

OF NOBLE SICILY

A WORK OF
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Marquis of Villa Bianca, Lord of the Castle of Mazara
And of the Barony of La Merca

PALERMO MDCCLIV
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SECOND PART, BOOK ONE

Of the Barons of the Kingdom of Sicily
Particularly the Princes, Dukes, Marquises, Counts and Baron
With details of their Titles, Fiefs and Vassals

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BISCARI

A baronial territory with the right of simple and mixed justice, which lies in the Vale of Noto. It was first erected on the banks of the River *Dirillo* by *Guglielmo Raimondo lo Castello*, Baron of La Favarotta, as may be seen from a marble slab set above the doorway of the ancient castle of this territory. It is seen to be totally destroyed by the vibrations of the earthquake that took place in 1693, but was restored promptly with new buildings on a higher and flatter site towards the South. *Niccolò Castagna* first purchased this Domain in the year 1396, who then sold it in 1407 to *Matteo Mazzone*, obtaining confirmation of same, and royal investiture as its new Baron in 1408. Two years passed before it was transferred to *Bernardo Caprera*, Count of Modica, until it was judged to have been taken from his control in 1416 by *Antonio lo Castello*, who was succeeded by his son Corrado as can be seen from the investiture of 1453. Then Gutierrez received investiture for it in 1465, thereafter Guglielmo in 1479, who was succeeded by his grandson Giovanello, who inherited it in 1528. Vincenzo, son of the latter, was invested in 1555. He was the father of Ferdinando, as may be seen from his investiture in 1566, to whom thanks to a transaction carried out in 1578 subsequently succeeded *Orazio Paternò Castello*, as the son of Francesca del Castello of the aforementioned Giovanello, who was succeeded by Francesco, who became Baron in 1604, being succeeded by his brother Vincenzo Paternò in the year 1609, whose daughter Maria became its heiress and brought it in her dowry to her husband Agatino Paternò Castello, who was its first Prince. The domain enjoys all those privileges that had previously been

granted to the County of Modica and to the House of Caprera, who once possessed its Lordship, as may be seen above. Its population consists of 921 souls, residing in 374 houses. On the spiritual side it boasts a Parish Church as well as two other churches. There is to be found a Convent of Capuchin Fathers, as well as an Abbey dedicated to Saint Joseph under the patronage of the Baron, being subject immediately to the authority of the Holy See. It is within the Diocese of Syracuse. The Domain is comprised of the Fiefs of Lo Giunco, Bidani, Baudarello, Litteri, Bosco grande and Baucino; albeit this latter should rather be a fief dependent on the County of Modica and added to the lands of that latter territory.

For the aforesaid fiefs, as for his other baronies the Prince of Biscari their Lord from 1700 to date has proffered military services of nine horses.

AGATINO Paternò Castello

The *Paternò* Family, which has been illustrious since the times of the Great Count Roger, emanates from Roberto Paternò who was a warrior involved in the expulsion of the Saracens. He had a son Costantino who was invested with the Vassalages of Buccheri and Partanna, of whom the recollection is still to be found on his tomb stone of 1168. His descendants acquired other fiefs, holding also the highest offices in this Kingdom, just as today they live with singular splendour in the City of Catania. It is to be believed that such a Family, as is shown by Fr. Aguilera in his History of the Province of Sicily, to have been one of the Consular Families: *From the Roman house of the Paternò were derived, particularly in that age, the two Paternò who were elected consuls in the years subsequent to the Birth of Christ 233 & 267 whom not few deemed to be liberators and innovators* (from his History of the Jesuit Province of Sicily, Part I, fol. 450).

