The Ambivalence of a Port-City. The Jews of Trieste from the 19th to the 20th century

by Tullia Catalan

Abstract

This article stems from a key question: was Habsburg Trieste truly a cosmopolitan and tolerant city? Building upon the interpretative category of "port Jews", established by David Sorkin and Lois C. Dubin, this study examines the social, economic and political behaviour of the Triestine Jews in the nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries, and conducts a comparison with the other religious minorities present in the Adriatic port during this period: Greeks, Protestants, Serbians and Armenians. The picture which emerges allows for the proposition of a new interpretative model, that of the "port-merchant." The second part of the article focuses on the second half of the nineteenth-century, when the model of Trieste as a tolerant city was challenged by the nationalist fights between Italians and Slovenians, and by the political antisemitism. The city lost its capacity to include the 'Other', and was rapidly transformed into a genuine breeding-ground of Italian racism.

Preface: Trieste, a multifaceted city

For a tourist visiting Trieste today, a few minutes spent standing upon the walls of the San Giusto castle are essential. This landmark, besides being the very symbol of Trieste, also provides a prime vantage point from which to admire the historical centre of this Adriatic city, enclosed between the Karst Plateau and the sea. As he looks on from his lofty position, our tourist would notice one imposing building, of a Moorish and oriental style, which stands out from the surrounding edifices. This is the local Jewish community's synagogue, which, with strong backing from the Triestine Jews, was designed by the architects Ruggero and Arduino Berlam and inaugurated with great pomp and ceremony amidst the presence of all the city's authorities in 1912.[1] The building's majesty is a forceful symbol in the modern-day landscape, which leads one to reflect on the role played by the Jewish community in this city's past; a city which was the main port of the Habsburg Empire for two hundred years. If our tourist, after having admired the synagogue from afar, were to shift his view a little to the west, his gaze would fall on the shimmering blue dome which signals the ancient presence of the Serbian

[1] On Trieste's synagogue, see: Lorella Fiorot, "Il Tempio israelitico di Trieste (1903-1912)", in *Shalom Trieste. Gli itinerari dell'ebraismo*, ed. Adriano Dugulin, (Trieste: Comune di Trieste 1998): 106-116, which has a useful bibliography on the building.

Orthodox community in the city.[2] If he let his gaze wander still further towards the sea, our tourist could not fail to notice yet another religious building: that of the Greek Orthodox community, build by no coincidence on the very shore itself, which was once a pulsing heart of trade and commerce.[3]

The alert observer will strain in vain, however, to locate cathedrals and bell-towers: in Trieste, in stark contrast to other Italian cities, there are few Catholic churches in the historic centre. Trieste has a cathedral on the castle's hills, but its most beautiful squares are dominated exclusively by secular buildings: seats of economic activity, insurance companies and government institutions, built between the eighteenth- and early twentieth-centuries, during the Habsburg period.[4] The modern-day cityscape thus reveals two fundamental elements of the city's past, and it is from these elements, I believe, that we must depart in order to introduce the relationship between the city and its Jewish minority.

The first element to take into consideration is that the Jewish community was not the only religious minority to reach prominent positions in the economic and social arena of Trieste during the Habsburg period; whilst a second element to be considered regards the way in which the city eluded the grip of the Catholic Church, which had, in contrast, a great following in the Slovenian population of the countryside. The Catholic Church's difficulty in penetrating Trieste would persist until the end of the First World War, thus creating a favourable social landscape and climate for non-Catholic religious minorities during the nineteenth-century and until the Great War[5]. This situation changed slightly during the fascist period, but it was after the

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[2] Giorgio Milossevich, Marisa Bianco Fiorin, *I Serbi a Trieste. Storia, religione, arte*, (Udine: Istituto per l'Enciclopedia nel Friuli Venezia Giulia, 1978); Dejan Medakovic', Giorgio Milossevich, *I serbi nella storia di Trieste*, (Beograd: Jugoslovenska revija, 1987); Marco Dogo, "Una nazione di pii mercanti. La comunità serbo-illirica di Trieste, 1748-1908", in *Storia economica e sociale di Trieste,* eds. Roberto Finzi - Giovanni Panjek, I, *La città dei gruppi 1719-1918*, (Trieste: Lint, 2001): 573-602; *Genti di San Spiridione: i serbi a Trieste, 1751-1914*, eds. Lorenza Resciniti, Michela Messina, Marisa Bianco Fiorin, (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana 2009); Marija Mitrovic, *Cultura serba a Trieste*, (Lecce: Argo, 2009).

[3] On the Greeks in Trieste, see: Giuseppe Stefani, *I Greci a Trieste nel Settecento*, (Trieste: Monciatti, 1960); Olga Katsiardi-Hering, *He hellenike paroikia tes Tergestes (1751-1830),* (Athena: Ethniko kai Kapodistriako Panepistemio Athenon, Philosophike Schole, 1986); Olga Katsiardi-Hering, "Das Habsburgerreich Anlaufpunkt für Griechen und andere Balkanvölker im 17.-19. Jahrhundert", *Österreichische Osthefte* 2 (1996): 171-188; Olga Katsiardi-Hering, "La presenza dei Greci a Trieste: tra economia e società (metà sec. XVIII-fine sec. XIX)", in *Storia economica e sociale di Trieste,* 519-546.

[4] See: Fulvio Caputo, Roberto Masiero, *Trieste e l'Impero: la formazione di una città europea*, (Venice: Marsilio, 1988); *Neoclassico: arte, architettura e cultura a Trieste, 1790-1840*, ed. Fulvio Caputo, (Venice: Marsilio, 1990).

[5] On the religious minorities in Trieste, see: Liana De Antonellis Martini, *Portofranco e comunità etnico-religiose nella Trieste settecentesca*, (Milan: Giuffrè, 1968); Anna Millo, *L'élite del potere a Trieste. Una biografia collettiva 1891-1938*, (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1987; *Storia economica e sociale di Trieste*, eds. Roberto Finzi, Giovanni Panjek.

Second World War that local Catholicism managed to gain, although still with difficulty, a certain hegemony in the territory, due to the immigration into the city of a large contingent of exiled Istrians, whose arrival caused a profound change in the composition of Triestine society.[6]
Until the first post-war period, therefore, the city had been characterised by an essentially secular stance with regards to religion, which provided an impetus behind the secularisation of the various religious groups present in the territory. This process took place during the nineteenth-century, and brought with it the progressive modernisation of collective customs, practices and habits. It was a process which facilitated an inclusive and assimilatory attitude towards the newcomers who arrived at the free port, and which contributed over time to create the image/myth of Trieste as a tolerant and cosmopolitan city. It is a myth which still persists in the collective imagination, even beyond the confines of the city itself, and which has almost become the city's 'brand', an epithet, however, which I believe stems from a superficial and partial reading of the city's history.

After the fall of the Habsburg Empire in the course of the twentieth-century, the city underwent difficult times, during which its 'dark side' began to emerge, identifiable in its violent and persistent racism, a product of the exasperation of opposing nationalisms in a borderland, the roots of which were firmly in place in the closing decades of the nineteenth-century. Indeed, it is in this period that the cosmopolitan city of the past became a fertile breeding ground for racism, primarily aimed at the city's Slavic population (Slovenians and Croatians), but also against the Jews. These tensions grew and later exploded in the 1920s when, in the Venezia Giulia area, the fascist movement began a widespread policy of denationalisation, operating a systematic persecution of the Slovenian population, which was followed in 1938 by the attack on the Jewish community, through the meticulous implementation of the racial laws.[7]

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[6] On this period see: Marina Cattaruzza, *L'Italia e il confine orientale, 1866-2006*, (Bologna: il Mulino 2008); Anna Vinci, *Sentinelle della patria: il fascismo e il confine orientale 1918-1941*, (Rome - Bari: Laterza, 2011); Glenda Sluga, *The Problem of Trieste and the Italo-Yugoslav Border: Difference, Identity, and Sovereignity in Twentieth-Century Europe*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001); Rolf Wörsdörfer, *Krisenherd Adria 1915-1955. Konstruktion und Artikulation des nationalen im italienisch-jugoslawischen Grenzraum*, (Padeborn: Schöningh Verlag, 2004); Maura Hametz, *Making Trieste Italian, 1918-1954*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005); Raoul Pupo, *Il lungo esodo. Istria: le persecuzioni, le foibe, l'esilio*, (Milan: Rizzoli, 2005); Raoul Pupo, *Trieste '45*, (Rome - Bari: Laterza , 2010); Pamela Ballinger, *History in Exile. Memory and Identity at the Borders of the Balkan*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

[7] See: Vinci, *Sentinelle della patria*; Joze Pirjevec, *Trst je nas! Boj Slovencev za morje (1848-1954*), (Ljubljana: Nova Revija, 2008); Milica Kacin Wohinz, *Vivere al confine. Sloveni e italiani negli anni 1918-1941*, (Gorizia: Goriska Mohorjeva druzba, 2004); Marta Verginella, *Il confine degli altri. La questione giuliana e la memoria slovena*, (Rome: Donzelli

Later on, the Nazi occupation, which could count on active collaborationist within the city, proved to be devastating in the *Operationszone Adriatisches Küstenland.* It saw the creation in the city of the only Italian concentration camp with a crematorium, the *Polizeihaftlager* of the Risiera di San Sabba.[8] Finally, in May 1945 – when war was over - the brief but violent Yugoslav occupation, lead to the elimination of thousands of political opposers, killed and thrown into the sinkholes (*foibe*).[9] Then came the period of the Allied Military Government's occupation, from 1945 to 1954. For the Jews of Trieste it meant a re-entry into civic life, yet one which was far from easy. Since the enactment of the racial laws in 1938, the local society had revealed itself to be hostile towards the Jewish community, more so than the rest of the country.[10]

From the 1990s onwards Triestine Judaism has been the subject of a profitable series of studies of international relevance, which have seen historians and literary scholars engaged, using various methodological approaches, in analysing the major events, and the economic, social, political and cultural aspects which, from the 1700s to the 1900s, characterized the history of Trieste's Jewish population.
The majority of these studies, above all those of a historical nature, focus on the eighteenth- and nineteenth- centuries, the period in which the Trieste's Jews, aided by the patents and privileges conceded by the Habsburgs, reached a level of international prestige in the financial world, due to the fundamental role the community played in the development of the free port, which enabled them to become quickly

2008), which has a useful bibliography on the topic; Silva Bon, *Gli ebrei a Trieste, 1930-1945: identità, persecuzione, risposte*, (Gorizia: Libreria Editrice Goriziana, 2000).

