



GENOA AND VENICE OVERSEAS

PEOPLE, POWER, AND ART,

13TH TO 16TH CENTURY

böhlau

REBECCA MÜLLER, RAFAŁ QUIRINI-POPLAWSKI (EDS.)

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Introduction

The present volume emerges from two conferences, “Genoa and Its Colonies in the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean” (Heidelberg) and “Genoa, Venice, and Their Colonies Compared” (Kraków), both subtitled “Power, People, and Art” and with a chronological scope spanning from the 13th to the 16th century. As art historians, albeit from different fields, we organized these gatherings with the goal of achieving the kind of truly interdisciplinary exchange we considered essential to addressing the challenging topics in question. We solicited papers from historians and art historians who focus their research on the premodern Mediterranean and/or Black Sea, thus encompassing not only Italy but also the Eastern European world, Byzantium, the Golden Horde and other khanates, the Crusader states, and Iberia. While each conference stood on its own thematically, the two interrelated and built upon one another with regard to their methodological and research questions. These overlaps inform the structure of the present volume, and here we take up each conference’s field of inquiry, with its respective focal points and challenges.

Why revisit the issue of Genoa and its colonies? First, one must note that the term “colony” itself is debatable, as it is not found in contemporary sources, and researchers use it to refer to very different entities.¹ As a rule, “colony” in this context refers to entities controlled by authorities of the metropole and having the character of land areas, large cities, and smaller towns and districts. However, entities could equally be acted on by the Banco di San Giorgio, a merchant company (*maona*), or certain powerful families. Moreover, the term “colony” may refer to places with no sovereign metropolitan authority where merchants of a given “nation” established, and visited often for trade purposes, their own *fondaco* or homes. To describe these complex realities, some authors opt for other—more or less successful—terms such as “dominion”, “overseas territory”, “outpost”, or “trading post”.

Almost half a century ago, around 1980, groundbreaking studies appeared from Michel BALARD and Paolo STRINGA.² Though historical research proceeded considerably from

1 This fact is underlined by ORIGONE, who in her overview elucidates the highly divergent realities encompassed by this concept, as well as the varying interests, motivations, and actors on the Genoese side, which included not only the *comune* and individual families but also the bishops of Genoa. See Sandra ORIGONE: Colonies and Colonization, in: A Companion to Medieval Genoa, ed. by Carrie E. BENEŠ, Leiden / Boston 2018, p. 496–520.

2 Michel BALARD: La Romanie génoise (XII^e–début du XV^e siècle), 2 vols., Genoa / Rome 1978 (=“Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria”, n. s., XVIII [XCII]); Paolo STRINGA: Genova e la Liguria nel

that time up until perestroika thanks to the archival materials accessible in the Genoese Archivio di Stato, still today we lack a firm grasp of the architectural and artistic heritage of the Genoese colonies in the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean regions. In part, this research area has remained understudied because these colonies do not formally belong to the cultural heritage of any specific nation-state.³ From the Italian perspective, understandings of this heritage are somewhat more complicated: with the end of the Second World War and the waning of Italian colonial ambitions, these territories were no longer promoted as “Italian heritage abroad” and likewise became a subject of limited academic interest. In contrast to the Eastern Mediterranean, where the major factors hindering access to monuments concern physical distance and transportation infrastructures, the main problems for the Black Sea stem from political and ideological issues, especially with regard to Crimea and the wider northern part of the basin. From the early 20th century up until perestroika and Ukrainian independence (1991), fieldwork in these areas was conducted primarily by Soviet researchers or those from other countries of the “Eastern Bloc”, with any archaeological findings being published mainly in Russian. This literature very rarely reached the West; and reciprocally, the results of Western historical studies on the Black Sea, which tended to be archival in nature, did not often cross the Iron Curtain. Research was thus conducted in parallel, but separately. External conditions changed after 1991, and the flow of people and knowledge slowly gained momentum. Nevertheless, publications by Russian and Ukrainian researchers in Western languages were still few and far between.

Less than a quarter of a century later, with the Russian Federation’s illegal occupation of Crimea, the area became closed to foreign researchers even more drastically than in Soviet times. With the departure of many local researchers (both Russian and Ukrainian) for Russia and Ukraine, research institutions were transformed, and they remain underfunded today.

In Turkey, we are confronted with the difficult presence of Christian figurative decoration in buildings that are now active places of Muslim worship. This is how one should interpret the covering up of the fresco cycle discovered in stages between 1999 and 2012 in the former Dominican church in Pera (today the Arap Camii, or Arab Mosque, in Istanbul). Unfortunately, thus far, documentation of the major discoveries, as well as of the 2012 conservation efforts and any related technical analyses of the paintings, has not been made public.⁴

Mediterraneo. *Insediamenti e culture urbane*, Genoa 1982.

3 See, for example, Jaroslav FOLDA: *Crusader Art. The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1099–1291*, Aldershot / Burlington 2008, p. 15.

