

Cultural History of Early Modern European Streets

EDITED BY

RIITTA LAITINEN & THOMAS V. COHEN

BRILL

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Cultural History of Early Modern Streets— An Introduction

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Abstract

The articles in this collection deal with the early modern street—a public space that was never completely separate from other public spaces, or indeed from private spaces. This introduction presents central themes for the following six articles that explore the history of the street in various European towns. Public and private, order and disorder, and control and hierarchy are discussed, and the inextricable link between the material and the immaterial in the history of the street is emphasized.

Keywords

Urban, street, public, private, space, order, gender

Towns invariably have outdoor public spaces. Most obvious are the wide ones, market places and public plazas, built for congregating people. Streets, even when narrow, also function as public spaces. Generally, a street provides a passageway for the movement of goods, beasts, and people; it also structures the town by demarcating blocks and outlining houses; and it brings people together, when they step outside of their houses and move from place to place. Streets open out to market places and plazas, and also funnel in, to yards, gateways, paths, passages, and stairwells. The street, as place, is a bit ambiguous—a public space never completely separate from other public spaces or from private spaces.¹ This ambiguity

¹ The word *street* is derived from the Latin word *sternere*, to pave and is thus connected to building and construction. Street differs from road, for example, in that it does not necessarily lead anywhere as the road does. The term road suggests moving to a destination while a street can finish in a plaza or a blind alley. Joseph Rykwert, “The Street: The Use of its History,” in *On Streets*, ed. Stanford Anderson (Cambridge 1986), 15. This is the street

extends to street's own social functions, for the early modern street, its uses manifold and varied, far more than its modern analogue was a very incompletely public place and space.

The articles in this journal issue examine the street and street culture in six widely separate European countries. They derive from a session at the European Association of Urban History conference in Stockholm in the fall of 2006 and take on the European streets of Cluj, Venice, Rome, Lisbon, London, Stockholm and Åbo (today Turku, Finland).² All six articles treat the street as cultural, as well as physical. They dwell on the public and the private, the real and the ideal, and the concrete and the conceptual, on disorder and order, on autonomy and control. They talk about building and planning, about observation and activity and about collective intervention to quell crimes. All these topics engage at once society and the state, two early modern forces, interwoven but still distinct, that worked in concert or in conflict to shape or rule what happened along a city's streets.

These articles have in common many cultural themes. The public nature of streets runs through all articles, none of which, however, assumes that streets were plainly public or that indoor space was unadulteratedly private. Streets were shaded, nuanced places; multiple aspects and tones of publicity and privacy figure in our early modern streetscapes. Public and private were at once ideals and practices; here they are not the only ones. Other ideals and realities, or norms and practices, are central themes. Diverse desires for order, in collision with practices of urban living, sometimes stirred conflict, or spurred subtle negotiation. In response to their own urban outlooks, and to their regimes' designs, people placed themselves in the streets, or were placed there by decree and fiat. Relations between the lives of local townspeople, the shared cultural conceptions, and "official order," or (to put this complex negotiation in different terms) relations between the reality of urban living and the ideals about behavior or between individuals, community, and state—men and women, commoners, magistrates, lords, and queens—manifested themselves in the streets.

we are studying here, even if not all the languages in our cases use the Latin-based word for this urban structure.

² The editors of the collection, Riitta Laitinen and Thomas Cohen, would like to thank all the writers for stimulating texts and discussion as well as patience in responding to our various comments and suggestions. Thanks also go to the anonymous reviewers who made us strive to better our articles.

Urban living is at the center of our discussion. We discuss material towns and the people in them; we are interested not only in how people lived in their urban surroundings but also in how they imagined them—we examine early modern streets as lived and imagined in actions, practices, and discussions. Historians have so far failed to bring out a balanced examination of the various aspects of the urban space—material, social, mental, discursive. Social historians have tended to bury the materiality of the street, viewing the street a mere backdrop for social events or social relations. On the other hand, architectural historians and urbanologists have studied the material street as an outcome of town planning and architecture, leaving streets relatively vacant of living people. Moreover, while whole street systems have been the central focus, concrete streets have tended to hover in the background.³ Aiming for integration, in this collection of articles, we have attended to the nature of the street as an urban material entity, as a starting point for studying people in the streets (and near them), highlighting the integral connectivity of the material and the immaterial.⁴

All streets in this volume are European. Though confined to a single continent, we have cast our net wide, ranging from the Baltic to the Mediterranean and from the Atlantic shore to deep Central Europe. Indeed, our articles form a rough circle, or, if one likes, a garland or wreath draped from western Finland, across Sweden, to Lisbon, Rome, and Venice, and up to Transylvania. Our streets and cities thus perch on Europe's periphery, although, despite their position on the map, many of our places, Stockholm included, were central to early modern affairs. Like any wreath, our collection has an empty center; we lack France, Germany and the Netherlands. So our claims are less than universal, but the thematic unity in our concerns suggests wider uniformities in Europe itself and, moreover, invites comparisons from further afield, other continents and cultures.

The prospect of wider comparisons raises an important question: how universal were matters of the street? Trade and profession, stately pomp

³ Peter Arnade, Martha C. Howell, and Walter Simons, "Fertile Spaces: The Productivity of Urban Space in Northern Europe," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 32 (2002); Diane Favro, "Meaning and Experience: Urban History from Antiquity to the Early Modern History," *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 58 (1999/2000), 369; Jill Steward & Alexander Cowan, "Introduction," in *The City and the Senses. Urban Culture Since 1500*, eds. Alexander Cowan and Jill Steward (Aldershot 2007), 8.

⁴ See Arnade et al., "Fertile Spaces," 535, 542.

and power, private lives, neighborhood relations, and religious customs filled streets outside Europe too. How did Islamic streets differ from Christian ones? And what of the cities of East Asia? And, with European intrusion, did colonial towns acquire their own character or just hew to the homeland template? Differing political regimes, religions, trading cultures, family customs, and geographical conditions imprinted the streets around the world with their own characteristics. Nevertheless, our questions, and our findings, may invite comparisons and wider conclusions.

One central theme for us at least is the contest for control. Spiro Kostof has written that streets, wherever in history, always entail negotiation of public and private; uses of the street have competed, public effort striving to keep the streets free for traffic; private effort trying to wrest control of the street for its own use.⁵ Even if things never really are quite so simple (especially, in the early modern period, the centrality of traffic flow can be questioned), Kostof's comments handily do place the street on the border of public and private. This liminality of the street is highlighted by the ambiguity of "public" and "private" in general and, importantly for us, regarding the early modern period. It has been argued that in early modern culture public and private space did not exist; spaces were both at once, or sometimes something in between.⁶ Ted Kilian writes that public and private space as such do not exist at all (regardless of the era), but that public and private as categories are necessary when examining space.⁷

Earlier research shows that amidst so many early modern changes in conceptions of personal and shared, secret and open, and domestic and communal, "public" and "private" have proven useful terms, demanding caution but still difficult to avoid.⁸ And even if one were to discard public

⁵ Spiro Kostof, *The City Assembled. The Elements of Urban Form Through History*, (London, 1992), 191. See also Robert Gutman, "The Street Generation," in *On Streets*, ed. Stanford Anderson (Cambridge 1986), 249, 250.

⁶ See, for example, Marjo Kaartinen, "Women's Metropolis—Elite Women in Early Modern London," *Women's History Magazine* 53 (2006), 1-12; Beat Kümin, "Drinking and Public Space in Early Modern German Lands," *Contemporary Drug Problems* 32 (2005); Marjo Kaartinen, "Public and Private: Challenges in the Study of Early Modern Women's Lives," in *Time Frames. Negotiating Cultural History* (Turku, 2002), 94-95.

