

Dana E. Katz, *The Jewish Ghetto and the Visual Imagination of Early Modern Venice*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. xiii + 188.

by *Cristiana Facchini*

In some of his remarkable publications, famed urban sociologist Richard Sennett explored the interconnection between religious notions and the construction of space. In both *The Conscience of the Eye* (1990) and *Flesh and Stones* (1994), Sennett confronted the body in the city, or more generally, he attempted to look at the built urban environment through the perspective of the “human condition.”¹ Whereas the former title constitutes the third part of a trilogy (*The Fall of the Public Man* 1977 and the novel *Palais Royal* 1986),² the latter is in many respects indebted to his friendship with Michel Foucault. In *Flesh and Stones* Sennett explores how Christian theology and Christian notions of the body find expression in the urban environment, and he considers the cathedral and the cloister as a counterpoint to the bustling life that characterized the market with its dangers and violence.³ Detecting a structural ambivalence at the core of the Christian city, Sennett proceeds to explore its potential contradictions in reference to those in the city who were not Christians, and in doing so he certainly tries to criticize a certain scholarly tradition that had idealized the medieval city. “The medieval adage,” he writes, “*Stadt Luft macht frei* would leave a bitter taste in the Jew’s mouth, for the right to do business in the city did not bring a more general freedom. The Jew who contracted as an equal lived as a segregated man.”⁴ The chapter Sennett devoted to the ghetto in *Flesh and Stone* may be regarded as a tribute to the sociological debate about the ghetto, initiated at the beginning of the twentieth century by members of the school of urban sociology of Chicago.⁵ Notions about the “ghetto” played a significant role in American urban sociology. Louis Wirth published a short and provocative article in 1927 and a book in 1928, where historical analysis blended with sociological

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¹ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, (Chicago – London: The University of Chicago Press, 1958).

² Richard Sennett, *The Fall of the Public Man*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977); Id., *Palais Royal*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977).

³ Richard Sennett, *Flesh and Stone. The Body and the City in Western Civilization*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1994).

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Classic Essays on the Culture of Cities*, ed. Richard Sennett, (New York: Meredith Corporation, 1969).

theories revolving around the problem of immigration in the great American metropolis.⁶ In doing so, Wirth offered a universalized history of the ghetto, using the Jewish experience to understand ethnic grouping and behavior in the American city. However, he also attempted to sketch a psychological and cultural portrait of an “urban minority.” “The ghetto is not only a physical fact, it is a state of mind,” he wrote. “The forms of community life are likely to become more intelligible to us if we have before us the natural history of the Jewish ghetto. The ghetto may therefore be regarded as typical of a number of other forms of community life that sociologists are attempting to explore.”⁷

Although quite original in its scope, his endeavor is the result of a wider discourse on the ghetto which had animated the intellectual debate both in America and Europe. In fact, Wirth’s book must be understood not only within the cultural ambience of sociology at the time, but also against the background of a wealth of discourses about the “ghetto,” both negative and positive, which were triggered by two different social and political developments. The first, linked to the slow path of political emancipation throughout the nineteenth century, was composed of articles and books on the history of the Jews in many European cities, portrayed mainly by members of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. By the second half of the nineteenth century a few important publications would be devoted to the Jews of Rome, whose miserable condition symbolized the evil of the Catholic Church and its ghetto, the walls of which would be officially destroyed only after the fall of Rome in 1870. At the same time, a number of publications appeared, reflecting upon the psychological consequences of social seclusion, in order to offer answers for a better and faster assimilation of Jews in their national context and to counter the rising tide of antisemitism.⁸ The second development was inspired by the wave of migrants from Eastern and Central Europe to many European and American cities. In some cases, it romanticized the idea of the ghetto through the use of new creations, such as novels and theatre plays⁹; in other instances, it attempted to

⁶ Louis Wirth, “The Ghetto,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 33,1 (1927): 57-71; Id., *The Ghetto*, (Chicago – London: The University of Chicago Press, 1928). For a recent discussion see: M. Duneier, *Ghetto. The Invention of a Place, the History of an Idea*, (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2016).

⁷ Wirth, *The Ghetto*, 6.

⁸ See, for example, the controversial book by the Italian criminologist, Cesare Lombroso, *Antisemitismo*, (Turin: Bocca, 1894) or Theodor Herzl, *Das Neue Ghetto*, (1903).

