Osmanlı-Speaking Diasporas

Guillaume Calafat

Guillaume Calafat

Osmanlı-Speaking Diasporas: Cross-Diasporic Relations and Intercommunity Trust between Marseilles, Tunis and Livorno (1600-1650)

Scholars generally consider Jewish, Armenian and Greek diasporas as historical paradigms of scattered, stateless and trading populations. Often compared in order to provide categorical definitions of "trading diasporas", and of "diasporas" *tout court*, little has been done, however, to study social and mercantile interactions between those three "classic" diasporic groups in a synchronic perspective – what I propose to call "cross-diasporic relations". The port of Livorno offers a perfect laboratory for such a study. Greeks and Jews settled during the second half of the sixteenth century in the Tuscan port, known for its religious toleration and its fiscal exemptions.[1] The Grand Dukes of Tuscany granted a series of economic privileges to Greek sailors, from the reign of Cosimo I (1537-1574): Greeks from the Venetian domain, from the Ionian Islands, from the Dodecanese, the Cyclades, Cyprus, and several continental Greek subjects of the Ottoman sultan arrived in Livorno in the second half of the sixteenth century.[2] In 1590 and 1597, the Grand Duke Ferdinand I granted, through *motus proprii*, numerous privileges to the "Greek nation", asking Greek sailors to serve his navy: the Tuscan sovereign wanted expertise for his galleys and people with solid knowledge of the Levant seas.[3] As for the Jews, they were explicitly invited, with the edict of 10 June 1593 (best known as *Livornina*), to settle and to trade in the towns of Livorno and Pisa, where Crypto-Jews (*Marranos*) could come back to their faith without being sued by the Inquisition.[4]

1. Lucia Frattarelli Fischer, *Vivere fuori dal ghetto: Ebrei a Pisa e Livorno (secoli XVI-XVIII)* (Turin: Zamorani, 2008), pp. 15-68; Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), pp. 70-101; *Livorno 1606-1806: Luogo di incontro tra popoli e culture*, ed. by Adriano Prosperi (Turin: Alemandi, 2009).

2. Doriana Popova dell'Agata, "Greci e slavi in alcuni tentativi popolazionistici dei primi granduchi di Toscana", *Europa Orientalis* 8 (1989): pp. 105-115; Andrea Addobbati, *Commercio, rischio, guerra: il mercato delle assicurazioni marittime di Livorno (1694-1795)* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2007), pp. 46-49.

3. Giuseppe Vivoli, *Annali di Livorno dalla sua origine sino all'anno di Gesù Cristo 1840* (Livorno: Sardi, 1842), vol. 3, p. 210.

4. *Le 'Livornine' del 1591 e 1593*, ed. Lucia Frattarelli Fischer and Paolo Castignoli (Livorno: Cooperativa Risorgimento, 1987).

During the seventeenth century, Jews were about 10% of the whole population of Livorno.[5] By contrast, the Armenian presence was more embryonic before the second half of the seventeenth century, but little groups of Armenian merchants began to settle in Livorno, especially from the 1620s.[6]

I believe that studying "cross-diasporic relations" can illuminate common features as well as specificities of each diasporic history. It also contributes to the clarification of the now very capacious and unifying notion of "diaspora", putting forward the variety and complexity of diasporic itineraries, understood as the "multipolar migration" of a population maintaining, in spite of its scattering, "interpolar relationships" (economic, social, religious, political, sentimental etc.).[7] It is true that early modern sources do not always provide evidence of "cross-diasporic relations"; however, archives of commercial tribunals sometimes attest such encounters and transactions. If these documents do not allow to draw general conclusions about cross-cultural trade, they nevertheless give the opportunity to describe in detail the way traders dealt and negotiated and how they chose their economic partners. Between 1624 and 1626, two Armenians brought proceedings in the commercial courts of Livorno and Pisa against two Jewish diamond dealers.[8] In these trials, we can meet Greek middlemen and Turkish slaves living in the *Bagno*, the slave prison of Livorno. This particular case took place following the theft of twenty-three diamonds. Here I was less interested in the case itself than in the explanation of the commercial negotiations that preceded the dealing. This case study aims at revealing, indeed, the crucial role of languages in the sociability of minorities, but also in the making of intercommunity trust and commercial ties.

5. Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers*, pp. 54-56.

6. Paolo Castignoli, "Gli Armeni a Livorno nel Seicento: notizie sul loro primo insediamento", in Id., *Livorno dagli archivi alla città* (Livorno: Belforte, 2001), pp. 115-133; Lucia Frattarelli Fischer, "Per la storia dell'insediamento degli Armeni a Livorno nel Seicento", in *Gli Armeni lungo le strade d'Italia*, ed. by Claudia Bonardi (Pisa-Rome: Istituti Editoriali Poligrafici Internazionali, 1998), pp. 23-41; Ead., "Gli Armeni a Livorno", in *Roma-Armenia*, ed. by Claude Mutafian (Rome: De Luca, 1999), pp. 297-302.

