



Twelve Cities – One Sea

Early Modern Mediterranean Port Cities
and their Inhabitants

edited by

GIOVANNI TARANTINO and PAOLA VON WYSS-GIACOSA



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INTRODUCTION

EARLY MODERN MEDITERRANEAN ENTANGLEMENTS

Our mental mapping of the globe through continents rests on an imagery of large bodies of water constituting limits, boundaries and obstacles to the free flow of peoples, goods, information and knowledge while land masses connote integrations and belonging. Perhaps the Mediterranean stands out as the only body of water representing historical connectiveness and unity.¹

On the other hand, we have to be careful with too strong claims about the affinity of citizens of Mediterranean port cities because it smacks of geographical determinism and anthropological reductionism. Not all people living in Mediterranean port cities have been affected by their proximity to the port and the sea to the same degree. Many coast-dwellers in fact lived with their backs turned to the sea and had little experience with or knowledge of the wider world represented by the sea.²

Completed at Castelserpico, near Avellino, in 1458, as an epidemic swept through the city of Naples, and first published in 1573, the *Libro dell'arte della mercatura* by the Dalmatian 'humanist merchant'

¹ Biray Kolluoglu and Meltem Toksöz, 'Mapping Out the Eastern Mediterranean: Toward a Cartography of Cities of Commerce', in *Cities of the Mediterranean: From the Ottomans to the Present Day*, ed. Biray Kolluoglu and Meltem Toksöz (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 1–13 (1).

² Henk Driessen, 'Mediterranean Port Cities: Cosmopolitanism Reconsidered', *History and Anthropology* 16, no. 1 (2005): 129–41 (130). On the (mis)uses of notions of cosmopolitanism as applied to some Mediterranean port cities (in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), see also Sakis Gekas and Mathieu Grenet, 'Trade, Politics and City Space(s) in Mediterranean Ports', in *Port Cities: Dynamic Landscapes and Global Networks*, ed. Carola Hein (London: Routledge, 2011), 89–103.

(Benko) Kotruljević (in the Italian text: Benedetto Cotrugli, in Latin documents Cotrullis, ca.1410–1469) details the qualities expected of a competent merchant in the early modern age. From an early age he needed to display a propensity for competition (in order to pursue profit ‘with honour and without offence to God or [his] neighbour’), resilience in the face of toil and privation, and even a fine physique and fair appearance.³ A lengthy section of Cotrugli’s treatise – long considered, rather reductively, to be more of a humanistic dissertation in the vernacular than a merchant handbook about measures, commodities or taxes – also deals with the need for a conscious and intimate devotion to God (‘man must be eager and willing to embrace religion and learning’). The Christian precepts a merchant was expected to uphold and live by in his daily life were: study (‘merchants ... do not bother to discover what is necessary to their salvation’); attentive participation in the eucharistic liturgy; assiduous, discreet and contrite prayer (*lacrimosa*); and charitable giving, especially to relatives in need.⁴ Despite his extensive references to scholastic authors, Cotrugli unexpectedly stresses the incompetence of clerics on all matters relating to trade, effectively denying the legitimacy of any attempt they might make to meddle in the timing and utility of commercial transactions, deferred payments, debt transfers and the inexorable replacement of metal coinage with a much more mobile and remunerative paper equivalent. He also writes that certain theologians speak about trade and financial movements as the blind do of colours (*tamquam caecus de coloribus*).

An international merchant who was used to mixing with people from a range of geographical, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, Cotrugli describes the kind of scenario a merchant might typically encounter in a distant land. He might find himself dealing with Turks or Tartars or Moors, short on money due to unforeseen travel costs, and with a pressing need, for reasons of economy, to purchase large quantities of goods. The merchant would have to trust the vendor, irrespective of his religious persuasion or confessional affiliation, not to offload

³ The quotations from Cotrugli in English translation are taken from Carlo Carraro and Giovanni Favero, eds, *Benedetto Cotrugli: The Book of the Art of Trade*, trans. John Francis Phillimore (Cham: Palgrave, 2017). The original Italian text is quoted from Vera Ribaudò’s 2016 edition (Edizioni Ca’ Foscari) based on the 1475 manuscript unearthed by Paul Oskar Kristeller in the National Library of Malta.

⁴ *La limosina si deve dare, come dice Agostino in libro primo De doctrina christiana, in questo modo, ... imprima ad quelli li quali sono a noi più congiunti che li extranei.*

poor-quality goods on him. At the same time, he would need to reassure his counterparty that he could be relied upon to pay. Above all, the good faith of the seller-creditor involves not profiting from the debtor's financial difficulties ('if you are in a condition of being able to help him, extend his credit and get him back on his feet, this will be a thing well done'),⁵ so much so that credit appears to be an act of *caritas*.⁶ Deferred payments ('*al termine*') are therefore necessary for the vitality, success and even the humanisation of trade, requiring not a shared religious faith but civic 'good faith'. This is based on the reputation built up in well-established business relations, or alternatively involves gauging, with a careful and experienced eye, the trustworthiness of the faces, gestures and expressions of people one has only just met ('And it cannot be doubted that you will rarely find a well-proportioned man with well balanced [*sic*] limbs whose inner self does not correspond to his outer aspect').

Historians interested in examining how cultural, economic and diplomatic interactions played out in concrete terms in the Mediterranean have demonstrated the fruitfulness of exploring the ways in which various go-betweens (merchants, ransom agents, Jewish brokers, renegades, dragomans and spies) crossed and blurred political, religious and linguistic boundaries and moulded a 'practical cosmopolitanism' defined as 'the ability to adopt, adapt, and operate across two or more different cultural codes or "vernaculars" simultaneously'.⁷ The studies of Francesca Trivellato take a fresh look at the relationship between money, tolerance (as an attitude) and toleration (as a policy). While noting the persistence of Christian Judaeophobic tropes in the early

⁵ *Et se bisogna posérlo aiutar et darli credito et rimeterlo a cavalo, farai bene.*

⁶ See Marcin Buala, "Il suo credito e la salvation tua". Good Faith in *vendere al termine* according to Benko Kotruljević (Benedetto Cotrugli), in *La fiducia secondo i linguaggi del potere*, ed. Paolo Prodi (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007), 131–42.

⁷ See Felicia Gottmann, 'Commercial Cosmopolitanism? Transcultural Actors, Objects, Spaces, and Practices in the Early Modern World', in *Commercial Cosmopolitanism? Cross-Cultural Objects, Spaces, and Institutions in the Early Modern World* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021), 1–20. Also see Eric R. Dursteler, 'Speaking in Tongues: Language and Communication in the Early Modern Mediterranean', *Past & Present* 217 (2012): 47–77; Eric R. Dursteler, 'Language and Identity in the Early Modern Mediterranean', in *Mediterranean Identities in the Premodern Era: Entrepôts, Islands, Empires*, ed. John Watkins and Kathryn L. Reyerson (London: Routledge, 2014), 35–52.

modern *ars mercatoria*, her original and imaginative research argues that as commerce grew in magnitude and influence in European politics and society, less importance was given to the religious faith, ethnic background and national affiliation of individual merchants and more to their solvency and trustworthiness. Indeed, ‘ultimately, individuals’ quest for profit would overcome prejudice’.⁸

In the second half of the sixteenth century, the Iberian Inquisition tightened up its surveillance of ships bound for the territories of the Spanish Empire. Both Spanish and Portuguese institutions clamped down on heretical contamination and continued to do so until well after the end of the Union of the Crowns. Reports written by Holy Office officials following the inspection of foreign-owned vessels entering the port of Lisbon (*Livros para as visitas das naus*) contain details about the vessel’s port of origin and cargo, the number, nationality and religion of all the crew and passengers, and any books or papers on board. This inquisitorial documentation offers fascinating insight into seafarers’ trading practices and how they connected spaces and cultures. Equally significantly, as Benedetta Crivelli has recently pointed out, it shows that the inspectors were anxious not to hinder the flow of trade.⁹

Stefano Villani recently observed that ‘toleration in early modern times was a dirty thing, a pragmatic necessity’.¹⁰ Factors encouraging uniformity intersected with discourses of tolerance and accommodation and, more significantly, the concrete practice of plurality. This brought different religious communities, and mostly merchant diasporas, into close contact with each other, despite their antagonism. The periodic outbreaks of prejudice and violence were a means by which individuals psychologically deflected and appeased the guilt they felt

⁸ Francesca Trivellato, ‘Images and Self-Images of Sephardic Merchants in Early Modern Europe and the Mediterranean’, in *The Self-Perception of Early Modern Capitalists*, ed. Margaret C. Jacob and Catherine Secretan (New York: Palgrave, 2008), 49–74; Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009).

⁹ Maria Fusaro et al., ‘Entrepreneurs at Sea: Trading Practices, Legal Opportunities and Early Modern Globalization’, *The International Journal of Maritime History* 28, no. 4 (2016): 774–86.

¹⁰ Stefano Villani, ‘To Be a Foreigner in Early Modern Italy: Were There Ghettos for Non-Catholic Christians?’, in *Global Reformations: Transforming Early Modern Religions, Societies, and Cultures*, ed. Nicholas Terpstra (London: Routledge, 2019), 115–33.

about associating with people who professed a ‘false’ creed.¹¹ For example, the northern European merchants who survived the great Lisbon earthquake suddenly found themselves fearful for their safety, because ‘the superstitious populace had put into their heads that this sad destiny had been visited on them because of the heretics’.¹²

Displacement, connectivity, disconnection, shifting and plural identities and knowledge, motion and emotions – these are the keywords describing the approaches and objectives of the COST Action ‘People in Motion: Entangled Histories of Displacement across the Mediterranean (1492–1923)’, or ‘PIMO’ for short, a large humanities research project involving forty countries in Europe and around the world, authored and coordinated by Giovanni Tarantino (University of Florence) and Katrina O’Loughlin (Brunel University London). Over the four years of the grant (2019–2023), PIMO’s aim has been to explore the ‘entangled histories’ of the voluntary or forced displacement of human subjects *within* and *from* the Mediterranean between the fifteenth and twentieth centuries. PIMO has engaged with and contributed to a body of scholarship which critically interrogates the history and politics of global movement, transforming historiography and modern geopolitics in equal measure.¹³ Colonial and postcolonial history has done a

¹¹ See Alexandra Walsham, *Charitable Hatred: Tolerance and Intolerance in England, 1500–1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).

¹² Quoted in Jean-Paul Poirier, ‘The 1755 Lisbon Disaster, the Earthquake that Shook Europe’, *European Review* 14, no. 2 (2006): 169–80 (171).

¹³ Jan Lucassen and Leo Lucassen, ‘The Mobility Transition Revisited, 1500–1900: What the Case of Europe Can Offer to Global History’, *Journal of Global History* 4, no. 1 (2009): 347–77; Mimi Sheller and John Urry, ‘The New Mobilities Paradigm’, *Environment and Planning A* 38, no. 2 (2006): 207–26; Stephen Greenblatt et al., *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Peter Adey et al., eds, *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Elisabeth A. Fraser, ed., *The Mobility of People and Things in the Early Modern Mediterranean: The Art of Travel* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020). Also see Amélia Polónia and Helena Maria Osswald, eds, *European Seaport Systems in the Early Modern Age: A Comparative Approach* (Porto: Universidade do Porto, Instituto de História Moderna, 2007); Maria Fusaro, ‘Maritime History as Global History? The Methodological Challenges and a Future Research Agenda,’ in *Maritime History as Global History*, ed. Maria Fusaro and Amélia Polónia (St John’s, Newfoundland: International Maritime Economic History Association, 2010), 267–8; John-Paul Ghobrial, ‘Moving Stories and What They Tell Us: Early Modern Mobil-

great deal to recover the movement of people enacted through empire, while toleration, migration and diaspora studies have extended that focus to the ongoing reality and effects of the new communities that have been created. But diaspora studies have traditionally addressed particular kinds of transnational communities, for the most part characterised by distinct religious or language group identities. In what is a significant critical departure from this line, PIMo has looked at networks and diasporas as emotional communities, tightly intertwined with and connected to other groups through long- and short-distance relationships, economic dependencies, political associations, friendship, scholarly and intellectual exchange, and intergenerational experiences of exile. By introducing emotion to the study of dislocated people, the PIMo researchers have been able to ask new questions of historical materials, and to add a fresh layer of understanding to our findings, as emotions follow different logics of place, travel and time.¹⁴

ity between Microhistory and Global History', *Past & Present* 242, Supplement no. 14 (2019): 243–80; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Three Ways to Be Alien: Travails and Encounters in the Early Modern World* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2011); Maurizio Isabella and Kostantina Zanou, eds, *Mediterranean Diasporas: Politics and Ideas in the Long 19th Century* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); Giovanni Tarantino, José María Pérez Fernández and Giorgio Riello, *Encounters at Sea: Paper, Objects and Sentiments in Motion across the Mediterranean: An Intellectual Journey through the Collections of the Riccardiana Library in Florence*, afterword by Cátia Antunes (Pisa: Bandecchi & Vivaldi, 2020); 'Mobility and Displacement in and around the Mediterranean. A Historical Approach', ed. Cátia Antunes and Giedrė Blažytė, special issue, *Ler Historia* 28 (2021); Stefan Hanss and Dorothea McEwan, eds, *The Habsburg Mediterranean 1500–1800* (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 2021); 'Cities in Motion, Mobility and Urban Space in Early Modern Europe', ed. Pablo Gonzales Martin, Rosa Salzberg and Luca Zenobi, special issue, *Journal of Early Modern History* 25, nos 1–2 (2021); Paul Nelles and Rosa Salzberg, eds, *Connected Mobilities in the Early Modern World: The Practice and Experience of Movement* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2023); 'Paper, Finance and Semiotics: The Symbolic Economy of Knowledge in the Early Modern Mediterranean', ed. José María Pérez Fernández and Gaetano Sabatini, special issue, *The Journal of European Economic History* 2 (2023); 'Crossroads in Early Modern Italy: Encounters between Foreign Travelers and Local Inhabitants', ed. Marta Albalá and Sandra Toffolo, special issue, *Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento* 49, no. 1 (2023).

¹⁴ Giovanni Tarantino and Katrina O'Loughlin's full description of the PIMo project can be found at <https://www.eredita-culturali.sagas.unifi.it/cmpro-v-p-68.html> (accessed 12 September 2023). See also Paolo Boccagni and Loretta Baldassar, 'Emotions on the Move: Mapping the Emerging Field of Emotion and Migration', *Emotion, Space and Society* 16 (2015): 73–80; Giovanni Tarantino and Charles Zika, eds, *Feeling Exclusion: Religious Conflict, Exile, and Emotions in Early Modern Europe* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019).

The PIMo researchers share a conception of the Mediterranean as a large geopolitical space that has long been a flexible locus of exchange for a multitude of cultural transactions, with North, South, East and West, ‘entangled in a cultural and historical net cast over centuries, even millennia’. One primary goal of the collaboration has been to restate and restore the significance of the region as a historic site of engagement and exchange.¹⁵ Wide enough to support radically distinctive civilisations, and yet narrow enough to ensure ready contact between them, the Mediterranean is ‘probably the most vigorous place of interaction between different societies on the face of this planet’. After reading David Abulafia’s *The Great Sea*, it is hard to doubt the truth of his claim that ‘the human hand has been more important in moulding the history of the Mediterranean than Braudel was ever prepared to admit’.¹⁶ Yet in this all-encompassing survey of the sea’s past, Abulafia also shows the extent to which geography has influenced the many different Mediterranean civilisations over its history, and the ways in which scholars and the wider public need to understand that history.

In *Mediterranean Crossings* (2008), Iain Chambers reminds us that the Mediterranean is a long-standing fusion of European, African and

¹⁵ Iain Chambers, *Mediterranean Crossings: The Politics of an Interrupted Modernity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008).

¹⁶ David Abulafia, *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). The obvious reference is to Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, trans. Siân Reynolds (from the revised 2nd ed.), 2 vols (New York: Harper and Row, 1972). According to Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell (*The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000)), Mediterranean unity has been described in two principal ways, one highlighting the shared physical geographical features, and the other emphasising the ease of seaborne communications. In fact, the eagerness of sixteenth-century Christian printers in Europe, especially in Rome and Venice, to offer vivid and almost contemporaneous accounts (around three or four weeks after a given event, according to the estimates of Ganado and Agius-Vadalà) of the increasingly violent clashes taking place between Christian and Ottoman vessels in the Mediterranean certainly helped to emotionally dilute the distances between the shores. See Albert Ganado and Maurice Agius-Vadalà, *A Study in Depth of 143 Maps Representing the Great Siege of Malta of 1565*, 2 vols (Malta: Bank of Valletta, 1994); Carla Keyvanian, ‘Maps and Wars: Charting the Mediterranean in the Sixteenth Century’, in Kolluoğlu and Toksöz, *Cities of the Mediterranean*, 38–60; Jessica Maier, ‘Cartography and Breaking News: Mapping the Great Siege of Malta’, *Renaissance Quarterly* 75 (2022): 459–507; Giovanni Tarantino, ‘Tripoli Città di Barbaria (ca.1560): The History of a Fake News Map’, in *Visual Reflections across the Mediterranean Sea: A PIMo Collection of Essays on Mediterranean Crossings*, ed. Natalie Fritz and Paola von Wyss-Giacosa (Siena: Idem, 2023), 136–45.

Asian influences. Chambers speaks of its 'liquid materiality', the ways in which 'overlapping territories and intertwined histories' form a fluid Mediterranean where borders are 'both transitory and zones of transit'. Emphasising the 'visible and invisible networks' connecting cultures in the region, Chambers condemns the way in which ideological and literal borders disrupt and artificially separate them. Likewise, he rounds on the growing tendency to view the Mediterranean as a frontier between the developed and the developing worlds, an approach that foregrounds the political dimensions of geographical and imagined space in a way that demonstrates critical continuities in the history and present reality of the Mediterranean. Conceiving the sea as an environment of metaphorical forces – of waves, winds, currents, tides and storms – underscores its ancient function as a vehicle of communication and exchange, revealing the degree to which this fluidity is at odds with the erection of artificial barriers across it. Echoing Walter Benjamin – who, writing about Naples in 1924, noted the porosity of the city's architecture, built largely from yellow tuff, a volcanic material which solidifies when it meets sea water – Chambers explicitly draws on another dimension of materiality by offering 'porosity' as a metaphor for the historical and cultural formation of this emblematic Mediterranean city. A porous substance absorbs materials, assimilating external elements but retaining its original structure. It is different while remaining the same. The materiality of these critical vocabularies is highly evocative and PIMo has explicitly drawn on the liquescence and permeability of the region as a way to understand and describe the continuous movement of people across its waters.

Tracing the 'entangled movement' of Mediterranean people in several periods of acute upheaval (and the objects, writing, emotions and ideas accompanying them), the PIMo research viewed displacement as a shared human experience, while remaining attentive to its geographical, political and historical specificities. Broad enough in scope to engage with experiences as different as commercial, diplomatic and trade networks, yet flexible enough to address isolation and discrimination within communities or households, displacement offers a powerfully effective conceptual structure to recover the historical and cultural commonalities of human dislocation, without eliding their critical differences. In recent comparative works, scholars have increasingly engaged with what Serge Gruzinski (2006) described as this 'alchemy

of hybridization'.¹⁷ An entangled history of the Mediterranean cannot, however, be content with hybridity alone: while hybridity connotes cultural states of being – the products of cultural fusion – entanglement emphasises dynamic processes of intercultural exchange and conflict that are neither static nor complete.¹⁸ As Sarah Nuttall has argued, 'entanglement is a condition of being twisted together or entwined', of being involved with. Entanglement speaks of an intimacy achieved, 'even if it was resisted, or ignored, or uninvited'. It is a term and concept which gestures towards a connection or set of social relationships that are 'complicated' and 'ensnaring', but which also imply 'a human foldedness'.¹⁹ In an image that directly echoes Chambers's description of the porous nature of the Mediterranean, Karen Graubart suggests that 'rather than name an outcome, entanglement suggests ongoing confrontations, shifts, and revisions: a state of mutual learning and pushback which does not dissolve into a final product'.²⁰ Challenging the conflictual model of Veneto-Ottoman relations by suggesting that 'although dissonance and strife were certainly part of this relationship, coexistence and cooperation were more common', Eric R. Dursteler has shown that 'early modern identity was multilayered, multivalent, and composite, a process rather than an object'.²¹

¹⁷ Serge Gruzinski, *Les quatre parties du monde. Histoire d'une mondialisation*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Point-Seuil, 2006).

¹⁸ See also Steven Hutchinson's 'counternarratives' as found in his *Frontier Narratives: Liminal Lives in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 152–93; Marina Caffiero, *Gli schiavi del papa. Conversioni e libertà dei musulmani a Roma in età moderna* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2022), 21–27.

¹⁹ Sarah Nuttall, *Entanglement. Literary and Cultural Reflections on Post-Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2009).

²⁰ Karen B. Graubart, 'Shifting Landscapes. Heterogeneous Conceptions of Land Use and Tenure in the Lima Valley', *Colonial Latin American Review* 26, no. 1 (2017): 62–84.

²¹ Eric R. Dursteler, 'On Bazaars and Battlefields: Recent Scholarship on Mediterranean Cultural Contacts', *Journal of Early Modern History* 15 (2011): 413–34 (432). Dursteler pointedly concludes this article by saying that: 'There is a danger that the "black legend" of Mediterranean battlefields will be replaced with an equally imbalanced depiction of Mediterranean bazaars that ignores the sea's long history of antagonism, division, miscomprehension, exploitation, and violence. ... [T]he connected Mediterranean need not be seen as an attempt to supplant the conflictual Mediterranean, rather it complicates it by undercutting the notion of a sea of clear-cut boundaries, and highlighting instead a sea of "shared patterns" in commerce, art, architecture, literature, food, gender and religion' (434).

By the Mediterranean we mean the inner basin of the Atlantic Ocean stretching from the straits of Gibraltar through the Dardanelles and Bosphorus as far as and including the Black Sea. Cut into two ‘maritime universes’ by a line drawn with the complicity of geography and history (running from Corfu and the channel of Otranto to Sicily and the coasts of modern-day Tunisia), these two basins – East and West – are, in turn, subdivided into further seas that several decades ago, in Predrag Matvejević’s ‘breviary’, were transposed into six ‘metaphorical’ zones: the Latin arc (from Gibraltar to Sicily), the Adriatic basin, the Maghrebi front, the Libyan-Egyptian stretch (from Tripoli to Cairo), the Middle Eastern façade and the Anatolian-Balkan bridge (*Mediterranski brevijar*, 1987). The twelve chapters that comprise this *Quaderno* traverse all of them, taking the reader on an exclusive tour of the same number of key Mediterranean port cities of the early modern age.

The twelve cities are considered as places of distance and proximity, conflict and cooperation, order and disorder, autonomy and control.²² Edward S. Casey notes that ‘places gather things in their midst – where things connote various animate and inanimate entities’.²³ Taking their cue from this observation, the authors of the chapters in this volume – each focusing on a different city – explore how the sense of place, the practical and affective local-level relations between different kinds of displaced individuals and communities, and a range of sensorial scapes (food, music, street culture, architecture, art and intellectual heritage, among others) shaped perceptions of belonging and exclusion. By absorbing these entanglements of people, ideas, things and places, and the emotional and sensorial experiences in the mutating fabric of public streets and marketplaces, private houses and religious buildings, the Mediterranean port cities reflected these qualities in their own distinctive make-up. Indeed, as Casey glossed, ‘places not only are, they happen’. This volume certainly has no wish to add to the ‘proliferation of hyphenated-cosmopolitanisms’.²⁴ Instead, based as it is on findings and methods from cultural history, the history of emotions, and visual and

²² On the early modern ‘crisis of recognizability’ sparked by the escalation in global mobility, see Nelles and Salzberg’s introduction to *Connected Mobilities*, 7–38 (19).

²³ E. S. Casey, ‘How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena’, in *Senses of Place*, ed. Steven Feld and Keith Basso (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1996), 13–52 (24–5).

²⁴ David Harvey, ‘The Banality of Geographical Evils’, in *Cosmopolitanism and the Geographies of Freedom* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 98–122.

material studies, the analytical framework that informs it requires us to view people and places, as well as material and legal configurations, as having entangled and mutually constitutive subjective, affective, emotional and material lives. It was our good fortune that the scholars we asked to contribute to this volume were all willing to discuss a particular aspect or source document relating to the history of cities which have been a key focus of their studies for many years. Their thematic expertise shines through constantly, together with insightful and original perspectives.

Under the rule of the Sun King, marked by a major spatial reorganisation of the city, Marseille became a commercial powerhouse and France's main port for Levantine trade. In her essay, Junko Thérèse Takeda offers a vivid account of Marseille as a place of commerce and industry, but also as a space of enslavement and displacement, with different prisons for Protestants, slaves and women of alleged ill repute; an urbanistic expression of Louis XIV's monarchy and prestige, it was at once a hotbed of proud republican resistance. In his chapter, Stefano Villani discusses the remarkable history of Livorno, transformed by the Grand Duchy of Tuscany's successful settlement policy from a small, fortified village into a key commercial hub and an exceptional city. The tolerance ensuing from the 1593 privilege, though considered an unfortunate necessity by contemporaries, laid the foundation for Livorno's social landscape, with influential zones of contact between the languages and sounds, smells and colours of different immigrant populations.

The atmosphere of Naples is rendered as a soundscape by Dinko Fabris, who focuses on the continuity of various songs down the centuries in a diachronic journey from the medieval House of Anjou to the Aragonese dynasty, Spanish rule and the Bourbons. Special attention is reserved for the *villanella*, an anti-Spanish song tradition with its roots in aristocratic circles, and the sung dance known as the *moresca*, a valuable source and enduring trace of an African diaspora in early modern Naples. Houssein Eddine Chachia examines both local Tunisian and European archival sources and documents in his portrait of Tunis. He focuses on the period when the city was a battleground in the conflict between the Ottoman and Spanish empires. The political turmoil led to major economic and demographic transformations, not least due to the influx of Sephardic Jews and Moriscos after their expulsion from Spain, and the growing importance of Tunis as a consular city for many European powers. In her essay about Malta, Anne Brogini elaborates on the notion of the frontier as a dynamic space of tension and ex-

change, conflict and cooperation. The island's Grand Harbour cities were a Catholic space impermeable to religious differences, and specific conditions and regulations were imposed on non-Catholics. As a small island on the border of Europe, several agents of maritime connectivity were active there: it was a space of corsairing conflicts and a ransom economy, but also of the establishment and stabilisation of intercultural networks.

Alexandria, with its two crescent-like ports on opposite sides of a large peninsula, has a unique geography and a long history of trade and settlement. In her chapter, Zoe Griffith focuses on the period of Ottoman rule in Egypt, looking at the diverse population and complex role of this arid coastal outpost, which struggled over the centuries to secure reliable access to the vital fresh water of the Nile, and its commercial importance in the empire's economy during the eighteenth century. Drawing on archival sources, correspondence, memoirs and travel accounts, Matteo Calcagni offers an illuminating account of France's successful efforts to claw back a significant position in the Levantine markets, leading to the extraordinary renaissance and importance of Acre. A former fishing village, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century it became a crucial hub for international commerce and shipping in the Mediterranean, trading highly profitable goods such as grain and cotton in the economy of Ottoman Syria. Nadia Al-Bagda-di's chapter on Beirut traces the city's development of spatial connections between urban and devotional sites. In the early modern age, the small Ottoman provincial town was not considered a worthwhile destination for travellers, but its natural harbour served as a centre of gravity around which the interactions of a multiconfessional population of diverse origin created markers of urban representation and administration. As a result, in the middle and second half of the nineteenth century Beirut became the most prominent city in the Arab East.

In her discussion of Istanbul's cosmopolitan life in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Tülay Artan presents a plethora of moments and episodes involving foreign artists, scholars and collectors, pilgrims, ambassadors and spies, merchants and adventurers, all actively engaging with the Ottoman elite. She highlights the importance of conducting in-depth studies into sociocultural networks such as the literary salons of Ottoman gentlemen, places and spaces for the lively encounters of a diverse, albeit exclusive society in Istanbul. A personal account by Zuanne Papadopoli, a high-ranking Cretan official forced into exile after Venice lost Candia (present-day Heraklion) to the Ottomans in 1669, is the source for Filomena Viviana Tagliaferri's portrait of daily

life in Venetian Crete. Papadopoli's memoirs span over three periods – prewar Crete, the siege of Candia, and his final years in Padua. Containing a wealth of observations and comparisons, the memoirs offer insight into the amusements of both nobles and less well-off social classes, as well as the foods, habits and now lost landmarks of Venetian rule.

In his chapter on the Republic of Ragusa (Dubrovnik), Jesse Howell makes an interesting case for the important role played by the peripheral location in the Adriatic Sea of the small but wealthy port city, and how its lack of military power spurred it into developing highly refined diplomatic skills. The city's officials were able to maintain its state of negotiated autonomy, even as an Ottoman tributary state, and successfully negotiate highly advantageous terms and a key position within Ottoman and Mediterranean trade networks. A poignant re-examination of Venice is offered by Anastasia Stouraiti. In her chapter, rather than presenting the Serenissima as a cosmopolitan melting pot, the author tackles crucial aspects and consequences of often forced migration by discussing, among other examples, public rituals of conversion and accusations of witchcraft made against Greek immigrant women. These lived experiences of institutional violence and marginalisation, gender bias and class dynamics highlight the importance of putting forward a critical historiographical discourse on mobility and urban history.

In his multilayered afterword, Nicholas Terpstra draws together the multiple threads spun by the twelve authors on 'happening' (as Casey would have it) places; migration and exchanges; trade and cultural life; and religious and territorial conflicts. The global picture of the cultural space in, on, around and beyond the Mediterranean Sea is one of a historically rich, vibrant, elusive place, with invented and competing imaginaries, a place that is continually called into question and brought under renewed examination.

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Abstract

The PIMo researchers have been united in their conception of the Mediterranean as an extensive geopolitical space which has long acted as a flexible locus of exchange for a multitude of cultural transactions. In this space, North, South, East and West have been entangled in a cultural and historical net cast over the centuries, and a primary goal of the collaboration has been to restate and restore the significance of the region as a historic site of engagement and exchange. Wide enough to support radically distinctive civilisations, and yet narrow enough to ensure ready contact between them, the Mediterranean is distinctive, in David Abulafia's words, as 'probably the most vigorous place of interaction between different societies on the face of this planet'. The twelve Mediterranean port cities discussed in the present volume are considered as places of distance and proximity, conflict and cooperation, order and disorder, autonomy and control.

Keywords: PIMo COST Action, Mediterranean port cities, early modern cultural entanglements, displacement, Edward S. Casey

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MARSEILLE – BETWEEN INDEPENDENCE AND INCARCERATION

Marseille, a necessary retreat in the middle of a stormy sea, Marseille, this place where all the winds, the shoals, and the disposition of the coastline invites ships to it, was frequented by a seafaring people. The sterility of its territory led its citizens towards economical commerce. They had to labour to supply what nature refused them; be just, to live among the barbarian nations that were to make them prosperous; be moderate, for their government always to remain tranquil; finally, be of frugal mores, to subsist by commerce—commerce that they would the more surely preserve the less it was advantageous to them. Montesquieu, *De l'esprit des lois*, book 20, ch. 5

In the winter of 1660, French king Louis XIV prepared to wed María Teresa of Spain on the banks of the Bidasoa, the river that separates the Basque country from southern France. On the way to his nuptials, he and his wedding entourage took a detour to Provence. Conflicts between royalist consuls, or civic leaders, and those who rallied behind the banner of municipal liberty in France's principal Mediterranean city of Marseille had piqued his apprehension and prompted him to act.¹ Louis instructed his governor of Provence, Louis de Bourbon, duc de Vendôme, to march ahead with 6,000 troops. The king arrived in Marseille in March, accompanied by his minister Cardinal Mazarin,

¹ Led by Gaspard de Glandevès-Niozelles, Marseille's frondeurs allied against the royalist consuls who had been elevated by Louis, duc de Vendôme, royal governor of Provence. The Crown charged Niozelles with *lèse-majesté* and attempted to sway the municipal elections of 1659 in its favour. But the city council rallied behind Niozelles and elected his allies to consulship. Junko Thérèse Takeda, *Between Crown and Commerce: Marseille and the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 23.

his mother Anne d'Autriche, his younger brother Philippe, duc d'Anjou, and Armand de Bourbon, prince de Conti. He forced his entry through a breach blown through the ramparts by Porte Réale, a symbol of Marseille's independence. Such aggressive theatrics of royal might, combined with orders to reconstitute the municipal government, ushered in a wave of unprecedented urban expansion for the city in the early modern period.

Louis and his controller-general Jean-Baptiste Colbert replaced Marseille's recalcitrant consulate with a new executive body – the *échevinage* – hoping to bring the city's leadership into line with the monarchy's projects for centralised governance. The Crown intended to collaborate with the *échevins*, elected from among Marseille's banking and trading elite rather than aristocracy, to build on the city's commercial connections with the Levant. Louis's interests in flexing his power beyond France at a time that was witnessing increasing inter-connections among global economies intensified human and material movements through the port. But his initiative to harness the city to his authority was complicated by its history as an aristocratic city state with republican and anti-royalist tendencies. Marseille's growth – as southern France's foremost port, a regional industrial centre, a prison town and naval yard – created an urban environment where cityscapes celebratory of the port's independent spirit and its Mediterranean connections reserved space for, and thrived off, the displacement, forced dislocation and enslavement of thousands.

Marseille's history as a commercial powerhouse dated to the ancient world. The Greek Phocaeen seafarers who founded Massalia in 600 BCE settled on the northern hills of a protected inlet on the Gulf of Lion. Julius Caesar noted in *De bello civili* that Massalia was 'bathed on three sides by the sea; the fourth, accessible by land, guarded by a citadel, is naturally protected by a deep ditch that presents great challenges for attacks'.² Its port of Lacydon became a focal point for maritime trade. The Massalians established colonies at Monoikos (Monaco), Olbia (Hyères), Athenopolis (St Tropez) and Nikaia (Nice), and directed trans-Mediterranean exchanges with cities further afield.³ Seventeenth-century Marseillais historian Antoine de Ruffi credited Massalia for having 'vanquished the Carthaginians, aided the Romans, civilised

² Julius Caesar, *De bello civili*, book 2, ch. 1, quoted in Augustin Fabre, *Les rues de Marseille*, vol. 1 (Marseille: Imprimerie Arnaud, 1867), 17.

³ Takeda, *Between Crown and Commerce*, 65.

the Gauls, taught good letters to Italians and enjoyed the happiness of being the first in France to receive Christianity'. 'A perfect aristocratic republic', Massalia's reputation earned it exemptions and liberties.⁴ Caesar sacked the city for supporting his rival Pompey in the Roman civil wars. But despite the city's submission to the conqueror, successive Marseillais consuls administered it as an independent city across a millennium. Following the Middle Ages, the counts of Provence helped Marseille retain its independence as a maritime trading centre.⁵ Most famously, René of Anjou (1434–1480) fortified Marseille with several ramparts, raised its status as a Mediterranean city, and used it to launch attacks on Sicily. But when his nephew and only heir, Charles III, himself died heirless in 1481, he bequeathed Provence to Louis XI of France. French king Charles VIII legalised the handover with René's former counsellor-turned-governor of Provence, Marseillais Palamède de Forbin in 1486. Forbin successfully lobbied the king to safeguard Provence's autonomy, Marseille's liberties and its Roman laws, despite the union. Three major revisions to Marseille's civic constitution notwithstanding, the city's directorship under its consuls remained virtually unchanged until Louis XIV's conquest.⁶

That conquest signalled a political rupture for Marseille. A spatial reconfiguration and massive urban expansion project – *l'agrandissement de 1666* – followed. Colbert's letters patent from June 1666 ordered the transformation of what had essentially remained a medieval town into a metropolis that could support increased maritime traffic; accommodate a growing population of administrators, merchants, artisans, migrants and slaves; and house an enormous arsenal of royal galleys. For centuries, Massalia, then Marseille, had remained confined to three hills above the northern quay of Lacydon, where cramped neighbourhoods, apartments, alleys and stairways – some preserved and restored today in the Panier district – had intermittently served as hotbeds for plague outbreaks since the Black Death of the fourteenth century (Fig. 1.1). The *agrandissement* tripled the city from 67 to 195 hectares and reoriented it around the port's underdeveloped eastern and southern flanks.

⁴ Antoine de Ruffi, *Histoire de la ville de Marseille* (Marseille: Garcin, 1654), 12–14.

⁵ Capetian-Angevin and Valois-Anjou dynasties ruled a Provence independent from the French Crown.

⁶ Takeda, *Between Crown and Commerce*, 22. The rules of Cossa (1475), Saint-Vallier (1492) and the *Règlement du Sort* (1652) altered the make-up of the municipal council. But the consulate remained unchanged.

Neighbourhoods sprang up around an axis formed by the intersection, at Place Royale, of the Grand Cours that ran from the main gates and another boulevard (the present-day Canebière) that extended out of the city from the eastern quay. A new southern quarter housed the royal elite, the arsenal and the *bagne*, or penal colony (Fig. 1.2).

Hardly limited to Marseille, numerous French cities underwent significant spatial reorganisation across the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The original transformation that Colbert envisaged for Marseille was consistent with orders to update other cities, from Paris to Sète, Rochefort and Brest. The monarchy gave uniform guidelines to impart the message of spatial unity and civic subordination under the Crown. Louis sought to embody his power over the provinces by exerting control over urban space and design. The more productive and essential urban populations became to the state, the more they fell under external administrative authority.⁷ But in Marseille, the *échevins* ‘opposed the entire execution’ of a project they perceived as overreach.⁸ Arguing that decisions for development required the consent of Marseille’s city council, they claimed that the project as it was originally conceived benefited everyone but the city’s native inhabitants. The *échevins* demonstrated their ambivalence towards both centralisation and globalisation, projecting financial ruin, the devaluation of older properties, unbearable taxes, the loss of jobs to foreigners and public health disasters.⁹

The deliberations between city and state over the *agrandissement* captured the ways in which Marseille’s administration continued, as in centuries past, to push for civic autonomy. They imagined their city as a communal space for local inhabitants and saw themselves as ‘protectors of the privileges and liberties of Marseille’. Nicolas Arnoul, Louis’s intendant of the royal galleys appointed to head the proposal, criticised ‘the *échevins*, who still think they are ancient Roman consuls’, and promised to force Marseille into submission.¹⁰ Marseille, he insisted,

⁷ Julien Puget, ‘Construire une “cité républicaine” à Marseille à l’époque moderne. Embellissement, fiscalité et intégration citoyenne’, *Dix-huitième siècle* 49 (2017): 549–67.

⁸ Archives municipales de la ville de Marseille [AMVM] DD 152, ‘Requête des *échevins* en opposition aux lettres patentes de 1666’.

⁹ Takeda, *Between Crown and Commerce*, 24–31; Béatrice Henin, ‘L’agrandissement de Marseille, 1666–1690: Un compromis entre les aspirations monarchiques et des habitudes locales’, *Annales du Midi* 98, no. 173 (January–March 1986): 7–20.

¹⁰ Archives de la chambre de commerce de Marseille [ACCM], Nicolas Arnoul, ‘Lettres et mémoires’, 31 August 1666.

would become ‘a great city that will not be able to defend itself against its master’.¹¹ But the *échevins* only conceded to the idea of expansion when they were able to wrest control from Arnoul, and collaborate with a Marseillais *bureau d’agrandissement* and local architects Gaspard Puget and Mathieu Portal to determine the project’s direction. They transformed what had been a royal initiative into one that prioritised local interests and tastes. Rejecting Arnoul’s plans for an austere French boulevard, Puget’s brother Pierre leaned on his training in Florence, Genoa and Rome to style Marseille in the manner of an Italian city state. He designed and adorned apartment façades with nymphs, sea gods and tritons that could simultaneously pay homage to the king, his royal galleys and Marseille’s independent, maritime identity.¹²

The new Marseille that emerged was a city with many faces which highlighted its republican and independent past, its classical connections, and cultural and geographic proximity to Rome and Italy, in relation to Paris and Versailles. It was also a city that remained deeply Catholic, despite the noticeable presence of Armenians, Jews, Protestants and Muslims who made it their base, seasonally or perennially. And for a king who dedicated every year but one in his personal reign from 1661 to 1715 to war, Marseille represented the aspirations of a purportedly absolute monarch for unrivalled power in the Mediterranean and beyond. To live in early modern Marseille was to simultaneously experience a city of commerce, a city of industry and a state at war. An urban environment where local *patrimoine* coexisted, albeit in tension, with a modernising military state and with the world beyond France.

1. *Marseille, a royal prison*

Tritons and sea gods were not Pierre Puget’s only subject matter. So too were slaves and prisoners. In 1668, the year he returned to Marseille from Genoa to work on the *agrandissement*, Nicolas Arnoul consulted him to construct Marseille’s arsenal. By the end of the first phase of construction, the immense complex situated at the corner of what is now La Canebière and the Quai de Rive-Neuve included two dry docks and a main building for storage, manufacturers, chapels and a

¹¹ ACCM, Arnoul, ‘Lettres et mémoires’, 1667.

¹² François-Xavier Emmanuelli, *Vivre à Marseille sous l’ancien régime* (Saint Amand-Montrond: Perrin, 1999), 100.

school for converting Turkish slaves into Catholics. Along the arsenal's southern end stood a *maison du roi* and garden for the galley intendant; an armoury, filled with a cache of 10,000 muskets, sabres and other military hardware; and a bakery to feed the compound's 1,000 plus employees. It grew even larger across the 1680s under the direction of Colbert's son, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, marquis de Seignelay, who ordered more drydocks, a canal, cordage workshop, hospital and cemetery for prisoners and slaves.¹³

The thousands of free and bound labourers at Marseille's arsenal transformed Louis XIV's navy from an embarrassment into a symbol of royal power. In the first two decades of his personal reign, Louis XIV went from possessing fewer than 20 dilapidated warships to commanding 40 new galleys, constructed, decorated and armed at their Marseille headquarters. As Meredith Martin and Gillian Weiss have recently shown, these richly adorned fighting ships not only functioned as instruments of war but as weaponised pieces of art that symbolised the *gloire* of Louis as 'the Most Christian King' both while anchored at port and when sailing at sea. For a king who weathered criticisms at home and abroad for maintaining France's centuries-long alliance with the Muslim Ottoman sultans, his galleys, manned by *esclaves turcs*, Protestants, convicts and salaried oarsmen – and decorated with carvings, bas-reliefs and gilded sculptures of shackled non-Christian slaves – helped visually and militarily impart the message that French Catholicism dominated the Mediterranean.¹⁴

The maritime fighting season only took place four months a year. From late autumn into early spring, the roughly 2,000 prisoners and slaves who rowed for the king returned to Marseille, where they worked at the naval yards and quayside kiosks, served as domestic servants or found employment with local guilds and individual masters while the galleys drydocked for repairs and refurbishment.¹⁵ They were ubiquitous around Marseille's port. Easily distinguishable by their top-knot, short pants, loose shirt, red bonnet and chains, Turkish slaves

¹³ Meredith Martin and Gillian Weiss, *The Sun King at Sea: Maritime Art and Galley Slavery in Louis XIV's France* (Los Angeles: Getty, 2022), 38–9.

¹⁴ Martin and Weiss, *The Sun King at Sea*, 29–31, 52–4.

¹⁵ Martin and Weiss note that at the end of the seventeenth century, seventy-seven Marseillais businesses, merchant firms, silk, pewter, plaster, soap and leather makers hired Turkish slaves and convicts seasonally. Martin and Weiss, *The Sun King at Sea*, 46. See also Jean-Baptiste Xambo, 'Dockside Shanties: Lightweight Dwellings, Free Labour, and Enslavement in Marseille during the Ancien Regime', *Quaderni storici*, n.s. 51, no. 151 (April 2016): 137–64.

exposed the lie behind the kingdom's free soil principle according to which there were no slaves in France.¹⁶

The visibility and sheer number of prisoners and slaves in Marseille was a relatively new development in Louis XIV's France. For centuries, Marseille had housed the unfree more discreetly. Less than two nautical miles from port, Château d'If, a fortress built under the direction of François I in 1524 on the smallest island in the Frioul archipelago, had functioned as a prison since the sixteenth century. These days, reality and myth coexist on the château's walls, where plaques mark cells with the names of renowned historical inmates and fictional characters. Tourists who take the twenty-minute ferry ride to If are mostly inspired to see the prison made famous by Alexandre Dumas's fictional *Le comte de Monte Cristo*. But the signage also selectively commemorates some of the château's actual prisoners, of whom the Chevalier Anselme, held there in 1582, and Frère Valère de Foenis, who burned to death in 1588, were some of the earliest. Under the direction of Louis XIV, Colbert incarcerated hundreds of criminalised Protestant Huguenots there while they awaited galley sentences. The prison also housed Jean-Baptiste Chataud, captain of the *Grand Saint Antoine*, for introducing the plague that killed off half of Marseille's population in 1720, and the French revolutionary Honoré Gabriel Riqueti, comte de Mirabeau.

The château's prisoners were not just French subjects. They also included foreigners incarcerated as prisoners of state. The kidnapping of one such individual, Avétik, an Armenian Orthodox patriarch of Constantinople, was ordered by the French ambassador to the Ottoman port, Charles de Ferriol, marquis d'Argental, in 1706. Ferriol aggravated tensions between the Armenian Catholic and Orthodox sects, against the advice of the Capuchin missionaries, by taking an uncompromising stance against orthodoxy, which he shared with the Jesuits installed across Turkey. The ambassador nursed a years-long grudge against the Orthodox patriarch for working with Sultan Mustafa's *sheikh-ul-islam* to oust the Jesuits who had violated laws against proselytisation. Convinced that Avétik had weaponised his alliance with Ottoman authorities to acquire the patriarchate, Ferriol described him as a 'diabolical spirit' with an 'implacable hatred against France', and requested Louis's secretary of state, Louis Phélypeaux, comte de Ponchartrain's permis-

¹⁶ Martin and Weiss, *The Sun King at Sea*, 31–5, 37.

sion to make him disappear.¹⁷ He ordered a vice-consul in Chios to ‘spirit him away’ to a prison in Messina, where he hoped Avétik would be mistaken for a prisoner of the Spanish crown. When Ottoman authorities got wind of the disappearance and suspected French foul play, Pontchartrain moved him to Marseille, then transported him to Mont Saint-Michel, and finally to the Bastille.¹⁸

Months before his mysterious death in 1709, Avétik provided the secretary of state with an autobiographical memo as part of a deal to secure his release upon his renunciation of orthodoxy. His narrative provides a rare first-person account of life in detention in Marseille at the turn of the eighteenth century. ‘They threw me into a prison for criminals’, he described, where ‘[I was] condemned to forced labour, loaded with iron chains that were wedged into a nearby wall with a rivet’. ‘They shaved off my beard and priest’s crown’, he continued, ‘against the customs of our Armenian nation’. Avétik’s recollections of being ‘thrown into a deep dungeon’ for forty days hint at imprisonment in Château d’If or one of the forts at the mouth of the port. But his descriptions of compulsory shaving and labour suggest he was also taken to the arsenal.¹⁹ His valet, Katchatur, who sailed to Marseille in search of his master, was detained at Fort Saint-Jean until he was transported for life to Guadeloupe in the French Antilles. Notwithstanding the embellishments in an account written simultaneously as a captivity tale, conversion narrative and emancipation application, Avétik’s unique memoir underscores the everyday violence that was far from exceptional in old regime France.

Back in the medieval quarter of Marseille stood another incarceration site designated for women. The Maison de la refuge traced its origins to 1383, when women who had renounced debauchery requested the city council to provide a house where they could practice penitence. In 1630, the city magistrates oversaw the construction of a new refuge to incarcerate women of ill repute during a plague outbreak that killed 8,000. It stood on a hill just behind one of Marseille’s oldest churches, Notre-Dame-des-Accoules (built over a former temple of Minerva). In

¹⁷ Emile Charles Varenbergh, *Correspondance du marquis de Ferriol, ambassadeur de Louis XIV à Constantinople* (Antwerp: 1830), 221.

¹⁸ Junko Thérèse Takeda, *Iran and a French Empire of Trade, 1700-1808: The Other Persian Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 72–3.

¹⁹ Avétik, ‘Le prétendu masque de fer arménien, ou Autobiographie du vartabied Avétik de Thokhath’, trans. M. Brosset, *Bulletin de l’Académie impériale des sciences de St.-Petersbourg* 19, no. 2 (1873), 37–8.

1671, the *Vieille Charité*, an imposing three-storey Baroque almshouse designed by Pierre Puget, appeared just beyond it.²⁰ During the Great Plague of 1720, women accused of ‘public debauchery’ by *bureaux de la maison des filles et femmes pénitentes* were sentenced to the refuge for three to five years. Its rehabilitation programme included prayer, Mass, catechism, and a simple diet of bread, water and soup.²¹ Perhaps one of the more fascinating women held there was a gambling house madam, Marie Petit, who funded and joined Louis XIV’s first official ambassadorial delegation to the Persian shah in 1705. When the envoy, Marseillais merchant Jean-Baptiste Fabre, died en route to Isfahan, Petit unofficially assumed leadership of his entourage, completed the journey to Persia and returned to France. But accused of being a prostitute and apostate by Jesuits in Persia, Fabre’s successor Pierre-Victor Michel, and his patron Charles de Ferriol, Petit was issued a *lettre du cachet* and imprisoned in the refuge for three years. While there, she attempted an escape, led a prison riot and wrote countless letters to Louis’s secretary of state Pontchartrain, maintaining her innocence and requesting restitution for funds lost during her journeys.²²

Beyond housing prisons for slaves, Protestants, convicts and alleged prostitutes, during the reign of Louis XIV Marseille became a carceral city on a symbolic level too. Fresh from his victory over the city’s consuls in 1660, the king of France claimed possession of the iron chains extending across Marseille’s harbour so as to suggest that the former republic and its population were subdued under the yoke of his authority. He ordered the construction of a bastion fort, Saint-Nicolas, at the mouth of the port with cannon facing the city to surveil its inhabitants and discourage rebellion. From noncompliant consuls who lost their administrative posts to shackled Turkish slaves and Armenian kidnappees toiling at the arsenal, anyone in Marseille was potentially a prisoner, visibly or invisibly, in the Sun King’s France.

²⁰ Abbé Payan d’Augery, *Le refuge des filles repenties: Notice historique sur la maison de Marseille* (Marseille: Imprimerie Marseillaise, 1900), 5–6.

²¹ AMVM FF 238, ‘Lettres pour la punition des femmes et filles d’une débauche publique’, May 1691; FF 239 ‘Police locale, prostitution et débauche: dénonces et jugements, 1721–1724’; Takeda, *Between Crown and Commerce*, 146.

²² Takeda, *Iran and a French Empire of Trade*, 78–9.

2. *A commercial republic and industrial centre*

In 1754, Italian-trained artist Claude-Joseph Vernet completed his *Intérieur du port de Marseille* (Fig. 1.3). It was one of fifteen commissioned canvases of French seaports he completed for Louis XV. The viewer's eyes are immediately drawn to the foreground, where Marseillais *négociants* and well-dressed women mingle with ship captains, turbaned Levantine merchants, and local fruit, vegetable and fish vendors. A beggar can be seen soliciting alms. Vernet, however, did not include slaves or convicts in his painting. Galley slavery in Marseille had ended in 1748 when Louis XV dismantled the galley fleet and transported all convicts to a new *bagne* in Toulon. Bales of textiles, baskets of fish, sacks of grain and oil barrels lie scattered across the bottom of the painting. The workers who tended them were not chain gangs, but free dockworkers and fishermen. Above this cross-section of Marseillais society, the viewer's eyes are led between anchored vessels and others exiting the harbour, past parallel quays, towards the mouth of the port. There, beyond Fort Saint-Jean, at the painting's central vanishing point, a lone ship, its white sail unfurled, enters the sea.

Vernet made use of every segment of his canvas to highlight Marseille's maritime trade rather than royal power. By the mid-eighteenth century, when he completed his painting, Marseille not only held a monopoly in France's Levant trade, but also served as a critical port for transoceanic Atlantic trafficking. While it was linked to Ottoman routes that connected the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean trade zones, France's location between its Atlantic empire and the Mediterranean made Marseille particularly valuable.²³ Marseillais trade pumped Caribbean colonial goods into southern France, or exchanged them for materials from the Ottoman Empire. By the time Vernet's painting appeared, Marseille exported Languedocian woollens; Atlantic coffee, sugar and dyes; and regional manufactured items to Turkey in exchange for silks, cottons, spices, incense, alum, madder, resin, beeswax, nuts, Cretan olive oil and Yemeni coffee. Wheat from Egypt, Thessaly and

²³ Daniel Panzac, 'Les échanges maritimes dans l'Empire ottoman au XVIIIe siècle', *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée* 39 (1985): 177–88.

Thrace supplemented Provençal production.²⁴ Marseille's trade bound together communities of artisans and manufacturers, local inhabitants and migrants. The city's elite merchant dynasties who based their activities across the Mediterranean intermarried with Christian Ottoman subjects. Vernet captured this cosmopolitan human and material dynamic – an ideal portrait of *doux commerce* – in exquisite detail.

While commodity exchange in Vernet's Marseille had certainly grown in relation to decades past, Marseille's trading connections with Italian city states and the Levant went back centuries. Its chamber of commerce, founded in 1599, was the first in France. Marseille was also one of the first cities in France to develop a lazaretto, or quarantine centre. Due to the perennial threat of epidemics in Mediterranean coastal trading cities, Italian and French ports developed Europe's earliest plague prevention institutions. Marseille's first lazaretto appeared in the fourteenth century and was updated in 1526. When Louis XIV conquered Marseille in 1660, Colbert ordered the completion of a larger Nouvelles Infirmeries at Saint-Martin d'Arenc.²⁵ Together, the city's historic chamber of commerce, its revamped lazaretto and health intendency, and the most recent *agrandissement* primed Marseille for Colbert's edict of 1669, which designated the city as a duty-free port for direct trade with the Levant.

This legislation profoundly reshaped Marseille's demographics. Its population of 45,000 in 1600 rose to 75,000 by 1700. By specifying that upon twelve years of residency, marriage to a Marseillaise or the purchase of property worth 5,000 to 10,000 livres, any foreigner could become a naturalised French subject and a bourgeois of the city, the edict drew Armenian, Jewish and Protestant traders to reside at the port.²⁶ Marseille's trade had historically attracted merchants and artisans from across southern France, Corsica, Genoa and Piedmont, in addition to Spanish, German, Dutch and Levantine migrants from further afield.

²⁴ David Celetti, 'France in the Levant: Trade and Immaterial Circulations in the Long Eighteenth Century', *Journal of Early Modern History* 24, nos 4–5 (2020): 383–406; Junko Thérèse Takeda, 'Epidemics, Disinformation, and Financial Melt-down: Lessons from the Great Plague of Marseille of 1720', in *The Marseille Mosaic: A Mediterranean City at the Crossroads of Cultures*, ed. Mark Ingram and Kathryn Kleppinger (Oxford: Berghahn, 2023): 36.

²⁵ Archives départementales des Bouches du Rhone [ADBD] Fonds intendance sanitaire de Marseille, 200E 37.

²⁶ Jean-Baptiste Colbert, 'Edit sur la franchise du port de Marseille', in *Lettres, instructions et mémoires de Colbert*, vol. 2 (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1861–2), 796–8.

Jews had enjoyed relative security in Provence under the Angevins. The Spanish expulsion of Muslims led to the migration of 275,000 Moors to Provence in the fifteenth century. Armenians began frequenting Marseille to trade silk from the sixteenth century. But these waves of migration had been pushed back by *arrêts* issued by the Provence parliament, or rulings by Marseille's city council, depending on the perceived political, cultural or financial strains felt by local inhabitants.²⁷

Colbert's edict encouraged migration. Beyond stimulating overseas commerce, migrants strengthened several regional industries across Marseille and southern France, from soapmaking to silk and calico manufacturing. These industries benefited from transfers of industrial and technological expertise among French and non-French artisans, as well as from inflows of raw materials from North Africa and the Levant. For example, because local Provençal olive oil was primarily reserved for cooking and consumption, oil from North Africa, Italy, Spain and the Balearic Islands provided the essential material for Marseillais soapmakers. And while they competed regionally with the soapmakers in Toulon for exclusive royal manufacturing rights, Marseillais soap workers received protection from Colbert's son, the marquis de Seignelay, to produce high-quality products that sold well against competitors.²⁸ Silk manufacturing similarly captured royal attention. In 1685, Giacomo Bellouzo of Sicily, M. Monfredini of Genoa and Joseph Fabre, the scion of a wealthy Marseillais banker and merchant, established the *Compagnie du commerce de la mer Méditerranée*, backed by a twenty-year exclusive royal patent to operate several silk manufacturers in Marseille. They employed over 2,000 workers – many of them foreign – across thirty ateliers.²⁹

Not all Marseillais manufacturing resulted from royal patronage and protection. Partnerships between Marseillais and Armenian artisans initiated from below helped stimulate production of the widely popular Provençal calico, known locally as *indiennes* or *toiles peintes*. Indian and Levantine printed cottons had been popularised in southern France since the sixteenth century. By the mid-seventeenth cen-

²⁷ Takeda, *Between Crown and Commerce*, 96–7.

²⁸ Xavier Daumalin, Nicole Girard and Olivier Raveux, eds, *Du savon à la puce: L'industrie marseillaise du XVIIe siècle à nos jours* (Marseille: Editions Jeanne Lafitte, 2003), 28–32.

²⁹ Junko Thérèse Takeda, 'Silk, Calico and Immigration in Marseille', in *Merkantilismus. Wiederaufnahme einer Debatte*, ed. Moritz Isenmann (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2014), 241–63.

tury, Marseillais manufacturers began producing imitations. The edict of 1669 helped boost production and quality. The influx of white cotton and dyes, in addition to Armenian artisans experienced in working with colour-fast dyes and binders, helped Marseillais workers produce painted cottons ‘in the style of the Levant and Persia’. This technology spread to Avignon, Nîmes and Arles, and further to Amsterdam.³⁰

But Louis’s administration was inconsistent towards foreigners and their activities. After Colbert’s death in 1683, the Crown disallowed Armenian silk and calico trading and legalised religious intolerance with Louis’s revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685). Pressured by lobbyists from northern industrial regions, Louis XIV’s minister of war François-Michel le Tellier, marquis de Louvois determined that Marseille’s *indiennes* destroyed the French economy. In 1687, Colbert’s son, Jean-Baptiste Colbert de Seignelay claimed that Armenian *ardasses* ruined French manufacturers. He forbade Armenians from France’s silk trade and fined ships 3,000 livres for carrying Armenian textiles to port. Finance minister Michel Chamillart restricted naturalisation to Catholics, imposed a naturalisation tax in 1697 and stripped anyone who failed to establish residency or retained homes abroad of their naturalised citizenship.³¹

A cursory look at some Armenians’ experiences in Marseille across the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries highlights the city’s inconsistent attitudes towards foreigners. One of the earlier Armenians to settle there, Antoine Armení, arrived in 1612. Letters patent from Louis XIII in 1629 allowed Persian Armenians like Armení to trade in France. Armení fared very well and used his gains to acquire property south of the city limits. His son Jean sold some property back to the city when the ramparts were extended, but Jean’s three sons bought back the land, now inside the new city walls, in 1699.³² After Marseille was designated a duty-free port, more Armenians established themselves in the commercial centre near the Loge, opened a printing workshop, a coffee academy and married local widows or women from lower social groups.³³ But by the next century, when Armenians Oandjy and

³⁰ Daumalin, Girard and Raveux, *Du savon à la puce*, 37–9.

³¹ Takeda, ‘Silk, Calico, and Immigration in Marseille’, 258–61.

³² Adrien Blès, *Dictionnaire historique des rues de Marseille* (Marseille: Jeanne Laffitte, 2001), 34.

³³ Olivier Raveux, ‘Between Intercontinental Community Network and Local Integration: The Colony of the Armenian Merchants of New Julfa (Isfahan) in Marseille, 1669–1695’, *Revue d’histoire moderne et contemporaine* 59, no. 1 (2012), 83–102.

Ibrahim Barsan arrived from Alexandria en route to Spain in 1716, the chamber of commerce confiscated their goods and accused them of illegally selling silk. Similarly, the city rejected petitions filed by Abro and Serpius Georgi to trade in Marseille in 1720. The fact that they had served as translators for the French nation in Smyrna and received French royal protection in Constantinople did not move the chamber in their favour.³⁴ Even Persia's first consul in France, Armenian merchant Hagopdjan de Derichan, went bankrupt during his residency in Marseille. The chamber saw Persian trade as a threat to Marseille's Ottoman trade and did not cooperate with the Crown when it inaugurated direct French-Persian exchange in 1715. Louis XIV ordered the chamber to house Hagopdjan and pay him an annual indemnity for his services. But throughout his consulship, the chamber refused him bills of exchange, tagged him as a debtor, seized his assets and cancelled his payments, arguing that his prolonged business trips had made his residency lapse and annulled the city's obligation to provide support. He died debt-ridden in 1727, a casualty of Marseille's arguments with the monarchy over its guardianship of Levant trade.³⁵

These few examples reveal how the realities of trans-imperial commerce and local industry did not necessarily comply with the idyllic image of Marseillais cosmopolitanism projected in a painting like Vernet's. Fears of the 'oriental' plague, Barbary corsair attacks and perceived threats to Catholicism triggered intermittent violence against transplants. More generally, anxiety towards global trade, captured in Catholic homilies that equated commercial luxury with sin, or republican discourses about threats to morality and political virtue, could awaken xenophobic reactions or marginalise those who did not align with narrower definitions of what it meant to belong to Marseille. At the height of the plague of 1720, bishop Henri de Belsunce likened the commercial city to a wanton prostitute who invited God's wrath, and

³⁴ Takeda, *Between Crown and Commerce*, 101–2.