⁹ See, for example, the popular works by Israel Zangwill, *Children of the Ghetto* (1892) and *Dreamers of the Ghetto* (1898), and in general his works on ghetto’ culture and the notion of the “melting pot,” fundamental to his famous theatre play, *The Melting Pot*, (first staged in 1908).

explore its meaning in order to find practical solutions to various forms of hostility toward migrants.

Sennett's contribution belongs to this intellectual tradition and it deserves some discussion, especially in the wake of recent historiographical works on urban history and the Jews. According to Sennett, the dialectic between *communitas* and exclusion is at the core of the Christian city, which needs to implement different repressive strategies to deal with those at the margins of its sacred civic body. "Venetian Christians," wrote Sennett, "sought to create a Christian community by segregating those who were different, drawing on the fear of touching alien, seductive bodies. Jewish identity became entangled in that same geography of repression."¹⁰

Although Sennett's interpretation of the ghetto of Venice has rarely been used by historians, as it may be historically inaccurate, it is useful to flesh out some of his arguments. The Venetian ghetto is interpreted through Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, with a focus on Jewish bodies and the "fear of touching" as the driving forces which lead the Venetian authorities to implement a policy of segregation. As Venice's political and economic might was shattered by military defeat, a rhetoric of purification and discipline emerged among religious leaders, because economic losses were caused by moral weakness. Jewish professions, notably physicians and money lenders, made Jews visible as polluting elements of Christian society.¹¹ Often, in moral treatises of the time, they would be associated with prostitution, and perceived in similar ways as both necessary and dangerous.

Sennett's emphasis is on surveillance and isolation, even when describing the *Fondaco dei Tedeschi*, a compound inhabited by wealthier German merchants, situated close to the Rialto Bridge in a building embellished with frescos by Giorgione. With the rise of the Reformation the presence of heresy would unquestionably grow, and so the German *fondaco* became even more dangerous for the city. Nevertheless, the authorities decided to keep these merchants in Venice, at the cost of increased surveillance. For Sennett, the Venetian ghetto

¹⁰ Sennett, *Flesh and Stone*.

¹¹ In other cities, they were moved into areas where prostitutes would also be seclude confined. For Florence before a ghetto was established see: Justine Walden, *Spatial Logics, Ritual Humiliation, and Jewish-Christian Relations in Early Modern Florence*, in *Global Reformations. Transforming Early Modern Religions, Societies, and Cultures*, ed Nicolas Terpstra, (London – New York: Routledge, 2019)

exemplifies one of the most significant themes of urban society, by incorporating “impure” and yet necessary social groups into the fabric of the city. “Purity of the mass would be guaranteed by isolation of the minority.” No one would reclaim the Jews for the city, as “in this, the ghetto of Venice embodied a different ethos of isolation from the ethos practiced shortly afterward in Renaissance Rome [...]. The Roman ghetto was indeed meant to be a space to transform the Jews.”¹² The social rationale of the Roman ghetto was to humiliate the Jews in order to convert them. The Venetian ghetto was meant to separate and isolate them from the civic body of the city.

In her recent book on the Venetian ghetto, published in the wake of its 500 year anniversary, Dana Katz pays tribute to Sennett’s insights, and describes the rise of the ghetto, among other things, as rooted in the “fear of seeing,” whereas for Sennett the ghetto was the outcome of a deeply ingrained “fear of touching.”¹³

For Katz the Venetian ghetto is a “visual paradox” that challenges, from its margins, the Christian social body of a city that is, since its birth, a complicated engineered space both socially and ecologically. The book revolves around four material elements of urban life: the city’s margins, conceived as laboratories of “urban planning;” strategies of enclosure as a Catholic response to forbidden gazes (“enclosure as topographies of vision”); windows as sites of disturbance; and a final chapter devoted to “walls as boundaries of the night.”¹⁴

The first example of Jewish urban segregation is taken from Frankfurt, where in 1462 the city council decided to move its Jewish settlement out of the center to an area labeled *Judengasse*,¹⁵ the example is used to prove that locating Jews at the margin or outside the urban polity was a common strategy for dealing with religious minorities. Informed by a strong theoretical approach, *The Jewish Ghetto and the Visual Imagination* speaks of the ghetto from the perspective of the Venetian authorities, privileging the language of power and its ability to frame religious diversity in the urban environment. Katz highlights the fact that

¹² Sennet, *Flesh and Stone*.