⁷ Ted Kilian, "Public and Private, Power and Space," in *The Production of Public Space*, ed. Andrew Light and Jonathan Smith (Lanham, 1998), 124.

⁸ See, for example, Vanessa Harding, "Space, Property, and Propriety in Urban England," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 22 (2002), 549-69; Raffaella Sarti, *Europe at Home. Family and Material Culture 1500-1800* (New Haven, 2002), 138-39, 142-47;

and private as defined, crystalline concepts for the early modern period, that hardly means that street space was unspecified or undefined. This becomes clear in the articles of this collection where they discuss the planned and practical uses of the street as well as ideas about what was believed to be proper behavior in the streets. Restrictions and rules of use of urban space existed, as did their wide-spread violation.

We will do well to remember Ted Kilian's words: "publicity and privacy are not characteristics of space. Rather, they are expressions of power relations in space, and hence, both exist in every space."⁹ And we should remember Marjo Kaartinen's comment: "space is determined by each individual each time she uses space."¹⁰ These strictures are more useful for historians than many of the definitions of public and private coming from geographers and philosophers, which are problematic whenever they define public and private first and foremost from the perspective of modern society or freight them our values.¹¹ Still, recently the ambiguity of public and private has been recognized widely; concrete situations or places often sit awkwardly with the terms.¹² Scholars have found different ways of coping with the problems of public and private. Here, for example, Elizabeth Cohen has divided private into two territories, one domestic, the other urban, so as to include both the inside and the outside of homes, and has pushed the pure public away from house-fronts and towards the urban regime, collective and communal. Emese Balint has found it most fruitful to call attention to how early modern practices made borders between spheres and places porous—so that one could almost see people and issues seeping through walls and hedges. On the other hand, Anu Korhonen does not speak of public and private as traits of spaces, but does focus in

B. Ann Tlusty, *Bacchus and Civic Order. The Culture of Drink in Early Modern Germany* (Charlottesville, 2001), 45-47, 159-60; Paul Griffiths, "Secrecy and Authority in Late Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century London," *The Historical Journal* 40 (1997), 925-51; Robert Scribner, "Symbolic Boundaries: Defining Social Space in the Daily Life of Early Modern Germany," in *Symbole des Alltags—Alltag der Symbole. Festschrift für Harry Kühnel zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Gertrud Blaschitz, Helmut Hundsichler, Gerhard Jaritz and Elisabeth Vavra (Graz, 1992), 821.

⁹ Kilian, "Public and Private," 115-16.

¹⁰ Kaartinen "Public and Private," 97.

¹¹ See Kilian, "Public and Private," 116-23.

¹² Kilian, "Public and Private," 123; Kaartinen, "Public and Private," 96; Mary Ann Tétreault, "Formal Politics, Meta-Space, and the Construction of Civil Life," in *The Production of Public Space*, ed. Andrew Light and Jonathan Smith (Lanham, 1998), 81-97.

her article on various views on beauty and streets, placing them in “public consciousness” and thus, by implication, in public streets.

How ever one decides to talk about public and private, and how ever each writer here uses the terms, their articles all ask questions about communally shared space. Going back to Kostof’s idea about the struggle between private and public interests, we ask: is there a struggle on the early modern street, and if there is, who are struggling. Kostof speaks of a community that has committed to the street’s availability for general use. This raises questions. Who are the community? Who are the people who define the uses of the street? Who, if anyone, encroaches on whose space? Is the question of urban space, of the street, a question of the community and the individual or is it a question of the government and the citizen? Or is it a question of patriarchy and of the claims of one or the other gender to possess and use a space?

In one way or another, all these articles deal with who defines the meanings of the street. Elizabeth Cohen’s and Anu Korhonen’s articles, the one in Rome, the other in London, examine women’s position and role. Men aimed to define women and their place in the streets, but as Cohen and Korhonen demonstrate women had their own roles and ways of defining street and its use, so that gendered use of street is far from simple. Alex Cowan’s article on Venetian gossip explores further the multifaceted nature of gendered streets and also illustrates how, as information flowed, it intertwined the official urban community with neighborhood connections, private homes, and individual lives. Emese Balint on Transylvanian hue and cry shows how collective reaction to a crime could shift the permeability of boundaries between streets and houses. The articles by Maria Helena Barreiros, on Lisbon’s rebuilding, and by Riitta Laitinen and Dag Lindström on Baltic urbanism, nuance the relationship between the official administrators who saw streets as thoroughly public urban space, and townsfolk less easily convinced, and cityscape itself. These two articles show that all members of the urban community played a role in constructing both the material and imagined street, as well as the ways of living in the real one. As in all the other articles, the borders of public and private manifest themselves as intensely permeable in multiple ways.

In these articles it also becomes clear that there is no clear line between ideals and urban reality, between norms and practices. People’s ways of being in urban space usually contain both—experience is informed by many discourses in the culture, and also informs those discourses. As Tim

Hitchcock and Heather Shore have written, there is a misreading afoot whenever we see “the contest for the street as one played out predominantly between authority and disorder.”¹³ Dichotomies, however seductive or apparent in the sources, fail to take us very far. As is exhibited, for example, by Hitchcock and Shore as well as Maria Helena Barreiros in this collection, in the early modern period urban authority’s *modus operandi* was changing in ways that highlight the division between authorities and commoners. The change, consummated, where streets are concerned, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, moved local conflicts from the streets to more private spaces, imposed more stringent policing of urban space, and slotted streets into distinctive urban zones each defined by function and status.¹⁴ In this process both grand plans and modest urban living were influential; the desire for this kind of order in, on and among streets had a long prehistory; it was already clearly present in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as the present articles show. Official ideals of order and harmony impinged on outdoor behavior and more and more shaped street structure and decor.

For centuries, order, hierarchy and harmony have been seen as central tenets of early modern European high intellectual culture. Even if scholars today study order as an open complex, not as something just imposed by governments and higher classes and opposed by commoners, and current fashion sees order and hierarchy as a work in progress, the duality of up and down still crops up in different ways. Christopher Marsh writes that in current scholarship “negotiation” has taken the place of “resistance,” but that “resistance” still lurks in the background in unexpected and even unwanted ways. In early modern society, many a negotiation pitted parties far from equal in social, moral, and political capital against one another. Underlings and the disadvantaged could easily bargain and resist at the

¹³ Tim Hitchcock and Heather Shore, “Introduction,” in *Streets of London From the Great fire to the Great Stink* (London, 2003), 8.

¹⁴ Hitchcock and Shore, “Introduction,” 3, 7-8. See, for example, Robert Shoemaker, “Male Honour and the Decline of Public Violence in Eighteenth-Century London,” *Social History* 26 (2001), 190-208.; Carl B. Estabrook, “Ritual, Space, and Authority in Seventeenth-Century English Cathedral Cities,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 22 (2002), 593-620; Kostof, *The City Assembled*, 205, 209. As Maria Helena Barreiros’s article in this journal indicates, things started to change again already in the late eighteenth century, when for example Pombaline architecture was considered monotonous.

same time. This is a major lesson of studies in pre-modern rebellion, that even mayhem might have its subtle politics.¹⁵ But, while rough conflicts produce archival paper, smoother workings leave scant traces. So, for example, parishioners' religious motives for working alongside or with the hierarchies (Christopher Marsh's own subject of inquiry) do not easily appear in research. In Marsh's opinion, our scholarly relationship to "order" and "hierarchy" is still so tied to our own conceptions of ordered society that older thoughts and gambits may remain hidden, and only the most visible "resistance" and "negotiation" surface.¹⁶

In the articles here, we see the official desire for order, negotiations in the face of that desire, and resistance to it, all of them manifested in different levels of society and different urban situations. In Laitinen and Lindström's article royalty and Scandinavian burghers have different ideas of order. Gender hierarchy, a desire to order women, can be seen at work in Cohen's, Cowan's, and Korhonen's articles. In Barreiros's article, Lisbon's town planners have vivid visions of new, modern post-quake streets, which they want to impose on townspeople. It is shown in Balint's article how Transylvanian authorities moved to control by law ways of keeping order, and to supplant the old voluntary custom of collective action. Most of the articles do reveal that keeping order—moral and physical—was central to early modern street life; they also show that not all order came top downwards; a good bit was social, habitual, and spontaneous.

