



Cultural and Social History

The Journal of the Social History Society

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rfcs20>

Navigating Family Welfare and Dwelling Space for Mercantile Migrants in Venice, 1550–1700

Tamsin Prideaux

To cite this article: Tamsin Prideaux (2022) Navigating Family Welfare and Dwelling Space for Mercantile Migrants in Venice, 1550–1700, *Cultural and Social History*, 19:4, 371–387, DOI: [10.1080/14780038.2022.2089077](https://doi.org/10.1080/14780038.2022.2089077)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780038.2022.2089077>



© 2022 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.



Published online: 21 Jun 2022.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 478



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Navigating Family Welfare and Dwelling Space for Mercantile Migrants in Venice, 1550–1700

Tamsin Prideaux

School of History, Classics and Archaeology, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK

ABSTRACT

Mercantile migrants in Venice drew upon family ties and ruler's obligations to negotiate their rights and privileges. Drawing from a source base of immigrants' petitions to the Venetian Collegio and the Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia, this paper reveals that foreign merchants also exploited the ties of trust and reciprocity that traditionally bound ruler and subject in medieval and early modern supplication. However, immigrants confronted limits to reciprocity when it came to the authorities' moral or civic concerns in the regulation of space.

KEYWORDS

Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia; foreigners; merchants; petitions

Introduction

In cross-cultural trade, the early modern merchant and his family faced natural and human-made perils, uncertainties and alien surroundings which could be mitigated by trust in companions, clients and institutions.¹ The importance of trust and the fatal consequences of broken trust is demonstrated by a violent incident occurring some time before April 1603. On the 19 April 1603, the Venetian Collegio approved letters to be sent to Naples and Brindisi requesting recompense for various Ottoman Turkish merchants' goods, which were on a ship bound for Brindisi. These letters were the authorities' action in response to petitions from the Ottoman Turkish merchants and described the following story.² The captain of the ship, one Matthio Rosso from Zadar, had promised to conduct the goods of several Turkish merchants and take on board eight of these merchants, from Dubrovnik to Brindisi. However, in the high seas, Rosso murdered five out of the eight of the Turkish merchants and 'made the others into slaves'.³ Rosso was sent to prison for his crime and the goods were secured in a safe place. This story reveals one of the worst possible outcomes of a deal made between two parties and the potential dangers of maritime trade: it could have also damaged the merchants' desire to trade in Venice.⁴ The precarious nature of cross-cultural migration did not vanish once travellers had arrived safely in Venice, but continued throughout their sojourn, and affected their families. It was therefore essential for the Venetian authorities to establish a certain level of trust in their dealings with mercantile migrants which was dependent on certain obligations such as providing for family.⁵ Trust in horizontal relationships, between merchants and different economic actors, was also vital for securing lodging in a foreign city.

CONTACT Tamsin Prideaux  tamsinprideaux@gmail.com  School of History, Classics and Archaeology, University of Edinburgh, William Robertson School, Old Medical School Teviot Place, EH8 9AG Edinburgh, UK

© 2022 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Although trust is often thought of as an inherently positive term, in the case of the relationship between Venetian authorities and mercantile migrants, it is by no means indicative of equality or friendship. Indeed, trust inherently denotes a relationship of dependency between two parties which can involve an imbalance in agency and power between the two parties. One party must need to trust another based on an inability to guarantee the outcome of a situation. As Piotr Sztompka has observed, there is no need for trust if we are certain about the future, and if we do need trust, then it reveals that we are unable to control the response of another party.⁶ Therefore trust is the assurance that allows a profitable relationship to function in an uncertain world. As Edward Muir argues, trust among merchants functioned as a bulwark against the precarious nature of long-distance trade.⁷ I define trust and reciprocity as two separate but intertwined concepts. Trust can be practised by one party in an event, transaction or relationship or it can involve both parties: it does not always have to be mutual although it often is.⁸ Trust also suggests pre-existing societal norms or mutual understanding. By contrast, reciprocity must always be two-sided and relies less on loyalty or goodwill.⁹ My position here is based on Natalie Zemon Davis' *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France*, where she maps out this virtuous circle of reciprocity in terms of gift exchange.¹⁰ The significance of trust in Venetian-Ottoman commerce is established in academic scholarship.¹¹ However, this article more explicitly addresses the significance of trust and reciprocity beyond commercial interactions; instead illuminating how these concepts informed the negotiation of welfare and space for foreign and immigrant individuals.

This article investigates how mercantile migrants secured financial and spatial security for themselves and their families through the systems of trust and reciprocity which were necessary for the successful functioning of early modern trade. It focuses on the relationship between mercantile migrants and the Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia since this body had the most influence in migrant traders' lives and livelihoods. The interactions outlined in the Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia archives reveal that expectations and obligations, the mechanisms through which trust and reciprocity operate, were ever present in the process of petitioning for, and granting requests. Furthermore, the survival of the Cinque Savi in Venice's notoriously competitive corporate bureaucracy depended on the success of their interactions with foreign merchants, making the Cinque Savi reliant not only on the goodwill of their superiors in state hierarchy, but also on their social inferiors, the foreign merchants themselves. These findings complicate the narratives of Venetian oppression and control of minorities, and Venice's grudging *raison d'état* attitude towards foreign traders, since they shed light on wider political motivations which affected negotiating relationships between mercantile migrants and the authorities.¹² This is not to say that suspicion and control of religious minorities and foreigners did not play a part in Venetian authorities' actions towards these groups. The balance of power was certainly never equal, and in the administering of dwelling space, which is analysed in the final section of this article, the limits of trust become apparent. However, this article contends that minority individuals were nevertheless able to exploit formal channels such as petitioning to achieve some agency over their place in the city. They achieved this by positioning themselves in a dependent relationship of obligation and trust with the Venetian authorities.¹³

Since Filippo de Vivo's *Information and Communication in Venice* placed emphasis on the importance of ordinary people engaging in political *communication* with the authorities, more studies have rethought the political hierarchy of pre-modern Venice, and other Italian politics, to reveal that the vast majority of the population without direct political power were still able to shape or influence the organs of government through various means.¹⁴ The last two decades have also seen an increase in mobility studies of the Mediterranean within the emerging field of global history, which seeks to understand the mechanisms which facilitated, furthered, or deterred cross-cultural movement and connection, as well as the broader power dynamics of global movement.¹⁵ This article furthers our understanding of political communication and cross-cultural movement in the everyday, as it turns the focus on individuals' strategies for negotiating with the authorities and locating hospitality in the city. The examples of social and family welfare examined in these sections illuminate the position of medium-term foreign visitors and long-term immigrant residents in Venice; they indicate the levels of trust, obligation, and dependence which the Venetian authorities owed to the families of traders who provided a stable and long-term service and made Venice their home for at least a significant period. A duality of foreignness and belonging was also exploited by short-term residents, but they were less likely to use, or indeed need to use, an obligation to their families as a rhetorical device or real responsibility. Therefore, the final section examines how short-term residents used bonds of trust in horizontal relationships to navigate dwelling and trading places; this follows the approach of historians concerned with networks and mobility, and sheds new light on the everyday occurrences which facilitated cross-cultural mobility in Venice.¹⁶ This article offers a fresh perspective and evidence on how everyday mechanisms of mobility interacted with broader notions of trust, mistrust, and reciprocity in the fluid early modern Mediterranean.