[8] On the Risiera di San Sabba and the *Adriatisches Küstenland*, see: *San Sabba. Istruttoria e processo per il Lager della Risiera*, ed. Adolfo Scalpelli, 2 vols., (Milan: Aned, Mondadori, 1988); Karl Stuhlpfarrer, *Die Operationszonen "Alpenvorland" und "Adriatisches Küstenland" 1943-1945*, (Wien: Hollinek, 1969); Marco Coslovich, *I percorsi della sopravvivenza: storia e memoria della deportazione dall'Adriatisches Küstenland*, (Milan: Mursia, 1994); Michael Wedekind, *Nationalsozialistische Besatzungs- und Annexionspolitik in Norditalien, 1943-1945: die Operationszonen Alpenvorland und Adriatisches Küstenland*, (Munich, Oldenbourg, 2003); Stefano Di Giusto, *Operationszone Adriatisches Küstenland. Udine, Gorizia, Trieste, Pola, Fiume e Lubiana durante l'occupazione tedesca, 1945-1945*, (Udine: Istituto Friulano per la Storia del Movimento di Liberazione, 2005).

[9] See: Pupo, *Il lungo esodo*; Joze Pirjevec, *Foibe: una storia d'Italia*, (Turin: Einaudi, 2009). For a new approach to the topic, see: *Il perturbante nella storia. Le foibe: uno studio di psicopatologia della ricezione storica*, eds. Luisa Accati, Renate Cogoy, (Verona: QuiEdit, 2010).

[10] For the Allied Military Government period see: Raoul Pupo, *Guerra e dopoguerra al confine orientale d'Italia, 1938-1956*, (Udine: Del Bianco, 1999); Giampaolo Valdevit, *La questione di Trieste 1941-1954. Politica internazionale e contesto locale*, (Milan: Angeli, 1987); *Progetto Interreg. IIIA/Phare CBC Italia-Slovenia. Dopoguerra di confine/Povojni cas ob meij*, eds. Tullia Catalan, Giulio Mellinato, Pio Nodari, Raoul Pupo, Marta Verginella, (Trieste: IRSML-FVG, Università di Trieste, 2007).

and successfully integrated into the local multi-ethnic social fabric.[11]
Few studies, however, have focused beyond the Great War to take the fascist period into consideration. It is the period which proves, without doubt, the most difficult, to study, due to the considerable political and economic role played by the Triestine Jews in the National Fascist Party. This difficulty is also due to the fact that these decades were precisely those, before the enforcement of the racial laws, in which there was an ever-increasing orientation towards a full assimilation, via mixed marriages and conversions: a trend which had already begun in the 1870s, with proportions notably higher than the rest of the peninsula.[12] There are, for these years, studies regarding the organisation of Jewish emigration from the port of Trieste; studies on the role of the Jewish school before and during the years of fascist racial persecutions, and other studies concerning two controversial figures in the Triestine Jewish scene: Enrico Paolo Salem, fascist head of the town with Jewish roots, who had converted to Catholicism, and Israel Zoller, the chief rabbi of Galician origins, who would have converted to Catholicism after the Second World War.[13] Historians of the Holocaust have been greatly interested in the Shoah's devastating effect on the local Jewish population, which was numerically and culturally decimated.[14]

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11 On the Jews in Trieste, see: Giulio Cervani, Liana Buda, *La Comunità israelitica di Trieste nel secolo XVIII*, (Udine: Del Bianco, 1973); *Gli ebrei a Gorizia e a Trieste tra ancien régime ed emancipazione*, ed. Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, (Udine: Del Bianco, 1984); *Il Mondo ebraico: Gli ebrei tra Italia nord-orientale e Impero Asburgico dal Medioevo all'Età Contemporanea*, eds. Giacomo Todeschini, Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, (Pordenone: Studio Tesi, 1991); *Shalom Trieste*, ed. Dugulin; Lois C. Dubin, *The Port Jews of Habsburg Trieste. Absolutist Politics and Enlightenment Culture*, (Stanford: University Press, 1999); Tullia Catalan, *La Comunità ebraica di Trieste, 1781-1914. Politica, società e cultura*, (Trieste: Lint, 2000); Anna Millo, *L'èlite del potere*; Anna Millo, *Storia di una borghesia: la famiglia Vivante a Trieste dall'emporio alla guerra mondiale*, (Gorizia: Editrice Libreria Goriziana, 1998); Anna Millo, *Trieste, le Assicurazioni, l'Europa. Arnoldo Frigessi di Rattalma e la RAS*, (Milan: Angeli, 2004).

12 On the high number of religious renunciations in Trieste from the 1800s- early 1900s, see: Catalan, *La Comunità ebraica di Trieste*, 241-244.

13 On the emigration to Palestine, see: Tullia Catalan, "L'emigrazione ebraica in Palestina attraverso il porto di Trieste (1908-1938)", *Qualestoria* 2-3 (1991): 57-107; Maura Hametz, "Zionism, Emigration, and Antisemitism in Trieste: Central Europe's Gateway to Zion 1896-1943", *Jewish Social Studies* 3 (2007): 103-134; Marco Bencich, "Il Comitato di assistenza agli emigranti ebrei di Trieste (1920-1940): flussi migratori e normative", *Qualestoria* 2 (2006): 11-60. On the Jewish school in Trieste during the fascist years, see: *L'educazione spezzata. Scuole ebraiche a Trieste e Fiume durante le leggi razziali (1938-1943)*, eds. Tullia Catalan, Sanja Dukic, (Trieste: La Mongolfiera, 2006). On Salem and Zoller, see: Silva Bon, *Un fascista imperfetto. Enrico Paolo Salem, podestà ebreo di Trieste*, (Gorizia: Grafica Goriziana, 2009); Eugenio Zolli, *Before the Dawn: Autobiographical Reflections*, (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1954); Gabriele Rigano, *Il caso Zolli: l'itinerario di un intellettuale in bilico tra fedi, culture e nazioni*, (Milan: Guerini, 2006).

14 On the persecutions and on antisemitism during Fascism and the Nazi occupation, see: Bon, *Gli ebrei a Trieste*; Silva Bon, *La spoliazione dei beni ebraici. Processi economici di epurazione razziale nel Friuli Venezia Giulia, 1938-1945*, (Gradisca d'Isonzo: Centro

With regards to literary studies, on the other hand, the theme of modernity has occupied the center of the stage, through the analysis of the prominent figures of Italo Svevo and Umberto Saba, and their respective works, as well of other complex and fascinating, if less famous, figures such as Giorgio Voghera and Bobi Bazlen.[15] What is lacking for Triestine Judaism, is a cultural history, without which it remains difficult even today to fully appreciate the full extent of the Jewish contribution to the city, as well as the influences the city itself had on the community, located as it was for many years in an ideal crossroads of exchange with the Western world, Eastern Europe, the Balkans and Levant.[16]

The main goal of this work is to pause and reflect, if only briefly, on two questions which remain open. The first regards the nature of the strong bonds between the Jewish community of Trieste and the other religious communities present in the city, in the light of the consolidated category of 'port Jews' which was felicitously introduced into the international historiographical scenario by David Sorkin and Lois C. Dubin; whilst also considering the relations of the Triestine Jews with other Jewish communities based in ports with similar characteristics to Trieste, and the fundamental role played by families in the formation and consolidation of these relationships, which were often of both an economic and a sentimental nature.[17]

Gasparini, 2001); Liliana Picciotto Fargion, "Le deportazioni di ebrei partiti da Trieste", Qualestoria 1 (1989): 121-135; Silva Bon, *Testimoni della Shoah. La memoria dei salvati, una storia del Nord Est*, (Gorizia: Grafica Goriziana, 2005); Silva Bon, "La politica del consolato germanico a Trieste nei primi anni Quaranta", *Qualestoria* 1-2 (1994): 65-94; Maura Hametz, "The Ambivalence of Italian Antisemitism. Fascism, Nationalism, and Racism in Trieste", *Holocaust and Genocide studies* 3 (2002): 376-401.

15 On this subject, see: Katia Pizzi, *Trieste: italianità, triestinità e male di frontiera*, (Bologna: Gedit, 2007). Fundamental are the reflections of Giorgio Voghera, *Gli anni della psicanalisi*, (Pordenone: Studio Tesi, 1985). See also: Bruno Maier, *La letteratura triestina del Novecento*, (Trieste: Lint, 1969); *Ebrei e Mitteleuropa: cultura, letteratura, società*, ed. Quirino Principe, (Brescia: Shakespeare & Company, 1984); Alberto Cavaglion, *Italo Svevo*, (Milan: Mondadori, 2000); Elizabeth Schächter, *Origin and Identity. Essays on Svevo and Trieste*, (Leeds: Northern University Press, 2000); Patrizia Lombardo, "Trieste as Frontier. From Slataper to Bazlen and Del Giudice", in *Cities, Words and Images: from Poe to Scorsese*, ed. Patrizia Lombardo, (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003): 80-95; Marina Paino, *La tentazione della leggerezza. Studio su Umberto Saba*, (Florence: Olschki, 2009).

16 Little is known of the many Jews in Trieste who dedicated themselves to science such as medicine, physics and psychoanalysis. Exceptions are several studies on Edoardo Weiss, the psychoanalyst who was the student of Freud. See: Paul Roazen, *Edoardo Weiss: the House that Freud Built*, (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2005).