³⁵ Centre des Archives diplomatiques du ministère des Affaires étrangères de la Courneuve [ADMAE] CP 5.72, fol. 212, 'Le S. Agobjan à Son Altesse Royale Le Regent de France', 30 January 1719; ADMAE CP Perse 6.71, 'Memoire des Remonstrances que Le Agobjean Consul de Perse fait à la Cour', 10 July 1723; ADMAE CP Perse 6.87, fol. 332, 'Memoire du S. Agobjean Consul de Perse à Monseigneur le Comte de Merville Ministre de la Marine', 15 July 1723; ADMAE CP Perse 6.93, 'Lettre du Roy', 20 October 1723; Archives nationales (Paris) [AN] Marine B7 93, fol. 325.

consecrated Marseille to the Sacred Heart of Jesus to atone for its sins.³⁶ Transforming the boulevards used for commercial exchange into pathways for reconciliation with God, he staged a procession through the port, accompanied by cannon volleys from the royal galleys, to reclaim the city from the Jansenists and non-Christians. Years after the plague receded, as global trade rose to new levels, the Académie de Marseille fretted over the corrosive effects of commerce. Its directors and members deliberated over ways to support civic education and ensure that its globetrotting merchants who mingled with foreigners remained anchored to their *patrie*. Vernet's ship, with its pristine white sails, looked angelic in the distance, but some Marseillais continued to harbour fears that it may in fact disguise an angel of death and disorder.

Epilogue

Some of Marseille's early modern visualscapes can still be seen today. The forts of Saint-Nicolas and Saint-Jean continue to guard the port. The Intendance sanitaire still reminds visitors that health intendants chosen from among the merchant class failed to shield Marseille from the plague of 1720. On the southern side of the port, the Abbaye Saint-Victor calls attention to the long history of Christianity in France's oldest city. Further south, over the foundations of a sixteenth-century fort, the basilica of Notre-Dame de la Garde towers over Marseille, its gilded Mary, patron of mariners, watching over the bay, Château d'If and the crumbling lazaretto of the Hôpital Caroline. But much of the premodern world has vanished. *Patrimoine* is everywhere in the Phocaean city, but its pasts have been preserved selectively. Of the sprawling arsenal complex, all that remains is the façade of the *capitainerie des galères*. It houses an Ibis hotel and a restaurant-bookstore fittingly named Les Arcenaulx, featuring rare local history books published by Jeanne Laffitte. A few blocks south lies rue Armény, named after the seventeenth-century Armenian silk merchant. But the memory of the Armenian presence in premodern Marseille is overshadowed by architectural markers that highlight the more recent twentieth-century arrivals following the Armenian genocide. Avétik is not commemorated anywhere, and the neighbourhood behind the *hôtel de ville* where most

³⁶ Henri de Belsunce, 'Mandement de Mgr l'évêque de Marseille', in *Pièces historiques sur la peste de Marseille*, ed. Louis-François Jauffret (Marseille: Chez les principaux libraires, 1820), 168–9.

Armenians settled in the seventeenth century holds no plaques recalling their migration history. While Puget's *Vieille Charité* dominates the skyline of the Panier district, the refuge for prostitutes has long been torn down, only referenced by two cross streets that bear the names *rue du Refuge* and *rue des Repenties*.

Despite these disappearances, like in the premodern past, the city continues to situate itself between Paris and the Mediterranean, fiercely critical of centralisation and multiethnic in its demographics, architecture, music and gastronomy. Yet as in centuries past, it remains a hotbed for xenophobic violence. The end of the Algerian War in 1962 saw 60% of the war's displaced migrants pass through Marseille. Their arrival triggered the public housing projects in the city's periphery that became a model for HLMs (*habitations à loyer modéré*) across postcolonial France. Marseille became synonymous with postwar racist violence when six Maghrebi men were killed in retaliation for the murder of a bus driver by an Algerian boy, and OAS terrorists bombed the Algerian consulate in 1973.³⁷ But the city also emerged as a critical laboratory for French antiracist activism.³⁸ Is Marseille a model for Mediterranean multiculturalism? Or, as the national press frequently casts it, is it a gritty, violent French periphery? These simplistic stereotypes share a long history. Rather than accepting them, if we identify the local, state and global dynamics that have moulded this city across the millennia, we can appreciate the complexities of how human mobility and migration have shaped, and continue to shape, Marseille, its representations and its transformations.

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³⁷ Ingram and Kleppinger, *The Marseille Mosaic*, 7–8.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Abstract

In 1660, Louis XIV of France marched into Marseille with his royal troops to subdue the Mediterranean city that had nominally been French since 1486. This conquest of 1660 began a new phase for a former Greek republic and quasi city-state that had maintained its political independence for centuries. Across the late-1700s and 1800s, Marseille not only became a global hub for French overseas exchange, but also consolidated its reputation as an industrial centre and royal prison city. This chapter explores Marseille's rich heritage, and its early modern transformations into France's primary port for Levantine trade. It also analyses Marseille in all its contradictions. It examines how a city proud of its republican history, independence and openness to cosmopolitan global exchange also became a metropolis central to showcasing the French monarchy's imperial prestige and uncompromising stance on religious conformity. This chapter concludes by highlighting the legacies of Marseille's early modern contradictions, still visible today in an urban landscape where local *patrimoine* continues to coexist, albeit in tension, with a military state unsure of how to come to terms with its violent colonial past.

Keywords: Marseille, Louis XIV, trade, migration, enslavement

LIVORNO – DIVERSIS GENTIBUS UNA¹

1. *The Algiers of Christianity*

Since the early half of the seventeenth century, the symbol of Livorno has been the marble monument of the grand duke of Tuscany, Ferdinando I. His statue stands atop a pedestal, surrounded by four imposing bronze statues of enslaved ‘Moors’ in chains. Giovanni Bandini sculpted Ferdinando I’s statue in 1599, but it was only officially unveiled in the spring of 1617. Pietro Tacca added the four statues of the slaves: the first two in 1623 and the other two three or four years later. In April 1799, during the occupation of Livorno by French revolutionary forces, the statue, considered a symbol of slavery, was removed.

¹ In recent decades, with the global turn that has characterised historiography, the history of Livorno has gained centrality, greatly contributed to by Francesca Trivellato’s *Familiarity of Strangers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). Lucia Frattarelli Fischer, from her early studies in the early 1980s to the present day, has been the reference point for at least a couple of generations of Livorno historians. Given the impossibility of mentioning everything published in the last ten years, I refer to her latest work, *L’Arcano del mare. Un porto nella prima età globale: Livorno* (Pisa: Pacini Editore, 2018), which provides a comprehensive and immensely detailed overview of the most up-to-date and complete bibliography on the topic.

Among the many collections of essays published on Livorno, noteworthy for their breadth of themes and innovative approaches are: Paolo Castignoli, *Studi di storia. Livorno dagli archivi alla città* (Livorno: Belforte, 2001); Adriano Prosperi, ed., *Livorno 1606–1806. Luogo di incontro tra popoli e culture* (Turin: Allemandi, 2009); Andrea Addobbati and Marcella Aglietti, eds, *La città delle Nazioni. Livorno e i limiti del cosmopolitismo (1566–1834). Studi dedicati a Lucia Frattarelli Fischer* (Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2016). Unfortunately, I have not had the opportunity to read the newly published chapter by Nicholas Terpstra, ‘Ambivalent Neighbours. Sensory and Spatial Dynamics of Religious Exchange in Early Modern Tuscany’, in *Early Modern Toleration: New Approaches*, ed. Benjamin J. Kaplan and Jaap Gererts (Abingdon: Routledge, 2023).

Plans were made to replace it with a monument to Liberty, depicting her breaking the chains of the slaves with one hand and striking the decapitated head of the grand duke with the other. However, shortly thereafter, the Austrians expelled the French, and the grand duke was returned to his pedestal in July of the same year.²

The statue depicts Ferdinando I as master of the Knights of Santo Stefano. This maritime military order, established by Cosimo I in 1562, enabled Tuscany to engage in corsair warfare and effectively transformed Livorno into what can be described, borrowing Braudel's evocative phrase, as the 'Algiers of Christianity'.³ This era is closely associated with the construction of the 'Bagno degli Schiavi' (Slaves' Prison) between 1598 and 1604. This imposing building captured the imagination of the huge majority of foreign travellers who visited Livorno during the early modern period. Thanks to the Bagno, in contrast to other Italian port cities, Ottoman and Barbary galley slaves had the opportunity to spend their nights ashore instead of being tethered to oar benches. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the prison housed approximately 3,000 individuals, a staggering number that accounted for roughly 25% of Livorno's population. During the seventeenth century, the slave population steadily declined due to the discontinuation of Tuscan galleys. The use of the slaves' Bagno ended in 1750 following the signing of treaties with the Ottoman Empire and the Barbary regencies.⁴

The small fortified village of Livorno was acquired by the Republic of Florence from the Genoese in 1421. In the following decades, despite opposition from some factions within the Florentine ruling class who were sceptical about a Tuscan maritime strategy, the republic invested

² Anthea Brook, *Pietro Tacca a Livorno: il monumento a Ferdinando I de' Medici* (Livorno: Comune di Livorno, 2008); Mark Rosen, 'Pietro Tacca's Quattro Mori and the Conditions of Slavery in Early Seicento Tuscany', *The Art Bulletin* 97, no. 1 (2015): 34–57; Steven F. Ostrow, 'Pietro Tacca and his Quattro Mori: The Beauty and Identity of the Slaves', *Artibus et Historiae* 36, no. 71 (2015): 145–80; Lucia Frattarelli Fischer, *L'Arcano del mare. Un porto nella prima età globale: Livorno* (Pisa: Pacini Editore, 2018), 105–6.

³ Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 2:867.

⁴ Cesare Santus, *Il 'turco' a Livorno. Incontri con l'Islam nella Toscana del Seicento* (Milan: Officina Libraria, 2019); Frattarelli Fischer, *L'Arcano del mare*, 63–4, 74–5. On early modern travel reports on Livorno, see Carlo Mangio, 'Testimonianze di viaggiatori francesi su Livorno fra Seicento e Settecento', in *Livorno e il Mediterraneo nell'età medicea* (Livorno: Bastogi, 1978), 306–17; Mario Curreli, 'Scrittori inglesi a Livorno nel Seicento', *Nuovi Studi Livornesi* 11 (2004): 53–82.

in improving Livorno's port and defences. Around the mid-fifteenth century, they built the structure now known as the Tower of Marzocco. Between 1519 and 1534, based on Antonio da Sangallo's architectural design, they constructed the edifice now called the Old Fortress. Nonetheless, it was during the reign of Cosimo I that Livorno achieved prominence in the politics of Florence. In 1566, a customs regulation was ratified which set remarkably low tax rates for the storage of goods and their transportation. To create an integrated system between Pisa and Livorno, efforts were made to build the Navicelli Canal, connecting Livorno's port to Pisa. Initially conceived in the 1540s, the canal was completed in 1574, coinciding with the construction of the Pisa arsenal.⁵

To encourage trade, Cosimo aimed to establish a Jewish diaspora network. With Livorno and Pisa in mind, as early as January 1549, he issued a decree offering tax and legal advantages, as well as protection from the Inquisition, to new Portuguese and Castilian Christians who wanted to settle in Tuscany. In 1551, he extended an invitation to 'Greeks, Turks, Moors, Jews, "Aggiams", Armenians and Persians coming with their merchandise to live and engage in trade' ('Greci, Turchi, Mori, Ebrei, Aggiumi, Armeni et Persiani i quali venissero con le loro mercanzie per abitare e commerciare') in Florence and across the state. Unlike the previous decree, this proclamation, officially documented in the *Book of Privileges*, guaranteed that no one would attempt to convert them to Christianity. Subsequently, in 1556, another confidential privilege was granted, directed towards 'all Jews of any nation'.⁶

⁵ Frattarelli Fischer, *L'Arcano del mare*, pp. 33–4; Corey Tazzara, *The Free Port of Livorno & the Transformation of the Mediterranean World 1574–1790* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

⁶ Lucia Frattarelli Fischer, *Vivere fuori dal ghetto. Ebrei a Pisa e Livorno (secoli XVI–XVIII)* (Turin: Silvio Zamorani Editore, 2008), 15–29; Frattarelli Fischer, *L'Arcano del mare*, 119–20; see also Bernard Dov Cooperman, 'Trade and Settlement: The Establishment and Early Development of the Jewish Communities in Leghorn and Pisa (1591–1626)' (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1976). In Ottoman Turkish, the word 'Acem' (pronounced 'Agem') means 'Persian,' so it is highly likely that the 'Aggiumi' mentioned in this document were Persian Armenians, as opposed to Ottoman Armenians. I would like to express my gratitude to Cesare Santus for bringing this to my attention. See also Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers*, p. 295.

2. *The 'Livornine'*

Following Cosimo's death, his son Francesco I instigated a significant shift in Tuscan policy concerning Livorno. In 1575, he commissioned architect Bernardo Buontalenti to transform it into a fully-fledged city. The concept was to replicate the model of Antwerp, establishing a port-depot complete with infrastructure, housing and warehouses catering to merchants. These merchants, benefiting from customs advantages, would have a marketplace not only to sell their goods but also to purchase commodities for their return voyages. Livorno was envisioned as the pivotal commercial hub linking the Levant and northern Europe, while also integrating Tuscan products into this trade network. The grand duke's bold vision is underscored by the fact that the city walls were designed to accommodate a population of 12,000 inhabitants, whereas at that time, Pisa had a mere 8,000 residents. What is more, in 1591 Livorno itself counted just 530 inhabitants. The inaugural stone was laid on the morning of 28 March 1577.⁷

It was Ferdinando I, the brother and successor of Francesco, who realised this visionary project. Right from the early months of Ferdinando's reign, the growth of Livorno was a central focus of his policies. Construction work on a new and larger fortress commenced as early as 1589. In 1590, initiatives were launched to draw skilled labour to Livorno, and on 12 February 1592, the fiscal exemptions, initially limited to specific groups of workers, were expanded to encompass all types of immigrants, without discrimination. Thanks to the intervention of enterprising Venetian Jewish merchant Maggino di Gabriello, on 30 July 1591 an invitation was extended to 'Merchants of any Levantine, Western, Spanish, Portuguese, Greek, German and Italian nation, Jews, Turks, Moors, Armenians, Persians and others' ('Mercanti di qualsiasi nazione Levantini, Ponentini, Spagnoli, Portoghesi, Greci, Todeschi, et Italiani, Hebrei, Turchi, Mori, Armeni, Persiani et altri') to settle in Livorno. The invitation particularly targeted Jews who had 'adopted Christian lifestyles' ('vissuto in habito come christiano'). Jews were granted the freedom to practice their religion, establish synagogues in both Pisa and Livorno, have a cemetery, reside without being confined to a ghetto, avoid wearing distinctive signs, employ Christian nurses

⁷ *Ibid.*, 54; see also Elena Fasano Guarini, 'La popolazione', in *Livorno: progetto e storia di una città tra il 1500 e il 1600* (Pisa: Nistri-Lischi e Pacini Editori, 1980), 199–215; Dario Matteoni, *Le città nella storia d'Italia. Livorno* (Rome: Laterza, 1985); Frattarelli Fischer, *L'Arcano del mare*, 42.

and servants, own property, engage in trade and manufacturing with specific privileges and exemptions, and exercise civil and criminal jurisdiction (at lower levels) among Jews. Maggino himself was appointed consul of the Nation, responsible for organising and overseeing the Jewish community.⁸

The initial Jewish immigrants who came to Tuscany from Venice and Ferrara in July 1591 under the privilege granted expressed dissatisfaction with its institutional setup. They formally petitioned for the establishment of a community that would not be under the authority of a consul but instead would be managed by a self-governing body consisting of officials ('massari') elected by the Jewish merchants themselves. For this reason, on 10 June 1593, a revised edition of the privilege granted two years earlier was ratified, known as the 'Ampliacione de' privilegi di mercanti levantini et ponentini. In response to the Jews' requests, all clauses specifying the consul's duties were either eliminated or amended. In forty-three articles, every detail of the settlement of Sephardic Jews was meticulously defined. Those accepted (known as 'ballottati') into the Jewish Nation were officially registered in the Livorno customs book, thereby becoming Tuscan subjects. This privilege was reaffirmed at the coronation of each grand duke.⁹ These two documents, referred to as the 'Livornine', shaped the lives of Livorno's Jewish community until the mid-1800s.¹⁰ They enjoyed immediate success, and by 1601, Livorno already had 134 Jewish residents out of a total population of between 3,100 and 3,700.¹¹

Their presence had an immediate impact on the cityscape. As early as 1595, Maggino di Gabriello had arranged for a synagogue for the

⁸ Lucia Frattarelli Fischer, *Le leggi Livornine 1591–1593* (Livorno: Debate Editore: 2016), 9–23, 39–40. The *Privilegi de' mercanti levantini et ponentini* (30 July 1591) held formal legal validity as they were recorded in the 'Book of Privileges': Archivio di Stato di Firenze (State Archives of Florence, from now onwards ASFi), Pratica segreta, 189, num. 177, cc. 115v–119v. An earlier version, dated 1 July 1591, is preserved in the records of the auditor of reforms: ASFi, *Auditore delle Riformazioni*, 18, ins. 661 ½.

⁹ ASFi, *Pratica segreta*, 189, num. 208, cc. 196v–200v, see Frattarelli, *Le leggi Livornine 1591–1593*, 25–9, 39, 54–8; Frattarelli Fischer, *L'Arcano del mare*, 67–8.

¹⁰ On 12 August 1836, while their other privileges remained in effect, the safe conduct that guaranteed impunity to the 'ballottati' was repealed. The 'ballottazione' (de facto naturalisation of the Jews who moved to Livorno) remained in force until 1858. See Carlotta Ferrara degli Uberti, *La 'nazione ebrea' di Livorno dai privilegi all'emancipazione (1814–1860)* (Florence: Le Monnier, 2007), 33.

¹¹ Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers*, 54–5; Frattarelli Fischer, *L'Arcano del mare*, 63.

small community on the city's main street, Via Ferdinanda. Following this initial Jewish temple, a larger synagogue was constructed behind the duomo in 1606. This synagogue became the religious and administrative hub of the Jewish Nation, and many Jews began to reside in its vicinity. The growing Jewish population prompted the renovation and expansion of the synagogue in 1642, modelled after the one in Amsterdam. In 1600, the Jews purchased a piece of land, situated opposite the New Fortress, which they used as a cemetery (prior to this, they had buried their deceased on the beach of Mulinacci).¹²

Besides the significant Jewish community, which in 1693 reached a peak of 13.5% of the population, Livorno's general settlement policy proved highly successful, leading to a remarkable population growth. People primarily migrated to the city from the Val d'Arno and Apennine towns, as well as from Lucca, the Ligurian coast and Provence. Livorno's population surged from 500 inhabitants in 1590 to 5,000 in 1606.¹³ On 19 March of that year, Ferdinando I conferred upon Livorno the status of a city. During this event, the duomo was formally consecrated. Its construction, initiated some years before, had just been completed. Notably, Livorno as a city remained an exception in the Grand Duchy as it lacked a bishop: the duomo was established as a collegiate church with a provost and canons only in 1628, and it was not until 1806 that Livorno was elevated to a diocese.¹⁴ The city's governance was placed in the hands of a governor, holding both military and civil authority.¹⁵

Over the following years, Livorno's population continued to surge, reaching approximately 12,000 residents by 1642, which included 1,175 Jews, without accounting for soldiers, slaves and the convicts in the Bagno.¹⁶ This demographic expansion was accompanied by significant urban development. In 1590, a new harbour was excavated, and between the 1610s and the middle of the century, substantial alterations were made to the port infrastructure. Warehouses and lazarettos were erect-

¹² *Ibid.*, 61, 73, 114–15; Frattarelli Fischer, *Vivere fuori dal ghetto*, 104.

¹³ Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers*, 54.

¹⁴ Vincenzo Lavenia, 'Una città senza diocesi. Il governo della Chiesa livornese in età moderna', in Prosperi, *Livorno 1606–1806*, 63–70. See also Frattarelli Fischer, *L'Arcano del mare*, 70.

¹⁵ Marcella Aglietti, *I governatori di Livorno dai Medici all'Unità d'Italia Gli uomini, le istituzioni, la città* (Pisa: ETS, 2009); Frattarelli Fischer, *L'Arcano del mare*, 71, 188.

¹⁶ Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers*, 54; Frattarelli Fischer, *L'Arcano del mare*, 63, 113.

ed. Beginning in 1629, an entire merchant district emerged in the areas to the north of the town, soon earning the moniker ‘Venezia Nuova’ (New Venice) due to its canals.¹⁷

3. *The Livorno of the ‘Nations’*

In addition to the Jewish community, numerous other foreigners had established themselves in Livorno by the late sixteenth century, having been invited there since the time of Cosimo I, as previously mentioned. These newcomers included Greek shipbuilders and sailors, Armenian merchants from both the Ottoman and Safavid Empires, French artisans, Corsican sailors, as well as English and Flemish privateers, mariners and merchants. Over the years, distinct communities, known as ‘Nazioni’, formed around these initial groups, each creating its own rules and self-governing bodies. In the spring of 1606, almost concurrently with the consecration of the duomo and the declaration of Livorno as a city, the Catholic church of Greek rite, dedicated to the Most Holy Annunciation (Santissima Annunziata), was consecrated on a street perpendicular to Via Ferdinanda. In this instance, the construction of the church for the Greek Uniate community also served as a focal point for Greeks who purchased homes in the vicinity.¹⁸ On the same street, in 1608, the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel (Madonna del Carmine) was built and entrusted to the Franciscans. Within this building, altars were erected by Dutch, Portuguese, French and Corsican Catholics for their respective Nations, where their members were also laid to rest.¹⁹

While the privileges of 1593 were originally intended for Jews, the opportunity to practice their religion without being persecuted or harassed was soon seized upon by non-Catholic Christians as well. At least from the 1620s, when merchants began to arrive from Britain, gradually replacing the English pilots and sailors, the presence of the Protestants became increasingly visible, eventually becoming the ma-

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 93–7.

¹⁸ On Greeks in Livorno, see: Despina Vlami, *Mercanti greci a Livorno 1750–1868. Commercio, nazione, famiglia* (Athens: ETPbooks, 2021). See also Frattarelli Fischer, *L’Arcano del mare*, 194; Daniele Edigati, ‘Chiese, nazioni e principe: il culto cristiano orientale a Livorno nel Settecento fra tolleranza e giurisdizionalismo’, *Diritto e Religioni* 1 (2022): 342–79.

¹⁹ Frattarelli Fischer, *L’Arcano del mare*, 73.

majority of the British Community of Livorno.²⁰ A similar process occurred with the Dutch, albeit more slowly. The Catholic ‘Flemish-German Nation’ gained grand ducal recognition in 1607. When in 1622 it adopted its statutes, beginning to keep a precise list of its members, most of them came from Catholic southern Netherlands. In that same year, the Nation established the aforementioned chapel in the Church of Our Lady. However, we know that the Nation also counted many Protestants, many of whom adopted Nicodemite practices: by the mid-1600s, they were almost certainly the majority. During the seventeenth century, the number of German merchants increased, and from around 1740 onwards, they outnumbered the Dutch.²¹

Starting at least in the 1640s, the English sought recognition of their religious differences, requesting permission for a Protestant minister to reside in the city and ensure proper burial for deceased English individuals in an enclosed cemetery. However, measures to expel Anglican clergymen who had served the community were enforced in 1644, 1645, 1649, 1666, 1668 and 1670, in alternating periods of tacit tolerance towards Anglican ministers and intense controversies. It was only at the end of 1707, following another confrontation between the English resident diplomat and the Tuscan authorities, that permission was granted for a religious minister to reside in Livorno as the chaplain of the English community (although permission was not given for a church: the first Anglican church in Livorno was only authorised in 1816). A similar pattern of alternating tacit concessions and controversies characterised the request to enclose the land where British Protestants had been buried since the 1640s. The Inquisition strongly opposed this concession, partly to symbolically emphasise the unworthiness of those who died outside the Catholic Church and partly out of fear that a wall could conceal Protestant ceremonies. It appears that the cemetery was only finally enclosed – by a tall, dense hedge – in 1706, and it

²⁰ Michela d’Angelo, *Mercanti inglesi a Livorno 1573–1737. Alle origini di una ‘British Factory’* (Messina: Istituto di Studi Storici Gaetano Salvemini, 2004).

²¹ Magnus Ressel, *La Nazione Olandese-Alemanna di Livorno e il suo ruolo nel sistema mercantile europeo del XVIII secolo*, in Addobbati and Aglietti, *La città delle Nazioni*, 309–35. See also Marie-Christine Engels, *Merchants, Interlopers, Seamen and Corsairs. The ‘Flemish’ Community in Livorno and Genoa (1615–1635)* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 1997).

was not until 1746 that it was surrounded by a wall (one nevertheless low enough to allow people to see what went on inside it).²²

The early 1640s marked a significant period for Dutch Protestants as well, with the establishment of their own cemetery in 1642 within the garden of a Protestant engineer in the service of the grand duke. The cemetery's grounds were expanded in 1669 with the purchase of adjacent land by the Dutch-German congregation. However, again a dispute arose regarding the enclosure of this area, which was eventually resolved in 1695 with the informal authorisation to construct a wall, albeit one that again allowed a clear view of the ground (Fig. 2.2).²³

In Livorno, some French Huguenots had arrived as early as the late sixteenth century, their presence shaped by a discreet 'Nicodemism'. Their numbers notably increased following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, with those coming to Livorno usually seeking the protection of the English.²⁴

The distinction between those who adhered to the Orthodox tradition, considered schismatic by the Catholic Church, and Eastern-Rite Catholics within both the Greek and Armenian communities, was fluid and uncertain. Rome made multiple attempts to better define this situation, including the dispatch of Dominican missionaries with the specific task of educating the Armenians in matters of faith. It was only through these efforts to enforce confessional uniformity that in 1698, almost a century after the consecration of the Greek Rite church dedicated to the Most Holy Annunciation, permission was finally granted to construct a Uniate Armenian church. This church, dedicated to Saint Gregory the Illuminator, was built between 1701 and 1714 in Via della Madonna, the street where the Greek church and the church of Our

²² Stefano Villani, "Cum scandalo catholicorum..." La presenza a Livorno di predicatori protestanti inglesi tra il 1644 e il 1670', *Nuovi Studi Livornesi* 7 (1999): 9–58; Stefano Villani, 'Alcune note sulle recinzioni dei cimiteri acattolici livornesi', *Nuovi Studi Livornesi* 11 (2004): 35–51.

²³ Villani, 'Alcune note sulle recinzioni': 40. Paolo Castignoli, 'Il libro rosso della Comunità Olandese-Alemanna a Livorno (1622–1911)', in *Studi di storia. Livorno*, 101–7; Giangiacomo Panessa and Mauro Del Nista, eds, *I 'Giardini' della Congregazione Olandese-Alemanna Memoria e fede nella Livorno delle Nazioni* (Livorno: Debate, 2004).

²⁴ Lucia Frattarelli Fischer and Maria Teresa Lazzarini, *Chiese e luoghi di culto a Livorno dal Medioevo a oggi* (Ospedaletto, Pisa: Pacini editore, 2015), 34.

Lady had stood since 1606, thus, in the multifaceted Livornese cityscape, representing the street of the 'Nations' for over a century.²⁵

The schismatic Greeks were only granted permission to have their independent church after the change in dynasty, from the Medicis to the House of Lorraine, in 1757. This church, dedicated to the Most Holy Trinity (Santissima Trinità), was constructed near the Bagno. Even though it did not exhibit any outward indications of its religious identity to avoid causing scandal for the Roman Catholics, it is noteworthy that this marked the first instance of permission being given for a non-Catholic church in Tuscany.²⁶

4. *Diversis gentibus una*

The tolerance ensured by the 1593 privilege was what enabled the emergence of the Livorno of the Nations. This is why it came to be known as the 'Livornina', considered a sort of city constitution. However, it is worth noting that this term was not used by contemporaries and only introduced in the 1830s, shortly before its abolition. (The historians' custom of coupling it with the privilege granted through Maggino in 1591, employing the plural form 'Livornine', is even more recent).²⁷

It was an official document that was sent abroad, to both Queen Elizabeth of England and Ottoman Sultan Murad III. However, its circulation was explicitly prohibited by the grand ducal authorities (the Jews even went as far as to excommunicate those who distributed it).²⁸ The prohibition was clearly due to the fear that it might be formally

²⁵ *Gli armeni lungo le strade d'Italia: Atti del Convegno internazionale. Torino-Genova-Livorno, 8-11 marzo 1997* (Pisa-Rome: Istituti editoriali e poligrafici internazionali, 1998); Giangiacomo Panessa and Massimo Sanacore, eds, *Gli Armeni a Livorno. L'intercultura di una diaspora* (Livorno: Debate, 2006).

²⁶ Frattarelli Fischer and Lazzarini, *Chiese e luoghi di culto*, 67-73.

²⁷ One of the early instances in which 'Livornina' is used to refer to a privilege from 1593 is found in the third volume of the *Dizionario universale della lingua italiana, ed insieme di geografia*, a dictionary published in Livorno by Carlo Antonio Vanzon in 1833. The definition reads as follows: 'Livornina: Name given in usage to that kind of Safe Conduct or security document granted in Livorno to those foreigners who, forced into exile from their own countries due to debts, take refuge there. This is in virtue of a law issued in the year 1593 by Ferdinando I, grand duke of Tuscany'. ('Nome che nell'uso dassi a quella specie di Salvocondotto o carta di sicurezza che si concede in Livorno a quegli stranieri che costretti ad esiliarsi da proprj paesi per debiti quivi rifuggonsi e ciò in virtù di una legge emanata l'anno 1593 da Ferdinando I granduca di Toscana').

²⁸ Frattarelli Fischer, *Le leggi Livornine 1591-1593*, 33, 42.

condemned by the Inquisition or denounced by the Pope. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that it was first published in print in 1798, given the significant shift in the intellectual and juridical climate.²⁹ In 1804, when Lorenzo Cantini republished it in his collection of Tuscan laws, he emphasised in an accompanying note that the grand duke had not given approval but had merely tolerated ‘the exercise of religions other than the Catholic one in Livorno for the purpose of promoting the public good’.³⁰ This is an accurate clarification.

In 1656, the Florence mint issued a gold thaler featuring a portrait of Ferdinand II on one side and a view of Livorno’s port from the sea on the other. It was accompanied by the motto ‘Diversis gentibus una’, which undoubtedly harked back to the verse dedicated by Rutilius Claudius Namatianus, in his fifth-century work *De Reditu Suo*, to Rome to celebrate its former greatness. This motto, though highly evocative and suggestive, did not celebrate diversity in the way we understand it today. Livorno’s social landscape, as effectively defined by Francesca Trivellato, was a communal cosmopolitanism in which the presence of foreigners was marked by both a sense of belonging and estrangement from the city.³¹ Jews and Muslims were expected to maintain a clear and visible separation from Catholics to avoid giving the impression that the tolerance granted to them erased their fundamental differences from Christians. Simultaneously, non-Catholic Christians were encouraged to be as inconspicuous as possible to prevent the common people from believing that there could be other ways of practising Christianity beyond the one prescribed by the Catholic Church.³²

This certainly does not imply that integration into the city’s community was impossible. However, to achieve this, individuals had to relinquish their original identities, particularly their religious affiliations, which, in early modern Europe, served as symbolic markers defining

²⁹ *Collezione degl’ordini municipali di Livorno corredata delli statuti delle sicutà, e delle più importanti rubriche delli statuti di mercanzia di Firenze* (Livorno: Carlo Giorgi, 1798), 237–56.

³⁰ Lorenzo Cantini, *Legislazione Toscana* (Florence: S. Maria in Campo, 1800–1808), 14:10–22.

³¹ Guillaume Calafat, ‘Être étranger dans un port franc. Droits, privilèges et accès au travail à Livourne (1590–1715)’, *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* 84 (2012): 103–22.

³² Stefano Villani, ‘Religious Pluralism and the Danger of Tolerance: The English Nation in Livorno in the Seventeenth Century’, in *Late Medieval and Early Modern Religious Dissents: Conflicts and Plurality in Renaissance Europe*, ed. Federico Barbierato and Alessandra Veronese (Pisa: Edizioni Il Campano Arnus University Books, 2012), 97–124.

the boundaries of communities more than anything else. In the records of the Inquisition in Pisa and Livorno, I have identified approximately 400 cases of abjuration and conversion to Catholicism between 1598 and 1770. This figure represents a mere fraction of the total number of cases, partly due to the scattered nature of the documentation and the challenge of locating these documents without complete archive indices. About a quarter of these conversions involved ‘renegades’ who returned to Christianity after they had adopted Islam owing to enslavement in a Muslim country. Except for a few dozen Jews, the majority of those who appeared before the inquisitorial authorities were foreigners. Their motivations were typically not driven by religious crises but rather by a desire to become Italian. Interestingly, in the case of northern Protestants, it was not members of established merchant communities, like the British Factory or the Dutch-German Nation, who embraced conversion while maintaining their distinctiveness. Instead, it was individuals from the lower social classes – sailors, soldiers, artisans – who sought assimilation as a means to fully integrate into the host society.³³

Livorno, like many other parts of Europe, experimented various practices of toleration, enabling the coexistence of individuals from different faiths. However, it would be erroneous to attribute an ideological significance to the grand dukes of Tuscany’s choice, as it lacked such a connotation. Prior to the Enlightenment, ‘tolerance’ had not yet acquired an inherent positive value; instead, it was regarded as an unfortunate or even ignoble necessity. This concept was starkly exemplified in 1649 by the Duke of Savoy, who explicitly likened his tolerance towards his Waldensian subjects to his tolerance of prostitutes, stating that ‘tolerance is like games and whores’ (‘le toleranze sono come de’ giochi e putane’).³⁴ Similarly, it is no coincidence that when speaking of Livorno in 1657, French traveller La Boullaye Le Gouz noted precisely that there both prostitutes and Jews enjoyed the utmost freedom (‘les Juifs & les femmes publiques y ont toute liberté’).³⁵

³³ Stefano Villani, *Dalla Gran Bretagna all’Italia: Narrazioni di conversione nel Sant’Uffizio di Pisa e Livorno*, in Addobbati and Aglietti, *La città delle Nazioni*, 109–26.

³⁴ Stefano Villani, ‘To Be a Foreigner in Early Modern Italy. Were There Ghettos for Non-Catholic Christians?’, in *Global Reformations: Transforming Early Modern Religions, Societies, and Cultures*, ed. Nicholas Terpstra (Abington: Routledge, 2019), 115–33.

³⁵ François de La Boullaye Le Gouz, *Les voyages et observations* (Paris: Cloussier, 1653), 6–7.

While it is likely that a substantial intellectual exchange between Livorno's cosmopolitan elites and Tuscan intellectuals did not take place until the late eighteenth century, foreigners and Livornese residents had nevertheless been interacting since the city's foundation.³⁶ These interactions constituted contact zones that, in some manner, influenced the urban landscape. Yet there is still a lack of specific research on this topic.

5. Contact zones

A fascinating painting of the 1620s, attributed to Pietro Ciafferi, now at the State Archive in Pisa, depicts an extraordinary scene of the harbour and the bustling crowds around the Four Moors statue (Fig. 2.1).³⁷ The remarkable accuracy of this painting finds confirmation in a detailed description of Livorno provided by English diarist John Evelyn, who visited the city in October 1644. His written account seems to serve as a direct caption for the representation attributed to Ciafferi:

Here is in Ligorne, & especially this Piazza [sic], such a concourse of Slaves, consisting of Turkes, Mores and other Nations, as the number & confusion is prodigious; some buying, others selling; some drinking, others playing, some working, others sleeping, fighting, singing, weeping & a thousand other postures & Passions; yet all of them naked, & miserably Chayn'd with a Canvas onely to hide their shame: Here was now a Tent erected, where any idle fellow, weary of that trifle, might stake his liberty against a few Crownes; which if lost (at Dice or other hazard) he was immediately chayned, & lead away to the Gallys, where he was to serve a tearme of Yeares, but whence they seldom returnd; and many sottish persons would in a drunken bravado trye their fortune.

Reading this passage and looking at the painting, one can imagine the sounds and smells that a visitor to Livorno in the seventeenth century would have encountered.

First and foremost, as mentioned in Evelyn's diary, there were the slaves. Their heads and beards shaved every week, they were provided

³⁶ Francesca Bregoli, *Mediterranean Enlightenment: Livornese Jews, Tuscan Culture, and Eighteenth-Century Reform* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014).

³⁷ Franco Paliaga, *Livorno nel Seicento: il porto, le navi, il mare. I disegni degli artisti toscani e i dipinti di Pietro Ciafferi* (Pisa: Felici Editore, 2006).

by their owners with a pair of linen breeches, a little red jacket, a red waistband and a red cap. William Davies, an Englishman who had been a slave in Livorno since 1598, recalled that they often went half-naked, wearing only trousers. They were frequently allowed to rent shacks by the harbour where they sold fried foods and meats.³⁸ Philip Skippon, an Englishman passing through Livorno in 1664, remembered the sight of numerous slaves walking the streets of Livorno with irons on their feet. They were often employed as porters, and the city echoed with their calls to sell water from Pisa, which could also be purchased from pharmacists for two *crazie* each. Additionally, they sold cheese in two markets within the city, one of which was located near the galleys.³⁹ The harbour teemed with foreign and Tuscan merchants, port officials and labourers. It was there, for instance, on 14 March 1653, that Dutch, English and Livornese stood shoulder to shoulder in amazement to witness a battle of the Anglo-Dutch fleets.⁴⁰

Another significant gathering place for merchants of diverse nationalities and faiths was undoubtedly the Piazza Grande – the duomo square – a location that in the 1720s German painter Georg Christoph Martini aptly compared to a stock exchange. The city's commercial character evidently left a strong impression on all early modern foreign observers. It is no coincidence that, half a century before Martini's observations, Richard Lassels noted in his 1670 travel guide for English travellers in Italy that the only Latin commonly spoken in Livorno consisted of just two words: 'Meum and Tuum'. He went on to emphasise that the primary pursuit was to strike 'good Bargains, not good Books', and the only 'fine letters' of interest there were the 'letters of exchange'.⁴¹

Balthazar Grangier de Liverdis, who visited Livorno in 1660, observed the presence of French and Spanish individuals walking alongside Armenians in their turbans and colourful attire ('avec leurs turbans

³⁸ Santus, *Il 'Turco' a Livorno*, 44–5; Algerina Neri, *Uno schiavo inglese nella Livorno dei Medici* (Pisa: ETS, 2000).

³⁹ Philip Skippon, 'An Account of a Journey made thro' Part of the Low Countries, Germany, Italy and France', in *A Collection of Voyages and Travels, Some Now First Printed From Original Manuscripts, Others Now First Published in English*, ed. Awnsham Churchill (London, 1732), 6:359–597 (464).

⁴⁰ Frattarelli Fischer, *L'Arcano del mare*, 126.

⁴¹ Georg Christoph Martini, *Viaggio in Toscana (1725–1745)*, ed. Oscar Trumpy (Modena: Deputazione di storia patria per le antiche provincie modenesi, 1969), 59; Richard Lassels, *The Voyage of Italy* (Paris: [V. dv Movtier], 1670), 234.

et leurs grandes robes de diverses couleurs’).⁴² In 1672, French Catholic Albert Jouvin described how Jews, Greeks, Turks, Armenians and Christians all walked together in this square, which was the true heart of Livorno. From there, one could view all of the city’s wide and beautiful streets.⁴³

As Charles de Brosses remarked in 1739, Livorno’s streets resembled a carnival of masks, and the multitude of languages spoken there was reminiscent of the Tower of Babel (‘les rues semblaient une véritable foire de masques et le langage rappelait celui de la tour de Babel’).⁴⁴

Other venues of social interaction for foreigners included the numerous taverns and inns, which often hosted prostitutes, who formed a substantial presence in the city. A population report from 1690 underscored the presence of 214 prostitutes among Livorno’s 21,194 residents. They were predominantly concentrated on a street in the Sant’Antonio district, formerly known as the ‘king’s tavern’. The necessity to impose exorbitant fines on Jewish women engaging in prostitution with Christian men vividly illustrates the prevalence of this practice.⁴⁵

The English, on the other hand, established beer shops. Records from as early as 1654 indicate that an Englishman had made efforts to obtain a beer concession. By 1707, another beer shop was operated by an Englishman who, in a common path for non-elite foreigners choosing to reside in Italy, had ‘renounced his faith and married a prostitute’.⁴⁶ Soon, coffee houses emerged alongside the taverns, with the first one established by an Armenian. Coffee and tobacco consumption, for which the Livornese Jews held concessions for an extended period, began in the mid-seventeenth century. Within a few years, chocolate and tea also found their way to Livorno. Additionally, Jews were involved

⁴² Balthazar Grangier de Liverdis, *Journal d’un voyage de France et d’Italie* (Paris: Vaugon), 186

⁴³ Albert Jouvin de Rochefort, *Le voyageur d’Europe, 2/2, Le voyage de France et le voyage d’Italie et de Malthe* (Paris: Thierry, 1672), 371.

⁴⁴ Charles de Brosses, *Lettres familières écrites d’Italie en 1739 et 1740* (Brussels: Editions Complexe, 1995), 125.

⁴⁵ Francesco Pera, *Curiosità livornesi inedite o rare* (Livorno: R. Giusti, 1888), 140. See Carlo Mangio, ‘Mantenute, malmaritate, prostitute, apostate: l’occhio vigile della Reggenza lorenese sulle donne di Livorno’, in *Sul filo della scrittura. Fonti e temi per la storia delle donne a Livorno*, ed. Lucia Frattarelli Fischer and Olimpia Vaccari (Pisa: Plus, 2005), 217–37; Frattarelli Fischer, *Vivere fuori dal ghetto*, 240–306.

⁴⁶ ASFi, *Mediceo del Principato*, b. 2175, cc. n.n., 8 April 1654; *Ibid.*, b. 2228, cc. n.n., 7 October 1707.

in importing and refining sugar and managed shops specialising in candied fruits and jams.⁴⁷

While Livorno's streets, squares and taverns served as places where foreigners willingly gathered, there were also places where they were compelled to reside, such as the Bagno, the lazarettos or the Hospital of Sant'Antonio (a location that witnessed many conversions of unwitting dying patients). Additionally, there were locations outside the city, like the vineyard of French merchant Origen Marchant in the mid-seventeenth century. Marchant was a Catholic of Huguenot origins. During Lent, foreigners, both Protestants and nominal Catholics gathered in his vineyard to eat meat, hoping not to be seen and reported by some malicious neighbour.⁴⁸

Livorno, no doubt like all port cities, proved a challenge to keep clean, as reflected in the somehow implausibly severe penalties – including torture and imprisonment – for anyone caught littering the streets with garbage, water or urine. It was undeniably a city teeming with sounds and noise; as Richard Lassels described it, there was a 'horrible noise of chains, carts, shouting seamen, and noisy porters'.⁴⁹ Additionally, in 1664 Skippon observed the sentinels positioned along the walls, each with a guard post and a bell that chimed every hour during the guard changes.⁵⁰

There were, of course, the sounds of other bells that characterised what one could define as Livorno's soundscape. At dusk, much like in all Italian cities, the Ave Maria bell summoned the faithful to make the sign of the cross and offer a prayer to the Madonna before retiring home. In a 1703 Inquisition trial to verify the sincerity of the conversion of an English couple who had embraced Catholicism a few years earlier, witnesses were questioned about whether they had observed the couple engaging in this act of faith. At least a couple of witnesses affirmed that 'when the same hour struck', both individuals 'signed themselves and recited the Ave Maria, just like the other Catholics'. This couple, who owned a shop and an inn, were reported by neigh-

⁴⁷ Maria Lia Papi, 'Le botteghe del caffè', in Panessa and Sanacore, *Gli armeni a Livorno*, 118–20; Frattarelli Fischer, *L'Arcano del mare*, 126–7.

⁴⁸ Stefano Villani, 'Unintentional Dissent: Eating Meat and Religious Identity among British in Early Modern Livorno', in *The Roman Inquisition: Centre versus Peripheries*, ed. Katherine Aron-Beller and Christopher Black (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 373–94. On the Lazzerettos, see Paolo Castignoli, 'I lazzeretti di S. Jacopo e S. Leopoldo', in *Studi di storia. Livorno*, 173–95.

⁴⁹ Lassels, *Voyage of Italy*, 234.

⁵⁰ Skippon, *Account of a Journey*.

bours for consuming meat on Good Friday. They were subsequently imprisoned. Before their release, numerous individuals were interrogated, the trial records clearly confirming that Livorno was a society where it was relatively easy for Protestants to socialise with Catholics. For example, many English sailors from ships that had docked in Livorno regularly attended dinners hosted by these two converts, in the company of local Livornese residents. Nevertheless, the probing question about the sign of the cross reveals the delicate foundation upon which Livorno's toleration practices rested. Even the tolling of a bell served as a reminder of the boundaries of religious identities that the institutions were keen on keeping apart.⁵¹

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Abstract

This chapter describes the development of Livorno in early modern times and how the presence of various 'Nations' made this city a distinctive and particularly dynamic place in the Mediterranean. The opportunities for peaceful coexistence established by the 'Privileges for Eastern and Western Merchants of 1591 and 1593', known as the 'Livornina', guaranteed a certain degree of 'tolerance' and supported the growth of trade and the city's immigrant population from both neighbouring regions and distant countries. The discussion of the zones where foreigners and Livornese came into contact provides insight into the sounds, colours, odours and atmosphere of this diverse city. The presence of the Bagno degli Schiavi and the statue of Grand Duke Ferdinando I with the four enchained Moors, the symbol of the city since the seventeenth century, also reminds us that Livorno was, for decades, considered a kind of 'Algiers of Christianity'.

Keywords: Leghorn, Inquisition, foreign communities, Mediterranean slavery, Livornina, contact zones

⁵¹ ASDP, *Inquisizione*, 30, cc. 731r–872v. See Cristiano Cappellini, 'Identità religiosa e alimentazione nella Livorno dei primi del settecento. Il caso dei coniugi Katters' (degree thesis, University of Pisa, 2011–2012); see also Stefano Villani, 'Donne inglesi a Livorno nella prima età moderna', in Frattarelli Fischer and Vaccari, *Sul filo della scrittura*, 377–99.

NAPLES – THE SINGING CITY

[A Napoli] ogni fanciul pria che l'avvolgi in fasce | quasi cantando nasce.

In Naples every child before being wrapped in swaddling clothes | almost singing is born. (Giovanni Battista Del Tufo, *Ritratto*, 1588)

[In Naples] the country-people so jovial and addicted to musick, that the very husbandmen almost universally play on the guitar, singing and composing songs in prayse of their sweete-hearts, and wil commonly goe to the field with their fiddle; they are merry, witty, and genial, all which I much attribute to the excellent quality of the ayre.

(John Evelyn, *Diary*, Naples 1644)

1. A thousand colours

Naples more than any other city in the world can be described by its songs. All Neapolitans feel entitled to sing because they are descendants of the Siren and singer Parthenope, the mythical founder of the city.¹ Their songs do not describe its appearance, which has changed over the centuries, but the regret for a past that is always better than the present. The most popular song in Naples today is not *O sole mio*, but *Napule è* (Naples Is) by Pino Daniele:²

¹ On this myth, see Dinko Fabris, *Partenope da Sirena a Regina. Il mito musicale di Napoli* (Barletta: Cafagna, 2016).

² Published in the first LP by Pino Daniele *Terra mia* (EMI Italy, 3C064-18277, 1977). It is curious to note that *O sole mio*, the best-known Neapolitan song in the world, was written by the composer Eduardo Di Capua during his stay in Odessa (on the Black Sea) in 1898. When later presented at the Piedigrotta competition in Naples, it only achieved a mediocre result.

Napule è mille culure | Napule è mille paure | Napule è a voce de' criature |
 Che saglie chianu chianu | E tu sai ca' nun si sulo ...

Naples is a thousand colours, | Naples is a thousand fears, | Naples is the
 voices of the children | rising slowly | and you know you're not alone ...

But what are the 'thousand colours' of Naples mentioned in this text? At the end of May 2023, like an enormous chameleon, Naples became of one colour, sky blue: its football team had won the Italian championship for the third time in its history, the previous two being during the time of Diego Armando Maradona, the city's greatest modern myth. The image of this Argentinian football hero is everywhere in the city, elevated to the same rank of protector that St Gennaro had held for centuries. The tourists, who came to Naples by the thousands, from all over the world, were all dressed in blue too, to ritually share the happiness of the inhabitants like in some ancestral fertility rite. But blue, per se, has never been a dominant colour in the long history of the city of Naples. It is true that blue and gold were the colours adopted by the monarchy established in Naples in 1734 by Charles of Bourbon, which lasted until 1861. These colours also painted the original interior of the Teatro di San Carlo, the largest and most beautiful in Europe at the time, which opened in 1737. But this choice of palette reflected complex dynastic alchemies in which the white and blue of the Bourbons of France converged. Throughout the previous era, the dominant colours of the city had been yellow and gold, which still fly on the flag of the municipality of Naples.³ Red and gold have always been the colours of the Spanish monarchy and therefore they were adopted in Naples during the two centuries of Spanish domination (1503–1707). It is curious to note that these same colours had already been used by the monarchy of Aragon in Naples (1442–1501) and even before by the Anjou dynasty of the French kings of Naples (1282–1442), who chose them because they were the official colours of the church, which the Anjou claimed to defend. So for many centuries in the city of Naples the same colours marked both political and religious power, extending into an even wider collection of symbols: the glittering gold of the sun and of glory, the red of blood and fire in a city clasped between the Vesuvius volcano and the Phlegraean Fields, where a cult of ampoules

³ 'The Arms of our City of Naples ... have the upper part of the field in gold, and the lower part in red': Filiberto Campanile, *Dell'Armi overo insegne dei nobili* (Naples: Antonio Gramignani, 1680), 11.

containing the liquefied blood of saints still persists, giving it the name of ‘Urbs sanguinum’.⁴ These emblems of red and gold are still flaunted in the hundreds of churches in Naples and throughout the former kingdom of the South; in addition, archaeological excavations have revealed that these same colours, ‘Pompeian’ red and yellow ochre, were omnipresent in the ancient Roman houses of the Neapolitan coast before the eruption of Vesuvius in the year AD 79.

On the other hand, today Naples is a grey city, dominated by the colour of the lava that has been used for millennia to pave the streets.⁵ The first impression of a present-day visitor wandering through the old alleys of Naples will not be unlike that of the many travellers of past centuries: after having seen the harmonious Renaissance beauty of the many northern Italian cities of art and the composed elegance of papal Rome, the southern metropolis looks like an urban hodgepodge of overlapping styles, where fragments of spellbinding beauty overlap with apparent devastation and neglect. This was already the case in the seventeenth century and we can imagine the disappointment of the Grand Tour travellers, drawn to the capital of southern Italy by tales of the natural beauty of the most enchanting gulf in the Mediterranean and by the memories of ancient times scattered throughout the area. To the French traveller Jean-Jacques Bouchard who spent eight months there in 1632, the city appeared ‘obscure, morne et melancholique’.⁶ This was the effect of the rapid and massive urbanisation at the beginning of the seventeenth century which led the population of Naples to double to 400,000 inhabitants, making it the most populous capital of the time after Constantinople. To accommodate so many people in such a narrow area between the mountains and the sea, Naples had to resort to raising the existing buildings upwards, inventing the first skyscrapers of the modern age. All the spaces previously occupied by gardens and vegetation, which had painted Renaissance Naples with another colour, green, were sacrificed. The observer of the famous *Tavola Strozzi*, which depicts the city of Naples at the end of the fifteenth

⁴ Marino Niola, *Il corpo mirabile. Miracolo, sangue, estasi nella Napoli barocca* (Rome: Meltemi, 1997), 82, quoting Jean-Jacques Bouchard, *Journal*. Vol. 2. *Voyage dans le Royaume de Naples*, ed. Emanuele Kanceff (Turin: Giappichelli, 1977): ‘à Naples, qui pour cela s’appelle urbs sanguinum’.

⁵ Giovanni Maria Galanti, *Breve descrizione della città di Napoli e del suo contorno* (Naples: Gabinetto Letterario, 1792), 317: ‘The cooled lava is mostly of a dark ashen colour, spotted with red, blue, green and grey; when smoothed, it acquires a shine’, own translation.

⁶ Bouchard, *Journal*, 241–2.

century is taken aback to note that green is the dominant colour, both in the sea and in the sky, due to the mirror effect created by the rich vegetation that covers the most of the urban space. As in all the Mediterranean ports, the houses, on the other hand, are mostly white and pink, as is still the case on the islands of the Gulf of Naples. Dozens of enchanted gardens slope down from the hill towards the sea, and as many harmonious fountains add the colour blue with the refreshing sound of their waters.⁷ Tellingly, Renaissance Naples was labelled as ‘gentile’, or graceful.⁸

Now we have demonstrated that it is not possible to attribute a single dominant colour to Naples, we can better understand the meaning of *Napule è*, the song by Pino Daniele, which has become a true anthem of the city. The ‘thousand colours’ of Naples are actually a collective and ritual lament for the contradictory city that the singer at once loves and rejects as well as, we might add, for its extraordinary but forgotten past. Pino Daniele (1955–2015), who presented his song for the first time in 1977, was the last and most famous exponent of the group of artists defined as ‘Naples Power’ which played a significant role in the changes taking place in Italian popular music between 1970 and 1980, also as a reflection of the 1968 student revolutions. Many of the musicians who joined the ‘Naples Power’ movement opposed the saccharine image painted by the Neapolitan songs that had been handed down since the early nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century.⁹ The lyrics of the so-called ‘classic’ Neapolitan song repertoire had depicted many colours of Naples, as is immediately evident in the titles: *Luna rossa*, *Marechiaro*, *La grotta azzurra*, *Mandulinata blu* (Red Moon, Clear Sea, The Blue Grotto, Blue Mandolin Piece). On the contrary, ‘Naples Power’ picked out black as its colour of reference. In fact, one of the characteristics of this artistic movement,

⁷ The most important fountain designer in Naples was Giovanni Antonio Nigrone ‘oriundus neapolitanus’. He left a collection of over 300 drawings and projects, made between 1585 and 1609, of garden fountains and hydraulic machines, including sophisticated mechanical systems and automatons that anticipated the famous fountains in the Baroque villas of Roman cardinals (Giovanni Antonio Nigrone, *Vari disegni*, MS XII. G 59–60, Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale).

⁸ Michele Rak, *Napoli gentile. La letteratura in ‘lingua napoletana’ nella cultura barocca (1596–1632)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994).

⁹ Goffredo Plastino, ‘Naples Power. Neapolitan Sounds of the 1970s’, in *Made in Italy. Studies in Popular Music*, ed. Franco Fabbri and Goffredo Plastino (New York: Routledge, 2014), 56–7.

which included musical ensembles of different genres, from rock and jazz to folk revival, was the recreation of African-American musical models, starting from the blues, contaminated by the Neapolitan language and sounds typical of the Arab side of the Mediterranean. Daniele also composed a song called *Nero a metà* (Half Black) in which he expresses the aspirations of the whole generation of ‘Naples Power’ for a kind of ‘Neapolitan blackness’.¹⁰

In fact, ‘blackness’ was not a new phenomenon in Neapolitan music, since a sung dance called the *moresca* had already gained popularity there five centuries before. The first and most important musical sources of the *moresca* (dating from around 1555) were not printed in Naples, but in Rome, Venice and Paris. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the sung *moresca* was a Neapolitan tradition. Gianfranco Salvatore, who has systematically studied this repertoire, considers *moresche* ‘indirect documents of the history of the African diaspora in the West, in a period preceding the diaspora in the Americas’.¹¹ He also observed that the story told in the different *canzoni moresche* can be interpreted as a single narrative cycle, which can be summed up as follows: in an undefined location in the city of Naples, three African friends, the street musicians Giorgio, Martino and Cristoforo, are courting three black slave girls Lucia, Catalina and Patalena, making extensive use of explicit sexual references, with terms coming from their original Afri-

¹⁰ In the third LP by Pino Daniele (EMI Italy, 1980), dedicated to the singer Mario Musella, born to a Neapolitan mother and to a Native American father, who died in October 1979. See Plastino, ‘Naples Power’, 65–8 (‘Half Black’). Even a Neapolitan folk group such as the Nuova Compagnia di Canto Popolare did not fail to pay tribute to the colour black: think of their version of *Tammurriata Nera* (1974), a very popular song composed in 1944 by E. A. Mario.

¹¹ Six out of the nine pieces published in the *Secondo libro delle Muse a tre voci. Canzoni moresche di diversi autori* (Rome: Antonio Barré, 1555) were reprinted by the Venetian printer Gardane starting in 1560, and enjoyed great success. The most important *moresche* of the time were the ones published by the composer Roland De Lassus in his *Libro de Villanelle, Moresche et altre Canzoni* (Paris: Adrian Le Roy-Robert Ballard, 1581), which contained six. Only one ‘canzone moresca’ was printed in Naples: *A la lappia camocan*, in the *Secondo libro de canzoni a tre et quattro voci. Regolate & osservate con una moresca* by Grammatio Metallo (Naples: Cancer, 1577). See Gianfranco Salvatore, ‘Ritratti sonori. Musica, lingua, vita e socialità afro-europea dal teatro iberico alle canzoni moresche’, in *Il chiaro e lo scuro. Gli africani nell’Europa del Rinascimento tra realtà e rappresentazione*, ed. Gianfranco Salvatore (Lecce: Argo, 2021), 159–305 (Appendix II, 457–60).

can language.¹² Names of other Moorish characters also appear in later versions, and the story was included in the repertoires of *commedia dell'arte*.

Black characters were often found singing and dancing in both comedies and the refined Neapolitan-language literary works of seventeenth-century writers, such as Giambattista Basile. The Moorish character of Lucia was also connected to a kind of early Baroque Italian cantata called *Luciata*, and to a popular dance common until the twentieth century in the Naples area, known as *Tubba catubba*, *Sfessania*, *Lucia canazza* or simply *Lucia*. The presence of many 'black Moorish' musicians and dancers in early modern Naples was related to the intense practice of slavery which had brought thousands of prisoners to southern Italy, most of whom were African Muslims.¹³ It is possible that, in addition to their native African language, some of them introduced the music and rhythms of their homeland, which they performed on the Neapolitan streets. The *canzoni moresche* and the *Luciata* scores can be considered a valuable tool to reconstruct (albeit in a parodic way) the daily life of the Moorish communities in Naples. The black musicians also counted the slaves of the galleys anchored in the port of Naples, who were made to play wind instruments.¹⁴ Bouchard had described the same practice in 1632, which he observed outside some Neapolitan churches: 'there is always a band of cornetti and shawms played by galley slaves, who perform whenever a cavalier or lady of quality enters or leaves'.¹⁵ Even female slaves were often musicians in Spanish Naples, as recorded in Basile's *Cunto de li cunti* and in other Neapolitan language

¹² Until recently, it was thought that the black characters acting in the *canzoni moresche* sang an invented language for comic effect. But Salvatore has proved that many of the words in these lyrics correspond to an actual African language, Kanuri: Salvatore, 'Ritratti sonori', 183–216.

¹³ A survey of the earlier baptismal registers preserved in the cathedral of Naples has demonstrated the presence, between 1583 and 1649, of at least 340 Africans baptised as Christians and called 'negri' or 'mori' (251 males and 89 females): Giuliana Boccadamo, 'A Napoli: "mori negri" fra Cinque e Seicento', in Salvatore, *Il chiaro e lo scuro*, 143–57 and Appendices I and II, 423–59.

¹⁴ Keith A. Larson, 'Condizione sociale dei musicisti e dei loro committenti nella Napoli del Cinque e Seicento', in *Musica e cultura a Napoli dal XV al XIX secolo*, ed. Lorenzo Bianconi and Renato Bossa (Florence: Olschki, 1983), 61–77 (67); Nathan K. Reeves, 'The Oar, the Trumpet, and the Drum: Music and Galley Servitude in Spanish Naples', in *Music, Place, and Identity in Italian Urban Soundscapes circa 1550–1860*, ed. Franco Piperno, Simone Caputo, and Emanuele Senici (London: Routledge, 2023).

¹⁵ Bouchard, *Journal*, 184.

literary products. A particular role is assigned to black slaves in the plots of Neapolitan commedie dell'arte and in the librettos of operas staged at court and in the public theatres of Naples. The very first operas performed in Naples since 1650, almost all by Francesco Cavalli, feature Moorish dances ('Ballo di mori africani' in *Didone*), as well as black princesses (Zelmina 'Moorish queen of Calpe' accompanied by her nurse Zaide in *Veremonda*) or slaves (Fatama 'Moorish slave of Elmera dressed as a gypsy' in *Ciro*), just to mention a few examples of black female roles. Meanwhile, Moorish male characters continued to appear in Neapolitan operas until the beginning of the nineteenth century. And it was on the stage of the commedia dell'arte that the first 'Half Black' appeared, some 370 years before 'Naples Power': Pulcinella, the most important character in the Neapolitan comedies, wore a white tunic with a black mask on his face.¹⁶ This mask can still be considered the representation of all the contradictions and ambiguities of the Neapolitan population today: chubby or thin, male or female, brave or cowardly, cunning or stupid, dominated by an insatiable hunger; the character speaks little, in a voice disguised by the *pivetta*, whose croaking sound recalls that Pulcinella was a chick hatched from an egg, while the character's gestures display a natural talent for music and dance.¹⁷ Pulcinella, like Pino Daniele, is an interpreter of the perpetual regret for the 'bello tempo passato' (wonderful times past) similarly to all the storytellers whose names are set down in the literary works of the Neapolitan Baroque: Velardiniello, Gianleonardo dell'Arpa, Giovanni della Carriola, Compà Junno, the 'Re de la Museca', Masto Ruggiero, Nardo, Sbruffapappa, Mase and many others who have become proverbial over the centuries, including an idealised female singer, called 'the Siren of Naples'.¹⁸

¹⁶ For the history and iconography of Pulcinella (first documented on stage in Naples in 1609), see the two volumes edited by Franco Carmelo Greco: *Pulcinella: una maschera tra gli specchi* (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1990) and *Pulcinella maschera del mondo. Pulcinella e le arti dal Cinquecento al Novecento* (Naples: Electa, 1990), exhibition catalogue. See also Teresa Megale, *Tra mare e terra. Commedia dell'arte nella Napoli spagnola (1575–1656)* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2017), 266–78.

¹⁷ Rak, *Napoli gentile*, 244–51.

¹⁸ On the Neapolitan literary sources mentioning these singers, see Rak, *Napoli gentile*, 76ff.; Dinko Fabris, 'Il compianto per il perduto splendore artistico musicale della corte aragonese in un manoscritto napoletano del primo Cinquecento', in *Trent'anni di ricerche musicologiche. Studi in onore di F. Alberto Gallo*, ed. Patrizia Dalla Vecchia and Donatella Restani (Rome: Torre d'Orfeo, 1996), 305–21.