4 Rafał QUIRINI-POPLAWSKI: Greek Painters for the Dominicans or Trecento at the Bosphorus? Once Again about the Style and Iconography of the Wall Paintings in the Former Dominican Church of St. Paul in Pera, “Arts”, 8/4 (2019). In: <https://doi.org/10.3390/arts8040131> (25 September 2025); Silvia LEGGIO: Genova a Costantinopoli: la colonia di Galata, la chiesa di S. Domenico e il suo “perduto” ciclo murale, “Arte medievale”, 4/11 (2021), p. 89–140, here p. 89, 119 f.

Epitomizing the common fate of Genoese monuments are the foundation and grave slabs from Caffa and Pera. Following their publication during the interwar period, a selection from Caffa was incorporated into the permanent display of the Feodosia Museum of Antiquities, in Crimea, and the rest have remained stored in a pile outdoors. The Pera slabs, meanwhile, were locked away in the warehouses of the Archaeological Museum in Istanbul. The state of preservation of the Caffa examples deteriorated considerably over time, but in 2016 the pile was unblocked and the slabs cleaned; they are currently being researched by Elena YAROVAYA and Oleksandr DZHANOV, while the slabs from Pera are being republished by Hasan Sercan SAĞLAM.⁵

“E tanti sun li Zenoexi / e per lo mondo sì destexi, / che und’eli van o stan / un’atra Zenoa ge fan”.⁶ We took this anonymous and often-cited rhyme, written in Genoa at the end of the 13th century, as a sort of motto for our first conference. The term *un’atra*—with its two possible interpretations, either differentiation or imitation/duplication—corresponds to avenues of research on the colonies in question, and not just the Genoese ones. To what extent were they outposts, propagators of Latin civilization in the East? To what extent did they imitate and diffuse the organizational and cultural patterns of the metropolis or, more broadly, of Italy? And to what extent did they adapt to local conditions? For example, should we consider Pera, Caffa, and Chios to have been Genoese cities, or rather Crimean or Greek ones? Indeed, do they belong to the history, art history, and culture of Genoa or rather to those of Byzantium, Crimea and Chios Island? Are such lines of inquiry justified at all?

Studies on the Genoese colonies traverse today’s national boundaries and even cultural-confessional frameworks. The topic thus demands an approach informed by trans-cultural studies, focusing on the processes of interaction, circulation, and transformation in lieu of a dichotomy of center-periphery.⁷ In this regard, we are dealing with something

5 Elena Aleksandrovna YAROVAYA: *Novoye o genuezskom lapidarii Kryma*, “Trudy Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha”, 112 (2022) (=Tsar’gradskiy sbornik: K XXIV Mezhdunarodnomu kongressu vizantinistov. Venetsiya, Paduya, 22–27 avgusta 2022 goda), p. 123–136; Oleksandr DZHANOV: *Nove ta stare u vyvchenni pam’yatok monumental’noyi epihrafiky Pivnichnoho Prychornomor’ya doby pizn’oho Seredn’ovichchya*, “Ucrainica Mediaevalia”, 5 (2023), p. 166–262, here p. 236–261; Hasan Sercan SAĞLAM: *Mission to the Istanbul Archaeology Museums: Rediscovery of the Genoese Inventory*, “ERC GRAPH-EAST”, (2023). In: <https://doi.org/10.58079/5qy> (15 May 2023); Hasan Sercan SAĞLAM: *The Arap Mosque Tombstones’ Long Life* (Galata, Istanbul): Architectural Reusage, Damnatio Memoriae, Neglect, in: *Sepulture Medievali (IV–XV Secolo). Spazi, opere, scritture / Mediaeval Burials (4th–15th centuries). Spaces, Artwork, Writing*, vol. 1, ed. by Fabio CODEN, Milan 2024, p. 202–229.

6 Anonimo Genovese: *Poesie*. Edizione critica, introduzione, commento e glossario, ed. by Luciana COCITO, Rome 1970, p. 566. “And so many are the Genoese, and so scattered throughout the world, that wherever they come and settle, they create another/a different Genoa for themselves”.

7 At this point, reference can only be made to a single volume in the rapidly evolving field of trans-cultural studies; it provides a systematic discussion of the key methodological concepts and terms: Laila

that exceeds the “pure” diversity of nations and religions. For example, Armenians and Circassians constituted a certain part of the local Catholic clergy along the northern Black Sea. And similarly, we can challenge the very use of the term “Genoese” in the “colonial” context and identify a high degree of fluidity in concepts such as “Genoese building” and “Genoese work”.⁸ The issue remains, therefore, to what extent the adjective “Genoese” can be associated with, say, an Armenian *khachkar* in Caffa or “Byzantine-style” frescoes in the Nestorian Church in Famagusta.

It seems that one of the characteristic features of Genoese colonies was the tendency to employ local stone masons, artists, and craftsmen of different nationalities and confessions, resulting in lively, cross-cultural artistic exchange—not only among Latin and Byzantine artistic traditions but also drawing elements from Armenian, Islamic, and Mongol/Tatar traditions. Such artistic exchange affected not only works of art made by the Latins but also the activity of the representatives of other nations and religions. These phenomena are especially well represented by the monuments extant in Crimea and on Cyprus.

In terms of approach, the second conference centered comparison, expressly between Venice and Genoa. With Venice, we chose a second major player in the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions: another maritime republic, and one with which Genoa had a highly complex relationship. Taking account of the essential similarities between Venice and Genoa in terms of topography and history (both port cities, defined by their position on the Mediterranean and their extended network) only makes their differences more striking, in politics and economics, art and architecture—to name just the main fields of interest.