Foreigners, the Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia, and petitioning

Whilst the presence of foreign merchants, agents, and intermediaries in Venice was crucial to the functioning of long-distance Eastern trade after 1500, these individuals and communities brought with them perceived potential for disruption to the civic order through religious and cultural difference, as well as potential physical harm to the body politic.¹⁷ Historiography of the last two decades has generally highlighted the tolerance of religious heterogeneity in the Ottoman Empire, in contrast to Catholic Europe, which restricted the legal status, economic activity, and dwelling places of religious and cultural minorities to a greater extent.¹⁸ In Venice, non-Catholic immigrants were granted fewer legal rights than non-Muslim inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire: citizenship categories – *cittadinanza de intus/ et de extra* – and their attendant legal status were open only to Catholic foreigners of wealth and long residency in the city.¹⁹ Thus, the relationship between the authorities and foreigners or immigrants could be seen as inherently mistrustful. However, foreign merchants in fact enjoyed the same prestigious economic rights as *cittadini*: namely to practise long-distance maritime trade, a right which was technically denied to the vast majority of the Venetian resident population known as the *popolo/popolani*.²⁰ In theory, this right was originally restricted to travelling merchants [*viandanti*] but in practise many merchants, especially first in the German, Jewish, and Armenian communities and later in the Netherlandish and English communities, settled

and lived in Venice under the same favourable terms.²¹ Foreign merchants enjoyed a higher economic status than the Venetian *popolo* but their long-term residence in Venice required the expression of a dual Venetian/foreign identity to maintain trading privileges whilst settling permanently in Venice; this duality is exemplified in the petitions which highlighted both economic benefit to and loyal dependence on the Venetian authorities.

The Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia was the main authority in Venice which addressed mercantile needs, enacted trade regulations, and acted as interlocutors for immigrants with higher authorities such as the Senate. At the turn of the fifteenth century, Venice was suffering the aftermath of a deep economic crisis. Three of its four major family banks had collapsed at the turn of the sixteenth century, the Italian wars were proving costly and patrician trade overseas was dwindling.²² The Senate set up a dedicated board in 1507, the Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia, in order to regulate and encourage trade between 'foreign nations' and Venice.²³ Although the Cinque Savi's role was at first limited to trade focused activities such as shipping licences, between 1541 and 1620 it had commandeered regulatory powers over the trade transactions of foreign merchants, the space in which they lived, where their goods were stored, and what types of commercial activity they were permitted to practise. After assuming jurisdiction over the Ghetto Vecchio and its Levantine Jewish inhabitants in 1541, the Cinque Savi's role began to encompass the personal as well as the commercial.²⁴ The Cinque Savi was an important institution for understanding the structures of hierarchy and power in the Venetian Republic and the place of mercantile migrants within that structure.²⁵ The Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia held a unique position as both representative for mercantile migrant interests and simultaneously enforcing Venetian regulation of immigrant trade and daily life. This paradoxical role forced the body to maintain a fine balance between the conflicting concerns of Venetian economic interests, the welfare of mercantile migrants and their families, and an anxiety to maintain civic and religious order in the city.

Petitions are crucial for understanding migrant-authority negotiations in Venice.²⁶ These are drawn from the *risposte* series in the Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia archive, and the Collegio, *Suppliche* records. Although petitions were ultimately directed to the Collegio, mercantile migrants mostly addressed their petitions to the Cinque Savi, because this magistracy was likely to offer them a favourable response. The Savi then drew up *risposte* [responses]; these summarised the content and language of the petition, using original phrases verbatim, and at the end contained the Cinque Savi's recommendation for action. The petitions were then sent to the Collegio, and the Cinque Savi's opinion was almost always ratified, since this magistracy was a Senate-composed body with inappellable powers. Petitions were composed either collectively or individually. This article focuses on individual's strategies, which relied on the personal obligations of dependence; the petitions are drawn from a sample of 125 individual petitions, which have been cross-referenced with the Collegio, *Suppliche* records.²⁷ For section three, the source base is mixed between petitions to, and regulations made by the Cinque Savi; these are drawn from an overall source base of c.1000 mixed documents in the seconda serie of the Cinque Savi records. These sources present various issues of interpretation, being filtered through official language, and archived by the authorities.²⁸ However, since the focus of this study is to understand how immigrants and visiting merchants used official

language, and the kinds of ties and obligations which were important to emphasise, petitions are a uniquely valuable source for analysing the negotiating relationship between individuals and the authorities.²⁹

Family obligations and negotiation with the authorities

Family ties played an important role in the rhetoric of supplication. Poverty and discontent threatened the fabric of Venice's hierarchical social structure, and the authorities took measures to manage poverty through direct charity, employment by the Venetian government, and various charitable institutions.³⁰ Although mercantile migrants were not Venetian citizens, the concerns of poverty and civic order also applied to them as participants in Venice's trade economy and as temporary or long-term residents in the city. Petitions for the appointment of a certain role, or for higher wages often emphasised the poverty of an individual and/or, most importantly, his dependent family. Poverty was often used as a rhetorical trope in the case of wealthier supplicants, but even this indicates the concern for civic order which both supplicants and the authorities understood. Trust between individuals and institutions in Venice therefore operated on an understanding of the responsibilities and obligations between both parties. Trust did not necessarily require a personal relationship between supplicant and authority, but nevertheless drawing upon themes of kinship, family ties and social bonds helped to reinforce these responsibilities and obligations. According to Ronald Weissman, in Renaissance Florence, 'one sought to deal whenever possible with patrons, clients, family, and friends, or, failing this, to convert all neutral relations . . . into ties of obligation, gratitude and reciprocity'.³¹ Invoking these ties in a petition reminded the authorities of the petitioner's familial obligations, and by extension, the authorities' obligations to their subjects to maintain civic order. Immigrant petitioners successfully used the claims of family dependency to shape their relationship with the authorities into one of obligation and trust.

