Apulian New Christians in Venetian Dalmatia: Circum-Adriatic dimensions of the migration of converted Jews and their descendants in the late 15th and early 16th centuries

Introduction

By the late fifteenth century, several Apulian towns had notable populations of so-called New Christians (Lat. christiani novi, in the vernacular cristiani novelli). These people were descendants of (Italian or Iberian) Jews who more or (rather) less willingly had converted to Christianity in the face of growing repressions or imminent expulsion at the end of the thirteenth century. Despite being themselves already born as Christians, the New Christians of Apulia continued to constitute a group distinct from the rest of society. Simply the fact that they were denominated as “New Christians”, “neophytes” (neofiti, originally meaning “newly planted”) or “marrani” shows that the knowledge of their Jewish ancestry was present in their fellow citizens’ minds decades or even centuries after the initial conversions.

The New Christians’ history in Apulia was shaped by processes of social inclusion and exclusion and by periods of living together with and being expelled from the Leitkultur. By the end of the fifteenth century, expulsion had gained the upper hand, urging and later even forcing many New Christians to flee their hometowns or even the whole Kingdom of Naples. The subject of the present article is the migration of some of the Apulian neofiti to the other side of the Adriatic Sea, to Venetian Dalmatia. As traders of grain, many New Christians had regular contact with the hungry Dalmatian towns already in times less dire for themselves. In how far the threat of expulsion prompted them to intensify these contacts to Dalmatia to more permanent relations shall be studied in this article by taking the example of the Dalmatian town of Split (It. Spalato).

In comparison with Iberian conversos, the New Christians of Apulia have not been subject of a great number of scholarly works. The most recent and comprehensive study is Benjamin Scheller’s monograph on the New Christians of Trani, the town with the largest population of neofiti in the late Middle Ages.¹ Scheller describes their fate from the mass conversions of 1292 until the (attempted) expulsion first from Trani in 1495 and eventually from the whole Kingdom of Naples in 1510 and 1514, focussing on the processes of inclusion and exclusion

exercised by both the New Christians themselves and the rest of the population. The book combines a variety of sources and offers a comprehensive study of the existing literature on the subject, referring to important pioneering works such as those of Cesare Colafemmina or Vito Vitale.²

Most recently, individual articles on specific towns or newly discovered sources have been published.³ The migration of Jews (and to a lesser extent of converts) in the aftermath of the expulsion from the Kingdom of Naples in 1510 and 1541 has been studied even with an explicit focus on Venetian colonies in the Mediterranean as safe destinations or ports of transit.⁴ These studies, however, only take into consideration Venice’s Greek colonies – Crete, Corfu, Zante, Modon, Cyprus, Lepanto –, while completely ignoring the nearby shores of Venetian Dalmatia. While Venice itself as well as the non-Venetian Dalmatian city of Ragusa have been acknowledged as destinations for the emigrating and expelled New Christians of Apulia⁵, Dalmatian towns and islands such as Split, Zadar, Šibenik, Korčula or Hvar have been left out of the equation.

Neither do studies on Dalmatia itself take into consideration the New Christians of Apulia, with the notable exception of Fabian Kümmeler’s recent article on Korčula and its perspective on the Kingdom of Naples and the Catalans, in which the author underlines the neofiti’s role as merchants but does not comment upon any further contacts to Dalmatian societies.⁶ In his

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⁴ Nadia ZELDES, ‘Jewish settlement in Corfu in the aftermath of the expulsions from Spain and southern Italy, 1492–1541’. In: Mediterranean Historical Review 27/2 (2012), 175–188.
⁵ DE CEGLIA, ‘Nuovi documenti’, 94; Mirjana POPOVIĆ–RADENKOVIĆ, ‘Le relazioni commerciali tra Dubrovnik (Ragusa) e la Puglia nel periodo angioino (1266–1442)’. In: Archivio Storico per le Province Napoletane 76/77 (1958/1959), 73–104, 153–206 talks about merchants from New Christian families without mentioning their social background. The ongoing project “Das Meer der Neuchristen: Mobilität und Ambiguität konvertierter Juden und ihrer Nachkommen im Adriaeraum des Spätmittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit” (“The sea of the New Christians: mobility and ambiguity of converted Jews and their descendants in the Adriatic during the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Era”), directed by Benjamin Scheller at the University of Duisburg-Essen and located within the DFG sponsored research group “Ambiguität und Unterscheidung. Historisch-kulturelle Dynamiken” (“Ambiguity and differentiation. Historical-cultural dynamics”), explicitly studies only the migration of New Christians from Apulia to Venice and Ragusa.
detailed and important study of Italian merchants from various regions in Italy who have come to Split, Ermanno Orlando in turn does not mention the participation of Apulian New Christians in the (grain) trade between Apulia and Dalmatia, and concludes that none of the Neapolitan merchants took residence in Split, although he even cites two men by name, Alvise de Bisantis from Trani and Giovanni Florio from Manfredonia, who most certainly belonged to New Christian families and, in the case of Alvise, also settled down in Split. The same Alvise de Bisantis is also mentioned in a study by Tomislav Raukar, together with members of the de Mapheo family from Barletta, who had settled down in Split but were Apulian neoﬁti as well. Again, any reference to their original socio-political background is missing. Likewise, in her book on the commercial development of Split and Zadar, Sabine Fabijanec writes about Sephardic Jews who, after having been expelled from Spain and the Kingdom of Naples, reached Dalmatian towns in the ﬁrst decades of the sixteenth century, starting with the foundation of a Jewish colony in Split in 1539. Following Paci’s study on the establishment of the free port (scala) of Split in 1592, Fabijanec even explicitly mentions the migration of marrani to North Italian, Greek and Dalmatian towns, but when doing so, the author seems to understand the term as a synonym for Sephardic Jews and not as a denomination for Jews who had converted to Christianity and their descendants. This leads to some confusion in her paragraphs on the subject. Yet at the same time it perfectly illustrates how understudied and little known the history of the Apulian New Christians and their migrations is.

The present article does not stand to offer a comprehensive study of Apulian New Christians in Venetian Dalmatia; this task shall be the object of another work. The town of Split, however, serves as an example to show how broad these contacts were, ranging from

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9 Sabine Florence FABIJANEC, Le développement commercial de Split et Zadar aux XVe-XVIe siècles : un commerce transitaire entre l’Europe Centrale et la Méditerranée (Saarbrücken 2011), 174; Renzo PACI, La Scala di Spalato e il commercio veneziano nei Balcani fra cinque e seicento (Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Venezie, Miscellanea di Studi e Memoire XIV, Venice 1971), 42–43 on Split, within the chapter on “Ebrei e marrani: una classe mercantile che non conosce frontiere”, ibid. 31–43, pointing to the similarities but also differences between Jews and marrani. Fabijanec also mentions the names of proven New Christians without, however, elaborating on their origins (ibid. 134, fn. 476: “le Splitois Sipion de Fioro” originated, in fact, from a New Christian family from Manfredonia, see below).
commercial relations, especially grain trade, to temporary or even permanent residence. The basis of our study is archival material from the State Archive in Venice and, more importantly, the Croatian State Archives in Zadar and Split – mostly notarial acts and files of court proceedings –, thus offering an insight into a whole new type of sources that have to be studied in order to understand the Adriatic history of the Apulian New Christians.

The New Christians of Apulia as a distinct social group

To understand the unique position of the Apulian New Christians as a distinct social group even generations after the initial conversions, we have to take a look back at the mechanisms and consequences of the mass conversions of 1292.

The mass conversions of some six to eight thousand Jews to Christianity occurred in the Kingdom of Naples under the reign of the Anjou Charles II, whose father had taken over power in Sicily and Naples in 1266 before being expelled from Sicily during the Sicilian Vespers in 1282. They were the result of growing and radicalizing inquisitorial persecutions that had religious origins but were supported by specific political structures and motivations. On the religious side, papal bulls ordered inquisitors to persecute alleged apostates who had turned from Christianity to Judaism, including “relapsing” converts. This enabled easy accusations against virtually any Jew suspected of aiding and abetting apostasy. The ensuing high penalties imposed by the inquisitors were an important means of exerting pressure on Jews to convert.¹⁰

While worldly authorities elsewhere in South-Western Europe sought to control and contain the inquisitors’ zeal, Charles II of Naples gave them free rein. The reason behind the king’s approach to the inquisitors was the difference in jurisdiction over and taxation of the Jews: In France, Aragón, or Provence – whose count the same Charles II of Anjou was – the jurisdiction over Jews lay with the worldly authorities, who, moreover, collected the Jewish tax. These rulers thus considered the inquisitorial activities as an interference in their sphere of influence. Furthermore, converting Jews to Christianity would mean losing income from the Jewish taxes. In contrast to that, in many places the kings of Naples and Sicily had lost the direct jurisdiction and incomes from the Jewish tax to local churches, which had received

corresponding privileges during the critical period of transition from Norman to Staufer rule. In Naples, king Charles II thus had less incentives to stop the inquisitors as there was less to lose. Quite the reverse: he could even profit from the Jews’ conversion to Christianity since in that way they would be removed from the jurisdiction of the Church and integrated into the worldly dominion. As Scheller points out, the inquisitorial prosecution of Jews and the ensuing mass conversion were related to simultaneous processes of centralizing royal power.

