

**Foreigners and the City: An  
Historiographical Exploration  
for the Early Modern Period**

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## **Foreigners and the City: An Historiographical Exploration for the Early Modern Period**

### **Summary**

This paper will focus on the physical traces left by different minorities in the European city of the early modern age. Looking to the urban context in the main important ports and commercial centers we can find violent conflicts, traditional uses, as well as new urban strategies by the governors to keep together (for economic and social purposes) city-dwellers and foreigners. The invention of specific buildings and the effect on the architectural language is often quite visible and a mean of cultural exchanges.

**Keywords:** City, History of Architecture, Modern Age, Foreigners, Minorities

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## **1. Minorities in the early modern city: conflicts and new urban strategies.**

Following the forecast of an issue of "Time" of ten years ago, in the Fifties of this century the American man will be a little more bronzed and a little less European in his appearance. As a necessity, he will be also more comprehensive toward that part of the humanity "different from him which in a certain proportion he brings in himself. The cover of the periodical showed an ideal portrait of a teenager who will be born with the grandchildren of our children. It reproduced the features of a multiethnic society. As it had left on the back of its shoulders even the memory of the racial conflicts always recurrent in its country, as well as of what happens in Africa or in the eastern coast of the Adriatic sea. Oh, great virtue of the American optimism!"

The periodical does'nt put in advance the question of how could be his home, the school where he studies, the town where he moves..... Without entering in an imaginative territory, it's easy to say that cities as human faces were modified in times even as a result of ethnic mixtures<sup>1</sup>.

It is well known that in Europe, in the cities of the ancient régime the suspicion against the "alien" (foreigner because concerned by a different ethnical group, or religion) produced conflicts sometime explosive. But it is less known that this suspicion was sometimes at the origin of various organizations ways of the city's spaces, of different interventions in the residential or working places topography, of new architectural patterns.

My hypothesis is that the population movements, voluntary or imposed, and the consequent necessary cohabitation of different minorities in the city context often provoked new choices of urban strategy by the élites, often together with a diffusion of knowledges and a series of innovations dealing with the urban space.

In my working program themes such as identity, belonging, citizenship will be analysed only following the view point of the role of the frontiers physically recognizable in the urban texture, of the circulation of physical and morphological patterns, of architectural languages.

In short, from the research done until now, two conclusions may be drawn about foreigners in cities. First, their formal definition varied considerably from city to city. It also was transformed over time. Just as the general notion of citizenship gradually shed its civic roots for a more national and statist framework, so too foreignness was transformed from mere non-localism to a more modernist notion of cultural and national difference. In the long transition from the later Middle Ages to the early modern era, however, "foreigner" and "citizen" were terms consistently understood as demarcating the outer limits of a lengthy continuum of locations within the complex

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<sup>1</sup> Luigi Sampietro, *Lasciamo parlare l'Oriente*, in "Il Sole-Ventiquattr'ore", 13 agosto 1995, p. 19.

terrain of urban society and politics. This spectrum housed many intermediate categories between the two poles of citizens and foreigners, for example that of "residents", that is, non-citizens who were nevertheless integrated in many significant ways.

It is evident that this history can be studied only on the *longue durée*: *longue durée* of considered events in the chosen case-studies and *longue durée* of my work, which can advance only step by step. In fact, it seems to me that this subject has an historiographical interest and at the same time it registers a sensibility by the scientific community toward questions of ethnical mixture, put in evidence by the transformations going on in some European capital cities. We need to ask for scholars in urban history, institutional and architectural history, history of religions, of ethnical groups in the universities and research centers. Important themes will be:

- the spatial features of the segregation (imposed or voluntary chosen);
- the production of specific buildings, the uses, the reinterpretation of spaces given to the minorities by the élites, the circulation of architectural knowledges and building techniques.

It is not easy to cover homogeneously a territory (the European one), nor a chronological well defined period (since the XV to the XVIII century): but it is the case to try to limit it.

## **2. Cultural Exchanges and physical traces within the city.**

Since the beginning of this research, I was interested to the problem of the physical localization of the cultural exchanges; in fact I can be considered an "expert" of the place and the shape taken by the inter-national, inter-ethnic and inter-religion relations in the urban context, which is the real subject of this essay.

I decided to let aside legal questions.

In fact early modern Europeans reached little consensus on exactly how to define "foreigners" in the context of the city. Jurisprudence, privileges and charters, and political constitutions distinguished the categories of aliens, strangers, and denizens from burghers, citizens, and inhabitants. "Foreigner" was a less precise term. A catch-all designation, it signified in most cities the mirror opposite of a citizen. The latter was a person, usually of local birth, whose ownership of property and concern for reputation endowed him or her with a "permanent fixed interest" in society, to use the famous expression of Colonel Ireton in the Putney Debates of 1647. Yet foreigners not only lacked local roots and rights. They were also seen as possessing identities different from those of citizens. These identities were from cultural, linguistic, religious, and ethnic. Looking to the future, they also could be called, with a certain amount of anachronism, "national", in the sense of referring to subjects of a different sovereign.

Three basic facts of urban life should be kept in mind when discussing the evolving presence of foreigners in late medieval and early modern European towns. First, in most cities a large number, and in some cases the majority of townsmen were "strangers", in the sense of not having been born in the city itself. Second, these outsiders were usually not foreigners in terms of hailing from different countries or even regions (another anachronistic designation, but one evoking an important marker of cultural limits). Rather, most came from the nearby countryside, or from other cities in the same country. Third, as a rule, the larger the city, the greater the proportion of migrants, and the broader the catchment area from whence they came. Thus, in late seventeenth-century London-- by that point the largest city in western Europe-- some two-thirds to three-fourths of all adult inhabitants had been born elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> That a substantial number of these self-made metropolitans crossed political and other borders to reach their new home was a characteristic London shared with other large cities, such as Paris, Rome, Amsterdam, Madrid, and Istanbul.

Taking all these questions in account, the main important hypothesis of my work can be summarized as follows: what characterizes Europe since the Middle Ages is an intense circulation of men, commodities, and ideas. Traces of foreigners are often among the most significant signs of the contamination which distinguished the historical stratification of the European city. In fact, foreigners' traces may be identified: whole districts, such as the Jews' ghettos, or the area where Greeks inhabited; significant isolated buildings belonging to the foreigners' settlements, such as churches, confraternities, colleges, hospitals; specific building typologies, often common around the Euro-Mediterranean area, introduced to accommodate foreigners' needs and offer appropriated spaces for exchange, such as Exchanges, fonducs, drapperie, warehouses; places where people was often meeting, such as Courts or Universities: all these were for us subjects of analysis,

It appears therefore as essential, in order to understand the cultural complexity that derives from this movement, to further stress the importance and contribution of foreigners in the making of European cultural heritage. One effective way, we believe, of doing it is by integrating these traces of foreign presence into appropriately designed broader networks of protection and valorisation. Organised on a thematic basis – founded on research and cataloguing – these networks could even aim to promote, integrate, give visibility and accessibility to such a heritage.

In fact cities most clearly serve to promote cultural transfer in their role as centres for the circulation of news and ideas. The period 1400-1700 is marked both by the formalisation of spaces and buildings that served that role and by the proliferation of new ways to store and circulate

information, not least in print. The dominant commercial centres were the most notable for the dissemination of print culture and, as in other periods, the business world was to the fore in adopting new forms of information technology. By the 1540s printed lists of commodity prices were in use in Antwerp. Significantly, they were, and for long continued to be, in Italian, the business language of Antwerp, an indication that the lists were derived from Italian business practice. Venice and Antwerp were especially notable in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as centres for gathering and circulating information about the world. In that role they served wide markets outside their own territories and it is possible to see a large part of their printed output as expressing an outlook and culture of types which we would today associate with the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times*. The Antwerp presses and humanist circles played an important part in distributing Italian culture in northern Europe. Key texts on architecture, for example, were printed in Antwerp in Dutch and German translations only a few years after their first publication in Venice. In the seventeenth century Amsterdam fulfilled a similar role, while towards the end of the century London began to do the same, not least in business publications.

Such cities offered unique opportunities for encounters with the strange and the exotic and so stimulated interest in different cultures and the assimilation of new tastes and ideas. Guicciardini, whose *Descrittione di tutti i Paesi Bassi* could serve as a foundation text for the study of cities and cultural transfer, noted the presence in Antwerp of commodities from throughout Europe and the world. The city's merchants, he wrote, in words which identify characteristics common to successful commercial aristocracies in many historical contexts, were humane, ingenious, and ready both to imitate and to establish relations with the stranger. They kept up with fashion and spoke several languages. Antwerp artisans made many goods in foreign styles, using techniques imported from the Mediterranean region, some of which had recently been transferred from Bruges, Antwerp's predecessor as a commercial metropolis. It was not until the late seventeenth century that London could boast a comparable material, technical and intellectual culture, which in several respects traced its ancestry to Antwerp. Two Antwerp stories epitomise the city's role as a site for encounters with the new. It was through Antwerp, according to Guicciardini, that Germany learned of the Portuguese voyages, and German merchant families were attracted thence by the market in spices that the city owed to the Portuguese. At about the same time Thomas More set in Antwerp his fictional traveller's relation of Utopia: it could have taken place nowhere else.

With this perspective, the research has to be focused particularly on the areas of cities of social-political, ethnic, linguistic and religious complexity.

The aim of the work has been to encourage researchers of different geographical and cultural origins, as well as various specialists (geographers, political, social, economical, cultural,

architectural historians) to discuss together the rich complexities of the European city, having in mind their different role (port, capital, industrial, financial, artizanal centres) and the frequent overlapping of these functions. I am convinced that, by crossing distinct approachs and ways of reading the urban reality, it is possible to offer a more precise analysis of some of the European cities and their urban milieu as sites of significant cultural encounters, cultural exchanges and cultural innovations<sup>2</sup>.

A subject as vast as the one proposed needs an interdisciplinary approach and investigations of varying scale. But to prevent the areas covered by the lectures from becoming too disconnected from each other, in terms of subject matter, it would be essential to tie the contributions to specific cases and to use questionnaires to establish beforhand the points of view of each contribution.

Several workshops in the frame of the European Science Foundation held between 1999 and 2003 focused on the following six arenas, which represented some of the main locations in which cultural exchanges between city-dwellers and foreigners took place in Europe's cities 1400-1700:

- 1) Places of exchange of money: bourses/money exchanges.
- 2) Zones of hospitality: hotels, the foreign house, the fondaco, hospitals, assistential institutions, foreigners' districts, foreigners' churches and cemeteries..
- 3) Centres of prestige culture: mainly universities, but also theatres, academies.
- 4) The privileged foreign area: areas privileged for political reasons, e.g. protected by extra-territorial status, ambassadors' quarters.
- 5) Fairs, market places, commercial streets: The market of goods: - Privilegies granted to foreign trade or limitations imposed on it. - Limitations as well as their transgression with regard to imitations of foreigners and foreign products. - the corporative defense between citizens and foreigners.
- 6) Shops: The market of art. Circulation of artists and of their models. Specific cities (Rome, Constantinople) and their monuments as sources of models for the travelling artists.

In this paper I will focus on some of the main important among them.

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<sup>2</sup> This is not a new question: the Department of History of Architecture held during a so-called "permanent seminar" with the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme in Paris and in Venice, between the 1993 and the 1998 on the "The Foreigner and the City", which results were published in two different books, one in italian *La città italiana e i luoghi degli stranieri*, Bari, Laterza 1998 and one in french *Les Etrangers dans la ville*, Paris, MSH 1999. Afterwords a research group was constituted by the European Science Foundation on Cities and Cultural Exchanges, which work will be published by rhe Cambridge University Press in 2006 (D. Calabi and S. Turk Christensen editors). It is a new initiative, but there are linkages of continuity with the previous one (some of the participants were members also of the italo-french seminar).