The few comparative studies between Genoa and Venice have come primarily from the discipline of history. Indeed, a comparative approach is perhaps most firmly anchored in the theory of historical science: as a systematic comparison of two or more historical entities, with the aim of not merely describing but also explaining. The tendency of historical

ABU-ER-RUB et al. (eds.): *Engaging Transculturality: Concepts, Key Terms, Case Studies*, London / New York 2019.

8 Problems of identification in the context of “Genoese art” in Famagusta have been highlighted in Justine M. ANDREWS: *The Role of Genoa in the Visual Culture of Famagusta*, in: *Famagusta*, vol. 1: *Art and Architecture*, ed. by Annemarie Weyl CARR, Turnhout 2014, p. 315–337, here p. 330–332. To some extent, a similar ambiguity pertains to the concepts of “a Genoese” or “a person of Genoese nationality”, categories which stem in part from the Genoese authorities’ naturalization of Byzantine subjects—on a large-scale, and mainly in Constantinople—who were not necessarily of Greek nationality; see David JACOBY: *Between the Imperial Court and the Western Maritime Powers: the Impact of Naturalizations on the Economy of Late Byzantine Constantinople*, in: *The Byzantine Court: Source of Power and Culture. Papers from the Second International Sevgi Gönül Byzantine Studies Symposium, Istanbul, 21–23 June 2010*, ed. by Ayla ÖDEKAN / Nevra NECİPOĞLU / Engin AKYÜREK, Istanbul 2013, p. 95–103.

comparison to highlight differences, “exceptionalism”, or *Sonderwege* (special paths) has led to much criticism of the method, namely as one that places too strong an emphasis on national identities. Within the context of transnational history, historians such as Hartmut Kaelble have argued that a comparative approach remains crucial, however.⁹ Of course, comparison is quite fundamental for art history—perhaps even more so than for the field of history—in the form of the method and practice of *vergleichendes Sehen* (visual comparison). Our discipline attributes a particular analytical acuity to this act of side-by-side viewing. But this method—also often disparaged in its applications—usually refers to specific stylistic or iconographic comparisons.¹⁰ Broad-based historical comparisons remain significantly rarer in the field of art history.¹¹

If we look at the history of scholarly comparisons between Genoa and Venice, a sort of starting point comes with Roberto S. LOPEZ’s short and succinct article of 1970, which contrasted the attitude of the Genoese and Venetian elites toward their own communities. Its title “deux styles, une réussite” has become a much-cited formula, which—with the addition of a question mark—lends itself as the heading to one of the major sections of this volume. Another landmark text is Elisabeth CROUZET-PAVAN’s 1994 essay stressing the fundamentally different understanding, between Genoa and Venice, of time in relation to one’s past, as well as of the functions of historiography.¹² The most comprehensive historical comparison of the two cities appeared twenty years ago, with the conference volume co-edited by Gherardo ORTALLI and Dino PUNCUH, in which Giorgio ZORDAN and Antonella ROVERE contrasted the cities’ understanding of the “comune” and their

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- 9 See Hartmut KAEUBLE: Der historische Vergleich, in: Handbuch Methoden der Geschichtswissenschaft, ed. by Stefan HAAS, Wiesbaden 2023, p. 1–13, http://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-27798-7_13-1 (25 September 2025).
 - 10 Recent critical discussions of the method and its history are offered in Marc BAYARD: Les enjeux du comparatisme en histoire de l’art, in: L’histoire de l’art et le comparatisme. Les horizons du détour, ed. by ID., Rome / Paris 2007, p. 9–21; Lena BADER: Bricolage mit Bildern. Motive und Motivationen vergleichenden Sehens, in: Vergleichendes Sehen, ed. by EAD. / Martin GAIER / Falk WOLF, Munich 2010, p. 19–42; and Jaś ELSNER (ed.): Comparativism in Art History, London / New York 2017.
 - 11 For a fruitful comparative analysis of the artistic production of three cities within the framework of their political and socio-economic development, see Diana NORMAN: The Three Cities Compared: Patrons, Politics and Art, in: Siena, Florence and Padua. Art, Society and Religion 1280–1400, vol 1: Interpretative Essays, ed. by EAD., New Haven 1991, p. 7–12. Meanwhile, the volume Sergio BERTELLI / Nicolai RUBINSTEIN / Craig Hugh SMYTH (eds.): Florence and Venice: Comparisons and Relations, Acts of two Conferences at Villa I Tatti in 1976–1977, vol. 1, Florence 1979 (as such, not the individual contributions) was harshly criticized for a lack of methodological rigor in its comparative approach; see Anthony MOLHO’s review in “Renaissance Quarterly”, 35/1 (1982), p. 72–74.
 - 12 Roberto S. LOPEZ: Venise et Gênes: deux styles, une réussite, “Diogenes”, 71 (1970), p. 43–51; Élisabeth CROUZET-PAVAN: Gênes et Venise: discours historiques et imaginaires de la cité, in: Le forme della propaganda politica nel Due e nel Trecento, ed. by Paolo CAMMAROSANO, Rome 1994, p. 427–453.