2. *A thousand songs*

A line of continuity between the earliest songs in Neapolitan, the *vil-lanelle*, and the classic Neapolitan song was created in the 1820s, when the first Neapolitan songs were collected and published by Guglielmo Cottrau.¹⁹ Some of the printed songs were presented as centuries old, for example *Michelemmà*, dated to the seventeenth century, or *Jesce sole*, the song of the washerwomen who ritually invoke the sun, dated to the thirteenth century.²⁰ On the other hand, *La Canzone di Zeza*, published in the first volume of Cottrau's *Passatempi*, had been performed in theatres since the seventeenth century and later became a popular feature at carnival (*Zeza* or *Lucrezia* is the wife of *Pulcinella*).²¹

From a philological point of view, the first Neapolitan-style song for which the musical score has survived is *Hora may che fora son*, a *canzone napoletana* whose music is reported in manuscripts dated to before 1500, connected with the Aragonese court of Naples.²² *Io te canto in discanto*, another song of the same period (whose score is missing), was presented as a masquerade during the wedding party of the king of

¹⁹ Guglielmo [Guillaume-Louis] Cottrau. *Passatempi musicali. Raccolta completa delle canzoni napoletane* (Naples: Giraud, 1824–1829), sixty-eight songs, with further booklets published in the years 1843–1845 (repr. Naples: 1865 as a collection of 110 songs in total), it is considered the true start of the new Neapolitan song, intended to be performed in bourgeois salons. But the first intention of Cottrau was to record and arrange old popular songs still sung by Neapolitans, as clarified by the subtitle. Other collections arose with similar intentions, such as Francesco Florimo's *Scelta delle migliori ed originali canzoni popolari napoletane* and *Le Napolitane, scelta di canzoni popolari* (Naples: Giraud, 1845–1851). See Pasquale Scialò and Francesca Seller, eds, *Passatempi musicali. Guillaume Cottrau e la canzone napoletana di primo '800* (Naples: Guida, 2013).

²⁰ *Jesce sole* was also inserted in the neo-Baroque opera *La Gatta Cenerentola* by Roberto De Simone, whose premiere was staged at the Spoleto Festival in 1976 and then had a long European tour. The plot is taken from the fairy tale of the same title in Giambattista Basile's *Lo cunto de li cunti*. The show, written in Neapolitan, was able to represent a living musical fresco of Naples, linking the Baroque age to the present day. See Roberto De Simone, *La gatta Cenerentola. Favola in musica in tre atti* (Turin: Einaudi, 1977).

²¹ 'Antichissimo dialogo di Zeza che si canta in Napoli dal popolo colla maschera di Carnevale', in Cottrau, *Passatempi musicali*, part 2, no. 5 (1829).

²² A Siense chronicle from 1465 describes the picturesque use of this *barzelletta* during a dance party in which 'a Moresca of 12 richly decorated people came out, and they danced to a song, which says *Non vogl'esser più monica*': Allan Atlas, *Music at the Aragonese Court of Naples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 144ff. See also Elizabeth G. Elmi, *Singing Lyric in the Kingdom of Naples. Written Records of an Oral Practice* (Mainz: Schott, 2023), 86.

Naples, Ferdinand II of Aragon, in 1496. The two-voice piece was performed by a knight dressed as a peasant playing the *sordellina* (a small bagpipe widely used at the court of Naples) and another dressed *alla corteggiana* playing a noble lyre.²³ The taste for songs had established itself in Naples since the time of the French kingdom of Anjou. During the subsequent reign of the Aragon kings, some of the most important improvisers and *frottola* composers of the Italian Renaissance, such as Serafino Aquilano, stayed at the court of Naples, and the salaried musicians of the Neapolitan court, from all over Europe, even included a female singer, Anna Inglese.²⁴

Song continued to be performed in noble palaces even after the end of the Kingdom of Aragon, at the start of the long period of Spanish domination that followed, when Naples lost its status as capital for over two centuries.²⁵ Yet, the Neapolitan language was not used in songs, nor does the only book of *frottole* printed in Naples by Giovanni de Caneto in 1519 (*Fioretti di frottole*) contain songs in Neapolitan. Gradually in the following years, with the stiffening of the government of Spanish viceroys worried about possible revolts in Naples, a sense of mourning spread for the loss of Naples' rank as capital. The viceroys had forbidden the Neapolitan nobles from using arms and riding horses, while they were free to make music. Hence, the young aristocrats began to intensively practise singing and composition, and play musical instruments. The most important Neapolitan noblemen gathered around Ferrante Sanseverino, prince of Salerno, whose palace in the heart of Naples was always open to comedies and musical performances in the 1530s. During Emperor Charles V's stay in Naples (1535–1536), Sanseverino invited the sovereign to listen to a new genre of songs performed by the virtuoso noble musicians of his court: this was the real birth of the 'villanelle alla napoletana', songs in Neapolitan that rapidly spread throughout Europe. The first known musical collection was printed in Naples by Giovanni de Colonia in 1537 with the title of *Canzoni villanesche alla napoletana*. It included fifteen

²³ Anonymous, MS XXVIII D 24, ca. 1553–1555, Naples, Società Napoletana di Storia Patria, quoted in Dinko Fabris, 'El nacimiento del mito musical de Nápoles en la época de Fernando el Católico', *Nassarre* 9, no. 2 (1993): 53–93 (90ff.).

²⁴ Atlas, *Music at the Aragonese Court of Naples*, Serafino: 82–3, 102, 131 and Edition no. 14; Anna Inglese: 105, 107; Elmi, *Singing Lyric in the Kingdom of Naples*, 3–5.

²⁵ See Alfonso Colella, 'Musica profana a Napoli agli inizi del Cinquecento: i villancicos della *Cuestión de amor* (1513)', *Recercare* 28, nos 1–2 (2016): 5–41, with updated bibliography.

anonymous compositions, probably the same ones presented by Prince Sanseverino to Charles V.²⁶ *Villanelle*, based on texts in Neapolitan and recurring stylistic elements (onomatopoeia, references to the animal world, the ironic reproduction of peasant expressions), soon met with great success, with hundreds of volumes published in the following decades in Rome, Venice and even beyond the Alps, while in Naples no new editions of *villanelle* were printed until 1577.²⁷ The main reason for this vacuum can be attributed to the Spanish viceroys' ruthless repression of the Neapolitan nobles, starting with Prince Sanseverino who had created a true alternative to the viceregal court in his palace. Even people from the lower classes could attend some performances free of charge and this created great sympathy for the prince, who was considered the real governor of the city. When an anti-Spanish revolt broke out in 1547, the viceroy Pedro de Toledo, afflicted by the success of the Sanseverino court, had the opportunity to take his revenge, and the prince was exiled together with his musicians. Sanseverino's assets were confiscated and the palace, with its famous ashlar architecture, was transformed into a church, the still existent Chiesa del Gesù.

The *villanella*, in its guise of innocent, cheerful, double-entendre musical entertainment, hid a revolutionary content, however. This was their use of the national language (Neapolitan is not a dialect), which made the repertoire shared by the different Neapolitan social classes all but incomprehensible to the Spaniards. They were real protest songs.²⁸ After the death in exile of Ferrante Sanseverino in 1568, songs in Neapoli-

²⁶ Donna G. Cardamone, 'The Debut of the Canzone Villanesca alla Napolitana', *Studi musicali* 4 (1975): 65–130 (with full transcription of the only surviving copy and reconstruction of the missing bass part).

²⁷ The only exception is the collection *Canzoni vilanesche napolitane*, printed in 1547 in Capua by Giovanni Sultzbach, but no copies have survived. Subsequent books of villanesque songs 'alla napolitana' were printed in Rome by the printer Dorico in 1537 and Venice by Scotto and Gardane in 1541–1546. At the same time, Neapolitan composers began to print their works outside the Kingdom of Naples, especially in Venice. See Donna G. Cardamone, *The Canzone Villanesca alla Napolitana and Related Forms, 1537–1570* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1981), 1:5–31; 2:Appendix A. The commercial success of the *villanelle* (and related forms) is outlined by the 12,750 titles reported in Mauro Giuliani, *Catalogo delle villanelle alla napolitana canzonette e forme affini stampate dal 1500 al 1700* (Trento: Nova Scuola Musicale, 1995).

²⁸ Donna G. Cardamone, 'The Prince of Salerno and the Dynamics of Oral Transmission in Songs of Political Exile', *Acta Musicologica* 67 (1995): 77–108, reconstructs the European spread of the *Lamento del Principe di Salerno* and *Risposta della Principessa al Principe*, printed first in the collection of *Villanelle d'Orlando di Lassus* (Rome: Dorico, 1555).

tan style finally reappeared in Naples, explicitly linked to the theatrical activities which had resumed in the city: in Rocco Rodio's *Aeri raccolti* (Naples: Giuseppe Cacchio dell'Aquila, 1577), we find theatre music by several composers including Scipione del Palla, the Neapolitan teacher of Giulio Caccini, who later went on to found the Florentine monody.²⁹ In the same years, the performance of *villanelle* on boats became part of the 'spassi di Posillipo', summer festivals involving groups of young nobles along the coast of Naples. The collection of novels *Il fuggiloto* by Tommaso Costo, published in Venice in 1600, describes the summer festivals of 1571 of a group of Neapolitan gentlemen and ladies hosted in a villa, 'la Sirena', at Posillipo, where musicians sang *villanelle* among the many gentlemen in a boat.³⁰ The same usage is reiterated in Giovan Battista Del Tufo's *Ritratto ... della nobilissima città di Napoli* (1588), in which he associates the singing boats with the hundreds of colours of Naples.³¹ Del Tufo also lists many titles of the fashionable *villanelle* of the time, adding the multiple social backgrounds of the singers, from commoners to aristocracy. For example, the young apprentices of tailors or craftsmen sang 'the most beautiful of songs: *Parzonarella mia parzonarella*'.³² An impressive list of about twenty *villanelle* follows. Neapolitan-language literature of the seventeenth century expands on the ideal catalogue of popular *villanelle* (about forty titles are referred to in Basile's *Lo cunto de li cunti*, 1634), but hardly any of the music is known to us. Once again, the songs are associated with regret for a past now lost:³³ 'Oh beautiful ancient times, | solid songs, | tearful words, | concerts for two solo voices | music fit for a sovereign! | now you cannot hear anything good'.

²⁹ Nino Pirrotta, *Li due Orfei da Poliziano a Monteverdi* (Turin: ERI-RAI, 1969), 248ff. In this pivotal book Pirrotta proposes that the monodic performances within the comedies staged in the Sanseverino palace in Naples anticipated the birth of Florentine opera, which only occurred at the end of the sixteenth century.

³⁰ *Le otto giornate del Fuggiloto di Tommaso Costo ove da otto Gentilhuomini e due Dame si ragiona* (Venice: Barezzi, 1602), 2:137, 139.

³¹ 'Then the others coming out | much at ease placed in their *feluca* | not a single boat, | with banners and tents posted and explained, | but a hundred sets of beautiful coloured frigates, | either playing or singing ...': Giovan Battista Del Tufo, *Ritratto o modello delle grandezze, delitie e meraviglie della nobilissima città di Napoli* (MS XXX. C. 96, Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale); ed. Calogero Tagliareni (Naples: Agar, 1959), own translation.

³² Del Tufo, *Ritratto*, MS fols 209v–210v.

³³ Giambattista Basile, *Le Muse Napolitane. Egloghe* (Naples: Montanaro, 1635), 9:114–33, own translation. See Rak, *Napoli gentile*, ch. 2: 'Le canzoni del bel tempo antico', 75–97.

To ennoble the Neapolitan *villanella*, a mythical inventor of the genre was created, the sixteenth-century popular singer Velardiniello, known for his *Storia de cent'anni arreto*, a poem in Neapolitan published in 1590, once again full of regret for the city's former splendour.³⁴ Throughout the seventeenth century, *villanelle* were inserted in staged comedies or operas. Still in 1722, *Li Zite 'n galera* by Leonardo Vinci, the first Neapolitan-language 'Commedia per musica' with a surviving full score, begins with the song *Vurria addeventare soricillo*, based on a literary structure shared by many ancient *villanelle*, including *Vurria addeventare pesce d'argento* (*La canzone del pescatore*) that popular tradition attributed to the mythical figure of Virgil.³⁵ In this way, the songs continued to ensure the link with the forever lamented mythical past of the city.

When the new Neapolitan song was born after 1824, intended for domestic and bourgeois consumption, popular singers and improvisers continued to transmit the spirit of the *villanella* on the streets of Naples. A gradual transition occurred from artisan songs to the chamber genre of high society, in a similar way to the evolution of the Renaissance *villanella* which instead went from aristocratic beginnings to popular diffusion among the lowest social classes.³⁶ The new songs, like the old *villanelle*, never describe specific places in Naples, but only 'sun, sea, sky, the embalmed air: silent witnesses that illuminate situations and feelings'.³⁷ As occurred in the seventeenth century with Velardiniello,

³⁴ *Opera di Belardiniello musico, nella quale si ragiona delle cose di Napoli, dal tempo di re Marocco fino al dì di oggi* (Venice: 1590). His name and his compositions are remembered in the great texts of Neapolitan Baroque literature by Basile, Corsete and Sgruttiento (Rak, *Napoli gentile*, 89ff.).

³⁵ Roberto De Simone, *Canti e tradizioni popolari in Campania* (Rome: Lato Side, 1979), 40. The folk singer Ferdinando Zaccariello, interviewed by De Simone, referred to the popular attribution to 'Virgil the Magician' of the most ancient *villanelle*. During the Middle Ages, in Naples, the Roman poet Virgil was considered a magician who had worked as a thaumaturge to defend the city, where he was buried; see Domenico Comparetti, *Virgilio nel medioevo. Virgilio nella leggenda popolare*, 2 vols (Florence: Seeber, 1896).

³⁶ See Raffaele Di Mauro, 'Canzone napoletana e musica di tradizione orale: dalla canzone artigiana alla canzone urbana d'autore', *Musica/realità* 31 (2010): 133–51. The author analyses the various typologies of urban singers in different periods of the city's history until recent times, whom I have not been able to mention in this article: storytellers, improvisers, 'viggianesi' (itinerant harp and shawm players), 'posteggiatori' (performers in taverns and restaurants) and others.

³⁷ Maria Luisa Stazio, 'Back to the Future. Guillaume Cottrau viaggio temporale fra 'Divertimenti per pianoforte' e canzone napoletana, ovvero: la storia ricostruita dai suoi esiti', in Scialò and Seller, *Passatempi musicali*, 245, own translation.

the modern Neapolitan song found its new mythical hero, Enrico Caruso, who at the beginning of the twentieth century wanted to give dignity to the communities of Neapolitans who had emigrated to the United States, spreading Neapolitan song all over the world through his recordings.³⁸ Meanwhile, in a city where the different social classes were united by language and superstition, the encounter between the old and the modern song ‘alla Napolitana’ happened at the Festa di Piedigrotta, an event that took place next to the Tomb of Virgil: here Neapolitans had all participated in pagan rites with music and dance ever since Roman times.³⁹ The Festival della Canzone Napoletana in Piedigrotta was a meeting point for the entire community of Neapolitans until 1971.

3. *The soundscape of a crowded city*

Piedigrotta was just one of hundreds of both religious and civic festivals celebrated in early modern Naples. For the entire seventeenth century, historians have calculated a total number of 230 festive days per year, a figure that some Spanish viceroys tried to reduce in vain.⁴⁰ There were eight patron saints of the capital at the beginning of the seventeenth century, but this number later rose to twenty-four before 1750. In addition to the main official festivities of the Spanish court and the church, in Baroque Naples each patron saint’s day was celebrated with religious rites, processions and other forms of expression, all including music. Since most of the massive population lived in the open

³⁸ Simona Frasca, *Italian Birds of Passage. The Diaspora of Neapolitan Musicians in New York* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

³⁹ Roberto De Simone, *Nel segno di Virgilio* (Pozzuoli: Puteoli, 1982). Pasquale Scialò, quoting a 1930 text by Amato Caccavale on *La Madonna di Piedigrotta*, summarises as follows: ‘In a cave near the Tomb of Virgil, there was the Temple of Lampsaco, around which, at night ... naked dancers performed nefarious functions ... Through these branches the Neapolitan song must have descended, while the rite itself was transformed into the happy Piedigrottesque uproar of other times. Which proves that nothing in the world is as tenacious as these folk traditions’. Raffaele Viviani, *La Festa di Piedigrotta* (1919) in *Teatro*, preface by Pasquale Scialò (Naples: Guida, 1988), 3:211–389 (385), own translation.

⁴⁰ John A. Marino, ‘Becoming Neapolitan. Citizen Culture in Baroque Naples’ (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 69; Gabriel Guarino, ‘Public Rituals and Festivals’, in *A Companion to Early Modern Naples*, ed. Tommaso Astarita (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 257–79 (269). The reference book for Baroque festivals in Naples is Franco Mancini, *Feste ed apparati civili e religiosi in Napoli dal Vicereame alla Capitale* (Naples: ESI, 1968).

air, in the streets and squares, the effect of the almost daily festivals was a continuous noise everywhere. The standard guide of Baroque Naples, Capaccio's *Il Forastiero* (1634), recorded the incredible multitude of people everywhere, whose effect was to produce a persistent hum 'as if it were the buzzing of bees'.⁴¹ Special musical elements could be made out in this general noisy soundscape: the street vendors' voices, emitting the kind of melody that could be imagined in any cosmopolitan market on the Arab side of Mediterranean,⁴² or the sound of peels of bells ringing at the same time in just short of 500 churches and chapels. In addition, choruses formed by hundreds of young singers, students at the four conservatories of Naples, took part in the almost daily processions in the streets of the city, accompanied by groups of instrument players. These groups included the *castrati*, the most appreciated voices of the time, who were educated with particular care in preparation for an often highly successful career. The newspapers of the time outline how during the public festivals, the innumerable population was enchanted by the music performed by professionals (and of course by the food distributed for the occasion). Here are just two out of hundreds of examples:⁴³

12.6.1685. [Coronation feast of the English Nation] ... to the sound of trumpets and kettledrums and with firecrackers ... we enjoyed the sweetest music, composed by the best singers of this city. The crowd of people who went there to enjoy the music was unspeakable ...

24.9.1686. For three evenings bonfires were made in Piazza della Guglia [of St Gennaro] as there was an infinite crowd of people and nobility to enjoy no less the beauty of the lights than the melody of the music ...

⁴¹ Giulio Cesare Capaccio, *Il Forastiero* (Naples: Roncagliolo, 1634), 847.

⁴² See the project put together by the Vanvitelli University of Naples, in collaboration with the Istanbul Technical University, 'The Soundscape Reconstructions of the Early 20th Century Vendor Cries in Streets of Istanbul and Naples with Two 3D Sound Spatialization Approaches', paper presented at the *Inter-noise Congress*, Seoul, 23–26 August 2020. On the survival of street vendor cries in early-twentieth-century Naples, see Cesare Caravaglios, *Voci e gridi di venditori in Napoli* (Catania: Libreria Tinelli, 1931).

⁴³ All of the music quotations in Neapolitan newspapers up to 1768 are collected and commented in Ausilia Magauidda and Danilo Costantini, *Musica e spettacolo nel Regno di Napoli attraverso lo spoglio della "Gazzetta" (1675–1768)* (Rome: Isez, 2011).

The most popular summer festivals in Naples were the already mentioned ‘spassi di Posillipo’, which drew the entire population to the seashore, in three social groups: nobles, *popolo* (middle class) and *plebe*. Foreigners were astonished at the impressive crowd, which seems to have left Naples completely deserted. In this noisy location, nocturnal cantatas, called *serenate*, were performed outdoors in the evening, often on ephemeral theatres built on the water:

17.7.1696. It was a great delight to the eye all that sea covered with various boats filled with infinite people, as were all those [on the] shores, gathered there to delight the ear with the symphony of instruments and three very select voices, which sang this highly applauded serenade [composed by A. Scarlatti].

For these outdoor performances, given the background noise of the mass population, the Neapolitans invented voice amplifiers, machines that allowed singers to be heard from afar.⁴⁴

We have many elements to reconstruct the sound of Neapolitan festivals from 1600 to 1750: scores of religious music and secular songs and serenades, visitors’ accounts, newspaper descriptions and books printed for the occasion, but the iconography is almost non-existent. Among the few visual documents is the painting by Nicola Maria Rossi which depicts the procession of the *Four Altars* in 1732, at the time of Viceroy Harrach, with the instrumentalists and the renowned singers of the Royal Chapel in the foreground.⁴⁵

Even without images, we can perceive the impact of the singing city on the travellers of the time, who unanimously shared the opinion of Charles De Brosses that ‘Naples is the capital of the musical world’.⁴⁶

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⁴⁴ On 29 June 1674 in the Cicinelli noble villa at Mergellina, two female singers’ voices were amplified using a mechanical instrument ‘which carries the voice two miles away and more with the silence of the night’: Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 169.

⁴⁵ Rohrau, Graf Harrach’sche Familiensammlung.

⁴⁶ ‘Naples est la capitale du monde musicien’. Lettre XXXI, 24.11.1739, in Charles De Brosses, *Lettres d’Italie* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1986), 1:401.

Abstract

One of the most appropriate means to tell the ‘thousand colours’ of Naples is through its songs, because all Neapolitans are born to sing. A subtle coherence links the ‘classic’ Neapolitan song of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to the songs that have resounded in this cosmopolitan Mediterranean port since the medieval era of the Anjou and then of the Aragonese sovereigns. This text diachronically connects the history of the *villanella* (born as an anti-Spanish protest song in the aristocratic circles of the sixteenth century, later spreading through the commedia dell’arte and opera) and the *moresca* (a sung dance of African origin) to the birth of the new *canzone napoletana* starting from the collections of Cottrau (1824–1865), who transferred the popular songs of the Neapolitans to the living rooms of the city bourgeoisie. These songs continued to represent all the social strata of Naples, thanks also to moments of collective celebration such as the Piedigrotta Festival, and at the same time maintained their function of lamenting the city’s past, lost forever. Song constitutes but a small portion of the ‘noise’ typical of the most populous city of the Mediterranean after Constantinople, where festivities made up the majority of the days of the year, with hundreds of both civic and religious public festivals. Everywhere, on the shore or in front of churches, in the squares and on the streets, this massive population sang and danced, giving rise to the unique soundscape of early modern Naples, which made the city famous in Europe in the age of the Grand Tour.

Keywords: Neapolitan song, *villanella*, Renaissance and Baroque Naples, Naples Power

TUNIS – CITY OF OPEN DOORS

When the famous traveller Leon Africanus visited the city of Tunis in the early sixteenth century, he provided us with a detailed description of the prosperity and flourishing trade that the city and its bustling markets enjoyed, and the wide variety of goods and crafts that could be found.¹ However, what he did not know was that the city was experiencing its final years of peace and that within a few years this situation would be overturned, leading to a period of political turmoil, wars, successive crises and numerous political, social, economic and cultural transformations that would have a significant impact on the development of Tunis during the early modern period.

1. Tunis, a city in turmoil

Between 1534 and 1574, the city of Tunis had a series of rulers who held power at different times. These rulers were Hayreddin Barbarossa, Moulay Hasan and Moulay Ahmad. Additionally, figures like Charles V, Occhiali (also known as Uluj Ali), John of Austria and Sinan Pasha played significant roles in the region during this period, although they did not directly rule over Tunis.

During the sixteenth century, Tunisia experienced the impact of the Ottoman-Spanish conflict in the Mediterranean. The political and economic transformations occurring worldwide during this period led to a weakening of the Hafsid state. As their role as intermediaries diminished, the Hafsids were no longer able to provide the necessary

¹ Al-Hassan Ibn-Mohammed Al-Wezaz Al-Fasi (Leo Africanus), *The History and Description of Africa and of the Notable Things Therein Contained*, ed. Robert Brown, trans. John Pory (London: Hakluyt Society, 1600), 719–20.

financial resources to secure the loyalty of the tribes or maintain an army capable of resisting the advancing Ottoman invaders on multiple fronts, spanning from the Balkans to the Levant, Egypt, Tripoli and Algeria. Simultaneously, the Spanish fleets roamed all the way from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea.²

In the summer of 1534, Hayreddin Barbarossa successfully seized control of the city of Tunis, the capital of the Hafsid state. This forced Sultan Moulay Hasan to seek assistance from the Spanish emperor Charles V. In the summer of 1535, a massive campaign was launched, involving Spanish, Portuguese, German, Italian and other forces (Fig. 4.1). This campaign managed to drive out the Ottomans and restore Moulay Hasan as the sultan of Tunisia, effectively placing Tunisia under Spanish protection through the treaty of 6 August 1535. The second period of Sultan Moulay Hasan's rule was characterised by weakness. He failed to gain control over the inland regions and his effective influence remained limited to the city of Tunis and its surroundings. This situation led him to seek help from the Spanish once again, resulting in his son, Sultan Moulay Ahmed, rebelling against him in 1543.³ Despite the new ruler's attempts to rebuild the crumbling pillars of the state, his efforts were largely unsuccessful. The Ottoman ruler of Algeria, Uluj Ali, managed to enter the city of Tunis, the capital of the Hafsid state, in December 1569. However, this new Ottoman control over the city did not last long. In 1573, the Spanish fleet, under the command of John of Austria and by order of King Philip II of Spain, moved to aid the Hafsids once again. They defeated the Ottomans and gained almost direct control over the capital. Sources mention that the Spanish governor sat alongside the nominal Hafsid sultan in managing the affairs of the country. However, this Spanish presence was short-lived. The following year, in 1574, Sinan Pasha, the grand vizier of the Ottoman

² Robert Brunschvig, *La Berbérie orientale sous les Hafsides des origines à la fin du 15^e siècle* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1940); Sadok Boubaker, 'L'empereur Charles Quint et le sultan hafside Mawlay al-Hasan (1525–1550)', in *Empreintes espagnoles dans l'histoire tunisienne*, ed. Sadok Boubaker and Clara Ilham Álvarez Dopico (Gijón: Ediciones Trea, 2011), 13–82; Cristelle L. Baskins, *Hafsids and Habsburgs in the Early Modern Mediterranean Facing Tunis* (Cham: Springer, Palgrave Macmillan, 2022).

³ Houssem Eddine Chachia and Abdeljelil Temimi, 'Unpublished Hafsid Letters in the General Archive of Simancas (1535–1536)', [in Arabic] *Revue d'Histoire Maghrébine* 157 (2015): 423–55.

Empire, finally managed to eliminate the Hafsid state, bringing Tunisia under the control of the Ottoman Empire.⁴

Local Tunisian chronicles and European sources describe the state of destruction and devastation that befell the city of Tunis during this protracted and relentless conflict that lasted for approximately forty years. For instance, Tunisian chronicler Ibn Abi Dinar provides an account of the 1535 campaign, stating:

... The Christians attacked them [the inhabitants of Tunis], off guard, while the markets were open, and they took their goods, killed their owners, and captured many people ... and the ransom for a man was 1,000 dinars, more or less ... it was an immense disaster. It is said that in this event, one third of Tunis was captured, one third died, and one third escaped, the elderly of the city said: ‘Each third was Sixty thousand’ ...⁵

While there were limited details of the killing and looting in the Tunisian sources, there were many more in the Spanish-European texts. Very briefly, we can mention the testimonies of Luis del Mármol Carvajal, who says: ‘Meanwhile, the Spanish guards, along with the cavalry ... on the other side of the city on more than two leagues, killing, looting and taking whatever they came across, here and there huge piles of bodies could be seen of women and children who had suffocated or died of thirst’.⁶ On the same subject, Antoine Perrenin says: ‘... the Spanish infantry, and also some soldiers ... [were] looting all they found, looking for the wells and cisterns and wrecking the shops of the merchants and seizing everything they found there ... also, all the Moors took prisoners: men and women and children ...’.⁷ German soldier and eyewitness Niklaus Guldin a Vadian says: ‘... all the alleys and houses were full of dead people and there was great pestilence in

⁴ Mouayed Mnari, ‘The Ottoman Campaign in Tunisia in the Year 1574 in Turkish Historical Sources during the Modern Era’, [in Arabic] *Arab Historical Review for Ottoman Studies* 63–4 (2021): 241–70.

⁵ Abou ‘Abd Alah Ibn Abi Dinar, *Al Mu’nis fi Akhbar Ifriqiya wa Tunis* (Beirut: Dar Al-Massira, 1993), 186, all translations from non-English sources are my own.

⁶ Luis del Mármol Carvajal, *Libro Tercero y segundo volumen dela Primera parte de la descripcion general de Affrica* (Madrid: Casa de Rene Rabut, 1573), fol. 260r.

⁷ Antoine Perrenin, ‘Goleta de la ciudad de Tunez, 1535. Jornada de Túnez’, edited based on the manuscript found in the National Historical Archive, Military Orders, leg. 3509, no. 29, in *Túnez 1535: voces de una campaña europea*, ed. Rubén González Cuerva and Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Polifemo, 2017), 96–7.

the city, we did not want to camp more than eight days in the city, but we let the king [of Tunisia] with all his people enter the city and they cleaned it'.⁸

All these events had a significant impact on the composition of the population of the city of Tunis in the sixteenth century. On the one hand, there was a noticeable decline in the number of inhabitants. As previously noted, relying on various sources, it can be said that the city's population decreased from approximately 180,000 people to somewhere between 60,000 and 80,000 by the year 1574.

As for the effect of this chaotic situation on the composition of the people of Tunis, it is clear that it particularly affected the minorities. For instance, we have evidence that the local Jewish community, known as the *Tuanssa*, as well as the Sephardic Jews who arrived in the country after being expelled from Granada in 1492, were subjected to killings and looting in 1535 and the subsequent years – moreover, just like all the inhabitants of the city of Tunis. Regarding this matter, we can find relevant information in the book *The Vale of Tears* by Joseph ha-Kohen, which says:

When the Emperor Charles [V] marched against Tunisia, in the Barbary, he conquered it on July 21, 1535 [5295] and Tunisia lost its whole splendor. Many of the Jews who lived there in great numbers fled into the desert because of hunger, thirst, and want. The Arabs took everything away from them under great pressure. Many perished, and a part was slain by the sword when the Christians came into the city. The other part marched as prisoners before the enemy, and no one helped. Rabbi Abraham wrote from there [Tunis] the following description of the incidents which befell them: 'The earth swallowed some here, some fell victim to the sword; others perished due to hunger and thirst...'.⁹

Indeed, despite the negative impact of these events on the Jewish minority residing in the city of Tunis, as we will see shortly, by the end of the sixteenth century and throughout the seventeenth and

⁸ Niklaus Guldin a Vadian, '12 de enero 1536. Relato de la jornada del emperador Carlos V a Túnez', trans. Enrique Corredera Nilsson and Karin Czaja, in González Cuerva and De Bunes Ibarra, *Túnez 1535*, 131. Translation based on the edition in Emil Arbenz and Hermann Wartmann, eds, *Die Vadianische Briefsammlung der Stadtbibliothek St. Gallen. I. Hälfte 1531–1535*, vol. 5, (St. Gallen, 1903), 277–97.

⁹ Joseph Hacoheh and the Anonymous Corrector, *The Vale of Tears (Emek Habaca)*, trans. Harry S. May (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), 79.

eighteenth centuries this community was able to make up for its demographic losses. The same observation applies to the overall demographic composition of the population of Tunis.

2. *The Ottomans: the new masters of the city*

With the success of the Ottomans in establishing their political influence over Tunisia in 1574, the Ottoman Turks became active participants in the political, economic, and to a lesser extent, the cultural and religious life of the country. From the late sixteenth century onwards, the port of Tunis became one of the main destinations for Turkish soldiers, officers and adventurers.¹⁰

In this context, we can discuss the Turkish community settled in the capital city of Tunis. Primarily a military community, it is estimated that it counted around 4,000 soldiers in 1574, and it is likely that their numbers grew over time. This community differed in many respects from the local population. Culturally, its customs were Turkish-eastern, while the dominant culture among the inhabitants of Tunis was Maghrebi-Andalusian. In terms of religious practices, the majority of the Turks who settled in the city followed the Hanafi school, while the locals adhered to the Maliki school. In economic terms, the Turks were primarily involved in military activities, while the locals were mainly engaged in trade and crafts.

These differences, along with the difficult economic and political conditions that the country was experiencing at the end of the sixteenth century, created a state of conflict and a lack of harmony between the ruling Ottoman class and the local population. This is affirmed by numerous sources and even Ottoman documents with complaints from locals to the central sultanate in Istanbul regarding the encroachment upon their properties and finances by Turkish soldiers and officers in the city of Tunis.¹¹

The state of conflict, primarily the result of economic hardship, played a fundamental role in the transformation of governance within the ruling Turkish class. It shifted power from the Pashas and senior officers to a group of junior officers (deys) who carried out a coup in 1591, overthrowing their superiors and almost entirely eliminating

¹⁰ Abdelhamid Héniā, *Ottoman Tunisia: State-Building and Territory* [in Arabic] (Tunis: Tibr al-Zamān, 2016), 19–21.

¹¹ Fadhel Bayat, ed. and trans., *Osmanlı belgelerinde Arap vilayetleri / al-Bilād al-‘Arabīyah fī al-wathā‘iq al-‘Uthmānīyah* (Istanbul: IRCICA, 2022), 10:133–50.

them. This event had a significant impact on the country's political trajectory in modern times. While Tunisia remained politically subordinate to the Ottomans, it gained a degree of self-rule and, to some extent, increased autonomy. While the pasha appointed by the Sublime Porte (the central Ottoman government) remained the symbolic head of state, with his palace, known as Dar El Pasha, located in what is now known as Avenue de la Pasha in Tunis, the real power resided with the deys (1591–1647) and later the beys (1647–1957), whose governance was centred in the Kasbah, also in the city of Tunis.

This political shift at the helm of power paved the way for adventurers seeking a new life in Tunisia at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries. One such example is Uthman Dey, the first powerful Turkish ruler in the country. A cobbler, he migrated from Anatolia and arrived in the port of Tunis in the late sixteenth century. He gradually rose through the military ranks, eventually becoming a dey and governor of the country from around 1593 to 1610–1611.¹² Also, we have the example of Usta Murad, who initially came to the city of Tunis as a Christian captive but later converted to Islam and became a prominent Tunisian corsair. He eventually became the ruler of the country from 1637 to 1640–1641.¹³ Additionally, we can mention the founder of modern Tunisia's first ruling family dynasty, Murad Kourso, who was captured on the island of Corsica at the age of 9, and whose name before converting to Islam was Jacques Santi. He was a slave of Ramdhan Bey, the ruler of Algeria, and accompanied him to Tunisia in 1574. He remained in Tunisia and succeeded in amassing a great fortune and advancing in administrative positions until he eventually became the bey.¹⁴

3. *Tunis, a city of refugees*

Due to its political situation and the rule of a foreign class with diverse origins, the city of Tunis became home to a range of cultures in the early modern period. The city welcomed displaced groups that were expelled from the Iberian Peninsula, especially Sephardic Jews and Moriscos. These groups possessed a rich cultural heritage and unique traditions that enriched the cultural landscape in Tunis. We can see the

¹² Ibn Abi Dinar, *Al Mu'nis*, 226–8.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 232–4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 251–2.

impact of these groups on its language, literature, music, cuisine, customs and traditions. Tunis had become a hub for cultural exchange and interaction, creating a vibrant and diverse cultural mosaic.

Regarding the Sephardic Jews, known in Tunisia as ‘Portuguese’, ‘Livornese’, or ‘Grana’, their arrival in Tunis dates back to the period of their expulsion from Spain in March 1492 and from Portugal in December 1496. According to Spanish chronicler Andrés Bernáldez, many Sephardic Jews expelled from the Kingdom of Aragon chose Tunisia as their destination, boarding ship in Aragonese and Catalan ports.¹⁵ In a rare document from October 1495, Ruy López de Medina, a Jewish convert to Christianity, denied engaging in smuggling during his expulsion to Tunis.¹⁶

During the early sixteenth century, several notable Sephardic individuals left Spain for Tunis. One of them was Jacob ben Chajim Ibn Adonijah, also known as ‘the Tunisian’. In 1510, he left Tunis and travelled to Rome, Florence and eventually Venice, where he passed away around 1538.¹⁷ Similarly, in 1504, renowned astronomer and mathematician Abraham Zacuto completed his significant work, *Sefer Yohassin* (*The Book of Lineage*) in Tunis before ultimately choosing the centre of the Ottoman Empire as his final destination. He died in Damascus after 1510.¹⁸

While there may not be definitive evidence, it is believed that the majority of newly arrived Sephardic Jews settled in the city of Tunis, in close proximity to the established Jewish neighbourhood, locally known as Al-Hara. Thus, during the initial period of Sephardic settlement in Tunisia, it is difficult to identify a distinct and independent community. Indeed, the project to establish a separate Sephardic community does not appear to have been successful. Instead, the Sephardic Jews integrated into the existing Jewish community and assimilated into the broader social fabric of Tunisian society.

While many researchers agree that the presence of Livornese individuals in Tunisia dates to the late sixteenth and early seventeenth cen-

¹⁵ Andrés Bernáldez, *Historia de los reyes católicos D. Fernando y Doña Isabel* (Seville: J.M. Geofrin, 1870), 1:340.

¹⁶ General Archive of Simancas (AGS), Cancillería. Registro del Sello de Corte, Leg. 149510, 128.

¹⁷ Jacob Ben Chajim Ibn Adonijahs, *Introduction to the Rabbinic Bible* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1867), 1–35.

¹⁸ Eleazar Gutwirth, ‘The “Sefer Yuhasin” and Zacut’s Tunisian Phase’, in *Judaísmo hispano: Estudios en memoria de José Luis Lacave Riaño*, ed. Elena Romero (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2002), 2:765–77.

turies, the documented date of the first appearance of a Livornese at the French consulate in Tunisia, as noted by Taïeb, is 16 September 1609.¹⁹ Based on the archive documents, it can be concluded that individual and family arrivals in Tunis continued throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. This was driven by the economic prosperity of the state during that period and relative religious tolerance.²⁰ The emergence of a distinct Livornese, Grana or Portuguese community in Tunisia can be traced through the frequent commercial activities documented by the French consulate in Tunisia, as well as the increasing number of families settling in the city of Tunis.²¹ According to Lionel Levy, there were approximately seventy-four Livornese families in Tunis in the seventeenth century.²²

The official declaration of the definitive establishment of a Portuguese community in Tunisia occurred in 1710. The formation of the community was a response to the increasing number of Livornese families residing in Tunis. Some notable family names within the Portuguese community included Medina, Asuna, Valenci, Tapia, Costa, Castro, Carmona, Mendes and Mendez, among others.²³

The establishment of the Portuguese community in Tunisia can also be attributed to the influence of prominent individuals, including powerful Moriscos and Livornese who held significant positions and had access to the bey, Al-Husayn I ibn Ali (1705–1735). One notable figure is Gabriel de Mendoza, who served as the bey's personal doctor and played a crucial role in the official creation and privileged status of the community. He was likely the first leader of the community. Francisco Ximénez, a Spanish monk who resided in the country from 1720 to 1735, referred to Mendoza as the 'defender of the Portuguese Jews'.²⁴ Another influential individual was Mendoza's friend, Morisco *khazna-*

¹⁹ Jacques Taïeb, 'Les juifs livournais de 1600 à 1881', in *Histoire communautaire, histoire plurielle: la communauté juive de Tunisie* (Tunis, Centre de publication universitaire), 154.

²⁰ Ridha Ben Rejeb, *The Court Jews and the Jews of Money in Ottoman Tunisia* [in Arabic] (Beirut: Dar al-Madar al-Islami, 2010), 50.

²¹ Pierre Grandchamp, *La France en Tunisie au XVIIe siècle: 1681–1700* (Tunis: J. Aloccio, 1930), 9:57–9.

²² Lionel Levy, *La nation juive portugaise: Livourne, Amsterdam, Tunis* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001), 330–1.

²³ Paul Sebag, *Les noms des juifs de Tunisie: origines et significations* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2002).

²⁴ Francisco Ximénez, *Discurso de Túnez*, vol. 4, Madrid, Real Academia de la Historia, MS 9/6011, fol. 32.

dar (treasurer and prime minister) Mahmud Asrayyri. Asrayyri, being the most powerful man in the state of Al-Husayn I ibn Ali, probably persuaded the bey to approve the establishment of the Portuguese community.²⁵

The *tacaná* and *escamot* (Jewish laws or decrees) dated between October 1726 and March 1759²⁶ provide evidence that despite sharing the same Jewish religion and residing in the same neighbourhood in the city of Tunis, the relationship between the Grana and the Tuansa was often tense and conflict-ridden due to cultural and economic differences. On 25 September 1736, a *tacaná* was issued that prohibited members of the Portuguese community from purchasing clothes from both Muslims and local Jews. These restrictions were further specified in the 1741 *tacaná* of *Qasmet Dyyar Al-Ham*. This decree regulated the purchase of meat and outlined the taxes that each community had to pay. It also established guidelines for the integration of Jewish immigrants in Tunisia, wherein Jews coming from Christian countries were to be integrated into the Portuguese community, while Jews from the Maghreb or the East would join the Tuansa community.

While Ben Rejeb's perspective²⁷ on the economic causes of the conflict between the Portuguese and Tuansa communities is valid, it is also important to acknowledge the significance of social and cultural differences. The economic prosperity of the Portuguese community was indeed influenced by factors such as social consolidation and the solidarity of the Sephardic diaspora in the Mediterranean. This solidarity was founded on a shared history marked by expulsion from Iberia, a common Iberian origin, and the preservation of the Spanish and Portuguese language and culture. These cultural and historical connections played a crucial role in shaping the identity and success of the Portuguese community in Tunisia.

Certainly, the financial potential and extensive networks of the Grana community, both within and beyond Tunisia, played a significant role in their ability to navigate and overcome the challenges they faced in the second half of the eighteenth century. The Algerian inva-

²⁵ For more details about the role played by Mendoza and Asrayyri, see: Houssem Eddine Chachia, 'La diáspora Sefardí En Túnez: De Finales Del Siglo XV a Medios Del Siglo XVIII', *Sefarad* 80, no. 1 (2020): 156–8.

²⁶ Levy, *La nation juive portugaise*, 340–52.

²⁷ Ben Rejeb, *The Court Jews*, 66.

sion in 1756, mentioned by As-Saghir bin Yusuf,²⁸ was a particularly dangerous crisis for the community. However, the Grana's economic resources and connections likely enabled them to withstand these difficulties and maintain a relatively comfortable position in comparison to the local Tuansa Jews. Their financial stability and broader support networks may have provided them with greater resilience and resources to overcome adversities.

As a city whose doors were open to refugees, Tunis received the largest number of Moriscos expelled from Spain between 1609 and 1614. The numbers were estimated at between 80,000 and 100,000, amounting to almost one third of the total expelled.²⁹ The majority of the refugees headed towards the port of Tunis, thanks to the encouraging policies implemented by the authorities, particularly the governor Uthman Dey, who made a series of measures to attract them. These measures included exempting the ships carrying the refugees from port entry taxes, providing economic incentives such as a three-year tax exemption, and supplying them with agricultural seeds. Additionally, a separate judicial system was established for them.

The Moriscos' itineraries to Tunisia closely resembled those of the Sephardic Jews, with direct routes from Spanish ports to Tunis. For example, the Aragonese Moriscos departed from the port of Los Alfaques in August 1610 and headed to Tunis. However, there were also indirect routes, as Tunisia became the second destination for many of the expelled. Notable examples were the Castilian Moriscos and some Aragonese who first travelled to San Juan de Luz and then to the port of Agde before boarding ships bound for Tunis. Another significant group of individuals embarked from the port of Marseille to Tunis, either before or after the expulsion decrees. The majority of those who chose this route were Catalans, Murcians, Castilians, a considerable number of Aragonese, and even Valencians who were expelled after the rebellions in the Sierra de Laguar and La Muela de Cortes.

There were also a small number of exiles, estimated at several dozen, who travelled to Tunis from Maghrebi cities and Constantinople. For

²⁸ As-Saghir bin Yusuf, *Al-Mashra' Al-Malaki fi Saltanat Awled 'Ali Turki*, ed. Ahmed Touili (Tunis: Al-Maktba' Al-'Assria, 1998–2009), 4:85–6.

²⁹ Housseem Eddine Chachia, 'El auge y la decadencia de la comunidad morisca en Túnez (desde el siglo XVII hasta mediados del siglo XVIII)', *eHumanista* 53 (2022): 194–212; Luis F Bernabé Pons, 'La nación en lugar seguro: los moriscos hacia Túnez', in *Cartas de la Goleta*, ed. Raja Yassine Bahri (Tunisia: Embajada de España en Túnez, 2009), 307–32.

instance, there was a group led by Sharif Ahmed al-Hanafi al-Andalusi, consisting of people from Granada and Murcia (1604–1605). Additionally, some families of the Moriscos left their castle in Salé in Morocco for Tunis after a conflict with the Sufi Muhammad al-'Ayeshi. Examples include the Ibn 'Ashur family and the famous Ahmad ibn Qasim al-Hajari's family. More than a century after the expulsion (around 1727–1732), another group of Moriscos initially went to the centre of Ottoman power and then settled in Tunis.

Tunis was the primary destination for the expelled Moriscos, with most ships carrying them arriving from Spanish, French and Italian ports, as well as from cities like Tétouan and Algiers in the west and Constantinople in the east. Local and Morisco sources tell us that the streets, mosques, *zawiyyas* and corners of the city transformed into a large refugee camp.³⁰ The Ottoman political authorities, including the deys, starting with Uthman Dey (1593–1610/11) and later Yusuf Dey (1611–1637), collaborated with one of the prominent saints or Sufis/Walis of that time, Sidi Belghith Al-Qashash, to ensure the proper reception of the refugees. For example, one of the largest *zawiyyas* in Tunis, known as the Zawiya of Sidi Qasim Al-Jalizi, was converted into a shelter (Fig. 4.2). The Sufi Sidi Belghith provided daily food aid to the impoverished Moriscos, and it is believed that the political authorities also extended similar assistance.³¹

After the initial phase of reception in Tunis, the authorities implemented a clear policy for the Moriscos' settlement in the country. A number of them were directed to engage in agricultural activities and settle in fertile areas near Tunis, primarily in the regions of Cap Bon, the Majardah valley and the region of Bizerte. As for the city of Tu-

³⁰ Anónimo, *Tratado de los dos caminos por un morisco refugiado en Túnez*, ed. Galmés De Fuentes, Juan Carlos Amieva and Luce López-Baralt (Madrid: Instituto Universitario Seminario Menéndez Pidal, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2005), 203–6.

³¹ About the roles played by Uthman Dey and Sidi Belghith Al-Qashash in the Moriscos' settlement in Tunisia, see Mikel de Epalza, 'Sidi Bulgayz, protector de los moriscos exiliados en Túnez (s. XVII). Nuevos documentos traducidos y estudiados', *Sharq al-Andalus* 16–17 (1999–2002): 141–72; Oltaz Villanueva Zubizarreta, 'The Moriscos in Tunisia', in *The Expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain: a Mediterranean Diaspora*, ed. Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard Wiegers (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 357–88.

nis itself, they inhabited neighbourhoods such as the Andalusian street (Fig. 4.3), Bab Cartagena and Bab Suwayqa.³²

The Moriscos who settled in Tunis primarily engaged in trade and craftsmanship, sources and archival documents telling us of their involvement and expertise in textile weaving and other crafts. The Spanish monk Francisco Ximénez wrote about this topic, stating: ‘Among them were wool and silk weavers, potters, goldsmiths, and other artisans whose industries greatly influenced the city in a short period of time’.³³

One of the most significant craft activities practised by the Moriscos in general, and specifically by those in Tunis, was making traditional chechia headgear. It became the leading craft in Tunis by the early seventeenth century, expanding its activity with the establishment of numerous new souks. The chechia industry even began exporting its products to several Mediterranean cities in the East and the West, as well as to African countries.³⁴

This flourishing activity brought substantial financial resources to the Moriscos, allowing them to accumulate considerable wealth within a short period. It seems that this success encouraged them to venture into trade, a pursuit that would have been challenging without such significant capital.

With regard to foreign trade, it is worth noting the importance of the roles played by certain prominent Morisco individuals, both during the first half of the seventeenth century as revealed by archival documents from the French consulate, published by Mikel de Epalza,³⁵ and during the first half of the eighteenth century as mentioned in Francisco Ximénez’s diaries.

³² André Raymond, ‘L’installation des Andalous à Tunis au XVIIe siècle: Un second quartier dans Bâb Suwayqa?’ in *Biographies et récits de vie*, ed. Kmar Bendana et al. (Tunis: Institut de recherche sur le Maghreb contemporain, 2005): 151–5.

³³ Budinar, *Historia de Túnez, traducida del árabe al español por Mohamet el Tabager de Urrea, siendo su amanuense Fr. Francisco Ximénez*, Madrid, Real Academia de la Historia, 1727, MS 9/6015, fol. 255r.

³⁴ Muhamad Al-Annabi, ‘La chéchia tunisienne’, in *Recueil d’études sur les Moriscos Andalous en Tunisie*, ed. Ramón Petit and Mikel de Epalza (Madrid: Dirección general de relaciones culturales, 1973), 304–7; Abdel-Hakim Gafsi Slema, ‘La familia Lakhoua, descendientes tunecinos de moriscos granadinos de los siglos XVII–XVIII, y sus actividades en la industria del bonete chechia’, *Sharq Al-Andalus* 14–15 (1997–1998): 219–44.

³⁵ Mikel de Epalza, ‘Moriscos y Andalusíes en Túnez durante el siglo XVII’, *Al-Andalus* 34 (1969): 247–327.

These sources shed light on the active participation of Morisco merchants in international trade, particularly in the Mediterranean region. They highlight the entrepreneurial spirit and commercial acumen of these individuals, who played a significant role in expanding trade networks and contributing to the economic growth of Tunisia. The influence and success of Morisco merchants in foreign trade further demonstrated their ability to adapt to new environments and leverage their skills and resources to achieve prosperity in their adopted homeland.

Notable figures of the first half of the seventeenth century include Luis Zapata and Mustafa de Cardenas. They were engaged in trading various commodities, including spices, soap, and, in particular, slaves.³⁶ As well as being involved in numerous capture operations, it is evident that the two merchants worked in partnership.³⁷ Similarly, Mahmud Asrayyri and Sharif al-Qasatali were involved in the slave trade during the first third of the eighteenth century, as indicated by Francisco Ximénez's diaries. Furthermore, the list of captives liberated by the Spanish mission in 1725 highlights the frequent presence of figures like the treasurer Mahmud Asrayyri, who was one of the key slave owners.³⁸

On this evidence, we can talk about the success of the economic resettlement process, which aimed to adapt the displaced Moriscos to the nature of the Tunisian economy during that era, which relied on agriculture, craftsmanship, trade, and especially the slave trade or piracy activities. This success was manifested in the revitalisation of the province's economy and the rapid accumulation of wealth within the Morisco community. This has been noted in various local chronicles, Al-Muntasir Al-Qafsi informed us about their rich,³⁹ while Al-Wazir Al-Sarraj speaks of the magnificence of the mosques they constructed in the areas where they settled and the enormous endowments they established.⁴⁰

The Moriscos who settled in the city of Tunis, the capital of the state, did not merely engage in craftwork and commercial roles; they

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 263–6.

³⁷ Ximénez, *Discurso de Túnez*, vol. 6, MS 9/6013, fol. 3r and fol. 59v.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, fols 176v–181v.

³⁹ Al-Muntasir Al-Qafsi, *Nur al-Armash fī manaqib al-Qashshash*, ed. Lotfi Aissa and Houcine Boujarra (Tunis: Alatika, 1998), 138–42.

⁴⁰ Muḥammad Al-Wazir al-Sarraj, *Al-Hulal al-sundusiyya fī 'l-akhhbar al-tunisiyya*, ed. Habib Alhila (Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1984), 157–8.

also played significant political roles. Some of them were close to the ruling Turkish class and actively involved in the internal and external political affairs of the country. One notable example during the seventeenth century, specifically during the rule of Yusuf Dey, was the sheikh of the Andalusians, Mustafa de Cardenas. He appears to have been close to Yusuf Dey and played significant roles not only in the economy of the province but also in important political functions. For instance, in 1628, he was part of the delegation that facilitated the reconciliation between the Turks of Algeria and Tunisia. Ibn Abi Dinar states:

‘... a group of esteemed sheikhs from the country, such as Sheikh Taj al-Arifin al-Othmani, Sheikh Ibrahim al-Gharyani, and Sheikh Mustafa [de Cardenas] the sheikh of the Andalusians, and others, walked together [to meet the Algerians], and a reconciliation was reached between the two factions ...’.⁴¹

In the first half of the eighteenth century, two highly important Morisco figures exemplified the continuation or reestablishment of the alliance between the Morisco community and the authorities. The first of these figures is Khazndar Mahmud Asrayyri, whom As-Saghir bin Yusuf describes as the second man in the state and refers to as the ruler, administrator, decision-maker and influencer during the reign of Bey Al-Husayn I Ibn Ali.⁴²

The second notable figure is Sharif al-Qasatali, who, despite not holding political positions, accumulated significant wealth which brought him close to power. As-Saghir bin Yusuf mentions: ‘... Sharif al-Qasatali, an Andalusian man, arrived and became a confidant of Prince Hussein ...’.⁴³ In his diaries, Francisco Ximénez also talks about al-Qasatali lending a considerable amount of money to Hussein bin Ali to pay the soldiers’ wages.⁴⁴

These prominent Moriscos played crucial roles in the power dynamics and alliances of the time, with their wealth and influence making them key figures in the administration as well as close associates

⁴¹ Ibn Abi Dinar, *Al Mu’nis*, 231–2.

⁴² Ibn Yusuf, *Al-Mashra’ Al-Malaki fi Saltanat Awled ‘Ali Turki*, ed. Ahmed Touili (Tunis: Al-Maktba’ Al-‘Assria, 2009), 2:71–4.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 1:95–6.

⁴⁴ Ximénez, *Discurso de Túnez*, vol. 6, MS 9/6013, fol. 64v and vol. 7, MS 9/6014, fol.7v. Ibn Yusuf, *Al-Mashra’ Al-Malaki*, 2:77.

of the ruling authorities in the places of power in Tunis, namely the Kasbah and the Bardo Palace.⁴⁵

4. *Tunis, a cosmopolitan city*

Many languages could be heard in the city of Tunis during the early modern period. In addition to Arabic, the city was also Spanish-speaking, and to a lesser extent, Portuguese-speaking, due to the Spanish presence in the country in the sixteenth century, and particularly due to the Sephardic Jewish and Morisco refugees who influenced Tunisian culture with many Iberian features. Not only that, Turkish, the language of the ruling class, was also heard, along with various languages from the Mediterranean region, such as Italian and French. The city was open not only to adventurers and refugees but also to captive liberators, traders and European consuls, some of whom visited the country for limited periods, while others settled semi-permanently. In this context, what is known as the ‘Diplomatic Quarter’ was established in Tunis, at the northern entrance of the city, near what is now known as ‘Bab Bhar’ or the ‘Porte de France’. There, we find the French Consulate (Fondouk), founded in 1659–1670, and the British, United States, Netherlands, and Portuguese consulates among others, which were established at various times between the seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries.⁴⁶ In the same area, we find the Spanish Prisoners’ Hospital, the construction of which began in 1720, opening to receive sick prisoners and even some local residents starting in 1722.⁴⁷

All these political, economic, social and cultural transformations that occurred in the city of Tunis during the early modern period had an impact on urban development. While the sixteenth century witnessed a state of urban decay, with many buildings and markets in the city falling into ruin, the seventeenth century represented a period of

⁴⁵ For more details about the group I referred to as ‘the powerful Moriscos’, please see my recent paper: Houssein Eddine Chachia, “Powerful Moriscos” in Tunisia during the Seventeenth Century’, in *The Morisco Diaspora and Morisco Networks across the Western and Eastern Mediterranean*, ed. Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard Wiegers (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

⁴⁶ For details about this diplomatic quarter and its development, see: Adnen El Ghali, ‘Du fondouk de la nation à l’hôtel consulaire. Les dimensions spatiales et symboliques de la diplomatie dans le quartier consulaire de Tunis (XVIIe–XIXe)’ (PhD diss., Université Libre de Bruxelles, 2021).

⁴⁷ About the history of this hospital see: Francisco Ximénez, *Colonia trinitaria de Túnez*, ed. Ignacio Bauer (Tetuan: Tip, Gomariz, 1934), 169–222.

urban revival, reflecting the economic prosperity of the time. In this context, the Moriscos played a significant role in the architectural renaissance of the city. Their architects had a hand in numerous renovations and the construction of various buildings, such as the complex of the mausoleum and mosque of Yusuf Dey, which was supervised by engineer Ibn Ghanam Al-Andalusi. Additionally, they constructed several *zawiyas* and schools, which showcased a blend of Andalusian and Ottoman architectural styles. Italian influence also emerged from the early eighteenth century onwards.⁴⁸

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Abstract

This work provides an overview of the developments that occurred in the city of Tunis at the beginning of the modern period, portraying it as an open city situated at the heart of the Mediterranean Sea. Initially, the focus is on understanding the city's status during the decline of the Hafsid dynasty, which turned the city and the country into a battleground between the Ottoman and Spanish empires. This conflict had significant repercussions on the city, affecting its demographics and economy. On one hand, the population dwindled significantly, and on the other hand, a new social element – the Turks/Ottomans – emerged in the city's population, going to form the ruling class as of 1574. This Turkish element was bolstered from the early seventeenth century by the migrations of Sephardic Jews and Moriscos, who found refuge in Tunis and its capital after being expelled from the Iberian Peninsula. The third aspect highlights the significance of the consular presence in the city of Tunis, as several European countries sought to establish friendly relations with the Tunisian regency to ensure the security of their trade in the Mediterranean. The work makes use of various local Tunisian documents and sources, as well as European archival sources and documents.

Keywords: Tunis, Mediterranean Sea, early modern period, Ottoman-Spanish conflict, diasporas

⁴⁸ Regarding the architectural transformations witnessed by the city of Tunis during the modern period, see: Ahmed Saadaoui, *Tunis ville ottomane: trois siècles d'urbanisme et d'architecture* (Tunis: Centre de publication universitaire, 2010).

A PLACE OF MEDITERRANEAN CONNECTIVITY:
THE MALTESE FRONTIER
(SIXTEENTH TO SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES)

Edward S. Casey observed that while time is one-dimensional, space is multi-dimensional. In this space, 'places' are references that locate and define: to be is to be in a 'place'.¹ This could define *frontier* experience.

The Mediterranean space-time defined by Fernand Braudel reflects the existence of 'moments' that give rise to 'places', particularly frontier areas, whose past or future strategic or economic acuity was or may not be the same. Presenting a history of the Mediterranean, the important work by Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell² deliberately reversed Fernand Braudel's analysis.³ Whereas Braudel defined the unity of the Mediterranean before focusing on the divisions arising from the individuality of sea basins, islands and continental territories, the Anglo-Saxon historians drew on the interactions between Mediterranean fragmentations to develop the idea of a global connectivity of the sea over time.⁴ However productive it may be, the concept of 'connectivity'⁵ nevertheless cannot mask the reality of a Mediterranean plurality of temporalities (very long-term, long-term, event-based) and spaces, as defined by Braudel. The unity of the sea, under the sign of

¹ Edward S. Casey, 'Espaces lisses et lieux bruts. L'histoire cachée du lieu', *Revue métaphysique et de morale* 4, no. 32 (2001): 467–8.

² Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea. A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).

³ Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, 2 vols (Paris: Armand Colin, 1966).

⁴ Brent D. Shaw, 'Challenging Braudel: A New Vision of the Mediterranean', *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 14 (2001): 422.

⁵ Sanjay Subrahmanyam and Hervé Inglebert, *Histoire universelle ou Histoire globale?* (Paris: PUF, 2018).

the circulation of goods, people and ideas,⁶ concerns a small number of privileged actors, who are also the most visible (merchants, diplomats, etc.); the vast majority of people were unconscious of it, living their daily lives within the internal boundaries of their islands, at once open to trade and closed in on themselves, of their towns or villages, and of the political and religious powers that controlled the movement of their subjects and foreigners.⁷

Henri Bresc convincingly demonstrated that ‘there are times when the Mediterranean is a dead sea, and spaces where naval warfare, easy to organise, quick to attack and easy to concentrate, has brought only destruction and continental retreat’.⁸ While Purcell and Horden perfectly grasped maritime interaction, they sometimes generalised it to areas, coasts and islands which, *at certain times*, escape their overall destiny, or which emerge suddenly and for an indeterminate period, helping create a new maritime equilibrium. Indeed, as far as islands are concerned, there are times of ‘dead sea’ just as there are times of ‘shared sea’,⁹ and these times are not always the same, nor necessarily located in the same maritime spaces. This was particularly true during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, due to the conflict between the Ottoman and Spanish empires.¹⁰ In the middle of the Mediterranean, ‘absolute frontiers’¹¹ materialising on certain coasts and islands became the sites of major military and corsairing conflicts, as well as economic exchanges (ransom of captives, trade). And these ‘frontier places’, es-

⁶ Maria Fusaro, ‘After Braudel: A Reassessment of Mediterranean History between the Northern Invasion and the Caravane Maritime’, in *Trade and Cultural Exchange in the Early Modern Mediterranean. Braudel’s Maritime Legacy*, ed. Maria Fusaro, Colin Heywood, and Mohamed-Salah Omri (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010): 1–22.

⁷ Maurice Aymard, ‘La Méditerranée: Braudel toujours présent’, *Synergies, Monde Méditerranéen* 1 (2010): 79.

⁸ Henri Bresc, ‘Îles et tissu “connectif” de la Méditerranée médiévale’, *Médiévales* 47 (2004): 123.

⁹ Bresc, ‘Îles et tissu “connectif” de la Méditerranée médiévale’: 127–8.

¹⁰ Caroline Finkel, *Osman’s Dream. The Story of the Ottoman Empire (1300–1923)* (New York: Basic Books, 2005).

¹¹ The expression is from Daniel Nordman, *Frontières de France. De l’espace au territoire (XVI^e–XIX^e siècle)* (Paris: Gallimard, 1998), 43–4; on the concept of a frontier sea, see Jean Heffer, *Les États-Unis et le Pacifique. Histoire d’une frontière* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1995); Renaud Morieux, *Une mer pour deux royaumes. La Manche, frontière franco-anglaise, XVII^e–XVIII^e siècles* (Rennes: PUR, 2008); Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary, *Qu’est-ce qu’une frontière aujourd’hui?* (Paris: PUF, 2015).

pecially the islands, were not always the same and did not embody the frontier with the same acuity over the centuries.