7. Emmanuel Ma Mung, *La diaspora chinoise: géographie d'une migration* (Paris: Ophrys, 2000). Since the 1990s, an ever-broadening set of emigrant groups are considered, in scientific literature and public discourses, as diasporas, so that social scientists agree today that the notion tends to lose its significance, becoming a commonplace synonym for "international migrations", "migratory networks" or "transnational communities". See: William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myth of Homelands and Return", *Diaspora* 1/1 (1991): pp. 83-99; Khachig Tölölyan, "Rethinking diaspora(s): stateless power in the transnational moment", *Diaspora* 5/1 (1996): pp. 3-36; nevertheless, on the possible uses of the "diaspora" concept: Rogers Brubaker, "The 'diaspora' diaspora", *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28/1 (2005): pp. 1-19; Stéphane Dufoix, *La dispersion: une histoire des usages du mot* diaspora (Paris: Amsterdam, 2011); Guillaume Calafat and Sonia Goldblum, "Diaspora(s): liens, historicité, échelles", *Tracés. Revue de Sciences Humaines* 23 (2012): pp. 7-18.

8. Archivio di Stato di Livorno (ASL), *Capitano poi Governatore ed Auditore* (CPA), "Atti Civili", vol. 75, case 250; Archivio di Stato di Pisa (ASP), *Consoli del Mare* (CDM), "Atti Civili", vol. 126, case 29; ASP, *CDM*, "Atti Civili", vol. 139, case 6.

1. *Language and Sociability*

Murad ("Moratto" or "Amurat" according to the sources) and Marco were two Armenian merchants from Persia.[9] They arrived in Livorno in 1623.[10] Their exact place of origin is not certain: since they are described in the sources either as Persians, or coming from Armenia. They may have come from the famous Isfahan suburb of New Julfa, from where most of the Armenian merchants in Asia, in Africa and in Europe since the beginning of the seventeenth century originated.[11] Julfan traders were active in the precious stones trade, and that was precisely the main activity of Murad and Marco, who came to Livorno with thirty-five high-valued raw diamonds. Another hypothesis is that they could also have come from Agulis or Chorot, two Armenian towns under Persian rule in the 1620s.[12] Unfortunately, no hint allows for a definite answer to the question. Armenian resident merchants in Livorno were very scarce in the 1620s. The *Livornina* of 10 June 1593 addressed mainly Jews and Crypto-Jews, but it also explicitly invited "Armenians and Persians" to settle in the Tuscan port. In 1624, a petition signed by fifteen Armenian merchants asked for the election of a consul, representative and interpreter, a certain Andrea Signorini, from Hungary. From those years, the "protector of the Armenian nation" (then "consul" from 1628) became a permanent institution in Livorno.[13]

In Livorno, Murad and Marco rented a room in the inn called *La Casa della Mangia'Asciutta*, located on via dei Cavalieri,[14] not far from the Church of the Uniate Greeks, the *Santissima Annunziata*, inaugurated in 1606, and the Jesuat *Chiesa della Madonna*, where according to the Inquisition, dubious Catholics converged in the 1620s (Armenians, new Christians, French, Dutch and Englishmen…).[15] This neighbourhood in the North-East of Livorno had a high density of inns, which accommodated merchants and sailors who arrived in the Tuscan port. This reminds us that trading diasporas were often "male diasporas", and that their accommodation was, in the first place, temporary: inns and furnished rental apartments welcomed the first groups of Armenian merchants in Livorno. Who helped Murad and Marco to sell their diamonds when they arrived in Livorno? Contrary to an insular and narrow vision of trading diasporas, neither the little Armenian community settled in Livorno at that time, nor the Hungarian consul of the Armenian nation, Andrea Signorini, played that role. Signorini only appeared

9. ASL, *CPA*, "Atti Civili", vol. 75, case 250: *Moratto e Marco di Persia, mercanti armeni*.

10. *Ibid*. Edmund Herzig, "The Armenian Merchants of New Julfa: A Study of Premodern Trade," unpublished dissertation, St. Anthony's College, Oxford University, 1991.

11. On the "trade network" of New Julfa merchants, see Sebouh David Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

12. I thank Olivier Raveux for formulating this hypothesis.

13. Frattarelli Fischer, "Insediamento degli Armeni", pp. 28-30; Ead., "Armeni a Livorno", pp. 298-299; Castignoli, "Armeni a Livorno", p. 115.