bureaucratic and administrative structures, respectively.¹³ And yet, significant analogies are suggested for the way in which Genoa and Venice established their respective systems of colonies: Michel BALARD argued against “il contrasto lopeziano tra le due città”, observing that the two cities devised similar solutions to address problems they had in common.¹⁴

Publications that investigate the relationship between the two maritime republics and other foreign powers also took this comparative approach.¹⁵ Indeed, significant analogies have been put forward in terms of how Genoa and Venice established their territories, colonies, and trading posts in the coastal areas of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. But the many likenesses only lend force to the question of why the territorial systems of Genoa and Venice ultimately diverged from one another in many respects. A similar issue is posed by material culture, in light of the differences in the architectural and artistic features of their colonies.

This volume aims to re-evaluate the comparative approach and to explicitly broaden its purview to the material and visual cultures of each city and its related territories. The field of historical studies has far from exhausted the advantages of such a comparison between the two cities, in their multiplicity. For instance, while ORTALLI and PUNCUH’s publication addressed political, institutional, and trade issues, important administrative and fiscal aspects have yet to be resolved, and a comparison of each city’s relationship with other empires and powers likewise remains open for discussion. Particularly fruitful in this volume is the prospect of setting such questions into an interdisciplinary dialogue

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- 13 Giorgio ZORDAN: *La nascita dei due comuni: proposte metodologiche per un confronto*, in: *Genova, Venezia, il Levante nei secoli XII–XIV*, ed. by Gherardo ORTALLI / Dino PUNCUH, Genoa 2001, p. 29–57, esp. p. 53–57; Antonella ROVERE: *L’organizzazione burocratica: uffici e documentazione*, in: *ibid.*, p. 103–128, esp. p. 104, p. 128, though she also draws attention to important parallels, see esp. p. 123.
 - 14 Michel BALARD: *L’amministrazione genovese e veneziana nel Mediterraneo orientale*, in: *ibid.*, p. 201–212, here p. 202 (citation). Comparative studies treating a defined and limited set of questions have contributed importantly to research on the area; e.g., Benjamin Z. KEDAR: *Merchants in Crisis. Genoese and Venetian Men of Affairs and the Fourteenth-Century Depression*, New Haven / London 1976; Sandra ORIGONE: *Genova e Venezia al tempo della Quarta Crociata*, in: *Quarta Crociata. Venezia – Bisanzio – Impero Latino*, ed. by Gherardo ORTALLI / Giorgio RAVEGNANI / Peter SCHREINER, Venice 2005, p. 97–124; Simone LOMBARDO: *La Croce dei Mercanti: Genova, Venezia e la Crociata Mediterranea nel tardo Trecento (1348–1402)*, Paderborn 2023, which also adopts a socio-historical and eco-historical approach; and Jane L. CRAWSHAW: *Cleaning Up Renaissance Italy. Environmental Ideals and Urban Practice in Genoa and Venice*, Oxford 2023. Meanwhile, more wide-reaching comparative efforts seem less productive; e.g., Gino BENVENUTI: *Le repubbliche marinare. Amalfi, Pisa, Genova e Venezia*, Rome 1989.
 - 15 Heymann CHONE: *Die Handelsbeziehungen Kaiser Friedrichs II. zu den Seestädten Venedig*, Pisa, Genua, Berlin 1902; Daphne PENNA: *Similar Problems, Similar Solutions? Byzantine Chrysobulls and Crusader Charters on Legal Issues Regarding the Italian Maritime Republics*, in: *Byzantium in Dialogue with the Mediterranean*, ed. by Daniëlle SLOOTJES / Mariëtte VERHOEVEN, Leiden / Boston 2019, p. 162–181.

with art and architecture: How did conflict, diplomacy, and trade relate to material culture, both within the cities themselves and in their colonies? When it comes to art and architecture, one discerns fundamental differences between Genoa and Venice in terms of style, the biographies of the actors involved, and the quantity and quality of production. How might the perceived incomparability between contemporaneous “Venetian painting” and “Genoese painting” relate to political and economic realities? Though a profusion of literature from various disciplines exists for the Mediterranean—achieving a “systematische Mittelmeerforschung”, with a depth (and volume) significant enough to be compiled in a handbook¹⁶—investigating such questions for the region of the Black Sea is a relatively new undertaking. To build up this body of knowledge, the authors were asked to carry out firsthand comparative analyses of their subject area. To this end, only speakers who have worked on both Genoa and Venice were invited to the corresponding conference.¹⁷

The volume follows different actors across its four thematic sections, seeking to identify their role in cross-cultural interactions and transfers. It attends to a range of ethnic, linguistic, confessional, and social groups in the colonies, draws similarities between the colonies and the Ligurian “motherland”, and observes differences among colonial “regions”. In the art-historical contributions, these threads connect to material culture and its specific role in such interactions.