Order, then, was far from simple, as was disorder. The personal and the shared, the domestic and the communal, male and female, allowed and forbidden all blend and mix together. In her article, Korhonen shows how complex London's ideas and ideals of beauty, women, and streets were and how real women in real streets were lodged in an intricate web of messages, rules, customs, and conceptions. For her, threats to order, hierarchy and

¹⁵ David M. Luebke, *His Majesty's Rebels: Communities, Factions, and Rural Revolt in the Black Forest, 1725-1745* (Ithaca, 1997); Hugues Neveux, *les révoltes paysannes en Europe XVI^e-XVII^e siècle*, (Paris, 1997); E. P. Thompson, "Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," *Past and Present*, No. 50 (Feb., 1971): 76-136.

¹⁶ Braddick and Walker, "Introduction. Grids of Power: order, hierarchy and subordination in early modern society," in *Negotiating Power in Early Modern Society. Order Hierarchy and Subordination in Britain and Ireland*, eds. Michael J. Braddick and John Walter (Cambridge, 2001), 1-2, 4-6, 12; Christopher Marsh, "Order and Place in England, 1580-1640: The View from the Pew," *Journal of British Studies* 44 (2005), 5-7; Alexander Cowan, *Urban Europe 1500-1700* (London 1998), 170-72; Christopher Friedrichs, *The Early Modern City 1450-1750* (London, 1995), 241.

harmony lurk beneath the surface, not easily seen in the sources directly addressing life in the streets. Cowan's article brings men into the center of gossip about Venetian marriages, as well as testifying about them, especially when the lay of streets, squares, and houses placed denizens very well to know tidbits. Gossip's power gave men, and women too, a central role in the construction of official, and communal, and familial order. Simple categorizations of the users of the street falter, as do ideas and ideals about the street; we can see this well in Cohen's article on the many kinds of women in Rome's streets, a supposedly pure male domain. Nor do categorizations of street order work in Balint's article where the maintenance of order in Cluj fluctuates between public and private spheres and spaces, and people use the rules of social order in different ways. The articles dealing more with the urban fabric and the rulers' and planners' perceptions of it show the complexity of perspectives on order. Laitinen and Lindström's article, for example, brings up the tangled web of motives, desires, and practices around Swedish funeral processions, where rulers, nobility, clergy, and burghers all had their own agendas. Barreiros's article opens up the continuities and changes of urban planning and its realization and shows how rationalist planning ideals imported from abroad, old promiscuous habits of using urban space, and an earthquake's chaos all converged to shape the renewal of central Lisbon.

Famously, one mark of early modern European planning was a yen for grand urban spaces, wide, straight streets, long views, and imposingly uniform big buildings. There were variations to this theme in place and time. Planners of broad straight streets might have differing motives; grandeur in the seventeenth century, smooth flow in the eighteenth. In our articles, in the 1750s to 1780s Portuguese planners sought both flow and grandeur, while Swedish planners in the seventeenth century, less utilitarian, aimed mainly for grandeur and presence.

The plans to renew towns around Europe collided with the reality of medieval narrow streets and houses, whose owners did not want them torn down, so that that all through the period fires and earthquakes sometimes did more for town renewal than planners' and administrators' efforts. No other town studied here matched Lisbon for disaster and for renewal. Elsewhere, the move toward the modern configuration of streets was gradual and, before the eighteenth century, fitful and merely partial.

Living in the streets entails several kinds of materiality: that of the street itself, that of the inanimate objects, stationary or mobile, that filled it, and that of the living bodies, animal and human, that moved across its surface.

The very concrete, very sensory, thoroughly textured urban environment plays an important role in the articles here. The particular streets and houses of each town made each local urban experience its own. In the articles we have striven to create a sense of place, a feel for local streetscape, a sense of sights and sounds and even some faint notion of the pungent smells. Materiality is crucial to the cultural history of the street; it matters that Göteborg's canals anchored the street system, that Cluj played host to three ethnic cultures, that Venice's inhabitants could spy inside their neighbors' windows, or that the Åbo's riverside was lined with tall granaries. Our tour around Europe's street culture finds much in common, but every town had its own flavor. We can feel the differing streetscapes of Cluj, Venice, Rome, Lisbon, London, Stockholm, and Åbo.

Urban Landscapes: Houses, Streets and Squares of 18th Century Lisbon

Maria Helena Barreiros

Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa

Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia grant holder

Abstract

This article retraces Lisbon's urban evolution, both planned and spontaneous, from the beginning of the Age of Discovery until the first decades of the 19th century. It highlights the 1755 earthquake as a powerful agent of transformation of Lisbon, both of the city's image and architecture and of street life. The article begins by summing up urban policies and urban planning from Manuel I's reign (1495-1521) to João V's (1707-1750); it goes on to depict Lisbon's daily life during the Ancien Regime, focusing on the uses of public and private spaces by common people. The Pombaline plans for the rebuilding of Lisbon after the 1755 earthquake are reappraised, stressing the radically original morphology and functions of the new streets and housing types. The contrast between pre- and post-1755 Lisbon's public spaces is sharp, in both their design and use, and gradually streetscape became increasingly regulated in accordance with emergent bourgeois social and urban values. More than a century later, the city's late 19th- and early 20th-century urban development still bore the mark of Pombaline plans, made just after 1755, for the revived Portuguese capital.

Keywords

Early 18th and 19th Century Lisbon, Pombaline urban design, urban planning, street usage, behavior, regulation

“For the street is human movement institutionalized”.

Joseph Rykwert, 1978¹

¹ Joseph Rykwert, “The street: the use of its history,” in *On Streets*, Stanford Anderson ed. (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1978), 15.

Introduction

The increasing role of the State and the growing distinction between a public and a private sphere of social life² which characterize late modern Western societies, had profound architectural and urban impact in late 18th-century Lisbon. The reconstruction of Lisbon after the great earthquake of 1755 gave birth to an almost entirely new city, both in architecture and in social structure. Former ways of dealing with and using public and private space were drastically affected, as if first the earthquake and then the ways of the urgent reconstruction acted, to borrow a Russian avant-garde term, as “social condensers.”³ This article will attempt to show some aspects of these changes, focusing especially on the way post-1755 urban design and urban regulations, new housing models, and social change transformed the concept and the uses of the street.

In Lisbon’s renewed areas public and private spheres were no longer commingled but very sharply separated, urban lay-out and architecture as well as urban behaviours were turned into public affairs and regulated as such, apartment buildings for rent spread out and became the realm of bourgeois private life—at the same pace as specific fragments of urban areas were transformed into the stage for bourgeois public life.

² Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (Oxford, 1969 and 1982; Basel, 1939); Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, Mass. 1989; Newied/Berlin, 1962); Ph. Ariès and G. Duby, eds., *A History of Private Life* (Cambridge, Mass., 1987-1991; Paris, 1985-1987); Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (N.Y., 1977; Paris, 1975) remain the reference texts most frequently quoted by Portuguese scholars concerning the social and cultural use of public space.

