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Encounters in Renaissance Venice: Exchange, Communication, and Interaction between Jerusalem-Bound Pilgrims and Local Residents

by *Sandra Toffolo*

ABSTRACT

During the Renaissance, Venice was the main place of departure for most Western European pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem. They often had to spend several weeks in the city, waiting for departure of the ships. During this time they interacted with a wide range of people living in the city. This article focuses on different types of such interactions between Jerusalem-bound pilgrims and Venetian residents. It analyzes how these could come about, how they could function, and what their consequences could be. This can provide us with insight into multiple aspects of early modern mobility. For instance, it sheds light on some of the urban spaces where foreign pilgrims and local inhabitants could interact. Factors such as language and social status could affect the pilgrims' activities in the city. Furthermore, encounters between pilgrims and Venetian residents could play a crucial role in the circulation of objects and ideas. Analysis of these moments of encounter can therefore contribute to our understanding of early modern mobility.

Keywords: pilgrims – Venice – mobility – Renaissance – encounter

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1. Introduction

Early modern Italy was full of people traversing the peninsula, for many different reasons. During their journeys they encountered and interacted with a variety of people – those spending their entire lives in the same place, but also migrants and other travelers. Such encounters could bring people from diverse geographical, linguistic, social, ethnic, and religious backgrounds in contact with each other, help circulate the latest news and ideas, and move objects from one place to another. In short, mobility in early modern Italy could have a profound impact on both foreign travelers and the people they encountered along the way. Analyzing this interaction can provide us with important insight into the dynamics of both mobility and transnational exchange.

The specific case of a group of travelers, namely Jerusalem-bound pilgrims, in Renaissance Venice provides an excellent opportunity to study this issue in depth¹. During much of the Middle Ages there had been several places where Western European pilgrims could embark for the Holy

¹ On Venice's role in pilgrimages to the Holy Land in the Renaissance, see in particular: B. Arbel, *Daily Life on Board Venetian Ships: The Evidence of Renaissance Travelogues and Diaries*, in G. Ortalli - A. Sopracasa (eds.), *Rapporti mediterranei, pratiche documentarie, presenze veneziane: Le reti economiche e culturali (XIV-XVI secolo)*, Venezia, Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, 2017, pp. 183-219; E. Ashtor, *Venezia e il pellegrinaggio in Terrasanta nel basso medioevo*, in «Archivio storico italiano», 143, 1985, pp. 197-223; M. Casini, *Renaissance Venice as the Pilgrims' Ritual Theatre*, in «Ateneo veneto», 207, 2020, pp. 9-31; N. Chareyron, *Venise porte de l'Orient pour les pèlerins du saint voyage à Jérusalem (1350-1550)*, in «Bollettino del centro interuniversitario di ricerche sul viaggio in Italia», 18, 1997, pp. 3-23; É. Crouzet-Pavan, *Récits, images et mythes: Venise dans l'iter hiérosolomytain (XIVe-XVe siècles)*, in «Mélanges de l'École française de Rome: Moyen Âge, temps modernes», 96, 1984, 1, pp. 489-535; R.C. Davis - G.R. Marvin, *Venice, the Tourist Maze: A Cultural Critique of the World's Most Touristed City*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2004, pp. 13-29; A. Denke, *Venedig als Station und Erlebnis auf den Reisen der Jerusalempilger im späten Mittelalter*, Remshalden, Verlag Manfred Hennecke, 2001; D. Howard, *Venice as Gateway to the Holy Land: Pilgrims as Agents of Transmission*, in P. Davies - D. Howard - W. Pullan (eds.), *Architecture and Pilgrimage 1000-1500: Southern Europe and Beyond*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2013, pp. 87-110; D. Jacoby, *Pèlerinage médiéval et sanctuaires de Terre Sainte: La perspective vénitienne*, in «Ateneo veneto», 173, 1986, pp. 27-58; M.M. Newett, *Introduction*, in M.M. Newett (ed.), *Canon Pietro Casola's Pilgrimage to Jerusalem*, Manchester, At the University Press, 1907, pp. 1-113; B. Saletti, *La logistica dei pellegrinaggi in Terrasanta nei secoli XIV e XV*, in «Nuova rivista storica», 100, 2016, 2, pp. 421-481; P. Stabel, *Venetie in de ogen van pelgrims: Stedelijkheid en stadservaring in laatmiddeleeuwse reisverhalen uit de Nederlanden*, in «Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis», 122, 2009, 2, pp. 134-147; U. Tucci, *I servizi marittimi veneziani per il pellegrinaggio in Terrasanta nel Medioevo*, in «Studi veneziani», 9, 1985, pp. 43-66.

Land. However, from the late fourteenth century one of them, Venice, became the most common one: the Venetian dominion over territories in the Eastern Mediterranean guaranteed safe harbors for a large part of the voyage, while the Venetian government regulated various aspects of the organization of the voyage and thus ensured certain standards of safety. During the Renaissance, Venice was therefore the main place of departure for most Western European pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem, one of the principal destinations of Christian pilgrimage. Since the ships carrying them to the Holy Land generally left in a specific time of year, usually most pilgrims were in the city in roughly the same period. They often had to spend several weeks in the city, while they waited for departure. As many as hundreds of pilgrims could pass through the city every year. This number diminished over time, until in the second half of the sixteenth century transportation that was specially intended for pilgrims from Venice to the Holy Land stopped being organized.

These pilgrims came from various parts of Western Europe. Although they could be from different social backgrounds, the majority did not belong to the lower social classes, since this journey was expensive. Some were of very high status indeed, as will be discussed later in this article. There were pilgrims who traveled with servants. Although some cases are known of female Jerusalem-bound pilgrims – traveling in the company of a larger group of pilgrims, together with their husband or father, or as a servant – they were rare². Compared with the wide variety of backgrounds that can be found among early modern travelers passing through Venice in general – men and women, from different social, religious, and ethnic backgrounds – in certain aspects there was, then, less variety among Jerusalem pilgrims³. At the same time, however, their heterogeneity should also not

² On female pilgrims to Jerusalem: B. Saletti, *La partecipazione femminile al pellegrinaggio gerosolimitano (secoli XIV-XV)*, in «Genesis», 16, 2017, 2, pp. 15-35. The proportion of women was generally larger for pilgrimages to destinations other than Jerusalem; see: L.A. Craig, *Wandering Women and Holy Matrons: Women as Pilgrims in the Later Middle Ages*, Leiden - Boston, Brill, 2009; S.S. Morrison, *Women Pilgrims in Late Medieval England: Private Piety as Public Performance*, London - New York, Routledge, 2000.

³ For overviews of travelers in early modern Europe, see: T. Betteridge (ed.), *Borders and Travellers in Early Modern Europe*, Aldershot - Burlington, Ashgate, 2007; N. Canny, (ed.), *Europeans on the Move: Studies on European Migration, 1500-1800*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1994; B. Chiesi - I. Ciseri - B. Paolozzi Strozzi (eds.), *Il Medioevo in viaggio*, Firenze, Firenze Musei, Giunti, 2015; S. Faroqhi, *Travel and Artisans in the Ottoman Empire: Employment and Mobility in the Early Modern Era*, London - New York, I.B. Tauris, 2014; J. Lucassen - L. Lucassen, *The Mobility Transition Revisited, 1500-1900: What the Case of Europe Can Offer to Global History*, in «Journal of Global History», 4,

be underestimated. The sometimes vast differences in the pilgrims' geographical, social, and linguistic backgrounds give us the opportunity to examine specific aspects of their mobility and their encounters with local residents. For example, social status could have a clear impact on the pilgrims' treatment.

Renaissance Venice was an exceptionally cosmopolitan city – something that has always attracted attention. Scholars have focused in detail on groups such as the city's religious minorities, communities of foreign merchants, and groups of immigrants⁴. When looking at pilgrims, most historiography has tended to focus mainly on only a few aspects of their stay in the city, for example how the government regulated their sojourn and their passage on the ships. However, analysis of an extensive variety of facets of the pilgrims' everyday experience in the city can help us obtain a better understanding of early modern mobility. During their time in Venice these travelers interacted in different ways and to different degrees with the wide range of people they met. Such encounters with people from various backgrounds could play a crucial role in the subsequent circulation of objects and ideas.