The title was conferred on the first Prince by the Most Serene King Philip IV by letters patent dispatched the 21st June 1633, with effect the 26th August of that year. He was appointed Vicar General of the Vale of Noto. He was Captain of Catania in 1633 and three times Patrician in the years 1623, 1627 and 1631. He took in marriage Maria Paternò Castello e la Restia, daughter of Vincenzo Paternò Castello and Maria la Restia of the Barons of Biscari, and there was born of this couple

Vincenzo Paternò Castello e la Restia, who tied the nuptial knot with Felice Gravina Cruyllas, daughter of Ignazio Ferdinando, Prince of Palagonia, and he was the undoubted father of

Ignazio Paternò Castello e Gravina, of whom it should be noted that he was invested twice of the single title on the 15th February 1676, and thereafter of this Domain on the 16th September 1678. He celebrated his solemn nuptials with *Lionora Paternò e Tornambene*, daughter of *Giacinto Paternò e Lao*, Baron of *Recalcaccia e Spinagallo*, and emanating from such parents

Vincenzo Paternò Castello e Paternò, to whom the letters of investiture were dispatched the 20th September 1700. He took as his wife *Anna Scammaca e Bonajuto*, daughter of *Arcaloro*, Baron of *La Bruce e Cresciunà*, and of *Maria Bonajuto*; and from this marriage was brought to the world the presently living

Ignazio Paternò Castello e Scammacca, the current Prince of *Biscari*, by means of his investiture as same of the 7th July 1750. He is also Baron of *Terra dell'Imbaccari Sottani*, and *Mirabella*, and of the Baronies of *San Filippo di Ragusa*, *Recalcaccia*, *Spinagallo*, *Baldi*, *Cubba*, *Ragona*, and *Sparagona*, of *Bidani*, etc. He possesses moreover the considerable Barony of *Alminusa*, which was conceded to him by the *Curtelli* family. He is united in matrimony with *Anna Maria Morso e Bonanni*, daughter of *Francesco Morso e Fardella*, Prince of *Poggioreale*.

APPENDIX, pp. 135-137

Ignazio Paternò Castello, also styled Prince of *Biscari*, to whom I can do no less as to my virtuous Lord and my intimate Friend than to render and act of respectful friendship with which the following does office of praise. He was born to the House of *Paternò Castello*, being one of the most noted Families of our Kingdom, and if which he is currently the Head and most senior Member, but beyond the advantage of such his birth he bears the glory that is his alone of being charged with noble and virtuous talents, which go above and beyond, in his public actions just as in his private concerns, and what is above all else in the cultivation of belles lettres. In fact he has given unto us a not inconsiderable quantity of refined literature, which has almost all been published by Torch, having founded in the City of *Catania* his noble fatherland the Literary Academy of the *Etnean Shepherds*, and instituted within his own Palace the distinguished and renowned Museum, which is such that today it is not just an embellishment of this illustrious City but in no time at all to the entire Kingdom, housing the most precious medals of Antiquity, the most exquisite rarities of other Nations, and the most admirable exhibits, which have been found among the distinguished works of nature, as well as among works of art. Upon the opening of such Museum the community of Men of Letters worthily honoured him in gold and also in bronze with the famous honorific medal which recto bears his likeness with his name: *Ignatius II, V Prince of Biscari, Aged 38*, and verso the following praise : *To the benefit of the public, the glory of his homeland, he*