The case of the Ottoman islands in early modern times is revealing. By eliminating all traces of the Latin presence and unifying the Levant under their own authority, the Turks often deprived these islands of the strategic role they had played when they were places of confluence between Latins, Greeks and Muslims. For example, after its conquest by Süleyman the Magnificent in 1522, Rhodes lost the role it had played in the Hospitallers' era as economic intermediary between the Muslim East and the Christian West.¹² The destiny of Malta, on the contrary, became evident at the end of the Middle Ages, when it found itself placed *in frontiera barbarorum* and began to outwardly appear as a corsair base, crystallising the discontent of Muslim Africa.¹³ Fernand Braudel had already grasped this evolution towards a frontier which, although porous, was marked by military violence as symbolised by the name that the Spanish monarchy gave to the islands of the western Mediterranean under its control and which it considered its 'armed frontiers'¹⁴ during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Property of the Spanish monarchy, fiefdom of the Hospitallers since 1530, Malta benefited from the confrontation between the Habsburgs and the Osmanlis. The little island on the border of Europe and its sea routes became a strategic element in the Mediterranean area, a magnificent crossroads, a point of closure and a link between East and West: a *frontier place* in the dynamic sense of the term. The distinction be-

¹² Nicolas Vatin and Gilles Veinstein, eds, 'Introduction', in *Insularités ottomanes* (Istanbul: Institut français d'études anatoliennes, 2004), 13, <https://books.openedition.org/ifeagd/1454>; Nicolas Vatin, 'Îles grecques? Îles ottomanes? L'insertion des îles de l'Égée dans l'Empire ottoman à la fin du xvi^e siècle', in Vatin and Veinstein, *Insularités ottomanes*, 71–89, <https://books.openedition.org/ifeagd/1463>.

¹³ Henri Bresc, 'Malte et l'Afrique (1282–1492)', *Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Méditerranée* 71 (1994): 63–73; Henri Bresc, 'Sicile, Malte et monde musulman', in *Malta. A Case Study in International Cross-Currents* (Malta: Malta University Publications, 1991), 47–81; Henri Bresc, 'La genèse de l'identité maltaise', in *Mutations d'identités en Méditerranée*, ed. Henri Bresc and Christiane Veauvy (Saint-Denis: Bouchène, 2000), 141–57; Carmel Cassar, *Society, Culture and Identity in Early Modern Malta* (Malta: Mireva Publications, 2000), 1–10.

¹⁴ Natividad Planas, 'Pratiques de pouvoir au sein d'une société frontalière. Le voisinage de Majorque et ses îles adjacentes avec les terres d'Islam au XVII^e siècle' (PhD diss., European University Institute, 2000), 73–4; Angelantonio Spagnoletti, 'La frontiera armata. La proiezione mediterranea di Napoli e della Sicilia', in *Sardegna, Spagna e Mediterraneo. Dai Re Cattolici al Secolo d'Oro*, ed. Bruno Anatra and Giovanni Murgia (Pisa: Carocci, 2004), 20–1.

tween a frontier and a boundary or border is twofold: it is a space of tension and exchange, and a place that attracts attention, where people on either side clash while at the same time working together.¹⁵ During the oscillations of the Mediterranean frontier in early modern times, Malta emerged as one of the ‘places’ of the Spanish Empire and, more broadly, of the whole of Christendom. Like other places that, in Paul Ricoeur’s words, ‘were occupied, left, lost and found again by living beings’, Malta was taken over by individuals and authorities and recognised as a medium of collective memory.¹⁶ During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it indeed became a place where agents of maritime ‘connectivity’¹⁷ (corsairs, merchants, renegades, etc.) were both active and strictly controlled.

¹⁵ The historiography on frontiers is so vast that I will only mention a few key titles: Lucien Febvre, ‘Frontière: le mot et la notion’ (1928) republished in *Pour une histoire à part entière* (Paris: Sevpen, 1962), 11–24; Michel Foucher, *L’invention des frontières* (Paris: Fondation pour les études de défense nationale, 1986); Charles Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994); Robert Bartlett and Angus McKay, eds, *Medieval Frontier Societies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); Pierre Toubert, ‘Frontière et frontières: un objet historique’, in *Castrum 4. Frontières et peuplement dans le monde méditerranéen au Moyen Âge* (Rome: École française de Rome; Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 1992), 9–17; Pierre Toubert, ‘L’historien, sur la frontière’, in *L’Histoire grande ouverte. Hommages à Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie* (Paris: Fayard, 1997), 221–32; Daniel Nordman, *Profilis du Maghreb. Frontières, figures et territoires (XVIII^e–XX^e siècles)* (Rabat: Ed. Faculté des Lettres de Rabat, 1996); Daniel Nordman, *Frontières de France. De l’espace au territoire (XVI^e–XX^e siècles)* (Paris: NRF Gallimard, 1998); Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries. The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley, LA: University of California Press, 1989); Philippe Sénac, *La frontière et les hommes (VIII^e–XII^e siècles). Le peuplement musulman au nord de l’Ebre et les débuts de la Reconquête aragonaise* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2000); Jennifer Heurley, ‘Les frontières internes et externes de l’Irlande du Nord. Logiques territoriales et recomposition d’un espace conflictuel’ (PhD diss., Paris-Sorbonne, 2001); Carlos de Ayala Martínez, Pascal Buresi, and Philippe Josserand, eds, *Identidad y representación de la frontera en la España medieval (siglos XI–XIV)* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2001); Anne Brogini, *Malte, frontière de chrétienté (1530–1670)* (Rome: BEFAR, 2006); Michel Catala, Dominique Le Page, and Jean-Claude Meuret, eds, *Frontières oubliées. Frontières retrouvées. Marches et limites anciennes en France et en Europe* (Rennes: PUR, 2011).

¹⁶ Paul Ricoeur, *La mémoire, l’histoire, l’oubli* (Paris: Points Seuil, 2000), 191.

¹⁷ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Empires between Islam and Christianity, 1500–1800* (New York: Permanent Black, 2018), 409.

1. *Defending and demarcating the frontier place*

The reality of the Maltese frontier was materialised through original sensory experiences: the overrepresentation of men of the church and men-at-arms in the harbour showed visitors and residents that they were in a very much Catholic urban space. Religious people were omnipresent: knights of Malta, staff of the Holy Office and the island's clergy.¹⁸ The Grand Harbour was composed of four cities at the beginning of the seventeenth century (Valletta and the 'Three Cities' – Vittoriosa, Senglea, Bormla/Cospicua), which became five at the end of the century, with the construction and settlement of Floriana (Fig. 5.1).

In the mid-seventeenth century, the Grand Harbour had a population of around 20,000, of whom between 8% and 10% were men of the church: in addition to the 500 or 600 Hospitallers, there were almost 1,500 men and women from the regular and secular clergy.¹⁹ In addition to the traditional religious feasts (Christmas, Easter, All Saints' Day, etc.), there were four important and specific Maltese feasts that helped to keep people in a permanent Catholic mood. On 10 February, there was the commemoration of the shipwreck of Saint Paul, the island's patron saint, whose cult developed considerably in the seventeenth century;²⁰ on 24 June, the feast of Saint John the Baptist (patron saint of the Hospitallers); on 29 June, *L-Imnarja*, the Feast of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, marked the start of the summer season and was the occasion for many festivities in the Grand Port; last, 8 September commemorated the victory against the Turks in the Great Siege of Malta. In 1665, for the centenary of the siege, a great commemoration mass had been celebrated in the Church of St John in Valletta, followed by a gigantic artillery salvo fired in the Grand Port (Fig. 5.2 and 5.3). The galleys in the port had all been illuminated, and parades of soldiers and battle re-

¹⁸ Emanuel Buttigieg, 'Negotiating Encounters, Controlling Spaces: Official Meetings between Grand Masters and Inquisitors in Valletta and Vittoriosa', in *The Roman Inquisition in Malta and Elsewhere* (Malta: Heritage Malta, 2017), 110–19.

¹⁹ Brogini, *Malte, frontière de chrétienté*, 682.

²⁰ Cassar, *Society, Culture and Identity*, 209–19; John Azzopardi and Alain Blondy, *Marc'Antonio Haxac and Malta's Devotion to Saint Paul* (Malta: Fondation de Malte, 2012); John Azzopardi, 'Les chevaliers de St Jean à Malte (1530–1798): promoteurs du culte de saint Paul', *Société de l'Histoire et du Patrimoine de l'Ordre de Malte* 25 (2011): 58–63; Alain Blondy, 'Culte paulinien et Contre-Réforme', in *Chrétiens et Ottomans de Malte et d'ailleurs* (Paris: PUPS, 2013), 91–2.

enactments had taken place throughout the day in the Grand Harbour cities.²¹

The religious feast dimension was inseparable from the military dimension of the Grand Harbour. Each of the five port cities was protected by its own walls. The general impression given by the harbour was very much a militarised one, with a succession of stocky bastioned ramparts, which, however, did not break up the port's population or society.²² Even if each town was individualised by its own walls, they were closely dependent on each other and obeyed the same rules and the same political and religious authorities. While Valletta housed the Hospitallers' convent, Vittoriosa was the seat of the Holy Office and the arsenal and Floriana was used for military training, the island's clergy were equally present everywhere, and goods were unloaded in each of the cities. Slave prisons were located in three towns of the Grand Harbour (Vittoriosa, Senglea and Valletta).²³

These impressive walls were proof of Malta's frontier position: within them, inhabitants and foreigners were in Christendom; beyond them, they were exposed to the Muslim danger (Fig. 5.4).

But the walls were also proof of the close surveillance imposed on the population living temporarily or permanently in the Grand Harbour. It was for this reason that some Maltese walls had eyes and ears, added by the Hospitallers above the entrance gate of the St Elmo fortress and on the watchtower above the Senglea wall (Fig. 5.5). These eyes and ears reminded everybody that they were protected by the po-

²¹ Archives of the Order of Malta [AOM] 261, fols 27r–27v, 28 July 1665.

²² Many excellent works have studied Maltese fortifications: Quentin Hughes, *The Architecture of Malta During the Period of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, 1530-1798* (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1952); Quentin Hughes, *The Building of Malta during the Period of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem (1530-1798)* (Malta: Tiranti, 1986 [1956]); Quentin Hughes, *Fortress. Architecture and Military History in Malta* (Malta: Ben Uri Gallery & Museum, 1969); Roger de Giorgio, *A City by an Order* (Malta: Progress Press, 1985); Alison Hoppen, *The Fortification of Malta by the Order of St. John (1530-1798)* (Malta: Mireva Publications, 1999); Stephen Spiteri, *Fortresses of the Cross: Hospitaller Military Architecture (1136-1798)* (Malta: Heritage Interpretation Services Publication, 1994); Stephen Spiteri, *Fortresses of the Knights* (Malta: Book Distributors, 2001); Nicoletta Marconi, ed., *Valletta. Città, architettura e costruzione sotto il segno della fede e della guerra* (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 2011).

²³ Anne Brogini, 'Les prémices d'une place marchande en Méditerranée. Malte au début de l'époque moderne (XVIe-XVIIe siècles)', in *La loge et le fondouk. Les dimensions spatiales des pratiques marchandes en Méditerranée, Moyen Âge-Époque moderne*, ed. Wolfgang Kaiser (Aix-en-Provence: Karthala, 2014), 209–26.

litical and religious powers, but above all that they were controlled by them (Fig. 5.6)!

The ramparts of the Grand Harbour marked the watertight frontier between Maltese Catholicism and the perils of the sea, and they were therefore subject to very strict political regulations. All Jewish, Muslim and Protestant foreigners were formally forbidden from crossing them and entering Maltese territory. In 1605, a grand master's order required the English merchants and sailors to remain alongside the quay:²⁴ while they had complete freedom on board, they could not go ashore or pass through the walls without a special authorisation from both the inquisitor and the grand master. The inhabitants were not allowed to board Protestant ships, socialise with the crews or even speak to them. In 1607, the order had been extended to Flemish and Dutch ships: only merchants were allowed to board ships and meet the Flemish and English men.²⁵ Muslims and Jews were also forbidden from crossing the harbour walls: they had to present customs with a document of safe conduct delivered exclusively by the grand master, which they had to keep with them throughout their stay in the Grand Harbour.

In addition to the safe conduct, non-Christians had to distinguish themselves physically from the Maltese by their clothing and appearance.²⁶ Since 1595, both free and enslaved Jews had had to wear a piece of yellow cloth: on the head for men and on the bodice for women. If a Jewish man hid the cloth with a hat, he was condemned to be whipped in public if he was a slave, or expelled from the port if he was a free man.²⁷ Muslims were always to be dressed 'as Turks'. In 1595, the Holy Office in Rome declared to the inquisitor of Malta that the 'physical distinctions served to ensure that everyone knew with whom they were conversing and having relationships'.²⁸ Maltese women were never allowed to talk to slaves or visit prisons, otherwise common women were condemned to be whipped, and noble women to pay ten scudi. In the event of sexual relations with Muslims, the women were sentenced to very severe convictions: whipping in public and banishment for four

²⁴ Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede [ACDF], Stanza Storica M 4-b (2), *Privilegi ai mercanti e agli Ebrei*, fol. 15r, 1605.

²⁵ ACDF, St. St. Q 3-d, *Raccolti di testi di lettere ed istruzioni del Santo Offizio agli Inquisitori e Vescovi*, fol. 123r, 23 November 1607 ('...che sopra li vascelli loro possono andare solamente quelli che hanno da comprare le merci e non altre persone ...').

²⁶ National Library of Malta [NLM], MS 152, *Prammatiche magistrali*, 140.

²⁷ NLM, MS 152, 129–30.

²⁸ ACDF, St. St. HH 3-b, *Inquisizione di Malta (1578–1684)*, without folio, 27 June 1595, own translation.

years the first time; whipping, scourging of the throat or chest and banishment for ten years in the event of a repeat offence. Muslims ‘who dared to have carnal relations with Christian women’ were punished by whipping and four to ten years in the galleys for free men, or whipping and ten years in the galleys, with no possibility of redemption for slaves.²⁹ The Order of Malta and the Inquisition encouraged the population to keep a close eye on non-Catholics. The grand master would give twenty scudi to any inhabitant who captured a Muslim who had landed on the island to fight or pillage.³⁰

The island of Malta, and particularly the Grand Harbour, were therefore an area strictly closed to religious differences.³¹ Non-Catholics were not allowed to reside freely in the port, or, if they were, only under very specific conditions, which were set out in the documents of safe conduct signed by the grand master. Relationships between islanders and non-Catholic foreigners were always controlled. Despite this daily surveillance, which gives the impression of a closed frontier, the Maltese harbour was nevertheless an important place for intercultural exchanges.

2. *Mediterranean exchanges in Malta*

Frontiers are not only characterised by conflicts and the surveillance of otherness, but also by intercultural exchanges. A large historiography has focused on this cross-cultural theme in several places of the Medi-

²⁹ ACDF, St. St. HH 3-b, *Inquisizione di Malta (1578–1684)*, fol. 1392r, 4 May 1658.

³⁰ NLM, MS 152, 707.

³¹ Liam Gauci, ‘Maltese Corsairs and the Inquisition in Malta. Defending the Faith during the Last Years of Hospitaller Malta’, in *The Roman Inquisition in Malta and Elsewhere*, ed. Margaret Abdilla Cunningham, Godwin Vella, and Kenneth Cassar (Malta: Heritage Malta, 2017), 156–63; Elina Gugliuzzo, ‘Roman Inquisition and Social Control in Early Modern Malta’, in *Roman Inquisition in Malta*, 164–71.

terreanean, such as Crete,³² Livorno,³³ Marseille,³⁴ Venice,³⁵ the Barbary regencies,³⁶ etc. In the Hospitallers' Malta, intercultural exchanges were not as free and easy as in the Frankish ports or the major Mediterranean trading ports. Nevertheless, Malta became integrated in Mediterranean trade thanks to its active participation in the 'ransom economy'³⁷ practised in the Mediterranean in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Through corsairing, Malta opened to economic trade, and when in the early eighteenth-century private shipowners gradually abandoned *corso* in favour of maritime transport and trade,³⁸ the Barbary regencies very much followed suit.³⁹ Of course, the redemption of captives was not the only purpose of public and private slavery in the Mediterrane-

³² Molly Greene, *A Shared World. Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Molly Greene, *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants. A Maritime History of the Mediterranean* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

³³ Guillaume Calafat, 'Être étranger dans un *port franc*. Droits, privilèges et accès au travail à Livourne (1590–1715)', *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* 84 (2012): 103–22; Guillaume Calafat and Cesare Santus, 'Les avatars du "Turc". Esclaves et commerçants musulmans à Livourne (1600–1750)' in *Les musulmans dans l'histoire de l'Europe*. Vol. 1. *Une intégration invisible*, ed. Jocelyne Dakhliya and Bernard Vincent (Paris: Albin Michel, 2011), 471–522.

³⁴ Mathieu Grenet, *La Fabrique communautaire. Les Grecs à Venise, Livourne et Marseille, 1770–1840* (Rome: École française de Rome; Athens: École française d'Athènes, 2016).

³⁵ Maria Fusaro, 'Les Anglais et les Grecs. Un réseau de coopération commerciale en Méditerranée vénitienne', *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 58, no. 3 (2003): 605–25.

³⁶ Guillaume Calafat and Wolfgang Kaiser, 'The Economy of Ransoming in the Early Modern Mediterranean. A Cross-Cultural Trade Between Southern Europe and the Maghreb (16th–17th centuries)', in *Religion and Trade: Cross-Cultural Exchanges in World History, 1000–1900*, ed. Cátia Antunes, Leor Halevi, and Francesca Trivellato (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 108–30; Guillaume Calafat, 'Familles, réseau et confiance dans l'économie de l'époque moderne. Diasporas marchandes et commerce interculturel', *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 66, no. 2 (2011): 513–53; Guillaume Calafat, 'A "Nest of Pirates"? Consuls and Diplomatic Intermediaries in Algiers during the 1670s', *Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni* 82, no. 2 (2018): 529–47.

³⁷ Wolfgang Kaiser, 'L'économie de la rançon dans la Méditerranée occidentale (XVI^e–XVII^e siècles)', *Hypothèses* 1 (2006): 359–68.

³⁸ Carmel Vassallo, *Corsairing to Commerce: Maltese Merchants in XVIII Century Spain* (Malta: Malta University Publishers, 1997); Carmel Vassallo, 'Consuls and Commerce: the Development of Malta's Consular Service in Eighteenth-Century Spain', *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma* 28 (2015): 45–69.

³⁹ Daniel Panzac, *Les corsaires barbaresques: la fin d'une épopée, 1800–1820* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 1999).

an. States and private individuals were looking for cheap labour; moreover, owning a slave could even be proof of a certain lifestyle.⁴⁰ But the redemption of captives was a very important trade which mobilised many actors in Malta: Christians (French from Marseilles, Maltese, Italians, Greeks and even Hospitallers), Muslims (Turkish, Barbarian, renegades) and Jews.

The case of Homor Ben Selem was revealing. A private slave in Malta, he received safe conduct from the Order of Hospitallers in 1595 to go to Istanbul to collect the sum for his redemption, and to negotiate the redemption of several Turkish slaves belonging to Hospitallers.⁴¹ He encountered knights and island merchants: through the intermediary of the knight Jacques de Vincheguerre (captain of a *saettia* ship and very active in *corso* and the ransom economy), he signed contracts with five merchants from Malta, including a Greek and a Frenchman living in the Grand Harbour, to trade with the Levant.⁴² During the first quarter of the seventeenth century, Homor Ben Selem became the preferred partner of the Hospitallers and the Catholic merchants of Malta, and he made numerous maritime trips between Malta, Tunis, Algiers and the Levant. This example clearly shows how relationships were established, in Malta itself, between commercial partners from the two shores. When this first undertaking was successfully completed, it generally led to the establishment of new relationships and the stabilisation of networks, or even to the diversification of networks by adding new, both Christian and non-Christian partners.

The combination of trading merchandise and ransoming slaves was a typical feature of Mediterranean trade.⁴³ Indeed, during the seventeenth century, the Maltese slave trade was regularly coupled with the goods trade. In 1605, Iusuf Hagim, a Jew from Tripoli, approached the Order with a proposal to trade between Malta, Tripoli and Alexandria, while at the same time ransoming Jewish slaves in Malta and Maltese slaves in Muslim lands.⁴⁴ Similarly, in 1610, rais Mahamet Ben Cassin

⁴⁰ Hayri Göksin Özkoray, 'L'esclavage dans l'Empire ottoman (XVI^e-XVII^e siècle): fondements juridiques, réalités socio-économiques, représentations' (PhD diss., PSL Research University, 2017), 36.

⁴¹ AOM 449, fol. 267r, 31 December 1595.

⁴² Notarial Archives of Valletta [ASV], R 286/5, fols 377r-378v, 4 January 1596.

⁴³ Wolfgang Kaiser, 'Asymétries méditerranéennes. Présence et circulation de marchands entre Alger, Tunis et Marseille', in *Les musulmans dans l'histoire de l'Europe*. Vol. 1. *Une intégration invisible*, ed. Jocelyne Dakhlia and Bernard Vincent (Paris: Albin Michel, 2011): 417-42.

⁴⁴ AOM 455, fol. 278r, 3 November 1605.

of Tripoli, proposed to ransom Christian and Maltese slaves in Barbary, then to come to Malta with the freed Christians as well as numerous goods to ransom Muslim slaves of the Order, and to sell useful goods on the Maltese market.⁴⁵ Gradually, trade with the infidels became commonplace for the Hospitallers, and the grand master sometimes granted certificates of safe conduct for commercial transactions without ransoming Christian slaves. In 1616, a *rais* from Sousse came to Malta to sell 'Barbary goods' (leathers, goatskins, wax, etc.);⁴⁶ in 1624, a *rais* from Alexandria transported luxury goods from the Levant;⁴⁷ and in 1635, *rais* Milet Bin Abdelaziz, from Tripoli, sold Barbary goods in Malta.⁴⁸

Trade relations also linked free men and slaves. In 1624, a Muslim slave in Malta named Mamet Faoni went into partnership with a Maltese merchant, Ambrosio Gardino, and a Jewish merchant from Tunis, Abraham Alfuri. The slave and the Maltese each invested 190 scudi in the purchase of a cargo of sugar in Tunis, which Alfuri was responsible for collecting, in anticipation of selling the goods on the market in Malta (the profits from the sale were to be shared equally between the two). At the same time, Abraham Alfuri had given Ambrosio Gardino a cargo of twenty-four pieces of fine cloth, transported from Tunis, to be sold in Malta.⁴⁹ This example testifies the leeway that Muslim slaves in Malta could have in their human and commercial contacts. Undoubtedly, Mamet Faoni's role in the trade between Malta and Barbary was a way for him to raise the sum needed to ransom himself out. But it was undeniable that, when trade was profitable, neither servile status nor religious differences (which as seen above were usually an obstacle to human relations in Malta) prevented the signing of contracts between islanders and 'infidels'.

The best proof of this can be found in the ease with which Maltese businessmen (including the Order) agreed to form ties with those who were the most visible manifestation of crossing frontiers between civilisations: renegades, apparently the symbol of the convergence between peoples and the living illustration of the danger of apostasy and transgression. At a time when Malta was asserting itself as the protector of Christendom and when the religious authorities (the Holy Office, the

⁴⁵ AOM 456, fol. 315v, 18 March 1610.

⁴⁶ AOM 459, fol. 333r, 22 October 1616.

⁴⁷ AOM 461, fols 302v–303r, 21 May 1624.

⁴⁸ AOM 465, fol. 308v, 22 December 1635.

⁴⁹ Pierre Grandchamp, *La France en Tunisie* (Tunis: Société Ancienne de l'Imprimerie Rapide, 1929), 4:99, 12 February 1624.

Hospitallers, the island clergy) were highly concerned with otherness on the island, the Order and private individuals showed no heed in going into partnership with these transgressors, many of whom were Maltese. In the 1590s, Maltese renegade Mohamed Malti, who lived in Tunis, became specialised in ransoming Maltese and Christian slaves;⁵⁰ in 1595, he went into partnership with a Neapolitan merchant, Silvano Gauderisi, set up shop in the Grand Harbour and became the Order's main intermediary for ransoming slaves between 1602 and 1610.⁵¹ In 1621, a Maltese merchant, Giuseppe Schembri, head of a company selling cumin from Malta, went into partnership with a renegade from Tunis, Morat Oggia, who had invested money in the Maltese company: the renegade's profits were to amount to one fifth of the profits made from the sale of cumin in Barbary.⁵² Similarly, in 1659, Joseph Icard, a Marseille merchant who had become Maltese, bought a trading boat from Osta Mamet, a Maltese renegade, to trade between Malta and Tunis.⁵³ Lastly, the renegade Morat Maltese was a *rais* from Tunis and close to the bey. His real name was Pietro Mifsud, and he was born in the village of Lia, Malta. In 1628, his four sisters and widowed mother were living in poverty.⁵⁴ In Tunis, he became an important corsair who went into partnership with Christians. He was wealthy and owned many slaves, particularly Maltese ones, such as Joseph Vella in 1651⁵⁵ or Girolamo Psinga in 1660,⁵⁶ and often helped out with their ransoming procedure, as he did for Francesco Bonifacio who was a Maltese bombardier.⁵⁷

This opening up of the island to the ransom economy and goods trade brought Malta into the heart of Mediterranean economic networks and helped it to emerge as a strategically important 'place'. But intercultural exchanges were not only economic, and, despite the control of the authorities, the population was marked by a certain mix, both legal and forbidden. In the Grand Harbour, Maltese society was very open to Catholic foreigners and many Maltese women married foreigners employed in seafaring jobs (merchants, corsairs, sailors, sol-

⁵⁰ Grandchamp, *La France en Tunisie*, (Tunis: Société Ancienne de l'Imprimerie Rapide; 1920), 4:54–5, 16 October 1593; 1:64, 15 August and 15 October 1594.

⁵¹ Brogini, *Malte, frontière de chrétienté*, 366, 382, 391–2 and 639.

⁵² Grandchamp, *La France en Tunisie*, 4:26, 21 October 1621.

⁵³ Grandchamp, *La France en Tunisie* (Tunis: Société Ancienne de l'Imprimerie Rapide; 1928), 6:227, 16 July 1659.

⁵⁴ Grandchamp, *La France en Tunisie*, 4:263, 2 May 1628.

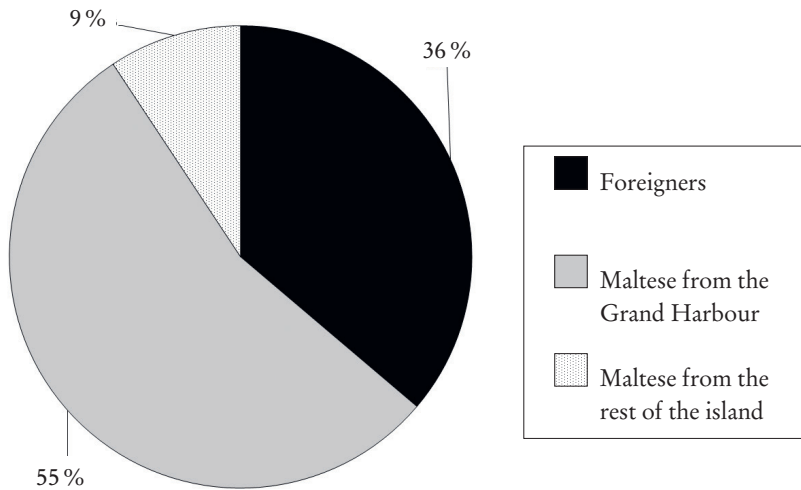
⁵⁵ Grandchamp, *La France en Tunisie*, 6:4, 8 February 1651.

⁵⁶ Grandchamp, *La France en Tunisie*, 6:261, 19 July 1660.

⁵⁷ Grandchamp, *La France en Tunisie*, 4:263, 2 May 1628.

diers, etc.). During the seventeenth century, 36% of marriages in the Grand Harbour united Maltese with foreigners who were French (40% at the end of the seventeenth century), Italian (28%), Greek (about 14%) and from northern Europe (about 4%).

Proportion of mixed and non-mixed marriages in the Grand Harbour (1585–1670)



Sources: Archives of the Cathedral of Mdina [ACM], AP Valetta, Porto Salvo, Liber Matrimoniorum, vols I, II, III, IV; ACM, AP Valetta, St Paul, Liber Matrimoniorum I, II, III; ACM, AP Vittoriosa, Liber I Baptizatorum, matrimoniorum, mortuorumque, Liber Matrimoniorum, II; ACM, AP Senglea, Liber Matrimoniorum I, II; ACM, AP Cospicua, Liber I Baptizatorum, matrimoniorum, confirmatorum et mortuorum, Liber II Matrimoniorum.

The large number of marriages to foreigners proves that Catholic immigrants were quickly integrated into the port's society: between 1575 and 1670, 80.1% of foreigners had married women of a different origin from their own, and most of them (86.4%) had married Maltese women (perfectly identifiable by their surnames, such as Abela, Agius, Attard, Azzopardi, Balzan, Bonnici, Burlo, Caruana, Cassar, Falson, Farruggia, Fenech, Greg, Imbroll, Mifsud, Sammut, Spiteri, Vella, Xi-

cluna, Zahra, Zammit, etc.).⁵⁸ Whatever the port city, foreign Catholics (or Catholic converts) married easily. In 1589, Amaroza Camilleri from Senglea married a French immigrant, François Macigue;⁵⁹ in 1621, Prudenzia Greg from Senglea married a Dutchman, Cornelius Closen;⁶⁰ in 1635, Giuliana Azzopardi from Vittoriosa married a Greek from Zante⁶¹ and Florentia Xerri from Bormla married a Greek from Candia;⁶² in 1645, Petronilla Farruggia from Valetta married Frenchman Antoine Armage;⁶³ in 1665, the Maltese Angelica Copi from Vittoriosa married a Frenchman named Pierre Viane,⁶⁴ Cattarina Xicluna from Valletta married a Russian,⁶⁵ while Matteola Caruana from Senglea married a Frenchman named Gabriel Dougal.⁶⁶ Newcomers sometimes married foreigners too: in 1589, Frenchman Urbain from Provence married a Neapolitan woman in Senglea;⁶⁷ in 1605, Candiote Elena, who had come to the island with her parents, married a newly immigrated Rhodian;⁶⁸ in 1615, in Valletta, Frenchman Nicolas Lacroix married Lorenzina, daughter of an Englishman who had come to Malta;⁶⁹ in 1655, Maruzza Honorat, daughter of a Frenchman, was married to Giuseppe Carcasno from Sicily and in 1665,⁷⁰ the Greek Maria from Milos, who had arrived in Bormla, married a German.⁷¹ All these foreigners had married easily, as military and maritime activities left many women widowed and orphaned, with no male emotional or material support.

More dangerous for the preservation of religious identity were associations or friendships with Jews and Muslims, whether free or slaves. Contacts between Maltese and non-Christian slaves were often the result of poverty and the desire to leave the island for North Africa. In 1598, two Maltese women, one a slave and the other free, fled to Barbary with their Muslim lovers, one of whom was a slave and

⁵⁸ Godfrey Wettinger, 'Late Medieval Maltese Nicknames', *Journal of Maltese Studies* 6 (1971): 40–6.

⁵⁹ ACM, AP Senglea, *Lib. Mat. I*, 6, 6 August 1589.

⁶⁰ ACM, AP Senglea, *Lib. Mat. I*, 159, 31 January 1621.

⁶¹ ACM, AP Vittoriosa, *Lib. Mat. II*, fol. 35r, 15 September 1635.

⁶² ACM, AP Cospicua, *Lib. I*, fol. 49r, 14 January 1635.

⁶³ ACM, AP Valetta, Porto Salvo, *Lib. Mat. III*, fol. 165r, 10 August 1645.

⁶⁴ ACM, AP Vittoriosa, *Lib. Mat. II*, fol. 183r, 11 March 1665.

⁶⁵ ACM, AP La Valette, San Paolo, *Lib. Mat. III*, fol. 65r, 17 September 1665.

⁶⁶ ACM, AP Senglea, *Lib. Mat. I*, 607, 24 May 1665.

⁶⁷ ACM, AP Senglea, *Lib. Mat. I*, 6, 10 August 1589.

⁶⁸ ACM, AP Cospicua, *Lib. Mat. I*, fol. 11v, 19 June 1605.

⁶⁹ ACM, AP Valetta, Saint-Paul, *Lib. Mat. I*, fol. 72r, 28 November 1615.

⁷⁰ ACM, AP Cospicua, *Lib. Mat. II*, fol. 18v, 18 April 1655.

⁷¹ ACM, AP Cospicua, *Lib. Mat. I*, fol. 78r, 28 October 1665.

the other a freeman.⁷² In 1648, three Christian women from Valletta (a widow and two poor young girls) tried to flee to Muslim shores with their Muslim lovers;⁷³ captured by the port guard, they were sentenced to imprisonment by the inquisitor few months later.⁷⁴ In 1617, sailor Gioanne Calamia from Vittoriosa, and unemployed Francesco Carcep from Gozo, aged 18 and 20, attempted to flee with Jewish and Muslim slaves to Barbary, with the aim ‘to become Turks and earn money’ (*‘di farsi Turco e guadagnar denaro’*).⁷⁵ After being captured by soldiers, the two young men were judged very severely by the inquisitor, even though they had pleaded innocence, and their sentence to the galleys was longer than that of the slaves, even those who had converted to Catholicism: the four slaves were sentenced to four years’ rowing, while Gioanne and Francesco were sentenced to six years.⁷⁶

In the early modern era, Malta had become a ‘place’ in the Mediterranean between the Christian and Muslim shores. The economic dynamism of the Grand Harbour had encouraged population growth and maintained a high level of cosmopolitanism in the port through the regular arrival and settlement of foreigners. However, opening to ransoming traffic and the goods trade, and intercultural exchanges did not make the Maltese border disappear. The apparent connectivity and diversity of origins were always counterbalanced by a strong attachment to Catholicism. Contacts with both shores of the Mediterranean never dampened the awareness of otherness nor the danger that this otherness could represent. Non-Catholics and non-Christians were carefully excluded because it was impossible for some of them to settle in Malta and for others to live there freely. Indeed, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Maltese society reflected the duality of the frontier and the island had become a perfect ‘frontier place’ as Michel Foucher defined it: ‘The right frontier? Natural but discreet, open but protective, a place for exchanges and contacts, chats and encounters – in short, ideal!’⁷⁷

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⁷² Archives of the Inquisition of Malta [AIM], Processi 16A, fols 187r–188r, 27 August 1598.

⁷³ AIM, Proc. 61B, fols 741r–768r, August 1648.

⁷⁴ AIM, Proc. 61B, fol. 781v, 21 November 1648.

⁷⁵ AIM, Proc. 38A, fol. 261r.

⁷⁶ AIM, Proc. 38A, fols 308r–308v, 13 July 1617, inquisitor’s sentence.

⁷⁷ Michel Foucher, *Fronts et frontières* (Paris: Fayard, 1991), 9.

Abstract

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Malta became an important place of connectivity in the Mediterranean. A fiefdom of the Order of St John, the Maltese archipelago became the main Christian corsair port in the western Mediterranean, open to maritime trade but extremely closed to religious differences. Malta became a place of ransoming slaves, but also a key location for the materialisation of the Christian frontier and defence of Christendom. The religious authorities (the Order, the Inquisition and the clergy) protected Catholicism on the island. In modern Malta, cosmopolitanism existed, and foreigners were welcomed, but only if they were Catholics.

Keywords: Malta, frontier, connectivity, intercultural exchanges, religious surveillance

ALEXANDRIA – BETWEEN DESERT AND SEA IN OTTOMAN EGYPT

At least since Fernand Braudel's *Mediterranean* (1949), geography, climate and space – the arid soil, the winter winds, islands and inlets as havens for smugglers – have set the frame for the study of human activity and statecraft in the Mediterranean basin.¹ The long history of the port of Alexandria, founded in the fourth century BCE, is very much this kind of Mediterranean history, shaped by aridity and connections across the sea. But it is also a history of Egypt's role as a fulcrum towards the Indian Ocean, and of the annual rhythms of the northward flow of the River Nile from the Great Lakes of the Rift Valley.² Before the contemporary era, Alexandria's fortunes were largely shaped by the city's unique geography: a deep, natural harbour bordered by desert and, most significantly, located 60 kilometres from the Nile.³ For two millennia, the history of trade and settlement in Alexandria can be told as human beings' ongoing and constant struggle to command fresh water amidst desert and salt. These specific local dynamics exemplify the call by some of Braudel's most astute students and critics for an

¹ Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, (Paris: Armand Colin, 1949).

² Janet Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250–1350* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 12; for Egypt's role in the world system, 149.

³ As measured along the coast, between Alexandria and the mouth of the Rosetta branch. When the city was founded, it was only thirty kilometres away from the Nile. Due to sedimentation of the canopic branch, the river was seventy kilometres away from Alexandria in the early medieval period. Jean-Yves Empereur, 'L'eau d'Alexandrie. L'alchimie du H₂O au Centre d'Études Alexandrines', in *Du Nil à Alexandrie: Histoire d'Eaux*, ed. Isabelle Hairy (Alexandria: Centre d'Études Alexandrines, 2011), 16–35 (29–30).

approach to Mediterranean history that treats the basin not as a unified space, but as a series of microecologies in which towns and ports ‘can be seen as “epiphenomenal” to larger ecological processes’.⁴

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries represent a low point within the *longue durée* of the human effort to supply Alexandria with fresh water from the Nile. This is not to suggest that during those centuries Egypt’s Ottoman rulers were uninterested in Alexandria’s fortunes; as will be discussed below, there were structural reasons for Alexandria’s relative nadir in the early modern period. However, the fact remains that the early modern city was a shadow of what it had been and what it would become by the middle of the nineteenth century. While no precise population figures exist for the period before the first official census in the late nineteenth century, reliable estimates place the population of Alexandria at around 10,000 residents in 1800.⁵ The city would swell to more than 100,000 by the mid-nineteenth century, and to nearly 450,000 by the First World War.⁶ But during the late medieval period and until the nineteenth century, Alexandria, one of the finest natural harbours in the Mediterranean basin, was a struggling coastal outpost, marooned at the arid frontiers of the salty sea and barren desert.

Alexandria is located to the west of the Nile Delta. The city was originally founded on a narrow strip of rocky land sandwiched between the Mediterranean to the north and the brackish waters of Lake Mareotis (Arabic: Maryut) to the south (Fig. 6.1). A natural seawall, the site of the ancient Lighthouse of Alexandria (Pharos), was connected to the mainland by the construction of a narrow land bridge (Fig. 6.2). Over time, this bridge was widened and built up, giving Alexandria’s harbour its characteristic shape, like an anvil or a strange mushroom.⁷ By the medieval period, this infill had become a large peninsula, bifurcating Alexandria’s natural harbour to form two crescent-like ports.

⁴ Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 90.

⁵ Robert Ilbert, *Alexandrie 1830–1930: histoire d’une communauté citadine*, 2 vols (Cairo: IFAO, 1996), 2:754–8. Michael Reimer offers a somewhat higher estimate, around 15,000, in ‘Ottoman Alexandria: The Paradox of Decline and the Reconfiguration of Power in Eighteenth-Century Arab Provinces’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 37, no. 2 (1994): 107–146 (115).

⁶ Ilbert, *Alexandrie 1830–1930*, 2:754–8.

⁷ Jamal al-Din al-Shayyal, *al-Iskandariyah: tubughrafiyat al-madinah wa-ta-tawwuruha min aqdam al-‘usur ila al-waqt al-hadir* (Cairo: Dar al-Ma’arif, 1951), 191. The anvil/mushroom comparison is my own.

Alexandria's fortunes under Ottoman rule have been described as a 'paradox'.⁸ With Egypt's incorporation into the Ottoman Empire in 1516, Alexandria became a node in a constellation of eastern Mediterranean ports and communities within a common legal jurisdiction and cultural framework. By the eighteenth century, Alexandria was the beating heart of the main commercial 'artery' in the Ottoman economy, which ran south to north from Alexandria, through Izmir, to Istanbul.⁹ Despite Alexandria's tremendous commercial and administrative significance for the empire, the Ottomans made limited attempts to maintain the man-made canal that formed the city's 'umbilical cord', linking it to the life-giving fresh water of the Nile.¹⁰ The maintenance of this canal was a constant concern for Egypt's rulers over the centuries. If the canal dried up, boats could not carry valuable goods between the harbour and the river, and the population of Alexandria would struggle to obtain adequate fresh water. The canal was completely non-navigable for most of the early modern period. It only brought drinking water to the city during the annual inundation of the Nile in the late summer. This water was stored in great cisterns to supply the city for the rest of the year, supplemented by winter rains and costly private water sellers.

It is reasonable to ask why Ottoman policymakers, who were acutely aware of Alexandria's importance and potential as a source of commercial revenues, did not try harder to improve the port's com-

⁸ Reimer, 'Ottoman Alexandria', 108.

⁹ Daniel Panzac, 'International and Domestic Maritime Trade in the Ottoman Empire in the 18th Century', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 24, no. 2 (May 1992): 189–206 (195–7).

¹⁰ Isabelle Hairy and Oueded Sennoune, 'Géographie historique du canal d'Alexandrie', *Annales Islamologiques* 40 (2006): 247–78 (247–50). The concept of the canal as Alexandria's 'umbilical cord' is taken from André Bernand, 'Alexandrie et son ancien cordon ombilical', *Bulletin de la Société Française d'Égyptologie* 48 (1967): 13–23. Two of the Mamluk sultans were famed for their repairs to the canal to re-establish navigation: Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun repaired the canal in 1310, allowing 'Alexandria to be watered all year' according to medieval historian al-Maqrizi. By 1368, however, the canal had become clogged with sand once again. Sultan al-Ashraf Barsbay cleaned the canal and moved its mouth to Rahmaniya in 1423, giving the canal the name 'al-Ashrafiya', which it would carry through the early modern period until 1820.

mercial infrastructure or liveability.¹¹ Michael Reimer suggests that this apparent disinterest was due to the short tenure of centrally appointed governors, who stayed in Egypt on average for only one or two years, or to the rise of the short-sighted tax farmers who had come to dominate Egyptian politics and administration by the seventeenth century. Indeed, in pre-nineteenth-century Ottoman Egypt there was rarely the political will or the capacity for enormous infrastructure projects.¹²

1. *The living city*

The financial, political and geological obstacles to maintaining the Alexandria canal were enormous, and by the eighteenth century, ‘Alexandria was little more than an appendage of its harbors’.¹³ Meanwhile, individual officials and wealthy families built their own commercial structures in the port. Merchants of all stripes built storerooms (*wikalas*), while the Ottoman governor of Egypt (and later grand vizier) Koca Sinan Pasha constructed a great covered market (*khan*) and established it as a pious endowment (*waqf*) in the 1570s.¹⁴

One can also reasonably turn the question of Alexandria’s early modern aridity on its head. As one scholar of the medieval Nile queries, ‘Why maintain a canal connection that is both costly and a poor performer in navigational terms when, ostensibly, Alexandria is already connected to the [Nile’s] Rosetta branch by sea?’¹⁵ Indeed, the Ottoman government’s motivation to tackle the public works nightmare of the Alexandria canal was tempered by the sixteenth-century rise of the city of Rosetta, sixty kilometres east of Alexandria along the coast, which came to act as a sort of living city to Alexandria’s gasping harbour. Rosetta sprang up on the western bank of the Nile’s western

¹¹ Hairy and Sennoune note that the last major attempt to repair and dredge the canal was in 1573 (fifty years after the Ottoman conquest), but that only small-scale maintenance projects were carried out thereafter until the nineteenth century (Hairy and Sennoune, ‘Géographie historique du canal d’Alexandrie’, 251).

¹² Alan Mikhail discusses a variety of local infrastructure projects throughout the eighteenth century in *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt: An Environmental History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). See for example, 178–200.

¹³ Reimer, ‘Ottoman Alexandria’, 127.

¹⁴ Ghislaine Alleaume, ‘Heurs et malheurs du legs d’un grand officier impérial: le *waqf* de Sinân Pacha (v. 1520–1596) à Alexandrie’, *Turcica* 43 (2011): 419–79 (422–3).

¹⁵ John P. Cooper, *The Medieval Nile: Route, Navigation, and Landscape in Islamic Egypt* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2014), 43–4.

branch where it met the Mediterranean. A rather insignificant village prior to the Ottoman conquest, the Ottomans designated Rosetta as the site of the imperial storerooms (*Anbar-ı Amire*), where Egyptian products destined for other imperial institutions (the palace kitchens, the army) were collected, registered and stored until shipment could be arranged to Istanbul.¹⁶

For the purposes of long-distance trade in the Mediterranean, Alexandria and Rosetta came to form a loosely symbiotic unit. As in many of nature's symbioses, the relationship could be described as vaguely parasitic, as Alexandria's stunted growth during the early modern period corresponded to Rosetta's 'golden age' in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹⁷ Rosetta was ideally situated to receive goods travelling up the Nile from Cairo – which may have arrived from the Red Sea or from irrigated fields further down the Nile Valley. But Rosetta's harbour – effectively just the estuarial mouth of the river where it joined the sea – was notoriously shallow with strong tides, winds and sand banks that prohibited large vessels from entering. Rather than moving goods to Alexandria via canal, local river captains carried wheat, coffee and sugar on flat-bottomed skiffs up the Nile to Rosetta, where they unloaded their cargoes. Goods destined for export to Mediterranean markets – Istanbul, Izmir, Venice or Marseille – were then shuttled westward on the small ships of Egyptian sea captains, hugging the coast on the short voyage to Alexandria.

Transporting cargo along the coast between Rosetta and Alexandria was undoubtedly inefficient and presented many opportunities for grift as valuable goods arriving from the Mediterranean passed through the hands of porters, customs officials, warehouse operators and local coastal sea captains before being unloaded all over again in Rosetta. However, these inefficiencies must have seemed tolerable when com-

¹⁶ Stanford J. Shaw, *The Financial and Administrative Organization and Development of Ottoman Egypt, 1517–1798* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 272–3.

¹⁷ Jalilah Jamal al-Qadi, Muhammad Tahir al-Sadiq, and Muhammad Husam Isma'il, *Rashid: al-Nash'ah, al-Izdihar, al-Inhisar* (Cairo: Dar al-Afaq al-'Arabiyya, 1999), 45. The customs offices of Alexandria and Rosetta were combined into a single tax farm in the mid-sixteenth century. Rosetta's customs revenues were reportedly incidental, 'created not to generate more taxes, but to monitor fraud in the trade travelling through Alexandria and Bulaq' (M. le Comte Estève, 'Mémoire sur les Finances de l'Égypte', *Description de l'Égypte*. Vol. 5. *État Moderne I* (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1809), 352, own translation).

pared with the challenge of dredging, widening and maintaining a navigable canal linking the Nile to the sea.

2. *Space and society*

Alexandria's population, while relatively small during the early modern period, was still diverse. The Muslim majority of the city's inhabitants included Egyptians as well as substantial communities of wealthy Maghrebi (North African) merchants and others from around the Ottoman domain including Albania, Crete, Salonika, Anatolia and the Greek islands. Ottoman non-Muslim (*zimmi*) communities included a small number of Jews and somewhat larger numbers of Armenians and Syrian Christians. European merchants established trading houses and consular operations, but the European presence in Alexandria was relatively small. France was Egypt's primary European trading partner by a wide margin, but most years there were probably no more than twenty French merchants and consular staff in Alexandria. The English Levant Company did very little trade in Alexandria and had no permanent consular or commercial presence there to speak of until the final decades of the eighteenth century.¹⁸

The early modern period saw a significant realignment of the port's urban geography, wherein nearly the entire population of the city left the old walled city (the so-called 'Arab city') and settled on the mole (peninsular infill) connecting the mainland to the rocky strip where the ancient lighthouse had been replaced by the citadel of Mamluk sultan Qaitbay in the fifteenth century. This new settlement was called the 'new city' or the 'Turkish city', and migration beyond the city walls initially began as an elite phenomenon, as the notables of the city (the so-called 'Turks') left the decaying warrens behind the medieval walls and built from scratch. The map attributed to the early-sixteenth-century Ottoman navigator Piri Reis shows a small number of homes hugging the edge of the eastern harbour beyond the city walls (Fig. 6.3). A European map of Alexandria from 1619 shows that the main area of settlement was still the old city, while maps from the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries show a sparsely populated walled city with the settlement concentrated on the peninsula.¹⁹ This development may

¹⁸ Alfred C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), 33, 77, 125, 166 and 174.

¹⁹ Reimer, 'Ottoman Alexandria', 116.

reflect the relative security of Ottoman rule in the Mediterranean by the end of the sixteenth century.²⁰ While piracy, corsairing and illicit trade plagued mariners at sea, the populations on Egypt's Mediterranean coast did not live in fear of attack from the sea until Napoleon's forces sailed into Alexandria's harbour in July 1798. No longer concerned with the security provided by the city's ancient walls, the Alexandrians erected new commercial structures, mosques and residential quarters closer to the harbour that provided their livelihoods. New customs offices were built on the peninsula and a new Jewish quarter sprang up nearby; Jewish agents were in charge of customs in Egypt's ports until they were dismissed and replaced by Syrian Christians under Egypt's ambitious local ruler Ali Bey al-Kabir in the 1760s.²¹ South of the Jewish quarter, the influential Maghrebi community established their own neighbourhood (Harat al-Maghariba) near the imperial arsenal (*tersane*).²²

When Ottoman explorer Evliya Çelebi visited Alexandria around 1670, he attested to the city's new development. The *varoş* (extramural settlement) was 'a thriving new city', only about eighty years old, where 'lofty palaces and khans and Friday mosques are still being constructed'.²³ Evliya was a traveller first, an Ottoman statesman second, and a storyteller as a close third; he thus had a tendency to embellish and exaggerate for narrative effect. This helps to explain why he can proclaim on one line that seventeenth-century Alexandria had '12 elaborate coffee houses, each with a capacity of 500 customers, with singers and musicians performing day and night', only to attest a few lines later that the city had no public baths (*hammam*) and that 'the main roads are unpaved sand and brackish soil ... Indeed, there is no fresh water at all'. Whereas many European visitors to Alexandria saw only the neglected remains of the city's classical past, Evliya's account tended to conflate and blur descriptions of Alexandria's (past or present) greatness with testaments to greatness in ruin.

²⁰ Alleaume, 'Heurs et malheurs du legs d'un grand officier imperial', 431–2.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 430–1.

²² *Ibid.*, 434.

²³ Robert Dankoff, Nuran Tezcan, and Michael D. Sheridan, *Ottoman Explorations of the Nile: Evliya Çelebi's "Matchless Pearl These Reports of the Nile" Map and His Accounts of the Nile and the Horn of Africa in The Book of Travels* (London: Gingko Press, 2018), 147–8.

Beneath the city of Alexandria is a network of water channels, divided in chessboard fashion. In ancient times these channels issued in 7,000 wells in the city. Of these, 3,000 are still visible ... The water of the blessed Nile comes to Alexandria from [the] Nasiriya [canal], next to the village of Rahmaniya, a distance of 2 stages. Boats also come and go between the two cities on this canal (*tur'a*). There is a pavilion on the shore of the canal (*kbaliij*) where the Alexandrians pitch their tents every year and hold celebrations for the Cutting of the Nile, when water from the river is made to flow into the city at three places. It is a great spectacle and a great public work that no ruler living today would be capable of performing.²⁴

In short, the early modern city may have been newly built, but it was probably not an especially luxurious place to live. The city reportedly had eighty-eight mosques by the eighteenth century, but only one (the mosque of Abu'l-'Abbas al-Mursi, still standing) was of any architectural or cultural repute. The arid terrain could support few orchards and gardens, which spread over the remains of the recent and classical human settlements behind the medieval walls.²⁵ There was almost no agricultural production, making the city almost entirely reliant upon coastal shipments from Rosetta for its sustenance.²⁶ Plague visited the city frequently, the result of its intensive trading networks and lack of systematic quarantine. According to Daniel Panzac, between 1701 and 1844, Alexandria saw fifty-nine years of plague – two years out of every five.²⁷ Most outbreaks carried off no more than 2 to 3% of the city's population, but catastrophic epidemics could reduce the city's population by 25 to 30%.²⁸ In the eighteenth century, such was the case in 1701, 1736, 1759, 1785 and 1791. In the years in which serious plague struck, it swept through Alexandria following an eerily precise time-

²⁴ Dankoff, Tezcan, and Sheridan, *Ottoman Explorations of the Nile*, 146. I have given the English translation from Dankoff, but this temporal ambiguity also exists in the original Turkish. See Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, ed. Seyit Ali Kahraman, Yücel Dağlı, and Robert Dankoff (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi, 2007), 10:359.

²⁵ Reimer, 'Ottoman Alexandria': 126.

²⁶ On the need to provision Alexandria as a motivation for renovating the canal in 1810, see Mikhail, *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt*, 245–9. For how the Ottomans handled one such provisioning crisis in 1791 with grain from Rosetta, see Zoe Griffith, 'Egyptian Ports in the Ottoman Mediterranean, 1760–1820' (PhD diss., Brown University, 2017), 176–80.

²⁷ Daniel Panzac, 'Alexandrie: Peste et croissance urbaine (XVIIe–XIXe siècles)', *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée* 46 (1987): 81–90 (81).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 85.

line, arriving during the chilly, rain-drenched days of January, cresting during the early spring in March and April, and vanishing with the arrival of the dry summer heat in late June.²⁹ Alexandria's cemeteries were never far from where people settled, surrounding the newly built town on the peninsula to the north and south, and scattered among the gardens within the old city walls.³⁰

Alexandria's two ports lay on either side of the newly inhabited peninsula. The western port, sometimes called the 'Old Port', offered better protection from the Mediterranean's fierce winds and waves and was thus preferred by ship captains who dropped anchor in Alexandria for trade or repairs. The Ottoman government restricted its use to Muslim merchant ships and Ottoman navy galleons. The arsenal (*tersane*) was likewise located in the western port. Non-Muslim Ottoman ship captains as well as Europeans were relegated to the eastern 'New Port'. European captains often complained to their consuls about the hazards of exposure in the New Port. Such segregation was a reflection of Alexandria's population, which, while diverse, was hardly 'cosmopolitan' in the way that the city would come to embody the term by the turn of the twentieth century.³¹ The city's Muslims were favoured within Ottoman political culture and regarded themselves as deserving of special treatment. The association of Muslim identity with the Ottoman political community increased with rising European economic and military power over the course of the eighteenth century.³²

3. Authority and identity

In the early modern period, Egypt's chroniclers and historians wrote the history of Egypt as a history of Cairo (al-Qahira, 'the Victorious'), a city founded by Fatimid caliph al-Mu'izz in 969 CE. The conflation of Egypt with its capital city dates to the conquest of Egypt by newly Islamised Arab armies in 640 CE. After defeating what remained of the Byzantine armies in Egypt, Arab general 'Amr Ibn al-'As relocat-

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Reimer, 'Ottoman Alexandria', 125–6.

³¹ For a representative example, see Robert Ilbert and Ilios Yannakakis, eds, *Alexandrie 1860–1960: un modèle éphémère de convivialité: Communautés et identité cosmopolite* (Paris: Les Editions Autrement, 1992).

³² Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 233–6.

ed provincial administration away from Alexandria on the coast and stationed the Arab-Muslim troops in encampments (Arabic *masr*, pl. *amsar*) on the ruins of ancient Babylon. The new city was one of several inland provincial garrison cities, like Kufa, Basra and Kairouan, established by the conquering Arab armies in former Byzantine and Sasanian territory. *Masr* is what Arabic speakers call Egypt, and its local variant, *Misr*, is also what Egyptians call the megalopolis of Cairo. In the worlds of Amitav Ghosh, 'Cairo is Egypt's own metaphor for itself'.³³

Cairo was and is Egypt's hegemonic city. At its early modern height in the seventeenth century, its population numbered around 300,000 while Egypt's next largest cities – the Nile-Mediterranean ports of Rosetta and Damietta – reached only around 30,000 each.³⁴ Alexandria's population was about half of that. Cairo's disproportionate share of Egypt's population has distorted the writing of Egyptian history, in present-day academia and in the early modern tradition of chronicle writing. Although Egypt's port cities were important and not so geographically far from the capital, early modern historians writing from Cairo treated the Mediterranean coast as if it were the other side of the sultan's domain, perhaps in an attempt to curry favour and amass an audience among the patrons in Cairo's ruling elite.³⁵ Alexandria rarely features in Egyptian chronicles, except when the port appears in formulaic constructions of 'coming to' and 'going away' from Cairo's (and hence Egypt's) political and social realm. For example, each chapter of the Damurdashi chronicles, composed in colloquial Arabic by semi-educated soldiers in the mid-eighteenth century, begins with the arrival of a new Ottoman governor from Syria by land, or from Istanbul by sea. 'A messenger came to Cairo with the news of the arrival of

³³ Amitav Ghosh, *In an Antique Land* (London: Granta Books, 1998), 32.

³⁴ For Cairo: Jane Hathaway, *The Arab Lands under Ottoman Rule, 1516–1800* (Harlow, UK: Pearson Longman, 2008), 145. For Rosetta: Alexandre Lezine and A. R. Abdul-Tawab, 'Introduction à l'Étude des Maisons Anciennes de Rosette', *Annales Islamologiques* 10 (1972): 149–206 (153).

³⁵ Nelly Hanna believes there may be a rich manuscript tradition awaiting discovery, which might include more provincial chronicles and 'commoner chronicles' written by figures outside of the military and religious sectors, such as the ones studied by Dana Sajdi for the Levant. But they remain to be found. Compare Dana Sajdi, *The Barber of Damascus: Nouveau Literacy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Levant* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013) and Nelly Hanna, 'The Chronicles of Ottoman Egypt: History or Entertainment?', in *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt, c. 950–1800*, ed. Hugh Kennedy (Leiden: Brill, 2001): 237–50.

Hasan Pasha al-Silahdar (r. 1688–89) in Alexandria... [Senior officials] escorted him to Rosetta, where he spent the usual days'.³⁶ The pasha's arrival denotes both a political theatre and a repetitive literary trope of the 'sultan-pasha chronicle' genre.³⁷ When Kur Ahmad Pasha arrived in Alexandria in 1748, 'the reception party went to receive him as usual. They greeted him and offered to escort him to the port of Rosetta, but he declined, saying "I'm in no hurry"'.³⁸ The chronicler does not elaborate on what the pasha did with his leisurely days in Alexandria.

The eighteenth-century chronicles are famously preoccupied with political intrigue among competing elite factions in Cairo. If these accounts are to be believed, the Cairene elites' favourite way to dispense with rivals was murder by beheading or, if they were feeling generous, exile to the Mediterranean ports.³⁹ By positioning the ports as temporary sites of exile, these narratives explicitly cast these spaces outside of Cairo's sphere of power. In reality, figures exiled to the coastal cities found opportunities for personal enrichment and to make powerful contacts among another (albeit more peripheral) set of commercial and political elites. For example, chronicler 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti describes how Amir Ali Bey Habashi, a mamluk of the great Qazdağlı leader Ali Bey al-Kabir, was exiled to Rosetta and executed there in the 1770s following the death of his patron.⁴⁰ The violence of al-Jabarti's political chronicle is belied by a detail from the Islamic court of Rosetta, showing that the exiled Amir Ali spent a very large sum of money

³⁶ Daniel Crecelius and 'Abd al-Wahhab Bakr, eds and trans., *al-Damurdashi's Chronicle of Egypt, 1688–1755: al-durra al-musana fi akhbar al-kinana* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 27.

³⁷ For example, this same sequence of events is used in Damurdashi's chronicle to describe the arrival of Kara Muhammad Pasha, 1699–1704 (p. 111); Hasan Pasha al-Silahdar, 1707–1709 (p. 135); Ibrahim Qapudan Pasha, 1710 (p. 143); Ali Pasha al-Izmirli, 1717–1719 (p. 202); Raghīb Muhammad Pasha, 1746–1748 (p. 361) and Ali Pasha ibn al-Hakim, 1755–1757 (p. 388). Jane Hathaway has a useful explanation for the 'sultan-pasha chronicle' genre in 'Sultans, Pashas, *Taqwims*, and *Mühimmes*: A Reconsideration of Chronicle-Writing in Eighteenth Century Ottoman Egypt', in *Eighteenth Century Egypt: The Arabic Manuscript Sources*, ed. Daniel Crecelius (Claremont, CA: Regina Books, 1990), 51–78.

³⁸ Crecelius and Bakr, *al-Damurdashi's Chronicle of Egypt*, 370.

³⁹ Ahmad Shalabi Ibn 'Abd al-Ghani, *Awdah al-isharat fi man tawalla misr min al-wuzara wa'l-bashat*, ed. 'Abd al-Rahim 'Abd al-Rahman 'Abd al-Rahim (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khanji, 1978), 306–9, 401–2, 418–20, 476 and 569.

⁴⁰ 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti, *'Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti's History of Egypt: 'Aja'ib al-athar fi'l-tarajim wa'l-akhbar*, ed. and trans. Thomas Philipp and Moshe Perlmann (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1994), 1:253, 351; 2:23, 25.

to rent rice paddies irrigated by five wells from a Rosettan notable in 1776, before his death in 1778.⁴¹

So, from the perspective of Cairo, the cities of Egypt's Mediterranean coast were politically (if not geographically) distant and remote. Meanwhile, the populations of the ports had their own networks, interests and cultures that they tried to maintain beyond Cairo's hegemonic grasp. Although Alexandria was not the largest of Egypt's coastal cities in the early modern period, it retained enough status, infrastructure and prestige to act as a political and administrative counterweight to Cairo. Ottoman administration in Egypt was marked by a persistent struggle between the central government in Istanbul and various local groups who vied for power. For example, customs revenues from Egypt's port cities were intended to cover the expenses accrued by the Ottoman-appointed governor in Cairo, but after the mid-seventeenth century, localized members of the Janissary military regiment took over the tax farms of all six of Egypt's ports – Alexandria, Rosetta, Damietta, Bulaq, Qusayr and Suez. By the early eighteenth century, Cairo's Janissary ranks had incubated one political household – the Qazdağlıya – that managed to outflank its rivals and consolidate its power over Egypt's urban and rural tax farms.⁴² For the remainder of the eighteenth century, until Napoleon's forces put an effective end to the Qazdağlı house, Alexandria constituted an important pillar of resistance to the household's hegemony in Egypt.