14. ASL, *CPA*, "Atti Civili", vol. 75, case 250.

15. Lucia Frattarelli Fischer, "Lo sviluppo di una città portuale: Livorno, 1585-1720", in *Sistole/Diastole: Episodi di trasformazione urbana nell'Italia delle città*, ed. by Marco Folin (Venice: Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, 2006), pp. 271-333, here p. 303.

during the trial for making the deeds and translations official, and did not seem to have spent any time with the two Persian Armenians.[16]

Murad and Marco could actually count on Greek middlemen, and first on the ship captain and merchant Dimitri (or Demetrio) Cailla, who, in this case, was used as a broker (*sensale*). Dimitri Cailla was a ship captain from Athens, who settled in Livorno in 1606. Like many other Greeks settled in Tuscany, he was both a sailor and a merchant. He mainly traded in North Africa and, above all, in Tunis, where he regularly went since 1604, and where he lived, once six months, and another time one year.[17] Two of his brothers, Nicolò and Stamatis, were active in Tunis during the 1610s and the 1630s.[18] He sold and bought all kinds of products, which passed in transit between Livorno and Tunis, namely gums, sugar, grain, olive oil, but also captives. He was sometimes called during Tuscan trials in his capacity as expert in order to give his legal opinion (*parere legale*) about customs in force in Tunis.[19] Dimitri Cailla was in close relations with the Neapolitan *Santa Casa della Redenzione dei Cattivi*, and in particular with the redeemer Giunio de Falco.[20] He also had several connections with Venice, where he sailed with his ship in February 1624. In his testimony Cailla explained his link with the Armenians in Livorno: he had known for several years a certain Gregorio, and had rented a house "for six or seven months" to two Armenians, Isaï Gregorio and Agazano Chaes Cadaverdi.[21] He explained that he had known Murad and Marco since they arrived in Livorno. He had already gone many times to the *Mangia'Asciutta* inn to drink some *Greco di Bianco* wine and sometimes to have dinner. The two Armenian merchants asked Dimitri to help them sell their thirty-five raw diamonds since the Greek ship captain knew the place very well.[22] The latter introduced them to two diamond dealers: first, a New Christian of Portuguese origin, named Emanuele Pinto,[23] who proposed to barter the diamonds for damasks from Lucca; the Armenians refused and Cailla introduced them to a Jewish trader called in the archives "dottor Israel", probably

16. ASL, *CPA*, "Atti Civili", vol. 75, case 250.

17. ASL, *CPA*, "Atti Civili", vol. 73, case 207; Popova d'Agata, "Greci e slavi", p. 106; Richard Ayoun, "Les Juifs livournais et l'Afrique du Nord", *La Rassegna mensile di Israel* 50/9-12 (1984): pp. 650-706, here p. 702.

18. Pierre Grandchamp, *La France en Tunisie au XVIIe siècle (1611-1620). Vol. 3. Suite des documents inédits publiés sous les auspices de la Résidence générale de France à Tunis…* (Paris: Barlier et Cie, 1925); Id., *La France en Tunisie au XVIIe siècle (1631-1650). Vol. 5. Suite des documents inédits publiés sous les auspices de la Résidence générale de France à Tunis …* (Tunis: Tournier/Paris: Vuibert, 1927).

19. ASL, *CPA*, "Atti Civili", vol. 73, case 207.

20. Giuliana Boccadamo, "I 'Redentori' napoletani. Mercanti, religiosi, rinnegati', in *Le commerce des captifs. Les intermédiaires dans l'échange et le rachat des prisonniers en Méditerranée, XVe-XVIIIe siècle,* ed. by Wolfgang Kaiser (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2008), pp. 219-230 (p. 228).

21. ASL, *CPA*, "Atti Civili", vol. 75, case 250. On 26 September 1640, the chancery of the French consul in Tunis recorded a dispute between Dimitri Cailla and a certain "Morato Armeni", about an unpaid rent (Grandchamp, *La France en Tunisie*, V, p. 173).

22. ASL, *CPA*, "Atti Civili", vol. 75, case 250.

23. Frattarelli Fischer, *Vivere fuori dal ghetto*, p. 132.

Salamone Isdrael.[24] This latter offered Murad and Marco to buy the diamonds for 19 *scudi* per carat, paying half cash, and half with damasks. But the Armenians asked for 19,5 *scudi* per carat, and Isdrael refused.[25]

Dimitri Cailla's brokerage partly failed, maybe because the brokerage itself implied Cailla's remuneration and additional transaction costs for the two Armenians. However, the Greek captain served as the first middleman in the transaction between Armenian newcomers and merchants in close relations with Sephardi Jews of Livorno specialized in the damask trade.[26] Why did Murad and Marco ask Cailla to help them? The cross-examinations explain that Murad and Marco did not speak or understand Italian, while Dimitri Cailla knew this language very well and could be used as an interpreter with Jewish merchants of Livorno, settled in the Tuscan port for one or two generations. As Cailla explained in his interrogation, he did not speak Armenian, neither Persian, nor Hebrew, but Turkish (*turchescho*) with the Armenians.[27] In Tunis, the knowledge of the Turkish Ottoman language and of Italian was probably one of Cailla's decisive assets to complete his transactions successfully. The Armenians' knowledge of the Turkish language (osmanlı) is confirmed by a scene of transaction that Cailla described in the following section of his cross-examination. A few days after the failure of his brokerage, Cailla was passing by via dei Cavalieri, near Murad and Marco's inn. Then, he saw his two "Armenian friends" discussing with a Jewish diamond dealer, called Samuele d'Orta who was speaking Turkish very well.[28] The diamonds were put down on a table.[29] Murad and Marco asked D'Orta to carve them, for twenty *lire* (approximately 2,8 *scudi*) per carat. Certainly, Murad and Marco thought that they could earn more money after the diamonds' polishing, and d'Orta was one of the few diamond dealers operating in Livorno at that time. The two Armenians asked Cailla to serve as a witness to their deal, and the Greek merchant undersigned the deed of the transaction, together with another Greek merchant arrived in Livorno in 1620, Manolo di Pasquale from Mytilene.[30] Di Pasquale had spent time with Murad and Marco for about fifteen or sixteen months; he met them going about his business and speaking Turkish.[31] Manolo did not speak Italian: during his questioning, Livorno's judge solicited a Greek translator, Niccolò di

24. "Il dottore" Salamone Isdrael appears also in: ASL, *CPA*, "Atti Civili", vol. 75, case 328.