When Giacomo de Nores, the Cyprus-born Public Dragoman for Venice, petitioned for a considerable pay rise of more than 200 ducats, he brought to the attention of the Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia the family members he had to support.³² Significantly, when representing de Nores in a request to the Senate for de Nores' pay rise, the Cinque Savi chose to repeatedly emphasise the dependence of 'numerous' family members: 'having his mother, aunts, wife, children . . . to sustain, [them] having lost all their means of sustenance'.³³ This emphasis on family dependency was intertwined with the other reasons for de Nores's pay rise, illustrating that familial obligations were considered equally valid justifications as experience and competence in office.

Numerous foreign-born brokers used this understanding of familial obligation and dependence in their applications for a *gratia* [licence] to practise brokerage.³⁴ In 1590, a certain Anzolo Seraffino, a culturally ambiguous figure recently arrived from Tripoli claimed that he should be made a broker, even though by permitting him a licence, the Cinque Savi would exceed the 190 cap on brokerage licences.³⁵ It is not clear where Anzolo Seraffino had originally resided, as the petition only emphasised his capture at the hands of the Turks and the fact that he had spent considerable time in Tripoli, but he was likely a resident of a Venetian Stato da Mar territory and had been captured during war or travel. The Cinque Savi endorsed his petition and when presenting it to the Senate,

focussed on three key issues: Seraffino's ill-treatment and imprisonment at the hands of the Turks, his poverty, and, crucially, the financial dependence of his poverty-stricken family still trapped in Tripoli. In his current pitiful financial state, the only way Seraffino could support or rejoin his family, was to become a broker for the Turks and Armenians. Seraffino was appealing to a sense of obligation that the Venetian authorities had to provide security for their Christian subjects. Furthermore, by mentioning his family's location (in the Ottoman Empire and therefore a danger zone for conversion to Islam), was a hint that the authorities, as Christians, also had a responsibility to protect the spiritual well-being of his family. Seraffino's petition was not an isolated case: from 1585–1634, 76% of brokerage requests mentioned family dependency or family ties as one reason to be granted a licence and these requests were all endorsed by the Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia.³⁶ Similarly to Giacomo de Nores's request for a pay-rise, the importance of family dependency was emphasised as much as linguistic expertise or experience. Indeed, in many brokerage petitions, family obligations were more emphasised than the broker's experience or knowledge of languages. In 1607, a petition for Gabriel Zucato from Cyprus emphasised family obligations twice in the petition, his linguistic abilities in Greek, Ottoman Turkish and Arabic being mentioned almost as an afterthought.

Even in more significant requests, family obligations helped win over the authorities. In 1574, Francesco de Dimitri Lettino, a Greek innkeeper and broker, petitioned the Venetian authorities to set up a segregated Fondaco [a dwelling place and warehouse for goods]³⁷ for Ottoman Turks, with himself and his descendants as the paid guardians of that dwelling place.³⁸ He emphasised the difficulty of supporting his family as the final argument at the end of a petition:

“finding myself responsible for a wife with nine sons and daughters, and my brother's two nieces and my own two nieces, that were made prisoner in this Turkish war . . . have pity, your Serenity, for your miserable and fallen subjects . . . to maintain and in this way sustain this my miserable family, that without your gracious bounty, I am out of hope to support them.”³⁹

Whilst Lettino's petition took many years to bear fruit (the Fondaco dei Turchi was finally established in 1621), the Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia, who assumed jurisdiction of Fondaco dei Turchi matters in 1576, always ensured that Lettino's descendants continued the family post of Custodian of the Fondaco.⁴⁰

These examples demonstrate how foreigners used family ties to invoke a sense of responsibility in the authorities. Therefore, the foreign merchants trusted that the authorities held certain obligations towards family. However, trust went both ways. The language in the petitions indicates that supplicants had to prove their own trustworthiness to assure this goodwill from the authorities. The fact of Seraffino's steadfast Christian faith in the face of Ottoman imprisonment was the token of trustworthiness which demanded a reciprocal response from the Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia and the Senate. In Giacomo Nores' case the Cinque Savi noted his 'loyal' service to Venice as dragoman, and every time Nores' name was used he was referred to as the 'most loyal Nores'.⁴¹ Lettino shows his loyalty by describing his 'immense desire' to see Venice rid of scandal.⁴² These proofs of reliability may have been necessary due to the potential untrustworthiness of the foreigner: they were required to show their loyalty to Venice as it could not be taken for granted. Thus, in these instances trust needed to be mutual, but the authorities required a 'token' of trustworthiness whereas supplicants entirely

relied on the goodwill of the authorities. The risk of a negative response was greater for supplicants. Therefore, the invoking of family ties and obligations in petitions allowed supplicants to exercise agency during the bargaining process of a petition.

Death, family and the role of the Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia

Obligations to foreign merchants and their families continued even after their death. Trust was crucial when a merchant died in Venice and, not only was the journey dangerous, merchants also regularly died whilst sojourning or living in Venice. A merchant travelling to Venice would need to trust that if he died there, the authorities would deal appropriately with his estate, and take care of his family if necessary. Dealing with deceased merchants' estates was a commonplace activity for the authorities, but they were also responsible for more personal welfare.⁴³ The first port-of-call for assistance in care of dependents might be a religious structure such as a confraternity/scuola, as in the case of Armenian and Jewish merchants, but the authorities provided a safety net.⁴⁴ Whilst the welfare of Venetian widows and orphans has been relatively well-explored in historiography,⁴⁵ the lives and legal status of immigrant widows and orphans still remain somewhat obscure.⁴⁶ The Cinque Savi archives reveal various instances of this kind of welfare provision, although the documents in this area are not extensive. However, the archive series is very varied, and reflects only a small proportion of documents on any single matter. Therefore, whilst work is still required to uncover this area in greater depth, these examples illustrate that such issues were commonplace, rather than rare. The provision of family welfare and supervising of guardianship illustrates that the ties of dependence and obligation were not merely rhetorical but based in a real responsibility that the Venetian Republic owed, not only to its subjects, but also to foreign merchants and immigrants.

In certain cases of migrant welfare, the Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia acted in its capacity as a promoter of immigrant trade to defend mercantile families against deleterious claims. In 1545, for example, some unnamed children and widow of a deceased German merchant owed his outstanding debts amounting to 280 ducats. The supplicants argued that now they were financially dependent on the dowry of the widow, they would be ruined if they paid the entire debt upfront. The Cinque Savi defended their case to the Avogadori de Comùn by saying that it was not 'proper that this poor woman with her children' use up all their money and suggested that the family might pay back the debt at a rate of 25 ducats a year, until it was cleared, which would take 11 years.⁴⁷ The Cinque Savi expected the family to maintain ties with Venice, and the children to continue trading in the city. Therefore, the exercise of trust was not simply what was owed to the deceased merchant, but also a way of promising future ties of trust and obligation.