The structure of the volume acknowledges the outstanding significance of Crimea, examining this from both a historical and an art-historical point of view in the dedicated section “**A Hub for People and Art**”. Its metropolis, Caffa, armed with extensive fortifications and crucial for the defense of Genoese trade and possessions in the Black Sea region, was protected and defended by mercenaries. Based on approximately five thousand names, Michel BALARD provides an overview of the geographical and ethnic origins, professions, and wages of these men. His contribution sheds light on the multiethnic reality of Caffa. Complementing this broader analysis with a microhistorical perspective, Laura BALLETO presents a source-based study of the lawsuit against a notary from Genoa who worked in Caffa for the Genoese commune and, in 1469, was accused of having signed a (possibly forged) petition against a Jew acting as a representative of the commune. The notary defended himself against this charge by claiming that it had been nothing more than a Carnival prank. Through the legal arguments and counterarguments presented, the essay provides insight into the situation of Genoese citizens in Caffa and their exchanges with their homeland.

16 See Mihran DABAG et al. (eds.): *Handbuch der Mediterranistik. Systematische Mittelmeerforschung und disziplinäre Zugänge*, Paderborn 2015.

17 This qualification placed a strong emphasis on the comparative approach, unlike in volumes of papers that discuss the cities individually; e.g., Ottavio BANTI (ed.): *Amalfi, Genova, Pisa, Venezia: la cattedrale e la città nel Medioevo. Aspetti religiosi, istituzionali e urbanistici*, Ospedaletto 1993.

The next two contributions are art-historical analyses of Crimea and Caffa, respectively, with an emphasis on Armenian artists and the remarkable mobility of artisans and craftsmen, objects, and artistic forms. Patrick DONABÉDIAN examines the Armenian communities that emerged in Crimea from the late 13th century on. He outlines the artistic activities of these craftsmen, focusing on wood and stone carvings (including *khachkars*), along with works in stucco, and the exchange processes under Genoese rule. Rafał QUIRINI-POPEŁAWSKI traces artistic transfer from the Genoese colonies in Crimea to Central and Eastern Europe and their reception. He discredits the common assumption that the Genoese colonies served as centers for the dissemination of Latin and principally Italian culture, demonstrating the often dominant role of Armenian, Greek, and even Mongol artistic features or elements. Via the colonies, Armenian artistic traditions from the Crimean centers extended their influence into Central Europe and the Armenian diaspora, in places such as Lviv.

The comparative approach evident in the individual contributions is explored in the second section, “**Deux styles, une réussite?**”, turning Roberto LOPEZ’s famous formula into a question. Antonio MUSARRA tackles the desideratum of a comparative approach in the field of administration and fiscal policy. He examines the relationship between rising war expenditures, the development of the tax system, and political-institutional experiments in Genoa and Venice in the 13th and particularly the 14th century. In addition to economic-historical questions, broader social-historical issues are addressed, such as concepts of the public sphere, the significance of the *bonum comune*, and the agency of pressure groups. Georg CHRIST analyzes the diplomatic relations of Genoa and Venice, along with each city’s military conflicts with third parties (e.g., with Peter I of Lusignan, the Mamluks, and Byzantium), posing the question: Were Genoa and Venice truly always antagonists, as is often assumed? Based on an extensive evaluation of sources, chiefly for the second half of the 14th century, he demonstrates that the cities shared interests, adversaries, and alliances. Lorenzo PUBBLICI pursues a similar line of inquiry in examining the actions and responses of the two maritime powers in relation to developments in the Mongol Empire. He traces how, notably in centers such as Tana (modern-day Azov, Russia)—a key trading post on routes to China—actors reacted to rapidly shifting power dynamics and dealt with uncertainty and instability. This analysis reveals the dynamics between commercial and political interests, in addition to the respective impacts on residents, merchants, and shipowners. Nikolas JASPERT directs his attention to the Western Mediterranean and the Iberian Peninsula in a contribution that compares the presence of Genoese and Venetian trading companies, brotherhoods, and other communities on Iberian soil. Taking the economic expansion of both maritime republics as a starting point, he examines the social developments and configurations resulting from this expansion. The author highlights the differences between the actors and in the strategies employed by the Genoese and Venetians, as well as by the Muslim and Christian rulers of the Iberian kingdoms. In addition to

textual sources, the author utilizes material culture—such as ceramics, panel painting, and sculpture—to support his analysis. His findings challenge the notion of a clear East-West division in the spheres of influence of the two republics.

Two art-historical essays conclude this longest section of the volume. Julian GARDNER, in a comprehensive text covering the period from the 13th to the early 14th century, traces the historical, social, and political deployments of Genoa and Venice. On this basis, he explores how urban planning, architecture, and the visual arts developed differently in the two maritime republics and functioned as a means of self-representation for the respective elites, both internally and externally. Building on GARDNER's discussion of the main churches of both cities, namely the cathedral of S. Lorenzo in Genoa and the doge's church of S. Marco in Venice, Rebecca MÜLLER examines their facades with regard to the materials used, including spolia. She discusses the extent to which these materials—especially in light of their origins—carry a symbolic significance, as has been widely argued, particularly in the case of S. Marco.