### 3. Places of exchange of money: bourses/money exchanges<sup>3</sup>.

The commercial cities of early-modern Europe contained buildings specifically devoted to housing gatherings of merchants active in international trade and finance. Often they were key sites for the acquisition of information and new forms of knowledge, for linguistic exchange, and for dealing in money, credit, and expensive consumer goods. Sometimes justice was administered there. They were focal points in the cities, contributing to their identity and to their political and social life.<sup>4</sup> Important to be identified their roles in processes of cultural exchange.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, these buildings and institutions themselves embodied processes of cultural exchange, and served as models that were imitated in other countries. Their many different names -- *bourse* in France and the Low Countries, *bourse* and then 'exchange' in England, *lonja* in Spain, and *loggia* or *portico del cambio*, or *della mercanzia* in Italy -- to varying degrees indicate their functions and architectural forms. Thus the term *loggia* (*loge*, *lonja*, *laube*) has distinct connotations of architectural form (a gallery open on one side) and has been used widely to denote a covered space for meetings of nobles or financiers set aside from the bustle of the market place and passing traffic. Examples from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries include the loggia of "nobles" in Siena, those of 'merchants' in Bologna and Venice, the one of the *bourgeois* in Bruges, the 'Round Table' of Leuven, and the *Maison aux piliers* in the Place de La Grève in Paris. These places in some ways correspond to the 'consulate of the sea', the *Casa de Contratación* or the *taula de canvi* in Barcelona.<sup>5</sup> The sixteenth century witnessed a widespread building or rebuilding of such structures, often on a large scale and with impressive architectural effect.

For centuries the Venetian banks, precarious enterprises in an economy characterized by instability, retained a simple physical form similar to that of the modest moneychanger's table depicted by Carpaccio at San Giorgio degli Schiavoni (1501). The essence of this arrangement was the openness of the transaction, demonstrated by the presence of ready money.<sup>6</sup> These tables stood in the central square of the market island of Rialto and in 1587 were replaced on the same site by the public *Banco-Giro* with an open gallery at ground level. By about 1600, when secular public banks began to be established in Rome, Milan, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Hamburg, Delft, and Nuremberg, the siting of the Venetian bank within its square was probably a significant model, indicating a

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<sup>3</sup> Part of this chapter was written by me together with Derek Keene (whom I am grateful for the permission to re-use it here) for the book by D. Calabi and S. Turk Christensen (editors), *Cities and Cultural Exchanges* to be published by the Cambridge University Press (2006).

<sup>4</sup> D. Calabi, *Il mercato e la città*, (Venice, 1993), 213-214.

<sup>5</sup> J. Ainaud, J. Guidiol, F. P. Verrié, *La ciudad de Barcelona (Catalogo Monumental de España)* (Madrid, 1947), vol. I, 322.

<sup>6</sup> Vittore Carpaccio, *Vocazione di San Matteo*, 1500 ca: Venice, School of San Giorgio degli Schiavoni: on the left the painter represented a shop and a bank of money change.



clear separation between large-scale financial transactions and the every-day business of the market place.<sup>7</sup>

The name *bourse* (*borsa*, *börse*) has a Flemish origin and derived from the home of the Van den Boourse family in Bruges. Ludovico Guicciardini, in his *Descrittione di tutti i Paesi Bassi*, first published in 1567, a work which did much to spread the fame of the Antwerp *bourse*, recounts this derivation of the name.<sup>8</sup> The building in Bruges had an interior court, a large staircase and four big windows looking on to the central market place where international merchants customarily assembled, so that “all the rest of the city seemed almost empty”<sup>9</sup>. In the fourteenth century the house was acquired by the city of Bruges and came to be used as a covered extension to the square. This pattern was transferred to buildings and squares with loggias and galleries at Antwerp, Rouen, Toulouse and London, built or designated as places where merchants could assemble out of the way of passing traffic and other impediments.

At Antwerp, the bourse, later the *Oude Bourse*, resembled a general market rather than a loggia, and was created in 1515 behind the Great Market<sup>10</sup>. In some respects this ensemble resembled the Rialto square in Venice. In 1531, the city of Antwerp built a new, more elaborate bourse, for the enormous sum of 300.000 golden crowns.<sup>11</sup> The old bourse was not demolished, but this new one was intended to provide a more sophisticated environment for business, incorporating Italian spatial principles and an architectural melting of Brabantine and Iberian Gothic styles.<sup>12</sup> The main language on the Antwerp bourse was now Italian<sup>13</sup> and its business was coming to be dominated by financial and credit transactions following Italian models. The architect, Dominikus van Wagemakere, kept the old distributive scheme<sup>14</sup>.

Protected spaces of this type for trade proliferated. In 1556 King Henry IV of France issued an edict, published in 1563, for the institution of a ‘common square (*place*) in Rouen for all the merchants’, stating that it was to be ‘similar to the exchange of Lyon and to that of Toulouse, with

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<sup>7</sup> D. Calabi, P. Morachiello, *Rialto: le fabbriche e il ponte*, (Turin, 1989), 63-64 and footnotes.

<sup>8</sup> Ludovico Guicciardini, *Descrittione di tutti i Paesi Bassi, altrimenti detti Germania Inferiore*, (Antwerp, 1567), 92-106, 91-92 of the French translation published in Antwerp in 1568.

<sup>9</sup> L. Monga (ed.), *Un mercante di Milano in Europa, Diario di viaggio del primo Cinquecento*, (Milan, 1985), 70-71 (I<sup>st</sup> ed. 1588-89, 16v. - 17 r.)

<sup>10</sup> L. Monga, 70, (17 v.).

<sup>11</sup> F. Cattois, A. Verdier, *Architecture civile et domestique au Moyen Age et à la Renaissance*, (Paris, 1855-57), 175.

<sup>12</sup> G. Braun, F. Hogenberg, *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*, (Coloniae Agrippinae, 1575-1618), vol. I., tav. 17 "Antverpia"; J. Materné, ‘Schoon ende bequaem tot versamelinghe der coopliden. De Antwerpse beurs tijdens de gouden 16de eeuw’, in G. de Clercq (ed.), *Ter Beurze. Geschiedenis van de aandelenhandel in België, 1300-1990* (Antwerp, Bruges, 1992)

<sup>13</sup> P. Subacchi, ‘Italians in Antwerp in the second half of the sixteenth century’ in H. Soly and A.K.L. Thijs, *Minderheden in Westeuropese steden (16de-20ste eeuw)* (Brussels, 1995), pp. 73-90

<sup>14</sup> Guicciardini, pp. 91-2.

the aim that there, as usual, merchants and their factors can meet twice a day and make their traffic, enterprises and commerce' and bring there 'all the merchandise of foreign countries'.<sup>15</sup>

The Antwerp building, site of the most dynamic market in Europe, had a widespread influence, most directly on London and then on Amsterdam, which by 1600, as a consequence of the disturbances of the southern Netherlands, was taking on many of the commercial functions of Antwerp. In 1607 the Amsterdam authorities decided to establish a new building for mercantile transactions, to be placed in the southern side of the Dam by the city architect Hendrik de Keyser. The new building accommodated its first assembly of merchants in August 1611 and was solemnly inaugurated in 1613, yet its monumental courtyard was soon too small to contain the multitude of curious visitors.<sup>16</sup> The scheme followed that of the Antwerp exchange and the architect visited the recently-completed exchange in London, which was on the Antwerp model. The open rectangular courtyard was surrounded by a portico with twenty-three arcades, supported by forty-five granite columns with Doric capitals. In the two long sides of the exterior were vaults to accommodate shops at ground level. On the short sides, central arcades gave access to the court, crossing a bridge over the water. Above one of them was a tower with a carillon clock to regulate trading activity. Each of the columns in the interior was associated with trade in a different commodity. More than four hundred commodity prices were listed in the weekly-price bulletins, that Amsterdam had regularly sent to the other places in Europe since 1585. Rules governed the times of opening; prohibited access to beggars and those carrying arms; and forbade lamentation, outrages and children's games.<sup>17</sup> From its the origin the bourse was regarded as one of the city's most important monuments, mentioned by visitors and represented by painters and engravers.<sup>18</sup> The Conte de Montesquieu was overwhelmed and frightened by the multitude, which almost prevented him walking. By 1668, the building was perceived as too small for its business and an extension was added.

In Spain *lonjas* for the accommodation of merchants were established in several cities from the fourteenth century onwards. Seville's late sixteenth-century *Casa Lonja de Mercaderes* (or *Lonja*

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<sup>15</sup> Acte Royal 1557-03-00. Edict du Roy sur la création et l'établissement en la ville de Rouen d'une place commune pour les marchands à la similitude et semblance du change de Lyon et bourse de Toulouse, Rouen, XX juillet 1563.

<sup>16</sup> P. Schaltema, *De Boeurs van Amsterdam*, (Amsterdam, 1846).

<sup>17</sup> L. J. Wagenaar, 'Les mécanismes de la prospérité', in *Amsterdam XVII siècle*, (Paris 1993), 74-75.

<sup>18</sup> Jérémias de Decker, quoted in *Amsterdam XVII siècle; Gottfried Hegenitii Itinerarium frisio-hollandicum et Abr. Ortelii Itinerarium gallo-brabanticum*, (Lugduni, 1630); *Osservazioni nel viaggio di D. Franc. Belli fatto col signor Luigi Giorgi ambasciatore di Venetia a gli stati di Olanda e di la Francia*, (Venetia, 1632); P. J. Blok (ed.), *Relazioni veneziane, (Venetianske Berichten over de Veerigde Nederlanden van 1600-1795)*, (Den Haghen, 1909), (paper by Antonio Donato), 111; W. Brereton, *Travels in Holland, The United Provinces, England, Scotland and Ireland*, (London, 1844); Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, (edited by W. Bray), (London, 1973), 24; C. Joly, *Les voyage de Munster, d'Hollande, d'Osnabrugh, Varendorph, des Pais Bas et de Cologne*, (Paris, 1672), 106-107; Ch.-L. Montesquieu, *Voyage in Hollande de Ch. Louis de Secondat baron de Montesquieu, publié par Albert de Montesquieu*, (Bordeaux, 1894), 230.