This article therefore focuses on the pilgrims' interactions with Venice's local residents. Of course, both 'foreign' and 'local' are imprecise terms⁵. Indeed, as will be noted also throughout the article, Renaissance Venice's population consisted in part of people who originally came from elsewhere. Furthermore, also those spending their entire lives in Venice could have very different experiences with mobility. For instance, some belonged to

2009, 3, pp. 347-377; A. Mączak, *Travel in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1995; P. Nelles - R. Salzberg (eds.), *Connected Mobilities in the Early Modern World: The Practice and Experience of Movement*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2023; C.H. Parker, *Relazioni globali nell'età moderna: 1400-1800*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2012; R. Sweet - G. Verhoeven - S. Goldsmith (eds.), *Beyond the Grand Tour: Northern Metropolises and Early Modern Travel Behaviour*, London - New York, Routledge, 2017; J. Verdon, *Travel in the Middle Ages*, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 2003.

⁴ For overviews, see: D. Calabi, *Gli stranieri e la città*, in A. Tenenti - U. Tucci (eds.), *Storia di Venezia: Dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, V: *Il Rinascimento: Società ed economia*, Roma, Istituto della enciclopedia italiana, 1996, pp. 913-946; G. Fedalto, *Stranieri a Venezia e a Padova*, in G. Arnaldi - M. Pastore Stocchi (eds.), *Storia della cultura veneta*, 3/1: *Dal primo Quattrocento al Concilio di Trento*, Vicenza, Neri Pozza, 1980, pp. 499-535; B. Ravid, *Venice and Its Minorities*, in E.R. Dursteler (ed.), *A Companion to Venetian History, 1400-1797*, Leiden - Boston, Brill, 2013, pp. 449-485; A. Zannini, *Venezia città aperta: Gli stranieri e la Serenissima*, Venezia, Marcianum Press, 2009.

⁵ See also M. Albalá Pelegrín and S. Toffolo's introduction to this special issue.

what was considered a minority group with identity traits different from those of the dominant local group, for example because they were immigrants and their descendents who continued to maintain aspects of their foreign identity⁶. Even people without migrants in their own family history might have very different experiences with foreigners, as some Venetian inhabitants would be more in regular contact with them than others. While keeping in mind the diversity of both travelers and Venetian residents, this article will analyze encounters between on the one hand pilgrims who were in Venice with the specific goal to proceed to Jerusalem, and on the other hand people living in Venice at the time of the encounter. This distinction, then, is based on geographical mobility, not on people's legal status in Venice. This allows to keep the dynamics of mobility at the center of the analysis.

Based on various kinds of sources, including a wide range of travel accounts by pilgrims from across Western Europe, records of the Venetian government, Marin Sanudo's diaries, and several other ones, the article will consider a series of important types of activities where interactions could happen. It will analyze in detail how such encounters could come about and how they could function. It will also look at what their consequences could be: indeed, some interactions were pragmatic and had only limited impact on people's lives, while others may have had long-term and more profound consequences for the travelers, the Venetian residents, or sometimes even for the people in their respective networks.

2. Dealing with governmental regulation

The role of the Venetian government in the regulation of both the pilgrims' sea voyage and their stay in Venice has attracted considerable scholarly attention⁷. For instance, the government forbade the transportation of merchants or merchandise on ships intended for pilgrims, regulated who could carry pilgrims to the Holy Land, and even established how much space pilgrims should have on board. It also made it obligatory to register the contracts between the pilgrims and the shipowners with the *Ufficiali*

⁶ On minority groups in early modern Italy, see: S.J. Milner (ed.), *At the Margins: Minority Groups in Premodern Italy*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2005. On the case of Venice: B. Ravid, *Venice and Its Minorities*.

⁷ See note 1.

al Cattaver. Indeed, from 1395 the *Ufficiali al Cattaver* were responsible for matters regarding Jerusalem pilgrims⁸.

Among their tasks was also overseeing the *tolomazi*⁹. These were licensed guides meant to assist pilgrims, for example with finding lodging, exchanging money, finding passage on a ship, and buying necessities for the voyage. Clear rules existed about them: for instance, there could only be a limited number of them, and they had to work in pairs. In practice, there were clearly some problems with the *tolomazi*, as shown already by the numerous references to disagreements and irregularities involving them in the records of the *Ufficiali al Cattaver*¹⁰. At the same time, these references do show the ongoing attempts of this office to at least try to regulate this.

Nevertheless, when looking at these types of regulations with which the Venetian government tried to oversee several aspects of the pilgrims' stay in the city, it is important not to underestimate the agency that these travelers had in organizing their stay in the city or in connecting with other people: they were not just passive recipients of the regulations of the government. For example, references to *tolomazi* are not nearly as plentiful in pilgrims' accounts as one might have expected from the significant role that the Venetian government, judging from the large number of detailed rules about them, apparently wanted them to play. Incidentally, when *tolomazi* were mentioned by pilgrims, it was not even necessarily in a positive manner. Wilhelm Tzewers (pilgrimage in 1477-1478) had the

⁸ On the history of the *Ufficiali al Cattaver*, see: P. Bosmin, *Le origini del Magistrato del 'Cattaver'*, in *Ad Alessandro Luzio: Gli Archivi di Stato italiani: Miscellanea di studi storici*, Firenze, Felice le Monnier, 1933, I, pp. 231-235; A. da Mosto, *L'Archivio di Stato di Venezia: Indice generale, storico, descrittivo ed analitico*, I: *Archivi dell'amministrazione centrale della Repubblica veneta e archivi notarili*, Roma, Biblioteca d'arte, 1937, p. 101; C. Passarella, *Interessi di parte e logiche del processo: La giustizia civile a Venezia in età moderna*, Torino, Giappichelli, 2018, pp. 55-57; M.F. Tiepolo, *Archivio di Stato di Venezia*, in P. Carucci et al. (eds.), *Guida generale degli Archivi di Stato italiani*, IV, Roma, Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, Ufficio centrale per i beni archivistici, 1994, pp. 937-938.

⁹ M. Margaret Newett and scholars quoting her use the term *tholomarii*. As Ugo Tucci has pointed out, *tolomazi*, *tolomaci*, and *tolomagi* are all correct, but not *tholomarii*. The term originally derives from the German *Dolmetscher*. U. Tucci, *I servizi marittimi veneziani*, p. 63.

¹⁰ In particular: Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Ufficiali al Cattaver*, Atti, b. 2, reg. 4, *passim*. On this topic, see also: M.M. Newett, *Introduction*, pp. 39-41, 50-51, 60-62, 72-73, 87-89.

following to say about them: «Little faith is there in those who are sworn to guide pilgrims, although they may be German-speaking»¹¹.

Moreover, pilgrims generally seem to have been aware that they could also use the government regulations to their own advantage. More than once we find pilgrims complaining to Venetian government officials. For instance, recurring complaints are about the ship not leaving on time. This did not always have the concrete result that pilgrims wanted: for example, government officials could urge captains to leave as soon as possible, but even then it was still possible for several weeks to pass before departure¹². However, it did mean that pilgrims had a way to enter in direct contact with government officials to voice their complaints, and it seems that these officials often did at least try to accommodate these complaints.

Other times pilgrims even did achieve what they wanted, as in the case of Georges Lengherand (pilgrimage in 1486-1487) and his fellow travelers. When on the return journey, close to Treviso, part of their luggage got confiscated, the pilgrims went back to Venice. Accompanied by some merchants and by the captains of the galleys with which they had traveled, and with the help of one of those captains, the travelers presented their case before the Venetian government. The latter decided in the pilgrims' favor, and ordered to return the items and reimburse the pilgrims' expenses¹³. Another example is when in 1515 a group of pilgrims complained with the *Collegio* about their galley being too full with merchandise.

¹¹ «Modica fides est in illis, licet sint de ligua Alemanica, qui iurati sunt ad conducendum peregrinos», Wilhelm Tzewers, *Wilhelm Tzewers; Itinerarius terre sancte: Einleitung, Edition, Kommentar und Übersetzung*, ed. by G. Hartmann, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag, 2004, p. 76.

