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*Marsilea*

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*Marsilea* commemorates an Italian soldier, geographer and naturalist, Count Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli (1656-1730) from Bologna. Prior to becoming an officer in the army of Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I (1640-1705) in 1682, he had travelled in the Ottoman Empire gathering information about its natural history and military capability. For the next twenty years he not only fought in many European battles but also fed his curiosity and interest in the sciences, particularly geography and natural history. He gathered all manner of scientific information (including measurements of the speed and size of rivers in connection with his projected work on the Danube), considered the structure of mountains, and studied marine biology and the natural state of rivers and lakes. He made astronomical observations, mapped areas and determined geographical boundaries. He collected plant and animal specimens, as well as artefacts, fossils and antiquities, and he classified mushrooms, and made descriptions of Roman ruins. In 1712, when he returned to Bologna, he presented it all to the Senate of Bologna. He established Accademia delle Scienze dell'Istituto di Bologna which initially embraced six disciplines led by appropriate professors, as well as a printing house (provided with typefaces for Hebrew, Arabic, Greek and Latin) which he placed in the hands of the Dominicans. He was a Fellow of The Royal Society in London and in 1715 became a foreign associate of the French Academy of Sciences. His published works include *Histoire physique de la mer*, *Danubius Pannonico-mysicus, observationibus ...*, and *L'Etat militaire de l'empire ottoman*.