In the case of various Armenian families, the Cinque Savi were not only responsible for resolving financial issues which arose after a merchant's death, they were also put in charge of appointing guardianship of the orphans left behind. In 1629 when the Armenian merchant Carabet died, the Cinque Savi were in charge of approving guardianship of the children and their property since they were obliged to 'regulate and administrate' these matters.⁴⁸ They appointed the late Carabet's fellow confraternity member, a certain Cogas Abraf, to be their guardian and caretaker of their estate.⁴⁹ A case of guardianship for an Armenian child, brought before the Cinque Savi in 1704,

illustrates that the authorities were expected to intervene in family welfare if their initial arrangements failed due to the transience of their personal contacts.⁵⁰ Zustan de David had nominated another Armenian merchant, Nazar di Murat, to care of his child's finances and education. However, Nazar di Murat was absent from Venice, now living somewhere in Persia. In the absence of this guardian, Zustan's widow, Isabetta, took this chance to appear before the magistrates to petition for full joint control over her son's estate and finances. The Cinque Savi granted Isabetta unequivocal access to the necessary funds in a detailed agreement which ensured her legal rights to guardianship and education of her child.⁵¹ In these instances, where the mobility of the mercantile profession threatened instability for an individuals' dependents, the authorities were responsible for ensuring their welfare and care. Even in the partially self-governed community of Levantine Jews, vulnerable persons such as widows and children could seek additional support from the Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia to protect their claims.⁵² This indicates that the Venetian Republic's obligations towards semi-permanent, and permanent minority mercantile residents in Venice extended to intervening in family welfare if merchants needed to seek assistance beyond first support networks. Thus, the rhetoric of obligation which reinforced individuals' bartering power in petitions was based not simply on metaphorical ties, but on concrete responsibilities.

Social networks, dwelling spaces, and reciprocity

Although the Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia was responsible for promoting foreign trade and protecting the livelihoods of foreign merchants and their families, a successful arrival and sojourn in Venice also depended on the networks a merchant could build. Whilst Muir argues that merchants established a 'system of trust' in long-distance trade via letters and documentation, physical interactions were also vital to establish and maintain important commercial relationships with previous strangers.⁵³ Shared living spaces was one of the primary and most useful forms of making contacts, or, for a broker, of securing the business of the merchants they lodged in their homes. As Rosa Salzberg has shown, lodging houses and inns were important loci for encounter and exchange.⁵⁴ By analysing space, the concepts of reciprocity and trust can be applied to more horizontal relationships, between merchants, or between merchants and brokers. Dwelling spaces such as the Fondaco dei Turchi also reveal reciprocity and (mis)trust between merchants and the authorities. The space in which immigrant merchants moved and lived posed moral concerns which the Cinque Savi, as part of a Christian republic, were required to address. Despite these concerns, the Cinque Savi still attempted to maintain the appearance of promoting mercantile interests by claiming that the Fondaco would protect merchants and their goods, they were keen to preserve the fine balance of a reciprocal relationship between themselves, the merchants, the Republic of Venice, and the empires from which various merchants hailed.⁵⁵

Brokers were the first and most conveniently situated people to assist in a merchant's arrival in the city. In 1643, the Giustizia Nova charged two Armenian brokers, Balli and Giacomo de Usauf, with running an unlicensed hotel.⁵⁶ A group of Armenian merchants petitioned on their behalf that these brokers should not be castigated for renting out houses to them, and other merchants, because it was a necessary and useful service for merchants arriving in the city. The Cinque Savi supported the Armenian merchants'

petition against the *Giustizia Nova* by using a threefold argument. First, that the brokers provided an essential service to the merchants on arrival ‘to their [merchants’] great advantage and comfort’. Secondly, that the brokers were not transgressing any laws since they neither lived in the houses rented out to the merchants, nor provided any of the usual services associated with hoteliers such as ‘utensils’. Finally, that if the brokers were required to licence their accommodation, the grievous burden of hostelry taxes would be borne by the merchants rather than the brokers.⁵⁷

The 1643 petition has many important implications. It proves that brokers were among the first contacts in the Venetian mercantile community to provide help and services to immigrant merchants upon arrival in the form most useful to people arriving in a new city: by providing lodging.⁵⁸ Presumably, this lodging also provided further benefits and contacts to both merchants and brokers. The brokers had direct access to the merchants whom they could later broker deals for, thus providing them with a dual source of income. They would also be extending their trade networks through this social contact: Armenian and Persian merchants who had further friends and contacts arriving in the city could recommend the [non] hotel which the brokers ran. Merchants themselves could form useful and important trade contacts when staying there. Moreover, the safety provided by a trustworthy lodging house with a good reputation was critical in an environment where foreign merchants could face dangers such as theft and verbal abuse.⁵⁹ ‘Horizontal’ relationships therefore operated on a system of mutual aid and reciprocity since the lodging and contacts provided by brokers was mutually beneficial to both brokers and merchants.

Sharing space was an important way for immigrant merchants to make contact with other merchants and brokers but concomitantly friendships, social networks and group identity could also influence the space that people moved and lived in. For example, friendships with Christians could often facilitate a certain measure of spatial freedom for Turks. During the first years of the establishment of the *Fondaco dei Turchi*, the *Cinque Savi* received a number of petitions from Turks who wished to reside outside the *Fondaco* because of illness.⁶⁰ They had to be specific about the place in which they were now residing, which was usually the house of an Armenian or Venetian merchant sometimes referred to as a ‘friend’ of the Turkish merchant. In 1623, Mehmet Celebi from *Krujë* (a town in north-central Albania), was granted permission to stay with ‘his friend’ *Zuanne Trasardo* whilst he was ill.⁶¹ Between 1623 and 1638 there are 6 documents which give permission to lodge a Turkish merchant outside the *Fondaco dei Turchi*. The relatively small number of documents giving an illness exemption to residence in the *Fondaco* seems to indicate that this was a rare occurrence. However, the nature of documents in the *Cinque Savi* archive, and the language used in the permissions, indicates that illness exemptions were in fact granted regularly. It is extremely rare for routine permission or privilege documents to end up in the *Cinque Savi* archives. We know, for example, that hundreds of Levantine Jewish merchants and their descendants were granted trading ‘privileges’ under the terms of the 1589 charter, yet only a fraction of these privileges appear in the archive.⁶² Moreover, one of the illness exemptions mentions that the same individual was granted an exemption on two previous occasions; these permissions cannot be found in the archives.⁶³ Therefore, the fact that even six of these documents