17 For an accurate reconstruction of the origins of the debate surrounding the category of the "port Jews", see: Lois C. Dubin, "Researching Port Jews and Port Jewries: Trieste and Beyond", in *Port Jews. Jewish Communities in Cosmopolitan Maritime Trading Centres, 1550-1950*, ed. David Cesarani, (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2002), 47-58, 57; David Sorkin, "The Port Jews: Notes Toward a Social Type", *Journal of Jewish Studies* 1 (1999): 87-97; Lois C. Dubin, *The Port Jews of Habsburg Trieste: Absolutist Politics and*

The second goal instead at providing a more in-depth analysis of the stereotype of Trieste as a "tolerant city," in order to highlight the contradictory aspects of this notion, which were already discernible in the second half of the nineteenth-century. The route to civil inclusion for the Jews in Triestine society, so aptly described by Lois Dubin, has often been taken as an example of the inclusive character and assimilating force of the city towards other religions and cultures. Little, however, has been said about the penetration of other currents of thought, antisemitic and xenophobic in nature, originating from the troubled Habsburg world, and also from Italy. Sentiments which precisely in the closing decades of the nineteenth-century rooted themselves in the population and created a fertile breeding ground for the full deployment of the anti-Slavic racism of the 1920s and 1930s and of antisemitic persecution of the period 1938-45.
We will consider these two problems in light of the positive process of emancipation and integration of the Jewish community of Trieste in the local society, which took place from the end of the eighteenth-century until the beginning of the twentieth-century, which, however, was not the exclusive prerogative of the Jews, but also of other non-Catholic communities residing in the city.

General features of the Triestine Jews' route to integration from the 1800s to the early 1900s.

In Trieste, from 1719 (the year in which the free port was established) until the beginning First World War, the Jews were one of the most actively engaged minorities in the economic, social and cultural development of the Habsburg city. During the eighteenth-century and in the first half of the nineteenth-century, due to the Habsburg's policy of religious tolerance and the privileges bestowed by the Habsburgs on several minorities, (with essentially utilitarian ends), Trieste grew rich due the arrival of Jews, Greeks, Armenians and Protestants, who were primarily engaged in commercial and financial activities, and who were drawn to the city as it afforded them the opportunity to both freely profess their faith and increase their assets.[18] Furthermore, these ethnic/religious communities were able to fill the void in the local economic landscape determined by the city's lack of guilds. The

Enlightenment Culture, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); David Sorkin, "Port Jews and the Three Regions of Emancipation", in *Port Jews,* 31-46; Lois C. Dubin, "'Wings on their Feet….and Wings on their Head': Reflections on the Study of Port Jews", in *Jews and Port Cities 1590-1990. Commerce, Community and Cosmopolitanism*, eds. David Cesarani, Gemma Romain, (London - Portland, Or: Vallentine Mitchell, 2006), 14-30. For a more recent perspective, see: C. S. Monaco, "Port Jews or a People of the Diaspora? A Critique of the Port Jew Concept", *Jewish Social Studies* 2 (2009): 137-166.

[18] See: De Antonellis Martini, "Portofranco e comunità etnico-religiose", in *Storia economica e sociale di Trieste*, I.

minorities founded the Stock Exchange and later the Chamber of Commerce, finding an environment ideally suited to their political and economic activities. Thus a new middle class - a cosmopolitan, and religiously diverse bourgeous *milieux* - was formed in the course of the nineteenth-century. The members of this varied social group were able to overcome the inevitable differences in order to pursue a common objective: increasing the city's economic growth. This class was, until the 1870s, prepared to take political action in order to defend its freedom. It was capable to operate politically in order to protect the local municipal traditional from the pressures which emanated from Vienna.[19] This cooperation did not mean, however, that the various minority groups abandoned their respective identities. Indeed these identities firmly survived until the end of the century, perpetuating themselves above all in the private sphere and in networks based on kinship and economic bonds.[20]

From the eighteenth to the nineteenth-century, the demographic increase of the small local Jewish community was noteworthy. The economic possibilities offered by the city's thriving financial businesses attracted Jews from the nearby Italian peninsula, as well as from Levant, North Africa, Dalmatia, the Balkans and the rest of the Habsburg Empire. The Adriatic port offered them the opportunity to found

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[19] The formation of the multi-ethnic mercantile class in Trieste has been studied by Marina Cattaruzza, "Cittadinanza e ceto mercantile a Trieste: 1749-1850", in *Trieste, Austria, Italia tra Settecento e Novecento. Studi in onore di Elio Apih*, ed. Marina Cattaruzza, (Udine: Del Bianco Editore, 1996), 57-84; Marina Cattaruzza, *Trieste nell'Ottocento: le trasformazioni di una società civile*, (Udine: Del Bianco, 1995); Marina Cattaruzza, "Il primato dell'economia: l'egemonia politica del ceto mercantile (1814-60)", in *Storia d'Italia. Le Regioni dall'Unità a oggi. Il Friuli-Venezia Giulia*, I, eds. Roberto Finzi, Claudio Magris, Giovanni Miccoli, (Turin: Einaudi 2002), 149-179. On Triestine municipalism, see: Giorgio Negrelli, *Al di qual del mito: diritto storico e difesa nazionale nell'autonomismo della Trieste asburgica*, (Udine: Del Bianco, 1978). For a convincing illustration of the dynamics of formation and self-representation of the Triestine middle class, see: Millo, *Storia di una borghesia*.

[20] Several studies on port-based minorities have highlighted these strategies, typical of the various ethno-religious groups. For the Italian case, see: Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: the Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period*, (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2009); Francesca Trivellato, "The Port Jews of Livorno and their Global Networks of Trade in the Early Modern Period", in *Jews and Port Cities*, 31-48; Carlotta Ferrara degli Uberti, "The 'Jewish Nation' of Livorno: a Port Jewry on the Road to Emancipation", in *Jews and Port Cities*, 157-170; Daniela Luigia Caglioti, *Vite parallele: una minoranza protestante nell'Italia dell'Ottocento*, (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2006), regarding the port of Naples. Roberta Garruccio's reflections on the subject are also useful, see: Roberta Garruccio, "Il comportamento economico delle minoranze in prospettiva storica: un'introduzione metodologica", *Archivi e Imprese* 16 (1997): 231-244; Silvia Marzagalli, "Città portuali e minoranze etniche: Amburgo, Bordeaux e Livorno tra Sette e Ottocento", *Archivi e Imprese* 16 (1997): 365-383. Also useful is: *Négoce, ports et océans: 16.-20. Siècles. Mélanges offerts à Paul Butel*, eds. Silvia Marzagalli, Hubert Bonin, (Bordeaux: Presse Universitaire de Bordeaux, 2000).

commercial firms, establish financial and insurance companies, buy property, and actively participate in the economic and social life of the city.[21] The city's original Jewish core, in fact, swelled in little more than a century from 103 Jews in 1735 to 4,534 in 1875, and reached 5,000 at the start of twentieth-century, to then settle at this figure until the end of the 1930s, when the racial laws, promulgated by fascism, provoked a tragic turning point in the relations between the Jews and the Italian State.[22]

In the final decades of the nineteenth-century the Triestine Jewish community no longer followed the demographic trend of the rest of the population. The abolition of the free port in 1891 and the transformation of the trading centre into a port of transit had changed the very demands of the labour market. Trieste no longer needed new merchants and bankers, but industrial workers, engineers, specialized technicians, workers and porters to employ in the factories, building sites and shipyards. The demographic curve of the Jewish community, which had until then been in constant ascent, suffered a sudden downturn.[23] Unlike the other main European ports, where a Jewish presence was to be found in all social classes, in Trieste the Jews belonging to the working class were very few in number, whilst their presence in the lower-middle - white collar - class was significant.[24]

The end of the nineteenth-century also coincided with profound changes of a religious, social and political nature within the community, changes which had begun in the turbulent revolutionary years of 1848-9 and which became more evident after the civil and political emancipation of 1867. In this period an early and uncertain national Italian identity began to flourish within a restricted circle of Triestine Jewish intellectuals, for the most part young men belonging to the middle class. It was a national identity destined to assume strikingly different dimensions and characteristics in the final years of the century, during the outbreak of nationalist fights between Italians and Slovenians.

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21 On economic aspects: for the 1700s, with useful tables of figures, and lists of professions, see Carlo Gatti, *Tra demografia e storia sociale. Gli ebrei di Trieste nel Settecento*, (Trieste: EUT, 2008); Tullia Catalan, "Presenza sociale ed economica degli ebrei nella Trieste asburgica tra Settecento e primo Novecento", in *Storia economica e sociale di Trieste*, I, 483-518.

22 For a detailed demographic analysis see Gatti, *Tra demografia e storia sociale,* for the 1700s. For the 1800s and 1900s see: Catalan, *La Comunità ebraica di Trieste*, 59-75.

23 On the economic and therefore demographic transformation of the city from the 1800s to the 1900s see: Marina Cattaruzza, *La formazione del proletariato urbano. Immigrati, operai di mestiere, donne a Trieste dalla metà del secolo XIX alla prima guerra mondiale*, (Turin: Musolini, 1979). For a general picture which also provides a comparative perspective of other ports, see: Marco Breschi, Aleksej Kalc, Elisabetta Navarra, "La nascita di una città. Storia minima della popolazione di Trieste, secc. XVIII-XIX", in *Storia economica e sociale di Trieste*, I, 69-237.

24 See: Silvio G. Cusin, Giovanna De Filippo, "Nucleo ebraico e società triestina tra il 1850 e il 1900", in *Il Mondo ebraico*, 403-431.

At first this new identity was inextricably linked with the traditional Jewish identity, as was the case, for example, for some of the young patriots of 1848, such as Giacomo Venezian Senior and Cesare Norsa. This identity changed over the course of the years to become the so-called "religion of the fatherland," to which a large number of the Triestine irredentists of Jewish origins 'converted'.[25] These men, in fact, chose to abandon the community and religion of their forebears, renouncing their faith and in many cases adhering to the Free Masonry's orders with an almost religious fervour.[26]
The anti-Slovenian campaign, which stimulated conflict on the Triestine political scene until the eve of the First World War, stemmed from this deeply anti-clerical local Liberal-Nationalist group, which led the municipality of Trieste from the 1880s until 1907, and which was headed by three ex-members of the Jewish community: Felice Venezian, Angelo Ara and Moisè Luzzatto.

