

Union in Separation. Trading Diasporas in the Eastern Mediterranean (1200-1700)

Veranstalter: Trading Diasporas Research Group, Transcultural Studies, Heidelberg University

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The conference „Union in Separation – Trading Diasporas in the Eastern Mediterranean (1200-1700)“ was organised by the Trading Diasporas Research Group which works within the framework of Transcultural Studies at Heidelberg University. The aim of the conference, which brought together a wide range of participants, both established academics and early career researchers, was to investigate the different diasporic communities of the medieval and early modern Mediterranean, especially their role in trade and exchange between perceived separate cultural domains. The concept of separate cultures is often constructed in people’s minds and it was hoped that the focus of the conference would shed light on these mindsets, their creation, and their impact on societies. Throughout the conference, particular emphasis was placed on the legal structures within which these trading diasporas operated and the informal mechanisms which they adopted in order to facilitate transcultural cooperation and communication across cultural divides.

The proceedings began with an opening lecture from DAVID JACOBY (Jerusalem), who demonstrated the diverse manners in which political, military, and economic incentives stimulated the transcultural transfer of industrial technologies in the late Middle Ages. He provided examples of the transmission of methods of production between Byzantium, the Islamic world and the Latin West, such as dyeing and weaving silk, as well as the production of weapons, such as the Levantine heavy crossbow. In addition to this, the importance of trading entrepôts, such as Acre, in the transmission of technologies was emphasised. Jacoby concluded that these transfers were common and occurred in many different ways: some were institution-

alized, while others were privately promoted; some were achieved by human and others by material agents.

The panel „Diasporas and Imperial Rule in the Thirteenth-Century Aegean“ addressed the question of transcultural interaction primarily between the Italian trading diasporic groups in the Byzantine successor states of Epiros, Nicaea and Trebizond, as well as the wider Latin East and the Black Sea. GÜNTER PRINZING (Mainz) identified some of the activities of the merchants operating in the Principality of Epiros, whose actions are detailed in a restricted number of sources. KRISTINE CIGGAAR (Leiden) also emphasised the difficulty in describing the lives of the merchants residing in the Latin Principality of Antioch, owing to the silence of many archival documents. She argued that private letters and the accounts of western diplomats operating in the region, such as Jacques de Vitry, can take on extra importance in the analysis of these diasporic groups. De Vitry, in particular, affords us a valuable glimpse of these groups from the perspective of a papal representative operating in the East. EKATERINI MITSIOU (Wien) analysed the policies of the Empire of Nicaea and the introduction of informal mechanisms, which enabled or prohibited cultural exchanges. She provided an example of an intriguing effort to regulate the habits of the citizens of Nicaea and to constrain the economic influence of the Italian merchants by Emperor John III Vatatzes. However, Mitsiou pointed out that communication between Latins and Greeks still continued in the form of trade treaties and theological discussions. This communication was highlighted by the example of the Latin mercenaries who served in the Nicaean armies at this time. DIMITRIOS MOSCHOS (Athens) emphasised the importance of existing infrastructure and commercial institutions in boosting ecclesiastical contacts, most explicitly portrayed during times of Church Union negotiations between East and West.

ANNA ANGERMANN (Heidelberg) opened the panel on „Diasporic Groups in Mamluk Egypt 1300-1450“, with the study of a transcultural encounter described in Al-Nuwayrî’s „Kitâb al-Ilmâm“. The encounter centred around the capture of a Muslim

on board a Genoese vessel in Alexandria. Although the source, which is often undervalued because of incoherence and errors, only describes the encounter briefly and simply, Angermann stressed that it can nevertheless provide us with a unique glimpse of Mamluk-European relationships and communication through trade, hostage taking and negotiation. GIUSEPPE CECERE (Cairo) progressed Angermann's investigation into the transcultural history of Medieval Egypt by analysing the „religious side“ of relationships between the Italian trading diasporas and the different religious groups and authorities of Mamluk Cairo. He suggested that external changes in the relationships between Europe and the Arab World throughout the Middle Ages inevitably influenced how these cultural groups perceived each other. For example, during the time of the Crusades, the Italian communities were perceived by their Muslim counterparts as being Christian above all else. PETER EDBURY (Cardiff) focussed on the commercial implications of the fall of Acre, the last crusader kingdom of the Levant, to the Mamluks in 1291. He explained that although this event signified the end of an epoch, and no doubt had significant ramifications for Latins operating in the East, the scarcity of evidence makes it difficult to assess to what extent Acre was in decline prior to 1291. Edbury also commented on the ambiguity which shrouds our knowledge of what happened to the survivors; many probably fled to Cyprus, but it is hard to establish to what extent the fall of Acre contributed to the rise of Famagusta as a commercial hub. ALBRECHT FUESS (Marburg) continued this analysis of Italian trading patterns with the Mamluk Sultanate. The rivalry between Venice and Genoa was often manifested in the policies of each republic vis-a-vis the Greek and Muslim states of the Mediterranean. Fuess argued that the Genoese were not a trusted trade partner of the Mamluks; their piracy in Mamluk waters was rife and was often regarded by the Genoese as more profitable than trade. This was in contrast to Venice, which had re-established official commercial ties with Egypt in 1344. The attack on Alexandria in 1365 was thus primarily blamed on the