¹² For instance, on 16 June 1515 a group of pilgrims complained with the *Collegio* about the delay in their departure. As a result, the captain was ordered to leave as soon as possible, but on 27 June the pilgrims were back to complain again about the same issue, which led to a second admonition to the captain to set sail. The galley finally left on 2 July. Marin Sanudo, *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, ed. by R. Fulin et al., 58 vols., Venezia, Visentini, 1879-1903, 1887, XX, cols. 304, 338-339, 353. Some other examples: Sigmund Feyerabend (ed.), *Beschreibung der Meerfabrt zum heyligen Grab*, in *Reyßbuch deß heyligen Lands*, Franckfort am Mayn, Feyerabendt, 1584, fol. 35r; Marin Sanudo, *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, 1889, XXV, col. 418.

¹³ Georges Lengherand, *Voyage de Georges Lengherand, mayeur de Mons en Haynaut, a Venise, Rome, Jérusalem, Mont Sinaï et Le Kayre, 1485-1486*, ed. by D.C. Godefroy-Méniglaise, Mons, Masquillier et Dequesne, 1861, pp. 192-196.

In response, one of the *Patroni all'Arsenal* was ordered to go to the galley in question to unload some wares¹⁴.

3. Taking care of practical needs

Among the first things that pilgrims needed on arrival in Venice was a place where they could find accommodation, food, and drink. Depending also on their personal circumstances, they could lodge in different places, such as inns, lodging houses, pilgrims' hostels, convents, their friends' houses, or the Fondaco dei Tedeschi¹⁵. In 1510 the Venetian government obliged foreigners to stay in an inn for at least a few days before allowing them to move to another type of accommodation¹⁶. Indeed, pilgrims could begin their stay in the city in one type of accommodation and move to a different one later. In having clear preferences for specific accommodation pilgrims could display a certain agency. For example, in 1525 a group of eight Netherlandish pilgrims went to the *Lion Bianco* inn upon arrival in Venice. After a few days they decided to rent a room with a local resident instead, pool their money, and buy their own food and drink¹⁷.

Immediately upon arrival, and throughout their stay in the city, pilgrims would be in contact with the person hosting them. That person was not necessarily from Venice originally: some hosts had migrated there some or many years ago¹⁸. Here, then, we see a clear example of the fluidity of the term 'local.' In some cases the host was from the same region as the

¹⁴ Marin Sanudo, *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, 1887, XX, col. 345.

¹⁵ On lodging in early modern Venice, see in particular: M. Costantini, *Le strutture dell'ospitalità*, in A. Tenenti - U. Tucci (eds.), *Il Rinascimento: Società ed economia*, pp. 881-911; R. Salzberg, *Little Worlds in Motion: Mobility and Space in the 'Osterie' of Early Modern Venice*, in «Journal of Early Modern History», 25, 2021, 1-2, pp. 96-117; R. Salzberg, *Mobility, Cobabitation and Cultural Exchange in the Lodging Houses of Early Modern Venice*, in «Urban History», 46, 2019, 3, pp. 398-418.

¹⁶ R. Salzberg, *Controlling and Documenting Migration via Urban 'Spaces of Arrival' in Early Modern Venice*, in H. Greefs - A. Winter (eds.), *Migration Policies and Materialities of Identification in European Cities: Papers and Gates, 1500-1930s*, New York - London, Routledge, 2019, p. 34.

¹⁷ Jan Govertz, *Reysen na Jerusalem ende Jordaen*, ed. by R.J.G.A.A. Gaspar, s.l., 2016, fol. 17r; Arent Willemsz, *Bedevaart naar Jerusalem, volbracht en beschreven in het jaar 1525, door Meester Arent Willemsz., barbier tot Delft in Hollant*, ed. by C.J. Gonnet, in «Bijdragen voor de geschiedenis van het bisdom van Haarlem», 11, 1884, pp. 20, 23-24.

¹⁸ R. Salzberg, *Little Worlds in Motion*, p. 105.

pilgrim, but not always. While there are multiple cases of pilgrims lodging together with people from the same geographical area, and while there were even inns intended for people from certain areas, the host could also be from a different region of Europe than the pilgrims.

The pilgrims' host could have a clear and direct impact on certain aspects of their stay. For instance, in 1523 a group of pilgrims stayed at Peter Pender's inn, located close to the Rialto bridge and the Fondaco dei Tedeschi¹⁹. In addition to just lodging them, the innkeeper also brought them to church for the feast of Corpus Christi, advised them on which ship to use to go to the Holy Land, brought them to the Grand Chancellor when they were having difficulties finding a ship, and went to the doge and the Signoria on behalf of and with the pilgrims, carrying a letter from the Grand Chancellor²⁰. Similar situations could exist with the hosts of other sorts of lodging. Furthermore, as Rosa Salzberg has shown in her research, in various types of accommodation foreigners could also intermingle with other local inhabitants²¹.

Pilgrims arrived in Venice with the main goal to leave the city and set sail for the Holy Land, and finding passage on a ship was therefore among their main concerns upon arrival in the city. Depending among other things on how many people wanted to go to Jerusalem in a certain year it could be more or less difficult getting a contract with favorable conditions for the voyage. Negotiations with shipowners could be protracted, for example when there was a large number of pilgrims and multiple ships vying for them or, on the contrary, when there were only few people wanting to go to Jerusalem that year. Such negotiations could take place in different sorts of spaces. For instance, the previously mentioned group of travelers who in 1523 received various kinds of assistance from their innkeeper, also used an inn (the *Lion Bianco*) as a place to meet with shipowners to negotiate passage²². The English Richard Torkington (pilgrimage in 1517-1518) described how he and his fellow travelers were invited on board a ship,

¹⁹ On Peter Pender's and other inns intended mainly for Germans, see: P. Braunstein, *Les Allemands à Venise (1380-1520)*, Roma, École française de Rome, 2016, pp. 369-374.

²⁰ Peter Füessli, *Peter Füesslis Jerusalemfabrt 1523 und Brief über den Fall von Rhodos 1522*, ed. by L.M. Uffer, in «Mitteilungen der Antiquarischen Gesellschaft in Zürich», 50, 1980-1982, 3, pp. 94-96, 99-100.

²¹ R. Salzberg: *Little Worlds in Motion*; R. Salzberg, *Mobility, Cobabitation and Cultural Exchange*.

²² Peter Füessli, *Peter Füesslis Jerusalemfabrt*, pp. 96, 98.

and how the shipowner tried to impress them with food and wine: «Ther they mad vs goodly Chere wt Diverse Sotylyties as Comfytes and Marche Panys, And Swete Wynes». Another shipowner did the same a few days later²³. In addition to meeting with the people directly responsible for the sea voyage, pilgrims could also have the assistance of others while negotiating their passage. Indeed, among the *tolomazi's* tasks was assisting pilgrims in reaching such an agreement (although, once again, *tolomazi* are not mentioned very often in pilgrims' accounts for this role either).

During their stay in the city pilgrims also needed to acquire a variety of objects for the next stages of their journey. For example, some received letters of recommendation for people they could meet later – from merchant friends they knew in the city, or from members of the Venetian government²⁴. They could also obtain bills of exchange and letters of credit, and exchange money into Venetian currency, which would be accepted throughout their later journey²⁵.

Some pilgrims listed in their travel accounts which supplies they had bought in Venice for the next stages of their journey, meant also as advice for

²³ Richard Torkington, *Ye Oldest Diarie of Englysshe Travell: Being the Hitherto Unpublished Narrative of the Pilgrimage of Sir Richard Torkington to Jerusalem in 1517*, ed. by W.J. Loftie, London, Field & Tuer, 1884, pp. 7-8. Quotation from p. 7.

