exceed their prerogatives, in the belief that they were acting for the best, like Maricourt with the *kaime* and Vienne with the lazaret, and their actions earned them the sharp reproach of the minister and the ambassador.

So, it is surprising that officials of foreign powers were able to interfere in purely domestic affairs within the Ottoman administration, and do so with success. How can one explain that ascendancy, and to what might it be really attributed? Had the governors received instructions to please the representatives of France and England, who were their allies in the Crimean War, and whose influence at the heart of the Empire was considerable? Was it due to the governors' incompetence? Unless it was simply weakness on their part. It mattered little to yield over minor questions, given the importance of their powers of conviction in obtaining the support of officials, and so the acceptance of the great reforms that called into question the privileges granted to foreigners. Whatever the answers, the consuls, thanks to their freedom of action, genuinely countered the powers-that-be in Cyprus and played an important role in the radical transformation that took place in this province of the Ottoman Empire. And that is indeed what the study of their correspondence reveals.

Glossary

In brackets is the spelling used by the consuls in their correspondence.

Barataire: the holder of a *berat* or patent. The term is used in the French archives.

Berat: official document issued by the Porte at the request of ambassadors so that they might employ a *raya* subject in their service.

Férik (*Férik*): the lieutenant-general or general of a military unit.

Firman: a written order from the Sultan that commanded obedience by the whole world.

Kadi (*cadi*): the Muslim judge charged with applying Canon Law in his district (*kaza*).

Kaimakam (*caïmacam*): a lieutenant who serves as a replacement. In the nineteenth century: a governor of a province.

Kaime: paper currency. An interest-bearing treasury bond that was redeemable at a fixed date and was accepted as payment by public funds.

Kavas (*cavas*): a guard of honour granted by the local authority. The presence of *kavas*, who were paid and lodged by the consuls, signalled that the persons they accompanied had the protection of the state.

Kaza: the district whose seat was occupied by the *kadi*, a canon law judge.

Khatt-i cherif: an imperial charter.

Malmudir: a director of finance.

Mazbata: minutes of meeting session.

177 CCC L 21, 15 October 1861, f. 329.

Mejlis (Medjilis): the council.

Mejlis-i Kebir (Medjilis Kebir): the Grand Council or High Council of the island located in Nicosia. Presided by the governor it was the institution relied on to conduct business.

Mekeme (mékémé): Ottoman tribunal presided by the kadi.

Mudir: the chief of a district (*kaza*).

Muschir: a general-in-chief.

Raya: a non-Muslim subject who was liable to pay tax to the Sultan. *Raya* taxpayers were typically peasants or manual workers.

Teskere (teskéré): a document or certificate.

Tombrouk agassi: the chief of police.

Ulema: Muslim theologian.

Zaptie (zaptié): a 'policeman'.

Consular Sources

CCC L: Correspondance Commerciale et Consulaire, Larnaca. La Courneuve: Archives diplomatiques, ministère des Affaires étrangères

CPC TL: Correspondance Politique du Consul, Turquie, Larnaca. La Courneuve: Archives diplomatiques, ministère des Affaires étrangères

CPC LC: Correspondance Politique du Consul, La Canée (Crete). La Courneuve: Archives diplomatiques, ministère des Affaires étrangères

FCDL: Fonds Constantinople, série D, Larnaca, 166PO/D/43). Nantes, Centre des Archives diplomatiques

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