*de Commercio*) is exceptional, both for its scale (it covered at least three times the area of the next largest commercial loggias, at Palma and Zaragoza) and for its architectural character. In the latter respect it resembles the great exchanges of the northern cities, even if not explicitly modelled on them. The foreign influence was Italian<sup>19</sup>. The Casa Lonja was palatial in form, with basilican elements (used as audience halls and council chambers) arranged around a porticoed courtyard and with a fine staircase leading to the upper floor.<sup>20</sup> The story is well known. In response to the complaint of the bishop of Seville against the merchants of the *Consulado de Commercio*, who had taken over the steps of the cathedral as a site for their business, King Philip II in 1572 authorized the building of a house of commerce on a nearby site occupied by the *Casa de Contratación de las Indias*.<sup>21</sup> The budget for the project was set at 360,000 ducats, with more than 1000 ducats set aside to pay the architect. The original scheme, by Juan de Herrera who was at that time engaged on the Escorial, was later developed by Juan de Minjares with the collaboration of Andrea and Alfonso de Vandelvira.<sup>22</sup> This monumental, autonomous building stands isolated in the centre of the city, an effect increased by the steps and the pillars and chains which surround it. The chains may refer to the site of Las Gradass, where the merchants had earlier traded by the cathedral, to which the Casa Lonja was the successor.<sup>23</sup> To finance this project the consulate of commerce was authorized to impose a special tax on all merchandise entering and leaving Seville by land or sea, a source of revenue so prolific as to permit magnificence in building and materials and workmanship of high quality.<sup>24</sup> The merchants of the Indies brought materials from afar, including stone from Portugal and bricks from Malaga incorporating chalk from Avana. More than seventy skilled workers were continuously active on the site; the architects and surveyors had to dedicate their time exclusively to the project; and the use of slave labour was prohibited. Work began in 1584 and was officially complete in 1598, although as late as 1606 it was proving difficult to persuade the merchants of Seville to transfer their business to the Lonja, away from accustomed places of trade. The Casa Lonja housed administrative and juridical as well as commercial functions. It became the seat both

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<sup>19</sup> P.G. García, *Archivo General de Indias* (Madrid, 1995), which contains a historical account plus photographs, plans and other illustrations of the establishment.

<sup>20</sup> V. Lamperez y Romea, *Arquitectura civil española de los siglos I al XVIII*, (Madrid, 1922), t. II, 237.

<sup>21</sup> Gestoso y Perez, *Sevilla monumental y artistica*, (Sevilla, 1892), vol. III, 216-229; S. Izquierdo Alvarez, 'Felipe II y el urbanismo moderno', in *Anales de Geografía de la Universidad Complutense*, 13, (1993), 81-109; C. Wilkinson-Zernmer, *Juan de Herrera: Architect to Philip II of Spain*, (New Haven, 1993).

<sup>22</sup> T. Falcon, *La capilla del Sagrario de la Catedral de Sevilla*, (Sevilla, 1987).

<sup>23</sup> A. Morgado, *Historia de Sevilla el qual se contiren sus antigüedades, grandezas...hasta nuestros tiempos*, (Sevilla, 1587), par. II.

<sup>24</sup> D. Sanchez-Meza, "El renacimiento in Andalusia", in *Historia de Andalusia*, (Sevilla, 1984), vol. IX; L. Garcia Fuentes, *Un ejemplo de la industria de la construccion en Sevilla en los s. 16 y 17: La Casa Lonja*, in *Andalusia y America en el siglo XVII*, (Seville, 1985), I, 271-324; V. Pérez Escolano, 'Ciudad y espacios de comercio en la España del siglo XVI. Una aproximación al hilo de la Lonja de Mercaderes de Sevilla'; A. Marín Fidalgo, 'La Lonja de los Mercaderes. Intervención de las autoridades del Alcázar sevillano en la génesis de su construcción', both in *Juan de Herrera y su influencia: Actas del Simposio*, edited by M.A. Aramburu-Zabala and J. Gómez Martínez, Camargo, 14-17 July 1992 (Universidad de Cantabria, Santander 1993), 287-96 and 297-310 respectively.

of the *Consulado de Cargadores de las Indias* and of the *Casa de Contratación*, bodies which governed all trade with the Americas, regulating contracts, shipping and migration and exercising commercial jurisdiction. Much of the business at the Lonja concerned dealing in commodities. Brokers (*corredores*) had bases there and parts of the building were used for storing merchandise. Nevertheless, the core of its activity lay in commodity transactions, finance, commercial credit, money exchange and maritime insurance.<sup>25</sup> With the transfer to Cadiz of the monopoly of trade with the New World in 1717, the Casa Lonja lost its great commercial function, but the transformation of the building into the *Archivo General de Indias* during the 1780s gave it a new role as a symbol of commercial exchange and of knowledge of distant worlds.<sup>26</sup>

The complex story of London's Royal Exchange introduces the conclusion to this point since it highlights several important characteristics of the role of exchanges in cultural transfer. Apart from the king's exchange (*cambium*) for coin, which occupied various sites in the city from the twelfth century onwards, London did not have a merchants' exchange until, between 1566 and 1569, a 'Burse' was built on a site in the angle between Cornhill and Threadneedle Street, where its successor now stands opposite the Bank of England. Following the queen's visit in 1571, this splendid building was named The Royal Exchange.<sup>27</sup> There were precedents in London for buildings that provided shelters and controlled sites for trade.<sup>28</sup>

The congregation of merchants took place in the open street, which was narrow and disturbed by passing traffic. From 1527 a chain was placed across the street during trading, but there remained discomforts occasioned by the weather. By that date it had been proposed to move the merchants from Lombard Street to Leadenhall, and in the 1530s the idea of setting up an Antwerp-style bourse at Leadenhall was seriously discussed. Then it was proposed to build a bourse in Lombard Street on the site of the house known as the Pope's Head, the former headquarters of the Bardi. In the 1560s plans to build a bourse in Lombard Street were revived, but it proved impossible to acquire the intended site and so the Exchange was established a block away, opposite Pope's Head Alley.<sup>29</sup>

The new bourse, funded by Thomas Gresham the leading English merchant and financier active in Antwerp, was a powerful 'modern' statement in the distinctive manner of Antwerp architecture.

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<sup>25</sup> C. H. Haring, *Comercio y navegacion entre España y las Indias*, (Mexico, 1918, 1979).

<sup>26</sup> A. M. Bernal, *Credito y financiación en la carrera de Indias 1492-1825*, (Sevilla, 1991).

<sup>27</sup> A. Saunders, ed., *The Royal Exchange* (London Topographical Society, no. 152, 1997) surveys many aspects of the institution and its buildings.

<sup>28</sup> D. Keene, 'The setting of the Royal Exchange: continuity and change in the financial district of the city of London, 1300-1871', in Saunders, *The Royal Exchange*, pp. 253-71; D. Keene, 'Wardrobes in the City: houses of consumption, finance and power', in M. Prestwich, R. Britnell and R. Frame (eds.), *Thirteenth-Century England VII* (Woodbridge, 1999), pp. 61-79.

<sup>29</sup> J. Imray, 'The origins of the Royal Exchange' in Saunders, *Royal Exchange*, pp. 20-35; Keene, 'Continuity and change'.

The overall design – a spacious open courtyard surrounded by arcaded galleries where merchants could gather in bad weather, with shops or stalls on the floor above the galleries, and a tower where a bell sounded the hours of trading – closely resembled that of Antwerp’s New Bourse of 1531, even to the number of thirty-six great columns in the arcades. Moreover, the architect of the London bourse was an Antwerp mason, Hendryck van Paesschen, who had been involved in the building of Antwerp’s new Town Hall (largely complete by 1566) and perhaps in work on Gresham’s private house in Antwerp.<sup>30</sup> Stones for the building and slates for the roof were brought to London from Antwerp. The former included the *pierebize* (a dark stone probably resembling ‘Tournai marble’) used for the thirty-six columns, the ‘jasper marble’ used for columns at an upper level and for the most important columns at the two entries from the street, and the black and white marble slabs used for paving the galleries, all described admiringly by a French visitor in 1578. The English identity of the building was proclaimed by arms and inscriptions and by a scheme for bronze statues of English monarchs, from William the Conqueror onwards, which would look down on the courtyard. Otherwise the building’s most powerful message was that London belonged to the world of Antwerp, the market which more than any other united the commerce of Europe and provided links to Italy, Spain and new worlds across the Atlantic. There was another foreign allusion in the name that was soon applied to the vaults beneath the galleries, where linen was sold. This was ‘New Venice’, probably because it was an obscure area to which light penetrated only through iron grilles.<sup>31</sup>

This building immediately struck visitors as one of the sights and identifying monuments of London. Well into the nineteenth century the Royal Exchange remained high on the list of ‘must sees’ for foreign visitors, who among other things could often find their countrymen there and obtain the news, letters and financial services that they required. Along with the Antwerp Bourse it provided a model for Amsterdam’s exchange completed in 1613. The building which replaced the first Royal Exchange after the Great Fire of 1666 was larger than its predecessor and was admired for its grandeur, but in its architecture and decoration expressed a purely English identity. That reflected its design by two London builders competent but not of international reputation, and of the now greatly enhanced standing of London as a commercial metropolis.

#### **4. Special zones of hospitality: the “fondaci”<sup>32</sup>**

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<sup>30</sup> Saunders, *Royal Exchange*, 9-10.

<sup>31</sup> This French visitor’s description is in Vatican Library, Reg Lat 672, fos. 51-6 (approximately translated in Saunders, *Royal Exchange*, 48-49). For the building process, see Saunders, 36-47.

<sup>32</sup> Part of this chapter was written by me together with Derek Keene (whom I am grateful for the permission to re-use it here) for the book by D. Calabi and S. Turk Christensen (editors), *Cities and Cultural Exchanges* to be published by the Cambridge University Press (2006)

The term *fondaco* comes from the Arab words *funduq*, or warehouse, and *fhondac*, which means pub. It can also be traced back to the Greek *pandokion*, or hotel, where people, animals and goods in transit could be lodged<sup>33</sup>. It was often a two- or three-storey structure, with large premises on the ground floor to accommodate the people and goods passing through, which faced onto a busy central space used for many different purposes. A series of more permanent merchants' residences were found on the floor above, accessible from a gallery which ran around the inner court<sup>34</sup>. In Andalusia, the *almudì* (at times *alholì* or *alfolì*) was an important building for the grain market in particular, while the *alhóndiga* was a large depository and store for the same products, and the *alfhondac* served as a pub, hotel and hospice. In general, the *fondaco* was both, a building or a group of buildings where one could live and store products destined to trade or consumption. It often hosted foreign merchants. The early *fondaci* were public, governed directly by the State to protect its interests, through specially assigned organisms. They existed practically everywhere in Europe, with names such as *entrepôt*, *grenier*, *Kornhaus*, *Kaufhaus* and *cornhaus*. At the beginning they were places where wheat or flour was traded; later on, they became depositories for other grains or products as well (wine, salt). The basic layout allowed it to be classified in typological terms. It was characterised, on one hand, by the separation between the private spaces of those who owned the *fondaco* or to whom it was designated, and the transitory spaces to which 'outsiders' also had access, and, on the other, by the combined presence of services, residences and premises where animals could be kept and imports conserved. The necessary ties between warehousing, government control and taxation could or could not be facilitated by the structures themselves. Public or private interests could or could not be posed in contradictory terms. In some geographical and political contexts, these warehouses–lodgings constituted the presupposition and the physically centralised framework of a commercial port.

The *fondaco* was always state-owned and designated to a specific use. It generally took on the characteristics of an island within the city, a specific market within a commercial center. It was a form of public interference in trade, of regulation aimed at impeding buy-ups, scarcity, competition and price fluctuation.

The Venetian system storing of goods was quickly extended to out-of-towners. Germans, Turks, Persians, Arabs, Greeks, Armenians and people from Florence or Lucca who had ongoing relationships with the Venetian market were gradually able to take commercial advantage of a 'residence' designated specifically to them<sup>35</sup>. In the sixteenth century, the Venetian magistracies

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<sup>33</sup> E. Concina, *Fondaci: architettura, arte e mercatura tra Levante, Venezia e Alemagna*, Venice 1997, pp. 15-26.

<sup>34</sup> Le Tourneau, under the headings *Funduk* and *Khan* in *Encyclopédie de l'Islam*, cit.