When the peak of the growing pressure on Jews was reached in 1292 and thousands converted to Christianity in Apulian and Campanian towns – Calabria, by contrast, saw hardly any conversions –, the question of belonging of these New Christians was still far from being definitively answered. Being Jewish was not just a matter of religious but also of social, political, and fiscal status – so having changed the religious status, the issue remained of where to put the New Christians socially, politically, and fiscally. Hence conflicts arose on their belonging to the noble or popular estate, and with it, on their taxation. To postpone a decision on both their taxation and social status, king Charles II granted the newly converted – but not their descendants – the privilege of being exempted from all taxes to the royal chamber in 1294. The official motivation was displaying the king’s joy over the conversion as well as the benevolence future Jewish converts could expect to meet.

However, instead of mitigating the conflicts over the converts’ taxation, the exemption rather aggravated the situation by creating a fiscally separate group between Jews and Christians. Moreover, many towns resented the new status of the converts and attempted to collect taxes from them in disregard of the exemption, which further promoted their social (self-) exclusion.


13 SCHELLER, Die Stadt der Neuchristen, 58–66; Nicola FERORELLI, Gli ebrei nell’Italia meridionale dall’età romana al secolo XVIII (Torino 1915), 55.

14 SCHELLER, Die Stadt der Neuchristen, 67–71.
The fourteenth century saw further complications of the matter. On the one hand, Dominican inquisitors prosecuted many converted Jews and their descendants on the grounds of alleged apostasy, underlining their difference from the rest of society. On the other hand, the Church, most notably the archbishop of Trani, continued to treat the New Christians and their descendants as Jews by claiming jurisdiction and collecting the Jewish tax from them. This prevented their inclusion into the political body of the king’s Christian subjects and turned them into Christians with the political and fiscal status of Jews. Instead of levelling out the difference between Christians and Jews, the mass conversions of 1292 thus created an additional difference, the one between Christians and neofiti. By the turn of the century, the New Christians of Trani, the town with the biggest population of neofiti, had managed to remove themselves from the archiepiscopal control, which had waned due to the general weakness and confusion of the Church during the Great Schism. They continued to constitute, however, a distinct social group. As such, the neofiti were even included into the city’s new constitution of 1413, which granted the commune the right to elect a small council consisting of eight nobles, six populares and two neofiti. This had two important implications: Firstly, the New Christians were assigned to belong to the estate of the populares. Secondly, they were acknowledged to constitute a separate political and social community which was granted political rights within the commune. This universitas neofitorum of Trani was the first one to be established in Apulia. Other towns followed Trani’s example only in the 1460s.

As a distinct political group, the New Christians were also inclined to actively distinguish themselves from the rest of the population, which was mainly achieved by the practice of strict endogamy. This, however, also sparked new resentments and accusations, re-establishing anti-Jewish prejudices of blasphemous rites practiced by Jews and crypto-Jewish converts who only stayed among themselves and supported one another in defiling the Christian faith. Renewed inquisitorial persecutions followed in the 1440s, coinciding, however, with urban unrest caused by conflicts between two groups within Trani’s populace. Since the New Christians appear to have sided with the noble party, the efforts of excluding them from the city probably were connected to the popular party’s attempts of weakening their opponents. In this atmosphere of inquisitorial persecution and urban unrest, most New Christians left Trani for other Apulian towns from 1452 onwards. They established

17 Vito Vitale, Trani dagli Angioini agli Spagnoli (Bari 1912), 480; Scheller, Die Stadt der Neuchristen, 113–119.
themselves in towns such as Manfredonia, Barletta and Monopoli, from where many of the New Christians that could later be met in Dalmatian towns originated.\textsuperscript{18}

While some New Christians stayed in the abovementioned towns, thereby enlarging the existing population of \textit{neofiti}, most returned to Trani by 1466, after the city had received a reformed communal constitution from king Ferrante I of Aragón. This new constitution included the New Christians into the political body again, giving them the strongest position they had ever had so far. Next to \textit{nobiles} and \textit{plebei}, they were to constitute a third part both of the large and the small council that ruled the city. Another change of their political status was even more remarkable: Not anymore were they called \textit{christiani novi/cristiani novelli} or \textit{neofiti}. Rather, their new socio-political designation was \textit{mercatores}. The New Christians were so well known as merchants that they had become \textit{the} merchants par excellence. The sources moreover show that \textit{mercatores/mercanti} and \textit{christiani novi/cristiani novelli} were almost used as synonyms. This development was very much in the interest of the New Christians, because it let them cast off the negative epithet of having Jewish origins and redefined them as a group in terms of their professional activities. A similar political and social tripartition of society was established in Barletta.\textsuperscript{19}

The period of renewed political and social inclusion into the society of Trani lasted for less than thirty years. The death of king Ferrante I in 1494 led to a crisis of succession in the kingdom of Naples that would only end with the takeover of power by Ferdinand the Catholic of Aragón in 1504. Before that, Italy was confronted with two French invasions by Charles VIII and Louis XII, who revived the Angevin claims on Naples.\textsuperscript{20} The confusion of the unclear succession and the ensuing wars led to outbreaks of violence and persecutions against Jews and New Christians, many of whom fled their towns or even the whole kingdom. While New Christians could stay in or return to Barletta and Molfetta, they were harshly treated in Trani and completely expelled from the town. The stated reason for this might have been their alleged heresy, but an at least equally important motivation was their fellow citizens’ attempt to transfer the New Christians’ possessions confiscated by the royal chamber to themselves. The resentment against the New Christians was probably also borne from both the \textit{plebei}’s

\textsuperscript{18} \textsc{Vitale}, \textit{Trani}, 207–210; \textsc{Scheller}, \textit{Die Stadt der Neuchristen}, 122–138.

\textsuperscript{19} \textsc{Scheller}, \textit{Die Stadt der Neuchristen}, 139–144, 223; \textsc{Vitale}, ‘Un particolare ignorato’, 236–238.

\textsuperscript{20} \textsc{David Abulafia} (ed.), \textit{French Descent into Renaissance Italy 1494-95: Antecedents and Effects} (Aldershot 1995).
fear to fall behind the wealthy mercatores as well as the nobles’ fear of being challenged in their status as the upper class.\(^\text{21}\)

Meanwhile, Ferrante I’s grandson Ferrante II had pawned the Apulian ports of Trani, Mola, Polignano, Otranto, Brindisi and Monopoli to Venice for its help in fighting against the French.\(^\text{22}\) They would remain Venetian from 1496 until 1509 (and, except for Otranto, would be so again between 1528 and 1530), which meant that the conflict over the confiscated property between the expelled New Christians and the city of Trani had to be mediated by the Venetians. While several New Christians tried to claim their possessions in Trani from their exile in Barletta, the city asked Venice to stop any restitution and transfer the assets to the communal chamber which needed the money to pay for the expellees’ taxes and repair the port. Venice’s position on the question seems to have been double-edged: On the one hand, it neither allowed the expropriation of the New Christians nor consented to the city’s attempts of enforcing a perpetual interdiction of return for them, as four ambassadors had asked the Venetian senate to do in 1496.\(^\text{23}\) What is more, rather than expelling the New Christians, Venice was interested in getting them back to Trani by offering restitution to anyone who returned. That way the mercatores could have resumed their trading activities, thereby increasing the worth of the pawned port.\(^\text{24}\)

On the other hand, Venice made concessions to the Apulian towns under its rule with negative consequences for the New Christians trying to claim their rights. In June 1497, the Venetian senate approved the request brought forward by the town of Monopoli to defer the payment of debts owed to marrani – the term spread from Spain and was the most common denomination for New Christians used in Venice –, giving the debtors an additional five years’ time to pay their debts.\(^\text{25}\) The reason for the need of this moratorium as claimed by the cit[1]adini of


\(^{22}\) Carol KIDWELL, ‘Venice, the French Invasion and the Apulian ports’. In: David ABULAFIA (ed.), French Descent into Renaissance Italy 1494-95: Antecedents and Effects (Aldershot 1995), 295–308.


\(^{24}\) SCHELLER, Die Stadt der Neuchristen, 275–279.