³ The concept is borrowed from Russian constructivist architecture of the 1920s (see Anatole Kopp, *Città e rivoluzione. Architettura e urbanistica sovietiche degli anni Venti*, Milan, 1987, 114-18 passim; 1st ed. Paris, 1967), which, while enhancing collective daily life practices, would act as a promoter of social transformation on its own. The so to speak architectural consequences of 1755 Lisbon’s earthquake seem to have acted in a similar way: “People were bound to come together and to cooperate in those times of disaster. They got used to social life and partially abandoned the rather Moorish kind of life of our ancestors. Even the form of the new houses contributed to make life less concealed and customs more gentle,” states in 1781 abbot José Francisco Correia da Serra (1751-1823), botanist, member of the *Real Academia das Ciências* (Royal Academy of Science) of Lisbon, and future Portuguese ambassador in Washington (1816). The source for this comment is an unpublished description of Lisbon addressed to one of the editors (Robert de Vaugondy) of the *Encyclopédie méthodique ou par ordre de matières...* (Paris, 1782-1832) at this last request. See Catherine Petit, “Notice inédite sur Lisbonne en 1781”, *Bulletin des études portugaises et brésiliennes*, 35-36 (1974-1975): 93-120.

Pre-Pombaline⁴ Lisbon. Notes on the City and its Government

Lisbon urban regulations and urban planning dating back to King Manuel I's reign (1495-1521) were the earliest Portuguese attempt to impose order and regularity on a town that had been growing in size and population since the 15th century. They reflect both the cultural ambience of Portuguese Age of Discovery and the urge for urban renovation of the city. At the time, Lisbon's port played a major role in European overseas trade, which continually brought new people into the city. By the middle of the 16th century Lisbon's population was estimated at circa 100,000 inhabitants, against 60,000 to 65,000 one hundred years before.⁵ Let us listen to the well-informed report to the Venetian government by two Venetian ambassadors to the new Portuguese king, Philip II of Spain, during his sojourn in Lisbon between 1581 and 1583:

The trade in the market of Lisbon is a very considerable one because of the connection Lisbon has with all the other European markets and with the New World ones. The volume of the commercial exchanges is enormous, and the traders are very wealthy; they make huge amounts of money, lost by the Venetians, merely with the spices and drugs that are brought to Lisbon since the trade of Syria and Alexandria through the Red Sea expired around 1504 (...).⁶

Sixteenth century Lisbon thus became a melting pot of migrant nationals, foreign merchants, and skilled craftsmen, as well as women and men reduced to slavery, mostly Africans. Together, foreigners and slaves represented around one fifth of the whole population.⁷ Like 16th-century Rome described in this volume by Elizabeth Cohen, Lisbon was also a city "full of strangers," though for entirely different reasons.

Royal urban planning took material shape mainly in reforms in the city center: the opening of Rua Nova d'El Rey (The King's New Street), as a part of the connection between Rossio Square and the business district further

⁴ "Pombaline": after José Sebastião de Carvalho e Melo (1699-1782), State minister in 1756, made Marquis of Pombal in 1769.

⁵ Irisalva Moita, "A imagem e a vida da cidade," in *Lisboa quinhentista. A imagem e a vida da cidade*, Irisalva Moita, ed. (Lisbon, [1983]), 15.

⁶ *Comentario per Italia, Francia, Spagna e Portugallo, o Vera Relazione del Viaggio de S.iori cau.ri Tron e Lippomani eletti ambasciatori dalla Rep.ca Veneta al Re Cattolico (...) l'anno MDLXXXI*, Cod. Vat. Reg. 552. A Portuguese version of this excerpt was published in the journal *Panorama* (Lisbon, 1843), and quoted in Moita, *Lisboa quinhentista*, 74.

⁷ *O Livro de Lisboa* (Lisbon, 1994), Irisalva Moita, ed., 16 and 18.

south, and the construction of a new royal palace and administration buildings in Praça da Ribeira (Riverine Square), giving the square approximately a U-shape facing the river. The planned extension of the city towards northwest, with the allotment for a new residential quarter (Bairro Alto, High Quarter), was the initiative of private landowners with close relations with Manuel I's court (Fig. 1). In all three cases, the reformed and the newly built areas presented geometrical urban patterns, reflecting what one might call the mathematised empiricism of the Portuguese elites, developed in close connection with the progress of Discovery.⁸ Housing types in the 16th-century Bairro Alto consisted of two-storey (a ground floor and a second floor) individual houses—an “equal and short” architecture, as mentioned in a royal decree of 1498 concerning new plans for the Praça da Ribeira.⁹ Doors, windows, and balconies, like the plots themselves, followed a pre-defined metric system, and had proportioned measurements. These principles were not always complied with. Later on, in the 18th and 19th centuries, Bairro Alto became a residential district of collective dwellings with 3 to 5 storeys, some nobles' palaces occasionally occupying several parcels of the original plan.¹⁰ Still, this 16th-century urban lay-out remains relatively untouched until today.

Old Lisbon had a cluttered look. According to medieval regulations, Lisbon overhangs could stretch across one third of a street's width, thanks to their timber construction. Similar rules seem to be common elsewhere in Europe, as Riitta Laitinen and Dag Lindström point out here for Sweden. At the turn of the 16th century, Manuel I's urban policy intended to remove from streets obstacles to circulation—within six months all

⁸ According to some scholars, a geometricised and mathematised way of dealing with empirical data is considered to be a distinct trait of the Portuguese Renaissance. The planning of Lisbon during the reign of king Manuel I and its cultural context were examined by Helder Carita, *Lisboa manuelina e a formação de modelos urbanísticos modernos, 1495-1521* (Lisbon, 1999). Portuguese urban planning in early modern time, in relation with overseas settlements, is in the process of being reassessed by recent research. See Walter Rossa, *Cidades indo-portuguesas. Contribuições para o estudo do urbanismo português no Hindustão Ocidental/Indo-Portuguese cities. A contribution to the study of Portuguese urbanism in the Western Hindustan* (Lisbon, 1997) and *Universo urbanístico português, 1415-1822* (Lisbon, 1998), Helder Carita and Renata Araujo ed.

⁹ Quoted by Helder Carita, “Lisboa manuelina, de cabeça de reino a capital de império,” in *Lisboa, conhecer, pensar, fazer cidade*, M.H. Barreiros et alii, eds. (Lisbon, 2001), 23.

¹⁰ Helder Carita, *Bairro Alto. Tipologias e modos arquitectónicos* (Lisbon, 1989) and *Lisboa manuelina* (1999).



Fig. 1. Copy of the survey by the architect João Nunes Tinoco, *Planta da cidade de Lisboa (...), 1650*. As in Manuel I's time, the nucleus of the city lies between Rossio square, in the north, and Terreiro do Paço, Palace Square (former Praça da Ribeira), on the riverside. Further east, there is Saint George hill with the primitive castle on top, and in the opposite, west side, Saint Francis hill. Outside the city walls to the west, the regular urban pattern of Bairro Alto (High Quarter). Museu da Cidade, Lisbon.

overhangs must vanish, proclaims a royal decree of April 1502—and masonry must replace all timber. The same document refers to security (the overhangs sheltered criminals), public health (they help propagate diseases such as plague) and fire prevention.¹¹ The removal of Lisbon's *balcoadas* (overhangs) transformed the cityscape: gradually, whitewashed masonry supplanted medieval timberwork.

The king's persevering "modern" urban policies—he created several official posts for public works—show the urban insight of his first secretary, António Carneiro.¹² It was he who signed most of the royal decrees on public works, as two centuries later the Marquis of Pombal would, in king José I's name, for decrees regarding the "rational" rebuilding of destroyed Lisbon.