Alexandria often represented an alternative locus of power in Egypt. When the French first opened consular relations in Egypt under the terms of the Ottoman capitulations in the sixteenth century, they established their consulate in Alexandria and stationed vice consulates in Cairo and Rosetta.⁴³ As wealth and power consolidated in Cairo around the Red Sea spice and coffee trades, these roles were reversed. The consul decamped to Cairo, and French merchants in Alexandria would be represented by a vice consul until the late eighteenth century. With the rise of the Qazdağlıs and their alliance with imperial Russia,

⁴¹ Dar al-Watha'iq al-Qawmiya (Egyptian National Archives), Mahkamat Rashid 337, case 206 (23 Shawwal 1190/7 December 1776). The rent agreement was 1,060 riyals for fifty-nine years, two months and twenty-six days.

⁴² Jane Hathaway, *The Politics of Households in Ottoman Egypt: The Rise of the Qazdağlıs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁴³ Raoul Clément, *Les Français d'Égypte aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Cairo: Imprimerie de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1960), 9.

however, Cairo was deemed too dangerous for diplomacy, and the consulate moved back to Alexandria in 1777.

When the Ottoman government attempted a military campaign in Egypt in 1786 to unseat the Qazdağlıs and re-establish centralised control, they discussed a plan to dilute Cairo's power. Since the Ottoman conquest, Egypt had been governed as one enormous province with Cairo as its capital. From his seat in the Cairo citadel, the governor had limited authority over the northern coast and even less authority in Upper Egypt to the south. In the 1780s, Ottoman reformers floated the idea of dividing Egypt into three provinces, governed from Cairo, Alexandria and Jirja, but the plan was never implemented.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, there is significant evidence that the population of Alexandria held more favourable views of the Ottoman government across the Mediterranean than of Cairo's ruling household.⁴⁵ In the years leading up to the French invasion of Egypt, France's consul in Alexandria wrote to Paris of the townspeople's 'desire to wage a war of independence' against the rulers in Cairo.⁴⁶ In the final decades of the eighteenth century, the municipal council (*divan*) of Alexandria became the site of imperial governance in Egypt, registering Ottoman orders for naval materiel and staple grains to be delivered to Istanbul to supply the navy and residents of the capital.

As the dust settled in Egypt following the French occupation (1798–1801) and the violent power struggles between British, Ottoman and Mamluk forces that followed the French expulsion, the imperial government actively supported efforts, stalled for centuries, to restore the Ashrafiya canal linking Alexandria directly to the Nile.⁴⁷ The power vacuum in Egypt after 1801 was filled by ambitious Ottoman governor, Mehmed Ali Pasha (r. 1804–1848), an Albanian commander who would ultimately establish a heritable viceroyalty in Egypt for himself and his heirs that would rule in Egypt until 1952. In 1817, Mehmed Ali wrote to the reigning Ottoman sultan, Mahmud II (r. 1808–1839), that

⁴⁴ Reimer, 'Ottoman Alexandria': 137. For resistance in Upper Egypt, see Zeinab Abul-Magd, *Imagined Empires: A History of Revolt in Egypt* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2013).

⁴⁵ Michael Reimer describes 'a marked sense of Ottoman loyalism' among the population of Alexandria during the late eighteenth century, giving rise to 'a drive for independence from the regime in Cairo'. Reimer, 'Ottoman Alexandria', 108.

⁴⁶ Centre des Archives diplomatiques de la Courneuve (Paris), 'Alexandrie, Correspondance Consulaire', 1792–1804, vol. 16, 16 Janvier 1792 [p. 2], own translation.

⁴⁷ Mikhail, *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt*, 255–83.

if the canal could be restored, 'the city's growth in both geographic size and population would make Alexandria so beautiful that people would praise the sultan until the day of judgment'.⁴⁸ These plans held great appeal for the reformist sultan Mahmud, who saw the value in recentring Egypt's economic, political and administrative life in a revitalised Alexandria.⁴⁹

Like in the Ptolemaic or medieval periods, providing Alexandria with a year-round supply of fresh water from the Nile was foundational to Sultan Mahmud and Mehmed Ali's designs for Alexandria. Repairing and widening the Ashrafiya canal was also deemed essential as it would allow ships to travel directly from Alexandria's Mediterranean harbour to the Nile and onwards to Cairo; before the construction of railway infrastructure, it enabled the cotton and wheat produced in the Nile Valley and Delta to travel directly to Alexandria's growing port.⁵⁰ With a viable, direct connection between Alexandria and the Nile, Rosetta's vital role as Alexandria's 'living city' was rendered redundant. The canal was completed in January 1820, at great monetary and human expense, and renamed Mahmudiya after Mahmud II. As the pasha extended his control over agriculture, trade, labour and military power in Egypt, the fields of the Delta were converted to the production of long staple cotton which could be shipped down the river, across the desert via the Mahmudiya canal, and into the modern dock and brand-new warehouses of Alexandria. From there, the pasha sold the cotton that would entwine Egypt's modern fortunes with industrialising, imperial Britain.

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⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 277.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 256.

Abstract

The port of Alexandria, a deep natural harbour surrounded by desert, was founded in the fourth century BCE. Its geography would shape Alexandria's fortunes until the modern era. Despite recognising Alexandria's commercial and administrative significance, Egypt's Ottoman rulers made limited attempts to maintain the canal that linked the port to the Nile during the early modern period. The rise of the port of Rosetta facilitated trade through Alexandria from the sixteenth until the early nineteenth century. Trade was dominated by communities of Muslim merchants from Egypt, North Africa, Albania, Crete, Salonika, Anatolia and the Greek islands, as well as small numbers of Jews, Armenians and Syrian Christians. European (particularly French) merchants had a limited presence. Despite its modest population of around 10,000, Alexandria acted as a counterweight to the political and economic hegemony of Cairo during the Ottoman period. By the end of the eighteenth century, Alexandrians were more favourably inclined towards the Ottoman central government than towards Cairo's ruling factions. With the digging of the Mahmudiya Canal in 1820, Alexandria was again linked directly to the Nile, providing fresh water and a direct conduit for the export of agricultural commodities through new, modern port infrastructures financed increasingly with European capital.

Keywords: Alexandria, infrastructure, water, trade, Ottoman Empire, Egypt

ACRE – THE TROUBLED RESURGENCE
OF A LEVANT COTTON HUB
IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

At the end of the seventeenth century, Henry Maundrell, recently installed as the new chaplain of the Levant Company's Aleppo factory, the chartered company that had been regulating English trade with the Ottoman Empire since the late sixteenth century, undertook a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.¹ In the company of a good dozen compatriots, mostly merchants, he left Aleppo on 26 February 1697. The route of the voyage progressed more and more, touching towns on the coast of Ottoman Syria, such as Latakia and Jableh, and then proceeding via Tartus. In Tripoli in Syria (Lebanon), the group was welcomed by merchant Francis Hastings, the local English consul, and his factor John Fisher, who ran the only English firm in the Lebanese town. Passing through Beirut, Maundrell and his party were then received in Sidon by the French consul, L'empereur, who escorted them through Palestine. Arriving in Acre on 21 March 1697, Reverend Maundrell noted in his travelogue what he could glean of that Ottoman port through his eyes:

Acra had anciently the name of Accho, ... now since it hath been in the possession of the Turks, recover'd some semblance of it's old Hebrew name again: being called Acca, or Acra. This City was for a long time the Theater of Contention between the Christians and Infidels, till at last, after having

¹ For a recent study of Henry Maundrell's (1665–1701) sojourn in the Levant, see Simon Mills, *A Commerce of Knowledge: Trade, Religion, and Scholarship between England and the Ottoman Empire, c.1600–1760* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 179–202. On the Levant Company, Alfred Cecil Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935).

divers times changed it's Masters, it was by a long Siege finally taken by the Turks and ruin'd by them, in such a manner, as if they had thought, they could never take a full revenge upon it for the blood it had cost them, or sufficiently prevent such slaughters for the future. As to it's situation it enjoys all possible advantages both of Sea and Land. On it's North and East sides it is compass'd with a spacious fertile Plain: on the West it is washed by the Mediterranean Sea, and on the South by a large Bay, extending from the City as far as Mount Carmel. But notwithstanding all these advantages, is [*sic*] has never been able to recover it self, since it's last fatal overthrow. For besides a large *Kane* in which the French Factors have taken up their Quarters, and a Mosque, and a few poor Cottages you see nothing here but a vast and spacious ruin.²

It was a 'vast and spacious ruin' that actually concealed much more than what the Levant Company chaplain of Aleppo had managed to observe. Although Henry Maundrell's memoir of the journey to the Holy Land was a highly successful source, translated into at least three languages and reprinted countless times between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,³ it presented a rather incomplete coeval picture of Acre. While on the one hand Maundrell emphasised the fortunate geographic location that made the Palestinian port a secure place for local or European travellers arriving from the North or the western Mediterranean, on the other hand he emphasised the general decadence that permeated the urban context. Indeed, the importance of the Palestinian littoral declined sharply after the fall of Acre in 1291, as it seemed that this strip of coast, used both as a preferential passage to launch the assault on Muslim lands and to build the Christian presence in the East, would never again assume such a function. In late medieval times, however, Acre continued to serve as the node of two coupled, intertwined and interdependent networks: a hemispheric trade network that connected the Silk Road to the Mediterranean and a transport network that brought pilgrims, crusaders and church dignitaries back and forth between Europe and the Levant.⁴

² Henry Maundrell, *A Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem* (Oxford: at the Theater, 1703), 53.

³ Maundrell's account was translated into French in 1705, into Dutch in 1717 and into German in 1792.

⁴ J. Lucien D. Houle, 'Connecting the Medieval and the Mobile: The Case of Crusader Acre', *The Journal of Transport History* 42, no. 1 (2021): 101–20.

Subsequently, the systematic dismantling of the ports of Palestine carried out by the Mamluk rulers, coupled with the continuing decline of the local economy in the first decades of the early modern period, turned the entire area into a desolate, sparsely populated stretch of coastal plain, unattractive to international trade and very rarely visited by Europeans.⁵ Indeed, when it was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire in the second decade of the sixteenth century, in the *tabur* records, the busy port of Acre was referred to as a mere *karye*, a village, an indication of the state of disrepair in which it was found by the new governing authorities (Fig. 7.1). As noted by Amnon Cohen, the various political and economic improvements made by the Ottomans during the first fifty years of their rule in Palestine were manifested in the redevelopment of the hinterland, such as in Jerusalem, but not yet along the coast.⁶

Other contemporary travellers to Maundrell impressed their passage through Acre on paper. Between 1685 and 1687, the high official Étienne Gravier d'Ortières was commissioned by Louis XIV to take a census of the territory and study the political, economic and military situation in the Ottoman Empire. Officially, his voyage was to generally collect information, to reestablish order in French trade in the Levant. In reality, however, he and his party were given the task of drawing up accurate maps of the Dardanelles and Constantinople, surveying anchorages and making plans of fortresses and city walls with the aim of preparing a major French military venture against the Ottoman Empire. The same observations were to be carried out in the archipelago and on the coasts of Anatolia, Egypt and Syria, where Gravier drew a detailed view of the Bay of Acre (Fig. 7.2). French religious man and pilgrim Antoine Morison, on the other hand, left a thorough, little-known account of the journey he undertook from France to Jerusalem. Morison travelled alone and passed through Acre on 24 February 1698. He reported on the harassment that the Arab rulers inflicted on the religious community settled on Mount Carmel, as well as providing some useful information on the society that animated the port:

⁵ Amnon Cohen, 'Ottoman Rule and the Re-Emergence of the Coast of Palestine (17th–18th centuries)', in 'Les Ottomans en Méditerranée - Navigation, diplomatie, commerce', *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée* 39 (1985): 163–75.

⁶ Amnon Cohen, 'Local Trade, International Trade and Government Involvement in Jerusalem during the Early Ottoman Period', *Asian and African Studies* 12 (1978): 5–12.

The French nation, which settled there to trade cotton rather than other goods, is gathered in a large terraced building called Khan, where it has its living quarters and warehouses. ... The town of Acre is currently very small, its buildings are very simple and do not exceed two storeys. However, it is almost entirely surrounded by walls, which are but a part of the ancient walls that still remain. The Turks keep an Aga there, more for reasons of custom than for the good governance or security of the place. The consul of the French nation of Sidon has there [in Acre] his vice-consul, who regulates with provisions the differences that merchants may have among themselves in their trade or otherwise.⁷

Nevertheless, both Maundrell and Morison, from their perspective as religious men intent on preparing a compelling memoir of their pilgrimage to the Holy Land, as they merely passed through Acre, had noted a certain presence of French merchants. However, they had neglected to mention in their accounts that the harbour was undergoing a social and economic reconfiguration that would significantly change its shape in the following decades, transforming the fishing village into the most important port on the Syrian coast in the eighteenth century. In fact, when Maundrell's party entered Acre, they were met by Francesco Adami, an Italian merchant acting on behalf of the Levant Company in the tempting Galilean cotton trade, who offered Reverend Maundrell 'every assistance, as well as money and accommodation for the night'.⁸ After a career spent in the ganglions of the Levant Company in Aleppo, and after about four years of pushing, in 1696 he was persuaded by the Vernon brothers of Aleppo, his employers, to move to Acre to set up a branch of the Aleppo headquarters and get a foothold in the Acre cotton business, which was regaining a market share. Adami had come down from Syria to Palestine with little information and when he arrived in Acre in January 1697, after a six-month apprenticeship with

⁷ Antoine Morison, *Relation historique d'un voyage nouvellement fait au Mont de Sinai et à Jérusalem. On trouvera, dans cette relation, un détail exact de ce que l'auteur a vu de plus remarquable en Italie, en Egypte et en Arabie* (Toul: A. Laurent, 1704), 171, own translation. On Antoine Morison, see F. Thomas Noonan, *The Road to Jerusalem: Pilgrimage and Travel in the Age of Discovery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 214–20.

⁸ Adami-Lami archive (hereafter AAL), Florence, archival unit 240-FA, copy letter book 1, 13, Francesco Adami to Nathaniel Harley, 2 April 1697, own translation. For a concise introduction on the youth activities of Francesco Adami, see Matteo Calcagni, 'Francesco Adami, a Young Livornese Merchant in London, 1673–1674', *Cromohs - Cyber Review of Modern Historiography* 22 (2019–2020): 17–41.

the Maronite Arab merchant Jean Chaloub in Ramla, he found himself in a port teeming with some forty French traders, when in 1691 there had been only thirteen.⁹ This growing presence of western merchants was a signal of a gradual change in the trend of Mediterranean, if not global trade at the end of the seventeenth century and did not only involve the large French community, but also the other European merchants who would move there.

1. A ‘European’ port in the Levant

Trade between Europe and the Ottoman Empire had been regulated since the beginning of the early modern age through an *‘ahdnāme*, or the so-called ‘capitulations’,¹⁰ namely treaties between the sultans and their European counterparts that granted residence, independent jurisdiction and trading privileges to western merchants in port cities under Ottoman jurisdiction. The first capitulations with France were negotiated in 1569, when the Sublime Porte sought French support against the Venetian Republic. They were later renegotiated under Colbert in 1673, when Louis XIV’s fiscal-military state grew in sophistication and promoted mercantilism as an economic expression, simultaneously employing privileges and liberties to promote France’s economic expansion. Indeed, the second half of the seventeenth century was a period of intense change for French trade in the eastern Mediterranean. The right to protect Catholics, since in the Near East France considered itself the protector of Eastern Christians, especially Maronites, and missionaries, as well as all those who belonged to a European Nation not officially represented at the Sublime Porte, and the reduction of the tax on

⁹ AAL, archival unit 240-FA, copy letter book 1, 34, Francesco Adami to Thomas Vernon, 1 July 1697; Archives Nationales de France (hereafter AN), Affaires étrangères fond (hereafter AE), B/I, archival unit 1017 (1644–1704), ‘Mémoire et Instruction touchant le commerce des Echelles de Seyde, Acre, Barut, et Rame’, 20 February 1691.

¹⁰ On the utilisation of capitulations in the early modern age, see Maurits H. van den Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System: Qadis, Consuls and Beratlis in the 18th Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Fariba Zarinebaf, *Mediterranean Encounters: Trade and Pluralism in Early Modern Galata* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018); Tijl Vanneste, *Intra-European Litigation in Eighteenth-Century Izmir. The Role of the Merchants’ Style* (Leiden: Brill, 2022).

trade to 3%, were among the most important privileges obtained by the French.¹¹

Furthermore, having been freed from almost all trade restrictions by the granting of free port status in 1669, the French port of Marseille received a number of privileges in its trade with the Ottoman Empire. The concentration of commercial privileges with the Levant in Marseille should be understood in terms of strategy. Colbert's intervention increased the international competitiveness of French commerce, and only an influential institution such as the Marseille chamber of commerce would have allowed French subjects to compete with English and Dutch traders. Between the end of the seventeenth century and the eighteenth century, therefore, the diplomatic and economic Mediterranean balance was reconfigured as the French regained a significant position in the Levantine markets.¹²

French 'Nations', each headed by a consul, became widespread in the south of Ottoman Syria: in Aleppo (1562), Tripoli (1587) and Sidon, the latter established in 1615. In addition, there were important merchants in Ramla, Jaffa and Acre, which from 1629 became a vice-consular seat dependent on Sidon.¹³ In each Mediterranean port, French merchants were organised as a Nation led by a consul or vice-consul. The components of a Nation consisted mainly of merchants and their factors, who resided abroad for limited periods of time, usually from three to ten years. The consul, who was often also a tradesman, was in charge of the Nation and had the task of dealing with the local Ottoman authorities, reporting to Marseille and Paris, and sending annual statistics and reports on political matters.¹⁴ Moreover, the Nation was not an impermeable and isolated community, entrenched in itself,

¹¹ *Les Capitulations entre l'Empereur de France et Mehemet Quatrième Empereur des Turcs, renouvelées le 5 Juin 1673* (Marseille: Charles Brebion, 1675).

¹² Jean-Pierre Farganel, 'Entre diplomatie et pouvoir local, heurs et malheurs des consulats français d'Acre et de Seyde (1695–1794)', *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* 57 (1998): 49–86.

¹³ The Levant Company played a primary role in Levantine trade between the 1680s and 1690s, Ellen M. Nye, "'A Bank of Trust': Legal Practices of Ottoman Finance Between Empires", *Journal of Early Modern History* (published online ahead of print 2023), <https://doi.org/10.1163/15700658-bja10070>; Jérôme Cras, 'Une approche archivistique des consulats de la Nation française: Les actes de chancellerie consulaire sous l'Ancien Régime', in *La fonction consulaire à l'époque moderne: L'affirmation d'une institution économique et politique (1500–1800)*, ed. Jörg Ulbert and Gérard Le Bouëdec (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2006), 70.

¹⁴ Thomas Philipp, *Acre: The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian City, 1730–1831* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 94–105.

which avoided contact with the local population and settled in a distant land with the deliberate aim of draining its resources for profit.¹⁵ It often occurred that a mobile, temporary community became a diasporic community. In fact, European merchants entered the city fabric to such an extent that they married local women and formed families with them. By the end of the seventeenth century, several French merchants present in the harbours of Ottoman Syria were second-generation, retaining their national identity but with the added value of having a wide network of local relations since they were born in the Levant.¹⁶

Textile production played a crucial role in the industrialisation of Europe between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, largely due to the invention of new machines for processing cotton. In order to meet part of their growing demand for raw cotton, it was natural for England and France to look increasingly to the Near East, where the climate and land had always been very favourable for the cultivation of this plant. England, through the Levant Company, mainly drew on the abundant cotton production in Egypt and the northern Levant, especially in Anatolia and Aleppo, while French traders strengthened their presence in Lebanon and Palestine, making France the main European trading partner on the southern coast of Ottoman Syria. At that time, the French merchants who gravitated around the Marseille chamber of commerce were the almost exclusive managers of the chain of trade with the *échelles du Levant*,¹⁷ that is, those ports in the eastern Mediterranean under the domination of the Ottoman Empire where merchant

¹⁵ Daniel Panzac emphasised the isolation of European nations in the Levant, offering a partial picture of western-local relations in the provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Daniel Panzac, 'International and Domestic Maritime Trade in the Ottoman Empire during the 18th Century', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 24, no. 2 (1992): 189–206 (193).

¹⁶ This is the case, for example, of the merchant Antoine Gras, 'who, for being a person born in this country, passes as the son of a Frank, for having not only the knowledge of the peasants but still a good sum of money and good friends'. AAL, 240-FA-1, Francesco Adami to Thomas Vernon, 1 July 1697, 34, own translation.

¹⁷ The word *échelles* undoubtedly comes from the old naval term *escale*, which means a seaport found along the way and entered occasionally to replenish a ship, or seek shelter from the winds or refuge from the enemy. In the past, seafarers trading in the Levant were in the habit of stopping at these various ports and consequently making an *échelle*, or *escale*. The word *escale* is derived from the Turkish *iskele*, meaning landing stages: this Turkish word is itself derived from the Hebrew *aiškaleth*, a name used to designate the ladder used to get on or off a ship. Louis-Joseph-Delphin Féraud-Giraud, *La Juridiction française dans les échelles du Levant et de Barbarie* (Paris: A. Durand, 1859), 3.

communities had trading posts. In a 1670s memoir on Mediterranean trade held by Florentine erudite Lorenzo Magalotti in his library, Acre was succinctly described as a channel for the export of unprocessed raw materials handled by French merchants:

A port with a beach, ... several vessels from the west go there, and load raw cotton, and spun yarn, soda ash, and wax, which is brought there from Dumyāt, and sometimes load grains, and among others there are also several trading houses run by French merchants.¹⁸

Palestine's economy at the end of the seventeenth century was based on the presence of a few proto-industrial manufactures, the main sector being agriculture. A large portion of agricultural production was destined for the internal market, while the remainder was diverted for export through the intermediary of European merchants. Local agricultural production comprised mainly cereals, wheat and barley, sheep and cattle breeding, hides and wool.¹⁹ The mainstay of Palestinian agriculture, however, was based on a few intensive crops. The first crop revolved around the olive tree and the products that could be obtained from it, namely timber, which was very resistant, but above all oil, an indispensable element in the manufacture of soap. Soap and the alkaline ash needed to make it accounted for a considerable part of local exports to the ports of Europe in the seventeenth century and continued to increase throughout the century. The second was the cultivation of cotton and its sale in various forms, from raw material to carded, combed and spun cotton. This development was encouraged by local rulers who saw the fertile plains of Galilee and Nablus as the best terrain for the intensive cultivation of cotton for export.²⁰

¹⁸ State Archives of Florence, Magalotti Archives, archival unit 225, 340v, own translation.

¹⁹ Dror Ze'evi, *An Ottoman Century. The District of Jerusalem in the 1600s* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 102–6.

²⁰ Felicita Tramontana, *Una terra di intersezioni. Storia e istituzioni della Palestina di età moderna* (Rome: Carocci, 2015), 24. On Nablus, see Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine. Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700-1900* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995).

2. *Between grain trade and the Cotton Rush*

Acre therefore had its attractions, and the surrounding fertile valleys were the city's wealth. Before converging towards the cotton trade, one of the first impulses to establish a stable merchant presence in the Palestinian port was due to the French need to import huge cargoes of grain to Marseille to supply the needs of a Nation that, in the last third of the seventeenth century, was constantly at risk of famine.²¹ Through the diplomatic correspondence from Istanbul, we infer that from the late 1670s one of the main concerns of French ambassadors was the supply of grain from ports in the Ottoman Empire such as Acre, remaining so until the mid-1690s, when the export of grain was moved to the ports of Greece and interest grew around the cultivation of cotton in Galilee.²² Following the disappearance of the overland transit route for the Asian silk and spice trade, the new pattern of international trade that emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was centred on the sale of European artefacts, mainly woollen cloth, in exchange for primary commodities, particularly Palestinian cotton. The bulk of Palestine's commerce with Europe in the late seventeenth century was concentrated in the hands of a few French merchants from Marseille, who conducted their business from Sidon and Acre. Even then, the principal product was cotton, highly valued in Europe, which was exported to France in various forms (carded, spun and woven). In a French memoir dated 1685, it was reported that

the plain of Acre produces from two to three thousand bales of spun cotton, the most valuable and prized in the Levant. The English and Dutch, who had the most money, bought it from the French merchants who lived there and sold it wholesale.²³

Not only that. In the 1680s, in order to circumvent the monopolistic regime that the French traders were putting in place, the Levant Company's Aleppine factory permanently, but unofficially, used a number of French merchants as their representatives in Acre to obtain

²¹ Cormac Ó. Gráda and Jean-Michel Chevet, 'Famine and Market in Ancien Régime France', *The Journal of Economic History* 62, no. 3 (2002): 706–33.

²² AN, AE, B/I, 381 (1691–1694); AN, AE, B/I, 382 (1689–1699); AN, AE, B/I, 383 (1699–1701).

²³ AN, AE, B/I, 1017, 'Mémoire Concernant le Commerce qui se fait à Seyde 1685', own translation.

cotton bales at reduced prices and charge consulate fees to those who did business with the English community scattered around the Mediterranean.²⁴

In the early eighteenth century, Acre was becoming the main port city on the Syrian coast, but this development was not mirrored in a gradual growth in transactions or population. Indeed, in the 1690s, when the local cotton market was taking off, France, which at the time had returned to war against England in the Nine Years' War (1688–1697), was nurturing its ambitions as a global power. With the aim of stimulating the development of cotton production in the Caribbean colonies, Louis XIV's Council of State decided to steeply increase customs duties on the import of spun cotton from the Levant, while at the same time decreasing duties on American cotton. This overall economic strategy temporarily caused the infrastructure and the French nations in Palestine involved in this business to collapse, to such an extent that even in 1701 trade volumes had not regained their previous intensity:

The business of this port is so good [ironic tone], that eight people are leaving here as soon as possible, and there remain 20 rooms and 8 warehouses to sell, and those leaving are Nogharet, Joseph Arnaud, Boulatier, François Beaussier, Gantelmi, Eydous, Eon and Gautier, and perhaps there will be a few others.²⁵

It soon became clear that the damage suffered by the French textile industry was much greater than the profits made from American cotton. The new French policy did indeed reduce trade with the Levant, but as a result, the wheels of the French textile industry almost ground to a halt along with it. The textile industry in Lyon was in despair. In letters and petitions addressed to the king and the council, factory owners declared that they needed cotton yarn from the Levant for their business because cotton imported from America was not of a quality suitable for the Lyon factories. Faced with repeated requests, the Council relented and in 1700 another edict was issued annulling the previous one and reducing duties on Levant cotton to the previous

²⁴ It was discovered from Francesco Adami's correspondence that prior to the official establishment of the English vice-consulate in Acre, two French merchants, Laurence Arnaud and Joseph Beussieur, acted as informal agents of the Levant Company in the port of Acre. AAL, 240-FA-5, 'Adami&Gras' to the 'Vernon Company', 18 December 1697, 42.

²⁵ AAL, archival unit 489, letter 14, Francesco Adami to Domenico Adami, 14 February 1701, own translation.

levels. In the wake of this decision, commerce with the ports of the Levant soon returned to normality and records from Marseille indicate that from this time onwards most cotton imported into France was ‘coton de Jerusalem’ or ‘coton d’Acre’.²⁶ The momentary crisis in the French ‘coton d’Acre’ trade was thus the result of an increasingly global conflict between France and England that had shifted from a strictly military level to that of global trade and this time had found its centre of gravity in the Atlantic. The volume of the Acre cotton trade slowly began to increase again from the early eighteenth century onwards.

The growing demand for French manufacturing at the beginning of the eighteenth century and the considerable profits that could be made from its export pushed Acre’s merchants to hoard as much of this merchandise as possible, transforming the harbour of Acre into the main export centre for Palestinian cotton. Concrete evidence of the change in the cotton trade can be seen in the internal tensions within the French nations of Acre and Sidon, where the main French community in the Levant was located as well as the consular seat on which Acre was dependent. The revenue that the French merchant community in Acre was earning from the sale of cotton could have been the means to coordinate purchases and thus control the price of cotton on the market. But this was prevented by the consul in Sidon because this initiative would have compromised relations between the French agents in Acre and their colleagues in Sidon.²⁷ In fact, as the volume of cotton bales traded with Marseille increased, some French merchants stationed in Sidon reported that one of their colleagues in Acre was trying to secure a large cotton harvest exclusively from some of the villages surrounding the port in exchange for gifts and halting the deal at a price of more than 30% above the current prices per bale. Arguing that this speculation was ruinous for them, the Sidonian merchants asked the Marseille chamber of commerce to put a stop to such trading operations, warning that otherwise the village *shaykhs* would start withholding cotton and trying to force up the price.²⁸

²⁶ Dror Zee’vi’s pages on this subject are illuminating. Zee’vi, *An Ottoman Century*, 166–7.

²⁷ Mahmoud Yazbak, ‘The Politics of Trade and Power: Dahir al-Umar and the Making of Early Modern Palestine’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 56, nos 4–5 (2013): 696–736.

²⁸ Archives de la Chambre de commerce de Marseille, Série J (Affaires du Levant et de Barbarie, 1577–1796), 880, 3 February 1691, Acre. The affair in question concerns the case of the merchant Reucrend and is briefly mentioned by Thomas Philipp. Philipp, *Acre*, 97–8.

This internal tension contributed to the emergence of two major themes in the Acre cotton trade during the eighteenth century: control against spiralling prices and the need to negotiate with local authorities to obtain the cotton harvest. Throughout the century, French merchants tried to control and influence the price paid for cotton through so-called *répartition*, that is, an agreement between merchants to divide among themselves the quantity of cotton they wanted to buy and the price they were willing to pay, thus exercising a price monopoly. They would then buy the agreed quantity through an agent and subsequently divide it among themselves. In this way they tried to avoid tensions. However, individual merchants who did not want to take the *répartition* into account paid higher prices in order to grab as much cotton as possible, knowing full well that the increased demand in France made profit growth possible.

Taking advantage of the temporary weakness and quarrelsomeness of the French *échelles du Levant*, the Aleppo factory of the Levant Company attempted to undermine the local French cotton monopoly by officially appointing its own representative in Acre in 1699, triggering a minor diplomatic crisis that lasted between 1699 and 1702.²⁹ The decision to establish an English vice-consulate in Acre was connected to the ongoing Anglo-French conflict. In fact, in some respects, more than in previous wars, during the Nine Years' War there had been numerous attempts to interfere in long-distance trade, leaving behind a permanently altered economic order and reinforcing protectionism. However, the war was followed by a general upswing in international trade. The conflict had shaken the economic life of the Mediterranean but had not permanently compromised its vitality. Thus, the diplomatic choices made by the English in the Levant reflected a renewed and aggressive commercial strategy to enter the cotton trade, against the French merchant communities established in the *échelles du Levant*, undermining the French dominance in the southern Levant, from

²⁹ An in-depth study of Francesco Adami as the first English vice-consul in Acre, appointed in 1699, is currently underway. Before the discovery of his papers, historiography agreed that the first English representative in Palestine was Richard Boyleston, appointed around 1711–1712. Matteo Calcagni, 'The Adami-Lami Archive', in *Paper in Motion: Information and the Economy of Knowledge in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, ed. Giovanni Tarantino, José Maria Pérez Fernández and Matteo Calcagni (Siena: Idem, 2021), 47–50.

Tripoli in Syria to Cairo, where there had been no English merchants acting under the protection of the Levant Company.³⁰

In addition, infighting among the French opened the way for other foreigners, apparently untethered from consular protections, to come to Acre and settle there, some even with the help of individual French merchants. Thus, it was that the unknown Paul Maashouk, an enterprising Dutch merchant with an Arab-sounding surname, rapidly achieved dominance in the cotton trade from 1701 to 1711, the year of his death.³¹ A charismatic figure, capable of indiscriminately bribing both the Levant Company establishment and the local rulers in order to pursue his own goals, he was even appointed English vice-consul after Francesco Adami in 1702. His mansion was always open to all and the guests at his table included the most important Arabs. Moreover, he managed to establish good relations with several *shaykhs*, especially the *shaykh* of Shefaram, who assured him a constant supply of cotton in exchange for the advance payment of the crop tax that the villages had to make to the Ottoman administration. With the connivance of some French traders, Maashouk controlled the villages around Safed. The impact of Maashouk's presence on the cross-cultural trade in early eighteenth-century Palestine was so important that the French consul in Sidon, no longer knowing how to curb the Dutch merchant's resourcefulness, tried to restore order among Acre's fellow merchants and forbade them from doing business with him.³² After Maashouk, however, in the same way that the relations of the *shaykhs* and local villages with the European merchants in Acre changed completely, the European way of dealing in cotton with the local rulers changed radically in the mid-eighteenth century too.

³⁰ From the correspondence between the former French ambassador in Istanbul Pierre-Antoine de Châteauneuf (1689–1692) and secretary of state Louis Phélypeaux de Pontchartrain, written between August 1696 and November 1698, we can glean the great French attention to the English moves in Egypt that led to the establishment of the English consulate in Cairo. Thus, they showed all their hostility when news reached the French communities of Sidon and Acre in 1699 of the Levant Company's appointment of Francesco Adami as vice-consul. In essence, the English initiative was perceived as yet another attempt to damage the French monopoly in the southern ports of the Levant. AN, AE, B/I, 382.

³¹ For a brief biographical overview of Maashouk, see Ismail Hakkı Kadı and Jan Schmidt, 'Paul Maashoek, Dutch Merchant and Adventurer in Palestine (1669–1711)', *Eurasian Studies* 4, no. 1 (2005): 1–17.

³² AN, AE, B/I, 1017, missives dated 8 March 1703 and 2 May 1704.

3. *The rise of local merchant rulers in Acre's Mediterranean economy*

The monopoly system perfected by Paul Maashouk as early as 1701 was so simple that when his dominance of the Acre cotton trade ended, it quickly became a standardised procedure. The French merchants advanced the cash needed to pay taxes on the cotton harvest to the villages, who in return were willing to offer the harvest at a lower market price to cover their expenses. Over the next 20 years, a complex network of social and financial relations developed around this practice, which quickly led to debts among the *shaykhs* of the villages around Acre, and the conditioning of local politics by western merchants.³³ In order to curb the French practice of buying the harvest in bulk from Galilean villages, the Ottoman government issued a decree to make it illegal. According to the *firman*, the harvested cotton was to be sold publicly in the bazaar, so that the government would be able to legitimately collect taxes. But this measure to counter French control over cotton had no effect on the day-to-day life of the port of Acre. If anything, this measure against the monopoly further cemented the alliance between the French merchant community and the *shaykhs* of the surrounding villages. Doing business with the local Arab populations was not complicated for the French merchants of Acre, who were already interpenetrated in the local culture. For some time, the Nation had already been working with local merchants, such as Jean Chaloub. French imports from the ports of Acre and Sidon, which at the end of the seventeenth century amounted to about 456,500 kg, rose to about 3,742,750 kg in the first half of the eighteenth century and profit margins exceeded 150%.³⁴

However, from the 1730s onwards, it was no longer French merchants who negotiated prices with cotton farmers or the village *shaykhs*. The emergence of a new predominant figure helped balance the influence exerted by the French Nation on Acre: Dahir al-‘Umar al-Zaydani (1689/90–1775). Originally from Galilee, of Bedouin descent, his family had settled in Galilee in the mid-sixteenth century, where they

³³ Philipp, *Acre*, 99.

³⁴ Mahmoud Yazbak, ‘Europe, Cotton and the Emergence of Nazareth in 18th-Century Palestine’, *Oriente Moderno* 93, no. 2 (2013): 531–46 (535); on the profit margins on cotton in Acre in the 1730s, AN, AE, B/I, no. 978, 3 October 1730; on a recent analysis of French trade in the early modern Levant, see David Celetti, ‘France in the Levant: Trade and Immaterial Circulations in the “Long Eighteenth Century”’, *Journal of Early Modern History* 24, nos 4–5 (2020): 383–406.

acquired the position of tax collectors, *multazim*. Dahir took his first steps as a minor tax collector of some villages, but at the same time he was actively involved in trade, especially between Galilee and Damascus. His position gave him police and judicial powers over his district. Although subordinate to the *wâli* of Seyde, Dahir held his real power in the region of Acre, which from the 1740s became the nerve centre of his activities, upon the ruins of the ancient settlement, as they provided inexpensive building material locally.³⁵

If Acre's economic revival was due to French interest in cotton from Galilee, the harbour's socio-demographic development was due to Dahir's ambitious plans to rebuild the city, which proceeded expeditiously. On the ruins of the old crusader fortress he modelled a citadel that served as both his residence and the seat of government. The number of *khans*, which served to store and prepare cotton for export, was increased to three and arranged in distinct parts of the citadel, with the addition of a new bazaar to the previous one and public baths. As rightly observed, the construction of new churches similarly marked the demographic development of the port city.³⁶ The final signal of this development was when Dahir decided to make Acre even more advantageous for European traders by lowering customs duties. Within a short time, the port began to attract Turkish and Arab merchants from Damascus, turning the small city into the central entrepot of southern Ottoman Syria. By the middle of the eighteenth century, Acre's population exceeded 20,000, making it the third largest city in Palestine, a crossroads of international trade.³⁷

However, the souls of the two succeeding monopoly systems were well aware that they had to be able to establish a *modus vivendi* in order to survive, as the international cotton trade in Acre could not take place without either Dahir al-'Umar or the French 'nation'. The first had established a new personal monopoly on the production and distribution of this product too solidly for there to be any turning back. The latter, on the other hand, was the only European interlocutor in the

³⁵ Jean-Pierre Farganel, 'Les consuls de France au Levant au XVIIIe siècle, chefs de communauté et médiateurs auprès des autorités ottomans', in *L'espace politique méditerranéen. Actes du 128e Congrès national des sociétés historiques et scientifiques, 'Relations, échanges et coopération en Méditerranée'*, Bastia, 2003, ed. Jean Duma (Paris: Editions du CTHS, 2008), 63–72.

³⁶ Yazbak, 'Politics of Trade and Power', 720.

³⁷ Philipp Thomas, 'The Rise and Fall of Acre: Population and Economy between 1700 and 1850', *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée* 55–56 (1990): 124–40.

Palestinian region in commercial and financial terms, as the other Nations, especially the English, were too poorly represented to constitute a real alternative. Locally, Dahir was the only financial power capable of honouring a promissory note sent from Marseille, and was in dire need of the bills of exchange issued by the Marseille merchants in order to safely send the various taxes collected for the Porte.³⁸

This cross-cultural encounter appeared to be a mutually beneficial solution. But it was precisely this business model based on the monopolistic control of all branches of trade – import and export, an innovation in the Arab trade tradition – that conditioned Acre's expansion and relegated it to becoming a one-product export port, controlled this time by the local government rather than by a European Nation. When the trade routes of the global economy changed in the nineteenth century and the cotton produced in Palestine was no longer in demand in Europe, or could not be exported due to the political instability of the surrounding area, the trade in Acre came to an abrupt halt, permanently compromising the development of the port, taking the city and the population back to the times of the visits of Henry Maundrell and Antoine Morison.

An ancient but new port city. In the early modern period, Acre captured the curiosity and interest of travellers, who left written or visual evidence of it, impressed by the decay which, in reality, was the grounds for the reconstruction of a large cotton hub built around the small port, surrounded by high walls, an illusion of defence for international trade in the context of a turbulent Mediterranean. Due to the trade first in grain and then in cotton, Acre was an example of a port revived during the period of the great Anglo-French commercial rivalry, and this rebirth was sustained by the trading networks of European merchants, Jews, Arabs and Greek Armenians, who established themselves and took root despite the economic and political crises. Thus, the fishing village became a crucial hub for trade between East and West, marking the beginning of our global era.

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³⁸ Edhem Elsem has demonstrated the importance of bills of exchange in the transfer of funds in the Ottoman Empire and the financial relationships that linked them to French merchants. See Edhem Elsem, 'Structure et acteurs du commerce international d'Istanbul au XVIIIe siècle', in *Les villes dans l'Empire ottoman: activités et sociétés*, ed. Daniel Panzac (Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1991), 1:243–71.

Abstract

The resurgence of global trade between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries profoundly changed the balance among the Mediterranean port cities, with operations concentrated in a few large cities such as Livorno, Marseille and Venice. However, there was a different situation in the eastern Mediterranean, where there was still a network of numerous minor ports involved in both international trade and coastal shipping. One of them, Acre, a fishing village along the coast of Palestine with a glorious past, experienced a singular renaissance due to the massive presence of European, mainly French, merchants who at the turn of the eighteenth century decided to move from Marseille to Palestine, attracted by the lucrative grain and cotton trade, one of the pillars of the economy of Ottoman Syria. It was not a gradual process of development, but an uneven expansion, shot through with cultural and economic tensions, and shaped by the ambitions of the cosmopolitan community that crowded the harbour at the time, namely a fierce French ‘Nation’, some representatives of the Levant Company, and Arab merchants and *shaykhs*. Through the entanglement of public and private sources, memoirs and correspondence preserved between Paris, Marseille and Florence, the essay aims to reconstruct the complicated daily context that, starting in the late seventeenth century, transformed the small port of Acre into the main hub of early modern Palestine.

Keywords: Acre, cotton, Mediterranean trade, Ottoman Empire, Anglo-French rivalry

BEIRUT – CITY OF CAPITAL AND CULTURE

1. *Temporalities*

‘We came to the place where, they say, Saint George killed the dragon which was about to devour the king of Bayreut’s daughter: There is a mosque on the spot, which was formerly a Greek church’ – this description in 1738 by Anglican bishop Richard Pococke, known for his bland literary style, evokes an awareness of the multilayered nature of Beirut’s physical archaeological sites and places of worship and the character of the early modern port city and its deep-rooted mythologies. Travelling along the eastern Mediterranean coast from Acre to Beirut, Pococke’s travelogue *A Description of the East*¹ catalogued the constant, continuing presence of times and peoples past. For this particular reference pointed as much to the multiconfessional make-up of early modern Beirut’s residents as it did to temporal, or even genealogical continuation. Early modern Beirut, unlike the cosmopolitan Beirut of the mid-nineteenth century, had not yet developed into a destination sought after by people from neighbouring or more distant regions nor by foreign travellers.

In Pococke’s reading, the small port city of Beirut offered travellers – had they stayed on – and locals alike fertile ground for reading the city as an urban spatial palimpsest. For this spatial feature of the city became engraved, so to speak, in social and cultural modes of residential practice. Looking back to the fifteenth-century Mamluk period, historian Ṣāliḥ b. Yaḥyā attested to the legends kept alive *at* and *through* places and sites, which resonate to the present day in the figure of George as

¹ Richard Pococke, *A Description of the East, and Some Other Countries* (London: W. Bowyer Printed for the author, etc., 1743–1745), 2:91.

the city's saint whose name is given to landmark places, thus inscribing a Christian character to a city whose inhabitants were of different backgrounds and varying lineages. One such lineage can be traced from the religious site of the initially probably Byzantine Orthodox Greek church of St George, which under Ottoman rule was later transformed into the Khodr mosque since it had not paid the *dhimmī* or *jizya* (poll) tax, while the adjacent well of healing water continued to serve all of Beirut's inhabitants (Fig. 8.1).

These spatial and symbolic connections of an urban and devotional site whose history reaches back even further, to the beginnings of humanity and the cultural revolution of the writing system in nearby Byblos, have offered many clichéd understandings and presentations of the port city's changing roles in local, Mediterranean and global history, following alternating intervals of political and socio-economic importance and differing historical recollections. The city and the region around Beirut have been continuously inhabited, with archaeological finds in the south of Beirut proving a human presence from the end of the Palaeolithic to the Mesolithic eras. These were visible and partly accessible in early modern times in the inner city of Beirut. Like some other port cities around the Mediterranean dating far back in history, Beirut was built over the urban grids of earlier Phoenician, Hellenic, Roman, Arab, Crusader, Mamluk and Ottoman cities. While continuously populated, the inhabitants differed, from Canaanites, Greeks and Phoenicians to Arabs, Crusaders and the Ottomans who ruled over the early modern port city.² The orthogonal plan of the Roman city, dividing the city into four quarters, still defines the layout of modern Beirut.³

But it was only during the medieval period (ca. 1300–1500) that protective city walls were erected and the port's fortifications were extended, enlarging the natural harbour of Beirut which provided shelter from prevailing winds. During the early modern period, major sites, such as the majestic palace of Fakhr al-Dīn with its lush garden rich with large lemon trees, were built both inside and outside the city walls, extending the port city beyond the walls and city gates. Under the imposing ruler, Druze emir of the nearby Shūf and Mount Lebanon, Fakhr al-Dīn II (r. 1590–1635), who had chosen Beirut for his residence during the winter

² For a summary overview of the site and perceptions of the city, see for example Samir Kassir, *Histoire de Beyrouth* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), 45–63.

³ Samir Khalaf, *Reclaiming the Heart of Beirut* (Beirut: al-Saqi Publishers, 2016), 40ff.

months, trade relations with western Mediterranean countries were intensified, as was the influence of Florentine urban architectural styles and Medici landscaping, introduced after Fakhr al-Dīn II's five years of exile in Tuscany from 1613 to 1618.⁴

Tucked away in a natural harbour of St George's bay, cut off from the Syrian hinterland by the two massive Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountain ranges, early modern Beirut was conceived by many passing travellers as a 'sleepy town'.⁵ Despite this, the port dominated and was the centre of gravity of the small city. The central core was built around the historic port of the city and moles. Defences were erected towards the landward side and supported by two towers at the entrance of the port.

By the end of the eighteenth century, in political and economic terms Beirut was still a comparatively second-rate port city, a small Ottoman provincial town with a small population of some 4,000 inhabitants. But despite its relatively small size, within its walls Beirut already possessed all the markers of a city and the institutions of urban representation and administration. In terms of internal infrastructure, its ancient grids of streets merged with tight medieval alleyways; in terms of architecture, there was the imperial Serail, which served the Ottoman administration, and the seat of the *hākīm*, the sous-prefect under the authority of the *wālī* of Saida, as well as a considerable number of religious places of worship for the multiconfessional urban population and, of course, the citadel of the port, the *Būrj al-Mīna* (Fig. 8.2). This urban structure and organisation served a religiously diverse population, of different origins.⁶ Built on these foundations, already towards the end of the early modern period, this small coastal town rapidly developed, rising to become the leading centre of the eastern Mediterranean shores and of the Arab East in general by the middle and second half of the nineteenth century.

⁴ Alessandro Olsaretti, 'Political Dynamics in the Rise of Fakhr al-Din, 1590–1633: Crusade, Trade, and State Formation along the Levantine Coast', *The International History Review* 30 (2008): 709–40.

⁵ Leila Fawaz, 'The Changing Balance of Forces between Beirut and Damascus in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', *Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Méditerranée* 55–6 (1990): 208–14 (209). For a general history see Leila Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants in Nineteenth-Century Beirut* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).

⁶ May Davie, *Beyrouth et ses faubourgs, 1840–1940. Une intégration inachevée* (Beirut: Les Cahiers de CERMOC, 1996), 19.

The very spirit and professional composition of the port city's residents – locals, immigrants and foreigners – enabled this rapid and remarkable development which by the 1840s saw Beirut move into a new, modern era. Of the many smaller port cities along the coastline of the eastern Mediterranean, stretching from southern Turkey to the north of Egypt, in a relatively short period of time Beirut came to stand out as a port city with its very own character, acquiring a status beyond a gateway port to Damascus. The competition over control and access to the Syrian hinterland for the export and import of goods between the port cities, especially between the British-supported port of Haifa and the French-supporting Beirut, defined the politics of the local and foreign elites.⁷ Two simultaneous developments lent themselves to the sudden rise of the port city as a major capital on the eastern Arab shores: the Ottoman *tanzimāt* and *post-tanzimāt* policies and developments which sought to centralise power in the Ottoman capital, and the tremendous influx of European money, passing through Beirut to the Syrian hinterland.⁸ The former brought more administrative officials to the city, the latter a shift in the foreign representations of the Austrians and British, among others, changing the characteristic and dominant local residential relationship between the Lebanese mountains and the city.

All historical accounts emphasised the smallness of the early modern harbour – and most travellers who disembarked in Beirut did not intend to stay but continue their voyage to the famous cities and sites of the Orient. Sea travellers in the seventeenth or eighteenth century would rarely visit Beirut for its own sake and people but traversed through the city to continue their journey to Damascus, Aleppo or Baghdad and other cities of the Arab East. The coastal cities of Tripoli and Saida were more important ports until the *wilāya* (provincial) port was moved from Saida to Beirut. In the eighteenth century, sources mentioning Beirut, travellers' narratives in the first place, described the city not only as a small harbour but one which offered safety, unlike in earlier periods when corsairs dominated the traffic and travel routes.⁹ They converge in their description of a peaceful port city, a small fortified medieval city with ancient monuments in its historic centre, surrounded by gardens and dominated by the proximity of the mountains. This feature of the city's overall peacefulness and security

⁷ Fawaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon* (London: Pluto Press Beirut, 2012), 55.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁹ Khalaf, *Reclaiming the Heart of Beirut*, 40–5.

stood in sharp contrast to the conditions found in other cities and the surrounding mountains where sectarian strife and clashes occurred at regular intervals.

Though an Ottoman port city, the long-lasting physical absence of the administrative and tangible presence of the Empire in the early modern city led Beirut to a decade of Egyptian occupation in the 1830s. During this period, Beirut transformed into a port city of significant importance. More and more goods were traded through the harbour and the Egyptians erected the first military barracks within the city walls, while a larger military compound would be built in the second half of the century outside the city.¹⁰ Until the 1820s, the port of Beirut was rather lamentable, still spatially separated from the city centre, and its frail conditions following an earthquake in 1821 still visible. Improved and modernised in the mid-1830s for the arrival of vessels from across the Mediterranean, and with paved roads physically connecting the port and the inner city, the port and its environs were mainly inhabited by European consuls and merchants, who moved into the city in larger numbers as of the 1820s. The new places around the port made an important difference to the crowded and narrow urban outline of the old inner city, with its modest private buildings and workspaces.¹¹

The Egyptian occupation was a turning point, introducing gradual shifts to the port city. From the early modern to the modern period, the city underwent transformations that went beyond the infrastructure and the surface level. Another major shift continuing earlier changes resulted from the new trading patterns and the rapid opening of the port towards the West of the Mediterranean, which had an immediate effect on the people of Beirut. It turned the city away from its dominant and to some extent exclusive connection to its Syrian hinterland and the mountains, opening it up to the export of local goods and the import of goods from the western Mediterranean and beyond. These changing patterns of trade were not simply the result of its opportune situation as a relatively safe port that could manage vaster vessels, but followed on from the initiatives of local and Egyptian merchants and entrepreneurs. Under the control of Ibrāhīm Pāsha, son of Egyptian ruler Muḥammad ‘Alī, the new urban welfare programme focused on introducing new measures for hygiene, quarantine regulations and the

¹⁰ Jens Hanssen, *Fin de siècle Beirut. The Making of an Ottoman Provincial City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 29.

¹¹ Édouard Blondel, *Deux ans en Syrie et en Palestine (1838–1839)* (Paris: P. Dufart, 1840), quoted in Hanssen, *Fin de siècle*, 32.

policing of law and order.¹² Ordered by the distant governor, they were executed by local Beirut residents, who had little impact on the design of these measures and policies owing to their lack of political representation.

During the ten years of Egyptian occupation, the population experienced a conspicuous growth, from ca.10,000 to 15,000 residents. In response to this demographic increase and in an effort to enlarge the physical space of the city, the medieval city walls were partly demolished. For the population and the urban elites, this also symbolically important act underlined the new composition of the residents and the atmosphere in the city towards the end of the Egyptian rule. Nevertheless, even prior to this act, better-off Beirutis had already begun to move outside the city walls, giving up the inner city security of urban policing during the day, and locked gates at night.¹³ Finally, the end of the Egyptian decade was marked by heavy fighting in 1840–1841, accompanied by the forced withdrawal of the Egyptian rulers. The old port itself was so seriously damaged by the shelling of the Ottoman-European military that a new modern port was needed and took its place, marking a new phase in the history of the port city and its residents. More modern and intensive communication and contacts across the Mediterranean and with its people did not only bring more merchants and their entourages to the city but a new group of scholars, intellectuals, teachers and foreign missionaries emerged too, from both within the city and abroad. Much was written about the so-called East-West divide, about Orient versus Occident by contemporary Beirut residents and travellers and by later historians. Indeed, it seemed to have found its purest expression in Beirut and its architecture and designs, culinary tastes, clothing styles and, last but not least, its appeal as a fertile ground for local early modern and modern critical scholars and thinkers.

2. Perceptions and self-perceptions

All port cities around the Mediterranean resemble each other in some way. Nevertheless, each of them has its own character rooted in the geographic environment of its region, in the socio-economic fabric of the place and, of course, in its inhabitants and cultural and religious

¹² Samir Khalaf, *Reclaiming the Heart of Beirut*, 61.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 18.

practices, trajectories and genealogies. Early modern residents of Beirut and visitors to the city reflected on these conditions. What made Beirut the first port city in the Ottoman provincial towns in the nineteenth century was indeed the constellation and active endeavour of the local population, which made it overtake the competition of the other coastal ports.

There was a profound difference between the traditional behaviour and tastes, and political inclinations of the population of Beirut and the people from outside the city, formed as a result of the individual and collective habits and socialisation, changes and exchanges that took place in the respective milieus. Journalist and writer Salīm al-Bustānī (b. 1848), born into one of the leading Christian Beirut families, son of Buṭrus al-Bustānī and married to the daughter of the Ṭrād family of immigrant Christians, remembered '[w]hile the people of the interior covet their customs more than the coastal people, the latter were used to mixing with foreign nations and adopting both beneficial and offensive customs and taking from foreigners knowledge and industry as others have done'.¹⁴ Thus supporting the view that Mediterranean port cities offered a favourable ground for contact and shared experiences as well as for asymmetric relationships among people from the Middle East, North Africa and Europe. It is this individual and family-centred as well as collective experience of joining capital and culture that would already come to dominate the early modern perceptions of the inhabitants of the city.

External observers confirmed this divide which set apart the residents of Beirut from other coastal and interior places. Moreover, it echoes both internal and external perceptions about the inhabitants, who are defined by an exceptional standard of behaviour, widespread civility and a longstanding openness to education and learnedness. In this vein, French chevalier Laurent d'Arvieux (b. 1635), merchant to the Levant and later consul of Aleppo and traveller in the Arab East, observed that the people of Beirut were even more '*civilisé*' than other peoples in the region. His flattering observation expressed astonishment about the peacefulness among the residents in the walled port city of Beirut, something similar to what d'Arvieux had also witnessed in Tripoli.¹⁵ Again, later on, during the height of Beirut's transformation

¹⁴ Salīm al-Bustānī, 'Asbāb taqaddum Bayrūt wa-l-namūw al-sarī' [The Reasons for Beirut's Progress and Steady Growth], *al-Jinān* 15 (1884).

¹⁵ Laurent d'Arvieux, *Mémoires du Chevalier d'Arvieux*, ed. Jean-Baptiste Labat, 6 vols (Paris: Delespine le fils, 1735).

into a modern city, following the experience of sectarian violence between Druzes and Maronites in Mount Lebanon and a large number of refugees and displaced people moving to Beirut, one of the city's leading figures, thinker and Christian reformer Buṭrus al-Bustānī (b. 1819), stated his sentiments about the city's local elites: '[M]ost of the people of Beirut are lovers of peace and public prosperity and share common interests. They are made up of masters of crafts, merchants, property owners and rulers. The number of the rabble (*al-awbāsh*) is very small compared to other cities'.¹⁶ He then expanded this judgement into what would become a recurring Lebanese self-perception during the Arab *nahda* (*awakening*) movement in the long nineteenth century: '[m]ost of the inhabitants of Beirut are civilized and their sympathies are directed towards civilization and inclined to it'.¹⁷

During the early modern period, immigration of various forms shaped the port city, and not only in social and economic terms. The city functioned as a refuge for immigrants from the regions of Greater Syria, with the walled and well-protected city offering a safer space. The newcomer families were mainly Christians, and especially Greek Orthodox families, a trend that started during the eighteenth century. They migrated from Mount Lebanon and Sidon, as well as from Acre, Damascus and the more distant Aleppo. The names of the immigrating families came to mark the port city's new lifestyles and the alliance of capital and culture. They are associated with the Sursuq (or Sursock), Bustros, Tuēni (Tūaynī) or Trād Greek Orthodox families, as well as non-Orthodox families such as the Dahhān, Nasrallāh, or the Naqqāsh brothers. Immigration from the region thus accompanied, stabilised and propelled the ascent of Beirut as a city defined by the bond between financial capital and culture, which in turn benefited from the openness of port cities as contact zones.

These observations and self-assertations about Beirut urban civility have to be read against the violent history surrounding the city, and the tensions between the Egyptian leader and the Ottoman Sublime port orchestrated, as it were, by the colonial powers of England, France and Austria, shaping the occupation by the Egyptians and the ensuing fight against them. While Beirut itself was spared the sectarian violence that occurred in the mountains around the city, owing to the

¹⁶ Buṭrus al-Bustānī, 'Khitāb fi al-hay'a al-ijtimā'iyya', in Jan Dāyah, *al-Mu'alim Buṭrus al-Bustānī* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981), 167.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

inflow of migrants fleeing the struggles, the residents of Beirut felt the impact of the violence through the dislocation and migration to it as a safe heaven, all of which shaped the city. The ties between port city and mountain were strong. Journals like *Nafīr Sūriyya* (*The Clarion of Syria*) appeared in the port city after the civil wars, calling for an end to the sectarian violence. Focusing their attention on the interior and mountain regions, they were initially much less concerned with the port city and its residents. Whether Beirut was actually a safe place for newly arriving immigrants and the local population is difficult to judge. Contemporary perceptions of safety and security naturally varied between worried local observers like the writer Jurjī Zaydān and passing foreigners like the French diplomat and writer Henri Guys who stayed for about thirteen years in Beirut or newcomers like the American Presbyterian pastor Henry H. Jessup who stayed on for decades.

The perception and self-perception of the special role of Beirut was thus intimately linked to what came to be dubbed the ‘Republic of Merchants’. This is one of the port city’s lasting attributes, including equally large numbers of foreign as well as local merchants. The slow but steady rise of economic trade after the brief Russian occupations of the city in 1772 and 1773–1774, paired with the efforts of Italian and Danish merchants to invigorate the harbour in the successful competition against Acre and Saida, were capitalised as Beirut became the main entry port for Damascus.¹⁸ Remarkably, it was the alliances and collaborations between local Beirut merchants, ‘*ulamā*’ (Islamic scholars) and mountain Druze leaders that secured the city’s economic leadership.¹⁹ This advance of economic wealth and trade in turn attracted the foreign representations of major consulates to move to the port city, benefiting the city and contributing to its fast rise. As praised by the French consul to Beirut: the ‘[c]ommerçe of this town is increasing daily’.²⁰

¹⁸ Hanssen, *Fin de siècle*, 28, based on Thomas Philipp, *Acre: The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian City – World Economy and Local Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

¹⁹ For a more detailed account see Thomas Philipp’s abovementioned study on the rise and fall of Acre.

²⁰ Quoted after Philip Mansel, *Levant: Splendour and Catastrophe on the Mediterranean* (London: John Murray, 2011), 92.

3. *The mixed city*

Diversity was a constant feature among the early modern city's inhabitants. Unlike other cities of the Arab East, Beirut was not divided into religious quarters but saw all residents and religious groups live side by side,²¹ while the port district was predominantly Christian. Whether in the centre or the periphery, the city was not built or arranged along religious or ethnic boundaries.²² Christians, Muslims, Jews and Armenians lived alongside each other, as did the merchants whose paths routinely crossed with small entrepreneurs, artisans and workers. In this same sense, the harbour city juxtaposed the surrounding mountain society with its political and religious organisation along sectarian lines. While the villages, towns and cities of Mount Lebanon were dominated by religious groups and families, Beirut was socially and spatially pluralistic, and the people lived and worked in the same space, creating a strong sense of belonging enshrined in the daily life within the neighbourhoods.

Legally, Beirut's inhabitants benefitted from the same attitude that the Ottoman imperial jurisdiction applied to all the peoples in its empire. Non-Muslim religious denominations or 'millet' (from the Arabic *milla*) enjoyed not only the protection of the Sublime Port, but also, as was the case of Beirut, the protection of their respective religious orders. For Beirut, and Lebanon at large, the Greek Orthodox as well as the mountain Maronites enjoyed religious quasi-autonomy. Towards the end of the early modern period, more foreigners settled in the port city. As a small port city, early modern Beirut served visitors as a temporary staging post or place to pass through, while the city's residents felt connected to the larger political powers around them. During his visit to Beirut and the region in the early 1830s, French writer and statesman Alphonse de Lamartine (b. 1790) offered a vivid account of how, for example, the change of the governor of Beirut reflected this sense of the port city's belonging to a vaster connectedness via its governors. Maybe with a touch of wishful thinking, he described the replacement of the Ottoman Turkish officer with a Christian prince from Mount Lebanon, bestowed with all his own tributes and costumes. It was not perceived as a mere personnel change, but signalled a switch in representation. This filled the air with anger as Ottoman residents

²¹ Davie, *Beyrouth et ses faubourgs*, 21ff.

²² *Ibid.*, 64.

were governed by Christians, who were held at bay by Egyptian ruler Ibrāhīm Pāsha during his rule of Greater Syria in 1832–1840.²³

The city's layout and urban architecture enabled residents of different social and religious backgrounds to mix. They had plenty of opportunities to cross each other's path, from their respective places of worship to the public baths, and the markets (*sūqs* and *khāns*), the port city offered much space for public encounters. Life was not yet as luxurious as it would become after the 1850s. For half of 1832, the traveller Alphonse de Lamartine stayed in the elegant quarter of Ashrafiyya, close to the main square and the port, commending how cheap life was, at the price, however, of not being offered much in return. 'On n'y mange guère que du mouton et pour légumes des courges et des concombres'.²⁴

4. A port city in the gardens

The foreigner Lamartine's disappointment stands in some contrast to other observations about the inhabitants of Beirut and their ways of life. What struck travellers as most pleasant, regardless of how much they struggled with the at times somewhat challenging conditions in the eastern Mediterranean, was Beirut's urban landscape: the city was full of lush gardens and orchards, lined with fruit trees, pine trees, mulberry trees, olive trees, and especially orange and lemon trees (Fig. 8.3). The strong, fresh smell they gave off was a recurrent motif in descriptions of the city, becoming a metaphor for Beirut's learned classes. Thus, the title of the 1858 first published newspaper in Beirut, *News Garden* (*Hadiqat al-akhbār*), may metonymically be read as a self-reference to the learned, multiply active members of the city as well as to the socio-spatial facet of Beirut and its gardens, from where a new urban form of knowledge and news emerged and spread, thanks to the distribution of the journal in the regional cities of the eastern Mediterranean and beyond.