25. ASL, *CPA*, "Atti Civili", vol. 75, case 250.

26. Relations between New Christians (including Emanuele Pinto) and Sephardic Jews were notorious in Livorno in the 1610-1620s (Frattarelli Fischer, *Vivere fuori dal ghetto*, p. 132).

27. ASL, *CPA*, "Atti Civili", vol. 75, case 250.

28. *Ibid*.: *parlava benissimo turchesco*.

29. As Joseph Pitton de Tournefort stated in his travel narrative: "[Les Arméniens] prétendent, avec raison, que la vue de l'argent fait plus tôt conclure les marchés" (Joseph Pitton de Tournefort, *Relation d'un voyage du Levant fait par ordre du Roi, contenant l'Histoire Ancienne et Moderne de plusieurs îles de l'Archipel, de Constantinople, des Côtes de la Mer Noire, de l'Arménie, de la Géorgie, des Frontières de Perse et de l'Asie Mineure* (Lyons: Anisson et Posuel, 1717), vol. 3, pp. 259.

30. ASL, *CPA*, "Atti Civili", vol. 75, case 250.

31. *Ibid*.: *con occasione che (...) pratticando in piazza et parlando turchesco*.

Costantino from Candia (Heraklion).[32] These statements clearly demonstrate that the Turkish tongue created both social connections and commercial ties between Armenians and Greeks in 1620s Livorno.

The Turkish speaking sociability did not only bring together Armenians and Greeks: Ottoman slaves in Livorno could also visit the Armenians living in the *Casa della Mangia'Asciutta*. Brought for questioning before the court of Livorno, three slaves of the *Bagno* described interesting occurrences of sociability, which give information on the situation of slaves in the port city when the galleys wintered. Ali di Bayndir came from Antakya;[33] slave of the Grand Duke, he was a barber in the city, a job often reserved for slaves in the Tuscan port.[34] He spoke Turkish, Persian and Italian and had been asked by several Greek and Armenian merchants to shave them in their inn (*camera locante*) on via dei Cavalieri. The same day, Armenian merchants from Marseilles, staying in the same inn as Murad and Marco, invited Ebraim d'Ahmet, who most likely came from Limnì in Euboea, for dinner. This latter spoke Turkish and Italian. Eventually, Arvas Hesedi, from Karaman, worked in the galleys' laundry. While bringing dirty clothes and walking by the via dei Cavalieri, he was invited by the Armenians and the other Turkish slaves of the *Mangia'Asciutta* to "drink a pipe of tobacco".[35] Arvas declared that he spoke Turkish and Italian.[36]

Armenians, Greeks and Turks spent time together, partly because they shared the same language, which made interactions and encounters easier. For Greeks and Armenians, Osmanlı was neither a mother tongue, nor the "diasporic idiom", understood here as the language of the homeland – like Portuguese for most of the Sephardim,[37] or Castilian for Moriscos.[38] But both Armenians and Greeks spoke Turkish, which was, during the seventeenth century, one of the two vernacular languages for trade in the Mediterranean (along with Italian).[39] With the expansion of the Ottoman Empire, indeed, Osmanlı was spoken in the Levant, Western Asia,

32. *Ibid*.

33. *Ibid*.; ASP, *CDM*, "Atti Civili", vol. 126, case 29.

34. Vittorio Salvadorini, "Traffici con i paesi islamici e schiavi a Livorno nel XVII secolo: problemi e suggestioni", in *Atti del Convegno "Livorno e il Mediterraneo nell'età medicea"* (Livorno: Bastogi, 1978), pp. 206-255, here p. 232; Lucia Frattarelli Fischer, "Il bagno delle galere in 'terra cristiana'. Schiavi a Livorno fra Cinque e Seicento", *Nuovi Studi Livornesi* 8 (2000): pp. 69-94, here p. 77; Guillaume Calafat and Cesare Santus, "Les avatars du 'Turc': Esclaves et commerçants musulmans à Livourne (1600-1750)", in *Les musulmans dans l'histoire de l'Europe, vol. 1: Une intégration invisible*, ed. by Jocelyne Dakhlia and Bernard Vincent (Paris: Albin Michel, 2011), pp. 471-522.

35. ASL, *CPA*, "Atti Civili", vol. 75, case 250.

36. *Ibid*.

37. Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers*, p. 65 and p. 178.