¹³ For the use of the notion of purity/impurity in spatial analysis of Jewish enclosed areas see *Rome, Pollution, and Propriety: Dirt, Disease and Hygiene in the Eternal City from Antiquity to Modernity*, eds. Mark Bradley, Kenneth Stow, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

¹⁴ Dana E. Katz, *The Jewish Ghetto and the Visual Imagination of Early Modern Venice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

¹⁵ Katz, *The Jewish Ghetto*; it is also used by Wirth as an exemplary model: Wirth, *The Ghetto*, 1928, 41-62.

through segregation the Republic applied its policy of religious tolerance as a mere corollary of its economic interests: “The separation of foreigners into distinct ethnic enclaves became a physical expression of the republic’s policy of tolerance.” As Venetian authorities sealed off their religious groups in order to reduce their visibility, often walling off windows and balconies that faced the Christian borders, the ghetto itself very quickly developed into a new form of urbanity, giving birth, with its multi-story buildings, to a verticality that challenged the Christian gaze.

The first chapter is indeed focused on “spatial marginalization” as a strategy to achieve hierarchical organization and manage ethnic and religious diversity in the city, depicted as an ideal Renaissance polity whose beauty often paralleled the harmony of its political system (being that of the ancient republic). Marginality is conceived, in her words, as “a lived experience of social and geographical displacement marked by negotiation of position” (p. 29). Venice was a city of lived religious diversity which inhabited the built environment. Jews were one of the many religious and ethnic groups that contributed to the welfare of a city that was simultaneously the capital of a maritime empire with its colonies (which implies a hierarchical space), and the hub of a trading network composed of multiple groups, often labeled as *stranieri*.

The rise of the ghetto is placed against the backdrop of Venice’s economic decline, which was hardly visible to observers of the sixteenth and seventeenth century. But Jews arrived in Venice relatively late compared to other groups, and were very soon relocated to the area of the ghetto, the site of the old foundry. The decision seems to have aimed both for marginalization and inclusion, in contrast with other situations where the viable options were forced conversion, expulsion, or even massacre. And yet, according to Katz, the corporate body of the Jews in the city remains marginalized even when the ghetto is placed, after the promulgation of the *Cum nimis absurdum* (1555), at the very center of the city, where in some cases the market is located as well (Florence, Rome, Padua, Verona). Comparisons with other Italian cities seem to call for a different analysis that goes beyond the notion of urban marginality suggested by Katz. The religious motive that drives the Roman enclosure of the Jews and the subsequent establishment of the ghettos is relatively different from the urban logic of the Venetian enclosure, which partly followed in the footsteps of urban

zoning, even if with hierarchical logic.¹⁶ But the question of how to look at the rise of secluded Jewish areas as the consequence of different religious and theological traditions remains unanswered.

Katz is also attentive – as Sennett was before her – to how marginalization produced a new form of “urbanity,” conceived of as “an alternative form of urban living” (p. 41) which was defined by its verticality. In this connection, the author compares the modern urban verticality of the twentieth century, as embodied in megacity tenement halls, with the unique Venetian type of verticality. The comparison is suggestive, yet to my mind it fails to reveal the complexity of modern verticality as compared to that of the early modern period. If tenement halls (exemplified in this book by the case of Pruitt Igoe in Missouri) proved a total failure as spaces conceived to host marginal social groups, not all modern urban experiments meant to dignify the urban condition of less privileged social classes failed. Urban verticality has also been deployed, both in the past and the present, to glorify the religion or culture of dominant groups. In this sense, the ghetto presents an interesting case, very much in opposition to other architectural examples of vertical magnificence, redirecting the gaze from the dominant to the dominated. However, it is unlikely that its verticality attracted foreign visitors, who were more inclined to cross the ghetto’s walls for other reasons, among which the most relevant are sheer curiosity, religious zeal and the urge for confrontation.