<sup>35</sup> R.C. Mueller, *Stranieri e culture straniere a Venezia: Aspetti economici e sociali*, in "Ateneo Veneto", 1981, pp. 75-77; R.C. Mueller, *Mercanti e imprenditori fiorentini a Venezia nel tardo medioevo*, in "Società e Storia", 55, 1992, pp. 29-60; L. Molà, *Le comunità dei lucchesi a Venezia. Immigrazione e industria della seta nel tardo medioevo*, Venice

were actually intent on using real estate and foreigners' associative bonds as a means of control. Resettling the Jews in an eccentric area suited to limiting their freedom of movement was not the only example<sup>36</sup>.

What was established for natives became valid for the out-of-towners, whose role in Venice's economy was well-known. In a "land frequented by many people of every language and country"<sup>37</sup>, living 'together' as opposed to 'dispersed' throughout the city, in an area that could be kept under surveillance and in which they could organise themselves according their own customs and traditions, was considered a conquest and a guarantee for whoever was part of, or felt themselves part of, an ethnic minority<sup>38</sup>.

*Albergarie* that offered facilities for living and for storing merchandise as well as the possibility of maintaining one's own government (and, at one time, guaranteed a continuous tax revenue to the Republic) were conceded, over the years, to the Armenians at San Giuliano, the Germans at San Bartolomeo, the Turks at San Matteo (Rialto) and the Lucchese at Rialto Nuovo.

Given what went on there, their role as a mandatory 'landing place' and their physical autonomy, the foreign *fondaci* were among the most significant 'port' structures in the lagoon, quite analogous to those that already existed in the East, in particular, in Byzantium and the Islamic countries or in Alexandria or the areas most frequently visited by Venetian merchants<sup>39</sup>. When the Signoria assigned a residence to the Germans between 1222 and 1225, it also founded (as it had for flour) a magistracy, the *Visdomini al Fondaco*<sup>40</sup>. The common interests and reciprocal advantages were unquestionable as the Alemanni contributed a great deal to the city's wealth and put their monies to good use in the Venetian banks. Before 1470, someone estimated the *fondaco's* business at 1,000,000 ducats a year!

When the neighbourhood was destroyed by fire one winter night in 1505, these interests were protected by the merchants who hurried out to save 'their own'. It was impossible for the Republic not to intervene immediately. Revealing an extraordinary decision-making and operative capacity compared to the norm on the city's large public works, the Senate voted to reconstruct the *fondaco*

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1994; D. Calabi, *Gli stranieri e la città*, in *Storia di Venezia, V, Il Rinascimento: Società ed Economia*, edited by A. Tenenti and U. Tucci, Rome 1996, pp. 913-46; D. Calabi, *Gli stranieri nella capitale della Repubblica Veneta nella prima età moderna*, in *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome, Italie et Méditerranée*, 111 (2), 1999, pp. 1-13; *Les Etrangers dans la ville*, edited by J. Bottin and D. Calabi, Paris 1999.

<sup>36</sup> B. Ravid, *The Establishment of the Ghetto of Venice*, in *Gli Ebrei e Venezia*, edited by G. Cozzi, Milan 1987, pp. 228-47.

<sup>37</sup> As Francesco Sansovino noted with regard to the Jews in the city, *Venetia città nobilissima, et Singolare*, Venetia 1581, p. 136 (cf. also the edition with the additions by G. Martinioni, Venetia 1663, p. 368).

<sup>38</sup> Calabi, *Il ghetto e la città*, cit., pp. 203-301; D. Calabi, *La cité des juifs en Italie entre XV et XVI siècle*, in *Les Etrangers dans la ville*, cit., pp. 25-40.

<sup>39</sup> G. Dagron, *La città bizantina*, in *Modelli di città*, Turin, 1987, pp. 153-74.

<sup>40</sup> H. Simonsfeld, *Der Fondaco dei Tedeschi in Venedig*, Stuttgart 1887; Cessi-Alberti, *Rialto*, cit., p. 233; K.E. Lupprian, *Il Fondaco dei Tedeschi la sua funzionedi controllo del commercio tedesco a Venezia*, Venice 1978 (Centro Tedesco di Studi Veneziani, quaderno no. 6).

at its own expense. The job was entrusted to the supervision of Francesco Garzoni, Provveditore al Sale, and some houses acquired to enlarge the surface area available to the new building. Exactly who designed the building is uncertain<sup>41</sup>. A competition was held and at least three models were presented to the Senate: two by Giorgio Spavento, at that time Proto dei Procuratori di San Marco and one by a certain Gerolamo, a German master considered an "intelligent and practical man", of which any further trace has been lost. The third project was chosen, on the grounds that it was more pleasing to the final users. The building became a model that was followed in an approximate way in many distant situations and a prototype in architectural literature and travel narration<sup>42</sup>.

The form of the new *fondaco*, which still exists, was 'perfect' and something unusual in Venice. The plan reproduced a 'Greek'-style forum: a square, central open space, enclosed between porticoes and loggias above, onto which a series of rooms – storage and living spaces – opened along the perimeter. Perhaps it was actually the resemblance between this layout and the proposal the Veronese friar made four years later for the post-fire reconstruction that led to the attribution mentioned above. All we know about the proposal comes from Vasari's description of a "closed" market with shops around a centre courtyard or, better yet, a piazza surrounded by loggias<sup>43</sup>. Doubts have also been raised, however, by the architectural language<sup>44</sup>.

The "*zente tedesca*" lived here and went to their own church, organising their community life around figures of high finance or culture (well-known poets, musicians, painters). From time to time they held ceremonies, encounters, festivals and masked balls open to the public<sup>45</sup>, establishing a community that while sometimes closed within itself, was often open to the surrounding city and certainly not only or always paced by the market clock<sup>46</sup>. The form of the Fondaco of San Bartolomeo is rectangular and rigorous, new and atypical in Venice, even if orchestrated in a rudimentary way. Perhaps Spavento and Scarpagnino tried to put into practice, as best they could, the summary indications of the friar, a great architectural theoretician. In any case, the building has a clearly identifiable typological layout, both a re-thinking of a more than 200-year-old pre-existing example and a model for future works.

The not so distant Fondaco dei Persiani must have been quite similar, it too overlooking the Grand

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<sup>41</sup> M.T. Dazzi, *Sull'architetto del Fondaco dei Tedeschi*, Venice 1940; E. Padoan, *Il Fondaco dei tedeschi a Venezia*, in "Emporium", 90 (1939), pp. 287-92; F. Forlati, *Il restauro del Fondaco dei Tedeschi*, in "Palladio", IV (1940), pp. 164-66.

<sup>42</sup> *Petrus Contarenius in m. Andream Grittum panegyris* (1517): BNMV, MS. lat. XIV, 230 (=4736), III, fol. 21v; and MS. lat. XIV, 246 (=4683), fol. 297; cf. also Jacopo Morelli, *Notizie d'opere di disegno nella prima metà del secolo XVI*, Bassano 1800, p. 241; A. Melani, *Fra' Giocondo Veronese e il fondaco dei Tedeschi*, in "Arte e Storia", 1890, p. 131.

<sup>43</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, cit., vol. v, pp. 269-72; cf. also R. Brenzoni, *Fra' Giocondo veronese*, Florence 1960, pp. 47-57.

<sup>44</sup> V. Fontana, *Fra' Giovanni Giocondo*, cit., pp. 64-66; M. Tafuri, *La "nuova Costantinopoli". La rappresentazione della "renovatio" nella Venezia dell'Umanesimo (1450-1509)*, in "Rassegna", 9 (1982), pp. 25-38.

<sup>45</sup> *Marchands flamands à Venise (1606-1621)*, edited by G. Devos and W. Brulez, Brussels-Rome 1986.

<sup>46</sup> G.B. Milesio, *Beschreibung des Deutschen Hauses in Venedig*, Munich 1881; M. Caffi, *A proposito del Fondaco dei Tedeschi*, in "Arte e Storia", 9 (1980), p. 146.



Canal and it too on a corner of a minor *rio* (rio della Fava) in the neighbourhood of San Giovanni Crisostomo<sup>47</sup>. A stone foot bridge at the corner of the bridge 'dell'Olio' led to a massive rectangular block supported by wooden structure. On the various floors, open loggias, accessed by open wooden stairs, overlooked an obscure central courtyard. It was not the refinement of the architecture, but rather the self-enclosed plan, the darkness of the interior spaces, the scarce flow of air, the facades covered rugs and fabrics hung on display that recalled – perhaps the same associations to which it was designated – the crowded spaces of the markets of the East<sup>48</sup>. In 1582 the four Ruzzini, co-owners of the building, declared rent on fifty storage spaces, five shops and, on the ground floor, a residence with a shop. Nonetheless, the number seems to have risen to seventy-four in the conditions issued by Savi alle Decime in 1661 and, even as many as 101 in that of 1740. The building, always classified as "dark, uncomfortable and very old"<sup>49</sup>, was demolished in 1908 for sanitary reasons.

Though it came to be in a different way, in much later times, the 'magnificent' revival of the Turks also seemed to refer to similar plan. From the fifteenth century on the Ottomans' presence in the city was both feared and revered<sup>50</sup>. Mention was first made of a place assigned to them at San Matteo (Rialto), while another anonymous chronicler narrated that, at the time of the battle of the Curzolari, they had established themselves in the Barbaro residence in Cannaregio<sup>51</sup>. Later, as they increased in number, they presumably lived throughout the city and, after Lepanto and the revival of commerce with the Levant, outbreaks of disorder were common. Disadvantages, disruption, damage and scandals were daily history. The Venetian government tried to find an appropriate residence. In 1575 the Senate declared it necessary to avoid having the Turks live 'scattered' throughout the city and urged the Collegio and the V Savi alla Mercanzia to solicit the Venetian nobles to procure a suitable palazzo<sup>52</sup>. The city was hard pressed to find an acceptable place where these foreigners could transport and maintain their goods, receive assistance and be watched over. When the Collegio and Savi alla Mercanzia finally gave the Ottoman nation a palazzo on the Grand Canal, in the neighbourhood of San Stae, quite a bit of work was required to adapt the splendid noble building into the residence for a foreign community. Listing what had to be done in thirty-one meticulous chapters, the magistrates intended to propose a building model that would provide

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<sup>47</sup> E. Concina, *Structure Urbaine et fonctions des batiments du XVI au XIX siècle*, Venice 1981, pp. 34, 37, 39.

<sup>48</sup> A. Wiel, *The Demolition of the Warehouse of the Persians in Venice*, in "Burlington Magazine", 13 (1908), pp. 221-22.

<sup>49</sup> ASV, *Savi alle Decime*, 1537, b. 94, Castello 287 (*Declaration* by Carlo and Marc'Antonio Ruzini, q. Domenico); 1582, b. 160, Castello 780 (*Declaration* by Ruzin Ruzini, q. Marc'Antonio) and Castello 753 (Marc'Antonio Ruzini, q. Piero).

<sup>50</sup> B. Imhaus, *Le minoranze orientali a Venezia, 1305-1510*, Rome 1997.

<sup>51</sup> Gallicciolli, *Delle memorie venete*, cit., p.102

<sup>52</sup> ASV, *Compilazione Leggi*, 2 June 1588, b. 210, fol. 104; 28 March 1589, b. 210, fol. 108r-v.