Beirut as a green city of gardens and vegetation set it apart from other places, as travellers regularly noted, when epidemics, illness and plagues ravaged through the region. Ottoman quarantine rules seized control over the plague haunting Greater Syria during the 1700s to

²³ Unpublished letter, reference in Henry Bordeaux, 'Le Secret du Cèdre: Lamartine en Orient: II', *Revue des Deux Mondes* (1829–1971) 28, no. 1 (1925): 66–98 (73).

²⁴ Quoted from Bordeaux, 'Le Secret du Cèdre', 69.

1842.²⁵ When later in the nineteenth century Beirut became known for its advances in modern medical science, it was built on the mobility of medical students going to Istanbul and Cairo, where medical training had advanced considerably, and on missionaries who introduced special precautions to the city. Yet it was not before the 1830s that doctors in the two imperial centres were trained to systematically deal with the threat of the epidemics and to set up measures to eradicate the plague within Greater Syria.

Thus, the port city was much commended for its healthy climate, with its gardens and easy access to the mountains.²⁶ Before the modern period, when new buildings and houses were built to face the sea upon the slight natural elevation above the coast, the inner city had faced inwards, towards the urban centre and urban life. The inclusion and openness to the port city brought about the first new sites where the inhabitants of Beirut could gather at the shore. But it was only in the 1840s that in the new respectable seaside quarter of Zaytūneh new cafés and hotels emerged which drew benefit from their coastal position. They testified to the Beirut population's new orientation towards the sea, complementing the port's traditional quarters of ill repute with a new sense of prosperity and new spatial layouts.²⁷

The rise of Beirut as a port city is linked to the shift of trade – especially of raw silk – from the hinterland to the Mediterranean.²⁸ In the year 1783, the ports of Beirut and Saida exported four times the quantity of a greater range of goods than any other of the eastern Mediterranean ports along the coast. Textiles, in the first place silk, but also damask and cotton, in addition to madder root, dried roses and different dried fruit, were shipped by French, Venetian and Ragusan vessels to Europe,²⁹ and especially to Venice and Marseille,³⁰ where 2,450 silk

²⁵ More generally see Daniel Panzac, *La Peste dans l'Empire Ottoman 1700–1860* (Leuven: Peters, 1985).

²⁶ Mansel, *Levant: Splendour and Catastrophe*, 92.

²⁷ Hanssen, *Fin de siècle*, 191, 198.

²⁸ On this development, see Dominique Chevallier, 'Western Development and Eastern Crisis in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: Syria Confronted with the European Economy', in *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. William R. Polk and Richard L. Chambers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 205–22.

²⁹ Daniel Panzac, 'Commerce des ports du Liban Sud et de Palestine (1756–1787)', *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 55–56 (1990): 75–93 (88).

³⁰ It is difficult to make a clear distinction between the two ports and their merchandise. *Ibid.*, 88.

ballons, étoffes de Damas, cotton, Alizari, dried roses and a variety of dried fruits were sent.³¹ Beirut's development into a major Mediterranean seaport in the later early modern period, with a rapid population growth from 10,000 to 15,000 inhabitants during the Egyptian decade, in turn led to a tangible increase in taxes for the city.³² These conditions prompted the fast, relatively vast urban expansion and development of what came to be known as the new Beirut style of mansions built by wealthy foreign and local merchants.³³ This new architecture, considered of typical Beirut aesthetic taste, came to be identified with the lifestyle of the new emerging class that came to live in the aspiring port city. '[E]verywhere utility was blended with magnificence',³⁴ marvelled British traveller Frederick Neale when describing the elegant style of the new mansions.

In tune with Beirut's prominence as a port city and the expansion of trade and markets, among its inhabitants the desire to purchase foreign commodities grew, thus giving rise to new exchanges of goods. During the later part of the early modern period, the provisions for the new style of homes, central hall house and home living arrangements³⁵ resulted in a new aesthetic which achieved its most refined development, as it were, in early modern Beirut. 'The houses in the new quarters were distinguished by their cubic bodies and tiled roofs. Large windows overlooked the city and the sea. They were two or three stories high and the floor plan was structured around a rectangular central hall'.³⁶ This architectural style enabled the inhabitants of the port city to conflate the private with the public. Indeed, in the port city of Beirut, as everywhere, (domestic) architecture is deeply rooted in socio-cultural values and practices and thus reflects the individual owners' social status and inclinations. The newly emerging eighteenth-

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Chevallier, 'Western Development', 208 and Khalaf, *Reclaiming the Heart of Beirut*, 51.

³³ Leila Fawaz, 'Foreign Presence and Perception of Ottoman Rule in Beirut' in *The Empire in the City. Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire*, ed. Jens Hansen, Thomas Philipp, and Stefan Weber (Beirut: Ergon, 2002), 93–104 (93).

³⁴ Frederick Neale, quoted here from Khalaf, *Reclaiming the Heart of Beirut*, 52.

³⁵ See Toufoul Abou-Hodeib, *A Taste for Home. The Modern Middle Class in Ottoman Beirut* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017).

³⁶ Anne Mollenhauer, 'The Central Hall House: Regional Communalities and Local Specificities', in Hansen, Philipp, and Weber, *The Empire in the City*, 275–96 (275).

and nineteenth-century central hall house is a manifest effect of early modern transformations at the interface of personal taste and social change, simultaneously reflecting new styles and technologies along with the persistence of traditional spatial forms. Although the central hall house was not unique to Beirut's urban domestic design but was common to the province of Greater Syria in the nineteenth century,³⁷ it became synonymous with the 'feel' of the urban life of both the middle classes (whose homes were called *bayt*) and upper classes (*qasr*).³⁸ As in previous times, there were no architectural distinctions between Muslim and Christian houses reflecting religious specifications. Unlike in other cities, the central hall was usually directed towards the sea and the prominent, large triple-arched windows divided the interior with marble columns in the rear part or *liwān*. The new architecture and the open floor plan of the central hall in turn called for a new kind of domestic furniture – chairs, tables and mirrors – which were either produced locally or imported from abroad.

5. *Being urban – not only a republic of merchants*

The increase in wealth and immigration of commercial entrepreneurs from all around the Mediterranean and beyond, and the steep rise in Christian missionary activities and diplomatic representation, put more pressure on housing and necessitated these new types of domestic as well as representative houses. The buildings erected outside the medieval city walls enjoyed more space and detached houses were embedded in the large gardens of the new quarters of Beirut, in contrast to the dense and compact set-up within the walls. For the rapidly growing presence of Christian missionaries, Beirut had offered many appealing features. Early on, missionaries such as the American Protestant Pliny Fisk in the 1820s had a much greater preference for Beirut over other places in Greater Syria. Its situation at the foot of Mount Lebanon

³⁷ Mollenhauer, 'Central Hall House', 280 and see Abou-Hodeib, *Taste for Home*, 6ff.

³⁸ Scholarship on the emergence and meaning of this 'most typical Beirut house' stresses two lines of argumentation, namely one preferencing a functional and aesthetic development from the distinct Beirut courtyard house, with its own architectural features, most ostensible on the outer façade with its many windows. Another direction of interpretation underlines the impact of the reform and modernisation processes, which explains the wider spread of the new style in the Syrian provinces, and the western influence. For a discussion of the literature, see Mollenhauer, 'Central Hall House', 277–9.

which allowed it to escape the heat of the summer, the short distance to Damascus which could be traversed in three days only, and the coastal cities in the vicinity – all of this turned Beirut into an important centre for connections and exchanges with other relevant places.³⁹

The diversity of the mixed city of Beirut's inhabitants could be seen in many ways, from the merging of Italian-style bars with European forms of entertainment, from balls to musical gatherings to the fluid merging of different religions. As Frederick Neale noticed, what united the people was their clear sense of mercantile duty: 'the people are a strictly mercantile set and late hours would interfere with their daily business'. This sentiment of a duty-driven, new middle class, echoing the spirit of the time, was also present in the self-ascribed views of the qualities of the local Christian citizens. 'The natural inclination among the people of Beirut is urban'⁴⁰ – this credo of one of Beirut's most prominent thinkers, Buṭrus al-Bustānī, reflected at once the desire to be part of the world of major Arab Ottoman capitals and his perception of his fellow Beirut residents. In urban civility, port city resident and thinker al-Bustānī evoked the lasting, classic motif of Arabic ethics, clearly directing it against the currents of sectarian strife in the mountains and other Arab cities in Greater Syria. In conjunction, he also reflected on the desired merger between the middle and merchant class and the learned class and society present in Beirut and beyond.

In contrast to these self-portraits of the social and intellectual elite in Beirut, other local observers were more realistic. In the autobiography of one local resident, Jurjī Zaydān, *Mudhakkirāt Jurjī Zaydān* (*The Memoirs of Jurjī Zaydān*), the city became the central space and stage for his development.⁴¹ He described the social atmosphere and composition of Beirut in the first half of the nineteenth century with an analytical eye towards its social structures and matters. Portraying the port city as divided between the general population (*'amma*) and the dominant merchant class, he contributes to what became the general view of Beirut's special place in the region. Intermingling his own experiences as the son of a former bread seller who became the owner of a restaurant, Zaydān pictured the place and role of tavernas, bars and restaurants in the city and their local and foreign customers, describing the

³⁹ Khalaf, *Heart of Beirut*, 48.

⁴⁰ Buṭrus al-Bustānī, 'al-hawaya' entry in his dictionary *Muḥīṭ al-muḥīṭ*.

⁴¹ On this aspect more generally see Nadia Al-Bagdadi, *Vorgestellte Öffentlichkeit. Zur Genese moderner Prosa in Ägypten, 1860-1908* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2010).

emergence of a new urban culture, in which restaurants mushroomed and became places for too much drinking, games and entertainment, in a (stereo-)typical view of port cities, against which a certain urban social protocol of self- and community control needed to be upheld. What is striking in this, as well as many other descriptions of Beirut, is the lack of prominence given to the port as a physical, economic or cultural site, space or place.

In the midst of the war that broke out in Damascus in 1860, al-Bustānī held up a peaceful, pluralist image of the port city's society which brought light to some parts of the city: 'In Beirut there are persons of different countries and races. Though they may differ in their nationality and tastes, they have common interests and if they wish, they may live together in security, ease, affluence and prosperity'.⁴²

Epilogue / In lieu of a conclusion

In 1784, in comparison to other port cities, the traveller Constantin-François Volney did not predict a great future for Beirut.⁴³ While he was proven wrong at the time, more recent events may support his view. For the port is no longer: on 4 August 2020, the port of Beirut and parts of the city were destroyed by nearly 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate which had been stored improperly in a port silos in one of the largest explosions ever recorded.⁴⁴ To local Beirut residents and international observers, this man-made catastrophe was emblematic of the long history of the corrupt state of affairs in the port city and capital of Lebanon, and of some of the intrinsic problems in governing the financial, economic and social sectors of Lebanese society over the last half century or so. The early modern port city of Beirut and the twentieth-century cosmopolitan 'Paris of the East' disappeared in the blast, brutally underlining the destructive force of uncontrolled power.

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⁴² Buṭrus al-Bustānī, *The Clarion of Syria. A Patriot's Call against the Civil War of 1860* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019). The original Arabic, *Nafīr Suriyya*, appeared as a series of pamphlets from 1860 to 1861.

⁴³ Kassir, *Histoire de Beyrouth*, 290.

⁴⁴ According to BBC news and other sources, the detonation was the second largest non-nuclear explosion registered in human history.

Abstract

The emergence of early modern Beirut as an important port city was characterised by its initially slow but then accelerated urban expansion and demographic development, turning the once small, sleepy harbour into one of the most active and multifaceted cities along the eastern Mediterranean coast. This development changed the city from a space of arrival and passage to a much sought-after place of abode, attracting new residents from the hinterland and other Arab cities as well as some foreigners from abroad. Sharing a composite make-up of different religious communities and social stratifications with other cities and capitals in the region, Beirut came to be seen as having a self-consciously mixed population that merged new modes of capital and culture, based on (long-distance) trade, knowledge production and networks of communication. More than other eastern Mediterranean port cities, both the city's residents and temporary visitors made early reflections on the nature of Beirut, its inhabitants and their ways of life.

Keywords: Beirut, hinterland and the port city, temporalities and urban space, multiconfessionalism, urban legends of foundation, republic of merchants

COSMOPOLITAN ISTANBUL, 1650–1750:
STRANGERS IN THE COMPANY OF
MANUSCRIPTS, PAINTINGS AND COFFEE

There is a superficial impression of premodern societies and cities as demographically, ethnically, linguistically or religiously (confessionally) homogenous. Popularly, this extends to Istanbul and the Ottoman Empire, which is somehow perceived or construed to have been uniformly Turkish and Muslim. This is complemented by a certain conception of cosmopolitanism as emphatically modern (but not early modern). Thus, the currently predominant discourse has tended to represent the Ottoman capital as unable to accommodate its many different communities. In the relevant scholarly literature, which foregrounds cosmopolitanism as a key dynamic of modernity, cosmopolitan Istanbul only comes to life in the nineteenth century and then only in the district of Pera, the European quarter of the city, and Galata. In other words, as in debates surrounding the history of the modern Middle East, Ottoman cosmopolitanism is said to have required modernity in order to flourish.

Empirically speaking, this preconception is not difficult to deflate. First, there is the question of sheer quantity and variety of the foreign presence. Already from 1600 to 1800, Istanbul was visited by a great number of outsiders from both Europe and Asia, including missionaries, pilgrims and exiles, as well as migrants, refugees, spies, diplomats, military experts, renegades, scholars, artists, commercial agents, explorers, antiquarians, adventurers and women living public lives. Second, these highly mobile identities often overlapped: missionaries doubled as embassy priests, secretaries and medical doctors; pilgrims were linguists, or manuscript and antique collectors in disguise; and many exiles evolved into pioneers. While variously characterised as migrants, foreigners or strangers, during frequently extended sojourns they often

mixed and mingled with the Ottoman elite, bringing new life to the society and culture of the capital of the empire.¹

This study aims to explore the coexistence and interaction of people of the same as well as of different ethnic, linguistic, religious, geographical and even political origins or cultures, with a corresponding range of lifestyles and mindsets, in Istanbul in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Here I cannot dwell on the history of the concept of cosmopolitanism, nor deal critically with existing studies on it, except to note that they generally pay little or no attention to how this difficult, indeed slippery idea translates into the Ottoman world.² Instead, I will focus on a more microhistorical perspective, admittedly taking into consideration only those sharing a sense of cultural superiority – the educated and the aristocratic elites bonding in social interactions across linguistic or confessional boundaries.

Yet it should be kept in mind that the recent arrivals and strangers in Istanbul did not only consist of elite foreigners from European and Asian metropolises and historical centres, but many (ordinary or modest) Ottoman subjects from small Balkan, Black Sea or eastern Medi-

¹ Tülay Artan, 'Cosmopolitanism in the Early Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Capital: The Impostor, the Alchemist, the Merchant and the Personal Dimension', *Turcica* 54 (forthcoming).

² For a selective overview of the contemporary use of 'cosmopolitanism' with regard to Ottoman history: Nora Lafi, 'The Ottoman Cosmopolitan Hypothesis in the Light of Pheng Cheah's Critical Explorations of Cosmopolitanism, Transnationalism and Colonialism' (presentation at the *Living together: Plurality and Cosmopolitanism in the Ottoman Empire and Beyond* EUME Summer School, Istanbul, 21–28 September 2008, <https://shs.hal.science/halshs-00337939>); Will Hanley, 'Grieving Cosmopolitanism in Middle East Studies', *History Compass* 6, no. 5 (2008): 1346–67; Derryl N. MacLean and Karmali Ahmed, *Cosmopolitanisms in Muslim Contexts: Perspectives from the Past* (Edinburgh: EUP, 2012); Edhem Eldem, 'Istanbul as a Cosmopolitan City. Myths and Realities', in *A Companion to Diaspora and Transnationalism*, ed. Ato Quayson and Girish Daswani (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 212–30; Ulrike Freitag and Nora Lafi, *Urban Governance under the Ottomans: Between Cosmopolitanism and Violence* (London: Routledge, 2014); Ulrike Freitag, "'Cosmopolitanism" or "Conviviality"? Some Conceptual Considerations Concerning the Late Ottoman Empire', *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 17, no. 4 (2014): 375–91. See by Ian Collier, 'East of Enlightenment: Regulating Cosmopolitanism between Istanbul and Paris in the Eighteenth Century', *Journal of World History* 21, no. 3 (2010), 447–70; 'Cosmopolitanism and Extraterritoriality: Europeans in 18th Century Turkey', in *Europa und die Türkei im 18. Jahrhundert / Europe and Turkey in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Barbara Schmidt-Haberkamp (Bonn: V&R Unipress, 2011), 205–18; 'Rousseau's Turban: Entangled Encounters of Europe and Islam in the Age of Enlightenment', *Historical Reflections/Reflexions Historiques* 40, no. 2 (2014): 56–77.

terranean towns as well as Anatolian villages and pastures. At the same time, crowds of wanderers, vagabonds, ruffians, rogues, impostors, counterfeiters, fakirs or antinomians mostly passed through uncounted. Consequently, anxiety (as an antonym of cosmopolitan composure) was widespread among Istanbul's inhabitants. The Ottoman capital, while first and foremost a court city rather than a port, still allowed its residents to intermingle according to class and at times even to transcend class divisions.³ Interaction of scholars and dignitaries with the underclasses took place in public settings like baths, taverns, barber shops, coffee houses, book markets, courthouses or Sufi lodges, which shaped everyday practices and allowed cultural diversity into their daily lives. Private encounters took place in the embassy salons and in the mansions or gardens of the Ottoman literati where Europeans, Asians and locals were entertained in the company of food, drinks and music, plus rarities and curiosities.

1. *Urban settings and communities*

Numerous diplomatic envoys had long arrived in the Ottoman capital with a variety of people and professions attached to their retinues. Istanbul was separated into four administrative divisions: the walled city plus the three districts, Üsküdar, Eyüb and Galata/Pera. During their temporary stay in the city, most of these esteemed Europeans were hosted in their comfortable embassies in *les vignes de Pera*, on the steep hills of Galata facing the walled city across the Golden Horn.

Mixing and mingling with the local Christians, eventually a sizeable community settled, never to return to their home countries. The European nationals of Pera also included thousands of unofficial members, '... independent artisans, laborers, and their families ... wandering adventurers, bandits, exiles'.⁴ Those coming from remote parts of Inner and South Asia, including eastern Christians, formed a consistent (but hitherto neglected) group. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the embassies from the khanates of Turkestan, who had authority over

³ Edhem Eldem, 'Istanbul: From Imperial to Peripheralized Capital', in *The Ottoman City Between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul*, ed. Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman, and Bruce Masters (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 135–206.

⁴ Julia Anne Landweber, 'Venetian Vagabonds and Furious Frenchmen: Nationalist and Cosmopolitan Impulses among Europeans in Galata', *Journal of Ottoman Studies* 44 (2014): 197–220.

the steppes stretching from the Caspian Sea to China, often brought along their families as well as a large retinue.⁵ Despite tangible factors like distance, time, safety and cost, Muslim pilgrims from the East chose to travel to the Ottoman capital with the intention of visiting the tomb of al-Ayyub and Hagia Sophia before continuing to the Hijaz, while dropping in on ‘second Meccas’ and ‘Sufi Ka‘bas’ along the way.⁶ There were also groups of families running away from troubled parts of Asia, travelling on the pretext of the Hajj, who were welcomed at Sufi lodges. Among them were distinguished members of the Bukhara, Khiva and Khoqand courts who introduced themselves as sons of this or that khan, military chief, supreme judge or special envoy, or as descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. But most of the Iranians and Indians, together with Inner Asians from Bukhara, Balkh, Ghazna, Kashgar, Samarkand, Sharisabz and elsewhere, could be identified as lone adventurers who chose to settle apart and on the opposite shores from the European embassies, in locations such as Üsküdar and Eyüb where Sufi lodges abounded. Some of them were prominent bureaucrats accompanied by their sons who might then find a place in provincial governments or the Sublime Porte itself in order to secure a career in the Ottoman administration. Among the European nobility instead, several eminent members found employment in Istanbul as military advisors.

By this time the city had also come to harbour the largest slave population of Christians from the Mediterranean, the Caucasus and the northern steppes in Europe and Asia. As prisoners of war, many were treated as *servi publici* and put to work in workshops as well as building or outfitting galleys and galleons in the naval dockyard. European ambassadors helped ransom distinguished captives, though some of them opted to stay in Istanbul on their own, including several who went on to become well-known members of the embassies. There was also the

⁵ Tülay Artan, ‘The First, Hesitant Steps of Ottoman Protocol and Diplomacy into Modernity (1676–1725)’, in ‘Monarchy and Modernity since 1500’, special issue, *The Court Historian* 26, no. 1 (2021): 29–43.

⁶ Tülay Artan, ‘The Paradoxes of Hagia Sophia’s Ablution Fountain: A Message at the Heart of the Cosmopolitan Istanbul, 1740’, in *Hagia Sophia in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Benjamin Anderson and Emily Neumeier (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming); Thierry Zarcone, ‘Pilgrimage to the “Second Meccas” and Ka‘bas’ of Central Asia’, in *Central Asian Pilgrims: Hajj Routes and Pious Visits between Central Asia and the Hijaz*, ed. Alexandre Papas, Thomas Welsford, and Thierry Zarcone (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 2012), 251–77.

lower end of the slave market where men and women were bought and sold as *servi privati* in order to be used for household services as well as in agriculture, weaving, mining or construction. In contrast to the public slaves, these people generally blended into society when and as they converted to Islam and could be emancipated in accord with social customs. Though few, there were also enslaved Iranians and Africans. It is estimated that as much as 20% of Istanbul's population may have consisted of slaves.

The Levant companies also promoted travel, especially for collectors of manuscripts, antiques or rarities for cabinets of curiosities. This led to an outpouring of travelogues as well as other, similar or overlapping writings by Dutch or Flemish, Italian or German linguists, scientists, botanists, medical doctors, religious or commercial agents, tradesmen and spies. Pietro della Valle (d. 1652), born into a noble Roman family, stands out from the general category of European travellers in this period as an exception who had the means to travel for no reason other than his curiosity and interest. He described the inspiration for his travels as 'glory', in his 'desire to accomplish or even write something that would add to his family's reputation, to emulate the great travellers of the past ... Alexander and Ulysses, or more recently, Columbus, da Gama and Magellan'.⁷ Styling himself as *il pellegrino* during his travels in the East, his journey to Persia and India was 'decidedly a pilgrimage of curiosity'.⁸ As a 'cosmopolitan humanist traveler', he reported on the topography, antiquities and architecture of Istanbul during his visit (from 15 August 1614 to 25 September 1615). But despite his efforts to learn Turkish, he made few attempts to meet Turks, either in Istanbul or on his journeys; instead he travelled with his small retinue, seeking out the company of expatriates, merchants and Maronite Christians.⁹

2. Languages in Istanbul

Istanbul's non-Muslim communities, such as the Greeks, Jews, Armenians or Levantines, were better connected with the Europeans. They spoke Italian, French, Dutch or German and were capable of reading

⁷ John D. Gurney, 'Pietro della Valle: The Limits of Perception', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 49, no. 1 (1986): 103–16.

⁸ Joan-Pau Rubiés, 'Della Valle, Pietro (1586–1652)', in *Literature of Travel and Exploration: An Encyclopedia*. Vol. 1. *A to F*, ed. Jennifer Speake (New York: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2003), 326–8.

⁹ Gurney, 'Pietro della Valle', 105.

and writing in Latin as well as their vernacular languages. Hence, they were employed as dragomans, secretaries and in time even vice-consuls by foreign embassies. Cornelio Magni, originally a mariner from Parma, an adventurer who was captured by pirates, sold as a slave, became a renegade and rose to captain an Ottoman galley, visited Istanbul in 1672 (March to June), and, after coming into contact with the diplomatic circles, was able to make interesting observations in the Ottoman capital. He eventually took refuge with the French ambassador, the marquis de Nointel, and became a member of his 1673–1674 expedition to Greece and the Holy Lands together with a number of prominent artists and scholars. After four years of wanderings, he published his account of the expedition, *Relazione della città d'Athene* (Parma, 1688), and, in fourteen letters to his friends, recounted the countries and the people he visited, which he described as '[q]uante piu curiose' (Parma, 1679, 92).

In this same vein, embassies regularly hosted scholars and artists, as well as linguists, many of whom stayed in residence for extended periods. Swedish ambassador Claes Rålamb (May 1657 to January 1658) had an impressive retinue.¹⁰ Jakab Harsányi Nagy (d. after 1677), an accomplished linguist and agent in Istanbul for the Transylvanian prince George II Rákóczi, came to act as Rålamb's interpreter during his encounters with Ottoman dignitaries.¹¹ In his *Colloquia familiaria turcico-latina seu Status Turcicus Loquens* (1672), a collection of conversations in Ottoman Turkish and Latin, Nagy presented eight 'lively, dramatic, and often amusing' dialogues. Four of these were mainly between the *Viator* (habitual traveller) and *Dux viae* (prince), consisting of practical phrases to help the traveller (the merchant). The remaining four were between the *Legatus* (legate or ambassador) and *Interpres* (interpreter) and included long disquisitions by the interpreter, offering advice on administrative, military and religious affairs to a European ambassador visiting Istanbul. In Chapter 4, for example, the ambassador goes in search of inns, entertainment and restaurants: the relevant

¹⁰ Charlotta Forss, 'Knowledge and Agency. The Case of Claes Rålamb and the Swedish Embassy to Istanbul, 1657–58', *Legatio: The Journal for Renaissance and Early Modern Diplomatic Studies* 5 (2021): 133–58; Cemal Kafadar, 'The City that Rålamb Visited. The Political and Cultural Climate of Istanbul in the 1650s', in *The Sultan's Procession: The Swedish Embassy to Sultan Mehmed IV in 1657–1658*, ed. Karin Ådahl (Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute, 2006), 59–73.

¹¹ Gábor Kármán, *A Seventeenth-Century Odyssey in East Central Europe: The Life of Jakab Harsányi Nagy* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

Turkish phrases are both practical (Do you have separate rooms? Do you serve food and drink? Do you have stables for my horse?) and idiomatic (What kinds of wine do you serve? Good God! What a lovely colour it has. It will be an honour to drink it). It has been suggested that Nagy's descriptions of the Ottoman administration (both his own, only in Latin, and those put into the mouth of the *Interpres*) show a striking resemblance to passages in Paul Rycaut's (d. 1700) *Present State of the Ottoman Empire* (1668). Nagy could have taken inspiration from Rycaut, the English diplomat and historian, consul and factor who spent seven years in Istanbul (1660–1667) before moving to Izmir until 1677. However, the discrepancies in the information each gives suggest that they shared a common source or informant, the obvious candidate being the 'ubiquitous and polyglot' Pole, Wojciech Bobowski (Albertus Bobovius), who was well known to Rycaut.

Bobowski (d. ca.1675), who was captured by the Tatars when he was very young, spent decades as a page at the Topkapı Palace and came to be known as Santuri Ali Ufki Beg.¹² His comprehensive education points to a former life as a noble or monastery-educated commoner. In Istanbul, he acted as amanuensis for the polymath/polyglot 'Hezarfenn' Hüseyin, known as 'a man of a thousand talents', who had access to diplomatic networks through the patronage of Fazıl Ahmed Paşa. Among the protégés of the grand vizier, whose atheistic tendencies were frequently remarked on by both European and local observers, were distinguished Ottoman literati and scholars, mostly newcomers to Istanbul, such as Köse İbrahim (Szigetvár, Hungary), Panagiotakis Nikousios and Alexander Mavrocordatos (Chios in the Aegean) or Ebubekir Dıvıŝki (Damascus). Hezarfenn himself was from Kos and having received his primary education from Jesuit missionaries in this Aegean island, was not only engaged in conversations about faith, but also in the sciences.¹³

Ali Ufki was another figure who moved in the same circles, his earliest works also reflecting two of his many strengths: religion and languages. In 1654, commissioned by Isaac Basire (de Preaumont), a French-born English chaplain (formerly to Charles I) and traveller whose mission was to disseminate the Anglo-Catholic faith throughout the East, he translated the Anglican catechism from Latin into Ot-

¹² See the recent works of Judith I. Haug.

¹³ Heidrun Wurm, *Der osmanische Historiker Hüseyin b. Ğa'fer, genannt Hezarfenn, und die Istanbuler Gesellschaft in der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Klaus Schwarz, 1971).

toman Turkish. Travelling overland from Aleppo, Basire had arrived in Istanbul in spring 1653 in the company of some Ottoman merchants for whom he acted as physician. At Pera, he was appointed as a chaplain to the embassy, ministering to the French using the English liturgy in French and establishing friendly relations with the local patriarchs and other Christian communities until 1661. Around the same time, Ali Ufki translated Johannes Amos Comenius's *Janua Linguarum Reserata* (1629) into Ottoman Turkish. Comenius was a pedagogue, known mainly for his innovations in teaching methods, especially of languages; he was also a theologian and the last bishop of the Unity of the Brethren. At the time of Ali Ufki's translation he was a religious refugee in Protestant Europe.¹⁴

In 1662–1664, Ali Ufki translated the Old and New Testaments into Ottoman Turkish. This was done for Levinus Warner, a German-born, Leiden-based orientalist, diplomat and manuscript collector for the Dutch Republic.¹⁵ Warner arrived in Istanbul in late 1645 and first worked as a secretary and translator for a resident Dutch trader called Nicolaas Ghisbrechti, who was originally a jeweller from Antwerp. When his patron died, Warner became the resident in Istanbul, until his own death there in 1665. Around this time, Ali Ufki gave to Thomas Smith – chaplain to Sir Daniel Harvey, English ambassador at the Sublime Porte – some treatises on Islam which were later published by Oxford orientalist Thomas Hyde (d. 1703).¹⁶ After three years in Istanbul, Smith returned to Oxford in 1671, taking a number of Greek manuscripts with him. Meanwhile, Thomas Hyde, who became the librarian of the Bodleian (1665–1701), professor of Arabic and Hebrew at Oxford in the 1690s and the translator of oriental documents to the Crown, published Ali Ufki's *Turcarum liturgia* (London, 1690, 1712).

Ali Ufki's Turkish-Latin dictionary (1658) and his *Grammatica Turcico-Latina* (1666), written for Henry Deuton, a priest at the Eng-

¹⁴ Barbara Flemming, 'Two Turkish Bible Manuscripts in Leiden as Middle-Ottoman Linguistic Monuments', in *Essays in Turkish Literature and History*, ed. Barbara Flemming (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 183–9.

¹⁵ G. W. J. Drewes, 'The Legatum Warnerium of the Leiden Manuscript Library', in *Levinus Warner and His Legacy: Three Centuries Legatum Warnerium in the Leiden University Library* (Leiden: Brill, 1970).

¹⁶ Colin Heywood, '“More than Ordinary Labour”: Thomas Hyde (1636–1703) and the Translation of Turkish Documents under the Later Stuart', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 26, no. 1–2 (2016): 309–20.

lish embassy,¹⁷ were followed by a book of dialogues in French and Ottoman Turkish (*Dialogues en Français et en Turc*) in the 1670s. The Ottoman literati and scholars who were socialising with long-term European residents of the city and engaging with their projects, also interacted with educated visitors from Iran, Inner Asia, India and beyond.¹⁸ With these easterners, the language barrier was still important but not insurmountable. In order to meet the social, political, religious and commercial needs of Hindi, Persian and Turkish (as well as Arabic, Kashmiri, Urdu and Pashto) speakers, multilingual dictionaries were produced. Following a debate about the interpretation of some couplets that arose at a private gathering of Vişnezâde İzzeti Mehmed Efendi, known for hosting scholarly-literary salons, the only Ottoman Hindi-Persian-Turkish dictionary, *Terceme-i (Kitâb-ı) Lûgat-ı Hindi*, was compiled by the aforementioned Hezarfenn Hüseyin Efendi with the help of a certain Molla Feyzullah who had come to Istanbul as Uzbek ambassador. In addition to his command of Arabic and Persian, Hezarfenn, the lexicographer, is said to have communicated in Greek, Hebrew and Latin and to have served, together with Ali Ufki Bey, as a translator at the Imperial Council.

3. Manuscripts and portraits of Istanbulites

It appears that Ali Ufki was also behind paintings commissioned by Claes Rålamb, for in his diary the Swedish envoy refers to a certain Boo Bovio, qualified as the Polish Turk or convert. Elsewhere, Rålamb mentions meeting and conversing with Ali Ufki, buying a Quran from him and paying sixty talers (perhaps) for the paintings.¹⁹ What the Swedish envoy purchased was typical of the costume albums made in Istanbul from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries which circu-

¹⁷ Hannah Neudecker, 'Wojciech Bobowski and his Turkish Grammar (1666). A Dragoman and Musician at the Court of Mehmed IV', *Dutch Studies in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures* 2 (1996): 169–92 and 'Two Hitherto Little-Studied Turkish Translations by Wojciech Bobowski alias Albertus Bobovius', *Oriens* 45, no. 3–4 (2017), 330–63.

¹⁸ Tülay Artan, 'Patrons, Painters, Women in Distress: The Changing Fortunes of Nev'izade Atayi and Üskübi Mehmed Efendi in Early Eighteenth-Century Istanbul', *Muqarnas* 39 (2022): 109–52.

¹⁹ Tadeusz Majda, 'The Rålamb Album of Turkish Costumes', in *The Sultan's Procession: The Swedish Embassy to Sultan Mehmed IV in 1657–1658 and the Rålamb Paintings*, ed. Karin Adahl (Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute, 2006), 197–263 (201–3).

lated in and across Europe. Serving as practical guides not only to the various social types but also to court society, including the dignitaries, ranks and titles of the central government in Istanbul, they were collected by enthusiasts, dispersed, sold, gifted, copied, reworked and rebound. In *Râlam*'s album, together with all these, an Istanbulite youth stands in striking contrast to an antinomian.²⁰ Male and female Acems (Persians) are virtually the only representatives of easterners, except for three Egyptians included among members of the Janissary corps and the Khan of the Tatars.

Collectors of ancient and rare manuscripts included Levinus Warner, Antoine Galland and Bolognese naturalist and military advisor Ferdinando Marsili. During his twenty years of permanent residence in Istanbul, Warner, for example, acquired a private collection of just over 900 manuscripts. He obtained his manuscripts and books through the lively antiquarian book trade in Istanbul, receiving help and advice from Arabs originally from Aleppo, such as Muhammad al-'Urđi al-Halabi (d. 1660) and Sâlih Efendi, known as Ibn Sallum (d. 1669), a physician to Mehmed IV. Behind these bits and pieces of information, the people and the places they visited, notably the booksellers and private salons of the Ottoman elite and ambassadors, lurks the understudied history of knowledge exchanges between Ottomans and Europeans in Istanbul. Cosmopolitans (or proto-cosmopolitans) of the Ottoman capital in this period found hospitality or comfortable socialisation – 'a form of virtue' – sharing it with people of different religions, regardless of taboos or parochialisms of various kinds.²¹

Antoine Galland came across a copy of the Medici Avicenna (Rome, Typographia Medicea, 1593) in the booksellers' market that he frequently visited.²² He was struck by the physical quality of the copy, which he claimed surpassed the beauty of all the other printed Arabic books he had seen. Galland also noted that in Istanbul the market for printed books was limited to Christian missionaries and Levantines, because Muslim readers preferred manuscripts, despite their much

²⁰ For costume albums in this period see the recent studies by Gwendolyn Colloço, Elisabeth Fraser and Natalie Rothman.

²¹ Margaret C. Jacob, *Strangers Nowhere in the World. The Rise of Cosmopolitanism in Early Modern Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 2–5.

²² Antoine Galland, 'Discours pour servir de preface à la Bibliothèque Orientale', in Barthélemy D'Herbelot de Molainville, *Bibliothèque orientale, ou Dictionnaire universel contenant généralement tout ce qui regarde la connaissance des peuples de l'Orient* (Paris: Compagnie des libraires, 1697), [ú].

higher cost. Hezarfenn Hüseyin helped Galland around the book market as he purchased manuscripts on behalf of the ambassador. In return, the French envoy repeatedly invited him to banquets and presented him with various gifts.

In the same vein, Ferdinando Marsili made friends with Hezarfenn Hüseyin, whom he first met in 1679, nicknaming him ‘Millevirtù’.²³ Marsili came to Istanbul twice – first with Venetian envoy Pietro Civrani, and second as the secretary of English ambassador Sir William Hussey. Primarily a soldier and well-trained military engineer, he actually fought against the Ottomans in Hungary during the 1683–1699 war. He was also a natural scientist and collector. As he documented birds, fish, corals, fossils and mines, made astronomical observations and measured the flow and volume of rivers, he collected all kinds of specimens, instruments, models, antiques, maps, manuscripts and documents. In Istanbul, Marsili began to learn Turkish from Abraham Gabai, whom he hired as interpreter and assistant and kept in touch with for twenty years. Gabai, who had a printing house in both İzmir and Istanbul, had published Rycaut’s *The Capitulations and Articles of Peace* (1663). Through Gabai’s mediation, Marsili made his first contacts with the Ottoman capital’s intellectual circles of astronomers, geographers, doctors and historians. He also nurtured good relations with the English, French and Habsburg ambassadors, the Orthodox patriarch Iakovos and Alexander Mavrocordatos. The latter was a Phanariote who had studied philosophy and medicine at the University of Bologna; he had become a dragoman and secret adviser of the Porte and risen to join Grand Vizier Fazıl Ahmed Paşa’s inner circle of courtiers.

These contacts stood Marsili in good stead. Behind the first book of his *Stato Militare* is the *Telhisü'l-Beyân* of Hezarfenn Hüseyin Efendi, who shared his notes on the Ottoman military apparatus as well as the empire’s social and political structure with Marsili. Müneccimbaşı Ahmed, herbalist and chief astrologist, was yet another source of his explorations. From Ebubekir Dımişki, the Ottoman geographer who was translating Willem Janszoon Blaeu’s *Atlas Maior* at the time, Marsili bought some maps which would be printed later in *Stato Militare*. During his second visit in 1691, he obtained Dımişki’s translation

²³ Mónika F. Molnár, ‘An Italian Information Agent in the Hungarian Theatre of War: Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli between Vienna and Constantinople’, in *A Divided Hungary in Europe II. Diplomacy, Information Flow and Cultural Exchange*, ed. Szymon Brzeziński and Áron Zarnóczy (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2014), 85–105.

of the *Atlas Maior* from Mustafa, a renegade from Livorno who was the head of the Imperial Mint.²⁴ He made acquaintances with people from all walks of life, ranging from courtiers to Italian prisoners, local medical doctors, boatmen and fishermen on the Bosphorus. One of courtiers he befriended was a Venetian renegade called Abdullah who was entrusted with cutting the sultan's nails and guarding his turbans; he helped Marsili to visit the Topkapı Palace.

Two manuscripts from his collection are remarkable for their artistic and documentary value. Some of the illustrations of the first, a catalogue of Janissary banners, were reproduced in printed works. The second one, which can be titled 'Catalogue of the Turbans and Hairstyles Found in Various Classes of Turkish Society', is yet another album of Ottoman portraiture reflecting on social class, political or administrative position and national-ethnic identity. It bears resemblance to two identical nineteenth-century albums that feature small portraits of figures from daily life, accompanied by short poems about their earthly and spiritual characteristics.

His *Osservazioni intorno al Bosforo Tracio o vero canale di Costantinopoli* (Rome, 1681), comprising some 200 sheets with more than thirty-five watercolour plates and some fifty pen drawings, is yet another example of Marsili's documentary efforts. He made a map of the straits and recorded some corals, molluscs, fish and seals in its waters. Marsili originally aimed to observe the Bosphorus for strategic reasons but ended up writing an oceanographic treatise.²⁵ His *Bevanda asiatica* (Vienna, 1685) is also noteworthy as one of the first European books on coffee; he consulted a contemporary Ottoman text on coffee by Hezarfenn Hüseyin, namely his medicinal encyclopaedia. He seems to have been inspired by coffee consumption at the scholarly-literary gatherings he attended in Istanbul. *Bevanda Asiatica* opens with a reference to Plato's *Symposium* where a group of learned men – Socrates, Eryximachus, Aristophanes and Agathon – toast their drinks as they converse about philosophy. He added that the accuracy of the translation into Italian was acknowledged by Franciscus à Mesgnien Meninski (d. 1698), yet another (more accomplished than all the others) linguist in Istanbul (1653–1661) who was in the retinue of the Polish ambassador.

²⁴ Molnár, 'An Italian Information Agent', 93.

²⁵ Emin Özsoy and Nadia Pinarđi, 'Marsili in İstanbul. Notes, Maps and Drawings', in *Marmara Denizi 2010 Sempozyumu Bildiriler Kitabı*, ed. Bayram Öztürk (Istanbul: TDAV, 2010), 25–32.

Those writing the history of the Ottoman coffee house have associated it with multiple intellectual currents highlighting the notions of sociability, public space and public sphere, democratic participation and scientific knowledge. All agree that the Ottoman coffee house served as a dynamic social space that played a seminal role in the culture of early modern cosmopolitanism in Istanbul and elsewhere. Antoine-Ignace Melling's *Interior of a Coffee House in Tophane, 1819*, printed in his *Voyage pittoresque de Constantinople et des rives du Bosphore*, casts sailors, Mevlevis, Armenians, bureaucrats and commoners as the clientele. The Topkapı Palace depicted in the background dominates the scene and the imagination of those who wanted to know about the Ottomans and their capital city.

4. Other scholars, artists and literati

Some of those that Marsili met, a group that included Hezarfenn Hüseyin and Ebubekir Dımışki, as well as poets and members of the judiciary, are said to have got together every Tuesday and Friday in Vişnezâde İzzeti Mehmed Efendi's (d. 1681) mansion, which was possibly located in Beşiktaş. Vişnezâde, an eminent judge acknowledged by the sultan on multiple occasions, had a much larger social network that extended to Seyyid Hasan Nuri Efendi, a Sünbüli *shaykh* renowned for his *Sohbetname* (1661–1665), a diary of sorts that recorded the numerous social occasions he took part in despite the plague that was then gripping Istanbul.²⁶ Seyyid Hasan, who lived around his lodge in Koca Mustafa Paşa, was friends with his mentor Debbâğzâde Mehmed Efendi, the son-in-law of Vişnezâde, who also held gatherings of literati and scholars in his mansion. At a banquet at Debbâğzâde's residence, Seyyid Hasan met Seyyid Muhyiddin Çelebi, the Ottoman ambassador to the Mughal court in 1653. The Mughal ambassador who followed Seyyid Muhyiddin Çelebi to Istanbul, Seyyid Hacı Mehmed, had a reputation as an outstanding scholar and Ottoman dignitaries and men of letters respected him highly.²⁷

²⁶ Cemal Kafadar, 'Self and Others: The Diary of a Dervish in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul and First-Person Narratives in Ottoman Literature', *Studia Islamica* 69 (1989): 121–50.

²⁷ *Sohbetnâme II*, fol. 12b; Naima Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Naima (Ravzatü'l-Hüseyin fî Hulâsati Abbâri'l Hâfikayn)*, ed. Mehmed İpşirli (Ankara: TTK, 2007), 3:1483.

While all of Vişnezâde's guests were known for their multiple talents, we cannot say for sure whether foreigners were among them – except for Antoine Galland who recorded that on 18 April 1673 he visited a certain Mehmed Çelebi (elsewhere Mehmed Efendi) at his home, where he was introduced to a certain Hüseyin Efendi, the author of a history book in Turkish. (He further noted that Mehmed Efendi sold him sixty-eight *hüccets* for one 'islote'. These *hüccets*, he says, were mostly written 'à Babilone'.)²⁸ There are other indicators that Vişnezade befriended European learned men in Istanbul. İzzeti Mehmed Efendi was a close friend of Kâtib Çelebi, arguably the most prolific Ottoman polymath of the time, who in turn was in contact with prominent Europeans in Istanbul such as Levinus Warner. In time, both Levinus Warner and Vişnezâde İzzeti Mehmed Efendi would figure among those who bought manuscripts from Kâtib Çelebi's estate.²⁹ Some of those were then passed on to geographer Ebubekir Dîmişki and further to Ibrahim Müteferrika (d. 1745), the Hungarian refugee who founded the first Ottoman printing house in 1729. In life, Kâtib Çelebi was aided by French or Italian refugees for his translations that gave the Ottoman literati an opportunity to catch up with European developments. To translate Gerardus Mercator's *Atlas Minor* (*Levâmiu'n-nûr*, 1654–1655), he sought help from Şeyh Mehmed İhlâsi, a French priest who had converted to Islam. His three other translations, all done in the same year, were completed with İhlâsi's support. The son of a famous, wealthy family in France, İhlâsi arrived in Istanbul in the early years of Mehmed IV's reign, if not earlier, and was well versed in Turkish and Arabic as well as various sciences. That the Copernican system was not mentioned in *Levâmiu'n-nûr* is attributed to his bigotry as a former Catholic priest, for heliocentrism was consigned to the Papal Index. Copernican heliocentrism was introduced to the Ottomans in 1660, when the aforementioned Köse Ibrahim Efendi al-Zigetvari translated Noël Duret's French astronomical work (written in 1637) into Arabic.

Galland mentions that Vişnezâde showed him a few maps. Maps, drawings and paintings, including figurative ones, were popular among the curious Ottoman elite. Evliyâ Çelebi, whose *Book of Travels* is embellished with vignettes about his interactions with foreigners, does not

²⁸ Antoine Galland, *Journal d'Antoine Galland pendant son séjour à Constantinople (1672–1673)*, ed. Charles Schefer (Paris: E. Leroux, 1881), 2:57–8.

²⁹ Gottfried Hagen, *Ein osmanischer Geograph bei der Arbeit: Entstehung und Gedankenwelt von Katip Celebis Gihannuma* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 2003).

seem to have befriended Europeans, however.³⁰ He narrates that his father, the head court jeweller Derviş Mehmet Zilli, was a friend of Sukemerli Koca Mustafa Çelebi, the chief clerk of the Janissary corps who claimed to be a relative of the king of France. Sukemerli maintained that he received gifts from the king's daughters and took European pictures to the young Evliyâ's home.³¹

Scholars and authors reporting from Istanbul took special care to have their travelogues illustrated. Aubry de la Motraye, a well-educated Parisian who came from a Huguenot family that had settled in England, took refuge first in Rome in 1696, then in Alexandria, Lisbon and London, before finally settling in Istanbul in late 1698. On his way across the Mediterranean to the Ottoman capital, and especially in the Aegean islands, he collected archaeological pieces, ancient medallions and coins. In Istanbul he seems to have acted either as an intelligence agent or as an intermediary between political interest groups and established close relations with European mission chiefs and religious refugees in the Ottoman capital. Though he lived in Ottoman lands for fourteen years, he only seems to have made a few Muslim friends. His chronicle, first published in English in 1723, and then in French in 1727, is adorned with engravings by celebrated artist William Hogarth, based on Jean-Baptiste Vanmour's paintings.

Vanmour was perhaps the most accomplished as well as the longest-residing European painter in the Ottoman capital, living there from 1699 until his death in 1737. A native of Valenciennes, he arrived in the company of marquis Charles de Ferriol, the French ambassador.³² After Ferriol returned to France in 1711, Vanmour worked for a succession of incoming French ambassadors, as well as a number of other diplomats in the city, most notably Dutch ambassador Cornelis Calkoen, and officials at the Ottoman court. He painted numerous indoor and outdoor scenes of unprecedented documentary value, possibly made on the spot, together with hundreds of portraits (Fig. 9.1).

Inspired by a genre of painting known as *fête galante* or *fête champêtre*, showing groups of elegant men and women enjoying them-

³⁰ Robert Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality: The World of Evliya Çelebi* (Leiden: Brill, 2006) and 'Did Evliyâ Çelebi "Fall in Love" with the Europeans?', *Cahiers balkaniques* 41 (2013): 15–26.

³¹ Nuran Tezcan, 'Love for Painting in Freng-Pesend Style in Evliya Çelebi', *Cahiers Balkaniques* 41 (2013): 27–42.

³² Olga Nefedova, *A Journey into the World of the Ottomans: The Art of Jean-Baptiste Vanmour (1671–1737)* (Milan: Skira, 2009).

selves, he developed a style to convey the circumstances of social interaction among Istanbul's upper classes. Despite his success, apart from a few letters of French ambassadors from Istanbul to Paris that mention his name, and a few letters by the artist himself, there is no information about his social network in Istanbul. Hardly any events from Vanmour's time in Istanbul can be established with certainty. In order to meet the considerable and growing demand for his paintings, Vanmour worked with a group of assistants and often reproduced his compositions. It is also highly possible that his workshop was visited by both European and local artists, including the celebrated Abdülcelil Levni and Abdullah Buhari, both of whom brought a new-fangled Iranian or Inner Asian flavour to Ottoman painting.

5. Hindus and Muslim dervishes, Catholic missionaries and Protestant refugees

Along with Europeans, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Istanbul was home to many migrant or refugee artists from the East, too, who became part of both courtly and commercial projects. Versatile painters like Mahmud Gaznevi, Abdullah Buhari and Rugani Ali Üsküdarî, all of central Asian origin, had flocked to the Ottoman capital and taken refuge in the Naqshbandî-Mujaddidî lodges in Üsküdar and Eyüb. They were active, respectively, in the periods 1685–1693, 1735–1745 and 1718–1763. The opportunities they found via wealthy and influential patrons, not necessarily members of the court, contributed to new stylistic, thematic and iconographic developments in Ottoman painting. In addition to the four Sufi lodges affiliated with sixteenth-century Naqshbandîyya *shaykh* Emir Buhari and his followers, several other lodges, such as those of Afghanis, Indians (Chishtis, Kubravis, Nima-tullahis), Uzbeks, as well as those named after places like Bukhara or Kashgar, became the primary locus of interaction between such Inner Asians and the Ottoman elite.³³ Other, Qalandari lodges welcomed antinomian Sufis, ruffians and paupers. They all provided shelter and other resources for *shaykhs*, dervishes and disciples who turned out to be craftsmen and masters of the arts of the book, including calligraphers, illuminators and bookbinders, as well as those skilled in marbling, carv-

³³ Thierry Zarcone, 'Histoire et croyances des derviches turkestanais et indiens à Istanbul', *Anatolia Moderna: Yeni Anadolu* 2 (1991): 137–200; Rishad Choudhury, 'The Hajj and the Hindi: The Ascent of The Indian Sufi Lodge in the Ottoman Empire', *Modern Asian Studies* 50, no. 6 (2016): 1888–931.

ing wood or mending china.³⁴ These migrants and refugees are known to have brought along high-quality light, but expensive paper, (illustrated) manuscripts, and both ancient and new single-folio paintings.

Seventeenth-century Ottoman globetrotter Evliyâ Çelebi provides snippets of information about the community of Indians (Muslims, Hindus and others) in Istanbul.³⁵ He notes the existence of a Hindu convent on the Kağıdhane waterfront where, on three different occasions, he says he witnessed funeral pyres and cremations. It seems that the river at Kağıdhane was worshipped by some Hindus as a sacred place where the deceased and cremated person's ashes and remaining bone fragments could be thrown, and where everyone could then proceed to take a purifying bath. Evliyâ also mentions the Kalenderhane-i Hindiyân, a Muslim convent located at the foot of the bridge at Kağıdhane. On another occasion, he notes that Kağıdhane was a meeting ground for travellers from Asia and Africa, specifically mentioning India, Iran, Arabia, Yemen and Ethiopia.

Religiously triggered migrations across Europe and Asia turned various cities into hubs of asylum. Istanbul was notable in this regard. In this period, not only the eastern Christian churches in the Ottoman Empire, but also the Sublime Porte itself, the representatives of France and the Roman church became embroiled in ideological debates and political disputes concerning Christianity and the local Orthodox and pre-Chalcedonian communities.³⁶ In the 1600s, in the aftermath of the Council of Trent (1545–1563), Jesuits and Capuchins engaged in a new phase of Apostolic-Catholic competition in Istanbul and Anatolia. The

³⁴ Lâle Can, 'Connecting People: A Central Asian Sufi Network in Turn-of-the-Century Istanbul', *Modern Asian Studies* 46, no. 2 (2012): 373–401.

³⁵ Orhan Ş. Gökyay et al., eds, *Evliya Çelebi b. Derviş Mehmed Zullî. Evliyâ Çelebi Seyahatnamesi. Kitap I. Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi Bağdat 304 Numaralı Yazmanın Transkripsiyonu-Dizini* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi, 2006 [1996]), 239 [146a], 238 [145a].

³⁶ Cesare Santus, 'Conflicting Views: Catholic Missionaries in Ottoman Cities between Accommodation and Latinization', in *Catholic Missionaries in Early Modern Asia: Patterns of Localization*, ed. Nadine Amsler et al. (London: Routledge, 2019), 96–109.

growing influence of Catholic missionaries is said to have led to increasing anxiety among the Armenians in Istanbul.³⁷

Members of the K'eḡmurchean family, and especially the two distinguished brothers Eremia Çelebi (d. 1695) and Komitas (d. 1707), embodied this tension and distress in opposite ways.³⁸ Eremia, an Istanbulite Apostolic Armenian, polymath, author and intellectual, reported the spreading popularity of Catholicism in his diary of the city, which covers fourteen years in the life of Istanbul (1648–1662). Komitas, in contrast, was a Catholic Armenian priest who was eventually executed by the Ottoman authorities for his missionary activities, and hence was beatified as a martyr of the Roman Catholic church.

In the aftermath of the Thirty Years' War, while the French embassy patronised the Jesuit and Capuchin missionaries, the British and Dutch embassies protected the Protestants. The term 'religious refugee' came to be applied exclusively to the Huguenots, a group of Reform (Calvinist) Protestants from France. As some 200,000 Huguenots fled France in 1685, they came to Istanbul, too, although, curiously, this remains largely unrecognised by Huguenot specialists. French Protestants were indeed the single largest group among the European refugees, and they included some quite exceptional characters in their ranks. Ahmed III's astrologer Mehmed Efendi, for example, was of Huguenot descent, as was Genevan clockmaker and father of Jean-Jacques, Isaac Rousseau (d. 1747). It has to be said that Isaac was not a religious refugee but had simply run away from home. From 1705 to 1711, Rousseau settled into a Genevan community in Galata while he was put in charge of regulating the pendulums in the Topkapı Palace. Motraye, himself a Huguenot

³⁷ The research on this is slight but growing. For descriptions of everyday matters and minor incidents recorded by Eremia Çelebi in his *Öragrut'ıwn* chronicle, see Polina Ivanova, 'Armenians in Urban Order and Disorder of Seventeenth-Century Istanbul', *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 4, no. 2 (2017): 239–60. See also the chapters by Anna Ohanjanyan, Paolo Lucca and Margarita Voulgaropoulou in Tijana Krstić and Derin Terzioğlu, eds, *Entangled Confessionalizations? Dialogic Perspectives on the Politics of Piety and Community Building in the Ottoman Empire, 15th–18th Centuries* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2022), 451–87, 489–519 and 521–62 respectively.

³⁸ Henry R. Shapiro, 'Afterlives of Komitas K'eomurchean (1656–1707): Commemorating an Istanbul-Armenian Martyr in Armeno-Turkish Literature and Sacred Pilgrimage', *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 58 (2021): 81–120.

refugee, visited the Topkapı Palace as an assistant to a watchmaker, who may have been the same Rousseau.³⁹

A significant figure was French general Claude Alexander, Comte de Bonneval (d. 1747), who had been an officer in the Royal Guard of Louis XIV and had fought side by side with Eugene of Savoy against the Ottomans – until he fell out of favour with all the major European courts and turned to the Ottomans in 1729. His conversion to Islam, refashioning and renaming himself as Humbaracı (grenadier) Ahmed Paşa as he sought to reform the Ottoman artillery corps, was perceived as a striking anomaly. Giacomo Girolamo Casanova, who met him in Istanbul in 1745, remarked that he was ‘a man of whom all Europe has talked, still talks, and will talk for a long time to come’.⁴⁰ He was friends with Catholic archbishop, theologian, poet and writer François Fénelon, political philosopher Montesquieu and German polymath Leibniz. Bonneval is buried in the cemetery attached to the Galata lodge of the Mevlevi, of which order he became a devotee.

Conclusion

In this study I have tried to bring out a wealth of cases, involving groups and individuals as well as moments or episodes, in Istanbul’s daily life and culture in the period of roughly 1650 to 1750, mostly based on narrative sources of a decidedly anecdotal character. What do they show? What do they correct or corroborate? On one hand, it remains true that we are looking at a tiny minority of the population. Public and private encounters were subject to various limitations, including social rules and norms in addition to spatial and linguistic barriers, as a result of which coexisting and interacting elites (frequently referred to as cosmopolitans) constituted only a small, not to say marginal, portion of the urban population even in a great imperial capital city such as Istanbul.

Yet there is also another side to the coin. A common criticism levelled at the idea of a premodern cosmopolitanism in Istanbul is that

³⁹ Aubry de la Motraye, *Travels through Europe, Asia, and into Part of Africa with Proper Cutts and Maps. Containing a Great Variety of Geographical, Topographical, and Political Observations* (London: for the Author, 1723), 1:173.

⁴⁰ Julia Landweber, ‘Fashioning Nationality and Identity in the Eighteenth Century: The Comte de Bonneval in the Ottoman Empire’, *The International History Review* 30, no. 1 (2008): 1–31.

‘peaceful cohabitation’ was only available to the elite, to those with the resources to travel and experience other cultures. At this level of abstraction, there seems to be nothing wrong with this idea. But the problem is that the bar seems to be set very high, first for whom is regarded as the elite, and hence for the existence of any kind or degree of cosmopolitanism. I would argue that this is largely perpetuated by a failure to find or develop new ways of making the most of whatever sources may be available. A new turn of mind is needed. For example, a systematic perusal of judicial records for references to Acems, Özbeks, Hindis and the like may help locate larger groups of migrants or foreigners in specific quarters like Eyüb or Üsküdar, and also provide insights into their association with the locals and the ‘Frenks’ (Europeans). A completely overlooked dimension of this period’s sociocultural reality are the scholarly-literary salons of Ottoman gentlemen. The very idea of Ottoman salons may seem strange and startling at first sight. Still, as I have tried to show, there is more than enough initial evidence of the existence of intersecting or concentric groups meeting around various political, literary or scholarly subjects of interest. Exploring them may help to open new venues of research. Ex-libris and other manuscript notes, pointing to those who commissioned, produced, translated, exchanged, read or commented on them, may reveal not only these people’s social networks, but also the districts or neighbourhoods where they lived, and the architecture of the urban fabric, down to specific places and spaces where they met.

In the end, all of this may go to support my working hypothesis that while cohabiting and civilly, culturally and intellectually interacting elites were, yes, still intrinsic to the upper classes, hence a minority, it was a larger one than what is frequently implied or taken for granted in these debates. In turn, this may help to revise the long-standing conviction that the cultural bearings of cosmopolitan societies or communities in eastern Mediterranean cities, defined through class, gender, mobility and entertainment, in Istanbul only found expression in Pera, and then only in the nineteenth century.

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Abstract

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Istanbul was visited by a great number of outsiders coming from both Europe and Asia, including missionaries, pilgrims and exiles, as well as migrants, refugees, spies, diplomats, military experts, renegades, scholars, artists, commercial agents, explorers, antiquarians, adventurers and women living public lives. It seems that these people, characterised as migrants, foreigners or strangers, but often mixing and mingling with the Ottoman elite during extended sojourns, brought new life to the society and culture of cosmopolitan Istanbul. This study explores different aspects of the coexistence and interaction of elite people of diverse ethnic, religious, linguistic, geographical and even political origins and cultures, with different lifestyles and mindsets. The Ottoman capital, being first and foremost a court city, rather than a port city, allowed its residents to intermingle, at times even transcending class divisions in cosmopolitan settings as diverse as literati salons, book markets, baths, taverns, barber shops, coffee houses, courthouses or Sufi lodges, and shaping everyday practices.

Keywords: cosmopolitan Istanbul, Sufi lodges, Ali Ufki, Ferdinando Marsili

CANDIA – DAILY LIFE IN VENETIAN CRETE IN ZUANNE PAPADOPOLI'S *L'OCCIO* (1690s)¹

‘A French boat arriving from Standia today after a nine-day crossing confirms the surrender of Candia, which capitulated on the fifth of this month’.² Thus begins the handwritten Maltese *avviso*³ from 28 September 1669, which informed the Vatican secretariat of state of the loss of Crete by the Venetians. The loss of Candia, present-day Heraklion and the Serenissima’s final stronghold on Crete, made a profound impression on the people of the time. Besides, it would be difficult to understate the political and cultural impact of the war of Candia and the end of Venetian rule on the island of Crete. In her seminal study of Ottoman Crete,⁴ Molly Greene has highlighted the strong elements of continuity between life during Venetian and Ottoman rule, a world inherently traversed by interconnections between Latins, Greeks and Muslims (as well as Jews). Nevertheless, it is undeniable that material and cultural practices related to political administration and religion introduced new and rupturing elements to the cityscape, especially at the urban level. Greene herself highlights this, noting that the conquest brought an abrupt end to the cultural blend that had come about between Catholics and Orthodox on the island, in addition to having

¹ I am deeply grateful to Dr Cristina Setti and Professor Eleftheria Zei for their bibliographic suggestions and attentive reading of this text.

² Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, Segreteria di Stato Malta, vol. 25, fol. 221r (my translation from the Italian). Standia is the Venetian name for Dia, a small uninhabited island north of Crete, approximately seven miles from Heraklion.

³ The *avvisi* were a kind of proto-gazette. On this subject, see Mario Infelise, *Prima dei giornali. Alle origini della pubblica informazione (secoli XVI e XVII)* (Rome: Laterza, 2002).