Art and material culture, both as a driving force and as a result of the multifaceted and complex exchange processes between Genoa and Venice in the Eastern Mediterranean, are examined in the third section, “**Art Overseas**”. Starting from the political and economic connections between Genoa and Byzantium, along with their antagonisms, Holger KLEIN analyzes the reception of Byzantine art in Genoa over an extended period. This reception, in its breadth, reflects the diverse realities of artistic transfer, including the import of objects, the migration of artists, and the circumstances of the creation of works in Genoa itself. Gianluca AMERI approaches the same topic from a perspective that is at once narrower and broader. Focusing on the late 13th and especially the 14th century, he traces the import of relics, panel paintings, treasury objects, and secular metalwork into Genoa from the regions around the Black Sea, mainly from the “contact zones” with the Mongol Empire and Byzantium. By tracing their artistic reception, he demonstrates the significance these works held in Genoa. Michele BACCI addresses panel painting in Genoa and Venice and the medium's multilayered reception processes. Not least due to their bonds with Byzantine art, Venetian and even more so Genoese art of the 13th to 15th centuries long received little scholarly attention, amid the prevailing Tuscan-centered art historiography. This orientation has now completely shifted, as researchers are increasingly captivated by the potential of “hybridity” as a lens through which to reapproach artistic production. Against the backdrop of this turn in scholarship, the author investigates perspectives contemporary to the artworks themselves, including to what extent their stylistic differences from Florentine art were recognized and reflected upon at the time.

An exceptionally complex cultural landscape is represented by Cyprus. Justine ANDREWS explores patronage by Genoese families, primarily buildings and their fresco programs in Famagusta in the 14th century. She discusses the choices made in favor (and disfavor) of certain architectural forms and building traditions. According to ANDREWS, these artistic

adoptions cannot be interpreted unilaterally as signs of either oppression or assimilation; rather, a cosmopolitan art of high quality was preferred in general, irrespective of the ethnic affiliations involved. The traces of Genoese families in the Eastern Mediterranean are also taken up by Ioanna KOUKOUNI in her study of sculpture from the 14th to 16th centuries on Chios Island. She discusses this body of work as the outcome of diverse processes of artistic reception, expanding beyond the political and economic-historical perspectives that prevail in the literature. Romedio SCHMITZ-ESSER's comparative study has an even broader geographical scope. Situating Venice's and Genoa's relationships with their territories and trading posts in the broader context of the exchange between China and the Latin West, he explores the role played by these strategic points—especially those in the Black Sea—for both maritime powers. His sources include travel accounts, merchants' handbooks, inscriptions, and material culture, with a focus on Marian imagery, representations of Bodhisattvas, and tombstones created by Chinese artists for Latin communities in Yangzhou.

The topic of Genoa and its colonies also carries elements of myth. For example, the myth of the hundreds of fortresses of Genoese origin still persists today—gaining new relevance with the not one, but two “tentative lists” of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.¹⁸ Thus, it is particularly topical to examine the post-medieval perception of the Genoese “colonies” and their status as cultural heritage, and not least to engage with the very terminology of the “colony”. These topics are discussed in the final section of the volume, **“Perception of the Genoese ‘Colonies’ and ‘Heritage’”**. Nicole KANÇAL-FERRARI explores the selective modern reception, and the related “narration”, of certain sites and historical events in Crimea ostensibly associated with the Genoese presence and the rule of the Golden Horde in the 14th and 15th centuries. Based on the report of Marcin Broniowski, a Polish envoy from 1578, and the famous travelogue of Evliya Çelebi, an Ottoman writer from the mid-17th century, her study speaks to constructions of history and identity. Hasan Sercan SAĞLAM offers a critical reevaluation of fortresses from the 13th to 15th centuries along the Anatolian Aegean coast—such as Foça, Çandarlı, Kuşadası, and Çeşme—that have traditionally been considered Genoese foundations or refoundations. By applying architectural research methods, archaeology, and a critical re-reading of contemporary sources and later descriptions, he demonstrates that most of these structures do not in fact date to the Genoese period, a finding that is particularly urgent in light of an ideologically charged contemporary debate about Genoese heritage in Anatolia. Against the backdrop of colonial discourse surrounding the former maritime powers in 20th-century Italy, Carlo TAVIANI examines the discourses

18 See the entries in the “tentative list”: Trading Posts and Fortifications on Genoese Trade Routes. From the Mediterranean to the Black Sea (Ukraine / the Autonomous Republic of Crimea). In: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5575/> (16 May 2025), and: Trading Posts and Fortifications on Genoese Trade Routes from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea (Turkey). In: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/6468/> (16 May 2025).

around the term and concept of “colony”. In turn, he analyzes the role of the Casa di San Giorgio in the governance of Genoese territories in the Black Sea region, including how the papacy perceived these possessions. His study highlights the specific activities of the Casa di San Giorgio in the Black Sea, which differed from its functions in other Genoese-controlled regions like Liguria, Lunigiana, and Corsica. These observations lead the author to a compelling differentiation in the use of the term “colony”.

One of our original intentions in conceiving the conferences was to bring together Western researchers with those from Eastern Europe. However, this aspiration became increasingly difficult to realize following the Russian attack on Ukraine in February 2022. We postponed the first conference, planned for April 2022—but the war did not come to an end, and it still has not. As a consequence, our Ukrainian colleagues were unable to attend either conference; nor could we, as a German-Polish cooperation, uphold the invitation to our Russian colleagues, given the sanctions put in place in response to the Russian Federation’s aggression. These circumstances were saddening and a loss for everyone involved, and they were to the detriment of the intended purpose and scope of each gathering.