²⁴ Felix Faber, *Fratris Felicis Fabri evagatorium in Terrae Sanctae, Arabiae et Egypti peregrinationem*, ed. by K.D. Hassler, 3 vols., Stuttgart, Sumtibus societatis litterariae stuttgartiensis, 1843-1849, 1843, I, p. 95; Giovanni Paolo Pesenti, *Il 'Pellegrinaggio di Gierusalemme' di Giovanni Paolo Pesenti: Diario di viaggio di un gentiluomo bergamasco in Terrasanta ed Egitto*, ed. by O. de Carli, Bergamo, Officina dell'Ateneo, Sestante, 2013, p. 248; Denis Possot - Charles Philippe, *Le voyage de la Terre Sainte: Composé par maître Denis Possot et achevé par messire Charles Philippe*, ed. by C.H.A. Schefer, Paris, Ernest Leroux, 1890, pp. 87-88; Jean Zuallart, *Il devotissimo viaggio di Gerusalemme: Fatto, & descritto in sei libri dal Sig.r Giovanni Zuallardo, Cavaliere del Santiss. Sepolcro di N. S. l'anno 1586: Aggiuntovi i disegni di varij luoghi di Terra Santa: & altri paesi: Intagliati da Natale Bonifacio Dalmata*, Roma, per F. Zanetti & Gia. Ruffinelli, 1587, pp. 36-38, 61.

²⁵ Pierre Barbatre, *Le voyage de Pierre Barbatre à Jérusalem en 1480*, ed. by P. Tucoo-Chala - N. Pinzuti, in «L'Annuaire-Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de France», 1972-1973, p. 111; Konrad Grünemberg, *Ritter Grünembergs Pilgerfabrt ins Heilige Land 1486*, ed. by J. Goldfriedrich -W. Fränzel, Leipzig, R. Voigtländers Verlag, [1912], p. 17; Arnold von Harff, *Die Pilgerfabrt des Ritters Arnold von Harff von Cöln durch Italien, Syrien, Aegypten, Arabien, Aethiopien, Nubien, Palästina, die Türkei, Frankreich und Spanien, wie er sie in den Jahren 1496 bis 1499 vollendet, beschrieben und durch Zeichnungen erläutert hat*, ed. by E. von Groote, Cöln, J.M. Heberle (H. Lempertz), 1860, pp. 58-59; Denis Possot - Charles Philippe, *Le voyage de la Terre Sainte*, p. 87; Jean Zuallart, *Il devotissimo viaggio di Gerusalemme*, p. 61.

future travelers²⁶. Such lists and recommendations usually focus on practical goods, needed on the ship and during the travel through the Holy Land: common items such as food, kitchenware, clothing, a mattress, sheets, pillows, and a chest to contain everything. Other items could include for example candles, mouse traps, a chicken cage, and small devotional objects with which to touch relics and sacred places and then gift to people back home. Some pilgrims had clear ideas on how they wanted their objects to be made, like Jacques le Saige, who undertook a journey from Douai to Jerusalem in 1518 and who had a seven-foot-long chest from cypress wood built for him in Venice²⁷. Others would buy some items second-hand, or resell them after returning to Venice.

Another item commonly included in the lists of supplies bought by pilgrims in Venice are medicines, which were prepared for them by a doctor in the city: usually generic types of medications, against problems such as seasickness, fever, vomiting, constipation, and adverse heat effects²⁸. One pilgrim mentioned that the noblemen among his fellow travelers invited a physician to their accommodation in Venice so that he could give each person specific advice on how to behave at sea, according to each person's physical condition, and write out prescriptions for medicines²⁹. Another traveler recommended future pilgrims to ask a doctor in Venice for advice

²⁶ S. Toffolo, *Pellegrini stranieri e il commercio veneziano nel Rinascimento*, in E. Gregori (ed.), *Rinascimento fra il Veneto e l'Europa: Questioni, metodi, percorsi*, Padova, Cleup, 2018, pp. 263-284.

²⁷ Jacques le Saige, *Voyage de Jacques Le Saige, de Douai à Rome, Notre-Dame-de-Lorette, Venise, Jérusalem et autres saints lieux*, ed. by H.-R. Duthilloeul, Douai, Adam d'Aubers, 1851, p. 47. When he passed again through Venice on his journey home, he resold the chest, together with his linen, to the people from whom he had bought it: p. 169.

²⁸ See for example: Santo Brasca - Gabriele Capodilista, *Viaggio in Terrasanta di Santo Brasca (1480), con l'Itinerario di Gabriele Capodilista (1458)*, ed. by A.L. Momigliano Lepschy, Milano, Longanesi, 1966, p. 129; Konrad Grünemberg, *Ritter Grünembergs Pilgerfahrt ins Heilige Land*, p. 17; Arnold von Harff, *Die Pilgerfahrt des Ritters Arnold von Harff*, p. 58; *Le pelerin veritable de la Terre Sainte: Auquel sous le discours figuré de la Jerusalem Antique et Moderne de la Palestine est enseigné le chemin de la Celeste*, Paris, chez P. Louys Febvrier, 1615, pp. 118-119; Wilhelm Tzewers, *Wilhelm Tzewers; Itinerarius terre sancte*, p. 72; William Wey, *The Itineraries of William Wey, Fellow of Eton College, to Jerusalem, A.D. 1458 and A.D. 1462, and to Saint James of Compostelle, A.D. 1456: From the Original Manuscript in the Bodleian Library*, ed. by A. Way, London, J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1857, p. 5; Jean Zuallart, *Il devotissimo viaggio di Gerusalemme*, p. 28.

²⁹ Felix Faber, *Fratris Felicis Fabri evagatorium in Terrae Sanctae, Arabiae et Egypti peregrinationem*, 1843, I, pp. 104-105, 107.

on matters such as bloodletting, preventive medicines, and how to take care of one's health during the sea voyage³⁰.

Some pilgrims bought paper, ink, and writing material in the city, or took advantage of the fact that Venice was one of Europe's leading centers of print in the Renaissance and bought some books. In the case of one pilgrim some of these books have even been handed down to us: books both printed and purchased in Venice – with one volume still bound in a Venetian binding from roughly the period in which the pilgrim was in Venice, likely commissioned by the pilgrim in question to be bound in the city before taking it with him on his further journey to Jerusalem³¹.

By buying objects in Venice, bringing them along on the journey, perhaps adapting them throughout the journey (in the case of books for example by writing in them), and then taking them back home, the time spent in Venice could therefore have a clear effect on the material culture of the pilgrims' journey. Moreover, it could contribute significantly to the international circulation of both objects and ideas. This could also be the case when pilgrims did not buy but borrow items in Venice. For instance, some pilgrims' accounts contain references to borrowing books in Venice to use in that city or during the remainder of their journey³². While this type of temporary access to objects generally leaves few traces in historical records, it could still have an important role in bringing people in different countries in contact with new objects or information. Borrowing items of course presupposes that the pilgrim already knew the lender at least to some extent. The same was true in cases where pilgrims left some of their non-essential belongings in Venice before embarking for the Holy Land, for instance with the storeroom keeper of the inn where the pilgrim had lodged, or at a friend's house. When they returned to Venice, some even arranged for these belongings to be brought home by someone else, for example by merchants³³.

³⁰ Wilhelm Tzewers, *Wilhelm Tzewers; Itinerarius terre sancte*, p. 72.

³¹ For this and other cases of pilgrims buying or otherwise engaging with written text during their stay in Venice, see: S. Toffolo, *The Pilgrim, the City and the Book: The Role of the Mobility of Pilgrims in Book Circulation in Renaissance Venice*, in A. der Weduwen - M. Walsby (eds.), *The Book World of Early Modern Europe*, Essays in Honour of Andrew Pettegree, vol. 2, Leiden - Boston, Brill, 2022, pp. 131-153.

³² S. Toffolo, *The Pilgrim, the City and the Book*.