\(^{25}\) Archivio di Stato di Venezia [henceforth ASV], Senato, Deliberazioni Mar, Reg. 14, 123r: “[…] che essendo in quella cita alcuni Marani che hano a reschuotere molti debiti de diversi citadini de dicta cita vostra i quali debiti sono tuti de usure et guadagni inficiti piu de usura se degni prefata illustissima vostra signoria concedere a dicti citadini a pagare dicti debiti dilazione de anni diece attento la ruina et extrema poverta et in quella citade et otrala quello farci osservare uno instrumento facto per dicti marani et altre scripture facte per alcuni deputati tra essa universita et suoi citadini et essi marrani non obstante ognaltra provisione per loro fosse impetrata seu da
Monopoli was the alleged usury exercised by the *marrani*, a typical accusation against Jews. Indeed, in the same *capitula* Monopoli also accused the remaining Jews of being usurious for demanding the payment of debts after the respective pawns had been lost during the war. In this case, Venice granted a moratorium of six years.\(^{26}\)

Such concessions made it hard for the New Christians to recover the debts owed to them. The debtors in turn hoped that by the time their debts were due the New Christians would have already left the town, thus making it even more difficult to recover the debts. In December 1505, the same town of Monopoli submitted a complaint to the Venetian senate about the “many New Christians called *marrani*, who were our citizens [but] went to Turkey and renegaded from the faith, becoming Jews”, who now were sending procurators back to Monopoli to recover their usurious debts, some of whom were *marrani* as well.\(^{27}\) Venice ruled that the procurators were not eligible for reclaiming the debts, instead the creditor would have to come personally to Monopoli to recover, however, only those debts that were not usurious. Personally returning to the place one just had to leave was of course a nearly impossible requirement, even more so for people who were accused of apostasy.

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\(^{26}\) ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni Mar, Reg. 14, 123v: “Che essendo in dicta citade certi hebrei che prestavan ad usura cum li pegni en el tempo che se diceava che veniva el re de franza nel reame dubitando loro ne forte fusseno sachegiati chome gia furono in altre cita del regno de loro beneplacito dettero dicti pegni a li patroni con promissione che dicti patroni a certi tempi pagassero dicti danari a lor prestati chome appare per publiche scripture et perche intervene che larmata de vostra illustrissima signoria prese la terra per forza et messela a sacho talche dicti pegni insieme con li altri beni se perdettero et dicti hebrei domandano li denari pre supplicamo se degni vostra illustrissima signoria che tali denari non se habino a pagare considerato che pagandosi saria la secunda ruina de quella patria pagare li denari et haver persi li pegni che se fusseno stati ne le lor mani anchora similemente sariano perduti. Respondeatur quod sumus contenti concedere predicte universitati quod non possint cogi ad solutionem usure sed capitalis tamen pro qua solutione concedimus tempus annorum sex ab hoc die infra pro rata dicti temporis.” Cf. Renata SEGRE, ‘Documenti di fonte veneziana sugli ebrei in Puglia’. In: Sefer yuḥasin. Rivista per la storia degli ebrei nell’Italia meridionale 6 (2018), 93–121, here 111–112 (no. 40) with modernized punctuation and following a different pagination.

\(^{27}\) ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni Mar, Reg. 16, 104r–v: “[...] che molti cristiani novelli chiamato [sic] marrani quali erano nostri citadini sono andati in Turchia et hano *regato* renegato la fede facendosi iudei et a molti hano facto pagar do volte et perche si trovano alcuni quali vengono cum lor procure facte avanti che fusseno iudei et molti debiti rescotten disfacendo citadini contra omne dover supplicarete essa illustrissima signoria che tali procuratori non habia ad exequer contra citadini per non haver fede ne conscientia et tanto piu che li dicti procuratori ce ne sono cristiani novelli, chiamati marani. Respondeatur che siamo contenti et volemo che questi tali non possino domandar alcuna cossa per via de procuratori quali non volemo siano alditi ma ben venendo loro personalmente possino dimandar excepto in petitione de debiti et danari per usure per le qual non volemo siano alditi o siano renegati o siano cristiani.” Cf. SEGRE, ‘Documenti di fonte veneziana’, 118–119 (no. 62).
With respect to Trani, Venice seems to have changed its position regarding the restitution of the New Christians’ possessions by 1504. In March of that year, the Venetian governor in Trani informed the senate of the little use the houses and property of the New Christians were to the signoria. Hence the senate ordered the governor to auction off these assets to the highest bidders, except for those possessions used to house the soldiers.28 This decision, however, cannot have been implemented to a substantial extent since the Spanish government was still in the possession of confiscated property after its takeover of power in 1509.29

While most New Christians had left Trani after 1495, the following twenty years saw two attempts to expel them also from the remaining kingdom of Naples. After their takeover of power, the Spanish tried to extend the Spanish Inquisition to Naples to control the local inquisitorial activities that had flared up again around 1504. These attempts, however, met the fierce opposition from the population, both noble and popular, and the Pope, who wanted the papal inquisitors to remain in Naples. Unable to introduce the centralized Spanish Inquisition, king Ferdinand ordered the expulsion of Jews and New Christians from Naples in November of 1510 as a compromise. It is unclear against whom exactly this edict was targeted, but it should probably encompass both Jews and conversos from Spain as well as recent local converts and the descendants of the 1292 converts. The latter group, “our” New Christians, mostly managed to escape expulsion and stay in Apulia. After a second unsuccessful attempt to introduce the Spanish Inquisition, king Ferdinand thus ordered the expulsion of all neofiti, Spanish, Sicilian, and Apulian, again in 1514. Once more many New Christians managed to stay in or return to Apulia some time afterwards, but they again suffered harm to their property by confiscations. The two edicts of expulsion of 1510 and 1514 were thus not successful in expelling all New Christians from Apulia, since many of the Tranese and other families could be found in various Apulian towns until the end of the 16th century and beyond.30 But the hostile environment, the need to justify one’s right to stay, the confiscations

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28 ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni Mar, Reg. 16, 49r: “Per lettere del governador de Trani de xiii zener proximo preterito hora lecte a questo conseggio el se vede quanta pocha utilita la signoria nostra habi et ogni zorno sia per haverne meno immo niuna de le case et possession che forono di christiani novelli perho, Landera parte chel sia per auctorita de questo conselgio scripto et imposto al dicto governator de Trani che le dicte case et possession de christiani novelli metter el le debi al publico incanto et quelle vender a chi piu i offerira come e consueto Reservando tamen quella parte che al dicto governador nostro apparera per lo alloçar de quelli provisionati nostri Tuto el tracto veramento de le dicte case et possession non possi esser dispensato in cossa alcuna senza deliberation de questo conseggio sotto pena di furanti.” This source is neither included in SEGRE, ‘Documenti di fonte veneziana’ nor taken into consideration by SCHELLER, Die Stadt der Neuchristen.

29 SCHELLER, Die Stadt der Neuchristen, 279–280.

of property and the attempts of debtors to avoid payment still caused many New Christians to leave Apulia for Ottoman territories, Ragusa, and Venice and its possessions in Greece – as well as Dalmatia.

The Venetians were well aware of Apulian New Christians leaving their homeland and fleeing to Dalmatia. In February 1495 the Venetian governor of Hvar asked the senate for instructions on how to proceed with the many Apulian families and especially the circa forty families of marrani and Jews who had come to the island following the French invasion of Italy. The senate replied that all Christian families from Apulia and elsewhere shall be received and accommodated in a friendly manner, allowing them to stay with all their property except for foreign cloth, which they were not allowed to sell. Neither should the marrani and Jews be harmed in any way or denied disembarking, however they should not be allowed to stay and instead be given an appropriate period of time to depart and leave Venetian dominions.31

By treating the New Christians in the same way as Jews, the Venetians acknowledged and confirmed their religious otherness. While it remains unclear whether the marrani meant in this source were descendants of the converts of 1292 or had themselves just recently converted in the face of growing repressions during the French invasion, the Venetian sources concerning Trani or Monopoli mentioned above suggest that the Venetians did not care to differentiate between these groups. They did, however, differentiate between their dominions in Apulia and Dalmatia, trying to prompt the New Christians’ return to Trani but forbidding them to stay in Dalmatia.


