

An Unknown Town Gate and a Church in Famagusta: The Santa Maria de la Cava and the Porta di Cava in historical texts of the 14th to 16th centuries

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There exist in Cyprus-related notary records, travelers' accounts, and pilgrims' observations, consistent references to a very important Latin Church called 'Santa Maria de la Cava'. The earliest of these date back to 1300 when a Genoese notary cites it as a burial place. It is obvious that the Santa Maria de la Cava was an important church for both Greeks and Latins right up to the Ottoman campaign of 1571, and it was a custom for all the merchants, pilgrims and sailors to visit this church after landing at the nearby port. However, few documents identified the exact location of the Santa Maria de la Cava Church or described in much detail the building itself. One of the very few indications of the location of the church is that it was near a town gate—the Porta di Cava. This paper examines historical and contemporary references to both the church and the gate, and delivers a summary of recent on-site findings.