⁴ Molly Greene, *A Shared World: Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

a strong impact on urban life.⁵ After all, the arriving Muslims much preferred to settle in Cretan cities rather than in the island's rural settings (as had also been the case for the Venetians before them). Moreover, the construction of mosques and hammams mainly took place in these urban spaces, alongside the disappearance of Latin churches, which were turned into mosques. On the other hand, rural areas, which were mainly inhabited by Christian Greeks, remained dotted with Orthodox churches,⁶ as they had been in the period of the Βενετοκρατία (Venetokratía), the term that, in Greek historical discourse, defines the Venetian domination of territories that now belong to the Greek state.

1. Rulers and subjects: clashes and encounters in Venetian Candia

As is well known, the conquest of Crete – that is, of its three main port cities – was divided into two main stages. Chania and Rethymno were conquered in just two months at the very beginning of the invasion (1645) and, from there, the Turks proceeded to progressively occupy the remaining parts of the island. In contrast, the conquest of Candia, the political capital of the island, took place after a very long siege, in 1669,⁷ marking the very end of the war and the change of rule in Crete. The siege created a fairly long space of time in which the besieged inhabitants rebuilt their everyday life as best they could under the circumstances (Fig. 10.1). This buffer between a 'before' and an 'after' increased the Candiotes' perception of belonging once the conflict was over, when many of them left as exiles for other parts of Venetian territory. Indeed, Cretan refugees started to leave the island from the very beginning of the war,⁸ as those living in the cities had very close ties with the dominant rulers. In fact, while the lower classes were in-

⁵ *Ibid.*, 78.

⁶ Orthodox churches were the predominant religious buildings in cities even during the Venetian rule. See Olga Katsiardi, *Η Κρήτη στην ύστερη μεσαιωνική εποχή. Η μαρτυρία της εκκλησιαστικής αρχιτεκτονικής* (Crete: ΠΕΚ, 2010).

⁷ The siege of Candia lasted from 1648 to 1669 and is the second-longest siege in history.

⁸ A first wave of refugees moved to the Ionian Islands mainly from the areas of Chania and Rethymno during the early years of the Cretan War. The second wave, after 1669, was more consistent and lasted up to the beginning of the eighteenth century. On the Cretan diaspora, see Eleftheria Zei, '1669: Une diaspora méditerranéenne du xvii^e siècle', in '20 Ans de Diaspora', special issue, *Diasporas* 40 (2022): 125–8. On the first wave, see Manousos Ioannou Manousakas, 'Η παρά Τρίταν απογραφή της Κρήτης (1644) και ό δήθεν κατάλογος των κρητικών οΐκων Κερκύρας', *Κρητικά Χρονικά* 3 (1949): 35–59.

tegrated into the Venetian maritime and commercial system or worked in Venetian households, members of the upper classes were employed in the Venetian administration and mixed marriages were common, as we will see.⁹

The relations between Cretans and Venice in the four centuries of the *Βενετοκρατία* were never simple, however. Frictions and discontent on the part of the former led to riots and conspiracies. Particularly acute crises also occurred with the Revolt of Saint Titus (1363–1364)¹⁰ and the Conspiracy of Sifis Vlastos (1454, with an important resurgence occurring between 1460 and 1462).¹¹ These episodes led the Serenissima to intensify its efforts to gain the loyalty of the Cretans (e.g., through the practice of granting material rewards); these attempts increased significantly after the loss of Cyprus in 1571.¹² The commonality of interests created between the locals and the rulers also resulted in an original blending of native and foreign elements in the island's culture, a crucial state of affairs that is most clearly encapsulated by the so-called Cretan

⁹ Cretan high society was composed of the Venetian nobles of the colony (whom Zuanne Papadopoli called *Veneti della Colonia*) and Cretan nobles (*Cretensi*). The latter could be either natives of the island or descendants of the *Veneti* and were therefore either Catholic or Orthodox. On the Cretan aristocracy, see Aspasia Papadaki, 'Η κρητική ευγένεια στην κοινωνία της βενετοκρατούμενης Κρήτης', in *Διεθνές Συμπόσιο: Πλούσιοι και φτωχοί στην κοινωνία της Ελληνολατινικής Ανατολής*, ed. Chrysa A. Maltezos (Venice: Hellenic Institute of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies in Venice, 1998), 305–18. However, current historiography tends to emphasise the complexity of the urban social stratifications/hierarchies in Crete.

¹⁰ Sally McKee, 'The Revolt of St Tito in Fourteenth-Century Venetian Crete: A Reassessment', *Mediterranean Historical Review* 9, no. 2 (1994): 173–204.

¹¹ The most important contribution on the subject is still Manousos Ioannou Manousakas's 'Η ἐν Κρήτῃ συνωμοσία τοῦ Σήφη Βλαστοῦ (1453–1454) καὶ ἡ νέα συνωμοτικὴ κίνησις τοῦ 1460–1462' (PhD diss., National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, 1960), <https://thesis.ekt.gr/thesisBookReader/id/5808#page/1/mode/2up>.

¹² Monique O'Connell, *Men of Empire: Power and Negotiation in Venice's Maritime State* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 104.

Renaissance.¹³ The substantial intermingling of Latin and Greek rite believers was favoured by the non-endogamous tendency of the rulers, allowing them to effectively establish a bond with the local upper class.¹⁴ In this regard, Zuanne Papadopoli – the author of the source I will analyse in this paper – wrote, in the seventeenth century:

The Venetian gentlemen of the colony would often give their sons in marriage to the daughters of Cretan Nobles, in which case the wedding service would follow the Latin rite,¹⁵ though afterwards each partner would follow their own rite without feeling any restraint and without causing offence.¹⁶

2. Zuanne Papadopoli and *L'Occio: a man, his memoirs and history*

Zuanne Papadopoli is certainly an intriguing embodiment of Veneto-Cretan culture. Despite not being of Venetian descent, Zuanne was a member of the local nobility that had become an integral part of the Venetian administration in Crete, and his memoirs provide an excellent source for examining life in the city of Candia (and Crete) around the

¹³ The sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Cretan Renaissance is understood as a time of blossoming of the arts in Crete, during which both literature and painting flourished. It was characterised by a blend of Byzantine and western artistic traditions. The main representatives of this renaissance include Vincenzo Cornaro (1553–1613/1614), the author of the romantic epic poem *Erotokritos*, and the painter Domenikos Theotokópoulos (1541–1614), known as El Greco. On the Cretan Renaissance, see David Holton, *Literature and Society in Renaissance Crete* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Zuanne Papadopoli, *L'Occio (Time of Leisure): Memories of Seventeenth-Century Crete*, ed. Alfred Vincent (with an English translation) (Venice: Hellenic Institute of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies in Venice, 2007), 22–3.

¹⁴ The process leading to a similar cultural *mélange* is analysed in Filomena Viviana Tagliaferri, 'In the Process of Being Levantines. The "Levantinization" of the Catholic Community of Izmir (1683–1724)', *Turkish Historical Review* 7, no. 1 (2016): 86–112. The exogamy between Venetians and Cretans is witnessed by the many Cretan surnames of Venetian origin currently present on the island, such as Venierakis, Kallergis, Kornaros, as well as Fragkiadakis, from *Franco*, which indicates a European origin.

¹⁵ Papadopoli refers to a legal custom – the patrilinearity of the rite – that prevailed throughout the *Stato da Mar* during the Counter-Reformation. In that period, it became reciprocal, meaning that if the husband was Greek, the marriage followed the Greek rite. See Cristina Setti, 'La contaminazione nel discorso giuridico e sociale. I matrimoni tra greci e latini nella Repubblica di Venezia', *Acta Histriae* 23 (2015): 43–66.

¹⁶ Papadopoli, *L'Occio (Time of Leisure)*, 58. The translation from the Italian is by Alfred Vincent, as in subsequent quotations in this text.

mid-seventeenth century (Fig. 10.2). Before moving on to the fresco he gives us of Venetian Candia and its daily life, I will first offer a brief introduction of who Zuanne was.¹⁷

Zuanne Papadopoli (Venetisation of Ioannis Papadopoulos) belonged to a Cretan family of landowners claiming descent from a branch of the Komnenos Byzantine imperial family. Orthodox, but with close ties to the Catholic Church,¹⁸ the family members had managed to enter the ducal administration and climb the ranks. In this sense, Zuanne's career is exemplary. Having begun in the post of supernumerary assistant secretary in the ducal chancellery of Candia in 1642, he was later promoted to the position of ducal notary and secretary in 1652.¹⁹ The profession of notary – in which Papadopoli was of the highest rank – was an institution standardised across all Venetian territories – including the *Stato Da Mar* – and had a key role in Venetian administration.²⁰ Undoubtedly an important figure, Zuanne had been advanced in his career by the war and the siege. For him, the Venetian defeat led to exile. In 1669, with the fall of Candia, he moved with his family to Parenzo (present-day Poreč, Croatia), while in the last phase of his life he settled with his eldest son, Niccolò, in Padua. While in Padua, at this point in his seventies,²¹ Zuanne put his memory to work to create one of the most remarkable documents on Cretan life in the early modern era. *L'Occio (Time of Leisure)* is the title the author gives

¹⁷ A rich and detailed biographical note on Papadopoli can be found in the introduction to Alfred Vincent's edition of *L'Occio*, which is the reference source for this paper. See Papadopoli, *L'Occio (Time of Leisure)*, 17–28.

¹⁸ This connection can easily be evidenced through the career of Zuanne's eldest son, Niccolò Comneno. In fact, despite being baptised as an Orthodox, he entered the Jesuit order and was later appointed to the second chair of Canon Law at the University of Padua.

¹⁹ Papadopoli, *L'Occio (Time of Leisure)*, 25. In the same period, Papadopoli also held the position of secretary for the *provveditori alla sanità* (superintendents of health), as well as making loans at interest.

²⁰ In the chancelleries, Venice generally employed local staff, who knew the territory better. See the Cretan example of Kastrofylacas in Angeliki Panopoulou, Πέτρος Καστροφύλακας, Νοτάριος Χάνδακα, Πράξεις 1558–1559 (Heraklion-Athens: EIE, 2015). The figure of the public notary was crucial in the Venetian colonies. See Filip Novosel, 'I funzionari pubblici come mediatori nello spazio urbano multilingue dell'Adriatico orientale del XVII secolo – il caso del notaio zaratino Ambrogio Lomazzi', *RiMe. Rivista dell'Istituto di Storia dell'Europa Mediterranea* 10, no. 3 (2022): 83–103.

²¹ In the text, he states that he has entered his seventy-eighth year.

to his manuscript, as it was precisely an excessive amount of free time that allegedly prompted Papadopoli to put pen to paper.²²

Preserved in the Museo Correr library, the text is well known to the academic public. Discovered by Nikos Panagiotakis in 1968,²³ it was first edited and published by Alfred Vincent with an English translation in 2007, before being translated into Greek and published in 2012.²⁴ While already widely studied, *L'Occio* nevertheless remains an invaluable source of information for social and cultural historians and, in general, 'anyone concerned with the history and interaction of Mediterranean cultures'.²⁵ The extent to which it can be relied upon as a historical document has been thoroughly investigated. Vincent, undoubtedly the leading expert on the text, has highlighted that, although at times Zuanne's memory betrays him (e.g., in recording certain demographic values in Crete), much of the information reported matches that of other archival sources of the time. Furthermore, Vincent has noted that the contribution of *L'Occio* to factual knowledge is only part of its value, as the writer's narrative conveys Zuanne's memory and emotions as they unfold, becoming a valuable 'micro-historical' gateway to the author's mindset and experience.²⁶

At the intersection of micro and macro history,²⁷ therefore, Zuanne became a chronicler of excellence whose extensive knowledge, preserved by an excellent memory, needed to find an outlet in writing. He says this himself:

I can say that at my age I would have preferred to accept the ability to forget rather than that of remembering my unfortunate fatherland, for I recall many things I would have preferred not to, and I am unable to forget those things I would like to.²⁸

²² Papadopoli, *L'Occio (Time of Leisure)*, 45.

²³ Nikolaos Panagiotakis, 'Ερευναι εν Βενετία' [Researches in Venice], *Thesaurismata* 5 (1968): 45–118.

²⁴ Zuanne Papadopoulous, *Στον καιρό της σχολής, Αναμνήσεις από την Κρήτη του 17ου αιώνα* (Crete: ΠΕΚ, 2012).

²⁵ Papadopoli, *L'Occio (Time of Leisure)*, 11.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 21.

²⁷ For a comprehensive reflection, see Francesca Trivellato, 'Microstoria/Microhistoire/Microhistory', *French Politics, Culture & Society* 33, no. 1 (2015): 122–34.

²⁸ Papadopoli, *L'Occio (Time of Leisure)*, 47.

Papadopoli presents himself as a reliable witness, for not only has he experienced what he recounts, but he is also unable to forget it, even if this causes him grief due to the memory of his lost homeland.²⁹

3. Daily lives in comparison, daily life as a genre painting: temporal dimensions and visual summoning in Papadopoli's narration

The value of *L'Occio* is directly related to the literary quality of the text itself and the way in which the author composed his account. Vincent has already noted that the work is written in an informal, discursive manner. Nevertheless, although he described himself as an unrefined writer, Papadopoli was extremely conscious of the relationship with his readership. In fact, not only does he address the audience directly, he also plays an active part in the construction of his own character as an author/witness/occasional protagonist.³⁰ Thus, while emphasising his authority and credibility, he portrays himself as a *μερακλής* (*meraklis*),³¹ that is, a person of taste who knew how to enjoy life and to feast but not to excess. His remarks on food, wine and women, together with his proud reflection on his advanced age, are intended to transmit the idea that he is an experienced man of the world who has lived and enjoyed his life and is therefore qualified to talk and philosophise about the past.

His account begins with a physical description of the city of Candia, its fortifications and churches, and the political and social structure of the colony, before expanding to consider the countryside, the food and customs of the people, and their love of music and wine. His style,

²⁹ The subject of a vast literature, I will not explore the complex relationship between memory and truth or memory and history. Among the vast interdisciplinary scholarship on the topic, Alessandro Portelli's work is fundamental: Portelli has worked on this topic in relation to oral history since the 1980s. An excellent overview of his theoretical and methodological reflection can be found in Alessandro Portelli, 'On the Uses of Memory: As Monument, As Reflex, As Disturbance', *Economic and Political Weekly* 49, no. 30 (26 July 2014): 43–7. In this perspective, see also Alistair Thomson, 'Memory and Remembering in Oral History', in *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, ed. Donald A. Ritchie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 78–95. Equally fundamental is the discussion on memory in philosophy and psychology. See Sven Bernecker, 'Memory and Truth', in *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Memory*, ed. Sven Bernecker and Kourken Michaelian (London: Routledge, 2017), 51–62.

³⁰ Papadopoli, *L'Occio (Time of Leisure)*, 19–20.

³¹ The original meaning from the Turkish word *merak* is one who is possessed by a passion for something, who has a longing or an intense desire.

which might almost be described as intimate, allows him to combine a plethora of information in a peculiar way, resulting in a presentation of Crete centred on two primary approaches: comparison and visualisation.

Comparison, as a qualitative and quantitative parallel between different environments, is undoubtedly a significant medium in the representation of realities far removed from the audience's own perception. Travel literature has often resorted to this approach to enable readers to picture a distant reality through a juxtaposition with familiar ones.³² In his description of life in Crete, Zuanne likewise resorts to this method, employing three terms of comparison that represent the three temporal dimensions of his experience. They are: everyday life in Crete before the war; life in Candia during the siege; and life in Padua. Of these three dimensions, the one obviously reserved more room in the text is the first, as an idealised place that nostalgically embraces a longing both for a lost homeland and a long-lost youth.

Zuanne's description of the second dimension – that of life during the siege – on the other hand indicates how much the war had changed Cretan people's manners. The text offers many examples of how the invasion represented the end of a state of grace and a chivalrous and gallant way of life. One example given concerns the custom of carrying weapons. He notes: 'After the invasion of the Realm all the old simple customs were abandoned, and in place of a dagger people would carry pistols ... gladly in order to fight and defend themselves from the attacks of the Muslims'.³³ This militarisation of the population went hand in hand with the immense restriction of their freedom. Speaking of the Candiotes, Papadopoli evokes a striking image of their powerlessness as 'the infidel ... had made himself master of our means of sustenance, and moreover kept us shut up inside the city, like capons in a pen'.³⁴ This picture is not merely a personal reflection years later but also a clear expression of the feeling shared by both besieged and besiegers alike (Fig. 10.3). In fact:

A number of times when I had occasion to converse in Greek with the pasha in command of the camp, when we showed a white flag in order to make an

³² Filomena Viviana Tagliaferri, 'Subjects in Between: Three Different Ways of Translating Experience by Italian Travelers in Late 17th – Early 18th-Century Ottoman Space', *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* 88 (2014): 329–51 (350).

³³ Papadopoli, *L'Occio (Time of Leisure)*, 124.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 140.

exchange of Turkish and Christian prisoners, he would compare us in the siege to sheep kept shut in the pen, with the kind of boasting which is habitual among those Muslims.³⁵

The Turkish takeover of livelihoods is what, more than anything else, changed the perception of what was acceptable and what was not. In the course of his narrative, Papadopoli himself sets out to clarify this, also to avoid being accused of lying:

I will go on to describe the delights enjoyed by the people of Candia, referring always to the time before the war, so that someone who was there during the siege will not have occasion to prove me a liar, *for then things were different as night from day* [italics mine], especially as regards the abundance of foodstuff.³⁶

And so, if wild goats were considered meat for peasants and strong stomachs, for those citizens who managed to obtain some dry-roasted goat during the siege, its 'flavour now seemed more delicate to those who had spurned [it] before the war'.³⁷ Moreover, one of the greatest riches of Cretan cuisine still to this day, namely, the abundant use of local olive oil, disappeared with the war. While many pulses and herbs were almost 'cooked ... with oil alone, as was the local custom', during the siege previously underappreciated dishes such as soups were cooked, out of necessity, 'in water alone'.³⁸

While the author's references to the difference between Crete before and after the siege are numerous, they are far exceeded by the number of comparisons between Crete and the Paduan area. This is the third dimension of Papadopoli's experience and, in his misfortune as an exile, he considers himself lucky. Speaking of the miraculous blood preserved in the Duomo – believed by some to be that of Christ himself – which was supposed to protect the fortifications from the enemy, he allows himself to engage in a crucial reflection:

Yet for our sins we ourselves finished up with the curse [of being conquered], and we must be grateful to have been able to escape from our beloved coun-

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 130.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 136.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 140.

try and save our lives and go wandering through the wide world, while the cursed Turk becomes master of everything.³⁹

Exile therefore ultimately proved an opportunity to experience differences firsthand, and to acquire new knowledge and a new life. This new life is precisely the third dimension he uses as a yardstick of comparison for the reader, making parallels throughout the text also in reference to fish, birds, farm animals, plants and fruits. On many occasions his comparisons also refer to wine. Cretan foodstuffs are generally judged to be better, but it is not rare for the author to praise Padua for some cultural aspects. For example, he considers livestock breeding to be enormously more developed in ‘these blessed regions’ of northern Italy, but Cretan farmers to be of ‘poor judgment’.⁴⁰ This *pocho giuditio* of the islanders also applies to other practices like bird hunting as they did not use traps like in Italy but only guns, which often resulted in the prey fleeing. On the contrary, ‘in these regions [of Italy] people use their subtle brain to study them and block their path’.⁴¹ From this kind of observation, one might also deduce that Zuanne felt a certain sense of superiority over the upper class of his fellow countrymen after living in a country he considers to be more refined. Hence, speaking of the ruling class in Candia, Papadopoli notes that:

They [the Venetian nobles] did not take pride in giving their children a good education; the same also applied to the Greeks [nobles]. These noblemen would sometimes make an arrangement with the garrison commander and he would assign them some soldier from the salaried companies so that he could teach the child to read and write his name, or grammar ...; though they would never teach their daughters to write, but only in some cases to read; the Greeks did the same.⁴²

Papadopoli’s openness to the education of girls does not imply, however, that he considered them equal to boys. Education is deemed something to be valued – while living in Candia, he sent his two sons to study at the Greek College in Rome⁴³ – but so is the preservation of the family patrimony. The Italians managed to safeguard this better than

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 165–6.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, 118.

⁴³ He regrets his own lack of formal education, *ibid.*, 192.

the islanders, by sending their daughters to convents and protecting the rights of the first-born, ‘and in this way the household remain[ed] in its original state’.⁴⁴

As for food, the flavours of Crete are deemed unbeatable. Magnified by nostalgia, they always surpass those of Italy. The island’s large citrons, ‘almost as big as pumpkins’, are extremely sweet, not like the Italian ones which, although ripe, leave a lasting bitter taste in the mouth.⁴⁵ The same marzipan-like sweetness is characteristic of Cretan melons, a far cry from the watered-down flavour of those from Padua.⁴⁶ This lack of taste also applies to Italian poultry which, ‘even when fat, seems to me insipid, and you do not have the taste lingering in your mouth which you had from poultry in Candia’.⁴⁷ Of the many other examples of comparisons between Crete and Padua to be found in the text, the most recurrent relate to wine. Praised in the highest terms, there can be no comparison between Cretan wine and Italy’s watery *acquarele*.⁴⁸

Wine and food, which he uses to evoke an emotional painting of ‘his’ Candia, are central to Zuanne’s retrieval of information relating to the first epoch of his lifetime. In *L’Occio*, genre scenes are brought to life by using food consumption as a catalyst, allowing the reader to visualise picturesque scenes of everyday life. Some of these scenes appear to lie somewhere between a Mediterranean version of Pieter Bruegel’s paintings and *commedia dell’arte* sketches. This is undoubtedly one of the great strengths of *L’Occio* as a historical source that gives access to life and mindsets in seventeenth-century Crete. It would be impossible to go into all these scenes here. Therefore, I will only consider four descriptions, which I believe best express Papadopoli’s style: those of breaking fast after Easter and Christmas, barber-musicians, the porters’ ‘lifestyle’ and the drunkenness of North European sailors. These four scenes also provide an emblematic sample of what *L’Occio* offers its readers: habits that can still be found on the island, unusual insights about the less well-off social classes and evidence of the internationality of the Venetian port of Candia. Let us therefore examine the first of these tableaux, which portrays the anticipation of breaking fast:

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 222.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 128.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 160.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 134–6.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 209.

Oh, what a gaiety there was in the city on Easter Day and for the twelve days of celebrations! They would eat meat throughout these days, as they would have fasted during Lent without even eating fish, and some without tasting oil or with other more rigorous forms of abstinence, especially during Holy Week ... Because of the long fast everyone was sick of this ... and could not wait for the mass to finish, which on Easter and Christmas was usually soon after the Ave Maria, so they could go and take breakfast in the manner described.⁴⁹

This passage is extremely significant because it demonstrates the familiarity Papadopoli wishes to establish with his reader through feelings that they could have experienced themselves. In fact, in a world where religious fasting marks the passing of time,⁵⁰ Zuanne clearly transmits the urge to rush home before the end of mass to eat lamb and goat's meat. The passage – and the detailed descriptions of what is on the table awaiting the return from mass – also helps create a climax of expectation. In this triumph of meat and its consumption, Papadopoli communicates the release of Lenten tensions, at the same time evoking long-lost flavours.

The second passage seems to be taken from a chivalric novel and opens with the night-time scene of an aristocratic Candia vibrant with life and music.

In summertime, in the excessive heat of those regions, the nobles and the other well-to-do men would leave their houses at ... night, almost naked, with just their shirt, linen breeches and shoes or slippers without stockings, and would follow the bands, which played instruments of every kind – clavichord, lute, violin, bass, flute, cittern or guitar. They would not spend any money at all, for the musicians were all prosperous barbers, who would join together ... for their own entertainment, and would go around playing ... with a boy or a girl who would sing ... in Greek and sometimes in Italian, walking round the city districts sometimes until one or two hours before daybreak. ... They ... would have them [the musician] sing serenades ... without making any payment except for the occasional refreshments, fruit or whatever, and the liquors of those regions.⁵¹

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 109–10.

⁵⁰ On fasting in the Christian tradition, see Claudio Ferlan, *Venerdì pesce. Diggiuno e Cristianesimo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2021).

⁵¹ Papadopoli, *L'Occio (Time of Leisure)*, 128–30.

Zuanne recounts the amusement of the nobles (even members of the Venetian administration whom he portrays following the bands incognito), the love of music made for pleasure and not for money, and serenades played at the homes of relatives or beloved women. With grace and vividness, Papadopoli allows the reader to participate in a gallant world in a Mediterranean climate in which people are permitted to walk around almost naked without scandal. However, this nocturnal sequence stands in antithesis to the third scene whose protagonists – the porters who live in caves outside the city walls – are among the lowest on the urban social scale. Papadopoli recalls that they would eat very salty foods such as bread, cheese and sardines, which they often paired with powerful drinks while working. Describing their return home, he says:

[The porters] would be incapable of walking in a straight line ... [they] were like Colossi, as fat as Paduan pigs. In the evening as they walked to their homes, which were outside the town towards the suburb of Maroulas, in some caves ... they would continually stagger around ... keeping up a continual banter in their jargon with voices like organs. They would carry over their shoulders their smocks, in the sleeves of which they had provisions for their family dinner, bread, cheese and, if it was a fast day, pilchards ...⁵²

This is a powerful genre picture, in which a shirt turned into a saddlebag becomes a container for the family's food. Papadopoli's reflection on the porters' poverty is mostly practical and unempathetic in tone and in tune with their consequential mockery by the upper classes. The scene is grotesque and contrasts sharply with the nobility's mode of entertainment, the lower classes being seen as bestial and ridiculous and becoming the target of derision. The double perception associated with drunkenness is evident here.⁵³ While Zuanne himself takes care to come across as an experienced drinker, the porters' unbridled drinking is derided and condemned from an ethical perspective.

The quasi-carnavalesque description of the porters is echoed, in an emphatic manner, in the final scene we examine here – the mockery of the drunkenness of northern European sailors – which includes a real carnival context. Regularly present in Candia where they loaded

⁵² *Ibid.*, 74–6.

⁵³ On the ambiguity of drunkenness, see Mark Forsyth, *A Short History of Drunkenness* (New York: Viking, 2017).

up Cretan wine destined for England and other northern countries, the northern European sailors often got so drunk that they could not return to their ships:

Staggering around the city ... in their ridiculous clothes. They would wear short breeches, wide at the bottom but pinched in where they were fastened below the knee, short doublets with narrow sleeves, always open, unbuttoned, and a large round beret ... always keeping a pipe in their mouth even when they were so drunk they did not know where they were going. Some locals from the cities would borrow some of their clothes during Carnival and would dress up completely in this style, with masks like foreigners' faces, imitating the way they would walk ... with a flask of wine in their hand Sometimes the masqueraders would come upon the real thing, completely sozzled ... and it was interesting to see the argument between the foreigner sailor and the masked reveler who was going about mimicking him, especially his language, even though the reveler did not understand the language.⁵⁴

This last sketch is truly extraordinary. It reveals the way otherness is perceived as ridiculous through clothing, which even becomes a carnival mask 'like foreigners' faces'.⁵⁵ The scene described here reinforces the perception of Papadopoli's disdain for the lower social classes, which in this case is heightened by the fact that they are also foreigners. Nevertheless, one cannot overlook the fact that the passage also attests to the considerable intermingling of locals and non-Venetian foreigners in seventeenth-century Crete. Indeed, in the context of the carnival, this comes about in an atmosphere of ambiguity and disguise, misunderstanding and physical contact. The inherently plural early modern Mediterranean societies ridiculed otherness while at the same time practising it, and coexisted with difference while at the same time failing to understand it.

Papadopoli's Venetian Crete was a place of both history and memory, that is, a place where micro and macro history met. The Ottoman siege overturned many individual stories and emotions, bringing an end to old ways of life and creating new ones as a result of exile or the

⁵⁴ Papadopoli, *L'Occio (Time of Leisure)*, 182.

⁵⁵ On the representation of otherness as a carnival mask and the carnivalesque, see Filomena Viviana Tagliaferri, 'A Mediterranean Theatre: Different Representations of Muslim Otherness in the Early Modern Maltese Public Feasts', in *Unframing and Reframing Mediterranean Spaces and Identities*, ed. Rosario Pollicino and Giovanna Summerfield (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming 2023).

need to adapt to a new regime. The city of Candia itself, battered by the long siege, lost many of the landmarks built during the 400 years of Venetian rule and today we can only imagine what it was like until the first half of the seventeenth century. In addition, it is also difficult for us to find many of the traces of the Ottoman identity of Heraklion. In this regard, the story of the imposing minaret of the cathedral of St Titus is emblematic. St Titus – first a church, then a mosque and then church again – had its minaret demolished with the departure of the last Muslims from Crete (1920), after the annexation of the island to the Greek state (1913). Nevertheless, Heraklion still shows its plural character despite the wounds in the urban fabric caused by the succession of political powers and its incorporation into the Greek state at the height of the national rhetoric of the *Μεγάλη Ίδέα* (Megàli Idèa). Its monuments, alleys, music, food and language indeed demonstrate that the city – as well as the whole island of Crete – is the expression of a world at the intersection of the Mediterranean East and West.

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Abstract

The 1669 loss of Candia, present-day Heraklion and Venice's last stronghold on Crete, was a decisive turning point in the Mediterranean political and military balance of the early modern era in a context inherently traversed by interconnections between Latins, Greeks and Muslims. Despite the strong elements of continuity between life during Venetian and Ottoman rule, it is undeniable that material and cultural practices related to political administration and religion introduced new and rupturing elements to the cityscape. This chapter aims to analyse the perceived disruption of everyday life brought about first by the Ottoman siege of the island and then by the exile status of one of its inhabitants, Zuanne Papadopoli. An intriguing embodiment of Veneto-Cretan culture, Papadopoli was a member of the local nobility of non-Venetian descent that had become an integral part of the Venetian administration in Crete. His memoirs, which go under the title *L'Occio* (Idleness), are the source employed in this paper, a valuable 'micro-historical' gateway to the author's mindset and experience. Through comparison and visualisation, the chapter shows how Papadopoli stands at the intersection of micro- and macro-history, becoming a chronicler of excellence of everyday life in Candia around the mid-seventeenth century.

Keywords: Candia, Crete, Stato da Mar, *L'Occio*, Papadopoli

RAGUSA (DUBROVNIK) – NAVIGATING EMPIRES

‘Lo loco non faccia gl’huomini’¹

Are the port cities of the Mediterranean fated to exist in specific locations? Many of the sea’s major settlements seem almost inevitably defined by unique geographical features: Naples by its bay; Alexandria by the Nile Delta; Venice by its lagoon. It is nearly impossible to imagine these locations as uninhabited sites without the accompaniment of bustling, cosmopolitan maritime cities. Their natural features provide protection for merchant fleets while offering easy access to rich inland markets. The foremost scholar of medieval Ragusa (Dubrovnik) argues that this port city, located at what is now the southern tip of Croatia on the eastern shore of the Adriatic, capitalised less on favourable natural features, and more on an inherently advantageous position in trade systems. Bariša Krekić describes Dubrovnik’s location as being poised at the intersection of ‘reliant routes’, connecting Italy to the Balkans, North to South, and Venice to the Mediterranean.² Ragusa, he writes, took advantage of its flexible position as a well-placed node in these rich trans-regional networks. Almost as an afterthought, he adds that the city-state also possessed a ‘genius for commerce and politics’.³

Taking a closer look, the degree to which the development of Dubrovnik’s preeminence as a port city can be said to derive from either its geographical features or its favourable location is questiona-

¹ Benedetto Cotrugli, *Il Libro dell’Arte di Mercatura*, ed. Vera Ribauda (Milan: Guerini Next, 2022), 106. Cotrugli, also known as Benedikt Kotruljević, was a Ragusan merchant and diplomat who wrote the book *On the Art of Trade and the Perfect Merchant* in 1458. He is self-consciously quoting Seneca here.

² ‘Située dans le Sud de la côte orientale de l’Adriatique, elle se trouvait au carrefour des routes reliant, de l’Ouest à l’Est, l’Italie aux Balkans, et du Nord au Sud, Venise à la Méditerranée’. Bariša Krekić, *Dubrovnik (Raguse) et le Levant au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Mouton & Co, 1961), 13.

³ *Ibid.*, 13.

ble. Many other sites on the Dalmatian coast sit between the broad axes that Krekić describes. Even immediately neighbouring locations – the mouth of the Neretva River to the north and the magnificent Bay of Kotor to the south – seem to offer better natural conditions than Dubrovnik’s modest natural harbour. Other Dalmatian cities offer easier access to the Balkan interior, while Dubrovnik occupies a narrow strip of rocky land. The steep and imposing Mount Srđ rises directly behind its inland walls. Considering the limited arable land in its vicinity, one geographer describes Dubrovnik’s location as ‘defensible but otherwise valueless’.⁴ Other cities on the eastern Adriatic also had deeper roots. Spalato/Split and Durazzo/Durrës were well established in Roman trade networks, while Dubrovnik’s rocky site was ignored by the ancients. Greeks and Romans preferred Epidaurus/Epidaurum, a modest port city 15 kilometres south of Dubrovnik, where the modern town of Cavtat is located.

Krekić’s terminology (‘genius’) is challenging for a modern historian. Another scholar invoked dire necessity as the animating force behind the city’s commercial brilliance:

The whole basis of Dubrovnik’s prosperity was trade. The republic’s territory was too small, and in part too barren, to provide sufficient foodstuffs for the population, and consequently it was upon trade and industry that the citizens had to depend for their means of livelihood.⁵

This analysis suggests that the poorest sites might make the best port cities. A quick glance at other barren locations in the Adriatic shows that poverty is no guarantee of mercantile expertise. In either case, it is clear that environmental determinism does not adequately explain the city’s remarkable history. An account must be made for the importance of human factors in the outsized success of such a modest place.

What is known is that the city of Ragusa, or Dubrovnik, was established on its present site in the seventh century CE. It eventually established itself as a republic, carved out small but valuable territories on neighbouring islands and coastal areas, and managed to survive with a remarkable degree of local autonomy until the French invasion

⁴ Francis W. Carter, *Dubrovnik (Ragusa). A Classic City-State* (New York: Seminar Press, 1972), 71.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 135.

of 1808. In the many centuries of its existence, much larger political entities competed to claim it. Byzantine, Norman, Venetian and Hungarian powers vied for the upper hand before the definitive arrival of the Ottoman Empire in the fifteenth century. Of these competing powers, only Venice imposed direct rule on this independent-minded place, governing it under the authority of a Venetian count from 1204–1358. In all other instances, Dubrovnik's officials – the city's many councilmen, senators, rectors and ambassadors who ran the affairs of state – were able to maintain a kind of negotiated autonomy over its internal and external affairs while remaining under the auspices of larger powers. This remarkable achievement was repeated again and again. Ragusa would formally submit to a distant authority, offer pledges of loyalty, and show fealty through the delivery of gifts and an annual tribute payment. In return, the monarchs in Buda or Istanbul would largely leave the republic alone to manage its affairs.

Dubrovnik's ability to maintain such a state of negotiated autonomy in shifting political circumstances owes much to its peripheral location. Indeed, it seems more likely that remoteness, rather than centrality, was the key to its long-term survival. The city-state found itself perpetually on the frontiers of empires, just far enough away from metropolitan centres to avoid unwanted attention. Dubrovnik managed to thrive in this vulnerable position, engaging with all surrounding powers, observing their habits, and adapting to their strengths and weaknesses. With centuries of practice, the city's officials became masterful negotiators. They were able to avoid confrontation while finding ways to make themselves indispensable to neighbours on all sides. Its relatively remote location gave Dubrovnik space to survive, but it was the city's human expertise and energy – including diplomatic and commercial skill, outstanding information-gathering networks, and the ability to trade with all partners regardless of linguistic or religious affiliation – that caused it to flourish (Fig. 11.1).

1. Biography of a (sometimes) free port

Historian Serafino Razzi, writing in the late sixteenth century, claimed that Ragusa '... is the only free city in Dalmatia, and the richest'.⁶ When he visited, the city was a prosperous and autonomous republic, secure

⁶ Serafino Razzi, *La Storia di Raugia* (Ragusa: Editrice tipserbo-ragusea, 1903), 11.

in its role as a tribute-paying vassal of the Ottoman Empire. Reaching this state of freedom and wealth while remaining subservient to the vast empire on its borders took some doing. Negotiating prowess was key, and the city began refining this skill well before the advent of the Ottoman dynasty. Strategic diplomacy and alliance-building reached an initial height as early as the twelfth century, when Venice, rather than the Ottoman Empire, was the dominant force to be reckoned with.

Byzantium had been Dubrovnik's protector in the Adriatic since the city's inception. As that empire's power waned, Venice's ascended. There was little that the tiny Republic of Ragusa could do to fend off its 'unequal rival', the Republic of Venice, over the long term.⁷ Venice coveted the Adriatic and claimed sovereignty over the entire Dalmatian coast in 998 or 1000, but was unable to establish lasting control over Dubrovnik on this first attempt.⁸ Venice occupied Dubrovnik in 1125 and 1171, but again failed to incorporate the city into its overseas empire, the *Stato da Mar*. In a pattern that would continue for centuries, Ragusan authorities did all they could to ensure the protection of distant imperial powers – initially Byzantine and Norman, later Hungarian and eventually Ottoman – to stave off the constant threat of a Venetian takeover.

In addition to entreaties to far-away imperial capitals, Dubrovnik pursued diplomatic alliances and economic ties with smaller powers closer to its home territory. Dubrovnik's merchant-diplomats seemed to be everywhere in the second half of the twelfth century. Treaties were signed with many of the Adriatic and Italian port cities that remained outside Venetian control: Molfetta in 1148, Pisa in 1169, Fano and Ancona in 1169, Kotor in 1181, Ravenna and Rovinj in 1188.⁹ Even pirates could be negotiated with: 'The piratical people of Omiš, the Kačić clan, were the most notorious, but the Ragusans bought them off with a tribute in exchange for the right to safe navigation'.¹⁰ A minnow swimming with sharks, Dubrovnik understood the tenuousness of its position and responded actively and pragmatically. Given its limits, military force was unlikely to accomplish the republic's goals of in-

⁷ The term is used by Bariša Krekić as the title for the essay collection *Unequal Rivals: Essays on Relations Between Dubrovnik and Venice in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (Zagreb: Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences; Dubrovnik: Institute for Historical Sciences in Dubrovnik, 2007).

⁸ Robin Harris, *Dubrovnik: A History* (London: Saqi Books, 2003), 36.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 39.

dependence. A more realistic approach was to build on its diplomatic savvy and commercial dynamism to develop a broad network of allies.

Dubrovnik could afford to be generous when necessary thanks to the wealth generated by its far-flung merchants. The city's maritime accomplishments were widely admired by contemporary observers. Geographer Muhammad al-Idrisi, writing in 1153, described the city as 'a large maritime town whose population were hard-working craftsmen and possessed a large fleet which travelled to different parts'.¹¹ Following Idrisi, many observers emphasised Ragusan maritime expertise as the key to its survival: 'If anything was lacking, the convenience of the sea and its many ships provided it abundantly'.¹² Dubrovnik's sailors were well known in the north as well. The term 'argosy', which entered the English vernacular in the 1570s to refer to a large merchant vessel carrying rich freight, is a corruption of Ragusa.¹³

But the sea is only part of the story. Dubrovnik also placed great attention on inland opportunities. On the other side of Mount Srj, the landmass of southeastern Europe was a complex political space that experienced rapid transformation in the post-Byzantine period. It was also an enormous market for imported goods, and an important producer of resources and materials for export. While Ragusan merchants were sailing their famous ships across the Mediterranean and beyond, they remained deeply connected to the mountains and valleys of the Balkan hinterland.¹⁴

Extensive trade is attested between Dubrovnik and the Balkan interior from the tenth century on: 'After the 10th century Dubrovnik and Salonika, together with Belgrade and Constantinople, were the four most important towns on the main trade routes of the Balkan peninsula'.¹⁵ Trade went hand in hand with diplomatic ties, and Ragusans watched the development of the Serbian and Bosnian polities carefully, along with that of neighbouring Hum (Herzegovina). The republic's negotiators were famously tough-minded, but always sought ways to minimise conflict and maximise economic potential. In 1189, right

¹¹ As quoted in Carter, *Dubrovnik (Ragusa). A Classic City-State*, 74.

¹² Razzi, *La Storia di Raugia*, 10.

¹³ David Abulafia, *The Great Sea* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 390.

¹⁴ See Jesse Howell, 'The Ragusa Road: Mobility and Encounter in the Ottoman Balkans (1430–1700)' (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2017).

¹⁵ Francis W. Carter, 'Dubrovnik: The Early Development of a Pre-Industrial City', *The Slavonic and East European Review* 47, no. 109 (1969): 355–68 (360).

around the time of intense diplomatic activity with the maritime powers listed above, Dubrovnik signed a treaty with Ban Kulin of Bosnia. The terms included ‘... considerable privileges, including free movement and trade throughout Bosnian territory *without the need for customs duty*’.¹⁶ The security of Ragusan merchants active in Serbian lands was later enshrined in the famous code of King Stefan Dušan.¹⁷ Freedom of movement, legal protection for merchants and their goods while abroad, and low tariffs were the holy trinity for Ragusan negotiators. Over centuries, the republic managed to sign accords with an array of inland neighbours (Byzantine, Serbian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Ottoman), securing these exact privileges, which were crucial for the republic’s economic vitality and political survival.

Robin Harris uses a vivid metaphor to describe the benefits of the city’s equilibrium between land and sea:

Dubrovnik had, as it were, the benefit of breathing with two lungs: when either maritime conditions on the one hand or the circumstances of the overland trade on the other proved especially difficult, it could turn elsewhere for sustenance until the difficulties passed.¹⁸

Breathing with both of its ‘lungs’, Dubrovnik made itself into an indispensable partner for both maritime and landlocked states. The republic may have been positioned between ‘reliant routes’, but it was the city’s flexibility and acumen that forced the routes to become reliant on it, as opposed to the many other coastal towns of the Adriatic. Ragusan merchants turned themselves into crucial middlemen, profiting from the flow of goods moving across land and sea between the Balkan and Italian peninsulas. By establishing itself as the preeminent place of exchange between the eastern Adriatic and its hinterland, a modest coastal settlement became a lucrative portal, the site of human, commercial and informational flows moving in all directions.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 361, italics mine.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 363.

¹⁸ Harris, *Dubrovnik: A History*, 49.

2. *The Venetian and Hungarian periods*

The early Christian martyr Saint Blaise, who lived in eastern Anatolia in the fourth century, is venerated across much of the Christian world. To this day he remains Dubrovnik's patron saint. The church of St Blaise sits in a prominent location a stone's throw away from the rector's palace. Local legend recounts that the saint appeared in a vision in Dubrovnik in the year 971, taking the guise of an old, bearded man wearing a bishop's mitre. His task was to alert the city's leaders about an impending Venetian attack. Thus forewarned, the Ragusans took last-minute defensive precautions and fended off the raid. Multiple images of St Blaise in his tall mitre are carved into the exterior of the city's magnificent walls, his eyes gazing out over the sea. It is a striking, stern image, as if the saintly figure were continuing to guard the city, perpetually looking out for the menacing arrival of the Venetian fleet (Fig. 11.2).

The story of St Blaise's miraculous warning underlines the degree to which Venice loomed as a key threat – even a metaphysical one – over the people of Dubrovnik. The city-state's diplomatic and economic strategies all focused on remaining out of the clutches of the Serenissima, which, in turn, sought to turn the entire Adriatic into its own liquid territory.¹⁹ Nonetheless, the period of a century and a half when the Venetians finally managed to establish control over Dubrovnik was strangely harmonious, a time of growth and expansion for both sides.

Ultimately, the combined factors of distance, alliance-building and spiritual protection were no match for blunt force of Venetian power. Leveraging the forces of the Fourth Crusade, Venice took Zadar (Zara) in 1202, and Constantinople itself in 1204. Ragusa followed, without a fight, in 1205. The city would remain under the direct control of Venice until 1358. As in previous centuries, Dubrovnik's leaders assessed the political situation, negotiated for favourable terms, and looked for opportunities to benefit. Opportunities for Ragusan merchants to trade with the Balkan hinterland remained lucrative, and Venice made little attempt to restrict them.

¹⁹ 'The golden rule, the "ben noto principio" as laid down by the Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia is quite explicit: 'ogni merce che entra nell'Adriatico o esce dall'Adriatico deve toccar Venezia', 'all goods carried in the Adriatic must pass through Venice...' Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, trans. Sian Reynolds (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 1:128.

Dubrovnik's economy grew steadily thanks primarily to the city's intermediary role assumed in the export of Balkan minerals to the West. This, in turn, led to the evolution of the social and administrative structure of Dubrovnik, largely under the influence of the Venetian model.²⁰

Despite the imposition of Venetian authority, Dubrovnik was able to *expand* its local territories through purchase and negotiation. The strategic island of Lastovo and the agriculturally productive Pelješac peninsula – key additions to such a land-poor city-state – were both added during this period.²¹

The Adriatic balance of power shifted with the advent of Louis I of Hungary, who claimed the kingdoms of Croatia and Dalmatia. Hostilities between Hungarian and Venetian forces broke out in the 1350s. Venice was eventually defeated, and, with the 1358 signing of the Treaty of Zadar, the prized cities of Dalmatia, including Dubrovnik, were absorbed by the Hungarian crown. Ragusa had been able to manage under Venice, but under distant Hungary it thrived. The envoys sent to the Hungarian sovereigns to deliver tribute and gifts did not hesitate to press for generous privileges: 'Louis went so far as to grant Dubrovnik the permission to carry on trade with Venice and with Serbia even when Hungary was at war with these countries'.²²

This outcome could hardly have been more advantageous for Dubrovnik. It had a powerful protector to invoke when under threat, but freedom to conduct its affairs at home and abroad. Remarkably, the city even managed to remain on good terms with Venice. In 1358, Count Marco Superanzio, the final Venetian governor in Ragusa, was given an honourable return to the Serenissima in a Ragusan ship accompanied by a Ragusan envoy whose mission was apparently to soothe Venetian ire and lay the groundwork for continued economic cooperation between the trading nations.²³

²⁰ Krekić, *Unequal Rivals*, 335.

²¹ Harris, *Dubrovnik: A History*, 53–7.

²² Krekić, *Unequal Rivals*, 29; Harris, *Dubrovnik: A History*, 65.

²³ *Ibid.*, 61.

3. *The good Venice: Dubrovnik and the Ottomans*

Ottoman traveller and polymath Evliya Çelebi visited the city in the seventeenth century. Describing his visit, he refers to Ragusa as ‘Dobra-Venedik’, the kind of multilingual pun he scattered throughout the ten-volume *Seyahatnâme* or *Book of Travels*. This was the ‘good Venice’, he suggests, as opposed to the other, more famous Venedik (Venice), which he calls sinful and rebellious.²⁴ In addition to wordplay, Evliya also loved telling tales that, while not entirely accurate, communicated a larger truth. He wrote favourably of Dubrovnik’s historians, and was astounded by the republic’s ability to collect and analyse information. Wise Dubrovnik, Evliya claims, was almost able to predict the future. To illustrate this point, he tells a story that highlights Dubrovnik’s foresight in its early dealings with the Ottomans. The republic, he writes, sent an embassy to the court of Osman Gazi when the eponymous leader of the young Ottoman dynasty was laying siege to the Byzantine city of Prusa (Bursa), which would shortly become the first Ottoman capital.

In the year [---], when Osman Gazi was besieging Bursa, these Dubrovnik infidels realized that the future world conquerors had emerged. So they sent their ambassadors to Osman Gazi in Bursa with [---] gold pieces and plenty of silk brocades and other precious stuffs. Finding that Osman Gazi had died and that his son Orhan Gazi had conquered Bursa, the Dubrovnikers gave all the presents to Orhan Gazi and made a peace treaty with him, agreeing to send the specified sum of treasure every year with their ambassadors. The treaty contained 150 articles, in return for which they received 150 imperial decrees.²⁵

The Ottoman conquest of Bursa took place in 1326, many centuries before Evliya’s lifetime. That date is also far earlier than any documented exchange between Dubrovnik and the Ottomans. Evliya suggests

²⁴ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatnâmesi: Topkapı Sarayı Bağdat 304 Yazmasının Transkripsiyonu*, trans. and ed. Seyit Ali Kahraman and Yücel Dağlı (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi, 2002), 6: 263.

²⁵ Note that the gaps in parentheses are due to gaps in Evliya’s manuscript, which includes many such lacunae. Apparently, the author intended to fill in these details at a later time. Translation from Robert Dankoff and Sooyong Kim, *An Ottoman Traveller; Selections from the Book of Travels of Evliya Çelebi* (London: Eland, 2010), 205.

that the Ragusans were able to anticipate the Ottoman victory before any major European power and were already well prepared with gifts to lavish upon the Ottomans after their triumph. Although the 1326 date is almost certainly fictional, Evliya's story neatly outlines the contours of Ottoman-Ragusan diplomacy, which is attested from the early fifteenth century, about a hundred years after the events he describes above. As the Ottoman author suggests, informational awareness and strategic gift-giving resulting in a position of favoured subjecthood would be the hallmarks of Dubrovnik's enduring partnership with the Ottoman Empire.

Following the victory at Bursa, the Ottoman state continued to grow, making significant inroads into the Balkan territories that it called Rumelia. By 1430, Dubrovnik was no longer able to ignore the reality of Ottoman power. A letter was sent that year in the name of Sultan Murad II. In it, the sultan took Dubrovnik's leaders to task for failing to properly recognise his authority, despite what he described as their well-known trading activities 'throughout all my lands'.²⁶ Ragusan ambassadors were sent immediately, and the sultan was appeased, apparently without any tribute being exchanged.²⁷ Over the following decade, Sultan Murad began to insist on formal submission in the form of a yearly tribute. When Dubrovnik stalled, the Ottomans showed their ability to control the republic's commercial livelihood: 'the Sultan arrested all Ragusan merchants and confiscated all of their goods all over his land'.²⁸ This easy demonstration of Ottoman power erased any lingering doubts about Dubrovnik's place in the Balkan trade system that was so vital to its economic survival. Despite continuing ties with Hungary, an agreement was reached in 1442. Formal recognition of Ottoman authority and Ragusan privileges was articulated in an *'ahdnâme*, a political and commercial treaty that can be translated variously as a capitulation or charter.²⁹ The document clarified that tribute would be delivered to the sultan annually by a pair of ambassadors,

²⁶ A version of the sultan's letter, written in Old Serbian, is published in French translation in Bosko I. Bojovic, *Raguse et L'Empire Ottoman (1430–1520); les actes impériaux ottomans en vieux-serbe de Murad II a Selim Ier* (Paris: Éditions de l'Association Pierre Belon, 1990), 184.

²⁷ Zdenko Zlatar, *Dubrovnik's Merchants and Capital in the Ottoman Empire (1520–1620)* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2010), 66.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 66.

²⁹ Nicolaas H. Biegan, *The Turco-Ragusan Relationship According to the Firmâns of Murâd III (1575–1595) Extant in the State Archives of Dubrovnik* (The Hague: Mouton, 1967), 49.

who would reaffirm the republic's loyalty in exchange for considerable privileges and protections. The Ragusan republic had become a tribute-paying vassal of the Ottoman Empire, an arrangement that would last for centuries (Fig. 11.3).

The Ottoman charter is highly reminiscent of Dubrovnik's earlier trade agreements with previous rulers in the Balkans. The commercial elements it contained were 'originally conceived on the analogy of the privileges which Dubrovnik had enjoyed in the medieval Balkan states, and more especially in Serbia, of which it was in fact the replacement'.³⁰ A key element of the Ottoman *'ahdnâme* (also seen in the earlier agreement signed with Hungary) gave Dubrovnik explicit permission to trade with foreign powers, even those with whom the Ottomans were at war.³¹ A later version of the charter clarified this point: 'The territory of Dubrovnik is open to all, whether arriving by land or sea, whether a friend or enemy of the sultan'.³² As formalised in these valuable documents, the city-state would become a tribute-paying subject, but it would also remain, for all intents and purposes, an autonomous republic and a free port.

It is a testament to Ragusan diplomatic prowess that such uniquely generous conditions were established and preserved over the centuries. Other lands maintained a type of tribute-for-limited-autonomy relationship with the Ottomans, but none enjoyed such advantageous conditions. The charter offered to Transylvania, for example, was 'full of restrictive clauses as far as the latter's foreign and internal policies are concerned'.³³ Dubrovnik had no military obligations to the Ottomans, while the Prince of Transylvania was expected to provide military support to the empire and was to have 'no dealings whatsoever with the sultan's enemies including trading activities'.³⁴

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 54.

³¹ Bojović, *Raguse et L'Empire Ottoman*, 193.

³² Vesna Miović, 'Diplomatic Relations Between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Dubrovnik', in *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century*, ed. Gábor Kármán and Lovro Kunčević (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 187–208 (189). On the complexity of the tributary/sovereign relationship in the Ottoman Empire, see Lovro Kunčević, 'Status of the Ragusan Republic in the Early Modern Period', and Gábor Kármán, 'Sovereignty and Representation: Tributary States in the Seventeenth-Century Diplomatic System of the Ottoman Empire' in the above volume.

³³ Zlatar, *Dubrovnik's Merchants and Capital*, 80.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 80.

Formal submission to a Muslim ruler might have seemed problematic for an assertively Catholic state like Dubrovnik. Fortunately for the Ragusans, Rome could also be pragmatic. A succession of popes prevented Dubrovnik from being forced to participate in Holy Leagues, despite the insistence of Venice.³⁵ The republic's role as a source of information about the Ottomans and its utility as an advocate for the Catholic population of southeastern Europe was too valuable to risk by forcing it into a confrontation with the empire on its borders. Having earned special dispensations from powers to the east and west, Dubrovnik settled into its role as a secure and quasi-independent subordinate of the Ottoman Empire. Its merchants, diplomats and spies (often one and the same) were able to move freely across every corner of the Mediterranean. With the exception of a few years during the reign of Mehmed II, the city would not experience a significant military threat for centuries, neither from its Ottoman neighbours, nor from Venice, its old adversary in the Adriatic.

Little wonder that Dubrovnik did all it could to present itself as a devoted and long-standing ally of the Ottoman state. When frictions flared with Ottoman officials, the republic's ambassadors, who travelled with a copy of the imperial charter with them at all times, were instructed to emphasise Ragusa's poverty, loyalty and generosity to the Ottoman dynasty.³⁶ They understood that there was a hierarchy between those states that voluntarily accepted tributary status, and those who were forced into a position of subjection through military defeat. Ragusan envoys continually emphasised their legally defined status in the former category. A letter to the *cadis* (judges) of Rumelia in 1580 clarifies how Ragusans saw themselves: 'Well, the Ragusans are like the rest of the Sultan's tribute-paying subjects (*ḥarācğüzār ra'iyetler*), and it is not allowed to do them wrong against the charter'.³⁷

The republic that had initially resisted coming under Ottoman protection eventually began to foster the myth that it had submitted to the Ottomans at an early stage, on its own initiative. A claim was perpetuated that the republic's tribute-paying status began with an embassy to the Ottomans in 1365. This timeline became so well established that it was not debunked until 1895, with the publication of an article by the

³⁵ Miović, 'Diplomatic Relations', 190.

³⁶ Biegman, *The Turco-Ragusan Relationship*, 69. Vesna Miović, *Dubrovačka Republika u Spisima Osmanskih Sultana (The Dubrovnik Republic in the Documents of the Ottoman Sultans)* (Dubrovnik: Državni Arhiv u Dubrovniku, 2005), 442.

³⁷ Biegman, *The Turco-Ragusan Relationship*, document no. 13.

great Balkanologist Konstantin Jireček.³⁸ Even then, the corrected date he offered (1396) was *still* too early. The earliest dependable date for a formal Ottoman-Ragusan agreement is 1430, but the remarkable endurance of the myth of an earlier treaty reveals much about Dubrovnik's ability to shape the narrative of Turco-Ragusan relations. For the diplomats of Dubrovnik, history and even time itself could be negotiated. It seems likely that Evliya Çelebi was not exaggerating (much) when he wrote his anecdote about the gift-laden embassy to the camp of Orhan Gazi in 1326. Perhaps he was only repeating the information given to him by the Ragusan sources he praised. In fact, the chronology may have become so ingrained that they believed it themselves.

4. *Changing currents*

Dubrovnik's survival as an autonomous port city was a constant balancing act. The republic needed to make itself useful – ideally essential – to the surrounding Mediterranean powers and learn to live under them when necessary. The city's merchants thrived during the long periods when their maritime expertise was matched with privileged access to inland Balkan trading territories. Lacking military power or extensive resources, the city relied on its commercial vitality and virtuosic diplomatic skills to survive. The republic was perpetually cautious about revealing its wealth, lest it attract the attention of hostile powers. Dubrovnik did not purchase permanent accommodation in Istanbul for its *poklisari* (tribute ambassadors), who were not even allowed to ride a horse worth more than one hundred ducats.³⁹ The myth of Dubrovnik's weakness and poverty was reinscribed at every opportunity. The unofficial motto of Ragusans abroad was 'we are neither Christians nor Jews, but poor Ragusans'.⁴⁰

At the same time, Dubrovnik's officials sought additional ways to bolster the city's tenuous position. In addition to the annual tribute, a bewildering array of gifts were lavished on Ottoman officials, both in distant Istanbul and to closer provincial neighbours. The republic tracked Ottoman appointees and were quick to identify those who were thought to be especially well connected. Gift-giving was an affair of state, and detailed lists were prepared in Dubrovnik prior to the de-

³⁸ Zlatar, *Dubrovnik's Merchants and Capital*, 65.

³⁹ Miović, 'Diplomatic Relations', 207.

⁴⁰ 'Non siamo Christiani, non siamo Ebrei, ma poveri Ragusei'. Biegman, *The Turco-Ragusan Relationship*, 29.

parture of embassies to Ottoman lands. Luxurious textiles were invariably presented, along with such delicacies as sugar, sweetmeats, spices, candles and cash. Prayer beads made from coral were another popular gift.⁴¹ A cosmopolitan port city like Dubrovnik had access to all types of commodities that could buy favour: ‘... members of the Sultan’s harem had the Ragusans bring for them items as unusual as parrots’.⁴²

Perhaps no other gift was as valuable as strategic information.⁴³ As Catholic merchants, Ragusans conducted business freely across western Europe, in locations that were difficult for Ottoman subjects to access, never mind collect sensitive information in.

Even by 1574 its fleet was still the largest in the Adriatic, its merchants having contacts in all the important towns of the Mediterranean. Contrary to trends in other ports (e.g., Marseilles), the extent of Dubrovnik’s shipping was increasing.⁴⁴

This burgeoning commercial network doubled as an intelligence-gathering operation. Dubrovnik did not shy away from highlighting the value of its spying efforts in the west, nor was it adverse to engaging in a quid-pro-quo relationship where sensitive information was exchanged, either for enhanced privileges, or to defuse tensions with Ottoman officials.

We pay two tributes, and not only one, because of our great and continuous expenses keeping people in every part of the world in order that we know what happens [there] and what is going on, then to report it to the Blessed Porte.⁴⁵

The skill of Ragusan stone masons and craftsmen was prized and many were sent to work on Ottoman building projects across the west-

⁴¹ For detailed examples, see Vesna Miović, ‘Beylerbey of Bosnia and Sancakbey of Herzegovina in the Diplomacy of the Dubrovnik Republic’, *Dubrovnik Annals* 9 (2005): 37–69.

⁴² Biegman, *The Turco-Ragusan Relationship*, 28.

⁴³ Nicolaas H Biegman, ‘Ragusan Spying for the Ottoman Empire’, *Bulleten* 27, no. 106 (June 1963): 237–56.

⁴⁴ Francis Carter, ‘The Commerce of the Dubrovnik Republic, 1500–1700’, *The Economic History Review* n.s. 24, no. 3 (August 1971): 370–94 (390).

⁴⁵ Biegman, *The Turco-Ragusan Relationship*, 129.

ern Balkans.⁴⁶ The republic was also known for its attention to medicine, having been a leader in taking active measures against the plague (the city began to institute public health policies against the plague in 1377, and a lazaretto was begun in the 1430s).⁴⁷ Medical expertise was a speciality that could also be commodified. In the mid-fifteenth century, as the Ragusan-Ottoman relationship was solidifying, Dubrovnik's doctors were sent on multiple missions to treat Ottoman officials. Always playing the odds, the republic sent doctors to assist Ottoman rivals as well. In 1463, at the request of the Hungarian king, Ragusan doctors were sent to care for Hungarian soldiers on the battlefield.⁴⁸ Dubrovnik's physicians, often educated in Italian institutions, would continue to be summoned by Ottoman dignitaries through the sixteenth century. Naturally, the practice was not completely altruistic: 'By sending their physicians, not only did they show their benevolence and their loyalty toward their neighbours, but upon the physicians' return they received precious briefings concerning the political, economic, and health circumstances in those countries'.⁴⁹

The combination of expertise and negotiation deployed by Dubrovnik was highly effective in maintaining the republic's status over a broad sweep of time. In the end, however, nature would have a say. The morning of 6 April 1667, an enormous earthquake struck: 'A large part of the city collapsed. Rocks poured down from Mount Srđ. A thick cloud of dust rose, spreading a pall of darkness over the ruins'.⁵⁰ Many who survived the initial destruction were killed in the fire that followed. It is estimated that 2,000 to 3,000 people died during these events, and much of the city was turned to rubble.⁵¹ Remarkably, the republic was eventually able to rebuild, but it would not regain its previous status. The natural disaster was challenging enough, but it was

⁴⁶ Gülru Necipoğlu, 'Connectivity, Mobility, and Mediterranean "Portable Archaeology": Pashas from the Dalmatian Hinterland as Cultural Mediators', in *Dalmatia and the Mediterranean: Portable Archeology and the Poetics of Influence*, ed. Alina Payne (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 313–81 (347). See also Miović, 'Beylerbey of Bosnia and Sancakbey of Herzegovina', 58, and Howell, 'The Ragusa Road', 77–80.

⁴⁷ Vesna Miović, 'Life in the Quarantine: Lazaretto at Ploče During the Republic', in *Lazaretto in Dubrovnik: Beginning of the Quarantine Regulation in Europe* (Dubrovnik: Institute for Restoration of Dubrovnik, 2018), 13–49 (13).

⁴⁸ Zlata Blažina Tomić and Vesna Blažina, *Expelling the Plague: The Health Office and the Implementation of Quarantine in Dubrovnik, 1377–1533* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 95.

⁴⁹ Tomić and Vesna Blažina, *Expelling the Plague*, 95.