constructed in Catania a Museum for the convenience of the studios in the year 1757. From all this it will be gathered that this Prince has worthily been entered as a member of the foremost of the literary academies of the City of London; and apart from this, he is well known and indeed acclaimed in the whole literary world, on this side as well as the other side of the Alps, this man talented in various sciences, this patron and true protector of men of literature. Moreover it can be said that there has been no man like the Prince of Biscari among our notables, who has seen fit to honour at his own expense the memory of the most famous Fr. D. *Vito Maria Amico* of the Cassinese Congregation, Royal Historian of this Kingdom, which distinguished man departed the commerce of we mortals in the year 1762, while the medallion, which has been made in his honour, struck in bronze and perhaps some other metal, was entirely the work of such a Lord. On one side of it may be seen the likeness of the illustrious deceased with the inscription : *D. Vito Maria Amico, Abbot of the Cassinese Congregation,* and on the other, that is verso : *Whom no age has matched. Died in the year 1762,* with also the surrounding epigraph of *Ignatius II Paternò, V Prince of Biscari, Produced in memory of the best of Friends.* With good reason therefore to the Prince of Biscari as a benefactor by grateful men of letters abroad as at home, are offered expressions of praise in their works, dedicated to the public and greatest of all in those in fact dedicated to him, which are a goodly number. Finally this Lord who is the Prince of Biscari, who to the inherited Domains of the House of Paternò has added the Domain of Arminusa in the Vale of Mazzara, being invested with same on the 24th January 1750 after having acquired it from the inheritance of the Cutelli, by means of an engrossed deed of concession to be found among the Registers of Notary Archdeacon of Catania as at the 27th July 1749. He is among those, as we must conclude, who is not only an ornament of our own times, but will always be a model and example for ages to come.

An example and even an envy of a future age, as said de Lorenzo Zanotti in his Sonetto nel Gobbi

Or as was also said of the learned Polidore Virgil :

He is worthily commended in fame of his grandchildren and by grace a praise to posterity

The eldest son of this worthy Knight is the equally worthy

Vincenzo Paternò Castello e Morso, which young man already shows himself to be on the path to glory, following the steps of his most worthy parent in the cultivation of the Muses and in the delights of the study of Antiquity. Presently living in Catania he is married to Francesca Paternò Castello ed Arezzi, daughter

and heiress to the currently living Gioachino Paternò Castello e Ramondetta, Baron delle Feudi della Sigona, and Bonincintro, and of Girolama Arezzi his wife.

PART II, BOOK II, pp. 97-101

GIO: PAOLO

CARCACI

(omissis)

Giovanna Sergio e Marullo, who was married to *Giuseppe Averna*, Duke of Belviso, Custodian of the Royal Patrimony, Knight of the Order of St. Maurice. By this lady the present title was finally sold to

Vincenzo Paternò Castello, Baron of Carcaci, thus being invested which was effected on the 15th April 1725. He thereafter obtained the mutation of the predicate of such title over that of the Barony of Carcaci, thus abolishing the ancient predicate of Gio: Paolo, and this by means of an imperial privilege which was conferred upon him. He headed the embassy made to the Most Serene King Victor of Savoy, entrusted to him by the Senate of Catania, and was elected as may be seen one of the three Vicars General, who were sent throughout the Kingdom to contain the outbreak of plague in Messina in 1743. Finally I find that of this Knight that in the year 1749 by deeds of the Notary Vincenzo Archdeacon as at the first of March made a marriage gift of the Fief of Bicocca to *Michele* Paternò Castello his first born son, of which the said Michele received the investiture in the same on the aforesaid date of the first of March 1749.

Here with good reason we should heap further praises on this most noble Family of Paternò, beyond those extended in the first book of this text, p.104, and this is for the most distinguished renown which offers to us a numerous sequence of famous persons, who in every age have made it rise with such glory above itself, its fatherland, the Kingdom. Indeed the History of Sicily owes illustrious deeds to this Family and much in the fulsome History of Catania by the never sufficiently recognised Fr. Prior D. Vito Maria Amico. Giovanni Paternò was born around 1400, and from being a monk of St. Benedict was appointed Bishop of Malta, and thence as Archbishop of Palermo in 1489 and moreover to him were on three occasions entrusted the reins of the Kingdom, in 1494 and in 1506 and again in 1509. He was buried in the Metropolitan Cathedral in a marble tomb with the following inscription :

Giovanni Paternò of Catania, Archbishop of Palermo, of the Order of Saint Benedict. Died in the year 1511 on the 24th January

