

9th day of the month of January, in the first half of the 7th Indiction,* at Rialto.

"It is the counsel of Divine Inspiration as well as the judgment of a provident mind that every man should take thought to make a disposition of his property before death become imminent, lest in the end it should remain without any disposition :

"Wherefore I MARCUS PAULO of the parish of St. John Chrysostom, finding myself to grow daily feebler through bodily ailment, but being by the grace of God of a sound mind, and of senses and judgment unimpaired, have sent for JOHN GIUSTINIANI, Priest of S. Proculo and Notary, and have instructed him to draw out in complete form this my Testament :

"Whereby I constitute as my Trustees DONATA my beloved wife, and my dear daughters FANTINA, BELLELA, and MORETA,† in order that after my decease they may execute the dispositions and bequests which I am about to make herein.

"First of all : I will and direct that the proper Tithe be paid.‡ And over and above the said tithe I direct that 2000 *lire* of Venice denari be distributed as follows : §

"*Viz.*, 20 *soldi* of Venice *grossi* to the Monastery of St. Lawrence where I desire to be buried.

* The Legal Year at Venice began on the 1st of March. And 1324 was 7th of the Indiction. Hence the date is, according to the modern Calendar, 1324.

† Marsden says of Moreta and Fantina, the only daughters named by Ramusio, that these may be thought rather familiar terms of endearment than baptismal names. This is a mistake however. *Fantina* is from one of the parochial saints of Venice, S. Fantino, and the male name was borne by sundry Venetians, among others by a son of Henry Dandolo's. Moreta is perhaps a variation of Maroca, which seems to have been a family name among the Polos. We find also the male name of Bellela, written *Bellello*, *Bellerio*, *Belletto*.

‡ The *Decima* went to the Bishop of Castello (eventually converted into Patriarch of Venice) to divide between himself, the Clergy, the Church, and the Poor. It became a source of much bad feeling, which came to a head after the plague of 1348, when some families had to pay the tenth three times within a very short space. The existing Bishop agreed to a composition, but his successor Paolo Foscari (1367) claimed that on the death of every citizen an exact inventory should be made, and a full tithe levied. The Signory fought hard with the Bishop, but he fled to the Papal Court and refused all concession. After his death in 1376 a composition was made for 5500 ducats yearly. (*Romanin*, II. 406 ; III. 161, 165.)

§ There is a difficulty about estimating the value of these sums from the variety of Venice pounds or *lire*. Thus the *Lira dei piccoli* was reckoned 3 to the ducat or zecchin, the *Lira ai grossi* 2 to the ducat, but the *Lira dei grossi* or *Lira d'imprestidi* was equal to 10 ducats, or (allowing for higher value of silver then) about 3*l.* 15*s.* ; a little more than the equivalent of the then Pound sterling. This last money is *specified* in some of the bequests, as in the 20 *soldi* (or 1 *lira*) to St. Lorenzo, and in the annuity of 8 *lire* to Polo's wife ; but it seems doubtful what money is meant when *libra* only or *libra denariorum venetorum* is used. And this doubt is not new. Gallicciolli relates that in 1232 Giacomo Menotto left to the Church of S. Cassiano as an annuity *libras denariorum venetorum quatuor*. Till 1427 the church received the income as of *lire dei piccoli*, but on bringing a suit on the subject it was adjudged that *lire ai grossi* were to be understood. (*Delle Mem. Venet. Ant.* II. 18.) This story, however, cuts both ways, and does not decide our doubt.