remain reveals that illness exemption, and therefore residence in the house of a friend or commercial contact was likely a common occurrence. This is highly suggestive of the fact that many Turkish merchants had friends or at least contacts among the Venetian and Armenian merchants that lived throughout the city. One permission reveals the close relationship between brokers and merchants when it describes how an Armenian broker, Simon Iseppo, found Agi Assan, a merchant from Istanbul, ill with fever in his room in the Fondaco. Simon Iseppo then approached the Cinque Savi to request permission to bring Agi Assan out of the Fondaco for the duration of his illness.⁶⁴ Not only did Agi Assan trust Simon Iseppo as his representative to the authorities, but he was also a close enough contact that Simon entered Agi's chambers whilst he was unwell revealing that commercial relationships often crossed the boundary into personal and intimate spheres. These requests to live outside the Fondaco, like the instances of brokers providing lodgings, reveal that a system of trust was also imperative amongst mercantile relationships merchants since the health and wellbeing of foreign merchants depended on their commercial contacts in Venice.⁶⁵

Comparing the diverse spatial experience of Armenian mercantile migrants and Muslim merchants illustrates how reciprocity replaced trust when issues of piety and civic order were threatened by a religious and cultural other. Tellingly, the Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia supported the Armenian brokers who lodged other Armenians. This is significant given that the Cinque Savi themselves sent out multiple prohibitions against brokers from lodging Turkish merchants and from entering ships to talk to immigrant merchants without a specific licence.⁶⁶ Although the Cinque Savi, and other Venetian authorities, were particularly anxious about contact between brokers and merchants, in this 1643 petition they actively endorsed the intimacy of shared dwelling space between brokers and merchants. Of course, the danger of contact between the Armenian brokers and merchants was limited in this instance to clandestine trade transactions, rather than the potential corruption of faith since Armenians, barring a few rare exceptions, were Christians.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, the Armenian brokers were almost certainly breaking Venetian hospitality regulations by not paying hoteliers' taxes, yet the Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia still chose to support their claim against other Venetian authorities. This reveals that the Cinque Savi understood that they would have to 'trust' the brokers' tenuous claim in this instance, because the material benefit provided to the merchants, and by extension the Cinque Savi themselves by promoting their comfort, and therefore encouraging their trade in Venice, was more important than the evasion of hotel taxes. Since the Cinque Savi's attitude in this area was so inconsistent, it shows that when dealing with spatial concerns, 'trust' was often highly dependent on circumstance and therefore may be more accurately described in the realm of dwelling space as reciprocity: the Cinque Savi only chose to favour brokers' lodging permits when the circumstance was mutually beneficial, or when they risked a commercial backlash from those merchants involved. Furthermore, by comparing dwelling space to family obligations, it is clear that recognition of responsibilities and obligations, key elements in fostering trust between strangers, was more ambiguous when it came to how space was regulated. It depended on each individual group's religion, status and what authorities such as the Cinque Savi gained or risked by permitting or forbidding them to live and move in certain spaces. The Cinque Savi might support, for example, the petition from

the Levantine Jews to move into a more spacious area of the ghetto, because it still essentially preserved the balance of control over Jewish dwelling space, and because the Levantine Jews were offering a valuable trading opportunity.⁶⁸ However, in cases such as the Persian Safavid merchants' objection to moving into the Fondaco dei Turchi, the number and importance of their community was not sufficient for their petition to be supported by the Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia. The potential gain offered by the Persian merchants was not enough to outweigh the importance of appeasing moral concerns, thus Safavid Persian merchants were eventually forced into residing in the Fondaco dei Turchi.⁶⁹

Conclusion

Family ties and social networks have important implications for our understanding of how merchants navigated Venice's complex corporate power structure. Although trust was crucial for both sides, individual merchants and their families were on the back foot. They had to trust the goodwill of the Cinque Savi to a much greater extent, since they were in the position of greater risk and vulnerability. However, there was an element of reciprocity in this relationship which helped to assure the trust of immigrant merchants. The case of the German merchant's family shows that the Cinque Savi members had an interest in maintaining the magistracy's trustworthiness. The Cinque Savi needed to prove that they would treat merchants' families fairly to attract merchants to Venice or convince the merchants to stay. Moreover, the Cinque Savi's livelihood depended on their success in encouraging trade: there were a number of other corporate bodies who were ready to take over the jurisdiction of the Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia, should they fail to promote foreign trade. The reciprocal nature of the relationship between the Cinque Savi and the immigrant merchants, could sometimes help to improve or foster trust. However, the investigation of dwelling space reveals that trust was limited and variable depending on the issues presented. If the Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia were dealing with family matters such as the provision for widows and orphans, their obligations towards merchants and their families were more clearly defined and their interactions more reliable. When it came to family, the level of trust between merchants and authorities appeared to be more stable. However, the more arbitrary manner in which the Cinque Savi dealt with issues of lodging suggests that expectations and responsibilities were more equivocal in issues of space since it was a critical area of moral concern. Thus, the interactions between merchants and authorities in issues of space were defined by reciprocity which could not always ensure a favourable outcome for foreign merchants. In a culture of reciprocity, the benefits needed to be mutual, and when they were not, the balance of power shifted to the authorities.

Notes

1. An early version of this article was presented at 'The Venetian Seminar (2019)' at Oxford Brookes University and I am grateful to the participants for their comments and questions. I also thank the anonymous reviewers for their helpful suggestions. This research was supported by funding from the Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation.