31 ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni Mar, Reg. 14, 54v: “Per vostre littere de 8 del instante habiamo inteso el zonzer de li de molte fameglie de pugliesi fra i qual etiam ne erano de marani et iudei circa fameglie 40 et ogni zorno ne zonzeano de le altre sopra la qual cosa rechiedete vi dechiaremos la intention nostra presertim havendo i predicti fra le altre cosse conduto cum si panni forestieri che per le leze et ordeni nostri non posseno esser portati ne le terre et luogi nostri, unde <laudando la prudentia vostra cum el nostro conseio de pregadi> respondendo ve dicemo et comandemo che tutte le fameglie de pugliesi et altr regnicioli christiani che capiterano de li per algun modo debiate amorevolmente receverli et accomodarli cum ogni demonstracion de carita et affecto permettendo che star possino in questo nostro loco ad ogni loro beneplacito liberamente et senza algun impedimento cum tute robe, beni, faculta et mercantie soe, advertendo pero del devedo di panni Azo i non li vendano contra la forma de le leze nostre ma de essi far possano quelle altre provisione li apparerano per suo beneficio et commodo, a tutti veramente li marani et iudei farete intendere che nostra mente non e possino star in alcun di luogi nostri et pero li assegnerete termine conveniente et habile a poter partirse et andar fuora del nostro dominio dove li parera, non li inferendo pero alcuna molestia over impazo ne a loro ne a chadauna de le robe soe ma dandoli commodita per el partir suo, et el medesimo observarete in quelli zonzessero in futurum de li, ali quali non negarete za el descender ma li assignarete termene ut supra de poterse transferir in luochi alieni di per di veramente de ogni successo in tal cosa ne darete noticia. Similes scribantur ad rectores nostros a parte maris ubi opportuerit mutatis mutandi.” Cf. SEGRE, ‘Documenti di fonte veneziana’, 110 (no. 35) with a slightly different transcription.
Venice’s negative attitude towards *marrani* led to an order of expulsion from Venice and its territories in 1497, following the influx of many Iberian *marrani* expelled from Spain and Portugal.\(^{32}\) Given their importance for the republic’s commercial interests, however, this order was not executed until it was proclaimed a second time in 1550.\(^{33}\) Contrary to Spain, Venice did not persecute or arrest New Christians on inquisitorial grounds, nor did it hinder their flight. As Zeldes points out, Venice did nothing to stop Jews and converts, even if they were returning to Judaism, from passing through or settling in its Greek colonies such as Corfu, as long as the number of newcomers was not too high.\(^{34}\) Nevertheless, the initial decree of expulsion from 1497 as well as the instructions given to the governor of Hvar in 1495 suggest that the Venetians were not all too fond of having New Christians live in their (Dalmatian) territories. How these people still managed to maintain contacts with Dalmatia and even settle there, will be discussed in the following sections.

**New Christians as mercatores in Dalmatia**

As the overview of the history of the Apulian New Christians has shown, they were mostly engaged as merchants and as such even considered as being the *mercatores* par excellence. For Dalmatia, they played a vital role as traders of grain. The Dalmatian towns were dependant on grain imports because their hinterlands and thus the land available for agriculture had been severely reduced due to Ottoman conquests in the region. The importance of Apulia and the Marches as grain exporters for Dalmatia becomes apparent in various sources concerning the economic history of Venetian Dalmatia.

When Venice attempted to redirect all commercial goods that were to be traded between Dalmatia and Southern Italy to the lagoon itself in 1452\(^{35}\), the town of Split complained

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\(^{32}\) ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni Terra, Reg. 13, 22r–v.
against this order and asked for its withdrawal. Were it to take effect, Split could not be supplied with enough grain and other vital foodstuffs, which it mostly received from Apulia and the Marches in exchange for domestic products such as coarse cloth, wax and cheese. Venice replied that its intention never was to cut off the supply with essential foodstuffs, rather only high-grade goods such as spices and iron (relevant moreover for military purposes) were to be encompassed by the order. Given the complaints, the order was revoked just a few months after its proclamation, but the discussions surrounding it clearly show the vital importance of the trade with Southern Italy for towns like Split.

The goods Italy received in exchange were largely agricultural and animal, as the extant export licences and the book on tariffs written by the Venetian Bartholomeo de Pazi from 1503 show: wine, figs, cheese, wax, honey, leather, furs, horses and additionally great quantities of coarse cloth called rassalraša were exported from Split. While approximately half of the export licences were issued for exports to Venice or its terraferma, pointing to the clear dominance of Venice as port of destination, about a fifth concerned exports to Middle and South Italy.

Most sought after by Split was, in turn, grain. Described as “sterile places”, Split and other Dalmatian towns were the destinations of government-organized grain shipments ordered by Venice. Despite such shipments, private trading initiatives were paramount for the provision of


36 Sime LJubić (ed.), Listine o odnoskih izmedju južnoga slavenstva i mletačke republike 9 (Monumenta spectantium historiam Slavorum meridionalium 21, Zagreb 1890), 420: “Una letera ducal questi xorni passati fuo mandata a magnifico miser lo conte nostro, la qual fci proclamar, che tute merchadantie generalmenti devissi andar a Veniexia, et non in altro logo. Sapia la serenita vostra, che quella vostra terra de Spalato non ha biave per tre mxi del anno, non a de ozlo, non a quella sustantia de viver che hanno altre terre, come podete haver pienaria informatione di vostri rectori, li qualo sono sta la. Convien che habia victoriaia di Pugla, de la Marcha, et quello proprii de la Marcha e di Pugla piglano barato et comprano rasse, cere, formaxi, et non possando lor havere so barato, come sono uxi, non e homo, che venga in quella terra, et siandoli tolto quello proprio de trafigo, che a, totalmente posso dir sera squasi disfato; […].”

37 LJUBIĆ, Listine 9, 420; ibid. 449.

38 LJUBIĆ, Listine 9, 449.

39 Export licences from Split can be found in the Croatian State Archive in Zadar: HR – Državni Arhiv u Zadru – 16: Općina/Comuna Split [henceforth DAZD-16]: 16/33.1; 18/35; 21/38.1; 23/39.26; 30/43.5; 36/48.1; 37/49.1; 41/52.4; 49/60.6-II; 59/66.7-IV; 61/68.2-V; 67/74.7; 96/103.17; 116/122.6; Croatian State Archive in Split: HR – Državni Arhiv u Splitu – 1: Splitska Općina [henceforth DAST-1]; 3. They have been studied by RAUKAR, ‘Jadranski gospodarski sustav’; NOVAK, ‘Quaternus izvoza iz Splita’; FABIANEC, Le développement commercial. Bartholomeo di PAXI, Tariffa de pexi e mesure. Con gratia et privilegio (Venice 1503), 87r–v (exports from Split to Venice), 43r (exports from Split to Damiette in Egypt).

40 RAUKAR, ‘Jadranski gospodarski sustav’, 62 (table 4), 66 (table 5). In 1511, 18% of the 214 extant licences were issued for Middle or South Italy, DAZD-16: 41/52.4/165r–177v.

41 Federico STEFANI/Guglielmo BERCHET/Nicolò BAROZZI (eds.), I diarii di Marino Sanuto, vol. 44 (Venice 1895), col. 542; SCHMITT, ‘Das venezianische Südosteuropa’, 93. The mounted soldiers called stratioti
of Split. Grain was brought to Split both by local merchants and by traders from places like Ulcinj (Dulcigno) in Albania, Ragusa, and Italy, the most frequently named towns of origin being Barletta, Trani, San Severo and Manfredonia.

In 1482, the Venetian governor of Split issued a licence to merchants from the latter two towns allowing them to import grain to Split to the benefit of the town and its inhabitants. He specified that they should not be obstructed and were allowed to stay overnight and conduct other businesses.\(^{42}\) Moreover, the governor underlined the importance of such grain shipments for Split, considering them to be “pro necessitate” and “pro commoditate habitantium in ea”.\(^{43}\)

These sources tell us that the grain supply of Split was not just a matter of government-organized shipments or private initiatives undertaken by individual traders. In addition, we see that some merchants or groups of merchants received licences explicitly authorizing the import of grain. Accordingly, these merchants were called “mercatores bladorum in Spalato” or, corresponding to their place of origin, “mercatores puglienses”.\(^{44}\) In Split, the term mercator was frequently used as a vocational title to denote also local traders who had achieved some sort of reputation as being merchants.\(^{45}\) These “mercatores bladorum” or “mercatores puglienses”, however, apparently constituted a distinct group of merchants in the eyes of the Spalatins. Otherwise, Lanzilago de Capuano would not have been explicitly

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\(^{42}\) DAZD-16: 18/35.1/473r: “[…] advertentes commodis et opportunitatibus civitatis et habitantium Spalati regimini nostro commissorum et moti obligationibus Jacobi Capotia de Sancto Severio […] eidem Jacobo concessimus quod pro se, Benedictum, Aluisium, Tullium et Matheum fratres suos libere sive per quemlibet ipsorum et per suos nuncios libere conducere seu conduci facere possint blada cuiuscumque sortis sub fide nostra sibi promissa […] quod libere […] venire possint ad civitatem hanc Spalati cum suis personis, navigiis, bladis, mercantii, rebus et bonis quibuscumque ibique stare, morari et pernoctare, negociari et mercare, emere et vendere indeque discedere cum rebus et mercantii emptis per tractum bladorum sive cum pecuniis, navigiis et bonis suis […]”; ibid. 479r: “[…] inclinati precibus quas apud nos fieri fecerunt infrascripti videlicet dominus Matheus Capuanus miles et doctor, Johannes, Valerius, Hercules, Sansonatus, Manfredus et Gaetanus fratres sui omnes de Manfredonia […] quod libere venire possint ad hanc civitatem Spalati cum navigiis, personis, bladis, mercantii et rebus suis quibuscumque ibique stare, morari et pernoctare, negociari et mercare, emere et vendere et alia quecumque facere […] indeque discere cum navigiis, mercationibus et rebus que emerentur per tractum bladorum sive quocumque ac cum pecuniis et aliis quibuscumque bonis suis ture libere et secure […]”.