38. Natalia Muchnik, "La terre d'origine dans les diasporas des XVIe-XVIIIe siècles: 'S'attacher à des pierres comme à une religion locale…'", *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 66/2 (2011): pp. 481-512, here p. 496.

39. Olivier Raveux, "Les marchands orientaux et les langues occidentales au XVIIe siècle: l'exemple des 'Choffelins' de Marseille", in *Les langues du commerce à l'époque moderne*, ed. by Gilbert Buti, Michèle Janin-Thivos and Olivier Raveux (Aix-en-Provence: Presses de l'Université de Provence, 2013), pp. 99-114.

North Africa, Dalmatia, Greece and even in the Court of Isfahan. The Turkish language was, therefore, one of the constitutive elements of Armenian and Greek diasporic cultures in the Mediterranean.[40] As Jean-Baptiste Tavernier described:

> [Armenians] have three languages very natural to them, which however are very different: the *Armenian*, which is their ancient Country-speech, which they have preserv'd from Father to Son; the *Persian*, which is the Language of the Country where they live; and the *Turkish*, of which they make very much use in course of Trade.[41]

The Julfa dialect itself had numerous Turkish loanwords.[42] Turkish speaking, but also tobacco, dress codes and presumably common culinary practices illustrate the existence of forms of sociability and solidarity between Armenians, Greeks and Turks, the so-called "Orientals" in Italian port cities. The *Mangia'Asciutta* became, at least around dinnertime, a kind of "little Eurasia".

2. *Intercommunity Trust and Diasporic Mobility*

Murad and Marco did not know the commercial customs in force in Italy, as they explained in one of their claims sent to the Grand Duke.[43] Claims (*Suppliche*) were common recourses used by litigants in order to justify a legal default in the settlement of transactions (like an incomplete or irregular contract).[44] This asserted ignorance of Italian customs encouraged them to find middlemen (*sensali*) who could introduce them to local merchants. The very small Armenian community in 1620s Livorno did not seem to provide this kind of service. In order to sell their precious diamonds (that is selling expensive products during complex and precise negotiations), Murad and Marco resorted to Greek Turkish speakers. A shared language could facilitate cooperation, thus be a step towards trust, a precondition for trust, and not a consequence of trust.[45] The failure of Cailla's

40. Johann Strauss, "Oubliés, exclus ou 'entre deux chaises': les auteurs non-musulmans dans l'activité littéraire de l'Empire ottoman", in *Hommes de l'entre-deux: Parcours individuels et portraits de groupes sur la frontière de la Méditerranée (XVIe-XXe siècle)*, ed. by Bernard Heyberger and Chantal Verdeil (Paris: Les Indes Savantes, 2009): pp. 151-178.

41. Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Collections of Travels Through Turky into Persia and the East Indies Giving an Account of the Present State of those Countries…* (London: George Monke and William Ewrey, 1688), p. 159. See also Raveux, "Les marchands orientaux et les langues", who quotes Jean Chardin and Pietro della Valle.

42. Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean*, p. 175.

43. ASL, *CPA*, "Atti Civili", vol. 75, case 250; ASP, *CDM*, "Suppliche", vol. 974, claim 65.

44. On claims and petitions: *Suppliche e gravamina. Politica, amministrazione, giustizia in Europa, secoli 14.-18*, ed. by Cecilia Nubola and Andreas Würgler (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002); *Suppliques et requêtes. Le gouvernement par la grâce en Occident (XIIe-XVe siècles)*, ed. by Hélène Millet (Rome: École française de Rome, 2003); Simona Cerutti, "Travail, mobilité et légitimité: Suppliques au roi dans une société d'Ancien Régime (Turin, XVIIIe siècle)", *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 65/3 (2010): pp. 571-611.

45. On conceptual differences between cooperation, confidence, credibility and trust, see: Niklas Luhmann, *Trust and Power* (Chichester: Wiley, 1979); Robert M. Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books, 1984); Diego Gambetta, "Can We Trust Trust?",

brokerage seems paradoxically to confirm this point. Neither Emanuele Pinto, nor the doctor Isdrael spoke Turkish (*turchescho*). Instead, Samuele d'Orta, who knew this language very well, was in a favourable position to deal with the two Armenians. D'Orta certainly had lived in the Ottoman Empire before coming to Livorno. Unlike most Livornese Jews coming from Iberia, d'Orta probably never was a Crypto-Jew, but a "Levantine Jew".[46] D'Orta lived in the *Casone*, the Jewish neighbourhood in South Livorno, where he was the owner of a workshop of diamond polishing with his apprentice (or his associate: that is one of the points raised by the trial), Daniele di Leone.[47] Di Leone was the son of Abram di Leone, a Sephardic Jew settled in Livorno at the beginning of the seventeenth century. D'Orta and di Leone in their workshop employed poor Italians such as Andrea di Giorgio, from Venice, or the peasant Francesco di Maso di Ferrino, who also gave their testimonies before the commercial tribunals. Ebraim d'Ahmet, who was invited in the inn, also served forty days in the diamond workshop, where he turned the wheel; slaves, indeed, were usually rented in Livorno for manual services.[48]