We read in Pirri's *Sic. Sacr.* Not. Malta, p.510 that, before the said Giovanni, there had ruled over the aforementioned Church of Malta *Bernardino Paternò* in 1445 and immediately after him *Giaimo Paternò* also a Benedictine, Abbot of S. Filippo d'Argiro. Commended by Fr. Aprile's *Cron. Sic.* p.558, ch.1 *Ferdinando Paternò* of the Society of Jesus decorated with piety, of distinguished virtue, who was born in 1604, and of whom Pirri, in his *Sic. Sacr.*, Not. Church of Catania, p.574, writes thus: *Renowned for his piety and distinguished erudition, personal chaplain to King Philip II, confessor to his Queen.* To demonstrate how this Family is one of the most ancient holders of fiefdoms in this Kingdom, we may read the following tombstone inscription, transcribed by Prior Amico whom we praised above, in Pt.3, bk.10, ch.9, p. 284 :

Constantine Paternò, Knight, a man distinguished in arms, of Buccheri and Partanna Count, son of Robert and Mathilda his most devoted wife, deceased 8th April in the year 1168

And thus is the catalogue of notable persons of the House as is found in the said Prior Amico. *Gualtiero Paternò* was born in the early 1400s and fulfilled the office of Royal Ambassador to Pope Martin V. He was Lieutenant of this Kingdom and permanent Royal Counsellor. Another *Gualtiero* is noted by the said author (Pt.4, bk.12, ch.1, p.233) distinguished for his writings and in this same place may be found the famous *Alvaro Paternò* of whom Mongitore in his *Biblioth. Sic.* (vol.1, p.23, ch.1) writes thus : *He was a nobleman of Catania and a Roman Patrician. By the Chapter of the Canons of his home town Catania he was elected Bishop, however a sudden death prevented him from assuming the episcopal dignity, he did not accede to it.* Another *Alvaro* may moreover be found on p.167 vested with the exceptional and supreme dignity of Roman Senator, as may be seen in the following eulogy : *Raised to the dignity of Senator of the City of Rome by Julius II, himself one Bishop of Catania, as was published by Gross in his Annals, and a second time by Leo X. And indeed from the beginning he confirmed his performance as the most distinguished of magistrates, but then when prevented by age, he resigned as ambassador. He departed this life in the year 1525. A most elegant marble statue of him is to be found in the church of Santa Maria de Gesù in Catania with the inscription given by Gross Chor. 9.* We can read on p.153, pt. 4 of Amico's bk.12, ch. 4 that *Giovanni Paternò* was appointed Vicar General in Syracuse in 1393, thence he was promoted to the office of Grand Chamberlain Regent of the Royal Patrimony in 1397, as also his son *Benedetto* achieved fame for the embassy mounted by King Martin to the Papal Court in the company of other notables of

the Kingdom in 1393. The praises of Mongitore may be seen in his *Bibliot. Sic.*, vol.1, p.129, ch.1, where there is numbered among the men of letters one *Carlo Paternò*, on p. 196, ch.2 *Ferdinando*, on p.265 the two Gualtiero mentioned above, and on p.357, ch.1 is to be read the praise of the Archbishop President of this Kingdom, *Giovanni Paternò*, in which we read particularly that, having reached the age of 80, the said Giovanni was summoned to Rome by Pope Julius II to enter him in the eminent College of Cardinals; there then follows on p.362, ch.1 a commendation of *Gio: Filippo Paternò* who was born in 1537, and finally on p.152, ch.2 of vol.2 is found *Pietro* who died in the early years of this century, namely in 1706; *Arrigo di Paternò* was Praetor of Palermo in 1377; *Ugo* was a Deputy for the Kingdom in the years 1585 and 1588, and many other Knights of this House have been awarded high and most noble offices, and awarded the mantles of the Military Equestrian Orders of Spain, the most recent of whom being D. Vincenzo Benedetto Paternò ed Asmundo, Baron of the Feudi di Ficarazzi, as a Knight of St. James of the Sword, and many others Knights of Malta, as is noted by Minutolo in *Mem.Prior.*, bk.8, pp. 256, 257, 258, and bk.9, p.337.