The diversity of political stances within the community until the war must not, however, be forgotten, and it is clear that there was far from a cohesive and united stance regarding the Italian national issue. Indeed, my view, which is supported by various sources, is that the Italian issue did not involve all members of the community in the same way. The poorer social strata remained absent from the political debate and from the management of community affairs, whilst the Jewish economic elite, involved in the oligarchic management of the community, preferred to maintain a position of political neutrality, in the knowledge that the economic opportunities on offer in the Habsburg city could not be reconciled with the demands of the irredentists, who, on the eve of the world conflict fought for Trieste's independence from Austria, and for its incorporation into Italy. In the Triestine Jewish population, as in the rest of the local population, it was the middle class (the self-employed, teachers, small-scale traders, white collar workers, commercial agents), who were most attracted to the militant political fight. It was, then, this same middle class which, in the 1920s adhered enthusiastically and in

[25] See: Catalan, *La Comunità ebraica di Trieste*, 303-340. On the Triestine Jews' participation in 1848 see: Tullia Catalan, "Il '48 fra Austria e Italia: le lettere alla famiglia di Giacomo Venezian", in *'Dolce dono graditissimo'. La lettera privata dal Settecento al Novecento*, eds. Daniela Maldini Chiarito, Luisa Betri, (Milan: Angeli, 2000), 254-270; Tullia Catalan, "'La primavera degli Ebrei'. Ebrei italiani del Litorale e del Lombardo Veneto nel 1848-1849", *Zakhor* VI (2003): 35-66; Tullia Catalan, "Ebrei triestini fra ribellione e lealismo all'Austria nel 1848-1849", in *Studi in onore di Giovanni Miccoli*, ed. Liliana Ferrari, (Trieste: EUT, 2004), 229-247; Tullia Catalan, "Ebrei italiani del Litorale austriaco nella rivoluzione del 1848", *Quaderni Giuliani di Storia* 1 (2006): 73-100.
[26] See: Tullia Catalan, "Massoneria ebraismo irredentismo dal 18 brumaio alla Grande Guerra", in *Napoleone e il bonapartismo nella cultura politica italiana 1802-2005*, ed. Alceo Riosa, (Milano: Guerini e Associati, 2007), 197-214.

large numbers to Italian fascism, many Jews included.
The Triestine Jews' route to integration entailed the loss of the minority's ancient dimension as a collective community. This loss was then followed by the Jews' loss of their role as 'cultural and institutional mediator' with regards the rest of Trieste's society. Gradually, as the Triestine Jews spread out into the various areas of civil life, the communal body slowly lost its traditional functions, until it ultimately became an institution tasked merely with the organisation of worship, education and charity.[27]

From the nineteenth to the twentieth-century there was a growing disaffection with the ways of community life amongst the younger generations, which often developed into a genuine abandonment of traditions. The large numbers of individuals who renounced their faith speak for themselves, while there are fewer records for Jews converting to other religions, a trend which follows those of the city's other religious communities. A large number of these religious recantations were motivated by sentimental reasons, as the correlation between the registers for religious disavowal, and those for mixed marriages demonstrate, a trend which steadily increased during the twentieth-century, and not only in the Jewish community, but also in the other non-Catholic communities in Trieste. Alongside these figures, however, there is another aspect which ought to be highlighted: the presence of a large number of converts to Judaism (around one hundred in number), which depicts a society without strict divisions at its core: it is the litmus test of a local society, which in its actions showed itself to be essentially open towards the Jewish community until the outbreak of the world war, despite the tensions present on a political level.[28]

The difficulty comes in understanding up until what point this readiness to welcome, to aid the integration and assimilation of those who arrived in Trieste from afar, bringing with them different habits, customs and traditions, but also new economic know-how and new business networks, lasted. The start of the rupture, as it seems to me, can be pinpointed to the years between the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries, when the nationalist claims led to the planting within Trieste of the first invisible but profound divides between Italians and Slovenians; Italians

[27] For a reconstruction of the transformation which took place in the Jewish community of Trieste during the 1800s and the start of the 1900s, see: Catalan, *La Comunità ebraica di Trieste*, 77-102. For a useful first impression of the general Italian context, see: Elizabeth Schächter, *The Jews of Italy 1848-1915. Between Tradition and Transformation*, (London, Portland: Vallentine Mitchell, 2011). For the Habsburg context, see: William O. McCagg, *A History of Habsburg Jews, 1670-1918*, (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989).
[28] Catalan, *La Comunità ebraica di Trieste*, 241-244.

and Germans; Italians and Hungarians, Croatians, Poles.[29] The Jews, as well as the other religious communities present in the territory were no less involved, and adopted - some more, some less - these new modes of behaviour, but not without significant problems and repercussions for the internal equilibrium of their community and its relations with the other Jewish communities of the Empire.

In order to identify the moment in which the bonds of the past were broken, to understand and re-examine this phenomenon in order to use this knowledge to achieve a fuller comprehension of what happened during the fascist years, it is useful to pause and reflect, not only on the role the Jews played in the city during the period of civil inclusion and the full emancipation which followed in the golden years of the Triestine trading centre, but also on the common ground shared by the Jews with other groups present, be they Protestant, Greek, Serbian or Armenian.

To which end, the category of the "port Jews," coined specifically with reference to the Triestine case by Lois Dubin,[30] can be extended to include the other non-Catholic communities, in order to create the larger category of the "port merchant."

From "port Jews" to "port merchants"? The Triestine case in the nineteenth-century.

Since the end of the 1990s, there has been great debate surrounding the historical study of port Jews, begun by David Sorkin and Lois Dubin and discussed in a wider, comparative context by David Cesarani in several international conferences; and examined in Monaco's article in 'Jewish Social Studies' in 2009.[31]

The category of the "port Jews," with its various applications, has offered a new insight into the study of the route to integration into the modern world of the European Jews engaged in mercantile activity and maritime trade in several large cosmopolitan ports of the Mediterranean and Atlantic from the 1700s to the 1900s. This new mode of considering the process of integration expands and complicates the interpretative hypothesis previously proposed in the works of Jakob Katz, Reinhard Rürup, Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson.[32] The majority of these

[29] See: *Nazionalismi di frontiera: identità contrapposte sull'Adriatico nord-orientale, 1850-1950*, ed. Marina Cattaruzza, (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2003).

[30] Dubin, *The Port Jews of Habsburg Trieste.*

[31] See the bibliography in footnote 17 in this article.

[32] Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto: the Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770-1870*, (New York: Schocken, 1978); Reinhard Rürup, "Jewish Emancipation and Bourgeois Society", *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 14 (1969): 67-91; Reinhard Rürup, "The Tortuous and Thorny Path to Legal Equality: 'Jew Laws' and the Emancipatory Legislation in Germany from the late Eighteenth Century", *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 31(1986): 3-33; *Paths of Emancipation: Jews, States and Citizenship*, eds. Pierre Birnbaum, Ira Katznelson,

studies focus on the significance of the relapse of Jewish Enlightenment thought in the Jews' relationship with the wider society; on the legacy of the French Revolution in European Jewish society; and on the new routes of integration and assimilation which followed the attainment of civil and political emancipation in the 1800s.

Sorkin identifies amongst port Jews, particularly the Sephardic merchants active in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries in maritime centres, including Italian ports, a new social type of Jew, with wider cultural, social and economic horizons, compared to his fellow believers. This broadened potential was facilitated by the policy of "civil inclusion"[33] adopted before the complete emancipation from the home nations.[34] In Sorkin's view, however, the term "port Jew" used to refer to a social type, should not be applied without discrimination to all the port cities, nor should it be extended to the whole community. Rather, in order to be used correctly, it necessitates the presence of precise cultural, social and economic characteristics, as well as religious and organizational criteria, to be found, in his view, only in a few individuals residing in specific ports, amongst which are Livorno and Trieste.[35]
Lois Dubin, however, though sharing the interpretative hypothesis of Sorkin, has opted, after an extensive analysis of the Triestine Jews of the eighteenth and early nineteenth-century, to extend - in my view, correctly- the category of the "port Jew" to also include, for example, the Ashkenazi Jews present in Trieste alongside the Sephardic Jews of Italian and Levantine origins and, unlike Sorkin, Dubin also proposes to extend the category to the entire Jewish community residing in the port, and not solely to single individuals, calling also for a comparison amongst different port-based Jewish communities, such as those at Livorno, Odessa and Thessaloniki, to cite but a few, whilst also proposing a comparison with other ethnic/religious minorities active in such maritime centres.[36]

Furthermore, Dubin also invites to reflect on the concept of utility,[37] seen as the fundamental driving force behind the formation of a port-based community of Jews, and she also dwells significantly on the

(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); David Cesarani, "Port Jews: Concepts, Cases and Questions", in *Port Jews*, 1-11.

33 The definition of "civil inclusion" can be ascribed to Dubin, *The Port Jews of Habsburg Trieste,* 198-225.

34 See: Sorkin, "The Port Jews: Notes Toward a Social Type."

35 Sorkin, "Port Jews and the Three Regions of Emancipation", 31. There are five necessary characteristics identified by Sorkin in order to define the port Jew social-type, some of which are discussed by Dubin, in her research on the Jews of Trieste: "'Wings on their Feet", 16-17.

36 Ibidem, 23.

37 Dubin, "Researching Port Jews", 48-53.

dynamic dimensions of the maritime community, and on the roles of "cultural mediator" and the "boundary crossing" attributed to the Jews in the great trading centres of the eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries, which rendered cultural as well as commercial exchanges possible with other states accessible by land or water.[38] All of the above took place within a framework of civil liberties which encouraged the adoption of the modes and customs of the local culture, which led the Jews of Trieste to a state of social inclusion before the definitive civil and political emancipation of 1867.[39]

Moving from Lois Dubin's statements, and embracing some of her suggestions which invite the reader to consider the social and economic behaviour and the networks of other ethnic/religious mercantile minorities present in a single port, this work constitutes a first attempt at carrying out a comparison between the port Jews of Trieste and the other religious groups present in the city since the end of the 1700s and above all during the 1800s.

This work has been made possible by the rich collection of studies which have finally brought to light some little-known details of the history of these minorities, such as their social and economic behaviour; their relationships with state authorities and with the rest of the local community; their marital strategies and business networks.[40]

During the nineteenth-century residing alongside the Jews, who were one of the largest minority groups in Trieste (around 5,000 in number), there were also Greeks (more than 3,200 in the years of the Restoration, but whose numbers dropped to 1,500 after the Greek Revolution); Protestants (Swiss, Anglicans, Lutherans and later even Methodists), more than a thousand in total; Armenians, (around 100); and approximately 200 Serbian-Illyrians, referred by the Austrians as the "Illyrian community."[41]

In the period during which the free port was active (1719-1891), the multi-ethnic image painted by the city for those who reached it for the

[38] Dubin, "'Wings on their Feet'", 19, 21-22.

