

A true and most exact Narrative
of the Events of the Conquest and Defence of the Kingdom of Cyprus:
Composed by the Reverend Father, Fra Angelo Calepio, of Cyprus,
a Doctor in Theology of the Order of Preachers, Vicar General of the Province of Terra Santa,
at the instance of the Reverend Father, Fra Stephano Lusignano,
a Reader in the same Order.

THE AUTHOR TO HIS DEAR AND KIND READERS.

I wish to set before your eyes with exactness and brevity the reason which moved the fierce and barbarous Turkish people to the conquest of the kingdom of Cyprus, and their way of conducting an enterprise which they consider most successful, and greatly to the credit of their skill in arms, but disgraceful to us, and to our faith, and herein I feel it a duty to put away all passion; to discard tedious prefaces, and superfluous graces of style, and to relate with the most perfect fidelity what really occurred, so that everyone may rapidly reach the substantial facts, and then recognise and pass judgment on our mistakes, and the emptiness of our enemy's boasting.

Avarice, lust of fame, difference of religion, diabolic suggestion, Divine permission, an unbounded appetite for new territory to be added to the Ottoman dominions, these were the remote causes of the conspiracy against Cyprus: the nearer cause was the wish of Selim, Emperor of the Turks, to build a mosque and school. This we saw in Adrianople this July, and found it far more magnificent than the mosque of Sultan Suleiman, his father, which is set at the summit of one of the hills of Constantinople, and surpasses all the other mosques and buildings, with its four minarets, and rich and beautiful architecture, crowned by the gateway removed from Zeghet. But the mosque of Sultan Selim will be grander far, and will have six minarets. A second reason was the acquisition of an income for this mosque, because, according to their law, Selim could not endow the building he proposed to erect from the revenues of the Empire, or from his Treasury. A third reason, that their Mufti, whom they reverence as their Pope or Chancellor, persuaded the Emperor that he ought not to build a mosque before he had accomplished some warlike enterprise against the Christians, to the extension of the Faith and the Empire, as his ancestors had done; reminding him of the famous Sultans Mehmed the Second, the conqueror of Constantinople, Bayazid, his son, and his own father Suleiman. Thus was he to acquire an income for his mosque. The Mufti urged Selim to the conquest of Cyprus, to make sure the sea, now ravaged by western pirates, who lay securely in its ports, and threatened the safety of pilgrims to Mecca, and of Turkish merchants who traded with Syria and Egypt. He knew that Selim had long cherished a wish to rule over the island, as being out of the reach of the Christian Powers: perhaps too, from his fondness for its excellent wines, and the beautiful falcons which are taken there. Another most powerful incentive was the persistent advice of a miscreant, Gian Miches, who was most devoted to him, and had given him precise news, received from his Jewish brethren, that on September the 13, 1569, a fire in the arsenal of Venice had destroyed its stores and powder; adding information concerning the very great scarcity which reigned in that city.

At last the Sultan disclosed his desire to his Pashas. He was opposed with some skill by Mehmed Pasha, who favoured the Christians, and thought this was not the time to break faith with the Venetians, whose friendship had always been of the greatest value to his nation; for it was through their not moving to help other Christians attacked by the Turks that these had made great conquests, and from what I heard at Constantinople from persons worthy of belief (whom I must not name, for they are still in the hands of the infidels, and I should