At the same time, this collaborative endeavor has drawn crucial support from many individuals and entities, for which the editors are profoundly grateful. The conference in Heidelberg was made possible by generous funding from the Fritz Thyssen Foundation, while the one in Kraków was enabled by a grant from the Faculty of History under the Strategic Program Excellence Initiative at the Jagiellonian University. We express our sincere gratitude to Stanisław Sroka, the dean of the Faculty of History of Jagiellonian University, for awarding this grant and for sharing welcoming words at the conference. Moreover, we would like to acknowledge Andrzej Szczerski, the director of the National Museum in Kraków, for making this venue available to us—with the wonderful atmosphere of the Bishop Erazm Ciołek Palace—and for his cordial welcoming address. We owe a special debt to the speakers and chairs of the two conferences.¹⁹

We relied on many helpful hands in the course of our preparatory and organizational efforts in Heidelberg and Kraków. Notably, we thank Kathrin Berghoff, Maëva Lacotte, and Annika Zschoch in Heidelberg, and Bartosz Doniec, Natalia Gala, and Wojciech Smoła in Kraków. Our heartfelt appreciation to Konrad Waniewski for assistance in the preparation of the first conference and major contributions to the organization of the second. We benefited greatly, at various stages, from Lara Frentrop’s support. We would like

19 We wish to gratefully acknowledge the authors of the two conference presentations not included in this volume: Stephan Westphalen: *The Frescoes of the Arap Camii (former Dominican Church of St. Paul in Pera)*; and Aygül Ağır: *Da Costantinopoli a Istanbul gli insediamenti dei Veneziani e dei Genovesi: uno sguardo comparativo sul contesto urbanistico*.

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A Hub for People and Art: Crimea as a Case Study

Les mercenaires de Caffa aux XIV^e–XV^e siècles

« Ianuensis civitas in extremo Europe » : en utilisant cette expression pour désigner le comptoir génois de Caffa (auj. Feodosya) sur la côte de Crimée, le chancelier du *Banco di San Giorgio* sous-entendait que la ville occupait une position de frontière entre la civilisation occidentale et la chrétienté, représentée par les colonies italiennes en mer Noire, et le monde extérieur des peuples barbares menaçant sans cesse les avant-postes chrétiens. De l'Antiquité jusqu'à la fin du Moyen Âge, la côte de Crimée a en effet toujours constitué une frontière entre le monde des tribus nomades du nord et de l'est des régions pontiques, cherchant à gagner les empires sédentaires du sud, et les pays méditerranéens, qui, en établissant des colonies sur les rivages pontiques, s'efforçaient de trouver un accès aux produits agricoles du nord de la mer (Fig. 1, Fig. 2).¹

Mais qu'est-ce au juste qu'une frontière au Moyen Âge ? Non point une ligne continue tracée sur une carte, mais plutôt, selon Pierre TOUBERT², une zone floue contestée entre Occidentaux et Tatars, de sorte que Caffa, située sur la frange de la côte criméenne, sur une baie ouverte communiquant facilement avec la plaine intérieure de la péninsule, est mal protégée contre le flux des invasions venant des steppes asiatiques, et doit donc recourir pour sa survie à une défense solide, tours et remparts pourvus d'une importante garnison composée essentiellement de professionnels de la guerre. Certes le consul génois, en charge de la ville, aurait pu recourir à ses concitoyens établis à Caffa depuis les années 1275,³ une minorité parmi les populations de la ville. Mais les Génois expatriés, surtout des marchands, étaient peu enclins à accomplir un service militaire, même s'il s'agissait de garder les murailles la nuit. Les autorités génoises étaient donc contraintes de recruter des mercenaires à grands frais, de leur fournir armement, logement et solde régulière et de s'assurer aussi de leur fidélité (Fig. 3).

Mais peut-on parler vraiment de mercenaires, au sens où l'entend par exemple Yves GARLAN qui les définit comme « des soldats professionnels dont la conduite est avant tout

1 Georges I. BRATIANU : La mer Noire. Des origines à la conquête ottomane, Munich 1969 ; Dimitri OBOLENSKY : The Byzantine Commonwealth. Eastern Europe 500–1453, Londres 1971.

2 Pierre TOUBERT : Frontière et frontières : un objet historique, „Castrum“, 4 (1992), p. 9–17.

3 Michel BALARD : La Romanie génoise (XII^e–début du XV^e siècle), 2 vol., Gênes / Rome 1978, p. 114–118 ; Michel BALARD : Caffa e il mondo tataro, in : Imperya. Problemi Vnutrennei i Vnechnei Kolonizatsii, éd. Yuriy Aleksandrovich PETROV, Moscou 2019, p. 41–73.