³³ Felix Faber, *Fratris Felicis Fabri evagatorium in Terrae Sanctae, Arabiae et Egypti peregrinationem*, 1843, I, p. 107; 1849, III, p. 396; Giovanni Paolo Pesenti, *Il 'Pellegrinaggio di Gierusalemme' di Giovanni Paolo Pesenti*, pp. 248-249; Pero Tafur, *Travels and*

In other words, pilgrims purchasing or borrowing the necessities for their further journey themselves could come into contact with a range of local inhabitants. These could include people selling basic products such as food and clothing, but also people like bookbinders and physicians. Their interaction would entail communicating – at least to some degree – about practical aspects of the transaction, such as prices and quantities. Such communication could bring its own set of challenges, for instance regarding language. I will come back to this in the next section. At times pilgrims could have the assistance of others in acquiring objects in Venice – people paid to accompany them from the beginning of their journey, or people in Venice. Giovanni Paolo Pesenti (pilgrimage in 1612-1613), who relied often, and for various purposes, on the help of friends in Venice, was also accompanied by «a very practical friend» (without specifying who or from where this friend was) when buying necessities for the sea voyage³⁴. Arnold von Harff (pilgrimage in 1496-1499) hired a Spanish guide to accompany him from Venice to the Holy Land, and mentioned that this guide also bought everything in Venice that Harff and his fellow travelers would need on the ship³⁵. Furthermore, helping pilgrims purchase necessities in Venice was among the *tolomazi's* tasks. Such local contacts could therefore potentially have an impact on the material culture of the pilgrims' further journey, while at the same time adding to the list of occasions when travelers could interact with Venetian residents.

4. Circulating ideas

The example of buying or borrowing books already indicates one of the ways that foreign pilgrims could play a role in the circulation of not just objects, but information as well. This was not just limited to written information: these travelers could come into contact with news and ideas through a variety of media, such as oral communication or visual depictions³⁶. They did not merely have a passive role in this circulation. When

Adventures, 1435-1439, trans. by M.H.I Letts, London, George Routledge and sons, 1926, pp. 173, 226.

³⁴ «un mio amico molto pratico ...»: Giovanni Paolo Pesenti, *Il 'Pellegrinaggio di Gierusalemme' di Giovanni Paolo Pesenti*, p. 248.

³⁵ Arnold von Harff, *Die Pilgerfabrt des Ritters Arnold von Harff*, pp. 57-58.

³⁶ See also: S. Toffolo, *Media e mobilità: Circolazione di informazioni lungo la via di pellegrinaggio nel Rinascimento*, in C. Cornelissen - M. Rospocher (eds.), *L'intermedialità nella società moderna e contemporanea*, Bologna, Il Mulino, forthcoming.

they encountered new information they could interpret it in their own way, transform it, add or remove elements, and reconcile it with older ideas. In turn, they could transmit it – together with all the other knowledge they already had – to new audiences, back at home or throughout their journey. They could pass on this information through different media, ranging from telling people about it in person to including it in travel accounts that, especially when appearing in print, could reach large audiences across various parts of the world. In this way, pilgrims could play a crucial role in transmitting information to audiences that could be from different geographical, linguistic, or social backgrounds.

The long journey to Jerusalem offered ample opportunity for coming across new information. Given the relatively long time that pilgrims generally spent in Venice, and given that this city was a crossroads of people from all over the world, pilgrims could encounter new ideas here, too. Analyzing how, in the most concrete terms, such exchange of information could take place helps us gain greater insight into the large phenomenon of transnational circulation of information. After all, passing temporarily through a city is no guarantee that a traveler will actually pick up narratives circulating in that city: one needs to have access to the medium containing this information (be it a person communicating the story or an inanimate object representing it), as well as possess the skills to understand it, such as linguistic capacities but also the ability to place the story in the right context.

When we look at the practicalities of how such transmission of information could come about in Venice, we see again that contacts between pilgrims and local residents could be crucial. And again, where a pilgrim was lodged could have an impact on the information with which he or she came into contact. For instance, the German Franciscan Paul Walther von Guglingen (pilgrimage in 1481-1484) stayed at the Franciscan convent of San Francesco della Vigna, where he was shown some writings about Prester John. At first he was unable to understand them because they were written in Italian, but one of the friars read and explained them to him. Walther then took over the writings in Latin translation in his own travel account, thereby also showing how transmission of information in Venice could have a long-term effect on the dissemination of that information across both geographical and linguistic borders³⁷. Both the place

³⁷ Paul Walther von Guglingen, *Fratris Pauli Waltheri Guglingensis Itinerarium in Terram Sanctam et ad Sanctam Catharinam*, ed. by M. Sollweck, Tübingen, Literarischer Verein in Stuttgart, 1892, pp. 37-41.

where Walther was lodged and the interaction with the people there (in any case the friar who explained the texts, but perhaps also a second person, in case the unspecified person showing Walther the texts was not the same as the friar who helped with the translation) were vital in defining which information he was able to access as well as understanding that information.

In the specific case of the convent of San Francesco della Vigna not just those lodging there were able to obtain information in this place. It was one of the major Franciscan convents in Venice and closely connected with the Custody of the Holy Land. The Franciscans there could play a role in the transmission of information to Jerusalem-bound pilgrims³⁸. An anonymous French pilgrim who passed through the city in 1612 (when the transportation of pilgrims from Venice to the Holy Land was no longer a mass phenomenon) even advised the future pilgrim to go to San Francesco della Vigna, «where he will be fully informed about matters of the Levant»³⁹.

The example of Paul Walther von Guglingen also shows how local contacts – both the people hosting the pilgrims as well as others – could be important to overcome the linguistic barriers that some pilgrims could face. This was a situation where Italians and those able to make themselves understood in Italian had an advantage, as when the Bergamasque Giovanni Paolo Pesenti could ask seamen in Venice to take him to see the person responsible for a ship⁴⁰. Travelers without this possibility would have to find another solution, for example communicating in Latin or via an interpreter. Some pilgrims paid someone to accompany them for a part of their journey and translate. This could also be the case for their stay

³⁸ Starting from Reinhold Röhrich and Heinrich Meisner's *Deutsche Pilgerreisen nach dem heiligen Lande* (1880), several scholars have claimed that it was possible to buy pilgrims' guides at San Francesco della Vigna. Josephie Brefeld has demonstrated that no evidence exists for this. She has also shown that the Franciscans did, however, sell books elsewhere in Venice, in addition to being involved in the dissemination of information in other ways. J. Brefeld, *A Guidebook for the Jerusalem Pilgrimage in the Late Middle Ages: A Case for Computer-Aided Textual Criticism*, Hilversum, Verloren, 1994, pp. 11-13, 58-59.

³⁹ «S'il passe par Venise, qu'il s'adresse au Convent de saint François de la Vigne, où il sera pleinement instruit des affaires du Levant, & luy donnera on peut estre advis du proche partement de la nouvelle famille de Cordeliers qui fait ce saint voyage de trois en trois ans pour passer avec elle»: *Le pelerin veritable de la Terre Saincte*, p. 119. Similar advice also at: Jean Zuallart, *Il devotissimo viaggio di Gerusalemme*, 40.

⁴⁰ Giovanni Paolo Pesenti, *Il 'Pellegrinaggio di Gierusalemme' di Giovanni Paolo Pesenti*, p. 247.

in Venice. In addition to the more serendipitous encounters with people who, while not having the official function of interpreter, were able to act as such (like the friar who helped Paul Walther von Guglingen), pilgrims in Venice could also be aided by people paid to translate for them. For instance, each pair of *tolomazi* (who, as stated earlier, had to work in couples) were required to speak at least two languages, and would therefore have been able to translate for pilgrims. Felix Faber, from the German town of Ulm (pilgrimages in 1480 and 1483-1484), described an audience with the doge, where the doge spoke to the group of pilgrims via an interpreter⁴¹.

Also when pilgrims did not experience linguistic barriers in the transmission of information, they could still face challenges in understanding, when they came across unfamiliar topics. After all, when people hear, read, or see new information this does not automatically mean that they also comprehend it. In some cases, interaction with local residents could help. The Swiss pilgrim Peter Füssli (pilgrimage in 1523), for example, witnessed a celebration of the liturgy according to the Greek rite, held in a chapel at the church of San Biagio. During this, a Greek person explained to him various aspects, and Füssli then included a detailed description of the liturgy in his travel account⁴². The help of the Greek person was indispensable in this case in order for this traveler to understand certain details of his encounter with an unfamiliar rite.