In one of their claims sent to Florence, Murad and Marco explained that they trusted d'Orta because this latter was approved as an active and trustworthy merchant by the representatives of the Livorno Jewish community.[49] The two Armenians described here the *ballottazione* process, namely the power granted to Jewish community rulers (*Massari*) to accept new members in the Livorno Jewish community through a secret voting.[50] Because the *Massari* formally approved Samuele d'Orta, Murad and Marco declared they were confident of d'Orta's truthfulness. Note that this point can seem slightly contradictory with the claimed ignorance of the Tuscan laws that the two Armenian merchants put forward in the same claim. Instead, Murad and Marco did not hesitate to make several references to the *Livornina*. Certainly, the two Persian Armenians were familiar with community privileges: New Julfa and Agulis Armenians were also granted legal autonomy by Shah 'Abbas I; the Armenian *kalantar*, like the Livorno *Massari* to a certain extent, served as an intermediary between the government and the Armenian community and had to maintain public order.[51] In their claim, they likely made an analogy with their own normative framework, moulded by the Asian Capitulation system.[52]

in *Trust: Making and Breaking Cooperative Relationships* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1998), pp. 213-237.

46. On "Levantine Jews" in Tuscany: Renzo Toaff, *La nazione ebrea a Livorno e Pisa (1591-1700)* (Florence: Olschki, 1990), p. 57-59; Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers*, pp. 64-65.

47. ASL, *CPA*, "Atti Civili", vol. 75, case 250.

48. Salvadorini, "Traffici con i paesi islamici", p. 232; Calafat and Santus, "Les avatars du 'Turc'".

49. ASL, *CPA*, "Atti Civili", vol. 75, case 250: *approvato et ammesso per mercante reale dalla Sinagoga e Massari de gl'hebrei habitanti in Livorno.*

50. Toaff, *La nazione ebrea*, p. 47; Frattarelli Fischer, *Vivere fuori dal ghetto*, pp. 48-50. Cf. chapter XXXI of the *Livornina* (see Toaff, *La nazione ebrea*, p. 428).

51. Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean*, pp. 185-188.

52. Charles Henry Alexandrowicz, *An Introduction to the History of the Law of Nations in the East Indies (16th, 17th and 18th centuries)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 97; Benjamin Braude, "Venture and Faith in the Commercial Life of the Ottoman Balkans, 1500-1650", *The International History Review* 7/4 (1985): pp. 519-542, here pp. 528-30.

The Armenians explicitly considered Livorno Jews liable for d'Orta's misbehaviour, since d'Orta, according to them, soiled the reputation of the entire local Jewish community.[53] Murad and Marco argued that the jurisdictional and administrative autonomy granted to Livorno Jews by the Grand Duke obliged them to keep an eye on merchants they approved. For the Armenians, the Grand Duke ought to enforce collective sanctions against Jews, because Jewish *Massari* failed to prevent the misconduct of one of their coreligionists.[54] This conception of collective reputation and sanctions is a well-known mainstay of trading diasporas and, more generally, pre-industrial societies.[55] Indeed, reputation played a central role in Julfan society and its vast trading network.[56] As for Sephardic merchants, they could ban those who "discredit the commerce of Jewish nation".[57] Collective responsibility was perceived as a reputation-based mechanism, possibly backed up by a law-based system, which could foster cross-diasporic exchanges and transactions.[58] As they explained, Murad and Marco trusted Samuele d'Orta (and so decided to deal with him), because they trusted the ability of the local Jewish community to control the probity of its members. Collective responsibility was not the only characteristic of "intercommunity trust": good faith between minority groups, a common vernacular language, but also a repartition of trade by commodity contributed to promote – both personal and impersonal – intercommunity exchanges.

Actually, the relations between Armenian merchants and Samuele d'Orta turned sour when Murad and Marco found that the diamond dealer took too much time to polish their diamonds. With Jewish Passover approaching, Murad and Marco asked for the restitution of their diamonds during the festivities.[59] They thought, indeed, that they could neither check what d'Orta was doing during the festivity, nor where he would go. D'Orta asked to let the diamonds to a third person, because he already polished twelve out of the thirty-five diamonds. Dimitri Cailla and Manolo di Pasquale were asked in the *Casa della Mangia'Asciutta*, where Murad and the Jewish diamond dealers (d'Orta and di Leone) argued. Acting as brokers, the two Greeks allowed them to find a compromise: they let the thirty-five diamonds to Livorno's governor during Pessa'h. Once the Jewish Passover finished, the two Armenians asked for a warranty from d'Orta. The Jewish dealer refused to give them money or anything, explaining that he was honest and could have already robbed them if he wanted. Dimitri Cailla described the scene

53. ASL, *CPA*, "Atti Civili", vol. 75, case 250; ASP, *CDM*, "Atti Civili", vol. 126, case 29; ASP, *CDM*, "Atti Civili", vol. 139, case 6.

54. *Ibid*.

55. Daryl J. Levinson, "Collective Sanctions", *Stanford Law Review* 56/2 (2003): pp. 345-428.

56. Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean*, pp. 176-186.