"convenience" to its guests and security to the Venetians. Funds were allocated and the work completed in view of the maximum exploitation of the space and a rational layout (a large number of rooms with washing facilities, mezzanines, collective spaces). Attention was given to guaranteeing considerable freedom of movement, without indiscretion and interference on the part of neighbours. All the doors to the outside were closed with the exception of the "main" entrance on the *salizzata* and the one on the *rio*, as were the windows toward the Grand Canal. The window sills on *rio* and *salizzata* were raised and the windows screened in larch on the exterior. Clear separations were made on the interior as well, by creating a physical division between walkways and spatial environments of the different ethnic and religious groups (the Asiatic component and the people from Constantinople were set up toward the *rio del Megio* and the Fondaco of the same name, while the Bosnians and the Albanians were placed near the *salizzata*). Everything was organised to assure easy provisioning (two *rive*, symmetrical with respect to the main entrance, open only for loading and unloading, and extra storage space on the ground floor). Adequate services were provided (well-irrigated wells, daily cleaning, garbage collection, a ban against firearms), and a 'loyal' guardian hired for fulltime surveillance (a well-known citizen who was provided with independent lodgings, someone who had been "very Christian" for several generations and could protect the Venetians and their guests by forbidding women, stragglers or Christians from entering). Rents were partitioned equitably according to the size of the space and the number of users, and the traditions of "those populations" were respected by furnishing the kinds of sleeping accommodations to which they were accustomed.

Before the vast and highly debated project began in 1860, the engineers in charge of the restoration described the division and details of the facade<sup>53</sup>.

The same formula – storage for goods and living quarters for their importers engaged in banking – was also found along the banks of the Scheldt. The seat of the merchants confederated in the Hanseatic league was a late parallel of the Venetian Fondaco dei Tedeschi. The project was designed by the architect and sculptor Cornelis Floris de Vriendt who, at the height of his career, also did a great deal of work for Germanic clients. Pieter Kraus, Hendrik van Paesshen and Peeter Frans are mentioned as his collaborators. Built between 1564 and 1568, it was a 'true palace', and its beauty a wonder in the eyes of who beheld it, as firsthand witnesses like Braun and Hogenberg affirmed in the atlas published four years after the work's completion<sup>54</sup>. Before it was destroyed by fire 1893, it was an imposing structure of 70 x 60 metres. Like other contemporary mercantile buildings in the German speaking countries, it was simpler but similar, in its overall volume and in the rhythm of the facade windows, to the new town hall, built by the same architect in the same

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<sup>53</sup> A. Sagredo-F. Berchet, *Il Fondaco dei Turchi in Venezia*, Milan 1860.

<sup>54</sup> Braun-Hogenberg, *Civitates*, cit., pp. 17-18.

years (1561-65)<sup>55</sup>. Its "splendid structure" had a central tower with a square base, done in beautiful stone, at the top of which a winged eagle marked the direction of the wind. The spacious square interior that could not lack in a complex of this kind was surrounded by a peristyle<sup>56</sup>. Granted to the Anseatic cities in solemn celebration in 1568, it must have been somewhat larger than necessary, given that only thirty of the 150 rental apartments were actually occupied at the official opening. But this was probably not a problem, given that Antwerp welcomed a large number of people from outside the city, as had Bruges, where Genoese, Hanseatic, Florentine, Castilian merchants had all been headquartered<sup>57</sup>. To the extent that "six major nations which in times of war as in times of peace resolutely resided here; there are more than 1000 Germans and Danes together; Italians, Spaniards, Englishmen, Portuguese [...] observe the laws of the country, but dress and do everything else freely in their own way".

Just as in the city of Venice, Antwerp saw to it that everyone was appropriately accommodated, so as to provide "greater freedom [...] than anywhere else in the world". The "superb lodging given to the English, called Thof van Lire, that is court of Lira" was built by a member of the Lire family, at the expense of the City, as a royal palace designed for Emperor Charles V's court. Erected expressly for the merchants of England, it had sumptuous storage spaces, where the many goods brought over land could be unloaded. Another "large and magnificent" building – as Guicciardini noted enthusiastically – was the warehouse of the Osterlins located next to the honoured seats of the Spaniards, "of great and very great traffic"; the "ample and good tenement of Portuguese"; and the buildings of the "many many French merchants".

## 5. Universities<sup>58</sup>

Exceptional mobility has long characterised European student populations. Before the seventeenth century, when exclusionist laws effectively restricted many universities to subjects of their local territorial prince, the *peregrinatio academica* had contributed greatly to cultural exchange through the multiple daily interactions between young men from diverse European regions. Reflecting the structure of university institutions and the necessities of student life, these contacts involved individuals from a very wide social spectrum.<sup>59</sup> The great medieval *studia* were real meeting points which attracted ambitious young men, especially from areas where university-level institutions

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<sup>55</sup> Hitchcock, *German Renaissance*, cit., pp. 131, 196.

<sup>56</sup> Knight, *London*, cit., vol. II, p. 285.

<sup>57</sup> H.C. Scribanus, *Origines Antverpiensium*, Antwerp 1610; J.B. van Mol, *Anvers*, Antwerp 1874, p. 146.

<sup>58</sup> This chapter is mainly based on the researches made by Stefano Zaggia, (S. Zaggia, *L'università di Padova: la costruzione del Bo e dell'Orto Botanico*, Venezia, Marsilio 2003) whom I am grateful for the informations he gave me.

<sup>59</sup> J. Verger, 'Peregrinatio Academica', in G.P. Brizzi and J. Verger (eds.), *Le università dell'Europa*, vol. VI: *Le scuole e i maestri. L'età moderna*, (Milan: Silvana editoriale, 1995), pp. 108-35.

were scarce. Thus, for a long time it was mainly students from the German, Scandinavian and Slav regions who gravitated towards the major French, northern Italian and Low Countries universities.<sup>60</sup> Studying the uses of urban spaces by these heterogeneous student populations presents special problems, because they were very different from the many other foreign communities which acquired urban lodgings. Nevertheless, there were distinct 'Latin quarters' formed by the presence of individually-transient students over long periods. Moreover, that presence was usually seasonal, linked to academic cycles, and often influenced by the individual experience of students whose periods of residence were short.

Not all university towns were equally involved with foreign students. Only those universities possessing a *studium generale* sufficiently famous to attract widespread attention could draw in young men from afar. Invariably, conditions differed from place to place, starting from chronology. In such places as Paris, Bologna, Oxford, Padua or Coimbra, the university began in the formative period of medieval instruction and had long-term effects on the whole life of the town. In other cases, however, the *studium* was founded later, often by government fiat: at Louvain, the university was founded at the desire of the duke of Burgundy;<sup>61</sup> at Turin, the *Ateneo* arose from the initiative of Prince Ludovico of Savoy.<sup>62</sup> In all these cases, the students played very different roles and had different degrees of importance.

The impact of this group of young lodgers depended upon its size in relation to the town's population as a whole. Moreover, any assessment of that impact must take account of those who accompanied the students: only the richest of them could afford many servants, but it seems to have been quite common for a student to have at least one servant or assistant.<sup>63</sup> A few universities attracted barely a dozen students and so had a negligible impact on their towns, but in other cases the university function became predominant and pervaded every aspect of urban life. Marino Berengo has retraced the history of conflict in small towns that boasted great universities, such as Oxford, where violent clashes broke out in 1355 between student groups and municipal authorities over control of the market. That conflict ended in a ruling by the king that, in fact, sanctioned the

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>61</sup> E.J.M. van Eijl, 'The foundation of the University of Louvain', in J. Ijsewijn and J. Parquet (eds.), *The Universities in the late Middle Ages* (Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1978), pp. 29-41; E. de Maesschalck, 'The Relationship Between the University and the City of Louvain in the Fifteenth Century', *History of Universities* 9 (1990), pp. 45-71.

<sup>62</sup> D. Balani, 'Lo Studio tra città medievale e città barocca', *Annali delle Università Italiane* 5 (2001), 57-66.

<sup>63</sup> G. Brizzi, 'Gli studenti e la città' in the catalogue of a Bologna exhibit of summer 2000: P. Bellettini, R. Campioni and Z. Zanardi (eds.), *Una città in piazza. Comunicazione e vita quotidiana a Bologna tra Cinque e Settecento* (Bologna: Compositori, 2000), pp. 101-9, especially p. 103.

intervention of university authorities in town management. In such places, the university could assume a hegemonic urban role, affecting economic, social or institutional arrangements.<sup>64</sup> Students enjoyed a privileged status within towns. For example, those who were foreigners were not subjected to the same conditions affecting other categories of foreigners resident in the town. Moreover, the extent of their privileges often created a good deal of tension with the citizens, especially those who lodged them. And the scholars did not hesitate to defend their *libertates* against urban political authorities, sometimes with arrogance. While student populations are counted among urban minorities, they and their governors nevertheless constituted a highly-privileged élite with rights often denied to ordinary citizens.

Since the twelfth century those who left their native country in order to study were protected by imperial law (the so-called *Habita* granted to Bologna students by Frederick Barbarossa). Later, a set of rules developed, often differing from town to town, that granted considerable autonomy to student associations and to individual students. Provisions were adopted to attract young men seeking professional training, presuming their positive effect on the town's economy. These privileges usually included the right to lodging at a fair price; the right to carry arms for self-defence; exemption from customs duties when importing objects and goods; and the right to be tried by a separate and autonomous court.<sup>65</sup>

Therefore, the medieval student body formed an autonomous association vis-à-vis other urban social groups, which served as organisational models. Moreover, student ethics resembled those of the nobility.<sup>66</sup> Student institutions, controlling the relationship with urban political authorities and the university itself, comprised the *nationes*: associations of mutual assistance, friendship and protection (and often of mutual conflict), organised according to the student's territory of origin or native language. In thirteenth-century Bologna and Padua, students already possessed wider assemblies: a *universitas ultramontaniorum* for students from transalpine territories and a *universitas citramontanorum* for students from Italian territories. Each group elected its own representatives and governing body.<sup>67</sup> At Padua, for example, twenty-two 'nations' were recognised in the university's statutes, while Bologna counted forty-six 'national' groups in 1553.

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<sup>64</sup> M. Berengo, *L'Europa delle città. Il volto della società urbana europea tra Medioevo ed Età Moderna* (Torino: Einaudi, 1999), pp. 579-80. See especially Hammer, 'Oxford town', pp. 87-8 and W.A. Pantin, *Oxford Life in Oxford Archives* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. 99-104.

<sup>65</sup> P. Kibre, *Scholarly privileges in the Middle Ages. The rights, privileges and immunities of scholars and universitates at Bologna, Padua, Paris and Oxford* (London: Medieval Academy of America, 1961); P. Denley, 'Students in Middle Ages', in *Universitates e Università* (Bologna: Bologna University Press, 1995), pp. 119-24.

<sup>66</sup> F. Piovan, 'Studenti e città nel diario di Giovanni Antonio Da Corte', in Piovan and Sitran Rea (eds.), *Studenti, Università, città*, pp. 317-45, esp. p. 333.

<sup>67</sup> P. Kibre, *The Nations in the Mediaeval Universities* (Cambridge Mass.: Medieval Academy of America, 1948); G. Fedalto, 'La nazione ultramarina', in Piovan and Sitran Rea (eds.), *Studenti, università, città*, pp. 425-39.