Information exchanged in Venice could concern a wide range of subjects: the pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulcher itself, but also many other topics, such as the history of Venice, recent events, stories about other parts of the world, the logistic aspects of travel, or devotional practices of different religious traditions. It could also be vital for the safety of the further voyage. Indeed, multiple cases can be found of pilgrims – generally very highly placed ones – who had an audience with the doge and asked for advice about matters related to their journey, such as how much danger could be expected at sea from the Ottomans, or how to identify the best ship for the voyage⁴³. Similarly, pilgrims could also provide new information

⁴¹ Felix Faber, *Fratri Felicis Fabri evagatorium in Terrae Sanctae, Arabiae et Egypti peregrinationem*, 1843, I, p. 95.

⁴² Peter Füssli, *Peter Füsslis Jerusalemfabrt*, pp. 101-102. On pilgrims and problems in understanding new information, see also: S. Toffolo, *Media e mobilità*.

⁴³ Peter Füssli, *Peter Füsslis Jerusalemfabrt*, pp. 99-100; Marin Sanudo, *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, 1879, II, cols. 688-689; 1880, III, col. 368; 1890, XXVIII, cols. 599, 628.

to people in Venice. The captains of pilgrims' galleys could inform the Venetian government about recent events, but sometimes we also find pilgrims themselves providing such information. For instance, Antongaleazzo Bentivoglio, protonotary apostolic returning from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in October 1498 (not long before the start of the Second Ottoman-Venetian War), went to see the doge and informed him that the grand master of Rhodes had told him that the Turks were arming⁴⁴. After all, the ships carrying pilgrims in the early modern period from Venice to the Holy Land and back did so in a period when tensions between the Ottoman Turks and Western European powers could rise. It can therefore hardly be called strange that people on these ships did not only have a personal interest in knowing whether it was safe to travel, but that they could also be among the many people involved in the dissemination of the latest news across the Eastern Mediterranean. Such exchanges could take place in Venice as well as throughout the voyage.

5. Strengthening diplomatic relations

Among the travelers passing through Venice on their way to Jerusalem various social backgrounds can be found. However, as mentioned already at the beginning of this article, while it was not impossible for poor people to undertake this journey, we can say that at least most pilgrims would not have been of lower social status. It was very expensive to make a pilgrimage from Western Europe to Jerusalem: it has been estimated that the part from Venice to Jerusalem and back (without taking into account the expenses before arriving in Venice, while staying there, and after returning there) would usually cost between thirty and sixty ducats, although in exceptional cases this could go up to 150 ducats⁴⁵. For a large part of the population this would have been as much as one or multiple years' income. It can therefore be assumed that most Jerusalem-bound pilgrims in Venice did not belong to the lowest social classes.

⁴⁴ Marin Sanudo, *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, 1879, II, col. 57. For some examples of the captains of pilgrims' galleys providing information to the Venetian government, see: Marin Sanudo, *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, 1881, VI, col. 539; 1890, XXVIII, cols. 57-58.

⁴⁵ E. Ashtor, *Venezia e il pellegrinaggio in Terrasanta nel basso medioevo*; G. Pinto, *I costi del pellegrinaggio in Terrasanta nei secoli XIV e XV (dai resoconti dei viaggiatori italiani)*, in F. Cardini (ed.), *Toscana e Terrasanta nel Medioevo*, Firenze, Alinea, 1982, pp. 257-284; U. Tucci, *I servizi marittimi veneziani*.

Especially in the case of pilgrims of high status their interactions with Venetians could be significant for diplomatic relations. Pilgrims from high social classes could come from many different parts of Europe, and therefore be important for Venice's connections with a large number of states. Such highly placed pilgrims included for example dukes, *condottieri*, bishops and archbishops, and other noblemen (generally not noblewomen) of varying ranks⁴⁶. Preparations were even made for King James IV of Scotland to undertake a pilgrimage to Jerusalem by way of Venice, although this was not carried out in the end⁴⁷.

The presence of pilgrims of such high status also explains why the Venetian government sometimes granted them special requests about going to the Holy Land on certain types of ships⁴⁸. Indeed, the Venetian state was very much aware of the importance of treating foreign pilgrims well, so that they would speak highly of Venice once they returned home. For instance, in 1546 the *Ufficiali al Cattaver* recorded that pilgrims going to Jerusalem on Venetian ships had been having many problems. They referred in particular to the year before, when a ship had sunk and all pilgrims had drowned. While discussing the need to avoid similar situations in the future, they explicitly mentioned Venice's reputation among the things at stake: «But for the honor and glory of the Lord God, for the praise of this city of ours, and for the convenience and benefit of those pilgrims, it is necessary to regulate that voyage...»⁴⁹. This also worked in the other direction: treating pilgrims well could have positive effects on Venice's international diplomatic relations, as in the case of a Venetian diplomat who was received

⁴⁶ For some examples: Roberto da Sanseverino, *Felice et divoto ad Terrasancta viaggio facto per Roberto de Sancto Severino (1458-1459)*, ed. by M. Cavaglia - A. Rossebastiano, Alessandria, Edizioni dell'Orso, 1999; Marin Sanudo, *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, 1879, I, col. 820; 1882, VII, cols. 472-473; 1891, XXX, col. 281.

⁴⁷ The arrival of a Scottish *orator* asking the Signoria for assistance in these preparations, and the Signoria's consent, are recorded in Marin Sanudo's diaries: Marin Sanudo, *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, 1881, VI, col. 513.

⁴⁸ M.M. Newett, *Introduction*, pp. 31-36.

⁴⁹ «Sono occorsi da certo tempo in quà molti inconvenienti et ruine alli Pelegrini che vanno in Hierusalem con li Navi et Navilij nostri et massime l'anno passato, che havendo voluto far à suo modo, et nollizar un Navilio non idoneo à quel viazo che de ritorno poi si somerse tutti li Peregrini si annegarono con danno, et vergogna universal, et però ad honor, e gloria del Signor Iddio à laude di questa nostra Città et à comodo, e benefitto di loro peregrini è di neccesità regular quel viazo per accrescer lanimo à molti d'andar à quel Santo e benedetto pelegrinazzo ...». Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Ufficiali al Cattaver, Atti, b. 2, reg. 4, fol. 105r.

well by the duke of Cleves «because his father had been honored by the Signoria when he returned from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem...»⁵⁰.

Such interaction could take place both with government officials, for example during audiences with the doge, and in other types of encounters with Venetian patricians. These interactions could take many forms. Examples include pilgrims visiting a noblewoman who had just given birth, attending Mass – in one case even the Christmas Mass – together with the Signoria, or participating in a wedding banquet⁵¹. Of course, these were all formalized occasions, which were used as a way to display Venice's splendor and strengthen diplomatic ties – something of which the pilgrims themselves undoubtedly were aware, as they sometimes even indicated explicitly in their travel accounts⁵².

6. Viewing the city

Not just pilgrims of high social status, but also those of less high classes were exposed to attempts of the Venetian state to make a positive impression on them. A well-known example is the inclusion of Jerusalem pilgrims in the annual procession for Corpus Christi on Piazza San Marco⁵³. Since most pilgrims' galleys left Venice more or less about the same time of year, this meant that every year there was a certain period in which a very large number of pilgrims was present in the city⁵⁴. During this time generally some important feasts took place: that of St Mark, Ascension Day,

⁵⁰ «perchè suo padre fo honorato da la Signoria quando ritornò di peregrinazo di Jerusalem...»: Marin Sanudo, *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, 1880, IV, cols. 758-759.

⁵¹ Pietro Casola, *Viaggio a Gerusalemme di Pietro Casola*, ed. by A. Paoletti, Alessandria, Edizioni dell'Orso, 2001, pp. 272-274; Marin Sanudo, *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, 1889, XXIV, col. 341; 1890, XXVII, col. 374; 1890, XXIX, col. 492.

⁵² See for example Pietro Casola's comments about being invited to visit a patrician woman who had just given birth: Pietro Casola, *Viaggio a Gerusalemme di Pietro Casola*, pp. 272-273.