Chapter Two explores the ghetto as compared to other forms of religious enclosure, of which the one most typical of the time was the female cloister. Here the author begins with the interesting insights on the nineteenth-century notion of the city square (*piazza*) as an ideal enclosed space of the urban *civitas*, as found in the work of Austrian architect Camillo Sitte or in the ground-breaking book *The Stones of Venice* by John Ruskin (p. 49-51). Katz defines enclosure as a

¹⁶ Some of these questions are addressed in Cristiana Facchini, “The City, the Ghetto and Two Books. Venice and Jewish Early Modernity,” in *Modernity and the Cities of the Jews*, ed. Cristiana Facchini, *Quest. Issues in Contemporary Jewish History*, 2 (2011): 11-44. For the Roman case see Kenneth Stow, *Theatre of Acculturation. The Roman Ghetto in the Sixteenth Century*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001); Serena Di Nepi, *Sopravvivere al ghetto. Per una storia sociale della comunità ebraica nella Roma del Cinquecento*, (Roma: Viella, 2013); for Florence see Stefanie Sigmund, *The Medici State and the Ghetto of Florence. The Construction of an Early Modern Jewish Community*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); for Counter-Reformation policies against the Jews, see Renata Segre, *La controriforma: espulsioni, conversioni, isolamento*, in *Gli ebrei in Italia*, vol. 1, ed. Corrado Vivanti, (Torino: Einaudi, 1996), 709-778.

“spatial condition predicated on the construction of boundaries to segment spaces.” The *piazza* is punctuated by openings, whereas other forms of enclosure are based upon sealed gates, as in the case of the ghetto, whose visual accessibility was also ruled out by decisions to wall up its windows.

Windows were also prohibited to women, who were confined to the private space of domestic seclusion. The visibility of a woman through a window suggested prostitution, therefore laws kept women far from these types of apertures.

Similarly, the architecture of *clausura* confined monastic life to an interior space, away from undesired gazes. This idealized conception of enclosure was strengthened by the norms of the Council of Trent. A comparison of ideal forms of religious enclosure would have been appropriate here, in order to understand whether the process which led to the “confessionalization paradigm” might shed light on religious policies concerning spaces in general. Similarities and differences are particularly enlightening, as enclosure defines sacred and “polluted” spaces, that is, spaces of ideal Christian life or the restricted life of “infidels.” “Both the sequestration of nuns and the ghettoization of Jews engender a relationship of power and discipline that expresses how a spatially confined subgroup articulates politics and ideology,” Katz writes, focusing on the potential power of sight as capable of nurturing forbidden sexual encounters. While the nuns aimed to protect themselves from the outside world, the Jews were kept apart as dangerous and yet useful urban subjects.

Katz insists upon notions of segregation, surveillance and tolerance, but in her narrative this complicated dynamic seems to repeatedly emphasize, in Foucaultian terms, the notion of surveillance, especially when hinting at the image of the panopticon that after all, in her own words, need not be evoked in order to understand the ghetto (p. 62-63).

Chapter Three delves deeper into the complex visual relationship between the Serenissima and the Jews by focusing on the material aperture of the window. Not surprisingly, evoking the *Merchant of Venice*, Katz writes that “Jessica’s abandonment of her father and conversion to Christianity is marked at the window” (p. 68). Windows are liminal spaces which connect the inside with the outside, where many forms of interaction take place. They are also vital for the organization of labor as they allow light and air to circulate inside.

Using the case of early modern London as a comparison, Katz introduces the theme of windows as spaces that are thoroughly regulated by civic rules, and from which it is possible to detect types of social interactions between the private and public domain; or they can be understood as places where outbursts of violence were enacted. In London windows are the prerogative of citizenship. For legal residents, any form of obstruction of the window or misuse of it represents an attack on private décor; however, for religious refugees (Protestants from other countries), whose work was permitted, their shop windows had to be obstructed in order to keep their merchandise out of sight, making profit more difficult to pursue (p. 73).

According to Katz, the decision to wall up windows and balconies in the Venice ghetto should be interpreted as a logical consequence of the Christian city's aim to "prohibit ocular contact with Christians" (p. 74). Even when the ghetto expanded due to the continuous influx of Levantine and Ponentine Jewish migrants, who were permitted residency in exchange for their commercial services, rules about the closing of windows or other apertures on the border lines with Christian neighbors were enforced. In some cases, Jews tried to avoid rigid enclosures, especially if they threatened the health and hygiene of the ghetto. Windows were also considered dangerous sites during Christian processions: Jews were accused of screaming and cursing at the Eucharist from their windows; conversely, charged religious rituals could easily spark off conflict and violence, as during Eastertide, when Christians assaulted and destroyed Jewish windows.