The proper functioning of any *studium generale* presupposed the availability of adequate lodgings for scholars who moved there in order to attend the professors' lessons. At both Bologna and Paris, this problem emerges vividly in documents dating from the late twelfth century. The usual solution, following negotiations between municipal officials and student organisations, was to impose controls on rents, checked often by joint committees representing both the municipality and the students.<sup>68</sup> While students from rich families did not need such legislative protection, the relations between student lodgers and landlords frequently led to dramatic conflict. The concept of pre-emption spread, requiring any building once rented to a student or professor to remain subject to university uses. Moreover, some mid sixteenth-century jurists, when describing the privileges of scholars, argued that if students were unable to find lodging, they could compel owners to rent to them (*si non invenint domos, possunt compellere habentes ad illis locandum*).<sup>69</sup>

An alternative solution, adopted from the start, was to purchase or rent houses and to convert them into *hospicia* or *pedagogia* (in England, 'halls' or sometimes 'inns'), reserved for students paying for their board and lodging.<sup>70</sup> This system left control entirely to student organisations or to the teachers who governed them. From this, a third institution developed — the college — which offered a solution to the problem of poverty affecting many young students. Colleges were places of hospitality, free of charge and expressly destined for impoverished students. This form of collective student life, which developed mainly in northern European universities, required outside economic intervention: the foundation of a college inevitably involved a donation from some rich and powerful patron, which enabled the college to be self-supporting. Every college was ruled according to criteria laid down by the founder and spelled out in its statutes. These rules reflected wishes regarding the college's social duties. Precise clauses often concerned the recruitment of the lodgers or members of the society, who were to must fulfil certain prerequisites concerning, for example, nationality, social class, or the faculty to be attended. More detailed rules governed daily life, religious observances, hours of study, etc.<sup>71</sup>

During the later Middle Ages, colleges multiplied across Europe. Only about two dozen were founded before 1300, but eighty-five (thirty-seven of them in Paris alone) were created in the fourteenth century and ninety-two more in the fifteenth century.<sup>72</sup> However, the most important late medieval trend was the diversification of types of college. They matured from simple forms with a

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<sup>68</sup> M. Bellomo, 'Studenti e "populus" nelle città universitarie italiane dal secolo XII al XIV', in *Università e società*, pp. 61-78.

<sup>69</sup> Quoted in Berengo, *Europa delle città*, p. 577.

<sup>70</sup> J. Verger, 'Collegi e Università tra medio evo ed età moderna', in D. Maffei and H. de Ridder-Symoens (eds.), *Collegi e Università d'Europa tra il XIV e il XVIII secolo* (Milan: Giuffrè, 1991), pp. 1-12; G.P. Brizzi, 'Studenti, Università, collegi', in Brizzi and Verger (eds.), *L'università dell'Europa*, vol. IV, pp. 191-210.

<sup>71</sup> Verger, 'Collegi e Università', p. 5.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

few boarders to a type known as the ‘great college’, characterised not just by its size (they could lodge fifty or sometimes over one hundred students) and architectural form, but because within their walls they possessed their own libraries and lecturing activities, distinct from those of the university faculties.<sup>73</sup> This substantial and enduring difference separates the major Italian universities from those of northern Europe. At Paris or Oxford, the great colleges eventually became more or less autonomous at a didactic level, as sites where the academic activities and daily lives of teachers and students coexisted within complexes of imposing buildings.<sup>74</sup> The principal function of Italian colleges, however, remained that of supplying accommodation to students, while pedagogic activities took place within other architectural spaces.<sup>75</sup>

This major division of university life between northern Europe and Italy had different effects on their respective urban frameworks. Northern Europe’s colleges functioned rather like large convents (they resembled the *studia* of mendicant and other religious orders) and their organisation effectively controlled a chronically quarrelsome and youthful student population. In an attempt to avoid riots in mid fifteenth-century Paris, all free students (the *martinents*, who did not live in a college) were required to find fixed abodes at least in a boarding school. Similar measures were also taken more gradually at Oxford, where the boarding halls were drastically reduced from seventy to eight as the colleges began to predominate.<sup>76</sup> By the sixteenth century, therefore, profound differences separated the functional order of university teaching in northern Europe and Italy. The ‘great’ college (on the Parisian or English model) now dominated university education in most European countries, including Spain; ‘fully operational colleges’ were autonomous institutions that ultimately could function outside the university system.

In Italy, however, before the introduction of Jesuit colleges, the larger universities substantially continued on traditional lines.<sup>77</sup> In the case of the most important university towns, affected only marginally by the organisational model of the college, we do not know whether ‘lodging neighbourhoods’ existed – specific areas that had evolving over the course of centuries so as to house the student population, and characterised by building forms (such as, at Oxford, the earlier halls or inns) adapted to the needs of a seasonal and highly mobile group. In general, even though Italian public authorities (displaying an inveterate tendency towards excess) strictly controlled their student populations, they apparently never to have compelled them to lodge in certain areas of town or in certain types of institution.

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<sup>73</sup> Brizzi, ‘Studenti, Università, Collegi’, pp. 199-201.

<sup>74</sup> M. Kiene, ‘L’ università nelle città europee: l’architettura universitaria’, in Brizzi and Verger (eds.), *Università dell’Europa*, vol. IV, pp. 27-49.

<sup>75</sup> P. del Negro (ed.), *I collegi per studenti dell’Università di Padova: una storia plurisecolare* (Padova: Signum, 2003).

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>77</sup> Brizzi, ‘Gli studenti e la città’, p. 104.

In only one case in Europe was it planned to establish a university in a place entirely separate from the rest of the town. When founding the University of Vienna in 1365, Archduke Rudolf of Hapsburg considered laying out a walled university suburb situated near his residence, where university buildings and student lodgings would be located. This unrealised project, arose from Rudolf's conviction that the Viennese would never tolerate the presence of a large and privileged foreign body.<sup>78</sup> This was an extreme and isolated case, but historians of universities agree that, after the mid sixteenth century, legislation across Europe attempted to impose stricter controls on students in the name of public order by segregating their accommodation within the town. For example, at Bologna at the end of the sixteenth century, the Jesuit Francesco Palmio (the leading spirit of a student religious brotherhood) suggested making a group of unused public buildings into new boarding schools (*pedagogia*), where students would live under the guidance of a suitably instructed housemaster.<sup>79</sup>

Although without sufficient documentary support, historians have repeatedly affirmed the widespread existence inside university towns of urban sectors occupied mainly by students.<sup>80</sup> The Latin Quarter of Paris offers a famous, but probably unique, model of a university suburb formed autonomously inside a major city. In steady progression, the university structures (professors' residences, student lodgings, and great colleges) clustered along the *Rive Gauche*. Over time, the Parisian university quarter became one of three districts within the circuit of walls that together expressed the urban identity of the French capital: sixteenth-century maps distinguished *Ville*, *Cité*, and *Université*. Nevertheless, local conditions varied widely. At the opposite extreme from Paris stand decayed towns like Oxford and Cambridge, which after 1300 were increasingly devoted to supplying the needs of a flourishing university. In middle-sized towns, especially those with commercial problems, the presence of a university operating in specialised buildings often had a direct and long-lasting impact on the cityscape. For instance, at Louvain in 1432, the *studium* originally occupied part of the Cloth Hall, made available to the university by the town authorities in an attempt to compensate for the decline of the local cloth industry. Louvain's colleges and boarding schools gradually consolidated around this structure, definitively changing the town's

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<sup>78</sup> Berengo, *Europa delle città*, p. 577. In some ways, Palmio's project resembles the slightly later Jesuit *reducciones* in distant Paraguay.

<sup>79</sup> G.P. Brizzi, *La formazione della classe dirigente nel Sei-Settecento: i seminaria nobilium nell'Italia centro-settentrionale* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1976).

<sup>80</sup> For example, J. Verger, 'Studenti e maestri', in Brizzi and Verger (eds.), *Università dell'Europa*, vol. IV, p. 69, asserts a 'topographical concentration of college schools and student accommodations ... everywhere, one observes the same concentration of a population with very clear specific characteristics, with an autochthonous population obliged to adapt to the student presence.'



functional geography within its walls and at the same time expressing Louvain's new economic vocation.<sup>81</sup>

Further studies will undoubtedly clarify the processes that underlay the formation of university precincts and suburbs within towns. Nevertheless it is clear that in various ways the market for student lodging was an important and widespread factor, to which student loyalties to 'nation' and to social class made a significant contribution.

## **6. Special districts of hospitality for the Jews: the Italian ghettos**

Between the end of the fifteenth century and the end of the seventeenth, a Jewish presence was widely spread and well-articulated throughout the Mediterranean region. Despite some inevitable differences, it can generally be characterized from an urban viewpoint and its cultural peculiarities are relatively easily recognized. It would be interesting to understand which elements are distinctive and which represent necessary adaptations to the habits and organization, or the architectural patterns, of the host countries which accepted Jewish residents. The complex relationships between Jewish settlements and host cities is linked to the fact that one cannot always distinguish voluntary from imposed enclosure, with a wide range of intermediate cases. In the early modern period, a series of edicts alternating between expulsion, toleration, and/or invitation explain the separation of Jewish districts: some were born as *ghetti*, others became areas enclosed by doors and gates, while others had been places of prevalent (but not exclusive) Jewish residence for centuries. We will focus here on the urban structure of such districts (including their impact on the conservation and transmission of the Jewish culture).

It is well known that during the sixteenth century, attitudes toward Jews varied greatly throughout Christian Europe. Unlike the Iberian kingdoms, or even the English or French national monarchies, where Jews had been completely expelled, in Italy, we find the formation of ghettos.<sup>82</sup> Some local governments (*e.g.* the Venetian Republic, the Papal states, or the Florentine Signoria) decide to impose a form of urban physical enclosure on their Jewish subjects, requiring them to live and earn their living (mainly by loaning money) packed together in a specific area reserved to them, where Christians could no longer reside. Consequently, the urban experience of Jews in Italy changed radically during the sixteenth century, with their passage to life within an enclosed space. The urban ghetto had a curious and

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<sup>81</sup> Maesschalck, 'University and City of Louvain', p. 63.

<sup>82</sup> M. Luzzati, *Il ghetto ebraico, Storia di un popolo rinchiuso* (Florence: Giunti 1987).

ambivalent history.<sup>83</sup> It was part of attempts by the Counter-Reformation church and by Italian municipal authorities to segregate Jews from the rest of the population, as they did with other marginal groups such as beggars, vagabonds or prostitutes.<sup>84</sup>

Once ghettos were established, they acquired a distinctive urban and cultural dynamic which did not always serve the original intentions of their creators. To a large extent, they functioned as city quarters, and as such they were 'normal' components of life. More than simply geographical areas, Italian city neighbourhoods (*gonfalon*, *rioni*, *contrade*, *alberghi*, *seggi*, *quartieri*, *sestiere*) were essential units in political life, with which their inhabitants identified proudly. Although most Italian communes lost their political autonomy during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, city neighbourhoods acquired renewed importance as part of the parochial system of the Counter-Reformation church. Jews were well aware that moving into a ghetto was not expulsion. It was usually preceded by prolonged negotiations between local Jews and city authorities concerning details of ghetto to be established: location, number of houses and shops permitted, conditions for leasing houses, community rights, and establishment of new synagogues. In Verona, as elsewhere, the foundation day of the ghetto was celebrated with annual festive prayers, similar to the commemoration of local miracles. Except at Bologna, Italian Jews were never expelled from their ghettos, where they lived until the Napoleonic occupation and sometimes into the twentieth century. The ghetto was a sign that they had been accepted as a part of city's population, much as Catholic and Protestant minorities in some northern European cities were allowed to establish churches for proscribed cults, provided they were not too conspicuous.

Once the Jews were in charge of their own geographical space, ghetto communities acquired new functions, which had not traditionally been Jewish responsibilities. These included street cleaning, water supply, fire brigades, keeping guest houses, and maintaining social order, all undertaken by paid officers, who were allocated pensions when they became too old to serve the community. This expressed a sense of stability which was enhanced by the joint efforts of community members to establish a distinct neighbourhood, the benefits of which were refused to non-local Jews. Strangers needed special permits from community authorities in order to receive hospitality in the ghetto. A few Italian ghettos conferred local citizenship upon strangers whose acts had benefited the community over many years. Even from a religious perspective, ghetto life often resembled that of a Catholic parish.