⁵³ On rituals in Renaissance Venice, see in particular the seminal work: E.W. Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1981. For the involvement of Jerusalem pilgrims specifically, see also: M. Casini, *Renaissance Venice as the Pilgrims' Ritual Theatre*; É. Crouzet-Pavan, *Récits, images et mythes*, pp. 529-534; R.C. Davis - G.R. Marvin, *Venice, the Tourist Maze*, pp. 21-24; S. Toffolo, *Describing the City, Describing the State: Representations of Venice and the Venetian Terraferma in the Renaissance*, Leiden - Boston, Brill, 2020, pp. 114-118.

⁵⁴ Until the mid-fifteenth century these galleys left in late spring and early fall; later they generally left only once a year, usually after the feast of Corpus Christi.

and Corpus Christi. The ceremonies during these days showed Venice's magnificence and power to everyone witnessing them, both locals and foreigners. Jerusalem-bound pilgrims had an increasingly prominent role in these ceremonies, particularly during Corpus Christi, when they were paired with Venetian patricians, included in the procession across Piazza San Marco, and greeted by the doge at the Ducal Palace. Pilgrims who had not yet paid at least half of their passage on the ship, were excluded from the procession⁵⁵.

At the same time, emphasizing Venice's role in one of the most sacred journeys that a Christian could undertake also reflected positively on Venice. For instance, a late-sixteenth-century engraving (fig. 1) shows what, according to its creator, were some of the main aspects of Venice, such as a bird's-eye view of the entire city and the lagoon, the Piazzetta, and the Rialto bridge⁵⁶. This also included the procession of Corpus Christi (bottom center), where the pilgrims are well recognizable and even mentioned explicitly in the caption: «Procession of Corpus Domini with the group of pilgrims who go to Jerusalem»⁵⁷. This clearly underlines their importance for the image of Venice.

The pilgrims themselves were generally very impressed with the procession of Corpus Christi and their own role in it, and frequently wrote about it in their travel accounts, often in great detail⁵⁸. Such a positive impression

⁵⁵ Arent Willemsz, *Bedevaart naar Jerusalem*, p. 42.

⁵⁶ On this engraving, see: *Architettura e utopia nella Venezia del Cinquecento*, Milano, Electa, 1980, pp. 55, 57; G. Cassini, *Piante e vedute prospettiche di Venezia (1479-1855)*, Venezia, Stamperia di Venezia, 1982, pp. 78-79; G. Romanelli - S. Biadene, *Venezia piante e vedute: Catalogo del fondo cartografico a stampa*, Venezia, 1982, p. 35; J. Schulz, *The Printed Plans and Panoramic Views of Venice (1486-1797)*, in «Saggi e memorie di storia dell'arte», 7, 1970, pp. 26, 58-59, 139.

⁵⁷ «Proccesione del Corpus Domini con la compagnia de Pelegrini che vanno in Gierusalemme».

⁵⁸ For example: Pierre Barbatre, *Le voyage de Pierre Barbatre à Jérusalem en 1480*, pp. 106-107; Pietro Casola, *Viaggio a Gerusalemme di Pietro Casola*, pp. 102-109; Antonio da Crema, *Itinerario al Santo Sepolcro, 1486*, ed. by G. Nori, Ospedaletto (Pisa), Pacini, 1996, pp. 33-34; Felix Faber, *Fratri Felicis Fabri evagatorium in Terrae Sanctae, Arabiae et Egypti peregrinationem*, 1843, I, pp.105-106;1849, III, p. 433; Sigmund Feyerabend, *Beschreibung der Meerfabrt zum heyligen Grab*, fol. 35r; Jan Govertz, *Reysen na Jerusalem ende Jordaen*, fols. 2v, 30v-35r; Richard Guylforde, *The Pylgrymage of Sir Richard Guylforde to the Holy Land, A.D. 1506*, ed. by H. Ellis, London, Printed for the Camden Society, 1851, pp. 8-9; Philipp Hagen, *Hodoporka Philipps von Hagen aus dem 3. Jahrzent des 16. Jahrbunderts*, in *Vier rheinische Palaestina-Pilgerschriften des XIV. XV. und XVI. Jahrbunderts*, ed. by L. Conrady, Wiesbaden, Feller und Gecks, 1882,

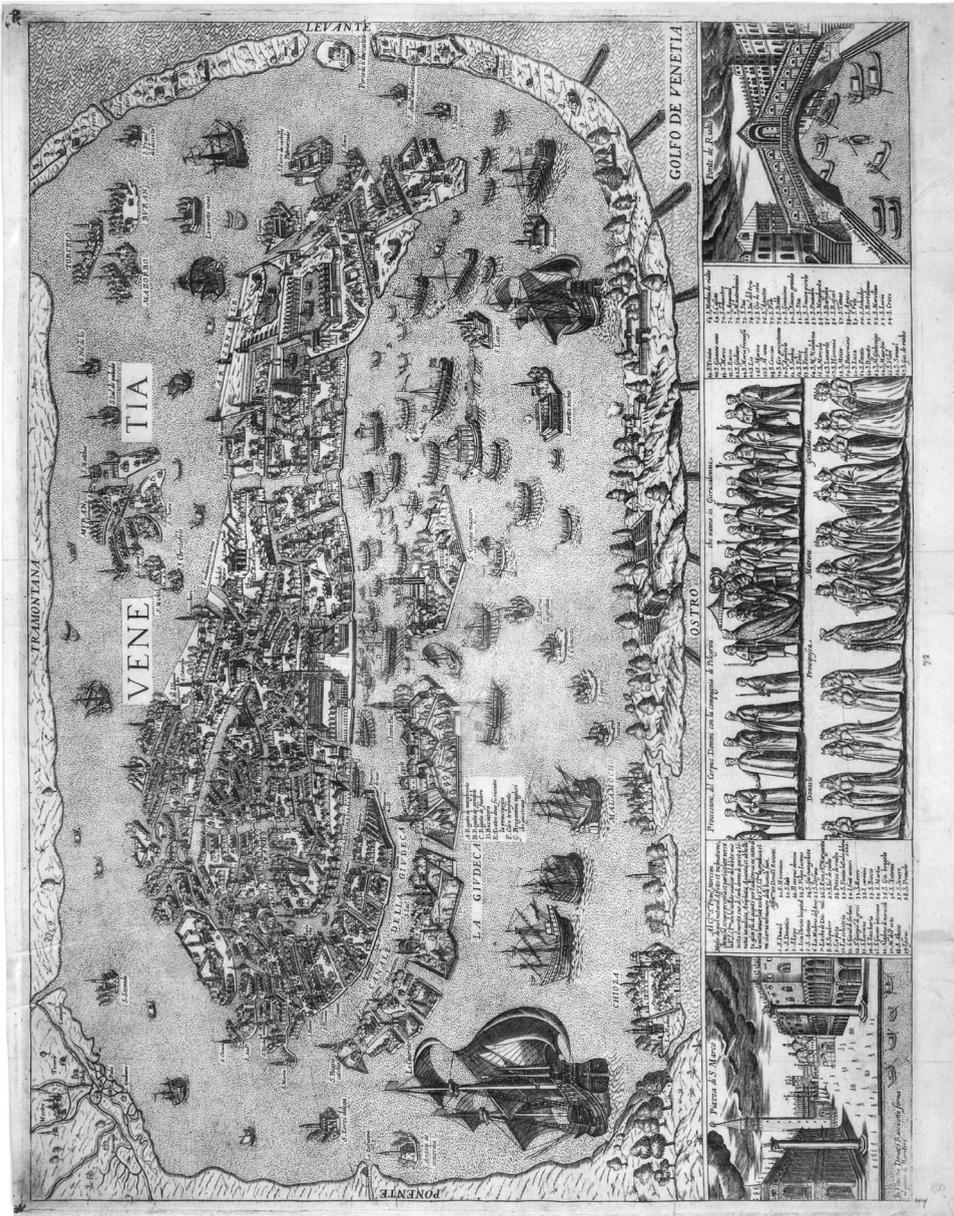


Fig. 1. Bernardo Salviotti, *Venetia* (ca. 1597). Venice, Museo Correr, inv. Cl. XLIVc n. 15. 2023 © Archivio Fotografico - Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia.

of the ceremony's grandeur was undoubtedly in line with one of the reasons why the Venetian government included these travelers in this way. Pilgrims' accounts could also include long descriptions of other rituals that the travelers could witness in Venice, both religious and civic. Additionally, the pilgrims could also participate in ceremonies other than the one of Corpus Christi, in various areas of the city. For example, some attended Mass at the church of San Rocco, and afterwards participated in a procession, together with members of the *scuola* of San Rocco⁵⁹.