\(^{43}\) DAZD-16: 18/35.1/473r: 488r–v: “[…] Alvisii Capuani de Manfredonia mercatoris bladorum qui se obtulit conducere ad hanc civitatem Spalati blada pro commoditate habitancium in ea […]”.\(^{44}\) DAZD-16: 18/35.1/122v; 488r; 597v–598r.

\(^{45}\) For example: “Egregius vir et mercator ser Marcus Cavogrosso q. ser Antonii civis Spalati” (DAZD-16: 32/44.9/154r–v); “Ser Hieronymus Sfoitinich civis et mercator Spalati” (DAZD-16: 34/46.1/56v–57r).
called “mercator bladorum” in a document confirming the payment of his servant’s wage, that is, in a document that was not directly related to grain trading.46

Furthermore, a look at their names reveals that they belonged to families of New Christians from Manfredonia. Troianus, Alvisius, Angelus, Lanzilago and Joannes q. ser Lancilai Capuano de Manfredonia were called “mercatores bladorum [in Spalato]” and appear as merchants in various sources47, while the brothers Matheus, Joannes, Valerius, Hercules, Sansonatus, Manfredus and Gaetanus Capuano omnes de Manfredonia received one of the abovementioned licences to ship grain to Split. The Capuano family was one of the most prominent New Christian families of Manfredonia. They were active in the grain trade and maintained tight relations with Trani. Members of the family rose to sad prominence for being burnt at the stake in Benevento during the renewed inquisitorial persecutions in 1504.48

The Capuano were not the only family of Apulian New Christians sustaining commercial relations to Split. From the extant export licences for the years 1475 to 1517, 116 were issued to altogether forty individual members of known New Christian families, allowing them to export different goods, mostly coarse cloth and horses, to Apulia.49 Most of these merchants came from Manfredonia, Barletta and Trani, their families of origin being the abovementioned Capuano, moreover the Bacho50, Barisano52, Bisantis/Bisancio53, Buctunis/ Botoni 54, Catalano55, Florio56, Granita57, Franchi/Francho58, Maffeo59, Mectulo/Metolo60, Nucio61, Ruberto62 and Stellatello63. Some individuals and the intensity of

46 DAZD-16: 39/51.3/60r.
47 DAZD-16: 18/35/122v; ibid. 479r; ibid. 488r–v; ibid. 597v; ibid. 600v; DAZD-16: 24/40.1/498r–v; ibid. 523v–524r; DAZD-16: 39/51.3/60r; DAST-1: 1: 98r; ibid. 242v.
50 E.g.: DAZD-16: 18/35/244r: Hercules Capuano de Manfredonia.
51 E.g.: DAZD-16: 49/60.6-II/470r: Ser Baptista de Bacho.
52 E.g.: DAZD-16: 49/60.6-II/464v: Ser Mellio de Barisano de Barletta.
53 E.g.: DAZD-16: 18/35/235r: Ser Aluysius de Bisanti de Trani.
54 DAZD-16: 49/60.6-II/490r: Ser Antonio de Botoni.
55 E.g.: DAZD-16: 36/48.1/61r: Ser Alto Catelan.
56 E.g.: DAZD-16: 36/48.1/76r: Ser Scipio de Florio de Manfredonia.
57 E.g.: DAZD-16: 16/33.1/12v: Ser Laurentius de Granita de Manfredonia.
58 E.g.: DAZD-16: 36/48.1/69r: Ser Donato de Franchi de Manfredonia.
59 E.g.: DAZD-16: 18/35/241v: Fabricius Hellie Maffeo de Barletta.
60 E.g.: DAZD-16: 49/60.6-II/483v: Ser Julio de Metolo da Barletta.
61 E.g.: DAZD-16: 18/35/244v: Palamides Nucii de Manfredonia.
their contacts to Split will be considered in more detail in the following section, at this point we shall, however, take a look at how these exports were organized. Since the export licences do not just contain information on who was permitted to bring which products to which place, but also on whose ship the goods were to be transported, we learn about another aspect of this trade: The New Christian merchants did not use their own vessels to ship their goods to Apulia but rather cooperated with shipowners from various places in Dalmatia, Greece and Italy who collected merchandise from various traders to collectively ship them to their point of destination. It was not uncommon that several New Christians received an export licence on the same day for transport on the ship of one and the same captain, a fact showing that they cooperated when conducting business abroad.64

The destination of the merchants’ shipments was most often just given as “Apulia”. In some licences the exact town is mentioned, viz., again, Barletta, Manfredonia, or Trani. Some New Christians had goods be shipped to other places in Dalmatia, mostly to the islands of Hvar (Lesina) and Korčula lying en route to Apulia, but also to Zadar.65 Trade with Venice played a negligible role for the Apulian merchants and was rather left to others – only Alvise de Bisantis from Trani, one of the most active merchants, also shipped hides and wax to Venice.66

Since we do not have similarly detailed sources on the imports of Split, we cannot ascertain definitively which products these merchants had brought to Split prior to exporting local goods from there. Sources from Apulian ports, however, underline the assumption that it was mostly grain that these New Christian merchants shipped to Split.67 The grain exports undertaken by New Christians from Barletta between June 1454 and May 1457 were almost entirely directed to Venice or Dalmatia.68 The register of export licences from the portolan of Apulia from the period of September 1486 to August 1487 also proves the numerous grain

62 E.g.: DAZD-16: 21/38.1/647v: Ser Giliberto de Ruberto de Trani.
63 DAZD-16: 16/33.1/1v: Johannes Stellatello de Manfredonia.
64 E.g.: DAZD. 49/60.6-II/470r: On 24.10.1515, Gauso de Ruberto, Evangelista de Barisano, Baptista de Bacho and Donato de Barisano all received a licence to ship coarse cloth to Apulia on the ship of Antonio Chochochis from Split.
65 DAZD-16: 36/48.1/68r; 69r; 76r; DAZD-16: 41/52.4/168r; 169v; 170v; 177r; DAZD-16: 49/60.6-II/482r–v; 484r; 493v.
66 DAZD-16: 18/35/239v; 249r; DAZD-16: 21/38.1/645v.
exports from the ports of Manfredonia, Barletta, Trani, Bisceglie, Bari, Giovinazzo and Poligno, many of which were destined to Dalmatia or undertaken on ships of Spalatin captains.\textsuperscript{69}

Since the statutes of Split contained a protectionist regulation prohibiting the import of foreign wine so as not to harm the domestic viticulture, we can rule out wine as an import product from Apulia.\textsuperscript{70} While Ragusa bought salt from Apulia\textsuperscript{71}, the Venetian monopoly on salt and its trade prevented the import of salt from foreign places to Dalmatia.\textsuperscript{72} Similar to grain, Venice rather ordered government-organized distributions of salt within its dominions, for example from Corfu to Split, whenever the yields of the Spalatin salterns were not sufficient.\textsuperscript{73}

Given moreover the above-mentioned likeliness of being called \textit{mercatores bladorum}, it can thus safely be assumed that most of the New Christian merchants attested in the Spalatin export licences had brought grain to Split in exchange for the products they were then exporting back to Apulia.

\textbf{The integration of Apulian New Christians into the society of Split}

As merchants, the Apulian New Christians kept regular contacts with Dalmatia throughout the 15\textsuperscript{th} century. In addition to that, the Spalatin sources from the latter decades of the 15\textsuperscript{th} and the first of the 16\textsuperscript{th} century show that an increasing number of New Christians intensified these contacts by staying in Split for a longer time and interacting with the local society also in matters other than trade. This intensification of contacts with Dalmatia coincides with the increasing pressure exercised on New Christians in Apulia during the crisis of succession and

\textsuperscript{69} Catello SALVATI (ed.), \textit{Fonti Aragonesi} 6 (Naples 1968), 3–79 (Spalatin captains on 5, 12, 27, 29, 54, 56, 61, 64, 70. Cf. SCHELLER, \textit{Die Stadt der Neuchristen}, 228–231, for a list of New Christians from Trani appearing in this source.


\textsuperscript{71} POPOVIĆ-RAĐENKOVIĆ, ‘Le relazioni commerciali’, 192; SPREMić, ‘La famiglia De Florio’, 248.


\textsuperscript{73} ASV, Senato, Deliberazioni Mar, Reg. 12, 5r, 139r; DAZD-16: 18/35/287r; DAZD-16: 60/67/50r–51r.
the French invasions between 1494 and 1504, culminating in the Spanish attempts to expel them in 1510 and 1514.

In total, seventy-eight Apulian New Christians could be discerned in the Spalatin sources from the archives of Zadar and Split for the period between 1475 and 1527. The point of reference for their identification as New Christians are the names mentioned in works by Colafemmina, Coniglio, de Ceglia, Ognissanti and above all Scheller, whose book contains a prosopographic list of Trani’s New Christians, most of whom moved to other Apulian towns during the urban conflicts of the 1450s and after the expulsion from Trani in 1495.74 Hence members of originally Tranese families can be found in Split, although only few of the New Christians in Split were described as coming from Trani.