57. Trivellato, *Familiarity of Strangers*, pp. 164-167. Cf. also chapter XXV of the *Livornina*: "I Massari possino de facto mandare in esilio tutti quelli Ebrei, che a loro paressero scandalosi" (Toaff, *La nazione ebrea*, p. 426).

58. See, for long-distance impersonal exchanges, Avner Greif's model of "community responsibility system" (Avner Greif, *Institutions and the Path to the Modern Economy: Lessons from Medieval Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 318-349).

59. ASL, *CPA*, "Atti Civili", vol. 75, case 250.

to Livorno's judge: Murad and Marco deliberated, using the Armenian language (*parlando in loro lingua*) as a language of secrecy for important discussions. The two merchants asked d'Orta to work on the remaining twenty-three raw diamonds, under the condition they would keep with them the already polished twelve diamonds. If d'Orta kept the diamonds more than forty days, the contract would be cancelled, and the Armenians would have their precious stones back. D'Orta agreed.[60] But forty days later, the Armenians still did not have their diamonds.

Murad and Marco, who began to have strong doubts about the honesty of the diamond dealer, regularly went to his workshop in the *Casone* neighbourhood. But a ship arrived in Livorno, with Armenians coming from Marseilles onboard. The proceedings described these Armenians as relatives and compatriots of Murad and Marco.[61] This mention is interesting, because Armenians – and in particular Armenians from New Julfa – had difficulties to settle in Marseilles in the 1620s, due to the reticence of local merchants and local authorities.[62] The City Council of Marseilles, under the pressure of Marseilles traders, took the decision in November 1621 to forbid French ship captains to take onboard, in the Western or the Eastern Mediterranean, Armenian or Persian merchants, or their goods, in order to bring them to Marseilles.[63] If they did not obey, ship captains could suffer high financial penalties and also a confiscation of their goods. Therefore until Jean-Baptiste Colbert's ministry in the 1660s, Armenian merchants had great difficulties to settle in the Provençal port city.[64] They tended consequently to favour a more welcoming destination in the Western Mediterranean, namely Livorno. One of them, Michele de Pellegrino, settled in Livorno after his short stay in Marseilles. Two others, Amercan Gian and Joseph Chinan, settled in Venice in the *contrada* San Biasio, where several Greek and Armenian merchants resided – another sign of the Greek-Armenian connection.[65]

Coming from Marseilles, Michel, Amercan and Joseph brought evidence during the trial. They had dinner with their relatives and friends in the *Mangia'Asciutta* inn, together with the Turkish slaves mentioned above. They all saw a very important scene of the trial. During that evening, Murad and Marco went to d'Orta's

60. *Ibid*.

61. *Ibid*.

62. Olivier Raveux, "Entre appartenance communautaire et intégration locale: la colonie marseillaise des marchands arméniens de la Nouvelle-Djoulfa (Ispahan), 1669-1695", *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 59/1 (2012): pp. 83-102, here p. 85; Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean*, pp. 75-76.

63. Archives de la Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de Marseille (ACCIM), série HH1; quoted by Raymond H. Kévorkian, "Le négoce international des Arméniens au XVII^{e} siècle", in *Arménie entre Orient et Occident, trois mille ans de civilisation* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1996), pp. 142-151, here p. 148. On the opposition of Marseilles consuls to Armenians in the 1620s, see also: Louis Bergasse, *Histoire du commerce de Marseille. Tome IV. De 1599 à 1660*, ed. by Gaston Rambert (Paris: Plon, 1954), pp. 64-70.

64. Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean*, pp. 75-76.

65. Jean-François Chauvard, "Échelles d'observation et insertion des étrangers dans l'espace vénitien. XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles", in *Les étrangers dans la ville: minorités et espace urbain du bas Moyen âge à l'époque moderne*, ed. by Jacques Bottin and Donatella Calabi (Paris: Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1999), pp. 195-208.

workshop and did not find him: they shouted against his wife, who said that her husband was in Pisa and would certainly come back.[66] Daniele di Leone came to the inn and complained. According to the testimonies, he publicly said (in Italian), in front of the Armenian merchants and the Turkish slaves who translated, that d'Orta did not run away and that he vouched for him.[67] This episode was crucial because it constituted the only proof advanced by the Armenians of di Leone's alleged complicity in the robbery. However, in front of Tuscan tribunals, such a verbal promise was not sufficient: Murad and Marco should have asked for a written certificate. Even if Armenians were used to writing powers of attorney, petitions and notarial deeds (they did so with Samuele d'Orta),[68] they seemed to consider oral evidence as probative (if not more probative) as written attestations.