Participation in such ceremonies would bring pilgrims in contact with various local inhabitants. Although such occasions were obviously highly formalized, they still offered the opportunity to encounter a variety of people. For example, in a year when negotiations for passage on a ship proved to be difficult, Peter Füessli indicated that he hoped to meet more pilgrims – and therefore possible fellow passengers – during the procession of Corpus Christi⁶⁰. In this case the procession did not only have a ceremonial role, but also a practical one in the formation of networks. This also shows that, even in cases where pilgrims were participating in highly orchestrated events, it was still not impossible for them to exercise a certain degree of agency and use these events also for their own goals. Of course, Venetian residents themselves could go to Jerusalem as pilgrims too, leading to contact – in Venice or during the rest of the journey – between pilgrims and locals where they shared a destination⁶¹.

Pilgrims generally also went to see other parts of the city⁶². It is no surprise – considering the reason for their journey – that churches and relics

pp. 234-235; Michele da Figline, *Da Figline a Gerusalemme: Viaggio del prete Michele in Egitto e in Terrasanta (1489-1490): Con il testo originale del viaggio di ser Michele*, ed. by M. Montesano, Roma, Viella, 2010, p. 53; Richard Torkington, *Ye Oldest Diarie of Englysshe Travell*, pp. 14-15; Pedro Manuel de Urrea, *Peregrinación de las tres casas sanctas de Jberusalem, Roma y Santiago*, ed. by E. Galé, II: *Edición crítica anotada*, Zaragoza, Institución «Fernando el Católico», 2008, pp. 127-129; Arent Willemsz, *Bedeavaart naar Jerusalem*, pp. 37-42.

⁵⁹ For instance: Jan Govertz, *Reysen na Jerusalem ende Jordaen*, fols. 37r-39r; Marin Sanudo, *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, 1890, XXVII, col. 377; Arent Willemsz, *Bedeavaart naar Jerusalem*, pp. 47-49; Heinrich Wölfl, *Reise nach Jerusalem, 1520-1521*, ed. by H. Bloesch, Bern, Schweizer Bibliophilen Gesellschaft, 1929, p. 26.

⁶⁰ Peter Füessli, *Peter Füesslis Jerusalemfabrt*, p. 96.

⁶¹ See for example: Marin Sanudo, *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, 1887, XX, col. 274; 1888, XXIII, col. 598; 1890, XXVIII, col. 57; 1894, XLI, col. 722.

⁶² S. Toffolo, *Describing the City, Describing the State*.

were an important part of these visits, and in fact in the pilgrims' descriptions of the city we often find detailed enumerations of the relics they had seen. However, pilgrims often went to see also more secular sights, such as the Ducal Palace, Piazza San Marco, Rialto, and various other ones. Some of these places were very much in line with what the Venetian government wanted foreign visitors to see⁶³. For instance, the Arsenal is one of Venice's secular spaces that is mentioned most often in pilgrims' descriptions of the city⁶⁴. On the part of the Venetian government, allowing foreign visitors to see a space that was vital for both Venice's commerce and its military power was undoubtedly meant to send a signal to them. Permission was needed to enter this space, but clearly many pilgrims were able to obtain that. Here, again, local networks could play a crucial role: the Netherlandish pilgrim Arent Willemsz (pilgrimage in 1525), for instance, gained access through a Franciscan friar who knew the person in charge of the Arsenal⁶⁵. Pilgrims could also simply come into contact with people during their visit to different parts of the city. For example, the same Willemsz also went to see the ghetto, and in his travel account described being approached by Jews asking him to buy something⁶⁶. Also

⁶³ Marin Sanudo wrote down a list of sights that were shown to important foreign visitors. This provides us clear insight into the image of the city that the Venetian government wanted to disseminate: Marin Sanudo, *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis Venetae, ovvero, La città di Venetia (1493-1530)*, ed. by A. Caracciolo Aricò, rev. ed., Venezia, Centro di studi medievali e rinascimentali «E.A. Cicogna», 2011, p. 59. On the correspondence between this list and foreigners' perceptions of the city, see: S. Toffolo, *Describing the City, Describing the State*, in particular chapter 2.

⁶⁴ For example: Santo Brasca - Gabriele Capodilista, *Viaggio in Terrasanta di Santo Brasca (1480), con l'Itinerario di Gabriele Capodilista (1458)*, p. 49; Bernhard von Breydenbach, *Peregrinatio in terram sanctam*, in civitate Moguntina, Erhard Reuwich, 11 February 1486, fol. [11v]; Pietro Casola, *Viaggio a Gerusalemme di Pietro Casola*, pp. 96-97; Antonio da Crema, *Itinerario al Santo Sepolcro*, p. 35; Sigmund Feyerabend, *Beschreibung der Meerfabrt zum beyligen Grab*, fol. 34v; Jan Govertz, *Reysen na Jerusalem ende Jordaen*, fols. 25r-26v; Richard Guylforde, *The Pylgrymage of Sir Richard Guylforde*, pp. 7-8; Arnold von Harff, *Die Pilgerfabrt des Ritters Arnold von Harff*, pp. 48-51; Georges Lengherand, *Voyage de Georges Lengherand*, p. 36; Jacques le Saige, *Voyage de Jacques Le Saige*, p. 48; Michele da Figline, *Da Figline a Gerusalemme*, p. 49; Ogier d'Anglure, *The Holy Jerusalem Voyage of Ogier VIII, Seigneur d'Anglure*, trans. by R.A. Browne, Gainesville, University Presses of Florida, 1975, pp. 79-80; Pero Tafur, *Travels and Adventures*, pp. 169-170; Richard Torkington, *Ye Oldest Diarie of Englysshe Travell*, p. 8; William Wey, *The Itineraries of William Wey*, p. 85; Arent Willemsz, *Bedevaart naar Jerusalem*, pp. 28-30; Ambrosius Zeebout, *Tvoyage van Mber Joos van Ghistele*, ed. by R.J.G.A.A. Gaspar, Hilversum, Verloren, 1998, pp. 416-418.

⁶⁵ Arent Willemsz, *Bedevaart naar Jerusalem*, p. 29.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

when visiting urban spaces that were not directly linked to their pilgrimage or to the logistics of their stay in the city, pilgrims could therefore encounter and interact, to a greater or lesser degree, with local residents.

7. Conclusion

Evidence from various sorts of sources gives us a clear idea of the types of interaction that could take place between Jerusalem-bound pilgrims and local residents in Venice. Analysis of such multifaceted moments of encounter shows us not only that such interaction existed, but also how multiple aspects of early modern mobility functioned. For example, these encounters could involve residents from various social classes, from patricians to salesmen and innkeepers – some of whom earned a living by interacting with foreign travelers, but not all. The variety among pilgrims, for instance in social and linguistic terms, could have an impact on the way they were treated in Venice and how easy it was for them to interact with local residents. The degree of intensity of the contact could differ. These encounters could take place in a range of public and more or less private spaces. While in some contexts pilgrims' actions were limited or at least conditioned by what the Venetian government wanted them to do or see, there are also cases where we should not underestimate the agency of these travelers, for example in deciding on which topics they wanted to gain further information, or where they wanted to lodge.

Such encounters between Jerusalem pilgrims and local inhabitants were not without consequences: consequences for the perception of the city, but also for the concrete practicalities of the pilgrims' journey and for the circulation of material culture and information. While in some cases this impact was limited to more pragmatic aspects, in other cases encounters could have significant and long-lasting effects on the pilgrims, the Venetian inhabitants, and even on the people with whom they were in contact in their turn. Analysis of such interaction can therefore provide us with important insight into the circulation of people, objects, and ideas at one of Renaissance Europe's great crossroads: Venice.