The number of seventy-eight does not contain those people whose belonging to a New Christian family cannot be ascertained securely because they are mentioned without a family name. In the case of “ser Donatus de Manfredonia”, for example, we cannot know whether he is in fact Donatus de Barisano de Manfredonia, Donatus de Franchi de Manfredonia, or a totally different person.75 Similarly, “ser Thomaso da Barleta” or “ser Luca de Manfredonia” could be New Christians because of their places of origin and occupation as merchants; but without a family name, we cannot know.76 Considering, moreover, the possibility of lost sources as well as the generally low visibility of women in notarial acts and case files – only six of the seventy-eight people are female –, the actual number of New Christians active in Split was most probably higher.

The identified neofiti belong to twenty different known New Christian families from Barletta, Manfredonia and Trani: Baccho77 (2), Barisano78 (3), Bello/Gello79 (2), Bisantis80 (3), Buctunis81 (1), Capuano82 (16), Catalano83 (5), Consulo/Zardullo84 (2), Florio85 (6), Francho86 74 Cesare COLAFEMMINA, ‘Cristiani novelli’; CONIGLIO, ‘Ebrei e Cristiani Novelli’; CEGLIA, ‘Cristiani novelli’; OGNISSANTI, ‘Ebrei e neofiti’; SCHELLER, Die Stadt der Neuchristen, 379–461.
75 DAZD-16: 21/38.1/645r; 650r–v.
76 DAZD-16: 49/60.6-II/475r; 486v.
77 SCHELLER, Die Stadt der Neuchristen, 386–387.
78 SCHELLER, Die Stadt der Neuchristen, 387–390.
79 SCHELLER, Die Stadt der Neuchristen, 417–426.
80 SCHELLER, Die Stadt der Neuchristen, 390–392.
81 SCHELLER, Die Stadt der Neuchristen, 392–405.
83 SCHELLER, Die Stadt der Neuchristen, 405–410.
84 SCHELLER, Die Stadt der Neuchristen, 410–416.
(2), Gentile87 (1), Granita88 (5), Iacobuzzo/Iacobi89 (7), Mapheo90 (6), Metulo/Mectulo91 (3), Minadoi92 (1), Nucio93 (3), Pace94 (1), Roberto95 (5) and Stellatello96 (1). Additionally, the family of Hieronymus and Bernardinus Domila de Manfredonia probably was of New Christian descent because they were related to the Minadoi and maintained extensive business relations with the Granita.97 Although we do not know the last name of Thomasus Bartholomei de Trani, he probably was a New Christian, too, since he was described as the nepos of Alvise de Bisantis and traded grain together with other neoﬁti.98 Finally, the deceased Marino de Iacobbi de Trani was most likely the New Christian Marino de Iacobuzzo mentioned by Scheller, since Iacobuzzo is a pejorative version of Iacobus that his wife and six children presumably were not reluctant to renounce in favour of the more neutral de Iacobbi when moving to Split in 1495. Moreover, Marino had done business with other New Christians, leaving his children debts to settle, and his son Pompeius traded grain with some of them in Split, fitting the profile of neoﬁti.99

While some of these New Christians appear in the sources only occasionally as merchants, others had further contacts with the Spalatin society or even settled down in town. A source explicitly addressing the settlement of New Christians in Split is the salvumconductum issued by the Venetian governor of Split in June 1515 to the brothers Mellio and Donatus de Barisano de Barletta, who had previously already lived in Split (“alias etiam domicilium habuerunt in hac civitate spalati”) and now wished to come back with their families and

86 COLAFEMMINA, ‘Cristiani novelli a Manfredonia’, 270, 273, 275.
89 SCHELLER, Die Stadt der Neuchristen, 429–431.
90 SCHELLER, Die Stadt der Neuchristen, 432–433.
91 SCHELLER, Die Stadt der Neuchristen, 434–437; COLAFEMMINA, ‘Cristiani novelli a Manfredonia’, 272.
93 SCHELLER, Die Stadt der Neuchristen, 438–442.
94 COLAFEMMINA, ‘Cristiani novelli a Manfredonia’, 273, 275; OGNISSANTI, ‘Ebrei e neoﬁti’.
95 SCHELLER, Die Stadt der Neuchristen, 446–451.
97 DAZD-16: 39/51.2–2/270v–271r: Ser Bernardino Domila de Manfredonia is described as the cousin of ser Victor de Minadoi de Manfredonia, to whose procurator he is nominated. DAZD-16: 39/51.2–2/268v: Providus ser Hieronymus Domila de Manfredonia receives a quittance from the heirs of Troianus de Granita “pro computa societatis granorum et aliarum mercantiarum”. By using network analysis, SCHELLER, Die Stadt der Neuchristen, 145–159, shows that the New Christians of Trani mostly established trading societies with one another and kept tight family contacts.
98 DAZD-16: 24/40.1/43v; DAZD-16: 45/56.1/77v; 79r–v; DAST-1: 1-1: 215v.
99 DAST-1: 1: 146v–147r; 209r; 215v; DAZD-16: 34/46.3/141v–142r; DAZD-16: 60/67/33v–34r. SCHELLER, Die Stadt der Neuchristen, 430.
possessions ("cupientibus venire cum eorum familiis ac rebus ex partibus apulię ad hanc spalati civitatem"). Since Donatus received an export licence in 1511, it is possible that they had temporarily moved to Split following the edict of expulsion of 1510, but he could have been in town as a merchant also without living there. While we thus do not know for sure when they had lived in Split before their return in 1515, their going back and forth between Dalmatia and Apulia reflects the waves of expulsion and repatriation the neofiti had to endure. Their wish to move to Split in 1515 most probably was motivated by the second edict of expulsion of 1514.

After having established themselves in Split, both brothers regularly received export licences to bring cloth, horses, honey and anchovies to Apulia, and both also traded with grain. Interestingly, Mellio is described as being a citizen and inhabitant of Split ("citadino et habitator de spalato") already on 6 July 1515, less than a month after having received the permission to move to Split. Contrary to other Dalmatian towns, the statutes of Split do not regulate the exact requirements a foreigner had to fulfil to obtain the civic rights, which points to Split’s general openness towards new citizens. Customarily, however, the prerequisites were permanent residence in Split, owning real estate and being capable of fulfilling the civic duties. Moreover, socio-economic criteria were decisive, especially one’s economic wealth and the accompanying benefit a new wealthy citizen would constitute for the town. We can thus assume that Mellio de Barisano was a fairly wealthy merchant who owned property in Split and was well-known in town already before moving there again in June 1515, enabling him to receive the citizenship of Split rather quickly.

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100 DAZD-16: 39/51.4-III/78r. Mellio is probably the same “Mele de Barisano” mentioned by SCHELLER, Die Stadt der Neuchristen, 388, as owing debts to the Medici in 1473 and being a witness in Barletta in 1503.
101 DAZD-16: 41/52.4/172v.
102 DAZD-16: 49/60.6-II/464v; 466v; 468r; 469r; 470r; 472v; 473v; 475r; 481v; 483r; 485v; 490r; 492r–v; 493r; 496r; DAZD-16: 39/51.4-IV/162r; 186r.
103 DAZD-16: 49/60.6-II/464v: “Ser Mellio de barisano da barleta citadino et habitator de spalato per puglia in navilio suprascripto [patron Zuan da Trau] rassa grossa rotulo uno.”
His brother Donatus, in turn, is not described as citizen but only as inhabitant, *habitator*, of Split. He maintained contacts to his hometown Barletta beyond trading: In 1526, he agreed that a seven-year-old girl from Klis (a fortress close to Split), whose father had been abducted by the Turks, would go to Barletta to serve in the household of his daughter Victoria for six years before returning to Split.\(^{105}\) While Donatus was a *habitator Spalati*, his daughter was still, or again, living in Barletta, being married to a *habitator Baruli*. The family thus did not abandon Barletta completely. The story of the girl who was to become Victoria’s servant is moreover typical for people, especially children, from the Dalmatian hinterlands. Many suffered from Turkish raids and abductions and hoped to secure their children’s safety by sending them to Apulia or Venice for some years or even permanently. While Dalmatia was a safe haven for expelled New Christians from Apulia, Apulia promised to protect refugees from the Balkan hinterland. The paths of fleeing people thus crossed in the Adriatic.

Mellio and Donatus de Barisano were not the only New Christians who acquired the status of *habitator* or even *civis Spalati*. Altogether, three of the identified New Christians are described as *cives Spalati* in the examined sources, while 19 are called *habitatores*. One must bear in mind, however, that the sources in general do not give a person’s legal status every single time they are mentioned. For instance, while the eminent merchant and citizen of Split Antonio Cavogrosso is described as *citadin de Spalato* in an export licence from 26.3.1511, this information is omitted in the licence from 16.5.1511.\(^{106}\) It is thus possible that more New Christians obtained the status of *civis* or *habitator* during their time in Split than we know of explicitly.