Genoese by the Mamluks, despite being a predominantly Veneto-Cypriot enterprise. In fact, this incident can be seen as a key phase of literary antagonism between Christianity and Islam. CHRISTIAN CASELLI (Pisa) provided an example of a Florentine ambassador in Mamluk Egypt, Felice Brancacci. Caselli demonstrated that Brancacci's diary can provide us with a valuable insight into various facets of the situation of Italian mercantile communities in Egypt: patterns of alliances between them; interdependence and legal aspects of their positions in the sultanate; and relations with the Mamluk authorities. Importantly, Caselli showed that Brancacci's diary also outlines the steps through which the representatives of the trading diasporas could gain an audience with the sultan.

The panel „Diasporic Communities in Rhodes“ shifted our study of diasporic communities from Mamluk Egypt back to the Aegean. The first contribution, by TERESA SARTORE (Heidelberg) posed the question as to what interests and motivations caused a conflict of relations between the Venetians and Hospitallers, two seemingly cooperative states. She asserted that commercial rivalry, economic interests, crusading commitments, political alliances, and religious and ethnical issues all played a part. Sartore stated that the main source of tension between the two islands originated in the relations between Rhodes, the kingdom of France and the Genoese. This diplomatic triangle was fostered by the French influence among the Order of Saint John and by the crusading efforts of the charismatic, but erratic, Marshal Boucicaut, governor of Genoa. ANTHONY LUTTRELL (Bath) highlighted the difference between Hospitaller Rhodes, an island state, and other Latin ruled islands, such as Crete and Chios, which were colonies. He showed that, after the Hospitaller conquest of 1306, indigenous and other Greeks, a minority of Latins, some Jews, Syrians, and others, including a variety of slaves, all populated Rhodes. Luttrell demonstrated that these categories were not always clearly distinguishable. Mixed marriages apart, there were Greek immigrants, imported Greek slaves who were gradually emancipated to form a free peasantry, and Greek inhabitants of the

town who were obliged to a marine servitude on the galleys. There were the Hospitaller brethren and their followers and mercenaries, temporarily resident Latin merchants and bankers, and Latins who became permanent settlers. Luttrell stressed that within this complex cultural milieu, each of these groups had its own identity, and the Hospitallers succeeded in fusing this mixed community into a functioning state. This theme was expanded on by JÜRGEN SARNOWSKY (Hamburg), who talked about the status of resident Jews and Muslims on Rhodes and their relationship with the ruling Hospitaller brethren. He gave an example of Jewish doctors, who were employed in the hospital and received some privileges in return for their service. In regard to Muslims, Sarnowsky established that the Order had many dealings with Egypt and Syria; it imported grain, used Muslim slaves and at times granted Muslim merchants safe conduct.

These panels were supplemented by a keynote lecture from BENJAMIN ARBEL (Tel Aviv) on the use of the Bill of Exchange by Jewish merchants operating in the Mediterranean during the early modern period. The paper focussed on the difficulties encountered by these societies in adopting a financial instrument that was already being used by Christian merchants and financiers. It was interesting to learn that a rather conservative attitude prevailed among early modern rabbis, which aimed at limiting the possibilities of using this financial tool. This, in turn, could constitute an obstacle to Jews who were trying to compete with Christians in international trade. However, Arbel explained that questions remain over whether Jewish merchants followed the rulings of more conservative rabbis and whether such religious inhibitions, which only applied to credit operations among coreligionists, motivated Jewish merchants to use the fully-developed bill of exchange in dealing with Christians.

GEORG CHRIST (Heidelberg) summed up the key findings of the conference in his final comments and suggested some areas for future inter-disciplinary collaboration. He highlighted that the conference proceedings had focussed on three cultural centres necessary to reduce complexity: Islam, Byzantium and

Mediterranean European littoral. Christ recapped the many detailed examples of legal frameworks we had discussed, but also highlighted some areas of ambiguity, such as in the definitions surrounding the status of diasporic groups on Rhodes. He reminded us of the various examples of informal mechanisms introduced to facilitate transcultural exchange, such as the mobility of intermediaries, the role of the family and the forming of coalitions. He also touched upon the role of technology and techniques as transcultural agents; as well as the role of religion in hindering or facilitating such a process. Finally, he stressed the importance of future interdisciplinary exchange and dialogue needed to further our understanding.