In 1580 Lisbon lost its native monarchy but kept its importance. True, after 1550, the Cape sea route declined and Portugal's trade in Eastern luxuries faded. And soon after young King Sebastian disappeared in battle in North Africa (1578), Philip II of Spain became Philip I of Portugal. The renovation of the Manueline palace by the Tagus and the building of a new monumental church in the older part of the city (São Vicente de Fora) testify to Philip I's wish to transform Lisbon into a second Iberian capital, a sea capital.¹³ Under its Spanish kings (1580-1640), Lisbon remained a prominent Atlantic port. In 1620, with 165,000 inhabitants, it was the largest city in the Iberian peninsula, followed by Seville with 120,000.¹⁴

It was also under the "dual monarchy" that the pressing water supply issue became an urban topic—"Now, if Lisbon has the presumption of being the greatest and noblest city in the world, how come she does not have drinking water for the people of the world?", asked the architect Francisco de Holanda back in 1571.¹⁵ Growing know-how from the Philippine

¹¹ Carita, *Lisboa manuelina*, 1999, 86.

¹² Carita, *Lisboa manuelina*, 1999, chap. VI.

¹³ See on this subject, A. Cristina Lourenço, Miguel Soromenho and Fernando Sequeira Mendes, "Felipe II en Lisboa: moldear la ciudad a la imagen del rey," *Juan de Herrera, arquitecto real* (Barcelona/Madrid, 1997), exhibition catalogue, 124-55.

¹⁴ In the European context, it was a capital city of the second order, below Paris and London but on a par with the likes of Venice and Amsterdam. Data from Teresa Rodrigues, *Cinco séculos de quotidiano. A vida em Lisboa desde o século XVI aos nossos dias* (Lisbon, 1997), 25.

¹⁵ Francisco de Holanda, *A fábrica que falece à cidade de Lisboa* (Lisboa, 1984), 24. First edition, 1571.

period on eventually produced the *Aqueduto das Águas Livres* (Free Water Aqueduct, 1728-1744) under João V (r.1707-1750).¹⁶ Spanish urban management was also behind the idea of a *Junta de Polícia* ("Council for Policing") put forward in 1607, to oversee, for instance, urban hygiene and architectural *decorum*, but with little success, since it overlapped town hall jurisdiction.¹⁷ Nevertheless, it foresaw the creation of the first Portuguese police corps, in the aftermath of the great earthquake.

Over the next two centuries, Lisbon's fate fluctuated. After a period of economic and demographic depression from the end of the Philippine dominion (1640) until the end of the War of Restoration against Spain (1668), the first shipments of gold from Brazil started to arrive (1699). This gave rise to a growth cycle that went on despite the earthquake until it was finally interrupted by the Napoleonic invasions and the transfer of the Portuguese court to Brazil in 1807.¹⁸ On the eve of the earthquake of 1755, Lisbon had approximately 200,000 inhabitants, a figure that was once again reached in the last quarter of the 18th century, when the demographic set-back due to the disaster was overcome.

Notwithstanding king Manuel's nearly "modern" urban policies and later Philippine contributions—mainly, the reform of the royal palace after 1581 and the reshaping of the former Manueline bastion into a Renaissance towerlike pavilion¹⁹—Lisbon's urban landscape would have remained almost unchanged throughout the 17th and the first half of the 18th c., had it not been for the city's growing expansion towards the West, along the coast line. This process went on with the foundation of numerous religious houses during the 17th century, several of which were located on the Lisbon western slopes facing the Tagus estuary.

This tendency was fostered by king João V's (r. 1707-1750) politics of transforming Lisbon into an ecclesiastical and imperial capital, in status and urban image. He succeeded in the former: in 1716 the archbishop of "West Lisbon" was elevated to patriarch and the royal chapel became the seat of the new patriarchate.

¹⁶ About Lisbon's aqueduct, the project and its urban and political context, see Walter Rossa, *Beyond Baixa: signs of urban planning in Eighteenth-Century Lisbon* (Lisbon, 1998). Lisbon aqueduct's architectural and building qualities partially justify its undamaged survival of the 1755 earthquake.

¹⁷ M. Soromenho, "Classicismo, italianismo e 'estilo-chão'. O ciclo filipino," in *História da Arte Portuguesa*, P. Pereira, ed. (Lisboa, 1995), vol. II, 395.

¹⁸ These were followed by the independence of Brazil (1822) and the liberal wars that lasted until 1834.

¹⁹ Lourenço, Soromenho, Mendes, "Felipe II en Lisboa".

As for the existing city, some patch-work urban reforms took place during the 17th century and the first half of the 18th century, such as the demolition of obsolete and bulky medieval gates, the widening of some streets and the building of new ones in the old quarters. These were mainly due to the increasing number of carriages circulating in the city. One of these new streets was Rua Nova do Almada (New Street of the Almada, c. 1665), connecting the royal palace nucleus to the existing Rua Direita das Portas de Santa Catarina (Straight Street of Santa Catarina Gate),²⁰ located uphill; it was the way out of town towards the West. Both streets, Santa Catarina and Nova do Almada, were wide enough to suit the Pombaline standards, and thus with slight design changes they were melded into the new city plan after 1755. Inevitably, there were urban and architectural connections between pre and post-earthquake Lisbon. Note, in that connection, that most of the long professional career of Chief Engineer Manuel da Maia (1677-1768), the technical leader of the reconstruction, took place under the reign of João V (1707-1750).

Manuel da Maia was surely aware of the grandiose projects for Lisbon's architectural and urban renewal committed to the most celebrated architects of the time by king João V. The Piedmontese architect Filippo Juvarra was one of them. However, Juvarra's designs for a new royal palace and a new cathedral located at first in Terreiro do Paço (1717) and afterwards on Buenos Aires plateau, further west (1719), were abandoned in spite of the enthusiasm they awakened in courtier and architectural Portuguese circles.²¹ Still, under João V's initiative and patronage, western Lisbon and its western coastal suburbs—particularly, Belém, where the Hieronymite monastery stood, a monument to Discovery and a pantheon for the Manueline dynasty—were enhanced by the construction of the *Aqueduto das Águas Livres* (Free Water Aqueduct) mentioned before, the Oratorian convent-palace of Nossa Senhora das Necessidades (started in 1742) and Belém royal palace (started in 1727). In addition, the capital's royal residence was upgraded by the building of a new patriarchal cathedral. Several other improvements were carried on in the palatial complex, such as a clock tower with a belfry. A new square laid out behind the palace under

²⁰ The city gate itself was demolished in 1702.

²¹ A detailed appraisal of João V's architectural and urban politics was recently put forward by Walter Rossa, "Lisbon's waterfront image as allegory of baroque urban aesthetic," in *Symposium Circa 1700: Architecture in Europe and the Americas*, H.A. Millon, ed. (Washington D.C., 2005), 160-85.

João V would be the foyer of his son's (José I) opera house, opened and swiftly broken down in 1755.

Daily Life in Early Modern Lisbon

Although, down to the loss of Brazil in 1822, Lisbon functioned as a large commercial port, urban conditions of medieval vintage persisted until the end of the Ancien Regime (and even well beyond), mostly in the eastern older areas, which were being neglected by architectural and urban investment in favour of a new Lisbon that had been extending westwards since the reign of João V.²² This fact is vividly portrayed in the many reports of foreign visitors during the 18th century and the early decades of the 19th.²³ After 1760, the newly rebuilt downtown (Baixa) emerged as an island of modernity—and of “beauty”, as conceived by 18th century (French) architectural culture²⁴—amidst a dense, over-crowded, violent, unhygienic city deprived of water, a sewer system, paving, and public lighting, where stray dogs, chickens, and pigs roamed freely, insects and beggars swarmed,²⁵ apartments dumped rubbish straight onto the street, and mayhem, robbery, and murder abounded. In the older areas, the public space continued to serve as an extension of the house—at the threshold women and men

²² Rossa, *Beyond Baixa* and “Lisbon’s waterfront image.”