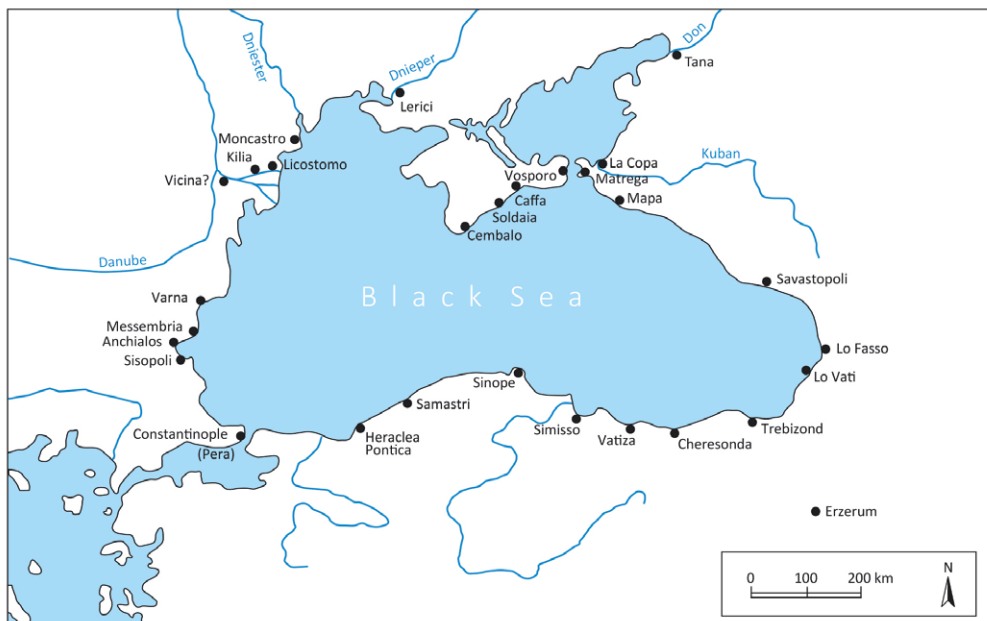


Fig. 1 La mer Noire aux XIV^e et XV^e siècles

dictée non par leur appartenance à une communauté politique, mais par l'appât du gain »⁴ ? La garnison de Caffa, composée à la fois d'une forte proportion de Ligures, d'habitants du lieu, le plus souvent artisans se louant pour une courte période, et de véritables professionnels de la guerre, venus parfois de fort loin, ne correspond pas strictement à cette définition. Elle comprend six catégories d'hommes d'armes, dont la distinction n'est pas toujours aisée, d'autant que parfois le scribe de la *Massaria* (Trésorerie) semble confondre les catégories de stipendiés (Fig. 4).

Les *placerii* sont des employés des autorités génoises locales, chargés d'organiser des enchères ou de représenter le consul de Caffa pour de courtes missions ; leur nombre ne dépasse pas 2 % de notre échantillon. Les *provisionati* désignent des délégués chargés d'affaires par le consul ; ils représentent 16 % de l'effectif examiné. Les *orguxii*, à l'origine des cosaques, voire même des brigands, forment la suite armée du consul, soit 9 % de la liste. Les *servientes* sont de simples soldats et composent 10 % de l'échantillon, tandis que les *socii*, avec 56 % forment le gros de la garnison, sous le commandement des *conestabiles*. Les

4 Définition reprise par Philippe CONTAMINE : La guerre au Moyen Âge, Paris 1980, p. 205. Sur la distinction entre stipendiés, mercenaires et membres d'armées nationales, voir Kelly DEVRIES : Medieval Mercenaries. Methodology, Definitions and Problems, in : Mercenaries and Paid Men. The Mercenary Identity in the Middle Ages, éd. John FRANCE, Leyde 2008, p. 43–60.



Fig. 2 Plan russe de Caffa (1784)



Fig. 3 Les murailles de Caffa

custodes nocturni, comme le nom l'indique, veillent la nuit sur les murailles de la ville ; ils ne représentent que 4 % de la liste. C'est donc par commodité qu'est ici employé le mot « mercenaire » pour désigner cet ensemble composite que les registres de la *Massaria* de Caffa nous font connaître : à la fois des recrues locales et des hommes de guerre venus de toute l'Europe.

Dès la nomination, vers 1280, d'un consul et d'une administration pour gérer leur comptoir, les autorités génoises ont vraisemblablement dû imposer au trésorier de Caffa la rédaction d'un registre des recettes et des dépenses publiques, tenu en partie double, le titulaire étant contraint de le rapporter à Gênes à sa sortie de charge. Malheureusement les premiers registres de la *Massaria* ne nous sont pas parvenus, soit en raison d'événements militaires, soit à la suite des bombardements de Gênes en 1684 par la flotte de Louis XIV, qui ont provoqué d'importants dommages dans les archives de la ville. Il ne subsiste aujourd'hui que 40 registres, souvent incomplets, le premier datant de 1374, le dernier de 1472, soit trois ans avant la prise de la ville par les Ottomans.⁵ Plus ou moins annuels, et de tailles très différentes, ces registres comportent les rôles des mercenaires, mais leur discontinuité dans le temps ne permet pas de suivre, année par année, le processus de recrutement. En effet, pour la fin du XIV^e siècle, n'ont été conservés que trois registres ; on passe ensuite à

5 Archives d'État de Gênes (abrégé ASG): San Giorgio, Caffa Massaria, n° 1225 à 1262.