Although this author was not able to attend all of the papers presented at the conference, he was struck by its scope and range. It appears that the real strength of the conference lay in its successful integration of a vast array of research areas, especially its ability to blend diverse chronological periods (1200-1700), geographical areas (from Flanders to Cairo, the Black Sea to the Adriatic), and methodological backgrounds (such as the social sciences, economics, religious history, legal frameworks). This, coupled with contributions from scholars from all areas of the academic spectrum, be it eminent professors or PhD students, made Union in Separation both intellectually stimulating and highly enjoyable. It is an example of the great potential of Transcultural Studies, which by maximising academic collaboration, can increase our understanding of communication between divergent cultural groups.

Conference Overview:

Opening Lecture

David Jacoby (Jerusalem)

Cross-cultural Transfers of Industrial Technologies in the Late Middle Ages: Incentives, Promoters and Agents

Panel 1A: „Diasporas and Imperial Rule in the Thirteenth-Century Aegean“

Organiser: Stefan Burkhardt

Chair: Jörg Peltzer

Günter Prinzing (Mainz)

In Quest of (Trading) Diasporas in the Byzan-

tine States of Epiros and Trebizond ca. 1210-1304

Krijnie Ciggaar (Leiden)
Merchants in the Crusader States

Ekaterini Mitsiou (Wien)
The Empire of Nicaea (1204-1261): A Transcultural Society?

Dimitrios Moschos (Athens)
Negotium Graecorum – Trade as Theory and Practice in Ecclesiastical Contacts between the West and the World of Late Byzantium

Alexandr Osipian (Kramatorsk)
Practices of Integration and Segregation: Armenian Trading Diasporas and Their Interaction with the Genoese and Venetian Colonies in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea, 1289-1484

Panel 1B: „Early Modern Italy’s Diasporas I“
Organisers: Wolfgang Kaiser, Roberto Zaugg
Chair: Wolfgang Kaiser. Discussant: Roberto Zaugg

Maartje van Gelder (Amsterdam)
Between Diasporas: The Netherlandish Traders in Venice, c. 1580 – 1650

Guillaume Calafat (Paris)
Osmanlı -Speaking Diasporas. Between Marseilles, Tunis and Livorno (1600-1650)

Mathieu Grenet (Italy)
A World in Motion: Inter-Communal Exchanges and the Shaping of the Greek Diaspora, c.1770-c.1830

Panel 2A: „Early Modern Italy’s Diasporas II“
Organisers: Wolfgang Kaiser, Roberto Zaugg
Chair: Roberto Zaugg
Discussant: Wolfgang Kaiser

Stephan Sander (Zürich)
Merchants of the Adriatic: The Jadertine Trading Community, c. 1550

Daniel Jütte (Heidelberg)
The Office of the Jewish Consul in the Early Modern Mediterranean. A Study in the Exchange of Legal and Economic Concepts

Evelyn Korsch (Dresden)
The Sceriman Between Venice and New Julfa: An Armenian Trading Network and its Socio-cultural Impacts (17th and 18th centuries)

Panel 2B: „Diasporic Groups in Mamluk Egypt 1300-1450 I“

Organiser: Anna Katharina Angermann
Chair: John L. Meloy

Anna K. Angermann (Heidelberg)
A Muslim of Turkish Origin Kept Prisoner on a Genoese Ship in the Port of Alexandria. A Transcultural Encounter According to Al-Nuwayrī’s Kitāb al-Ilmām

Johannes Pahlitzsch (Mainz)
Byzantine Saints as Captives in Mamluk Egypt and Ottoman Anatolia

Francisco Apellániz (Aix-Marseille)
At the Fringe of a Diaspora: Venetian Agents Between Alexandria and Cairo

Giuseppe Cecere (Cairo)
Between Trade and Religion: Italian Merchants in Mamluk Cairo

Panel 3A: „Diasporic Groups in Mamluk Egypt 1300-1450 II“

Organiser: Anna Katharina Angermann
Chair: Giuseppe Cecere

Peter Edbury (Cardiff)
Reflections on the Mamluk Destruction of Acre (1291)

Albrecht Fuess (Marburg)
Why Venice, not Genoa. How Venice Emerged as the Mamluks’ Favourite European Trading Partner After 1365

Cristian Caselli (Pisa)
Getting to Know the World of Trading Diasporas in Mamluk Egypt: Felice Brancacci’s Account of his Embassy to the Sultan on Behalf of Florence (1422)

Mike Carr (London)
The Influence of Papal Policy on the Italian Merchants and Turkish Maritime Emirates in the Aegean: 1300-1350

Panel 3B: „Trade Networks in the Later Middle Ages I“

Organisers: Lars Börner, Franz-Julius Morche
Chair: Lars Börner

Sergio Currarin (Venezia)
Social and Economic Networks: An Overview

Franz-Julius Morche (Heidelberg)
Business Networks as Complex Systems –

Venetian Merchants in the Eastern Mediterranean, 1400-1420

Yadira González de Lara (València) and Francesca Trivellato (Yale)