²³ Numerous foreigners visited and stayed in Lisbon and its suburbs during the 18th and 19th centuries, mostly for professional reasons (military, political, or commercial) and also for health or cultural purposes (the *Grand Tour*). The following reports were consulted: *O Portugal de D. João V visto por três forasteiros* (Lisbon, 1983); Thomas Pitt, *Observações de uma viagem a Portugal e Espanha (1760)/Observations in a tour to Portugal and Spain (1760)*, (Lisbon, 2006); J.B.F. Carrère, *Panorama de Lisboa no ano de 1796* (Lisbon, 1989); *Diário de William Beckford em Portugal e Espanha*, (Lisbon, 1988); Carl Israel Ruders, *Viagens em Portugal, 1798-1802* (Lisbon, 1981); Marianne Baillie, *Lisboa nos anos de 1821, 1822 e 1823* (Lisbon, 2002); José Pecchio, *Cartas de Lisboa, 1822* (Lisbon, 1990); Felix Lichnowsky, *Portugal. Recordações do ano 1842* (Lisbon, 2005). See also the anthology *As mulheres portuguesas vistas por viajantes estrangeiros (séculos XVIII, XIX e XX)*, Ana Vicente, ed. (Lisboa, 2001). Portuguese bibliography on this period often uses references taken from travel literature, even though they are rarely confronted with Portuguese contemporary sources.

²⁴ Carrère, *Panorama*, 23-24.

²⁵ This tumultuous scenery, severely criticized by European travellers of the years from 1760 until c. 1830, especially regarding the older areas that more or less resisted the earthquake of 1755, which deepened the existing gap between two Lisbons: the Eastern part, focused on the medieval castle and cathedral hill, left aside by the reconstruction; and western Lisbon, which would include the newly rebuilt city centre.

did chores and handicrafts—and was the privileged stage of lower class urban social life.

The urban Ancien Regime's most prominent public events were the frequent religious celebrations, when the urban community as a whole gathered in churches, main streets, and squares. Masses and processions, a mixture of collective devotion, festivity, and profane encounter, were the rare outdoor events in which the woman "of standing" would participate, often from the balcony of her home. For the greater part of her life she was largely confined in the home, even though recent research, like Elizabeth Cohen's here, rebuts the wide-spread picture of women's seclusion in early modern south European communities.

As downtown ground was scarce and costly, many houses sheltered more than one family. The multiplication of households under a single roof, a mark of urban life, dated back to 15th-century Lisbon. The practice of renting "apartments" most probably increased from the 1480s, when the business centre of the city between Praça do Rossio and Praça da Ribeira was settled by Portuguese and foreign merchants. Written sources and the urban iconography²⁶ of the period document the existence of 5- and even 6-storey buildings inhabited by a number of "neighbors". The German physician Hieronymus Münzer, when in 1494 he visited Lisbon, was amazed at the number of dwellers (3 to 5) sharing the same building.²⁷ The crowding in Lisbon's residential buildings surprised later travellers: on occasion there were "so many [*neighbors*] that they do not know each other, by either sight or name" says an account of 1590.²⁸ Collective housing *avant la lettre*. This was a radical change from the medieval one-family housing types of one or two storeys and a courtyard that, in less densely built up areas, sheltered little

²⁶ An illumination in the so-called *Book of Hours of King Manuel* (fol. 130), dated to the first half of the 16th century (Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon), shows, with a considerable degree of realism, the existence of 5- or 6-storey buildings in the most important streets of the city center.

²⁷ See A.H. Oliveira Marques, "Depois da Reconquista. A cidade na baixa Idade Média," in *O Livro de Lisboa*, I. Moita, ed. (Lisbon, 1994), 91, who considers this type of occurrence exceptional in the 15th century. See also Luísa Trindade, *A casa corrente em Coimbra dos finais da Idade Média aos inícios da Época Moderna* (Coimbra, 2002), 43-46.

²⁸ Duarte de Sande, S.J., *Diálogo sobre a Missão dos Embaixadores Japoneses à Cúria Romana*, preface, translation from the original [*De missione legatorum Iaponensium ad Romanam curiam...*, Macao, 1590] and notes by Américo da Costa Ramalho (Macao, 1997), 159. The real authorship of *De Missione* belongs to Alessandro Valignano, S.J. See, for instance, J.F. Moran, "The real author of the *Missione Legatorum Iaponensium ad Romanam Curiam...* *Dialogus*," *Bulletin of Portuguese-Japanese Studies*, 2 (2001).

vegetable gardens with a well and fruit trees.²⁹ They could also integrate spaces for the production and sale of craft articles on the ground floor. The collective buildings of the 16th, 17th and early 18th centuries differed sharply from their medieval predecessors because they delimited with greater rigor “inside” and “outside,” private space and public space, as they rose in height and detached the dwellers from the urban soil; and because they negated the poly-functionality and relative autonomy of the medieval urban house. With no well or orchard in the back yard, the dependence of the “apartment” on external street-based supply systems increased.

Not long before 1755 earthquake (Fig. 2), it seems that even the upper-middle strata rented “apartments”: “I was lucky enough to find easily a suitable floor [to rent],” writes the Frenchman Charles Frédéric de Merveilleux in the 1720s. In Lisbon, it is much worthier, he explains, to rent a house than to find lodgings at an inn: they were scarce, in those years, and unfit.³⁰ The post-earthquake urban reforms sustained and rationalized this older regime of divided buildings, even if the new plans would at first stir protests from landlords who feared lost tenants.³¹

1755, the Invention of a New Lisbon

The 1755 earthquake and the ensuing tsunami destroyed the central city between Rossio and Ribeira squares, including the royal palace and theatre, the Patriarchal see, the Customs house, the royal warehouses and ship-yards—the very heart of the Portuguese overseas empire. The rest of the city was less affected. In the next month came aftershocks that fed survivors’ terror. Still, somehow, only around 15,000 to 20,000 people died,³² among

²⁹ Amélia Aguiar Andrade, *Horizontes urbanos medievais* (Lisbon, 2003), 30 and 80-81; Oliveira Marques, “Depois da Reconquista . . .,” 91.

³⁰ And afterwards, we may add according to the copious travel literature produced about Lisbon during the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries. Ch. F. de Merveilleux, “Memórias instrutivas sobre Portugal, 1723-1726,” in *O Portugal de D. João V visto por três estrangeiros*, 134.

³¹ Manuel da Maia, *Dissertação, part III*, 1756, § 11. See the complete reference below, note 35.

³² Ana Cristina Araújo, *A morte em Lisboa, 1700-1830. Atitudes e representações* (Lisboa, 1997), 38-39. 15,000 casualties is also the number reported in 1781 by abbott Correia da Serra (see note 3). The decline in Lisbon’s population after 1755 has been considered to be more the result of people abandoning their places of residence than of mortality caused by the disaster. Rodrigues, *Cinco séculos*, 26 and 39.