The verb *gridare* (to shout) appeared many times in the questionings to describe the scene: it shows that there was no longer any trust, and that the lack of a common language between the litigants could complicate the relationship between the different merchants. It became more difficult to agree and the suspicion was great. The following day, Murad and Marco found out that Samuele d'Orta went to Florence, took the first post for Bologna, then Venice, where Murad and Marco lost his trace.[69] Looking for their diamonds, Murad and Marco used their contacts: they asked for d'Orta in Florence and Venice. According to the two Armenians, d'Orta probably stopped in Florence, in Moshe Cassuto's house – a Jewish jeweller that they accused of receiving stolen goods. Murad and Marco went to Florence in order to take Cassuto into custody, but he was freed for lack of evidence.[70] Then the two Armenians got an attestation by a Venetian Jewish dealer, named David Valerio, who explained having seen in Venice two Florentine Jews with twenty diamonds.[71] This attestation proves the importance of collective reputation: in order to exonerate the entire community, some Jews were probably asked by thr Livorno *Massari* to help the Armenians to find the robber. Murad and Marco might also have relied on good commercial relations between some Armenians and Jews in Venice. The itinerary made by the diamonds and the robber shows that d'Orta tried to sell the precious stones in the Jewish ghettos of Florence and Venice: eventual customers certainly tended to be more rapidly found within the diaspora.[72] This case shows important consubstantial attributes of diasporic mercantile networks. Even if they failed to find the robber, Murad and Marco did not hesitate to go to Venice, an important "anchor point" of the Armenian diaspora,[73] although they had very little chance of success. Marco himself eventually settled in Venice in 1626. Both d'Orta's itinerary, on the one hand, and Murad and Marco's

66. ASL, *CPA*, "Atti Civili", vol. 75, case 250.
67. *Ibid*.
68. Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean*, pp. 188-191.
69. ASL, *CPA*, "Atti Civili", vol. 75, case 250.
70. *Ibid*.; ASP, *CDM*, "Atti Civili", vol. 126, case 29.
71. *Ibid*.
72. Braude, "Venture and Faith", p. 532.
73. *Gli Armeni e Venezia. Dagli Sceriman a Mechitar: Il momento culminante di una consuetudine millenaria*, ed. by Boghos Levon Zekiyan and Aldo Ferrari (Venice: Istituto veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti, 2004); Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean*, pp. 70-71.

attempt to catch him, on the other hand, proves the importance of "diasporic relays" to gather news, but also to ease the circulation of men and goods.[74]

3. *Conclusion*

But did the actors of the seventeenth century feel like they belonged to a diaspora? Did they designate themselves as diasporic groups?[75] The term was almost never used during the early modern period, and "diaspora" with the meaning of "scattered population" is a very recent category.[76] Nonetheless, a sentence in Murad and Marco's claim to the Grand Duke of Tuscany reveals a kind of "consciousness" of the scattering. While explaining their situation, the two Armenian merchants asked the Grand Duke for justice. They added that if they were satisfied by Tuscan laws, "everywhere in the world, they could laud the good justice administrated in the States" of the Grand Duke.[77] The expression "in every part of the world" (*qualunque parte del mondo*) possibly points to the existence and the feeling of the global dispersion of Armenian merchants. Besides, the Armenians implicitly negotiated their settling in Livorno: if Murad and Marco were not satisfied with Tuscan justice, they could not only leave the place, but also work at spreading wide and far a bad reputation for Livorno. Of course, it was a strategy to persuade the Grand Duke to favor them since one of the goals of the *Livornina* was, indeed, to increase the volume of trade in Livorno, and to make this port one of the most important mercantile hubs of the Mediterranean. For that, the Grand Duke promised not only a tax-free trade and politics of tolerance, but also a "good and summary justice", overtly claimed by the Armenians.[78]

If Samuele d'Orta had not robbed Murad and Marco's diamonds, we would probably never know that they had dealt together. Thus, we would neither have access to the multiple steps of their commercial negotiations, nor to the description of the Turkish speaking sociability. But was this diamond dealing between Armenians, Jews and Greeks representative of trading practices of that time? Unfortunately, pacific and satisfactory transactions rarely appear in tribunal archives, and notarial deeds do not provide an exhaustive view of everyday paralegal or extra-judicial contracts (like oral or "non-notarial" agreements). This absence of evidence can lead historians to underestimate occurrences of cross-diasporic trade during the Early modern period. I believe, on the contrary, that a failed transaction, such as that of Murad and Marco, reveals recurrent successful exchanges between Armenians, Greeks and Jews.

74. On the concept of "circulation" applied to mercantile networks, see: Claude Markovits, *The Global World of Indian Merchants, 1750-1947: Traders of Sind from Bukhara to Panama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean*.

75. On diasporic auto-designation, see Martine Hovanessian, "La notion de diaspora: usages et champ sémantique", *Journal des Anthropologues* 72-73 (1998): pp. 11-36.

76. Martin Baumann, "Diaspora: Genealogies of Semantics and Transcultural Comparison", *Numen* 47/3 (2000): pp. 313-337.

77. ASL, *CPA*, "Atti Civili", vol. 75, case 250: *che cosi in qualunque parte del mondo potranno lodarsi della buona iustitia amministratali da VAS*.

78. Summary justice was positively viewed during the early modern period. See Simona Cerutti, *Giustizia sommaria: Pratiche e ideali di giustizia in una società di Ancien Régime (Torino XVIII secolo)* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2003).