[39] On this development, see: Dubin, *The Port Jews of Habsburg Trieste*; Catalan, *La Comunità ebraica di Trieste*.

[40] Fundamental on a methodological level is: *Storia economica e sociale di Trieste*, I.

[41] For figures regarding the Greek community, see: Katsiardi-Hering, "La presenza dei Greci a Trieste", 523-524. On the Protestants of all denominations, see: Umberto Bert, *Il protestantesimo a Trieste: spunti storici*, (Torre Pellice: Società di Studi Valdesi, 1979); Giovanni Carrari, *Protestantesimo a Trieste: dal 1700 al 2000*, (Trieste: Lint, 2002); Pierpaolo Dorsi, "La collettività di lingua tedesca", *Storia economica e sociale di Trieste,* 547-571, 562-566; Girolamo Agapito, *Comunità e chiesa anglicana a Trieste*, (Trieste: 1844). On the Armenians, see: Tullia Catalan, "Cenni sulla presenza armena a Trieste tra fine Settecento e primo Ottocento", in *Storia economica e sociale di Trieste*, I, 603-611; Carlo Curiel, "La fondazione della colonia armena in Trieste", *Archeografo Triestino* 3 (1929-30): 337-379. For the demographical details of the Serbian community, see: Dogo, "La comunità serbo-illirica", 575.

first time is epitomised, I believe, in the vivid and realistic description of the population's characteristics, recorded at the end of the 1700s by the police chief, the Baron Pietro Antonio Pittoni:

"[…] The populace has been composed of diverse nation and religios, who frequent this City and settle here. Since then the City has united these in business activities, which require knowledge and skills. This traffic in business and knowledge has made the City well-off and rich. The City has witnessed that the non-Catholic can be and is an honest man, that morality is the same, that he has learned the customs of the others. And felt their same needs. Since this brotherly sharing (*confratellanza*) of knowledge, of customs, and of reciprocally useful needs has rendered the City not only tolerant, but friendly, it has rooted out from the mind of infinity of prejudices, such that compared to other provinces, Trieste can with reason call itself an enlightened populace (*popolo filosofo*)."[42]

There are, it seems to me, several aspects of this definition of the population which are worth highlighting: the mutual economic collaboration between minorities and majority; the continual exchange of know-how and culture; and the way in which a peaceful cohabitation is sought and established. These factors were essentially the winning formula which made Trieste a kind of 'Promised Land' for ethnic/religious minorities who wished to improve their status and freely profess their beliefs: desires which could be met happily in the city's cosmopolitan environment, until the second half of the nineteenth-century.

In light of what I have just said, then, I would like to raise the issue of whether some of the characteristics of the "port Jew," theorised and felicitously applied by Dubin to the Triestine Jewish reality of the 1700s, could be more or less extended to the 1800s for other religious minorities present in the Adriatic port, by virtue of the same utilitarian policy adopted towards them by the Habsburgs.

This hypothesis, though clearly attractive, was checked on several fronts. The first step was to examine the economic, social and political behaviour of the specific minorities, taking note of the results reached by Italian historiography, which has focused its attention precisely on these themes.[43]

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[42] Related by Pittoni on the 21st December 1786, in Pierpaolo Dorsi, "'Libertà' e 'Legislazione': Il rapporto del Barone Pittoni sullo stato della città di Trieste e del suo territorio (1786)", *Archeografo Triestino* 49 (1989): 144. The author of the English translation of this passage is Dubin, *The Port Jews of Habsburg Trieste*, 201.

[43] I refer to Garruccio's contribution to the study of port-based minorities: "Il comportamento economico delle minoranze"; to Marzagalli's, "Città portuali e minoranze etniche"; Caglioti, *Vite parallele*; and to the monograph M. Elisabetta Tonizzi

The next step was then to proceed in a comparison between the social and economic behaviour of the minorities present in the Adriatic port, underlining the similarities and differences, and also keeping in mind the relationships these minorities had with the rest of society. Bearing this relationship in mind was essential in order to appreciate what Roberta Garruccio refers to as the potential specifities of the economic behaviour of the so-called "favoured" minorities.[44]

For the chronological time frame considered here the results of several studies concerning various ports and centres of significant maritime commercial exchanges, such as Odessa and Thessaloniki, which until the second half of the nineteenth-century presented characteristics similar to those of the Habsburg Trieste, and with which there was constant contact via commercial and family ties, were also taken into consideration.[45]

In the future it would be valuable to reach a comparative synthesis, which examines the economic and social strategies of these three ports during the nineteenth-century, focusing on the presence of a dense network of business and family ties which decreased with the growth of nationalist movements. The most wealthy traders and financiers of Trieste, of every religion, established branches of their businesses in Odessa, Thessaloniki, Alexandria, and Constantinople, and also in Marseille and Leghorn, which were directed on site by close relatives, or by agents and trusted proxies. This was the case, for example, within the dynamic Sartorio family (Catholics), who maintained close links between Odessa and Trieste due to the stationing of one brother in the former city, and another in the latter. The Jewish Morpurgo family, who were merchants and financiers, similarly set up financial and matrimonial links with Odessa in 1848 by forming an alliance with the Raffalovich bankers, whilst also enlarging their business network with the rest of Europe, due to their close relationship with the Rothschild household.[46]

The powerful Ralli family, which had Greek origins and was one of the

(ed.), "Porti dell'Europa Mediterranea (secoli XIX e XX)", *Memoria e Ricerca* 11 (2002).

[44] See: Garruccio, "Il comportamento economico delle minoranze." Also see: Barbara Armani, Guri Schwarz, "Ebrei Borghesi, identità familiare, solidarietà e affari nell'età dell'emancipazione", eds. Barbara Armani, Guri Schwarz, *Quaderni storici* 3 (2003), 636-637.

[45] On Thessaloniki, see: Mark Mazower, *Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews, 1430-1950*, (London: Harper Perennial, 2005); Mark Levene, "Port Jewry of Salonika: Between Neo-Colonialism and Nation State", in *Port Jews*, 125-154. On Odessa: Steven J. Zipperstein, *The Jews of Odessa: a Cultural History, 1794-1881*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1985); John D. Klier, "A Port, not a Shtetl: Reflections on the Distinctiveness of Odessa", in *Port Jews*: 173-178.

[46] See: Giovanni Guglielmo Sartorio, *Memorie biografiche ai suoi figli, parenti ed amici*, (Trieste: Tipografia Lloyd Austriaco, 1863); Tullia Catalan, "Il rapporto padre-figlia in una famiglia ebraica dell'alta borghesia triestina. Elio ed Emilia Morpurgo (1845-1849), in *Padre e Figlia*, eds. Luisa Accati, Marina Cattaruzza, Monika Verzar-Bass (Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1994), 215-235.

richest families in Trieste, continued to maintain a special link with their native island of Chios, despite the familial and commercial links from which they could also benefit in Liverpool, New York, New Orleans and Calcutta. Indeed, the family's patriarch, Ambrogio di Stefano Ralli, despite declaring that he was "among the most tolerant" of men, suggested to his descendants in the will he drew up in 1874 that they "*should not unite in marriage with anyone other than those belonging to the Eastern Greek religion and of Hellenic nationality, and if possible only with those whose families came from Chios, in order to maintain the greatest unity of customs and education*."[47] Up until the 1870s one also finds a similar degree of close endogamy within the large Jewish merchant families of Trieste. For example, the testament of Joachimb Hierschel speaks clearly, even if the family then chose not to respect his last wish in terms of marriage.

"this bequeather means for the three grandchildren, Ruben, Samuel and Leone to play the lottery in order to decide who may marry the two sisters and their cousins Sara and Lea, [...] he, then, who is deprived of the opportunity to take the cousin is hereby assigned f.500 more than the assigned f.1,500 which I leave to each of the others."[48]

These are just two examples, but many testaments of this type could be cited, proof of an awareness which was still present, especially among the older generation, of the importance of maintaining traditions and a collective religious identity. It was an ideal, however, which would become progressively more unravelled during the second half of the nineteenth-century, leaving ever-increasing space for individual choices.[49] These documentary sources are fundamental in order to build a picture of such social behaviours. Wills, inheritance documents, pupillary acts, marriage registers, records of naturalisation, minutes from the Stock Exchange, records from the Chamber of Commerce, ledgers for firms, bankruptcies notices, dowries and private family correspondences are all vitally important in interpreting the past. Only through a careful paralleling and comparison of these materials is it indeed possible to establish with a degree of certainty a backdrop of common ground, against which one can measure the sons and grandsons of the merchants who were able to reach Trieste at the end of the eighteenth-century, due to the licences granted by Joseph II.

If one investigates, within the various religious communities, who the

[47] Katsiardi-Hering, "La presenza dei Greci", 519.

[48] See: Catalan, "Presenza sociale ed economica degli ebrei", 509.

[49] Regarding this Jewish marriage tendency, see: Tullia Catalan, "Mediazioni matrimoniali nell'ebraismo triestino nel corso dell'Ottocento", in *La mediazione matrimoniale. Il terzo (in)comodo in Europa fra Otto e Novecento*, ed. Bruno F. P. Wanrooij, (Fiesole - Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2004), 127-156.

proxies and agents for individuals were, one finds a common pattern: Jews, Protestants, Greeks and Armenians always selected people who were of the same religion. Witnesses and executors of wills were also always fellow believers, or sometimes ex-fellow believers. This tendency was still notable in the early 1900s, despite the gradual loosening of community ties, following the process of integration which derived from the obtainment of full emancipation.[50]

This fact confirms that the relationship of trust within a group of fellow believers was able to transcend time and even survive mixed marriages (a very common custom in Trieste), as well as any formal abandonment of the community through conversion or the renouncement of faith, the latter made possible after 1870 and a very common occurrence in the city, particularly amongst Jews, but also amongst the Greeks.[51]

During the nineteenth-century, after the fall in economic activity caused by the third French occupation, Trieste's commercial dealings with the Italian peninsula, Levante and Africa all significantly increased, enlarging ever more the free port's sphere of action. The port was able to use the existing trading relationships, established by the religious minorities, in order to form new networks and connections. Thus this period in Trieste saw the creation of a climate of mutual collaboration amongst the various non-Catholic religious communities, which formed the basis of the cosmopolitan and profoundly secularized society of the 1800s. The new immigrants, in fact, adopted the "lingua franca," Italian, almost immediately upon reaching the city, and with little difficulty. Italian was used primarily to deal with contacts in the Mediterranean,[52] while German was used mainly for business with the Imperial territories and for bureaucracy; French, on the other hand, was the language adopted by the local elite for fashionable occasions. After the Restoration, English also came into use, given the presence of an important English colony in the city, and the links forged with the field of British insurance and with the New World. The immigrants' various original languages were, conversely, often retained exclusively for use in family settings, despite, for example, the Greek community having two different important newspapers in the Greek language: *Nea Imera* and *Cliò*.[53]

In this way the immigrants gradually acquired a strong sense of belonging to the "artificial city" (as it has been aptly described in the historiographical field),[54] where the absence of both an aristocracy and

[50] See: Catalan, "Presenza sociale ed economica degli ebrei."