The chapter attempts to provide an alternate explanation for two types of confinement, both of which are rooted in religious rationales: the temporary one during Easter, when Jews were compelled to shut their windows and to stay inside their houses, and the permanent one of the ghetto, whose windows were walled up. Whereas the recurring enclosure framed a seasonal construction of religious identity, "the walling up of the ghetto windows symbolized a permanent mark of domestic exile, an architectonic march toward civic isolation, that built subjugation into the urban form. Ghettoization institutionalized a city of alienating environments that inscribed religious difference into the urban fabric and in it prescribed a larger social order" (p. 83).

As Daniel Jutte argued, windows were places of social interaction between Christians and Jews before and after the construction of the ghettos, and that is why city authorities attempted to regulate reciprocal gazes: not only were Jews

forbidden to look on during Christian rituals or inside Christian sacred spaces, such as monasteries and churches, but Christians were also not allowed to look at Jewish space.¹⁷ Furthermore, while this chapter evokes the relevant theme of religious and civic rituals as occasions of civic and urban belonging, it does not dwell on the problem that civic and religious rituals pose to religious grouping in the early modern city. One should therefore ask where all interactions between different religious groups were spatially placed, and what it really meant to manage religious diversity in the city of the early modern period.

The ghetto is read through the senses, primarily the optical one, but at times also through tactility. This is the case of chapter Four, which is devoted to walls and nocturnal life. Here the night is associated with the “fear of contact” characteristic of many types of relationships between Jews and Christians, and plausibly between different religious antagonists. Drawing on Simmel’s definition of the wall, the focus is on movement, and interconnectedness. The wall as a means of separation is explored through its porosity during the real time of enclosure, after dusk, when Jews are compelled to stay inside and when the gates are locked. It is at night, Katz argues, that the fear of the Jews reaches its peak, as the night is the time of ambivalence. Particular religious and civic rituals take place after dusk in the city and among Jews, in whose life nocturnal ritual plays a prominent role: from circumcision ceremonies to kabbalist devotional rites, the night, even if spent in segregation, is inhabited by a plethora of religious activities.

The walls of the ghetto, as with other walls meant to keep outsiders separated from the civic body of the city, are also tools that support the widespread fear of touching and prohibit sexual encounters. “The nighttime lockdown of Jews within ghetto walls acted to avert sexual forays entre Jew and Christian. Preventing carnal contact between Christians and Jews was hardly original to Cinquecento Venice. What was new was the use of architecture to prohibit it” (p. 107). In his chapter on the ghetto, Sennett argued that the separation between Christians and Jews was rooted in the fear of contagion, as the Jewish body (especially the male body) was conceived as a receptacle of dangerous illnesses (syphilis) or the Jews as a group as polluting agents, responsible for the plague or the poisoning of wells. Yet Jewish doctors were praised professionals, permitted

¹⁷ Daniel Jutte, “‘They shall not keep their door or windows open.’ Urban space and the dynamics of conflict and contact in pre-modern Jewish-Christian relations,” *European History Quarterly* 46/2 (2016): 209-237.

to walk more freely outside the walls of the ghetto for the welfare of their Christian patients or the city (as in cases related to the plague or other urban disasters).

Katz's analysis of the Venetian ghetto offers an interesting reading of urban spatial relations between Christians and Jews, where two different forms of power, the civic and the religious, seem to forge and inscribe religious diversity within the urban fabric. At times the book seems to be redundant with recurring themes – such as the one of sight and verticality – and theory seems to be structuring the interpretation of historical data. The emphasis on power structures and city legislation highlights how urban seclusion became a structural condition of Renaissance statecraft. However, whilst this approach reveals the deep ties between the Christian city and its built environment, it adumbrates the complexity of city life, and it often silences the agency of the individuals and groups that inhabited it. Segregation fosters *communitas*, Sennett claimed. But what was the impact of enclosure on Jewish culture? What kind of urbanity did the Jews forge in reaction to this process of segregation? How did they perceive the deterioration of their urban condition? Was this model the only one that rendered religious toleration viable in a time of increasing religious strife?