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<sup>83</sup> R. Weinstein, "'Segregatos non autem eictos': Jews and Christians in Italian Cities during the Catholic Reformation' (in Hebrew), in S. Volkov (ed.), *Being different: Minorities, Aliens and Outsiders in History* (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 2000), pp. 93-132.

<sup>84</sup> S. Simonsohn (ed.), *The Jews in the Duchy of Milan*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1982), vol. I, pp. 27-35.

In many Italian cities, including Venice (1516), Rome (1556), Florence (1570) and Siena (1571), and at Ferrara, and Modena on the Venetian mainland (early seventeenth century), we find a similar process after the expulsion from Spain and the famous bull of pope Paul IV (1555), many Jewish districts were transformed into segregated areas. If we want to attempt a comparative analysis of the most important cases, some questions are relevant. Sometimes it was necessary to find a new zone for their compulsory residence and to relocate existing inhabitants; other times, areas where Jews had lived for centuries were surrounded with walls, closed off with a few doors and gates, with rigid timetables established for opening them.

The creation of the first European ghetto at Venice in 1516 is well-known.<sup>85</sup> A barely urbanized precinct surrounded by water in a somewhat marginal part of the historical centre was initially assigned for 700 Jews. The settlement, known as the 'New Ghetto', was soon extended by adding two areas designated for Levantine and Ponentine (i.e. Western) Jews: in 1541, after an investigation, the Senate granted the Jewish request for the additional space and ordered that the nearby site known as the 'Old Ghetto' (*Ghetto Vecchio*), which lay across the canal and was connected to the 1516 ghetto by a bridge, be walled up and assigned to Jewish merchants.<sup>86</sup> In 1633, the Venetian government, concerned to attract merchants to the city, created the 'Newest Ghetto' (*Ghetto Novissimo*) for twenty families of newcomers. By this time, these three zones, linked to each other but separate and almost autonomous, accommodated almost 5,000 inhabitants (in a Venetian population totalling about 150,000). Here people from every corner of Europe lived in a small area in groups defined by synagogues using different rites (Italian, German, Spanish, Levantine), by adhesion to different fraternities, and by their patronage of shops and services catering for people of different origins.<sup>87</sup> All seemed to enjoy being Venetians no less than Jews. The zone was closed off by gates and bridges and partially surrounded by a canal which was patrolled by Christian guards. The houses were owned by Christian landlords and rented to the Jews (at a higher rate than for previous tenants), but were soon enlarged and transformed by their inhabitants, following the *jus kazaka*. Jews added storeys to existing buildings, which they also subdivided intensively. By the second half of the seventeenth century, the incidence of

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<sup>85</sup> C. Roth, *Gli ebrei in Venezia* (Rome: P. Cremonese, 1933); originally published as *Venice* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1930) and reprinted as *History of the Jews in Venice* (New York: Schocken Books, 1975); *Ghettos in Italy, Venice-Rome*, Exhibition Catalogue (Tel Aviv: Beth Hatefutsoth, Nahum Goldman Museum of the Jewish Diaspora, 1979).

<sup>86</sup> B. Ravid, 'The establishment of the Ghetto Vecchio of Venice, 1541', *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies* 2 (Jerusalem: 1975), pp. 153-67.

<sup>87</sup> B. Pullan, *La politica sociale della Repubblica Veneta 1500-1620*, 2 vols. (Rome: Il Veltro editrice, 1980), vol. II, p. 528; originally published as *Rich and poor in Renaissance Venice. The social institutions of a Catholic state, to 1620* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971).

shops, private and public wells, and other services was higher in the ghettos than elsewhere in the city.<sup>88</sup>

Everywhere, Jews had their own cemeteries, generally located near or at urban boundaries. Centuries before the constitution of the ghetto, Venetian Jews had been given land for a cemetery on the Lido, the island separating the lagoon from the open sea. Here, as in many other Jewish cemeteries, the coexistence of different national groups is revealed by inscriptions in various languages and by different styles of gravestones. A distinctively Venetian feature of this cemetery, however, seems symptomatic of the relations often established between Jews and Christians in the Mediterranean. This was the 'Canal of the Jews', linking the ghetto and the cemetery of San Nicolò in Lido, excavated in 1668 and permitting an easier passage for Jewish funeral rites.<sup>89</sup> The Venetian Senate authorised the canal in response to a petition from the united Jewish community, which wished to avoid insults from young people of the Castello district when funerals passed under the bridge of St. Peter. Despite its shortness, the canal eventually reordered the pattern of maritime traffic into the harbour and was enlarged in 1688. This waterway was deep enough to permit the passage of quite large ships and came commonly to be used by vessels exiting the northern lagoon towards the open sea. The 'Canal of the Jews' was also encouraged silting in nearby canals. The 'slow and hidden progress' of these consequences of digging the canal was such that between 1725 and 1739 the best-known Venetian maritime engineers (Poleni, Margutti, Riccati, Zandrini) were employed to produce surveys, designs and projects to counteract it.<sup>90</sup> Despite being promoted by the city authorities, the canal was a threat to the economic functioning of Venice and in this way seems to symbolise the intimate connection of Venetian Jews to the rest of the city. The canal was to remain, despite the damage it occasioned. It is a poignant symbol of the ambiguous position of the Jewish community in the city, neither joined with nor entirely separate from the whole, although its spatial segregation was sometimes desired by both sides.

For a commercial state such as the Venetian Republic, the Jews were economically necessary, mainly for their money-lending activity, and in the the ghetto they were relegated them to what was considered an appropriate permanent position within Christian society. Some cities

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<sup>88</sup> D. Calabi, U. Camerino and E. Concina, *La città degli ebrei* (Venice: Marsilio, 1991, revised edition 1996).

<sup>89</sup> Mentioned by B. Pullan, *Gli ebrei in Europa e l'Inquisizione di Venezia* (Rome: Il Veltrò editrice, 1985) (originally published as *The Jews of Europe and the Inquisition of Venice, 1550-1670* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983)) and by J. Georgelin, *Venise au siècle des lumières* (Paris: La Haye, 1978), p. 945.

<sup>90</sup> ASV, Archivio Zandrini, 3 November 1725, R. 4, cc. 94-101; 7 August 1731, R. 7, cc. 288-294 (reports the history of the canal); Archivio Poleni, 7 August 1731, R. 3, T. II; Secreta, b. 2 (1-3), c. 77 (with the report by the 'proto' Domenico Margutti); cc. 124 v. and followings; 18 September 1739, b. 1-3, c. 139 with reference also to declarations by engineers Poleni and Riccati, given to the 'Savi ed Esecutori alle Acque', already expressed on 22 September 1731, after the inspection made between the Sant' Andrea fortification and the Fondamente Nuove.

of the terra firma, contained Jewish communities before the institution of the Venetian ghetto. Firmly established since the second half of the fourteenth century, they occupied closed spaces and lived according to well founded community customs. These districts were generally close to city centres and market squares, and arose more from the practice of everyday life and trade than from regulation; were due more to stratification and professional reasons of everyday trade than to impositions or prohibitions. Thus, long before any charters required Jews to live separately, Jewish urban *contrade* already existed at Verona, Padua and Rovigo, and at Vicenza and Udine. Inhabited mainly, but not exclusively, by Jews, these neighbourhoods contained one or more synagogues, public services, butchers and bakers' shops, and banks. Their close identification with a single ethnic component of the population facilitated the eventual imposition of an enclosure.<sup>91</sup> The extension of the ghetto to the cities of the Venetian mainland occurred almost a century after its creation in the capital, after decades of negotiations between the Jewish communities (*universitates*) and local authorities. The latter were often supported by local ecclesiastics, including the Franciscan friars who gave innumerable sermons condemning usury and favouring the foundation of pawnbrokers as an alternative. The Venetian model, with a central square for a community use, was the ideal, but local circumstances were responsible for compromises and variations.

In Rome an area around the Theatre of Marcellus and near the Tiber embankment had been inhabited by Jews since the fourteenth century, as place-names (*Ruga Judeorum*, *macella delli Judei*, *platea Judeorum*) and the presence of Rome's oldest synagogue (1337) testify. This was a mainly commercial district and included a fish market. In 1442, Pope Eugenius IV ordered the concentration of the Jewish population in the street (now the *via del Portico d'Ottavia*) and the square in front of the fish market (called *forum judeorum*). Following Sixtus IV's displacement in 1473 of many services to streets better linked to the Vatican, the area declined, but by enlarging the *Ruga Judeorum* Sixtus facilitated the insertion of the *Piazza Giudea* into Rome's urban system and thereby gave a new definition to this neighbourhood.

In 1555, the first year of his papacy, the former Inquisitor, Paul IV, forced Jewish citizens to sell their houses and live in an enclosure (*claustrum per serrarum li giudei*) at relatively low and fixed rents; they were no longer to lend money to Christians nor do other business with them, and they were to wear yellow caps. Henceforth they could have only one synagogue and were to be confined within a precinct with two gates, controlled by Christian guards paid by the Jews. The pope's architect, Salustio Peruzzi, was charged with designing the *claustrum* and

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<sup>91</sup> S. Zaggia, 'Les étrangers et leurs modalités d'implantation dans l'espace physique urbain: XIII-XIX siècles', unpublished paper given to the Second International Conference of Urban History, Strasbourg, September 1994.

within a few months of Pope Paul's bull the district had been enclosed by walls. The speed at which this was done suggests that the work involved no more than closing off the streets with walls and building two gates. The latter were to be the only means of access into a neighbourhood where many Jews already lived and which by 1589 was known as a *ghetto*. Some houses were demolished and neighbouring streets enlarged, squeezing the Jews in and permitting merchandise to be discharged from the Tiber and carried into the city. The Jewish precinct, slightly over one hectare in size, had a main street (*via Rua*) as its commercial centre, at the ends of which were the two entries, one from *piazza Giudea*, the other from *piazza Pescaria*. Similar decrees were issued for other centres of the Papal States (Bologna, Ancona, Ascoli, Imola, and Recanati). In 1586, Sixtus V authorized an enlargement of the Roman Jewish precinct, into a largely unbuilt area along the river. Three years later Sixtus commissioned his favorite architect, Domenico Fontana, to design two new gates, although the Jews themselves paid for the construction.<sup>92</sup> Tempesta's plan of 1593 shows this area with the Sistine enlargement and the new gates, with a few new buildings housing poorer Jewish families along a newly laid out street by the riverside (*ripa dei Giudei*).

At Rome, as in Venice, rapid Jewish immigration resulted in a very high population density and an increase in the number of floors of existing buildings (easily visible in the 1625 plan by Giovanni Maggi). In 1593, Clement VIII had reduced the number of ghettos within the Papal States to only three (Rome, Ancona, Avignon), which presumably contributed to their overcrowding. Accommodating about 4,000 Jews in 1600, the Roman ghetto had nine or ten thousand inhabitants a century later. At the same time building density increased, pavements were remade, a fountain with piped water was installed, and landing-places were built, resulting in the formation of a new urban complex.<sup>93</sup>

Following the prohibition of money-lending, Jewish settlements in sixteenth-century Tuscan towns were relocated near markets. At Florence and Siena this was ordered in 1570 and 1571, respectively. Even in the 'free' cities of Pisa and Livorno, where Jews were not physically restricted to ghettos, the originally widespread Jewish population became concentrated in specific districts. They tended to settle in already declining buildings, typical of the crowded surrounding of markets, especially near polluting trades such as butchers and in areas characterised by petty delinquency or prostitution. At Florence, such activities survived the

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<sup>92</sup> On Fontana's catafalque for Sixtus V, see the article by M.-A. Visceglia in volume I of this series.