[51] On the Jews, see: Catalan, *La Comunità ebraica di Trieste*, 241-244. On the Greeks, see: Katsiardi-Hering, "La presenza dei Greci", 525.

[52] See: Roberto Finzi, "La base materiale dell'italofonia di Trieste", in *Storia economica e sociale di Trieste*, I, 317-331.

[53] Katsiardi-Hering, "La presenza dei Greci", 538.

[54] See: Cattaruzza, "Il primato dell'economia", 161. The term was coined by Domenico Rossetti and then taken up by the socialist Angelo Vivante

of guilds allowed the Jews and other non-Catholics to become a leading economic force. The nineteenth-century was characterized, for the local Jewish community and for the other religious groups, by incessant immigration and emigration. Arrivals were not exclusively motivated by a desire to escape intolerant states, but also by the desire to improve social conditions; while those leaving were often departing in order to formalize appealing marriage proposals or to enlarge the mercantile and financial family businesses with new branches.[55]

During the 1800s, due to the importance acquired by the free port on the European economic scene, one witnesses the formation, also within the non-Catholic religious communities, of a financial aristocracy composed of families of bankers and traders, whose businesses and social networks were extended to cover an extremely large area. These families occupied prestigious positions not only in the rigid and oligarchic community organization, but also within the cosmopolitan and multi-confessional local economic elite. They also enjoyed ample credit from several Austrian government circles, as is demonstrated by the high number of honors and ennoblements conceded by Franz Joseph after 1848, despite the fact that the majority of these cases were brought about by the exchange of a large 'donation' to the Imperial coffers from those aspiring to a title.[56]

A large number of these families reached the city at the end of the eighteenth century and we are able to follow the trails of a few of them thorough the study of naturalization queries which were sent to the Austrian government after a significant period of time had been spent in the city. The majority of individuals who requested to become naturalized Austrian subjects were Jews from the Italian states, Africa and Levante; Greeks from the Ionian islands or from the Peloponnese, though the latter were more reluctant to abandon their Ottoman citizenship; Protestants from German-speaking countries and Switzerland, as well as Armenians from nearby Venice, and finally Serbian-Illyrians.

At the time Austrian citizenship was not easily granted: in order to obtain it even the most prominent members of the minorities had to demonstrate that they had lived in Trieste for several years; that they had a moral code which mirrored the local one (usually certified by the respective leader of the religious community) and above all they needed to be able to demonstrate that they were in possession of movable goods and real estate. All of this was still insufficient if the aspiring subject

[55] Catalan, "Presenza sociale ed economica degli ebrei"; Millo, *Storia di una borghesia.*

[56] On the titles granted to prominent figures of the religious communities, see: Millo, *L'élite di potere*, 85-92; Tullia Catalan, "Ordini cavallereschi e notabilato triestino dal 1848 al 1914", in *Le Italie dei notabili: il punto della situazione*, ed. Luigi Ponzani, (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 2001), 189-206.

could not provide evidence which proved that he had served in some way towards the development of the free port: in short, he had to be able to show that he had been "useful" to the Habsburg rule.[57]

For these immigrants, the obtaining of Austrian citizenship meant adding a certain lustre to their financial and commercial activities, particularly in the eyes of the local community. It allowed them to attain a certain status within the city,[58] and for those whose trade involved maritime travel, citizenship meant they could fly the Austrian flag, which conferred many special advantages in the period, such as the protection from pirates.

Up until the second half of the nineteenth-century the multi-religious, cosmopolitan local economic elite placed its financial and cultural know-how, and its international network of contacts at the disposal of the city. The place initially dedicated to this discussion and tie sharing of experience was the Stock Exchange, and later the Chamber of Commerce, which was founded in 1855.[59] It was here that the Trieste's economic policy took form until the second half of the nineteenth-century. It was, indeed, this institution which interacted with Vienna, and not always in a acquiescent manner, often demanding more privileges, money and attention.[60] For their part the bankers and traders who took part in these exchanges became valued observers and ambassadors for Trieste in far-off countries during their long business journeys.[61]

In this context of collaboration for a common goal - the economic development of the city - the respective knowledge of individuals and minorities became fused and interwoven, transforming itself into the basis for important business ventures such as the creation of insurance companies which still survive today. In the Trieste of the 1830s, the "Riunione Adriatica di Sicurtà" and "Assicurazioni Generali" were formed, and if one studies the names of the founding members, it

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57 For a reconstruction of individuals' routes to naturalisation, see: Catalan, "Presenza sociale ed economica degli ebrei", 489-492; Dogo, "Una nazione di pii mercanti", 583; Katsiardi-Hering, "La presenza dei Greci a Trieste", 537-538.

58 Dorsi, "La collettività di lingua tedesca", 550.

59 Initially there was some resistance against the acceptance of Jews as members of the Stock Exchange, see: Dubin, *The Port Jews of Habsburg Trieste*, 32-40.

60 Alessio Fornasin, "La Borsa e la Camera di Commercio di Trieste (1755-1914) in *Storia economica e sociale di Trieste*, II, *La città dei traffici 1719-1918*, eds. Roberto Finzi, Loredana Panariti, Giovanni Panjek, (Trieste: Lint, 2003), 143-190. The author dwells on the behaviour of the Jews elected as *Deputati* (Members) of the Stock Exchange, demonstrating in a convincing manner that they never favoured their fellow Jews.

61 These reports from the observers of the Stock Exchange and later of the Chamber of Commerce, conserved in the State archive of Trieste have never been systematically studied. They were recorded by Greeks, Jews, Dutch, Germans, Serbian-Illyrians, and the English and could constitute a new approach to the questions raised here, as they provide the possibility to interlink various views from a range of different observers of the port.

becomes apparent that almost all of the city's minorities are represented in a conspicuous way, with a prevalence of Jews and Greeks.[62] This positive first common experience cleared the way for a continued shared participation in all the public endeavors which took place in the following decades: the establishment of the city's gas company, the creation of the railway, and the construction of the new port at the start of the twentieth-century.[63]

A similar collaborative spirit can be also found in the composition of several commercial enterprises. In Trieste the reality of mixed societies, composed of members of different faiths, was widespread. This allowed the broadening of commercial activities on a geographic level, as well as a variation of the goods being handled. Greeks and Serbian-Illyrians, the former originating mostly from the Aegean islands, from the Peloponnese and Constantinople; and the latter from Castelnuovo (Bay of Kotor), from Trebinje and Sarajevo, were esteemed as both good traders, and brilliant navigators. The Ashkenazi and Sephardic Triestine Jews, on the other hand, were able to take advantage of a vast network of relations with all of Levant, Central-Europe and the Italian peninsula, due to their wide-ranging origins.[64] For these individuals a strong bond with the sea and navigation was vital as it increased their trade and broadened their horizons, and shyly, with the support of more experienced non-Jewish individuals in the sector, they began to invest their capital in the shipping trade.

For some of the 'mixed' businesses, the commercial contracts stipulated by the partners saw a strict observance of religious holidays. Jewish partners, for example, could benefit from a contract which gave Saturday as a day of rest, and they then worked for other partners on a Sunday. The collaboration between Jews and Protestants and Jews and Greeks was particularly successful on this level, and it was no coincidence that there was a secure presence of the religious minorities at the very pinnacle of the local economic elite up until 1914.

Working relationships of this sort were, however, rare with Serbian-Illyrians, who often preferred to work exclusively within their own community or with Armenians, who - unlike the Greeks and Jews - refused to integrate their customs and habits with those of the local community, jealously guarding their traditional cultural and religious identity.[65] This was, in fact, the main reason for the Armenian colony's

[62] For a detailed panoramic study of the role and the activities of the insurance companies in the city, see: Loredana Panariti, "Assicurazione e banca. Il sistema finanziario triestino (secc. XVIII-XIX)", in *Storia economica e sociale di Trieste*, II, 369-458.

[63] Anna Millo, "Un porto fra centro e periferia (1861-1918)", in *Storia d'Italia. Le Regioni. Il Friuli-Venezia Giulia*, 181-235; Anna Millo, "Il capitalismo triestino e l'Impero", in *Storia economica e sociale di Trieste*, II, 125-142.

[64] For examples of the "mixed" businesses, already present in Trieste at the end of the eighteenth-century, see: Catalan, "Presenza sociale ed economica degli ebrei", 492.

[65] See: Catalan, "Cenni sulla presenza armena a Trieste." Due to their highly closed

lack of development in Trieste. The colony survived, despite registering a unstoppable decline throughout the nineteenth-century, but unlike the other ethnic/religious communities present in the city, it never managed to start a process of mass-migration.

The end-result of this intense collaboration between minorities and the local community in such a strongly cosmopolitan context, was a rather lukewarm sense of religion within the population: a population which was little inclined to be harnessed by the reigns of religious observance. At the end of the eighteenth-century, the local ecclesiastic authorities protested in vain against the excessive disinterest demonstrated by several Catholics, who went to hear sermons in the Protestant and Calvinist churches.[66] Another important indication of this lack of religious control is that the church in Trieste was never able to construct houses of catechumens – intended as instruments for conversion – due to the strong action taken by the Habsburgs in order to protect the religious freedom of the "useful" religious minorities present in the city.