2. Archivio di Stato Venezia (ASVe), Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia (VS), seconda serie, busta (b.) 186, 19 April 1603. Archival references will be referred to henceforth in abbreviated form, as in the above parentheses. In the Venetian Republic the calendar year commenced on 1 March. Dates in January and February are kept in their original archival form but indicated as *more veneto* using the abbreviation m.v.
3. Ibid., ‘et gli altri fatti Schiavi’
4. Maritime dangers, such as piracy, were common in the Adriatic Sea and a threat to the functioning of trade routes between Venice and the Ottoman Empire: Molly Greene, *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants: A Maritime History of the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 78–109; Joshua M. White, *Piracy and Law in the Ottoman Mediterranean* (Redwood city: Stanford University Press, 2017).
5. This article scrutinises both merchants and intermediaries such as the Public Dragoman and brokers [sanseri]. Brokers were usually Venetian subjects, but from the Stato da Mar, and were hence viewed as simultaneously Venetian and foreign. The foreign merchants studied in this article are Armenians, Germans, Levantine Jews, Ottoman Turks and Safavid Persians.
6. Piotr Sztompka, *Trust: A Sociological Theory* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), 19.
7. Edward Muir, ‘Trust among Merchants circa 1400,’ in ‘Late Medieval and Renaissance Italian City-State and Beyond: Essays in Honour of M.E. Bratchel,’ special issue, *The South African Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 22/23 (2012): 147–156.
8. The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy 2nd Revised Edition (Oxford: OUP, 2016), entry: ‘trust’
9. Ibid., entry: ‘reciprocity’
10. Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), 3–55.
11. Maria Pia Pedani, ‘A Culture of Trust: Ottoman Merchants and Venetian Notaries in the Early Modern Period’ in *Venetians and Ottomans in the Early Modern Age: Essays on Economic and Social Connected History*, ed. A. Valerio (Venice: Edizioni Ca’ Foscari, 2018), 31–47; E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012).
12. Benjamin Arbel, *Trading Nations: Jews and Venetians in the Early Modern Eastern Mediterranean* (Leiden: Brill, 1995); Maria Fusaro, ‘Politics of Justice/Politics of Trade: foreign merchants and the administration of justice from the records of Venice’s *Giudici del Forestier*,’ *Mélanges de l’École Française de Rome: Italie et Méditerranée modernes et contemporaines* 126.1 (2014) <https://doi.org/10.4000/mefrim.1665>; Dana Katz, *The Jewish Ghetto and the Visual Imagination of Early Modern Venice* (Cambridge: CUP, 2017); Rothman, *Brokering Empire*, 87–121.
13. This article highlights individuals’ relationships with the authorities; collective negotiation was conducted differently, for different purposes. Collective strategies of communication and negotiation are analysed in depth in my current PhD project: ‘Negotiation and Mobility in Early Modern Venice: Armenian, Jewish, and Ottoman Turkish merchants and the Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia, 1541–1700.’ See also, Venice: Robert Davis, Appendix 1, ‘Suppliche in Venice’ which also gives some general information about the petitioning process, *Shipbuilders of the Venetian Arsenal: Workers and Workplace in the Preindustrial City* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1991), 183–197. General: Simona Cerutti and Massimo Vallerani, ‘Suppliques. Lois et cas dans la normativité de l’époque moderne – Introduction,’ *L’Atelier du CRH* 13 (12 June 2015); Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and their Tellers in 16th Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987). Florence: James Shaw, ‘Writing to the Prince: Supplications, Equity and Absolutism in Sixteenth-Century Tuscany,’ *Past & Present* 215 (2012): 51–83.
14. Filippo de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Richard Mackenney, *Venice as the Polity of Mercy: Guilds, Confraternities, and the Social Order, c.1250-c.1650* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019); Ioanna Iordanou, *Venice’s Secret Service: Organising Intelligence in the*

- Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); Claire Judde de Larivière and Maartje Van Gelder, eds. *Popular Politics in an Aristocratic Republic: Political Conflict and Social Contestation in Late Medieval and Early Modern Venice* (London: Routledge, 2020); Samuel Cohn, *Popular Protest and Ideals of Democracy in Late Renaissance Italy* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021.
15. The literature is very broad, but a good recent overview of the Mediterranean is found in Filippo de Vivo, 'Crossroads region: the Mediterranean,' in *The Cambridge World History* Vol. 6, eds. Jerry H. Bentley, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 415–44. A critical and in-depth review of the emerging scholarship on Italy, the Mediterranean, and the Islamic world (pre-2010) can be found in Francesca Trivellato, 'Renaissance Italy and the Muslim Mediterranean in Recent Historical Work,' *The Journal of Modern History* 82.1 (March, 2010): 127–155.
 16. Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: the Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); Rosa Salzberg, 'Little Worlds in Motion: Mobility and Space in the Osterie of Early Modern Venice,' *Journal of Early Modern History* 25.1–2 (2021): 96–117.
 17. Edoardo Demo, 'Gli «Infetti» Italiani e il Commercio Internazionale. Il caso dei nobili e dei mercanti di Vicenza,' in *La Riforma Protestante a Vicenza e nel Dominio Veneto*, ed. E. Franzina and M. Nardello (Vicenza: Accademia Olimpica, 2019), 109–130. On European suspicion of the Levant see Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). For example, the Levant was also commonly associated with bringing plague: Nükhet Varlık, 'New science and old sources: Why the Ottoman experience of plague matters,' in *Pandemic Disease in the Medieval World: Rethinking the Black Death*, ed. Monica H. Green (Amsterdam: Arc Humanities Press, 2015), 201–207.
 18. Eric Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2006) and 'Sex and Transcultural Connections in Early Modern Istanbul,' *Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni* 84.2 (2018): 498–512; De Vivo, 'Crossroads region: the Mediterranean,' 431–5; Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), 1–20, 131–6.
 19. Anna Bellavitis, *Identité, Mariage, Mobilité Sociale: Citoyennes et citoyens à Venise au XVIe siècle* (Rome: École française de Rome, 2001), 65–104; Blake de Maria, *Becoming Venetian: Immigrants and the Arts in Early Modern Venice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).
 20. Indeed, Alvise Sanudo, an unusually anti-immigrant Cinque Savi member, objected to the trade conditions of foreign merchants on the grounds that they were elevated above many Venetians: ASVe, VS, prima serie, b. 141, 10 February 1603 (m.v.). As Luciano Pezzolo points out, maritime trade was also practiced by non-citizens albeit under the radar: 'The Venetian Economy', in *A Companion to Venetian History, 1400–1797*, ed. Eric Dursteler (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2014), 268.
 21. Philippe Braunstein, *Les Allemands à Venise (1380–1520)* (Rome: École française de Rome, 2016); Maria Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean: The Decline of Venice and the Rise of England, 1450–1700* (Cambridge: CUP, 2015), 202–35; Maartje Van Gelder, *Trading Places: The Netherlandish Merchants in Early Modern Venice* (Brill: Leiden, 2009); Benjamin Ravid, 'Venice and its Minorities,' in *A Companion to Venetian History*, 449–85.
 22. Juraj Kittler, 'Too Big to Fail: The 1499–1500 Banking Crisis in Renaissance Venice,' *Journal of Cultural Economy* 5.2 (May 2012): 165–178; Frederic Chapin Lane, 'Venetian Bankers, 1496–1533: a study in the early stages of deposit banking,' *Journal of Political Economy* 45.2 (April 1937): 189 & 197 and *Venice: A Maritime Republic* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1973), 241–249; R.C. Mueller, *The Venetian Money Market: Banks, Panics, and Public Debt, 1200–1500* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1997); Pezzolo, 'The Venetian Economy', 268.

