

## **Famagusta as a Centre of Regional Trade During the Venetian Period**

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Historians of Venice's Mediterranean trade have laid great emphasis on the system of commercial voyages organized by the Venetian state. Yet, at the same time, several among them, such as Lane, Braudel and Hocquet, have notified the greater dimensions of private shipping in the overall system of Venetian commerce, as well as the importance of regional trade on board smaller vessels in the sixteenth-century Mediterranean world. In this paper these issues are proposed to be examined by focusing on developments in Famagusta during the Venetian rule of Cyprus. An attempt will be made to evaluate the development of regional trade carried out on board small Cypriot vessels between the island and the nearby Syrian provinces of the Ottoman Empire, especially during the last decades of Venetian rule. The factors that increased the importance of this kind of commercial shipping will be analyzed in the light of wider developments of Mediterranean trade around the middle of the sixteenth century, and the commercial relations between Cyprus and the eastern Mediterranean mainland. The impact of these changes on Famagusta's society and economy will also be taken into consideration.