Living in a cosmopolitan society, where philanthropy and fashionable events such as theatre-going, balls and musical, cultural and sporting activities were extended to include all of the financial elite, without regards to religion, gave many individuals the opportunity to encounter men and women of other religious faiths.[67] This led, in the second half of the nineteenth-century, to a crisis in the traditional practice of marrying exclusively within one's own faith, a practice which increasingly came to be abandoned in favour of an individual's free choice to inter-marry between faiths. It is no coincidence, given this relatively free interaction between members of different religions, that the rate of mixed marriages was significantly higher in Trieste that in the rest of the Empire. Catholics married Jews, Greeks married Protestants, Jews married Greeks and so on. After 1870 the majority of couples chose a civil marriage, abandoning the religious community to which they belonged for the love of their partner,[68] though the education of children often followed the desires of one or other of the spouses in terms of religion.

Particular attention has also been paid to the educative models adopted for younger generations, who, due to Giuseppe II's patents of tolerance, had the opportunity, by the end of the eighteenth-century, to study in

behaviour with regards to the city, they do not enter into the Triestine model of the port merchant.

[66] See: Catalan, *La Comunità ebraica di Trieste*, 198-199.

[67] See: Ariella Verrocchio, "Borghesia ebraica triestina tra culto della mondanità e culto della patria. Presenza e ruoli nella Società Filarmonico-Drammatica e nella Alpina delle Giulie", in *Shalom Trieste*, 284-296.

[68] The registers of mixed marriages conserved in the Historical Archives of the Commune, and the State Archive of Trieste are both particularly useful, and a quantitative study of the other religious faiths ought to be conducted

public schools alongside other youngsters of different faiths.[69] During the nineteenth-century the progressive politicization and widespread rebellion of new generations of Jews, Greeks and Protestants against the desires of their parents, who would have liked them to follow in the family businesses was (with great evidence by 1848) one of the biggest destabilizing elements for the traditional collective identities of the various groups, which began from that period to transform, eventually even acquiring nationalist characteristics.

The disruptive process of nationalization in the second half of the nineteenth-century, present from the outset in Trieste, had strong repercussions for the internal equilibriums of the religious minorities in the Adriatic port. Their traditional function as mediators was in crisis due to the new nature of the relationship between citizens and nation-State. The fact that young Greeks, Protestants, Jews, and Serbian-Illyrians could freely frequent the city's public schools meant the schools themselves became authentic arenas, in the second half of the nineteenth-century, for the construction of the nation.[70]

The last decades of the nineteenth-century saw the final death-throes of cosmopolitanism, which was replaced by the end of the 1870s with national conflicts, destined to escalate until the break out of the First World War. It was in this way that the delicate equilibrium between the ethnic/religious groups, created in the city more than a century before, was broken.

The unique formation and articulation of the Triestine middle class during the Imperial period of Trieste seems to validate the hypothesis of the collective model of the "port merchants." Its salient features were inextricably linked to the city's cosmopolitan context; to the financial and mercantile activities of the port; and to the common ground connecting the behavior of various religious communities on a social and cultural level, though with some necessary distinctions at their core, linked above all to the perception of the "other" and the stereotypes adopted from the local society.

From tolerance to racism: the downward spiral from the nineteenth- to the twentieth-century.

During the second half of the nineteenth-century, due to Trieste's involvement in the nationalist struggles which in that era hit all of the Habsburg empire, the city's finely balanced social equilibrium fell into great crisis. This social fabric which had survived until that point due to the cohabitation and constructive collaboration of the city's inhabitants, supported by the city's cosmopolitan outlook, was ruptured. In the

[69] On the importance of school and education in the eighteenth-century, see: Dubin, *The Port Jews of Habsburg Trieste*, 95-117.

[70] For the nineteenth-century and the role of education for a new generation of Jews, see: Catalan, *La Comunità ebraica di Trieste*, 147-177.

course of a few decades the Habsburgs' favoured port, which changed from a trading centre to a transit port in the final years of the century, was transformed into a city filled with fierce nationalist clashes. The fights were mainly between Italians, who supported the irredentist movement, and Slovenians. This fighting poisoned the city's air and laid the basis for the violent anti-Slavic racism, which was determinately perpetuated in the city during the years of fascism, and which was aimed at all the citizens of Slovenian origins.[71]

Adding to this shift in attitude towards the city's minorities, was the Habsburgs' rejection, at the end of nineteenth-century, of their utilitarian policy towards the ethnic/religious minorities they had consistently protected in the eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries, defending them from bouts of intolerance.[72] One must also remember that the economic and financial markets had changed and no longer gravitated towards Trieste, which, by no coincidence, was converted by the Austrian government into a modern port with cutting-edge facilities for the transit of people and products.

Political antisemitism took advantage of this change in Habsburg policy, and the city's rupture with its past, notable for its great capacity for inclusion and tolerance, allowed prejudices to spread. This antisemitism manifested itself in two distinct phases, which in turn can be subdivided into three currents of thought between the nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries.

Up until the 1880s the city had seen sporadic anti-Jewish incidents, mostly during Jewish funerals, or following the arrival of Jewish teachers in the public schools[73]. The origin of this intolerance can be traced back to the traditional Catholic anti-Judaism. Catholic agents never missed an opportunity, even in a secular city like Trieste, to encourage the poorest members of society into anti-Jewish beliefs. All the incidents of which we know, however, were firmly stamped out by the local police authorities, and did not succeed in disturbing the community's tranquility, or in denting its faith in progress and liberal society.

The following phases, however, revealed themselves to be of a somewhat different nature. During the first, which began in the 1880s, a

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71 See: *Nazionalismi di frontiera*, ed. Marina Cattaruzza; Marina Cattaruzza, "I conflitti nazionali a Trieste nell'ambito della questione nazionale dell'Impero Asburgico: 1850-1914", *Quaderni Giuliani di Storia* 1 (1989): 131-148; Cattaruzza, *L'Italia e il confine orientale*; Marina Cattaruzza, *Trieste nell'Ottocento. Le trasformazioni di una società civile*, (Udine: Del Bianco, 1995), 119-165; Marta Verginella, "Sloveni a Trieste tra Sette e Ottocento. Da comunità etnica a minoranza nazionale", in *Storia economica e sociale di Trieste*, I, 441-481. On the fascist period and the persecution of the Slovenians, see: Vinci, *Sentinelle della patria*; Maura Hametz, "The Nefarious Former Authorities: Name Change in Trieste. 1918-22", *Austrian History Yearbook* 35 (2004): 233-252.

72 See: Catalan, *La Comunità ebraica di Trieste*, 251-252.

73 Ibid., 253-257; Catalan, "Società e sionismo a Trieste fra XIX e XX secolo", in *Il Mondo ebraico*, 457-489, 469-470.

small and fierce group of Catholics, politically close to the stance of the Austrian Christian-Social movement, laid the basis for a widespread antisemitic propaganda in the local Catholic press. The two most read newspapers of the movement, *L'Amico* and *L'Avvenire*, quickly followed in the antisemitic footsteps of the Italian Catholic magazine, *Civiltà Cattolica*, which in turn looked to the example emanating from nearby Austria. In Austria, the Christian-Social party, led by Karl Lueger, who was elected as Mayor of Vienna in 1895, planted the seeds of political antisemitism in the capital, as well as in the country's provinces.[74] The attacks and accusations made against the Triestine Jews regarding their supposed control of local politics via the Liberal-National party, and the accusations that they controlled all sources of information and acted as a corrupting force, were repeating themes in the antisemitic discourse of the period in the Habsburg world. The outbreak of the Dreyfus Affair in France provided additional ammunition with which to hit the Jewish population. The height of the political instrumentation of antisemitism in Trieste came, however, during the third phase, which lasted from 1897-1904. In this period, alongside the Christian-Socials – who, by this time, had formed a party in Trieste – other two non-religious groups, also loyal to the Empire, also adopted anti-Jewish positions, with the objective of opposing the election of Liberal-Nationals and pro-Italian politicians of Jewish origins.

What is vital to note, for the purpose of our argument, is that one of the two aforementioned groups counted individuals from the Greek minority amongst its members, who chose to parade under the flag of antisemitism in order to wound the Jews on a political level. The Socialist party of Trieste impeded a further growth of these groups. The party, which in 1903 feared a bloody and violent reaction to the local elections in the streets of Trieste, made its voice heard and was ready to interpose, even on a physical level, between the two sides in the case of public demonstrations. In defense of the Triestine Jews, Wilhelm Ellenbogen, a Socialist MP, concerned by the *laissez-faire* attitude of the Triestine police forces in the face of the antisemitic fights taking place in the city's streets, made an interpellation to the Viennese parliament.[75] The Austrian government, however, supported one of these groups, which was headed by the journalists Riccardo Camber and Vittorio Cuttin, and secretly financed *Il Sole*, one of the antisemitic movement's newspapers. This non-Catholic based antisemitic current, which was reinforced in the early twentieth-century by groups of Slovenians who hoped to form a

[74] On Trieste, see: Catalan, *La Comunità ebraica di Trieste*, 273-291. On Austria, see: John W. Boyer, *Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna: Origins of the Christian Social Movement, 1848-1897*, (Chicago: University of Chicago press, 1981); on political antisemitism, see: Peter Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Antisemitism in Germany and Austria*, (London: P. Halban, 1988, 1st ed. 1964).

[75] Catalan, *La Comunità ebraica di Trieste*, 287.

cohesive unit, greatly worried Trieste's Jewish community. Undoubtedly the climate was very different to that of fifty years earlier, and even the Jews of Trieste began to feel a definite insecurity for their future, an insecurity fuelled by the propaganda and accusations with which the Jews were confronted on a daily basis in the antisemitic press. A definite setback for political antisemitism came in 1907 with the clear victory of the Socialist party in the local elections, who, replacing the Liberal-Nationals, took control of the area.[76]

In the same years in which the presence of antisemitism began to be felt in various sectors of the local population, the nationalist fights between Slovenians and Italians ignited a violent anti-Slovenian press campaign in the newspapers associated with the Liberal-National and irredentist parties. Within the City Council, meanwhile, the political fight swiftly changed into the reciprocal exchange of grave insults between Jews and Slovenians. Upon reading *L'Indipendente* and *Il Piccolo*, two openly pro-Italian newspapers, one is shocked by the articulation of the anti-Slovenian discourse, and by the disquieting similarities it presents with the strategies of dissemination used in the antisemitic campaign.