In what follows, the interactions of two more New Christians with the society of Split shall be described in more detail to give a better insight into the variety of possible contacts.\(^{107}\)

Rugerius Helie de Mapheo de Barletta was one of the first New Christians to settle in Split. In 1482 he was described as *habitator* and by 1491 he was a *civis et habitator Spalati*.\(^{108}\) As most *neofiti*, he was active as a merchant, shipping cloth, wax, hides and salted fish to Barletta and Apulia and in turn importing grain to Split.\(^{109}\) Rugerius cooperated with both

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\(^{105}\) DAZD-16: 60/67/162r.

\(^{106}\) DAZD-16: 41/52.4/167r; 169r.

\(^{107}\) The author’s forthcoming dissertation at the University of Vienna will provide a list of all identified New Christians and their activities in Split for the period of 1480–1530.

\(^{108}\) DAZD-16: 24/40.1/126v.

other New Christians and local Dalmatians from Split and Šibenik, which, however, also resulted in several lawsuits. In 1512, for instance, Alvise de Bisantis, another New Christian *civis Spalati*, pressed charged against him because of allegedly unsettled debts following the joint shipment of grain to Split for the provisioning of the local *stratioti* in 1482. In the trial, Rugerius explained that he could not remember well what had happened 30 years ago, but he had been doing business with Alvise for a long time and also in the name of his father Helia. Accordingly, Rugerius and his brother Fabricius, who was described as *habitatator* in 1482 and thus at least temporarily also lived in Split, agreed to pay 61 ducats to a Spalatin tanner for 18 horses he had given to their father. The third brother Hector stayed in Barletta but had Rugerius conclude a contract with a man from Šibenik who would go to Barletta to serve in Hector’s household and till his land for three years, earning four ducats per year. Hector’s sons Helia, Hieronymus and Julius, in turn, conducted (unspecified) business with their uncle Rugerius, asking the son of Scipio de Florio, the New Christian to be discussed in the following, to collect their uncle’s debts in 1517.

While maintaining contacts to his family in Barletta and to other New Christians in Split, Rugerius also interacted with the local society in matters beyond trading. Above all, he was married to a Spalatin woman, the sister of Franciscus Radmili de Spalato, who traded with Apulia and Venice and thus belonged to the same socio-professional stratum as Rugerius and other *neofiti*. He owned a house in Split’s old town, which, however, was put up for compulsory auction by the commune in 1495 because of the debts he owed after not paying his share of the rent of the villages’ revenues that he had leased together with two Spalatin noblemen. A few months later, he recovered the house by renting it for 12 *librae* per year. Beside the rent of the revenue from the villages, Rugerius also got involved in the commune’s finances by renting the customs duty that had to be paid for any product entering Split. He did so in 1487 and 1488 with a *societas* constituted by his future long-year partner Alvise de Bisantis and two other Spalatin businessmen. Disagreements over payments, however,
necessitated arbitration proceedings.\footnote{DAST-1: 1: 162v–163r; DAZD-16: 24/40.1/157v.} Next to renting public revenues, Rugerius also rented the revenues of a noblewoman’s properties in the district of Split in 1491.\footnote{DAZD-16: 24/40.1/126v.} Collecting all these rents either required profound knowledge of the local conditions also in the rural territory of Split and not just in the port, or at least having good contacts to people who had this knowledge. Both cases point to Rugerius’s integration into Split’s society.

What best illustrates this New Christian’s prestige among his fellow citizens in Split is his repeated appointment as judge in arbitration lawsuits. Such proceedings were very common in Dalmatia as they usually settled a conflict faster and with less costs. The parties agreed on one to five judges who naturally would have been people with legal experience and education and/or respectable men whose judgment would not have been questioned easily because of their prestige or expertise.\footnote{ORLANDO, Strutture e pratiche, 275–279.} Rugerius’s field of expertise clearly was supraregional trade, hence he was asked to be judge in a conflict between two Spalatins about the shipment of horses to Apulia in 1491\footnote{DAZD-16: 24/40.1/44r–v.} as well as in another conflict between two locals about a voyage to the “orient” financed by one of them and undertaken by the other.\footnote{DAST-1: 218r–v.} Rugerius declined the latter task, but he was elected in the first place nonetheless. The Spalatin merchant Deodatus Helie – unrelated to Rugerius – appointed him as judge in the arbitration proceedings against another local merchant in unspecified, but probably trade-related matters in 1501\footnote{DAZD-16: 32/44.8/68v–69r.} and finally also the fellow neofiti Pompeius and Jacobus q. ser Marini Jacobi de Trani on the one and the same Alvise de Bisantis on the other hand asked him and the New Christians Altus Catalano de Barletta and Scipio de Florio de Manfredonia for their judgment in all conflicts the brothers’ father had had with Alvise.\footnote{DAST-1: 209r.} Given their long-standing cooperation and probably also friendship, Rugerius was appointed by Alvise. Nevertheless, the arbitrators jointly ruled that Alvise had to pay the brothers 20 ducats to settle his debts, a judgment that shortly afterwards was also approved by the Venetian governor.\footnote{DAST-1: 234r.}

The second New Christian to be discussed in more detailed is the above-mentioned Scipio de Florio de Manfredonia, whose relatives belonged to the most important merchants connecting Ragusa and the Kingdom of Naples throughout the 15th century. In his article on the de Florio
family, Momčilo Spremić does not consider their New Christian background. While describing the Ragusan activities of other family members in detail, he mentions Scipio just once, saying that he only occasionally exported grain from Manfredonia.\textsuperscript{125} This is true as long as one only takes into consideration the trade with Ragusa, because Scipio, contrary to most of his relatives, preferred being in contact with Split, in whose sources he left his traces for almost five decades (1481–1527) in more than two dozen individual notarial acts or case files. Despite living in Split for such a long time and being recorded as a \textit{habitator} by 1503, he never seems to have obtained the Spalatin citizenship. On the contrary, in 1514 he is described as noble citizen of Manfredonia, \textit{nobilis civis sypontinus}.\textsuperscript{126} Although this is the only instance calling him noble, the frequently used titles \textit{egregius ser, providus vir ser} or \textit{dominus} point to his prestigious standing and wealth, which he, like most New Christians, acquired as merchant, earning him the denomination as \textit{mercator et habitator Spalati}.\textsuperscript{127}

Given the nature of notarial acts as records of legal transactions, most information the sources contain on Scipio concerns his business relations both with other New Christians and local Spalatins. Apart from his trading with different goods between Split and Apulia, this encompasses advancing credits\textsuperscript{128}, owning ships\textsuperscript{129} and demanding or receiving outstanding debts\textsuperscript{130}. We also, however, learn about his personal life. Procuratorial contracts suggest that Scipio had close contacts to the Spalatin merchant Hieronymus Sfoitinich, with whom he not only jointly owned a ship, but for whom he also acted as procurator in a sales contract concerning a house in a village of Split’s territory that Hieronymus bought in 1504. Scipio in turn authorized Hieronymus’s son Antonius to collect outstanding debts from another New Christian, Antonius de Gentile, and to demand the restitution of two ships from the island of Korčula.\textsuperscript{131} As Stephan Sander-Faes points out in his study on Zadar, business relations, kinship ties and patronage relations were decisive factors in choosing procurators apart from

\textsuperscript{125} SPREMIĆ, ‘La famiglia De Florio’, 247.
\textsuperscript{126} DAZD-16: 39/51.2–4/6v.
\textsuperscript{127} DAZD-16: 45/56.3/123v–124r (1515); DAZD-16: 45/56.5/225r–v (1516); DAZD-16: 48/60.6–II/482v; 483r; 487v; 492v; DAZD-16: 39/51.4–II/90v; DAZD-16: 39/51.4–IV/138v; DAZD-16: 36/48.1/76r; DAZD-16: 24/40.1/162r–v; SALVATI (ed.), \textit{Fonti Aragonesi} 6, 6. In 1496, Ser Dionisio Florii de Manfredonia was also described as \textit{nobilis}: DAST-1-1: 312v–313r.
\textsuperscript{128} DAZD-16: 32/44.9/113r–v; DAZD-16: 39/51.2–4/12v; DAST-1: 185v–186r.
\textsuperscript{129} DAZD-16: DAZD-16: 34/46.3/165v–166r; DAZD-16: 39/51.2–4/6v; DAST-1-1: 332v–333r.
\textsuperscript{130} DAZD-16: 24/40.1/162r–v; DAZD-16: 32/44.9/114r–v; DAZD-16: 39/51.4–III/90v; DAZD-16: 45/56.3/123v–124r; DAZD-16: 45/56.5/225r–v.
\textsuperscript{131} DAZD-16: DAZD-16: 34/46.3/165v–166r; DAZD-16: 39/51.2–4/6v; DAZD-16: 45/56.5/225r–v.
their education and social status.\textsuperscript{132} Accordingly, other procuratorial appointments tell us about Scipio’s family and thus about the kinship networks of New Christians in the Adriatic:

In 1494, Scipio represented his brother Georgius when negotiating with a woman from Klis that her son of eight to ten years would serve in Georgius’s household for eight years.\textsuperscript{133} Once again a parent from the Dalmatian hinterland felt compelled to send a child to Apulia to make a living in a safer environment, and once again the relative of a New Christian still living in Apulia negotiated the corresponding contract. Some New Christians also personally contracted their servants in Split before taking them back to Apulia, while others employed them to serve in their households or on their fields in Split.\textsuperscript{134} In some cases, however, it remains unclear whether the servants were intended to stay in Split or come to Apulia, but both point to the role of Dalmatia as source of (wo)manpower – many of the contracted servants were girls or women, some of whom probably were also intended as concubines\textsuperscript{135} – for Italians, be it New or Old Christians, as well as to the increasing insecurity in the Dalmatian hinterlands.