23. ASVe, VS, prima serie, b. 24, *Capitolare I*, 15 January 1506 (m.v.) and Senato, Terra, Deliberazioni, 15 October 1517. See also Maria Borgherini-Scarabellin, 'Il Magistrato dei Cinque Savi alla Mercanzia dalla Istituzione alla caduta della Repubblica' in *Miscellanea di Storia Veneto-Tridentina*, vol. 2, *R. Deputazione Veneto-Tridentina di Storia Patria Volume II* (Venice: La R. Deputazione Editrice, 1926), 16.
24. Benjamin Ravid, 'The Establishment of the Ghetto Vecchio of Venice: Background and Reappraisal,' *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies 2* (1975): 153–167, 161–166.
25. The most in-depth and recent study of Venice's corporate governmental structure can be found in James Shaw, *The Justice of Venice: Authorities and Liberties in the Urban Economy 1550–1700* (Oxford: OUP, 2006).
26. My PhD dissertation provides a detailed description and analysis of the petitioning process for foreigners and immigrants, and an in-depth reflection on the nature of power and agency in petitioning. Erasmo Castellani is currently the only historian to effectively address the Venetian petitioning system in relation to subjects in the Stato da Mar: 'Negotiating Sovereignty through Petitions in the Early Modern Mediterranean: Patterns of Political Expression in the Venetian Stato da Mar' (Unpublished PhD diss., Duke University, 2021).
27. The Collegio, *Suppliche* records contain thousands of original petitions, and to ascertain general trends of language and address, and to cross-reference some original petitions with the Cinque Savi archives, I read through c.3000 of these petitions to the Collegio across a time span of 100 years. Due to time constraints, these readings were necessarily cursory, with some documents analysed in greater depth. Collegio, *Suppliche*, suppliche di dentro, b. 1–7; 16–17; 45; 48–51; 58, [1565–1662].
28. Filippo de Vivo 'Archival Intelligence: Diplomatic Correspondence, Information Overload, and Information Management in Italy, 1450–1650,' in *Archives and Information in the Early Modern World*, eds. Liesbeth Corens, Kate Peters and Alexandra Walsham (Oxford: Published for The British Academy, OUP, 2018), 53–85, 55.
29. See Andreas Würzler for a compelling argument on the importance of petitions as a source base for the voices of 'ordinary' people: Andreas Würzler, 'Voices from Among the "Silent Masses": Humble Petitions and Social Conflicts in Early Modern Central Europe,' In *Petitions in Social History*, ed. Lex Heerma van Voss, *International Review of Social History Supplements* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 11–13, 32–34. More recently, the AHRC project led by Brodie Waddell, Jason Peacey, and Sharon Howard has emphasised the importance of petitioning in seventeenth-century England: 'The Power of Petitioning in Seventeenth-Century England' <https://petitioning.history.ac.uk/publications/>. For a global overview see David Zaret, 'Petition-and-Response and Liminal Petitioning in Comparative/Historical Perspective,' *Social Science History* 43.3 (2019): 431–51. More work is required to achieve an in-depth understanding of petitioning practices across the globe.
30. Brian Pullan, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice: the social institutions of a Catholic state, to 1620* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), 7–9 and 'Catholics, Protestants and the Poor in Early Modern Europe,' *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 35.3, Poverty and Charity: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (Winter, 2005): 441–456.
31. Ronald Weissman, 'Taking Patronage Seriously,' in Kent and Simmons (eds), *Patronage, Art and Society in Renaissance Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) 25–45:44.
32. De Nores's early history and role as Venetian Dragoman is outlined in Rothman, *Brokering Empire*, 173–178.
33. 'havendo la detta sua madre, amede, moglie, figliuoli . . . da sustenare, havendo anco perduto tutte le sue sustanze.' ASVe, VS, seconda serie, b. 61, 31 March 1599.
34. Individuals petitioned for brokerage licences to be granted exceptionally: when a licence had been stripped from them, or if the number of brokers exceeded the legal limit of 190.
35. ASVe, VS, prima serie, b. 138, 6 July 1590.
36. Petitions for brokerage licences petered out in the 1620s, most likely because the practice of appointing extra brokers had been normalised. ASVe, VS, prima serie, b. 137–147.