My opinion, after a thorough study of antisemitism and the initial results of a study still underway into the course of anti-Slavism at the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth-centuries, is that these forms of intolerance fed one another, despite being opposed to each other. One notices this when analyzing the themes and methods used in the antisemitic and anti-Slovenian propaganda in the local press, and when examining the language and stereotypes brought into the field by proponents of such racist thoughts.

We find, at the very forefront of the movement, amongst the most fierce proponents of anti-Slavism, a group made up of individuals of Jewish origins who were politically orientated towards the irredentist, pro-Italian Liberal-National party. Similar prejudices, no longer hushed up, but publicly expressed, can also be witnessed within the same Jewish community, with its decision in the 1890s that it no longer wanted the Jews of Ljubljana to fall under its jurisdiction, as it considered them, as Slavs, to be on a different cultural and linguistic level. In 1913 similar grievances were found with a small group of Polish Jews present in the city, despite Chief Rabbi Zvi Perez Chajes's attempts at mediation in the name of Jewish solidarity.[77] This demonstrates on the one hand the high level of integration that the Triestine Jews had reached within the society of Trieste, from which it borrowed its nationalist prejudices; whilst simultaneously highlighting the fracture taking place within the traditional Jewish world and its values.

An analysis of the period from 1880 - 1915 is fundamental in order to

[76] For a detailed reconstruction of the whole period described here, see Ibid., 251-302.
[77] Catalan, *La Comunità ebraica di Trieste*, 189-191.

understand the roots of the anti-Slavic racism, and the origins of several prejudices and stereotypes, which, primarily during the fascist period, but also in the years following the secondo World War, were largely elaborated and disseminated in a context vastly different to that of the late nineteenth and early the twentieth-century.[78]

Indeed, it is necessary on a methodological level to distinguish between the various periods and relative contexts in which the proponents of the anti-Slavic racist discourse acted, because despite being offshoots of a common root, the prejudices and stereotypes tended to transform and adapt themselves over time to the context and language used, until they formed a sort of repertoire.

Anti-Slavism grew in Trieste during the 1880s in the irredentist ranks of the Liberal-national party and in those of the Democratic-Republican Irredentism. To give an idea of the span of these events: the first phase was from 1880-1907, the second - and most virulent - from 1908 to the outbreak of World War I.

It is not, indeed, a coincidence that in the 1880s one witnesses a sudden increase in anti-Slavic discourses in the pages of the clandestine irredentist publications, smuggled to Trieste from the nearby Italian kingdom. During the 1880s and until 1907, the year of the electoral defeat of the Liberal-Nationals, the anti-Slavic discourse in Trieste was prevalently centred on the idea that the Slavs and above all the Slovenians, were an inferior population with respect to the Italians, in that they were not civil, lacked culture and were incapable of creating a ruling class.[79] It is precisely in this period, indeed, as Marta Verginella has demonstrated,[80] that the establishment of a new Slovenian middle-class was consolidated, a class which was active on economic and financial levels, and quickly able to build an important business and cultural network, which reinforced its position and identity in the territory, thus cementing the Slovenian presence in the city. This process brought a halt to the Slovenians' assimilation into Italian culture and society, a process which had been growing from the birth of the free-port. Also in the course of the 1880s and 1890s, the exchange between the Italians and Slovenians became increasingly ignited by the nationalist claims: the Liberal-National Italians, who led the municipality, obstructed all initiatives of a nationalist nature proposed by Slovenian representatives

[78] On this first phase, see the considerations of Cattaruzza, *L'Italia e il confine orientale*, 48 and following. The author dedicates several paragraphs to the genesis of the irredentist discourse, dwelling on the anti-Slavism.

[79] See the pioneering work of Enzo Collotti, "Sul razzismo antislavo", in *Nel nome della razza. Il razzismo nella storia d'Italia, 1870-1945*, ed. Alberto Burgio, (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1999); and also the brilliant work of Marta Verginella, "Il postcoloniale in Italia: antislavismo, razzismo di frontiera?", *Aut Aut* 349 (2011): 30-49. Also useful for a wider contextualisation of the phenomenon are the considerations of Alberto Burgio, *Nonostante Auschwitz. Il "ritorno" del razzismo in Europa*, (Roma: Derive e Approdi, 2010).

[80] See: Verginella, "Sloveni a Trieste tra Sette e Ottocento."

in the City Council. They were, of course, unfailingly supported in their actions by the Italian press.
After 1910, and following the foundation of the nationalist movement in Italy, Trieste entered a new phase in the articulation of the anti-Slavic discourse, which became increasingly inflamed by the nationalist irredentism, promoted by Ruggero Timeus. The latter was the most active representative of this current of thought. Fiercely opposed to the politics of the Liberal-Nationals, he forcefully introduced several new elements into the discourse, amongst which was the concept of race, which had, up until that point, been extraneous to the polemic.[81]
The reiterated use of the collective single "the Slovenian"; the repeated metaphors which focused on race, and the continued dehumanisation of the so-called "enemy" found in many texts drawn up by supporters of the nationalist and xenophobic current of Triestine irredentism, amongst whom the figure of the anti-Semite Vittorio Cuttin also looms large, allow us to identify the common discursive elements between political antisemitism and antislavism, on which there is still much study to be done.
The aforementioned Ruggero Timeus, who is still today remembered as a hero of the fatherland for his death in the First World War, and to whom the Museo del Risorgimento di Trieste dedicates a significant space, was not an outsider to anti-Jewish prejudices.
In his *Scritti politici* (1911-1915), whilst commenting on Virgino Gayda's text on Austria[82], he dedicates an entire paragraph to the Jewish presence in the Habsburg territories. Timeus' description of the Jews is a classical conglomeration of conventional stereotypes: first he refers to their cosmopolitan ways, and extrapolates from this their presumed lack of loyalty to the fatherland. Next he dwells upon the stereotypes of Jewish intelligence, their attachment to money, the practice of usury, and the idea of a conspiracy for their domination of society, etc.

Amongst the many populations who fight a passionate and bloody war, there is one social group who has its own distinctive characteristics, and which does not belong to any of the nations who fight, while simultaneously belonging to all of them. This social group is the Jews. [...] They are distinguished from the rest of us by their rapacious avidity, and their great and vivid intelligence. [...] the Jewish merchant in Vienna who deals with Trieste leaves the Austrian capital as an Austrian and arrives after twelve hours on the train in the irredentist capital of Italy as

81 On Timeus, see: Diego Redivo, *Ruggero Timeus: la via imperialista dell'irredentismo triestino*, (Trieste: Italo Svevo, 1996), where, however, this perspective is not addressed. On the anti-Slavism of Timeus, see: Collotti, "Sul razzismo antislavo" and Verginella, "Il postcoloniale in Italia."
82 Virginio Gayda, *La crisi di un Impero: pagine sull'Austria contemporanea*, (Turin: Fratelli Bocca, 1913).

an irredentist.[83]

In Timeus' statements, a profound break emerges between the new nationalist and xenophobic irredentists and the Liberal-National irredentism, where there was a significant Jewish presence, particularly in the group's leadership. It seems to me that this developes as a paradigm of intolerance towards the 'other' emerges. In the decades following World War I Trieste would change from the hospitable and inclusive city it had been until the 1880s, to an authentic breeding ground for Italian racist nationalism.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I retain that for the case of Imperial Trieste until the second half of the nineteenth-century, beside the well-defined figure of the "port Jews" another model may also function, that of the "port-merchants," which included the various ethnic/religious communities. This figure, protected by laws for the defense of civil and religious rights, in the private sphere was linked to the family and place of origin; whilst on a public level would work alongside individuals of the same religion, as well as of other religions, in economic and social activities useful to the growth and development of the financial and mercantile market of the free port. Readiness to collaborate with partners from other religious faiths in order to pursue a common objective was one of this figure's key traits. This mechanism for the progressive inclusion of the 'other', and of the latter's acculturation and integration without excessive trauma into the rest of the Triestine society was, however, interrupted in the second half of the nineteenth-century, when the Adriatic city was involved in nationalist fights, political antisemitism and nationalist xenophobia. The roots of the fascist racism, which was already raging in the 1920s against the Slovenian population, and which from 1938 also turned on the Jewish population, can be seen in the final years of the nineteenth-century: a period during which the city began to show its 'dark side', quickly becoming an authentic breeding ground of racism for the rest of Italy.

Tullia Catalan is Assistant professor of contemporary (Modern) History at the Dipartimento di Storia e Culture dall'Antichità al Mondo Contemporaneo

[83] Ruggero Timeus, *Scritti Politici (1911-1915),* (Trieste: Tip. Swl Lloyd Triestino, 1929), 173-175, 173. See other antisemitic affirmations of Ruggero Timeus in: *Trieste. Italiani e slavi. Il governo austriaco. L'irredentismo*, (Rome: Gaetano Garzoni Provenzani Editore, 1914), 99, 105.

(DISCAM) at the Università degli Studi di Trieste, where she teaches Jewish History. A large part of her studies are devoted to Triestine and Italian Jews of the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries, and explore issues such as family history, antisemitism, and the relationship between Jewish identity and national identity during the Risorgimento. She is the author of *La Comunità ebraica di Trieste (1781-1914). Politica, società e cultura,* Lint, Trieste 2000, and of numerous publications, amongst which are: *Il 1848 e l'ebraismo italiano nei territori asburgici*, in *Fratelli di chi. Libertà, uguaglianza e guerra nel Quarantotto asburgico*, edited by Stefano Petrungaro, (Edizioni Spartaco, Santa Maria Capua Vetere 2008); *Ebrei italiani e nazione dal Risorgimento alla crisi di fine secolo*, in *Storia della Shoah in Italia,* vol. I, edited by Marcello Flores, Simon Levis Sullam, Marie-Anne Matard Bonucci, Enzo Traverso, (UTET, Torino 2010); *Eugenio Colorni e l'ambiente ebraico triestino negli anni Trenta*, in *Eugenio Colorni e la cultura italiana fra le due guerre*, edited by G. Cerchiai e G. Rota, Lacaita, Manduria, (Bari, Roma 2011).

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