Scipio himself contracted a married couple from Omiš (Almissa) in 1494: while the man was to till his fields, the woman should serve in the household and nurse his daughter.\textsuperscript{136} Scipio thus owned a house and plots of land in Split, which is confirmed by other sources and underlines his stable settlement there.\textsuperscript{137} While we do not know the name of this infant daughter or her probably deceased mother, we do know about five other children of Scipio’s: one of his earliest appearances in the sources is a conflict with a Spalatin woman about child support for his alleged illegitimate son in 1491. Scipio denied being the father on the grounds of having been with her only once or twice, so that they agreed that he would not be responsible for maintenance, but he also would not be allowed to have the child live with him.\textsuperscript{138} This is probably the same Nicolaus \textit{filius naturalis} who Scipio appointed to be his procurator twenty-four years later: Together with his brother Georgius and his son-in-law


\textsuperscript{133} DAST-I-1: 4r.

\textsuperscript{134} Joannes q. ser Lancilai Capuano mercator de Manfredonia contracted four girls aged six to seven years with the obligation of treating them well like his own daughters and giving them in marriage with adequate dowries once they come of age: DAZD-16: 24/40.1/498r–v; 508r–v; 523v–524r; DAST-I-1: 98r. Other servants of New Christians: DAZD-16: 24/40.1/40r–v; 45v; 359r; 517v–518r; 521r; DAZD-16: 32/44.8/27r–v; DAZD-16: 34/46.5/268v; DAZD-16: 39/51.3/60r; DAZD-16: 60/67/162r; DAST-1: 6r–v; 220v–221r; 312v–313r; 349v.

\textsuperscript{135} Premić, ‘La famiglia De Florio’, 249–250.

\textsuperscript{136} DAZD-16: 24/40.1/524r–v.

\textsuperscript{137} DAZD-16: 45/56.4/169r–v; DAZD-16: 45/56.5/224r: His house was located in the \textit{terra nova}.

\textsuperscript{138} DAZD-16: 24/40.1/145r.
Alfonsus de Mabilia de Luceria, Nicolaus was authorized to recover and collect all debts and income from rents and leases of houses and other possessions Scipio was entitled to in Manfredonia and other places. At the same time, Scipio also appointed his brother to be his and his son Joannes Baptistas procurator at the office of the notary of the port of Manfredonia. Both appointments underline Scipio’s tight contacts to Apulia despite having lived in Dalmatia for at least 25 years: He still owned property in Manfredonia and had such frequent contacts with his hometown that he deemed a permanent representative in the port necessary. Moreover, he had married his daughter – probably the grown-up infant from above – to a man from Lucera and involved both the illegitimate and the legitimate son in his business with Apulia.

Like his father, Joannes Baptistas was a providus mercator and habitator Spalati. He kept contacts to Apulia and other New Christians, which is why Leonardus Roberti de Barletta mercator appointed him as procurator to collect all outstanding debts in 1526. Similarly, another son, merchant and habitator Spalati named Hieronymus was authorized by the above-mentioned New Christian Helia, son of Hector Helie de Mapheo, to recover what his uncle Rugerius owed him and his brothers in 1517. Eight years later, when the same Helia and one of his brothers advanced a credit in Neapolitan rather than Venetian coin – ducatis centum carlinorum – to the New Christian Hieronymus Capuano de Manfredonia, Hieronymus de Florio was asked by the Spalatin chancellor to confirm the names of the contracting parties. Despite living in Split, he was deemed capable of identifying these New Christians who were unknown to the chancellor. This points to both Hieronymus’s familiarity with fellow neofiti who apparently were not living in Split permanently, as well as to the reliability he was attributed with by the chancellor. The contracting New Christians from Barletta and Manfredonia, in turn, were trusting the Spalatin chancery and planning on staying or returning to Split since the credit was to be repaid within four years.

For his part, Hieronymus authorized the Spalatin nobleman Nicolaus de Albertis to represent him at court when the Venetian governor condemned a man to pay off his debts with him. Another son of Scipio’s, Bernardinus, is attested as a merchant, trading cloth, wax and barley

139 DAZD-16: 45/56.3/123v–124r.  
140 DAZD-16: 60/67/124v–125r.  
141 DAZD-16: 60/67/20v; 21v–22r.  
142 DAZD-16: 39/51.4–IV/188v.  
143 DAZD-16: 60/67/10v: “Ser Hieronymo ser Scipionis Florii de Manfredonia habitatore spalati qui fidem fecit de nominibus et cognominibus praemissarum partium.”  
144 DAZD-16: 60/67/21v–22r.
together with his father.\textsuperscript{145} By adopting the illegitimate daughter of the nobleman Petrus Jacoulich, Scipio also established contacts with Split’s nobility. Since he concluded a marriage contract for her in 1501, he must have adopted her either at a rather early stage of his residence in Split or when she was already almost grown-up. As it usually happened to the illegitimate daughters of noblemen, she was married to a non-noble of Split with a rather humble dowry paid in two-thirds by Scipio and one-third by Petrus.\textsuperscript{146} We do not know Scipio’s motivation for adopting the girl – while at the same time denying fatherhood of his own child – but doing so undoubtedly was a sign of integration into the society of Split.

**Conclusion: Venice and the New Christians in Dalmatia**

The overview of the presence of Apulian New Christians in Split in the period between 1480 and 1530 as well as the micro-historic analysis of exemplary cases have shown that the New Christians formed part of Split’s society in various ways also beyond trading: through marriage, legitimate and illegitimate children, adoption, by contracting servants, advancing credits, appointing procurators, owning property, renting private or public revenues, serving as judges, appearing in court, or becoming *habitatores* or even *cives Spalati*. They also, however, continued to be aware of constituting a separate community as is shown by their frequent interactions among each other also beyond kinship ties. Moreover, Hieronymus de Florio was asked to identify two New Christians from the Capuano family of Manfredonia and the Mapheo family of Barletta because the chancellor expected him to know them.

It is crucial to notice, however, that in the eyes of the Spalatins the basis of this separate community was rather their geographic origin and professional activity than their religious background or socio-political status within the Apulian society. Not one single reference to their status as *cristiani novelli*, *neofiti*, or *marrani* has been found in the Spalatin sources. Some were described as *mercatores* – but this term was a job title in Split also attributed to locals and thus lacked the socio-political meaning it had in Trani or Barletta, denoting a third legal status next to *nobiles* and *populares*. Calling them *mercatores bladorum* or *mercatores puglienses* refers to the fact that their frequent occupation as grain traders and their Apulian origin defined them to a far greater extent than their religious identity or social status back home.

\textsuperscript{145} DAZD-16: 39/51.4–IV/138v; DAZD-16: 49/60.6–II/482r.

\textsuperscript{146} DAZD-16: 32/44.9/146r–v.
The reason for this was hardly unawareness among the Venetians of the existence of New Christians in Apulia and their coming to Dalmatia, as shown by the senate’s response to the governor of Hvar from 1495, denying the *marrani* and Jews the right to stay in Dalmatia, and by the order to auction off the “*domus et possessiones christianorum novellorum*” in Trani from 1504. Moreover, the 1497 decree of expulsion of *neofiti* from Venetian territories underlines Venice’s negative attitude towards them, even if the order was not executed. Therefore, the only possibility how the people belonging to attested New Christian families mentioned in this article were able to stay in towns like Split must have been the lacking awareness of their religious ambiguity in Dalmatia as opposed to Apulia. As newcomers, their family background was unknown to the Spalatins, and given the repeated repressions they had to suffer in Apulia as well as the Venetian orders against *marrani*, the New Christians naturally would not have proclaimed it from the rooftops.

Instead, they managed to supply Split with vital grain, settle there and integrate themselves into the society. While it might have been Rugerius’s and Scipio’s dream to find safety in Dalmatia, they still kept contact to relatives and fellow New Christians who stayed in Apulia, proving that the edicts of expulsion from Naples were not successful in driving all the *neofiti* out.

Future research will shed light on the fate of Apulian New Christians in other Dalmatian towns and in periods prior and after the timeframe studied in this article. Whether their religious ambiguity was addressed in any way throughout Dalmatia has to be studied comparatively. Moreover, the consequences of the final expulsion of Jews and New Christians from Naples in 1541 are of special interest, as well as the interactions among New Christians within Dalmatia and other Venetian territories.
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