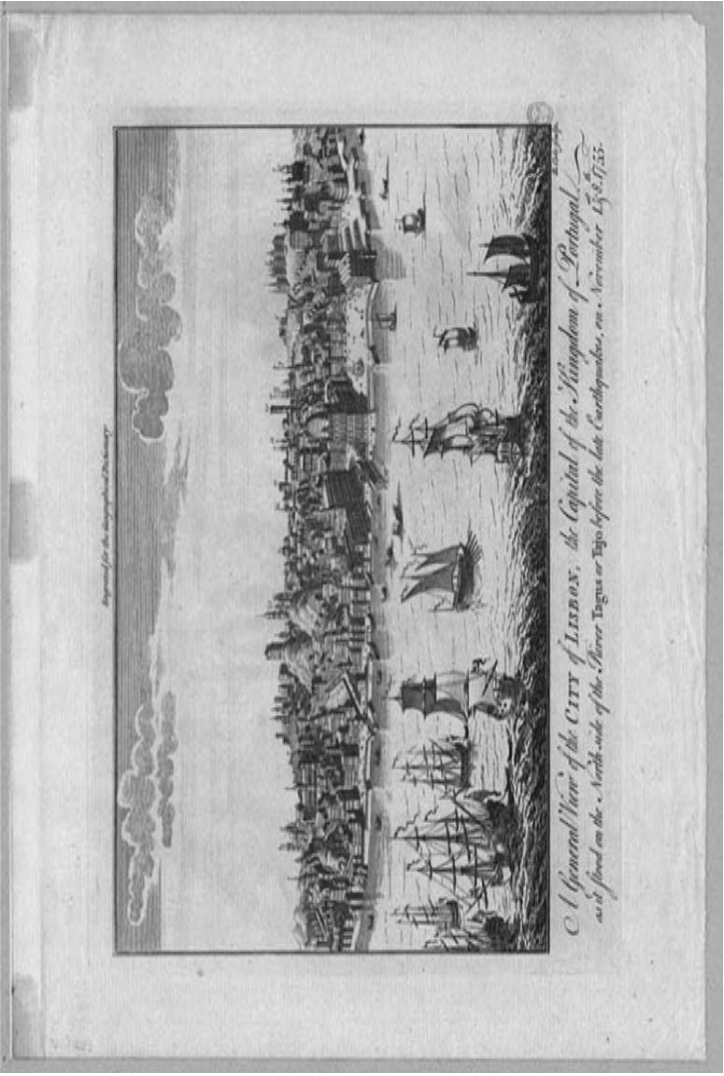


Fig. 2. Benjamin Cole, *A general view of the city of Lisbon (...)* before the late earthquakes, on November 1st & 8th 1755 (London, 1759-1760), in fact, a portrait of 17th-century Lisbon. From right to left (east to west): Saint George Hill, Palace Square, Philip I's royal pavilion, the four-towered Corte-Real palace. Biblioteca Nacional, Lisbon.

them only eight “persons of quality.”³³ So how terrible in fact was what Voltaire called the “*désastre de Lisbonne*?” The catastrophe was also a pretext to put in motion plans conceived and ripened long before,³⁴ in the same way city fires in 17th-century Sweden and Finland offered the opportunity to build new, regular towns, as Riitta Laitinen and Dag Lindström clearly show in this volume.

The most noteworthy new Lisbon urban planners were the Chief Engineer of the Kingdom, Manuel da Maia (1677-1768), and the architect (and military engineer) of the Lisbon Senate, Eugénio dos Santos (1711-1760). They were joined by a military engineer of Hungarian origin, Carlos Mardel (ca.1695-1763), in Portugal since 1733. This team defined and designed the new Lisbon’s essential layout and architecture between 1755 and 1758. These three years also saw rebuilding’s fundamental legislative instruments. Seventy-eight year old Manuel da Maia, in a very Cartesian *Dissertação* (Dissertation) discussed scenarios for rebuilding Lisbon, including two extreme solutions: reconstructing the city of before 1 November 1755 or sheer abandonment of the site for a new capital further west, in the prestigious suburb of Belém. The advantages and the disadvantages of each plan were weighed carefully. The *Dissertação*, divided into three parts, was presented at government request soon after the earthquake, on 4 December 1755, 16 February 1756 and 31 March 1756.³⁵ Da Maia addressed his *Dissertação* to the chief justice, the Duke of Lafões, but the job of deciding fell to José Sebastião de Carvalho e Melo (1699-1782), minister of War and Foreign Affairs (1750-1756), later State minister (1756-1777), Count of Oeiras (1759) and, famously, as books now remember him, Marquis of Pombal (1769), who oversaw the reconstruction of Lisbon politically. Once the decision was made to rebuild on the old location with an entirely different urban layout, Manuel da Maia developed plans for the new city and foresaw the problems his team of planners would face.

³³ Quoted by J.A. França, *Lisboa pombalina e o iluminismo* (Lisbon, 1977), 64, first edition, 1966. There is a French version (*Une ville des Lumières. La Lisbonne de Pombal*, Paris, 1965 and 1988) and an Italian one of this fundamental work. Several explanations were given for the relatively modest number of casualties, such as the time of the day when the earthquake occurred, 9:40 AM, when the churches were still half-empty. França, *Lisboa pombalina*, 64.

³⁴ Rossa, *Beyond Baixa*.

³⁵ Manuel da Maia, *Dissertação, Part I, Part II, Part III*, 1755-1756, published in França, *Lisboa pombalina*, 291-308.

As Da Maia foresaw, the exchange of private and public land would require skilled land surveyors and complex schemes for compensation. He soon came to see the business of recompense as the plan's "most serious difficulty," because "(...) to form a new City without attending to anything else but the City herself, connecting it to a former one as in Turin, will be more an amusement than work," *Dissertação, part III*, § 11.

The Baixa (downtown) district of post-1755 Lisbon consists of a regular grid demarcated to the north by a rectangular square (Rossio), successor to the commercial and popular square, and to the south by another square open on one side to the Tagus estuary: Real Praça do Comércio (Royal Trade Square), replacing the existing vast *platea* next to the Royal Palace (Terreiro do Paço). Between the two squares lies the first systematic Portuguese—or perhaps European—use of modern multi-family residential building (Fig. 3).³⁶ Block-long units holding a variable number of functionally independent apartment buildings set the character of the new downtown. Portuguese urban planners already conceived public and built spaces as inseparably linked elements in urban design, as their texts and drawings demonstrate. The new scale and morphology of the public space served hygiene, comfort, and safety dictated by the common good. Moreover the buildings' height was to be no greater than streets' width.³⁷ European urbanism would later codify this rule to assure secure buildings with luminous airy rooms. Thus, from a planning viewpoint, the street determined the built fabric in various ways.

In his *Dissertação*, Da Maia makes clear the functional links of street and buildings. Besides comfort and hygiene, rationalized fluid traffic is another obvious issue.

In 5th place, I present the plan of a street with 60 spans [c.12 metres] of width divided into three parts, following the example of some streets in London, the one in the middle, 40 spans large, for carriages and people on horseback, and the two on the sides

³⁶ The process was roughly contemporary to that of Paris, where, of course, it lacked the same massive scale and compelling conditions it had in Lisbon. Here the new form of residence was determined by the state and decided and designed within a short space of time immediately following the catastrophe. For the situation in Paris, see Jean-François Cabestan, *La conquête du plain-pied. L'immeuble à Paris au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris, 2004).

³⁷ This principle is repeated throughout Maia's *Dissertation*. He wished to limit the number of storeys at any rate to three. The plan was only partially complied with in reality. In 1758 four floors and an attic floor were accepted as a general standard and by the end of the century five floors were being allowed.



Fig. 3. Anonymous, *Planta topographica da Cidade de Lisboa* (...), circa 1780, extract. Instituto Geográfico Português, Lisbon. The Pombaline plan is shown overlapping the pre-1755 city. Northwest from the Baixa grid is the rectangular plan of the city's first public garden, *Passeio Público* (public promenade), 1764.

with 10 spans each for people on foot and sedan chairs, with the separation pillars and the pavements as shown in the section, and in the same section, the image of the Sewer, or Royal Pipe, to serve the waters coming down from the hills and for cleaning the pipes connected to the buildings.³⁸

This proposal for the lay out of the main streets produced the first street profile ever that “combined the built fabric and the systems that ensured its good functioning.”³⁹ equipment and infrastructures, as proposed in 1756 by Manuel da Maia and drawn up by Eugénio dos Santos. It predates the well-known and utopian street section by the French architect Pierre Patte (1723-1814), dating from 1769.⁴⁰ The Pombaline street, both on the surface and underground, was an instrument for organizing and systematizing flows: of people, vehicles, or sewage.⁴¹ (Fig. 4).