Criticism of this cultural interpretation may shed light on Jewish and other individual agency, and ultimately offer a more nuanced representation of power relations in unequal societies. Urban historians, for example, have stressed that in many Italian cities physical segregation followed two patterns. Most of the time ghettos were walled up in areas with a pre-existing loose Jewish settlement, usually located in the city center in proximity of the market; the land destined for enclosure would be of mediocre quality and therefore relatively inexpensive. Nevertheless, these areas were home to numerous infrastructures that aimed to improve the inhabitants' quality of the life. The material approach to the study of enclosed areas of settlement, while acknowledging the undeniable power of the Counter-Reformation Church, has shown that in some cases Jews attempted to voice their criticism, and even tried to postpone the construction of the enclosed area, as for example in Padua. Jews often negotiated with the government for better living conditions, and did their best to improve the quality of their urban spaces and their dwellings, shops, and storehouses.¹⁸

¹⁸ Donatella Calabi, "Les quartiers juifs en Italie entre XVe et XVIIe siècle. Quelques hypothèses de travail," *Annales* 52/4 (1997): 777-797; *La città italiana e i luoghi degli stranieri*, eds. Donatella Calabi, Paola Lanaro, (Bari: Laterza, 1998).

Jews were aware of their precarious place in the Christian city, as they often described the rise of the separated zone of residence as a *ghet*, the Talmudic term for divorce, meaning that they had been divorced by means of separation from the rest of society.¹⁹

Moreover, the case of Venice clearly shows that the Jewish enclave, even under surveillance, fostered a rich and refined culture that was expressed in a number of different languages – Hebrew, Italian, Spanish and Latin – and which took advantage of the major printing presses in the city. Elsewhere I have shown how some texts composed by Jews in Venice reached a wide audience thanks to the inter-faith encounters that the port city allowed, despite its ideals of closure.²⁰

The ghetto may also be interpreted as a liminal space with porous borders which allowed encounters to take place regardless of their ability to strengthen amicable relationships, and enabled information and knowledge to circulate from within and without. The inhabitants of the Jewish ghetto composed a diverse society in terms of class, ethnicity, and even religion. Wealthy Iberian Jews, for example, lived with their servants and slaves, some of whom came from Africa. This social diversity of the ghetto (which was replicated in many other cities) contributed to forming an alternative type of spatiality, typical of diasporic networks and built on family and business ties, religious collaboration, and expertise. The Jews of the Venetian ghetto were situated at the center of a wide diaspora structure that linked cities of the Turkish empire, Italian port cities, and new settlements in Hamburg, Amsterdam, Livorno. They simultaneously lived a life of compulsory enclosure and the life of a port city. Indeed, Jews were aware that the ghetto was one of the various options that Christian society offered, and they knew that elsewhere segregation was not implemented, as in the case of many port cities. The emphasis on surveillance also precludes analyzing the power structure within the segregated area itself. Only rarely does this approach combine study of internal religious rules with that of regulations imposed by the host

¹⁹ Isaac H.C. Cantarini, *Pahad Yitzhak*, (Padua, 1685); Cristiana Facchini, “Il Purim di Buda. Rimembranza liturgica e narrazione storica”, *Annali di storia dell’esegesi* 18/2 (2001): 507-532. See also Kenneth Stow, *The Consciousness of Closure*, in *Essential Papers on Jewish Culture in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, ed. David Ruderman, (New York: New York University, 1992).

²⁰ Cristiana Facchini, “Voci ebraiche sulla tolleranza religiosa. Pratiche e teorie nella Venezia barocca”, *Annali di storia dell’esegesi* 2/30 (2013): 393-419.

environment, thus failing to detect multiple sources of disciplinary strategies, not to mention potentially significant social differences.²¹

It is also tempting to follow the suggestions Wirth himself developed almost a century ago, focusing on forms of cultural production and sociability within the secluded areas. While there is a wealth of research available on the case of Venice, we lack more general accounts that consider a broader sample of cases, and investigate forms of multiple cultural belonging, as ghetto dwellers were, at times, people that lived on the fringes of a number of different cultural and religious realms at once.²² There is still much to consider regarding the types of urbanism produced by early modern cities in managing their different religious and ethnic groups, and how different groups increasingly became a part of the city's civic life and economic wellbeing.

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²¹ The case of Amsterdam has been analysed in some detail, especially with reference to the lives of Baruch Spinoza and Uriel Acosta. See, for example, Steven Nadler, *Baruch Spinoza. A Life*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

²² Wirth, *The Ghetto*, 34-39.