⁵⁰ Harris, *Dubrovnik: A History*, 320.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 328.

followed by a series of crises brought on by Venetian and Ottoman actions. Dubrovnik was eclipsed by Split as the primary port city of the eastern Adriatic, losing its privileged position in inland trade networks. What is more, the world had changed. The magnitude of the new global European empires was unlike anything Ragusa had known before. Finally, in the late 1700s and early 1800s, Dubrovnik was caught up in a conflict involving Austrian, French and Russian forces. Neither distance, nor negotiations, nor luxurious gifts could stave off the inevitable. When the dust settled, the city was occupied by France and, in 1808, the Republic of Ragusa came to an end.

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Abstract

From its founding in the seventh century, the Republic of Ragusa (Dubrovnik) faced continuous challenges to its independence. Distant powers – notably Byzantium, Venice, Hungary and the Ottoman Empire – vied to control the small but wealthy port city. Lacking significant military power, the city's officials proved remarkably adept at negotiation and alliance-building as tools of political survival. Even during the period of Venetian rule (1205–1358), Ragusa maintained high levels of local authority and economic dynamism. Dubrovnik's officials refined their skills in diplomacy and intelligence-gathering over centuries. This expertise was crucial when dealing with the expansion of the Ottoman Empire which absorbed the Balkan Peninsula in the fifteenth century. As an Ottoman tributary state, the republic was able to negotiate uniquely favourable terms. It exchanged a yearly tribute payment and extensive gifts for control over its lands and a privileged position in Ottoman and Mediterranean trade networks. Flourishing in this arrangement, the city became one of the key commercial centres of south-eastern Europe. An essential conduit for merchandise, information and diplomacy between the Ottoman Empire and the western Mediterranean, Dubrovnik relied on pragmatism and negotiation to thrive in the shifting political landscape of the Adriatic Sea.

Keywords: Ragusa, Adriatic, Ottoman, Venice, diplomacy, autonomy

VENICE – TALES OF DISPLACEMENT AND SPACE INVADERS

‘Reader, to satisfy your desire, I did not fail to bring with me, to this illustrious city of Venice, a Moor from Ethiopia’. This is how the Capuchin missionary Dionigio Carli introduced his travelogue *Il moro trasportato nell’inclita città di Venetia* (1687), describing his missions to Africa, America, Asia and Europe. If a book title is a kind of promise, Carli certainly knew how to keep one. To avoid misunderstanding, he explains that, while his religious order strictly forbade him to ‘trade in slaves and other infinite curiosities’ from Congo and Angola, he did allow himself to treat the Moor as a living synecdoche: not as an individual Black man but as the concrete embodiment of African ‘customs, rites and religion’.¹

An eye-catching illustration before the title page shows the Black slave’s transportation to Venice as a global evangelisation drama blessed by the Lion of St Mark (Fig. 12.1). The scene takes place in front of the two victory columns at the entrance to the mole in the Piazzetta. Pointing his finger skyward, Carli stands in the centre holding hands with a docile, nearly naked Black man with a pearl earring, who is smoking a *cazimbo*² while gazing up at the winged lion in the clouds. Styled like a living icon of St Mark preaching to the pagans of Alexandria, the missionary frames this act of proselytisation with an inscribed quotation

¹ Dionigio Carli, *Il moro trasportato nell’inclita città di Venetia, ovvero curioso racconto de costumi, riti e religione de popoli dell’Africa, America, Asia et Europa* (Bassano: Gio. Antonio Remondini, 1687). All translations from the Italian are my own.

² Carli, *Il moro*, 48. *Cachimbo*: the Kimbundu word for pipe. See Benjamin Breen, ‘Where There’s Smoke, There’s Fire: Pyric Technologies and African Pipes in the Early Modern World’, *Osiris* 37 (2022): 139–62.

of Christ's command to his disciples taken from Mark 16: 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation'. On the left, a native American woman is bending slightly towards her suitably naughty and endearing child who reaches up for the dove on her arm. At the water's edge, two turbaned men sit cross-legged on the ground, with their heads upraised to the heavenly apparition. This ethnographic assemblage also includes displaced indigenous animals and objects that during this period were uprooted from their contexts to become commodities in global networks of trade and human trafficking. The small monkey is a graphic allusion to the European fashion for exotic pets as well as hinting at the 'comedy' of Brazilian apes vividly described by Carli. But it is also a visual marker of animalisation that destabilises the border between beasts and sub-Saharan Africans, objectifying both as property with an exchange value. Similarly, the symbolic significance of the hookah brings together fascination with Ottoman material culture, as evinced in Carli's description of exquisite water pipes, and demeaning assumptions about its cross-legged owner as a lazy oriental.

What can we glean from this image of tangled displacements – of people, animals, artefacts and practices – and their relocation to Venice? Beginning with the half-title page, Carli proclaimed that his travelogue contained nothing short of 'the four parts of the world'. The engraving aspired to condense the known world into a single picture that would put animate and inanimate specimens on display in a manner reminiscent of cabinets of curiosities, ceremonial processions and allegories of the four continents. Despite the inclusive visual messaging, the image is not a homage to diversity. Instead, it centres the missionary's Christian voice at the expense of the silenced infidels, who look mesmerised by the miraculous lion – although it is unclear whether they attributed the sight to the thaumaturgic power of the missionary's speech, or to the psychotropic effect of the puffs of smoke intoxicating this multisensory theophany.

Venice is not merely a backdrop to this conversionary preaching performance. Both the iconotextual presence of its patron saint and the grand architectural setting celebrate the city as the global capital of Christianity. The lion's open book – bearing the promise of peace – and the dove – a manifestation of the Holy Spirit and a symbol of ecumenical concord – further project the myth of republican pacifism. This is a Venetocentric religious revelation that envisions the globe as a *pax veneta* filled with undesirable foreigners tokenised for the Venetian gaze. By bringing together different ethnicities and cultures in a ritualistic act of voluntary submission, the picture emphatically tells viewers that

Venice is the ultimate salvation. One of the dedicatory poems included in Carli's book mirrors the same scene of subjection: the 'entire world' arrived in Venice to bow to the doge, offer him 'their rites ... to be corrected' and 'beg for dogmas and laws'.

Religious instruction and political loyalty were closely interconnected in early modern Venice. In effect, the ceremonial crossing of the liminal zone between the columns of St Mark and St Theodore would indicate the rite of passage of the converts who, as the diversity optics of the image suggest, received the blessings of the Venetian rule without any colour discrimination. Providing another focal point in the background, the clock tower blends technological innovation and historical time, symbolically hailing the synchronisation of the globe and reconfiguring displacement as progressive improvement. At the top of the tower, bronze effigies of two wild men signify Venice's less civilised enemies, who 'have been pacified and forced eternally to sound the hours and the harmony of the Venetian state'.³ As Cristoforo Ivanovich's poem *Orologio de' mori in piazza di S. Marco* (1675) noted, 'with the blows of the hammer, the unknown spirit of the concave metal takes the talkative voice and motion from the Ethiopian hand'.⁴ Popularly known as 'the Moors', the two automated bell jacks echo the well-documented presence of black Africans in Venice.⁵ But they also serve as an illustration of the Aristotelian view of the slave as an 'instrument that wields many instruments' – as well as a reminder of the force of Frantz Fanon's 'machine-animal-men'.⁶

The charged political script that lies behind the image is also reflected in the personalities that were involved in the publication of the book, namely the Venetian patrician Pietro Donà and his father, former *bailo* in Istanbul, Giovanni Battista Donà. Addressing the doge in his dedicatory epistle, Pietro extols Carli's missions across 'barbaric nations'. Linking missionary activity to the expansion of the Venetian empire, he

³ Loren Partridge, *Art of Renaissance Venice 1400–1600* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 15.

⁴ Cristoforo Ivanovich, *Poesie* (Venice: Gio. Battista Catani, 1675), 19.

⁵ See, e.g., Paul H. D. Kaplan, 'Black Turks: Venetian Artists and Perceptions of Ottoman Ethnicity', in *The Turk and Islam in the Western Eye, 1450–1750: Visual Imagery before Orientalism*, ed. James G. Harper (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011), 41–66; Kate Lowe, 'Visible Lives: Black Gondoliers and Other Black Africans in Renaissance Venice', *Renaissance Quarterly* 66, no. 2 (2013): 412–52.

⁶ Aristotle, *Aristotle's Politics*, trans. Carnes Lord, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 6; Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (1967; London: Pluto, 2008), 171.

notes that Carli ‘would have brought the people themselves tributary’ to the Republic, eager as he was ‘to see so many dispersed unhappy people united under that royal mantle, which deserves to be expanded for the serenity of empire like Heaven’. In his letter to the reader, the printer Giovanni Antonio Remondini praises Giovanni Battista’s initiative to publish the travelogue for ‘public glory’. During his stay in Istanbul, the missionary had met the dragoman Gian Rinaldo Carli, one of Giovanni Battista’s scholarly collaborators, as well as the friar Cristoforo, brother of the dragoman Tommaso Tarsia and a prominent member of the local Capuchin community. Travel knowledge was, of course, intimately tied to Venetian state building and empire formation – all the more so at the level of foreign policy, where these two processes were interdependent. Missionaries were prized sources of information and their accounts contained crucial local knowledge that served both as a tool of imperial decision-making, and – not unlike the notion of a ‘Turkish literature’ advanced by Donà’s *Della letteratura de’ Turchi* (1688) – as a form of cultural capital, produced and reproduced through print. But the sponsorship of Carli’s travelogue also highlights the close connections between missionaries and the Donà family. From their publishing projects to their involvement with the Pia Casa dei Catecumeni (a charitable institution for converts to Catholicism), missionary enterprises were a household affair for the Donà,⁷ who were firmly embedded in Venice’s imperial presence in the Mediterranean.

The publication of Carli’s travelogue is significant in that it captures a moment that for many Venetians represented the beginning of a new imperial age. While Venice led the world in Carli’s *pax veneta*, it was simultaneously waging a war against the Ottomans (1684–1699), rapidly expanding its overseas territories and provoking extensive population movement. Empires at war often present themselves as global peace-makers: ‘they make a desert and they call it “peace”’, wrote Tacitus (*Agricola* 30). To celebrate the new conquests, Pietro Donà published celebratory accounts in Latin⁸ and the state cosmographer Vincenzo Maria Coronelli dedicated an erudite yet extremely violent image of the

⁷ Paolo Preto, *Venezia e i turchi* (1975; Rome: Viella, 2013), 201–7; Francesca Lucchetta, ‘Lo studio delle lingue orientali nella scuola per dragomanni di Venezia alla fine del XVII secolo’, *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 5, no. 6 (1987–1988): 479–98; Francesca Scarpa, ‘Per la storia degli studi turchi e armeni a Venezia: il sacerdote armeno Giovanni Agop’, *Annali di Ca’ Foscari* 39, no. 3 (2000): 107–30.

⁸ Pietro Donà, *Dies inter fastos Serenissimae Reipublicae* (Venice: Andrea Poletti, 1688).

Greek archipelago to Giovanni Battista Donà – his fellow co-founder of the *Accademia degli Argonauti*, who at the time oversaw military matters as *provveditore all’Arsenale* and *provveditore alle Artiglierie*. The map’s cartouche shows terrified Muslim civilians in Thrace desperately trying to cross over to Asia to escape from an aggressive, torch-bearing Lion of St Mark, who has set ablaze their house – a crumbling building called *Arcipelago* (Fig. 12.2). Not surprisingly, another dedicatory poem in Carli’s book linked Venetian expansion in Thrace and the submission of the ‘defeated Moors’ to the missionary’s achievements in Congo: how he baptised the Black African man, cleansing him from ‘the horrors of his dark mind and treacherous soul’; how he shed light on ‘strange rites’; and how, after all his voyages around the globe, he returned to Venice, ‘the centre of the entire tour of the world’.

War and military violence accelerated mobility, pushing more displaced people to Venice, where non-Christians would be instructed on how to become ‘good’ migrants at the Pia Casa dei Catecumeni under the guidance of Giovanni Battista’s brother, the abbot Andrea. Andrea worked closely with the Armenian missionary Giovanni Agop, a member of the former *bailo*’s retinue in Istanbul and author of an Ottoman grammar dedicated to the abbot.⁹ Carli’s account, with its declared ideals of charity and conversion, must have resonated with Andrea’s pastoral work. Carli wrote that he would not exchange the ‘spiritual pleasure’ he took in baptising endless queues of natives in Congo ‘for all the gold in the world’. Such excesses of religious fervour could be found at the Pia Casa during the war, when the institution’s premises were extended to accommodate more newcomers¹⁰ as ‘Turks, Moors, and Jews continuously arrive[d] ... from all parts of the world to receive the holy baptism’.¹¹

Public rituals of conversion maximised the symbolic potential of the displacement forced upon the new subjects by war, inscribing empire-building in the daily life of the city. This is how a 1689 description of the Church of San Maurizio, written by Don Michelangelo Mariani, presented conversional baptisms of refugees as a continuation of war by other means:

⁹ Giovanni Agop, *Rudimento della lingua turchesca* (Venice: Michel’Angelo Barboni, 1685).

¹⁰ Pietro Ioly Zorattini, *I nomi degli altri. Conversioni a Venezia e nel Friuli Veneto in età moderna* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2008), 89.

¹¹ Luigi Ruzino, *Istruzioni, ed avvisi pastorali al clero, e popolo della città, e diocesi di Bergamo coll’occasione di Quaresima dell’anno santo 1700* (s.l.: s.n., 1700).

Besides the expansion of the temporal empire, which in the past five years of war has taken place in Epirus, the Peloponnese, Dalmatia and Albania, there have followed such conversions of infidels to the Christian cult that they have populated from time to time the Pia Casa dei Catecumeni in Venice. And without mentioning the solemn baptisms celebrated in the Temple of S. Salvatore in the year 1686 and in the Church of the Frari in the year 1687 [and] in the Temple of S. Gio and Paolo this year 1689, forty-two catechumens among Turks, Moors and Jews of both sexes ... children and adults, dressed in white, solemnly baptised ... by the hand of Monsignor Patriarch Giovanni Badoaro, with the assistance of the godfathers – all personalities of the Venetian nobility, who generously lavished alms. The service was crowned by the confirmation of the neophytes and finally by a speech by the Patriarch ... thus leaving the audience not only edified but softened in their hearts.¹²

Emotions played a prominent role in baptism ceremonies, which served to communicate relations of power between immigrants and their noble godparents. Softened hearts and tender ties facilitated the converts' transition to their new religious congregation but also marked inequalities of position and reaffirmed existing social hierarchies. The text locates these affective negotiations of exclusion and inclusion within an urban topography marked by the presence of earlier refugee communities, specifically the Albanian community whose confraternity building was adjacent to the church of San Maurizio. Mariani records the relief sculpture commemorating the Ottoman siege of Scutari (1474) on the façade of their *scuola*. In doing so, he co-opts a prominent monument of the Albanian confraternity to stir up the desire for long-lost overseas colonies in the context of current imperial aspirations:

it is to be desired – having taken Castel Nuovo, which is the key to Albania – that the city of Scutari be reduced to our power so that, with the conquest of a Kingdom of such importance, the Albanian or Epirotic nation, so distinguished in arms and piety and with invincible faith in Saint Mark, may renew its devotion to its altar.¹³

¹² Michele Angelo Mariani, *Il S. Maurizio nella sua chiesa parrocchiale collegiata di Venetia, con la sacra esposizione dell'anno 1689* (Venice: Gio. Francesco Valvasense, 1689), 31–2.

¹³ Mariani, *Il S. Maurizio*, 17.

The affirmation of the Albanians' heroism in the above passage exemplifies how ethnic identity and pride were appropriated by the Venetian war machine. Badges of honour for military services rendered in the past could not, however, compensate inadequate performances of corporate piety in the present. This is why, in a rather unexpected way, Mariani scrutinises the conspicuous absence of the Albanian *scuola* from the decoration of the church's square during the annual votive procession on 15 June, the feast day of saints Vito and Modesto and the anniversary of the failure of the Tiepolo conspiracy. Although his comments hint at the limited financial resources and decline of the Albanian community, Mariani expresses strong disapproval and urges the confraternity to intensify its religious engagement in conformity with its own long tradition.¹⁴ Devotional zeal and loyalty to the local parish operate as affective tools to bring the Albanian confraternity into line with models of civic behaviour deemed more useful and moral. They forge compulsory attachments to the state, ensuring that diverse communities joyfully embrace the performative roles assigned to them by the host society: roles like displaying tapestries and setting up tents in the square of San Maurizio, for instance, affirmed standard images of the holy republic whilst offering the immigrants the illusion of agency and inclusion.

The politics of exposure as seen in the Albanian case highlights a key tension at the core of Venetian migration management: the fraught relationship between concessions and obligations, protection and repression, diversity and containment. To a certain extent, this was a metropolitan version of the enduring political dilemma of all empires: how to strike a balance between the incorporation of new people and a hierarchical distinction that maintained the power of the ruling elites.¹⁵ The deployment of exposure as a form of public scrutiny and embarrassment of the Albanian confraternity puts such power on display. Public shaming is 'structurally and systematically tied to relations of power'.¹⁶ By exposing the failure of the Albanians to meet social expectations, Mariani reasserted the authority of the Venetian Church within a colonial continuum that extended from the ways the Republic governed its colonies overseas to its ethnic populations at home.

¹⁴ Mariani, *Il S. Maurizio*, 19–20.

¹⁵ Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 11.

¹⁶ Ute Frevert, *The Politics of Humiliation: A Modern History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 185.

Receiving permission to live in somebody else's city has always involved exposing oneself to the distribution of differential degrees of vulnerability. It is worth remembering that immigrants in Venice were easy targets for accusations of religious dissent directed not only 'from above' but also 'from below'. Concerns about religious deviance reveal collective anxieties about immigration that were shared by ruling elites and common people alike. Indeed, as has been suggested, the success of the Inquisition was linked to increasing xenophobia among the people from the mid-sixteenth century onwards. Asked if he knew why he had been summoned before the Holy Office in 1575, the printer Pierre de Huchin replied: 'My lord, no, nor can I even imagine it, but I will tell you one thing: I am a foreigner here in Venice, even though it's been nearly twenty-eight years'.¹⁷ In many other cases, Greek immigrant women accused of witchcraft made similar points about the selective victimisation and instrumentalisation of their foreignness: 'maybe they call me a witch because I am Greek?'; 'because I am Greek, that's why they call me a witch'.¹⁸

These examples spotlight lived experiences of negativity that test the fable of Venice as a melting pot, a metaphor that still holds a powerful grip on the historical imagination today. If a prolonged stay of twenty-eight years was not long enough for immigrants to be considered members of a single community, what else could foster a sense of local belonging and connectedness that took precedence over ethnic identity? The use of ethnic profiling as a common practice for turning poor, immigrant women into perpetual suspects also shows how colonial relations – established according to ethno-religious hierarchies and complicated by gender, sexuality and class dynamics – were imported back into the imperial metropole. As an anonymous accuser said in 1584 about Elena *greca*, 'doing her business as a Greek, her name alone would be sufficient without testimonies' to support her guilt.¹⁹ If, as it has often been asserted, identities in the early modern Mediterranean were fluid and flexible, why did the outsider status of margin-

¹⁷ John Martin, *Venice's Hidden Enemies: Italian Heretics in a Renaissance City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 194.

¹⁸ Dionysia Gialama, *Ελληνίδες μάγισσες στη Βενετία, 16ος–18ος αι.* (Athens: Estia, 2009), 411, 417–18. Also, Sally Scully, 'Marriage or a Career? Witchcraft as an Alternative in Seventeenth-Century Venice', *Journal of Social History* 28, no. 4 (1995), 857–76; Franca Romano, *Laura Malipiero strega. Storie di malie e sortilegi nel Seicento* (Rome: Meltemi, 1996); Monica Chojnacka, *Working Women of Early Modern Venice* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), ch. 4.

¹⁹ Gialama, *Ελληνίδες μάγισσες*, 408.

alised Greek women draw them disproportionately into the criminal justice system? Why did their accusers use their Greek-language spells and Greek orthodox rites to uphold differentiation, even though these women's herbal remedies were part of contemporary popular medicine and, more crucially, made use of the medicinal plants of the eastern Mediterranean so eagerly sought by metropolitan botanists, physicians and pharmacists?

Cosmopolitan interpretations of Venetian history tend to play down the pain of particular historical experiences: of discrimination, coercive external categorisations and institutional violence. In so doing, they risk minimising the role of powerful agents of identification, such as the state and its bureaucracies, but also 'the myriad ways that stereotypical claims of difference permeated daily life and culture',²⁰ reproducing exclusionary and traumatising official discourse in everyday neighbourhood interactions. Unwittingly or not, modern accounts of Venice as a cosmopolitan hub have all too often confused descriptive with normative concepts of cosmopolitanism, mistaking the *de facto* ethnic and religious heterogeneity of the city's population for a fusion of different ethnicities and cultures. In their quest to avoid the pitfalls of essentialism, such descriptions have also reproduced early modern images of Venice as 'a world summed up in a city'.²¹ In his *Dialoghi storici*, for instance, Gregorio Leti presented Venice as an accessible city without solid boundaries or fixed entry points:

D. Can you enter Venice by night and by day as you wish?

M. Yes, because there are no gates or walls.²²

Praising the Republic for 'protecting, welcoming and caressing foreigners', Leti cited a Roman pasquinade, in which Pasquino explained to Marforio: 'I am leaving Rome because there is no liberty for anyone and am going to Venice where everyone is welcomed with such humanity'. It was Venetian 'kindness towards strangers', Leti concluded, that

²⁰ Giovanni Tarantino and Charles Zika, eds, *Feeling Exclusion: Religious Conflict, Exile and Emotions in Early Modern Europe* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 2.

²¹ Diego Zunica, *La calamita di Europa attrattiva de' forestieri in cui si describe la sapienza ... del Senato veneto ...* (Bologna: Pier-Maria Monti, 1694), 2.

²² [Gregorio Leti], *Dialoghi storici* (Rome: Francesco Moneta, 1665), 3:278.

gave rise to ‘the common proverb that it is better to be a foreigner in Venice than a citizen in Rome’.²³

In a similar vein, Mariani extolled Venice as a city ‘without gates, without guards and regardless exposed indifferently to all, both inhabitants and travellers, at sea and on land, day and night, every hour, at all times, both in peace and war’.²⁴ When Mariani was writing these lines, the Venetian colony of Crete was under attack by the Ottomans, and many refugees were fleeing the war to Venice. Two decades later, the same author dedicated his *Il Trionfo di Nettuno* to the engineer Antonio Mutoni, Count of San Felice, ‘who invented terrible bombs’²⁵ during the War of the Morea, when more people were forced to flee hardship at home, now occupied by the Venetians. But does cosmopolitanism not involve detachment from war and expansionist ventures?

We think of port cities as complex sites of cross-cultural encounter, exchange and mobility, but our concepts of this complexity do not always seem intricate enough to account for the wide variety of geopolitical flows that shape urban space: capital, migration and labour, but also militarisation, military logistics and the mobilisation of war-making resources. Ports are the very ‘sinews of war and trade’, Laleh Khalili reminded us recently.²⁶ Like other early modern port cities, Venice was a ‘fiscal-military hub’,²⁷ namely a prime example for studying the relationship between urban spatiality and the business of war. Located among civilians and celebrated as ‘the heart of our state’ (*cor Status nostri*),²⁸ the Arsenal was ‘an imperial institution’: a nexus of trade and violence sustained by a mobile workforce, it was ‘one of the city’s most

²³ Gregorio Leti, *Il ceremoniale storico, e politico* (Amsterdam: Giovanni and Egidio Janssonio à Waesberge, 1685), 6:276–7.

²⁴ Michele Angelo Mariani, *Le maraviglie della città di Venetia* (Venice: Giacomo Zattoni, 1666), 90.

²⁵ Emmanuele Antonio Cicogna, *Delle iscrizioni veneziane*, vol. 4 (Venice: Giuseppe Picotti, 1834), 629.

²⁶ Laleh Khalili, *Sinews of War and Trade: Shipping and Capitalism in the Arabian Peninsula* (London: Verso Books, 2020).

²⁷ Peter H. Wilson and Marianne Klerk, ‘The Business of War Untangled: Cities as Fiscal-Military Hubs in Europe (1530s–1860s)’, *War in History* 29, no. 1 (2022): 80–103.

²⁸ Alberto Tenenti, ‘Il senso dello stato’, in *Storia di Venezia dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*. Vol. 4. *Il Rinascimento. Politica e cultura*, ed. Alberto Tenenti and Ugo Tucci (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Treccani, 1996), 325.

imperial zones, intimately connected by experience, labor, and sufferings²⁹ with the *Stato da Mar*.

‘I came to Venice by the Po and stayed for a month and a half in the Frezzaria, in the lodging of a man employed at the Arsenal’, Giordano Bruno told his inquisitors in 1592 about his first sojourn in the lagoon.³⁰ Outside the formal military industrial structure, several *arsenalotti* families were involved in the private rental sector, subletting rooms in their houses to immigrants to earn extra income; likewise, women in the Arsenal community specialised as innkeepers, or *locandiere*.³¹ But the fusion of military and civilian within the accommodation sector extended further, in tandem with the expansive drive of the Council of Ten. Indeed, it was the Republic’s top military and political security council that in 1583 delegated the registration of persons of alien language and jurisdiction, as well as control over inns and lodging houses, to the *Esecutori contro la bestemmia*, a magistracy originally created to prosecute blasphemy.³² In one of his dialogues, Leti discusses how the *esecutori* tried to monitor mobility through the management of information and the coercive enlistment of hosts:

D. Do many foreigners come to this city?

M. It is believed that there are always thirty thousand foreigners passing through every day.

D. Are they obliged to say their name when entering the city?

M. Not to law officials, except in times of plague. But to those hosts where they go to lodge, under very serious penalties, it is forbidden for anyone to receive strangers into their homes without bringing their name and surname to the Tribunal of Blasphemy. In any case, this is overlooked, and I know this because the first time I went to Venice, together with one of my comrades,

²⁹ Robert C. Davis, *Shipbuilders of the Venetian Arsenal: Workers and Workplace in the Preindustrial City* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 116.

³⁰ Giordano Bruno, *Le deposizioni davanti al tribunale dell’Inquisizione*, ed. Antonio Gargano (Naples: La città del sole, 2007), 13.

³¹ Davis, *Shipbuilders*, 108.

³² Renzo Derosas, ‘Moralità e giustizia a Venezia nel ’500–’600. Gli Esecutori contro la bestemmia’, in *Stato, società e giustizia nella Repubblica Veneta (sec. XV–XVIII)*, ed. Gaetano Cozzi (Rome: Jouvence, 1980), 431–528 (452); Gaetano Cozzi, ‘Religione, moralità e giustizia a Venezia: vicende degli Esecutori contro la Bestemmia (secc. XVI–XVIII)’, *Ateneo veneto* 29 (1991): 7–95 (47); Vittorio Frajese, ‘L’evoluzione degli “Esecutori contro la bestemmia” a Venezia in età moderna’, in *Il vincolo del giuramento e il tribunale della coscienza*, ed. Nestore Pirillo (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1997), 171–211 (198).

we stayed a month in the house of signora Alesandrina *padovana* in San Luca without anyone asking us our names.³³

Leti assures the reader that he was able to stay in Venice undisturbed by the local authorities, because their bureaucratic mobility policies were practically incoherent and inconsistently applied. Yet, a sceptical reader might also argue that state surveillance and intelligence infrastructures were not meant to be coherent, but to scare people. The whole point of anti-immigrant rhetoric is that it has nothing to do with whether others are or are not on the move, and everything to do with encouraging people to be afraid of foreigners.

But what, exactly, was so scary about a foreigner? A close look at a printed proclamation on ‘blasphemy and dishonest words’ issued by the *esecutori* in 1689 gives us a glimpse of how official discourse turned mobile individuals into dangerous space invaders whilst entrenching patrician hegemony over domestic society (Fig. 12.3). Noting that ‘scarce reports and information’ obstructed the work of justice against the ‘punishable freedom’ of undocumented people in ‘ferries, taverns and inns’, the *esecutori* ordered the managers of these places to keep a check on their customers and submit monthly reports to the magistracy (even if no blasphemy had been heard), with the warning that they would be punished themselves if they failed to tell the truth. Conversely, prizes were promised to those who took appropriate action to assist the work of the *esecutori*. Copies of the decree were to be posted in lodging houses, inns, taverns and ferries ‘for the clear understanding of everyone’.

The proclamation draws attention to three main points. First, in contrast to literary representations of public venues such as the *hosterie* as a ‘rare treasure of the world’, where ‘one could try for once to be a *signore*’,³⁴ the proclamation exacerbated these places’ reputation for vice and disorder as associated with people on the move. Emotionally charged words, including ‘delinquents’, ‘corruption’, ‘indecent’, ‘scandalous’, ‘obscene’ and ‘crime’, spread anxiety around itinerant people and stigmatised unpredictable mobility as a threat to the safety of the community. Although the blind street singer Paolo Britti sang of

³³ [Leti], *Dialoghi*, 28–9.

³⁴ Francesco Beccuti (known as il Coppetta), ‘Capitolo in lode dell’hosteria’, in *Delle rime piacevoli ... Parte seconda* (Vicenza: Barezzo Barezzi, 1603), 26v–30v.

the pleasures (and pleasure traps) Venice offered to its visitors³⁵ and Coronelli's guidebook listed the city's lodging houses, inns and wine shops for them,³⁶ negative images of foreigners dominated the debates around migration. In his political *Dialogue*, the patrician Giovanni Maria Memmo recommended caution in accepting too many foreign merchants into the city and considered 'a multitude of foreigners gathered together dangerous'.³⁷ As reason-of-state theorist Ludovico Zuccolo argued, the selective admission of foreigners contributed to the preservation of public virtue: 'the discipline of the city remains intact, and the citizens well disposed towards the rites and laws of the fatherland' too because they are unable to tell if 'elsewhere one either lives with more gusto or enjoys greater happiness'. The Spartans never admitted foreigners, Zuccolo added, and 'today Venice hardly admits them, but for a number of plebs'.³⁸

Second, as the governance of urban mobility provided administrative headaches for the patrician elite, professional groups, such as boatmen and innkeepers, were used as state proxies to defend the city against intruders – from immigrant workers to convicts, from vagabonds to the displaced and the dispossessed. Surveillance work was promoted as a model of good subjecthood – a good Venetian subject was a vigilant subject. However, subjecthood is a status built inherently upon deference. It would be naive, in fact, to equate ordinary subjects' complicity in the policing of day-to-day mobility with political agency and increased political participation. As Edward Said suggested in another context, 'to accept the form of action prescribed in advance by one's professional status – which in the system of things is institutionalized marginality – is to restrict oneself politically and in advance'.³⁹ The bureaucratic inclusion of subaltern residents in the everyday routines of security governance is better understood as an aspect of a wider process of rationalising governmentality through what today we would call public-private partnerships. These replicated the gaze of the state and assisted the enforcement of law and order to socially engineer a

³⁵ Paolo Britti, *Nova canzonetta nella qual s'intende li gusti, e spassi ch' hà riceuto un forestier nella città di Venetia ...* (Venice: Domenico Lovisa, [1625?]).

³⁶ Vincenzo Maria Coronelli, *Guida de' forestieri ...* ([Venice]: s.n., 1700), 41.

³⁷ Luigi Robuschi, ed., *Il Dialogo politico di Giovanni Maria Memmo* (Aracina: Aracne, 2017), 171.

³⁸ Lodovico Zuccolo, *Discorso dello amore verso la patria* (Venice: Evangelista Deuchino, 1631), 61–2.

³⁹ Edward W. Said, 'Interview: Edward W. Said', *Diacritics* 6, no. 3 (1976): 30–47 (39).

complex multi-ethnic city. But conscripting commoners into defensive governance must not be viewed simply as a tool for waging war on irregular migrants. It also involved a crucial element of social reproduction, insofar as the patrician ruling class incorporated the *popolani* into its hierarchical system so as to implement its immigration agenda and, by so doing, maintain social stability without the risk of domestic threats.

Finally, the proclamation helps us rethink the perceived associations between ‘out-of-place’ foreigners and unruly public speech through the lens of empire and colonialism. The proclamation explicitly threatened troublesome outsiders with harsh penalties, including corporeal punishment, prison, exile and the dreaded but strategically crucial galley service. As Vittorio Frajese has aptly observed, in addition to overseeing civic morality, the *esecutori* tried to achieve two further aims: first, ‘to lighten the demographic pressure ... of those foreign immigrants whose act of blaspheming would single out as turbulent and dangerous’; and, secondly, ‘to supply the fleet with forced labour through the penalty of galley labour’.⁴⁰ Issued during wartime, the proclamation underlines the intimate links between the criminalisation of migration and the creation of a pool of deportable workforces, urgently required by the Venetian navy. In effect, the institutionalised distrust and forced removal of expendable migrants were not just a domestic issue, but part and parcel of a continuous history of imperial competition between Venice and the Ottoman empire.

By stressing the importance of understanding how Venice’s mobility regime cut through colony and metropole, the above observations have suggested an alternative methodological perspective that considers port city life as the effect of multiscale power structures and processes. By refusing to separate space and place, this approach prioritises what geographer Doreen Massey called a ‘progressive sense of place’: an open-ended and processual understanding of locality as a constellation of multiple power geometries and unequal relations. Such relations, however, ‘are actually constructed on a far larger scale than what

⁴⁰ Frajese, ‘L’evoluzione’, 194.

we happen to define for that moment as the place itself'.⁴¹ From this perspective, Venice – an archetypical extroverted trading port – can be seen as a contact zone shaped by uneven processes of connectivity and boundary-making. Far from being a passive site of transit, it provides an exemplary case for a deeper exploration of the co-production of the local and the global. Attending to such relational dynamics paves the way to more critical lines of enquiry that do not reduce mobility and urban history to empirical topics but treat them as analytic frameworks, or 'optics',⁴² through which to unsettle 'Venetian cosmopolitanism' and the larger histories of imperial worldmaking within which it was embedded.

Going back to where this essay began, Carli's Black African slave offers a further reminder of how Venetian urban life and knowledge production related to the wider development of racialised systems of enslaved labour in the Mediterranean and across the Americas in the seventeenth century. Upon sailing from Africa to the New World, the Capuchin missionary witnessed the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade and in his narrative included the following anecdote of an enslaved woman's attempted suicide:

our pilot, having one of his black women in the second deck who did not want to eat, had her come upstairs, so that she could get some fresh air and be consoled by the people and also exhorted to eat. However, one day, seeing that she was not being observed, she threw herself over the edge of the ship with her head forward to drown herself, as would have happened if the pilot – who did not lose sight of her due to the suspicion they have – had not seized her quickly by the foot and pulled her into the vessel. So much and such is the stubbornness of these Ethiopians.⁴³

We are often told that Venetian print culture nurtured a non-colonial geographical imagination and that – unlike missionaries and other empire builders – Venetian diplomats, bureaucrats and merchants

⁴¹ Doreen Massey, 'Power-Geometry and a Progressive Sense of Place', in *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Chance*, ed. J. Bird et al. (London: Routledge, 1993), 59–69 (66).

⁴² Gary Wilder, 'From Optic to Topic: The Foreclosure Effect of Historiographic Turns', *American Historical Review* 117, no. 3 (2012): 723–45 (744–5).

⁴³ Carli, *Il moro*, 90–1. For similar stories, see Terri L. Snyder, *The Power to Die: Slavery and Suicide in British North America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), ch. 1.

produced ethnographic knowledge that projected a sophisticated globalist perspective. And yet today one wonders, upon reading Carli's anecdote whilst thinking about social networks of Venetian statesmen and missionaries, the circulation of Murano glass beads in Congo,⁴⁴ and promotional texts that presented the Venetians as the discoverers of the New World and Australia:⁴⁵ Would a Venetian reader have felt the same annoyance as Carli did with enslaved people's acts of self-destruction? Would a reader have agreed with Carli in disconnecting slave suicide from enslavement and attributing it to ethnicity and temperament? Would a reader have deemed the tragic story of the 'stubborn' African woman, who refused to eat and jumped into the ocean, a form of cosmopolitan education?

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Abstract

This article reexamines the image of early modern Venice as a melting pot, a metaphor that still holds sway in current historiography. Standard accounts of the city as a cosmopolitan hub have all too often confused descriptive with normative notions of cosmopolitanism, mistaking the de facto ethnic and religious heterogeneity of its population for a fusion of different ethnicities and cultures. In so doing, they have focused on cross-cultural connections but have overlooked key aspects of displacement and migration: discrimination, coercive external categorisations and institutional violence. The present article suggests an alternative approach that does not reduce mobility and urban history to empirical topics but treats them as critical lenses through which to unsettle the romanticised ideal of 'Venetian cosmopolitanism' and the larger histories of imperial worldmaking in which it was embedded. In placing migrants and non-migrants in the same analytical field, the article moreover argues that the bureaucratic inclusion of subaltern residents in the policing of foreigners was part of a wider process of rationalising governmentality and entrenching patrician control over domestic society.

Keywords: Venice, migration, port cities, empire, governmentality

⁴⁴ Carli, *Il moro*, 45, 64.

⁴⁵ Vitale Terra Rossa, *Riflessioni geografiche circa le terre incognite distese in ossequio perpetuo della nobiltà veneziana* (Padua: Cadorino, 1686).

AFTERWORD

SYNCHRONIC SEA – MEDITERRANEAN CITIES IN AND OUT OF TIME

The Mediterranean is one of many seas where the routes of travellers, fishers, merchants, pirates and migrants weave across water and land to form distinctive cultural zones. Such is the scenario around the Indian Ocean, the Caribbean, the Baltic, the Bay of Bengal, the North Sea and the various China Seas. Each develops a *lingua franca*, each shares a diet and flavours shaped by what is pulled from the water or grown in the common climate of its shores. Each also shares a history – these maritime contact zones were inevitably the site of extraordinary rivalries that periodically exploded to punctuate or define the historical records. Each was also the site of day-to-day mercantile and professional contacts indifferent to politics or war. The liminality of the cities bordering these shores worked in both directions – perched on the fringes of their own societies, they often had more in common with other coastal ports across the sea.

Each of these maritime basins also shares a complex mix of similarities and differences – some enormous and others narcissistically small – that are difficult to capture without resorting to banal binaries. None is unique, but each has been through periods when tensions have ratcheted up to create its own distinctive character. In the Mediterranean, the early modern centuries are one such period, as indeed is the case in a number of other seas that were being crossed by unfamiliar navigators drawn from beyond their immediate shores. While the sea as a maritime environment may change little (though the more we probe the origins of the Anthropocene, the more we may come to reconsider this assumption), the human settlements that border it often undergo far-reaching changes in particular periods. Conflicts and ambitions

may raise or raze them, and it is these consequences that we focus on most closely. The twelve cities bordering the Mediterranean that are explored in this volume each express some of the dynamics distinguishing the early modern period. Adding another dozen or so from around the sea's perimeter might add further colour and details to the story but the narrative would fundamentally stay the same.

Each of these towns and cities has a longer history that might stretch a few hundred or even a few thousand years further back. Marseille, Naples, Beirut and Alexandria trace their origins and development to Phoenician, Egyptian, Greek and Roman migrations. This alone should make us cautious about attributing too much weight to early modern dynamics. And yet even if we avoid early modern exceptionalism, there is something distinctive about the interactions of the commercial, military, religious and intellectual exchanges of *this* particular period, which gained traction or caused friction over these routes and profoundly altered their built and human environments. For one, they were often self-consciously revivalist, focused on accomplishing the rebirth of their classical, late antique or medieval glories and on recovering their historical status. They were living a Graeco-Roman Renaissance long before Michelet and Burckhardt dreamt up the term. These were centuries when longstanding religious distinctions between Christians and Muslims came back to light, with major military campaigns that politically recast both the western and eastern shores and launched hostilities and piracy from both the northern and southern coasts. As these chapters show, the divisions *within* Christianity and Islam were equally influential in shaping how these cities and towns related to their own inland regions. Christian institutions fractured and became caught up in internecine tensions that split cities like Venice, Naples and Marseille, turning some communities of citizens into aliens and rendering some groups of foreigners particularly unwelcome. Ottoman confessionalisation intensified in the wake of the conquest of the Mamluk Empire, and while the fusion of religious and political purpose may have reinforced the imperial character of Istanbul, it seems to have brought a degree of uncertainty to former Mamluk and Hafsid centres like Alexandria, Acre, Beirut and Tunis. Religious antagonisms and schisms often lay at the intersection of social and political concerns and functioned as a critical language expressing and giving heightened currency to deeper dynastic disputes and territorial rivalries. Reformations, both Christian and Islamic, purged many religious aliens and even sent the forcibly converted on a path of involuntary migration in this epoch of the religious refugee. Ottomans and Mamluks, Aragonese,

Angevins, and eventually Bourbons, all claimed some divine directive behind their territorial seizures. All were animated by the prospect of projecting that power out over the water from newly fortified ports.

The tessellation of dynastic, territorial and religious factors took spatial and physical form in new streets and plazas, ports and fortresses, warehouses and shelters, walled ghettos and bounded districts. Revivalist impulses often turned these processes into deliberately synchronic exercises where ancient forms masked new ambitions. A series of Medici grand dukes saw Livorno as the *tabula rasa* for ambitious state-building on classical models of brick, stone and human capital. Louis XIV took Marseille as a *tabula plena* whose architectural and naval enhancements would add the weight of Graeco-Roman history to French and Bourbon plenitude. Mehmet II and Süleyman the Magnificent saw their conquest of Istanbul as an act of inheritance and extension of the ancient Roman Empire rather than its end. Even though imperial rivalries would prevent them from fully realising their own ambitions of claiming a *Mare Nostrum* or implementing a new *Pax Romana*, these same ambitions would shape their urbanistic interventions in Tunis, Alexandria and Candia. Ottoman ambitions put Venice on guard, placed Ragusa in tributary limbo and pushed Malta into becoming ever more of a prison-fortress, housing soldiers, corsairs and the enslaved. While early modern geopolitical dynamics raised walls in Livorno, Marseille and Malta and turned Candia's St Titus Cathedral into a mosque, they also led to the neglect, decay and repurposing of major infrastructure elsewhere. The Ottomans had their own parallels to Roman overreach, allowing Alexandria's canal to the Nile to fall into disuse and disrepair, and neglecting the port which for centuries had made Acre a major point of access to Damascus, Jerusalem and the Levant in general.

And what of the human consequences? Aside from the chaotic and episodic movements of migrants and refugees, it is sobering how often the histories of these towns show a steady movement of power and authority, leaking from these towns and coagulating in distant capitals over the early modern centuries. At the beginning of the early modern period, many of the ports described here were city states, *de facto* if not *de jure*, with locals having considerable control over their own affairs. By the end of the early modern period, all but Istanbul and Venice had been subsumed, both virtually and formally, under larger states and empires and were more clearly caught in nets whose strings were pulled from far away. In some cases, like Alexandria, Marseille and Tunis, distant rulers sent governors who might or might not engage in the port's society and might or might not advance its fortunes as they worked

on their own. In other cases, like Venice and Ragusa, local oligarchies tightened their grip and alienated the middling population and masses as they navigated more challenging transnational currents. Istanbul was *sui generis*, defined more by its court than its port, with an influence extending across the entire Mediterranean. But whether local or metropolitan, the power that was being redirected and concentrated was often slipping out of the hands of those who occupied each port's most liminal spaces and activities – the sailors and merchants and migrants who travelled more often on water than on land, and who were most familiar with the cracks in the walls that encircled almost all ports at the time. Their ability to find their way into the cracks or pull others through depended on an agency and independence that was threatened by growing government powers.

Intersecting dynastic, religious and territorial dynamics certainly reinforced walls and barriers in and between these cities at the beginning of the early modern era. And yet. Zuanne Papadopoli's account brings us straight into the sensory world of Venetian Crete in Candia: the taste of olive oil, the sight of sweet citrons as big as pumpkins, the marriages across Catholic and Orthodox divides and the carnivalesque celebrations with music and dance. He laments their loss in the Ottoman siege, but they would reappear after the conquest. The Mediterranean was above all a sensory space that defied time. The songs and dances with which Neapolitans introduced African influences and aimed to keep the Spanish at bay continued to reverberate down the streets and in times of festivals. The Dutch and English sailors who moved from port to port and tavern to tavern kept moving, on water and on land, as microcosmic actors in macrocosmic cultural exchanges linking the Mediterranean with worlds beyond that had lasted for centuries – or rather millennia. Their ships and steps might have made landfall in different ports around this sea, but it was the goods transported on overland links, extending far into Asia and Africa, and their final destinations in Atlantic ports, that fed continental appetites and imaginations. These made the Mediterranean a sensory reality even for those who would never see it.

The beginning of the early modern era had been defined by conflicts and ruptures that cut off these far-reaching land and sea passages. As geopolitical tensions eased by the turn of the eighteenth century, some more familiar currents re-established themselves in the Mediterranean. The raw materials of eating and clothing – grain, oil and cotton – again moved more freely on these currents and revived dormant ports like Acre and Beirut. Sailors had never ceased travelling, but in

the later part of the early modern era it took more than ships to make these cargoes move. The expanding states that had turned Marseille, Livorno and Istanbul into projections of a political theatre and conflict now exchanged consuls. They invited more of these commercial diplomats from other nations in order to promote, facilitate, track and tax trade. Travellers' accounts, pilgrims' voyages and diplomats' letters fed the curiosity of those inhabiting the shores and living inland, and gradually a new *modus vivendi* established itself. Or perhaps it was an older *modus vivendi* re-establishing itself. We are wise to avoid turning these expanded commercial contacts of the eighteenth century into examples of a new cosmopolitan ecumenicity and toleration, as was frequently done in the self-congratulatory teleologies that steered the narratives of older histories. Even when tensions were at their highest, Armenian, Greek, Jewish and Morisco merchants had moved in greater numbers and more freely between major ports like Livorno, Istanbul and Alexandria. Morisco exiles from Iberia could anticipate a welcome in Tunis, where they became creative members of a community experiencing many transitions. In the eastern Mediterranean, Converso Jews could recover identities that had been ripped from them on the western shores of Iberia and might navigate both – the compelling image of a ship with two rudders – as they moved between the ports of this and other seas. In these centuries religious refugees and forced migrants were seldom welcomed for the cultural diversity they contributed, but rather were tolerated for the technical skills and commercial capital they brought. Doors opened to them because they represented Nations, but not States. And contacts might be surprisingly limited. Long histories of marginalisation made many migrants accustomed to keeping themselves to themselves and looking inwards, and most diasporic communities reciprocated their hosts' suspicion and reflexively guarded their own boundaries. In some major ports like Livorno, Istanbul, Tunis and Alexandria, as of the sixteenth century these Mediterranean migrants had been joined by English, Dutch and German merchants – Livorno's boast of being a place of many Nations was not an empty one, though there were clear limits to the kinds of religious diversity that would be tolerated. There, as in Naples, Tunis, Istanbul and many other Mediterranean ports, the most diverse populations were found among the enslaved, whose forced labour raised crops on land and rowed galleys across the water. By the eighteenth century, these slave populations were declining, while mercantile migrations were extending to smaller towns like Beirut and Acre, which were building up their

own connections to inland agricultural communities and more distant trading communities.

Engaging in trade never displaced engaging in insults and assaults, and the violent movements of armies and navies around the Mediterranean never ceased. Those who had navigated its currents in the early modern period were often corsairs, the enslaved, refugees and exiles. It should give us pause for thought to realise that some of the most active international travellers at the beginning of the early modern era were indeed refugees, the enslaved and members of the Jewish diaspora, none of them beneficiaries of ecumenicity, cosmopolitanism or toleration. Ports had opened to them only as a temporary sufferance, on terms of extreme segregation and with a virtual guarantee of periodic violence. Enslavement and Jewish and Morisco expulsions would both decline by the eighteenth century, and many of the cities explored here would grow fat on the commerce they exchanged across the Mediterranean. Yet many also would come to experience more bloody divisions, more thorough exterminations, and more deaths on land and sea in the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries than the early modern period could ever have imagined.

Many of the expansive dynamics of the early modern period continue to characterise the Mediterranean today. Navies patrol shores to keep out some economic migrants in order that others might enjoy the beaches in peace. Migrants flee one form of enslavement only to encounter another. Some travellers have never been more welcome, and others never more feared. Today's crowded planes, trains and cruise ships suggest an area of open borders, but territories remain hotly disputed, tightly patrolled and defended with the most advanced technology. The movements of people, cultures and ideas across this sea have never been greater, have never drawn from places more distant and have perhaps never fed so many imaginations globally. Each of the twelve ports considered here fed early modern imaginations in different ways, and perhaps that is what continues to characterise the place and our period. The Mediterranean's most compelling times and spaces are invented mergings of ancient archaeological sites, romanticised literary histories, competing ethno-religious identities, Graeco-Roman monuments, Renaissance revivals and romantic imaginings. This sea is the site of a synchronic sensory juxtapositioning that took off in the early modern period and has never quite ceased.

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Abstract

The Mediterranean is one of many maritime basins that gain a distinct cultural identity through the migrations and exchanges of those bordering it. The evolution of these exchanges over centuries or millennia, and the export of this identity around the globe can have the effect of suspending time and space. Is there anything distinctive about the early modern period in this synchronic space? Each of the twelve ports considered here fed early modern imaginations in different ways. A heightening of new religious, territorial and dynastic conflicts triggered tensions and fundamentally shaped cityscapes and cultural life. At the same time, the period saw a self-conscious return to early cultural forms and models, and the Mediterranean's most compelling times and spaces were invented mergings of ancient archaeological sites, romanticised literary histories, competing ethno-religious identities, Graeco-Roman monuments, Renaissance revivals and romantic imaginings. Many of the expansive dynamics of the early modern period continue to characterise the synchronic sensory juxtapositioning of the Mediterranean today.

Keywords: Early Modern Mediterranean, sense and movement, space, cityscapes

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PLATES

MARSEILLE



Fig. 1.1. *Plan de Marseille* in Braun and Hogenberg, *Civitates orbis terrarum*, sixteenth century (public domain).



Fig. 1.2. Joseph Razard, *Plan geometral de la ville citadelles port et arcenaux de Marseille* (public domain).



Fig. 1.3. Claude-Joseph Vernet, *Intérieur du port de Marseille*, 1754 (public domain).



Fig. 2.1. Pietro Ciafferi (attr.), *The Harbour of Livorno with the Four Moors statue*, ca.1620. Courtesy of the State Archive, Pisa.



Fig. 2.2. *Prospect of the Dutch-German Cemetery, Livorno.* Courtesy of the Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede, Città del Vaticano, St. St. M4 – b, ins. 2, cc. n. n.



Fig. 3.1. Francesco Roselli. [attr.] *Tavola Strozzi*, ca.1472. Naples, Museo San Martino (Wiki commons).



Fig. 3.2. Jacques Callot, *Balli di Sfessania. Pulcinella e Lucretia*, ca.1622, engraving (private collection).



Fig. 4.1. Frans Hogenberg, *Battle of Tunis 1535, Attack on Goletta*, ca.1570, in *Empire of the Sea* by Roger Crowley (public domain).



Fig. 4.2. The Zawiya of Sidi Qasim Al-Jalizi, Tunis, 2016 (©Chachia, H. E.).



Fig. 4.3. The Andalusian Street, Tunis, 2015 (©Chachia, H. E.).

MALTA

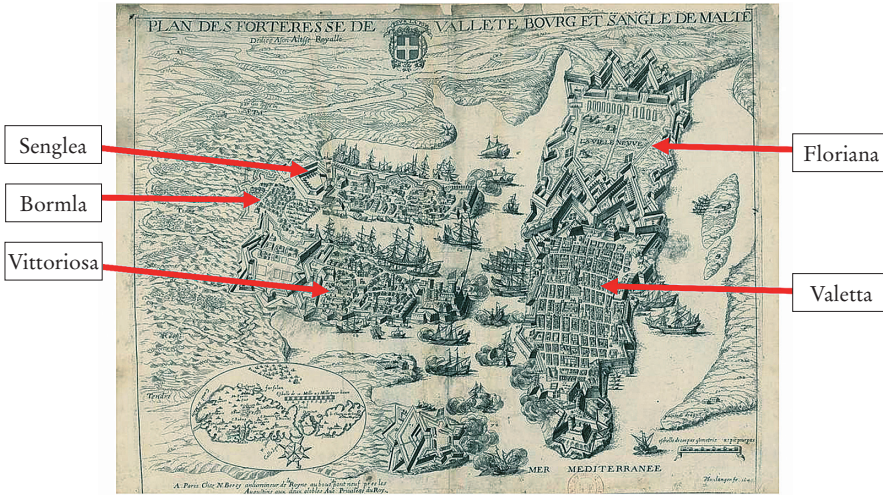


Fig. 5.1. Jean Boulanger, *The Maltese Grand Harbour*, engraving, Paris, N. Beris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ge C-2362.



Fig. 5.2. Anonymous, *The Church of St John and the 8 September procession of the Hospitallers*, mid-seventeenth century, MUZA (Malta National Community Art Museum).



Fig. 5.3: The Hospitallers' procession, detail of Fig. 5.2.



Fig. 5.4. The impressive walls of Valletta (the Great Ditch). (©Brogini, A.)



Fig. 5.5. *Il Gardjola* – the Senglea watchtower. (©Brogini, A.)



Fig. 5.6. Eye and ear of the wachtower of Senglea (above); eye of the wall of Saint Elmo Fortress (below). (©Brogini, A.)

ALEXANDRIA



Fig. 6.1. Carte Hydrographique de la Basse Egypte, in: *Description de l'Égypte*, 1810. Bibliothèque Nationale de France.



Fig. 6.2. Maḥmūd Aḥmad Ḥamdī al-Falakī, *Carte de l'antique Alexandrie et de ses faubourgs*, 1866. Bibliothèque Nationale de France.



Fig. 6.3. Piri Reis, map of the city of Alexandria from *Kitab-ı Bahriye* [Book on Navigation], ca. seven-teenth century. Walters manuscript W.658, the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, MD.



Fig. 7.1. Jakob Ziegler (1470–1549), ‘Aca, Acon, Ptolemais’, in *Tibus Aser particularis descriptio ex observatione Iacobi Ziegleri Landavi* (mid-16th century), Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département Cartes et Plans, Collection d’Anville, CPL GE DD-2987 (10436).

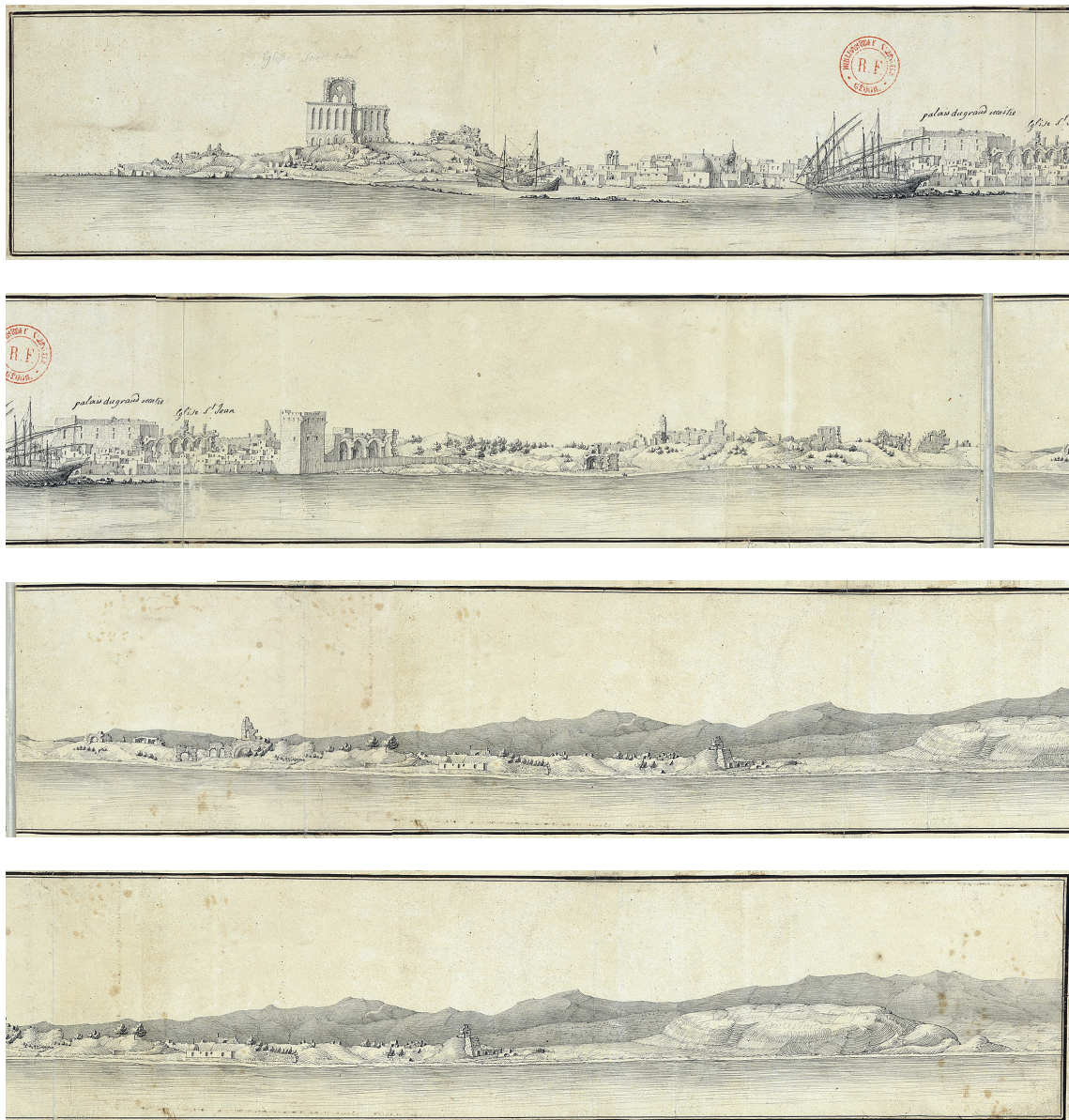


Fig. 7.2. Étienne Gravier, *Vue de Saint-Jean d'Acre*, in *Estat des places que les princes mahométans possèdent sur les costes de la mer Méditerranée et dont les plans ont esté levez par ordre du Roy a la faveur de la visite des Eschelles du Levant, que Sa Majesté a fait faire les années 1685, 1686 et 1687 avec les proiets pour y faire descente et s'en rendre maistres*, t. III, pl. 14, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département Cartes et Plans, GE DD-226 (14 RES).

BEIRUT



Fig. 8.1. A view of the city of Beirut from across the water (probably 1841) by R.J. Hamerton.



Fig. 8.2. Felix Bonfils, Beyrouth: Le Debarcadère, 1890. <http://www.levantineheritage.com/beirut.htm>.



Fig. 8.3. Felix Bonfils, Beyrouth: Vu du collège américain, ca.1870. Met Collection. <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/263440>.



Fig. 9.1. Jean Baptiste Vanmour, *View of Istanbul from the Dutch Embassy at Pera, 1720–1737*. Rijkmuseum, Amsterdam. Oil on canvas, 142 × 214 cm (public domain).



Fig. 10.1. Ottoman forces attacking an island fortress, possibly Grambusa, during the War of Candia by Jan Peeters I, 1667 (public domain).

CANDIA



Fig. 10.2. The city and fortifications of Candia, by Giorgio Corner, 1625 (public domain).



Fig. 10.3. View of the siege of Candia in *Atlas van Dirk van der Hagen* by Dirk Jansz van Santen, ca. 1680 (public domain).

RAGUSA (DUBROVNIK)



Fig. 11.1. Carte de la partie d'Albanie occupée par le Bacha de Scutari, le district des Monténégriens, et partie des territoires des rep.ques de Venise, et de Raguse, François Joseph Maire (Vienna, 1788–1789). Ragusa, lower left, is flanked by Ottoman Herzegovina, above (in green), and Venetian Kotor, centre (in pink). Courtesy of the Harvard Map Collection.

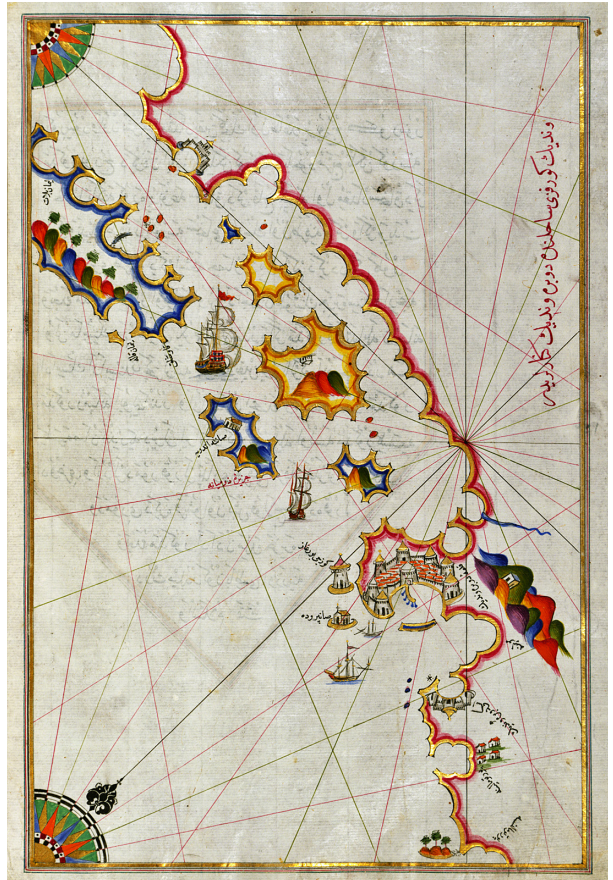


Fig. 11.3. *Map of the Adriatic Coast from Budva to Dubrovnik*, Piri Reis (1465–1555). Walters Ars Museum (Creative Commons).

Fig. 11.2. *Dubrovnik, Entrance into the City from Ploče*, Albert Bates Lord and Milman Parry, between 1933 and 1935. Used with permission of the Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature, Harvard University.

The COST Action ‘People in Motion: Entangled Histories of Displacement across the Mediterranean (1492–1923)’, or ‘PIMo’ for short, unites its researchers in the conception of the Mediterranean as a flexible locus for a multitude of cultural transactions. Their primary goal is to restate the region’s significance as a historic site of engagement and exchange. In this volume twelve Mediterranean port cities are considered as places of distance and proximity, conflict and cooperation, autonomy and control.

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