37. Olivia Remie Constable, *Housing the Stranger in the Mediterranean world: lodging, trade, and travel in late antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), especially pages 306–354; Deborah Howard, *Venice and the East: The Impact of the Islamic World on Venetian Architecture 1100–1500* (Yale University Press: New Haven, 2000), 120–131; Agostino Sagredo, *Fondaco dei Turchi in Venezia* (Milan: Stabilimento di Giuseppe Civelli, 1860), 25.
38. For more information on Lettino and the establishment of the Fondaco dei Turchi see: Rothman, *Brokering Empire*, 29–34, and Stephen Ortega, ‘Across Religious and Ethnic Boundaries: Ottoman Networks and Spaces in Early Modern Venice,’ *Mediterranean Studies* 18 (2009): 66–69.
39. ‘et acciò ritrovandomi carico di moglie con figlioli, et figliole 9, oltre due nezze di fratello, et due nipote del detto, che in questa Guerra Turchescha furono fatti priggioni, habbi modo mediante la molta pieta . . . Vostra Serenita, verso li miserabili, et discaduti suoi sudditi, come sono gl’infelici supplicanti, di poter con la servitu, Custodia, et fedelta mia, et de miei successori mantener, et à qualche modo sostentar essa mia famiglia miserabile, senza la quale buona gratia sua, son fuori d’ogni speranza di poterla sostentar, et alla Serenità Sua, bontà, et clarita prostrato à terra me le raccomando lacrimosamente.’ ASVe, VS, seconda serie, b. 187, 28 October 1574.
40. *Ibid.*
41. ‘fidelissimo Giacomo de Nores’ ASVe, VS, seconda serie, b. 61, 31 March 1599.
42. ‘L’immenso desiderio, che io povero Francesco . . . ’ ASVe, VS, seconda serie, b. 187, 28 October 1574.
43. Cemal Kafadar, ‘A Death in Venice (1575): Anatolian Muslim Merchants trading in the Serenissima,’ *Journal of Turkish Studies* 10 (1986): 191–218.
44. This was confirmed by reading the Collegio, *Suppliche*, which contained instances of widows’ petitions, particularly for the German merchants. The Jewish synagogues and their community activities were known as ‘scuola’ in early modern Venice, as mirroring the Venetian term for a Christian confraternity.
45. Isabella Cecchini, ‘A World of Small Objects: Probate Inventories, Pawns, and Domestic Life in Early Modern Venice,’ in ‘The Material Culture of Debt,’ special issue, *Renaissance and Reformation* 35.3 (Summer, 2012): 39–61; Fiona Margaret Colclough, ‘Widows and Widowhood in Early Modern Venice,’ PhD diss., (University of Northumbria at Newcastle, 1999); Juliane Jacobi, ‘Between charity and education: orphans and orphanages in early modern times,’ *Paedagogica Historica*, 45:1–2 (2009): 60–61; Paola Lanaro, ‘La restituzione della dote: il gioco ambiguo della stima tra beni mobili e beni immobili (Venezia tra cinque e settecento),’ *Quaderni storici*, nuova serie, 45.135 (3), Questioni di stima (December, 2010): 753–778.
46. On the economic role of immigrant women see: Monica Chojnacka, *Working Women of Early Modern Venice* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 81–102 and Rosa Salzberg, ‘Mobility, cohabitation and cultural exchange in the lodging houses of early modern Venice,’ *Urban History* 46: 3 (2019): 398–418.
47. ‘né conveniente che essa povera dona, con i sui figlioli preda li sui danari’ ASVe, VS, prima serie, b. 135, 6 June 1545.
48. ‘regererli [sic] et aministrarli’ ASVe, VS, seconda serie, b. 4, 23 June 1629.
49. *Ibid.*
50. There is very little scholarship on the lives of Armenian merchants in Venice: the historiography focusses on the high-profile Sceriman family, or the Mekhitarist order. Evelyn Korsch, ‘The Scerimans and Cross-Cultural Trade in Gems: The Armenian Diaspora in Venice its Trading Networks in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century,’ in Andrea Caracausi and Christof Jeggle (eds.), *Commercial Networks and European Cities, 1400–1800* (London: Routledge, 2014), 223–239; Boghos Levon Zekiyan and Aldo Ferrari (eds.), *Gli Armeni e Venezia Dagli Sceriman a Mechitar: il momento culminante di una consuetudine millenaria* (Venice: Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, 2004).
51. ASVe, VS, b. 4, 2 August 1704.

52. Ravid, 'Venice and its Minorities,' 481. ASVe, VS, b. 62, 31 March 1632 *Rachel Gages widow of Joseph*, 5 May 1679 *Anna Alteras on behalf of son, David*, 22 December 1683 *Lea Abenicar, widow of Jacob, heads up a secret dispute with a number of men testifying for her, against a certain Josef Samis*.
53. Muir, 'Trust among Merchants,' 154–6.
54. Salzberg, 'Little Worlds in Motion,' 96–117.
55. The VS claim that the Fondaco is necessary to protect the Turkish merchants and their goods, since they face theft and assault whilst living scattered throughout the city. ASVe, VS, seconda serie, b. 187, 20 March 1608.
56. ASVe, VS, seconda serie, b. 4, 29 September 1643.
57. 'Provedendo . . . al loro bisogno di Case per ricovero delle loro Persone et Mercantie al loro giunger in questa Città con grande loro vantaggio, et commodo' Ibid.
58. Venice did not have anything like the 'bassana' found in Ottoman Empire trading locations and ports. A bassana was an inn which typically housed merchants upon their arrival in a city, but only very briefly for one or a few nights. Thus, the ability to locate a suitable arrival lodging was potentially more difficult in Venice than on the trading routes merchants travelling in the Ottoman Empire were accustomed to. Daniel Rodriga's impressive blueprints for the 'Scala' in Split, included a bassana: ASVe, Sopraproveditore alla Sanità, *atti*, b. 417. Thanks to Petar Strunje, PhD candidate at IUAV, for drawing attention to the bassana.
59. For example, the abuse levelled at two Ottoman envoys by other diners at an inn: ASVe, AC, Misc. Civile, b. 4026, fasc. 7 cited in Maria Pia Pedani, *In nome del Gran Signore: Inviati ottomani a Venezia dalla caduta di Costantinopoli alla guerra di Candia* (Venice: Deputazione Editrice, 1994) 60–1.
60. ASVe, VS, seconda serie, b. 187.
61. Ibid., 28 April 1623.
62. ASVe, VS, seconda serie, b. 62–3.
63. ASVe, VS, seconda serie, b. 187, 4 April 1637.
64. Ibid., 27 November 1624.
65. Not all contacts between mercantile migrants were profitable and positive: frauds and conflicts often arose which marred the social fabric of various immigrant communities. In particular, there were a number of conflicts in the Armenian mercantile community which the authorities needed to intervene in swiftly to avoid deleterious effects. These conflicts deserve more dedicated analysis, some of which is included in my upcoming PhD dissertation.
66. ASVe, VS, seconda serie, b. 62, 23 January 1589 (m.v.). Brokers were entering ships and the lazaretto to talk to Turkish and Armenian merchants, and the officials expressed frustration that they could not understand the Turkish language they were speaking, therefore all sorts of scandals might be taking place without their knowledge.
67. 'Turning Turk' was a common fear of too much contact between Christians and Ottoman Muslims that was foregrounded in numerous real incidences of conversion to Islam, for example: ASVe, VS, seconda serie, b. 187, 27 May 1621, in 1662 the Cinque Savi describe how a Turk led a young man astray who 'turned Turk' to escape Venice, 2 June 1662. There was also the case of Zorzi who met with Turks and plotted his escape to Constantinople at a broker's inn (Francesco de Dimitri Lettino). ASVe, Savi all'eresia, b. 35 'Giorgio', 1573 other cases of conversions in: b. 47, 'Paolina Briani', 1581; b. 88 'Giovanni Pia Ficordo' 1631. See also, Eric Dursteler, *Renegade Women: Gender, Identity and Boundaries in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2011) and 'Fearing the "Turk" and Feeling the Spirit: Emotion and Conversion in the Early Modern Mediterranean' *Journal of Religious History* 39 (4) (December 2015).
68. ASVe, VS, seconda serie, b. 62, 2 June 1541.
69. Ibid., b. 187, 23 August 1662.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This work was supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation

Notes on contributor

Tamsin Prideaux is an early career researcher in early modern global traders and the city of Venice. She defended her thesis on foreign traders and the authorities in Venice at the University of Edinburgh in May 2022 and is completing a Saltire Emerging Researcher Scheme exchange between the University of Edinburgh and Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Her research focuses on forms of communication and negotiation between foreigners and the state, as well as analysing social networks and cross-cultural interactions in urban space.