<sup>93</sup> C. Benocci, 'Storia urbanistica dall'antichità al 1848', in E. Guidoni (ed.), *Atlante storico. Roma. Il ghetto* (Roma: Bonsignori, 1993), pp. 9-13; Regione Lazio, *Recupero del ghetto di Roma* (Rome: Multigrafica, 1989), pp. 13-30.

establishment of the ghetto and remained there after its abolition.<sup>94</sup> In the Florentine ghetto housing densities were high and so the daily life of the entire community was highly regulated: permission was required to use public spaces, and rules governed rubbish disposal, the cleaning of public spaces and even some aspects of behaviour within private apartments. Other ghettos were instituted in Tuscany at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Contemporary Jewish documents show unusual sensitivity to material and geographical space. Those recording the sale of habitation rights (*Ius Kazaka*) included detailed descriptions of the house involved: its surroundings, its windows, adjacent houses, the amount of light, passages leading to the place, terraces, etc. Every movement in by a new family directly affected the conditions of other families living nearby. Early modern Italian rabbinical *responsa* and court records document innumerable quarrels over passages, building rights, light, and fresh air. Full of passages and connections between houses where only a local inhabitant could find his way, the ghetto was a dense maze which continuously adapted to the needs of an ever more crowded population.<sup>95</sup> The sense of familiarity with locality and urban space was expressed in the increasing use of family symbols among rich Jewish families, some of whom proudly marked their houses with them. It also extended beyond the ghetto to the city as a whole. Thus, representations of a city's famous monumental buildings appeared in such Jewish artifacts as illuminated *Ketubbahs* (marriage deeds) and in illustrations representing the sacred and longed-for city of Jerusalem.

It would be a mistake to speak of 'the ghetto' as a standard phenomenon. There were different types of ghetto, which can be distinguished according to time (mid-sixteenth century or late seventeenth century), political contexts in different Italian regions (e.g. the Este, the Medici, or the papal states), geographic location (urban margin or central city market), process of construction (by mutual agreement or coercion), and the type of documentation available in municipal archives (Jewish or Christian). Every ghetto changed over several centuries with respect to living conditions, legal position, community life and minority-majority relationships. As a preliminary scheme, we suggest four basic types of ghetto:

- A. Isolationist-mode, not leading necessarily to the erection of a ghetto, but insisting on the separation of Jews and Christians. A clear case would be a ghetto consisting of a single house.<sup>96</sup> Following the precedent of the original ghettos in Venice and Rome, other cities,

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<sup>94</sup> O. Fantozzi Micali, *La segregazione urbana. Ghetti e quartieri ebraici in Toscana* (Florence: Alinea, 1995), pp. 12-13.

<sup>95</sup> D. Calabi, 'Les quartiers juifs en Italie entre XV-XVII siècle. Quelques hypothèses de travail', *Annales. Histoire et Sciences Sociales* 52, no. 4 (1997), pp. 777-98.

<sup>96</sup> R. Segre (ed.), *The Jews in Piedmont*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem: The Israeli Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1986-90), vol. II, no. 1569 on p. 771.

or groups within them (mainly guilds and clergy) put pressure on the local authorities to adopt an isolationist attitude towards local Jews, and separate their living quarters or at least limit their public visibility.

- B. Ghettos in relatively small cities (Urbino, Monferrato, Lugo, Cento, Finale). In many cases, these ghettos were erected in districts already densely inhabited by Jews.
- C. Ghettos in larger cities (Florence, Ferrara, Mantua, Turin). In these cases, passage to a ghetto promoted a substantial increase in community institutions, as well as in cultural and religious exchanges between these Jewish communities and others in the Mediterranean region.
- D. Two unique cases (Rome and Venice, the first ghetto). Both contained large numbers of Jews of different ethnic origins (*Italian, Sephardim, Ashkênazim*), creating multiple community institutions with rich documentation, both internal and external.<sup>97</sup>

Methods for acquiring the living spaces reserved to Jews differ in each case. At Florence, perhaps because of the strength of ducal control, Grand Duke Ferdinand, in exchange for having obtained this new title from the pope, himself purchased the buildings to make into houses for Jewish people and gave a commission to rehabilitate them to his architect Buontalenti. Management of the building was assigned to a ducal office, the *Scrittoio delle Regie Possessioni*. In Siena (as in Venice forty years earlier), the landlords of the *Salicotto* were obliged to expel all Christian inhabitants from their buildings and to rent apartments there to Jews. In this case, management became easier, as the quality of the tenants improved and total rental income increased; moreover, the new inhabitants had to undertake all modifications at their own expense. At Pitigliano and Sorano, Jews acquired ownership of the properties from Christians. Given the impossibility of expelling Jewish tenants, the stability of individual rents was fair to both owners and tenants: in a situation of stable prices, the *jus gazzagà* – under which tenants could sell, resign, donate, or inherit their tenancies – becomes comprehensible. Even unrented houses guaranteed an income to Christian landlords, for in such cases the Commune was compelled to intervene as ‘perpetual tenant of the houses of the ghetto.’ This practice facilitated housing improvements, although it was the Christian owners rather than the Jewish occupants who reaped any long-term benefits. On the other hand, since the houses could not be sold their condition tended to deteriorate and repairs were postponed, because no one had ultimate responsibility for undertaking them.

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<sup>97</sup> See two works by K. Stow, *The Jews of Rome*, 2 vols. (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1995-7) and *Theater of Acculturation. The Roman Ghetto in the Sixteenth Century* (Seattle and London, University of Washington Press, 2001) and D.J. Malkiel, *A Separate Republic. The Mechanics and Dynamics of Venetian Jewish Self-Government, 1607-1624* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1991).



Overall, ghettos in marginal locations (as in Venice or Palermo) seem rarer than those near city centres (Florence, Siena, Ferrara, Padua, Reggio Emilia, Modena, Verona). But even Venice, was a case of relative marginality, since the Senate had originally proposed to settle Jews on the more remote islands of Murano or Giudecca, and since sixteenth-century Venice experienced a general expansion of building in areas near the lagoon.

Another common characteristic of Italian ghettos (already visible, moreover, in medieval Jewish quarters of the Italian and Iberian peninsulas or of France) is the high quantity of their public services, in comparison to other parts of the city. They contained institutions for public assistance and culture, and also infrastructural provision such as drinking water, waste disposal at public and private places, public baths, and specialised shops. Many focused on a central square, a common open space containing wells or fountains, and surrounded by porticos with shops beneath.

Very often, the buildings in ghettos appeared to be of poor quality. At least four factors contribute to an explanation of this: the original location in areas with one or very few landlords and low property values; the process of enlargement of the ghetto, a consequence of its growing density of population up to the late seventeenth century; an increase in the volume of building, accomplished by adding floors and terraces and accompanied by internal transformations and subdivision – processes arising from the strict limits to the available land; the complex juridical titles of possession, which discouraged investment; and, finally, the fact that their decoration (when it exists) is hidden within houses or within sacred places, to the neglect of external appearances. Everywhere, the internal design of synagogues offers eloquent testimony of this attitude to decoration.

All these characteristics became means for the conservation and transmission of Jewish culture within Mediterranean urban textures: physical traces of a distinctive social group, proud of its behaviour.

## **7. First conclusions**

In summary: foreigners in early modern cities, no matter how they were defined, experienced a broad range of receptions. In some cities, they met with close restrictions on their activities, and in certain extreme cases were even obliged to reside in specified neighborhoods. In others, the absence of limitations allowed them to achieve considerable influence and even prominence, as did the Genoese in Seville and Naples, Florentines in Marseille and Lyon, or the Dutch and Portuguese in Rouen and Bordeaux. As privileged outsiders with firm ties to local elites, they carved a vital niche for themselves

by supplying urban markets with goods of distant origin and organizing local bases of international commerce and finance. The more successful among them played the role of what the sociologist Georg Simmel referred to as the "guest who stays", that is, one who takes advantage of the ambiguous position of being at the same time insider and outsider-- in this case, both stranger and local resident.<sup>98</sup>

Still, one wonders to what extent this flattering portrait of foreigners-- as well as the favorable reception extended to them-- proved typical of European cities as a whole. Xenophobia was always a popular political option. To cite merely one pithy example, in the words of a medieval chronicle Prince Spytihnev of Bohemia "earned everyone's admiration because he ordered the expulsion within three days of all Germans from Bohemia wherever they are found, whether rich or poor or pilgrim."<sup>99</sup> Such drastic options found special favor during moments of crisis. During plagues, for instance, outsiders, especially beggars, were often identified as carriers of disease, and thus expelled from cities as a matter of course. And even cities noted for their openness to foreigners witnessed sporadic instances of violence against them. The "Evil May Day" riot against aliens in London in 1517 was merely the most dramatic instance of a rejection of foreigners within an urban popular culture that brought xenophobia to bear on other issues, ranging from the practices of citizenship to the discourse of anti-popery.<sup>100</sup>

The most famous Dutch play of the seventeenth century, Bredero's The Spanish Brabanter (1617), found fault with foreigners from both extremes of the social spectrum. When the author blamed recent immigrants from the Southern Netherlands for threatening local austerity through their pomp and vanity, he was referring to the luxurious habits of the wealthy merchants from Antwerp and other southern cities who were propelled northward by religious conflict. Yet in Act III of the play, a proclamation is read aloud on the Dam ordering the expulsion of the foreign poor, who

get their keep as highwaymen, as thieves, by treacherous attacks, by robbery and plundering...  
[and] godless gambling, dicing, and... brawling, drunk-drinking, and whoring...<sup>101</sup>

The fact that a shrill anti-foreign sentiments should be voiced in what was probably the most cosmopolitan city in western Europe (Antwerp) is rather ironic. It is nevertheless also an indirect testimony to Amsterdam's very openness as an urban society. Other early modern observers were quick to note that it was hardly an accident that commercial, maritime cities wound up developing tolerant

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<sup>98</sup> Wolfgang Kaiser, in Bottin and Calabi, eds., *Étrangers*, p. 310.

<sup>99</sup> Cited by Arnost Klíma in M. Teich and R. Porter, eds., *The National Question in Europe in Historical Context* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 238-9.

<sup>100</sup> Ian W. Archer, in Griffiths and Jenner, eds., *Londinopolis*, p. 42. For the religious sources of Spanish hostility to English merchants, see Marshall, "Other Black Legend".

<sup>101</sup> G.A. Bredero, *The Spanish Brabanter: A Seventeenth-Century Dutch Social Satire in Five Acts*, ed. and trans. H.D. Brumble III (Binghamton NY, 1982), p. 84.

attitudes toward difference. In a memorable passage on the Royal Exchange in London, Voltaire wrote of it as a place where "Jew, Mohammedan and Christian deal with each other as though they were all of the same faith, and only apply the word infidel to people who go bankrupt."<sup>102</sup> More than a few of his contemporaries did not approve of the way transaction led to transience. But their unwillingness to endorse such practices does not gainsay the close connection between economic exchange and cultural change, or the efforts foreigners in cities, along with certain of their hosts, made to bring them together.

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<sup>102</sup> *Letters on England*, trans. and ed. L. Tancock (London, 1980; orig. ed. 1734), p. 41.

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