How to Trust a Stranger: Evidence from the Sephardic Diaspora and its Cross-Cultural Networks in the Early Modern Period

Christof Jeggler (Bamberg)

Markets from Networks – Commercial Networks and the Constitution of Preindustrial Markets

Panel 4A: „Diasporic Communities in Rhodes I“

Organiser: Teresa Sartore Senigaglia

Chair: David Jacoby

Teresa Sartore Senigaglia (Heidelberg)

Non-Isolated Islands: Diplomatic Relations Between Venice and Rhodes in the First Decade of the Fifteenth Century

Anthony Luttrell (Bath)

Mixed Identities on Hospitaller Rhodes

Pierre Bonneaud (France)

The Influential Trade Community of Western Merchants in Hospitaller Rhodes During the Fifteenth Century, 1421-1480

Jürgen Sarnowsky (Hamburg)

Muslims and Jews on Hospitaller Rhodes

Panel 4B: „Trade Networks in the Later Middle Ages II“

Organisers: Lars Börner, Franz-Julius Morche

Chair: Lars Börner

Jared Rubin (Fullerton)

Bills of Exchange, Financial Networks, and Quasi-Impersonal Exchange in Western Europe and the Middle East

Regina Grafe (U.S.A.)

Was There a Market for Institutional Solutions in Pre-Modern Europe? Multifunctionality and complementarity in Pre-Modern Commercial Institutions

Battista Severgnini (Copenhagen) and Lars Börner (Berlin)

Epidemic Trade

Erik O. Kimbrough (Maastricht)

The Impact of Social History and Geography on the Development of Long-Distance Trade:

A Laboratory Investigation

Panel 5A: „Diasporic Communities in Rhodes II – Historical Context“

Organiser: Teresa Sartore Senigaglia

Chair: Anthony Luttrell

Nicolas Vatin (Paris)

L'insertion de l'Ordre de Saint-Jean-de-Jérusalem en Méditerranée orientale entre les deux siècles de Rhodes (1480-1522)

Angeliki Tzavara (Paris)

Some Aspects of the Venetian Presence in Trebizond in the Fourteenth century

Ioannis Panagiotopoulos (Athens)

The Controversy for the «Eighth Ecumenical Council» and the Position of Metropolitan Neilos of Rhodes (Fifteenth Century)

Panel 5B: „From Venice to India: Networks, Diasporas and Transcultural Flows“

Organiser: Georg Christ

Chair: Sven Externbrink

Ievgen Khvalkov (Budapest)

Trading Diasporas in the Venetian and Genoese Trading Stations in Tana, 1430 – 1440: A Case Study

Tijana Krstic (Budapest)

Morisco Refugees' Relations with Venetian and French Trading and Diplomatic Communities in Istanbul, 1570s - early 1600s

Andrea Caracausi (Venezia)

The Venetian Diaspora and the European-Asian Trade during the Late Sixteenth Century

Panel 6A: „Legal Pluralism and Diasporic Communities in Historical Perspective“

Organiser: Teresa Sartore Senigaglia

Chair: Dirk Heirbaut

Prakash Shah (London)

The Socio-Legal Adaptation of British Immigrants in Turkey: A Theoretical Puzzle

Seán P. Donlan (Limerick)

A Patchwork of Accommodations": The Law and Other Legalities in Eighteenth-Century Ireland

David Zammit (Malta)

Legal Pluralism as a Tool of the Colonial State: the „Legal Othering“ of the Maltese as Na-

tives and as Migrants

Panel 6B: „From Venice to Tana: Networks, Diasporas and Transcultural Flows“

Organiser: Georg Christ

Chair: Carla Meyer

Fabien Faugeron (Italy)

La « nation » vénitienne en Sicile dans la seconde moitié du XVe siècle: l'exemple de la compagnie des frères Valier

Heinrich Lang (Bamberg)

Levantine Goods in Western Cultures: Adapting Rugs and Silk Cloth

Isabella Cecchini (Venezia) and Luciano Pezzolo (Venezia)

Florence at Venice: Florentine Bankers in Early Modern Venice

Panel Discussion: „The Uncanny Charm of the Other Old Diasporas – New Diasporas: Challenges of Integration and Contribution of Historical Research“

Douglas Murray, Regina Grafe, Dirk Heirbaut, Arthur Becker, Roberto Zaugg

Moderator: Jae Chung

Keynote Lecture

Benjamin Arbel (Tel Aviv)

Mediterranean Jewish Diasporas and the Bill of Exchange: Coping with a Foreign Financial Instrument (15th-17th Centuries)

Concluding Remarks

Georg Christ

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