The difference between pre- and post-1755 Baixa was striking: “Lisbon will always remain larger than before because *the streets are infinitely wider* and because of the extent of the new squares. (...) It was fortunate that a *design was followed and that (...) regularity and grandeur were required* in the construction of the new buildings. (...)”, reports the Portuguese academician abbot Correia da Serra in 1781.⁴² [my italics] “All of this was designed and put in practice (...) by Portuguese artists,”⁴³ he adds, all of them military engineers.⁴⁴

Recent historiography has underlined the competence and promptness of the technical response, given the disaster, as proof of a continuous process of knowledge, management, and organisation of both capital and

³⁸ Manuel da Maia, *Dissertação, Part III*, 1756, §15, in França, *Lisboa pombalina*, 307.

³⁹ “L’intérêt de cette planche provient principalement de l’association étroite qui s’opère entre le bâti et les systèmes assurant son bon fonctionnement,” Antoine Picon, *Architectes et ingénieurs au siècle des Lumières* (Marseille, 1988), 182, referring to the street section later published by Pierre Patte in 1769.

⁴⁰ *Profil d’une rue*, in *Mémoire sur les objets les plus importants de l’architecture*, Paris, 1769. The precocity of Eugénio dos Santos street section and its precedence over Patte’s, as well as the argument for the direct knowledge of the former on the part of the latter, has been laid out by Andrew J. Tallon in “The Portuguese precedent for Pierre Patte’s Street Section,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 63:3 (2004): 370-77, despite some minor errors and the author’s unawareness of recent Portuguese bibliography.

⁴¹ It was still too early for the direct distribution of water to the dwellings, though Manuel da Maia did consider this possibility.

⁴² In Petit, “Notice inédite sur Lisbonne en 1781,” 103-04. Italics mine.

⁴³ In Petit, “Notice inédite sur Lisbonne en 1781,” 105.

⁴⁴ Except for Machado de Castro, the author of the equestrian statue of king José I placed at the visual center of the *Royal Square of Commerce* in 1775.

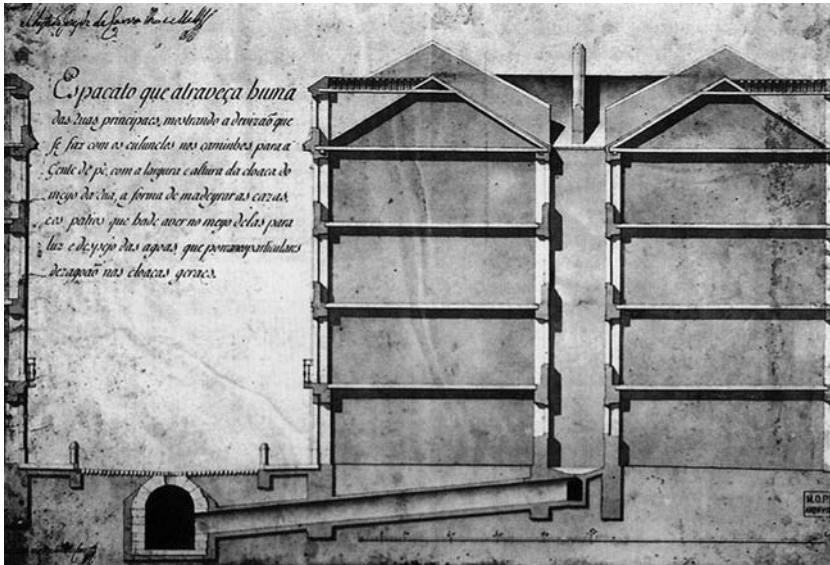


Fig. 4. Eugénio dos Santos, *Section through one of the main streets showing the division of the road into sidewalks (...), the width and height of the sewer in the middle of the street (...), with the courtyards that will exist in the middle of the houses for the purpose of light and for the disposal of waste water (...)*, 1756-1758, Arquivo Histórico do Ministério das Obras Públicas, Lisbon.

empire by the so-called “Portuguese school of architecture and military engineering,” well portrayed by Da Maia and Santos’ role in the reshaping of Lisbon after 1755.⁴⁵ (Fig. 5)

⁴⁵ Two foreign examples of urban renewal are referred to by Manuel da Maia in his *Dissertação, Part II*, § 3, 11, and *Part III*, § 14, 15, 1756: London’s reconstruction after the Great Fire of 1666 and the extension of Turin (a three-phased process dating from 1620, 1673 and 1714). Maia complains about the virtual impossibility of finding in time detailed information concerning either case. Lisbon’s main libraries were burnt down after the earthquake, including his own (*Dissertação, Part II*, § 3). Still he tries to bring forward whatever useful information he remembers about London’s rebuilding and Turin’s extension. Later, Maia will point out rightly that Turin’s case was one of extending a city mostly over flat and unoccupied land, with no parallel to Lisbon’s condition: rebuilding the previous settlement according to entirely different urban lay-out and architecture (*Dissertação, Part III*, § 14).

There is other evidence that the Pombaline rebuilders were aware of the architectural literature of their time. Their rationalistic and pragmatic approach to the disaster and its solutions should also be considered vis-à-vis their professional training as Portuguese military engineers and as cultivated Europeans of the Age of Enlightenment.



Fig. 5. José Joaquim da Rocha, *Map of Sabara County (...)* Minas Gerais district: this description was ordered by the (...) general Captain of the said district following the most accurate and new observations made with great effort by its author, Brazil, 1777 (detail), Fundação da Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro. José Joaquim da Rocha (c. 1740-1804) was one of the military engineers sent to Brazil during the 18th century by the Portuguese crown in order to survey and organize the territory.

The Pombaline street effectively ceased to be the street in which one also lived; it announced the the modern channel-street that guaranteed flows and nourished the complementarity between the private domain of the bourgeois apartment and the public sphere of professional and social life. This was how the Baixa district was meant to be. Its later transformation into a shopping and production centre was slow (1760 to 1840), as it was only then that it became animated by the everyday movement of clients and suppliers among whom the residents went almost unnoticed—and joined the world of commerce, services, and small-luxury industry that settled there.⁴⁶

New Housing Models for New People

Even though Pombaline planners aimed for the renovation of the entire town, only the Baixa district and very few other areas were renovated according to their plans. Lisbon became even more a two-faced city, where the traditional ways of urban life, dating back to late Middle Ages, still prevailed in older areas—in some cases, until the end of the 20th century. In new Lisbon, meanwhile all the blocks presented a uniform height of four storeys plus an attic with the same apartment plan on all floors. On the ground floor was the entrance to the shops and to the residences above, and to the warehouses and workshops in the basement. In the main streets, the cantilevered windows on the second floors echoed the *piano nobile* of aristocratic residences, giving a palatial look (Fig. 6). Like the shops, the residential storeys and attics were built to be rented, an expressive example of the understanding of urban housing as a form of property investment. An anonymous source of 1760 states that “in three or four years were built more houses to be rented than the ones that existed before the earthquake,”⁴⁷ though many were still vacant. Only five years had gone by since the disaster and already the new urban model had taken hold.

For a recent and updated assessment of the urban planning intervention carried out in Lisbon after the earthquake of 1755, see Walter Rossa, “Do plano de 1755-1758 para a Baixa-Chiado,” *Monumentos* 21 (2004): 22-43. For an account of Da Maia’s most distinguished disciple, military engineer and architect Eugénio dos Santos (1711-1760), see Leonor Ferrão: “Um oficial do Génio e a Nova Lisboa,” *Monumentos* 21 (2004): 66-75.

⁴⁶ Nuno Luís Madureira, *Lisboa 1740-1830. Cidade: espaço e quotidiano* (Lisbon, 1992).

⁴⁷ Quoted by França, *Lisboa pombalina*, 133.

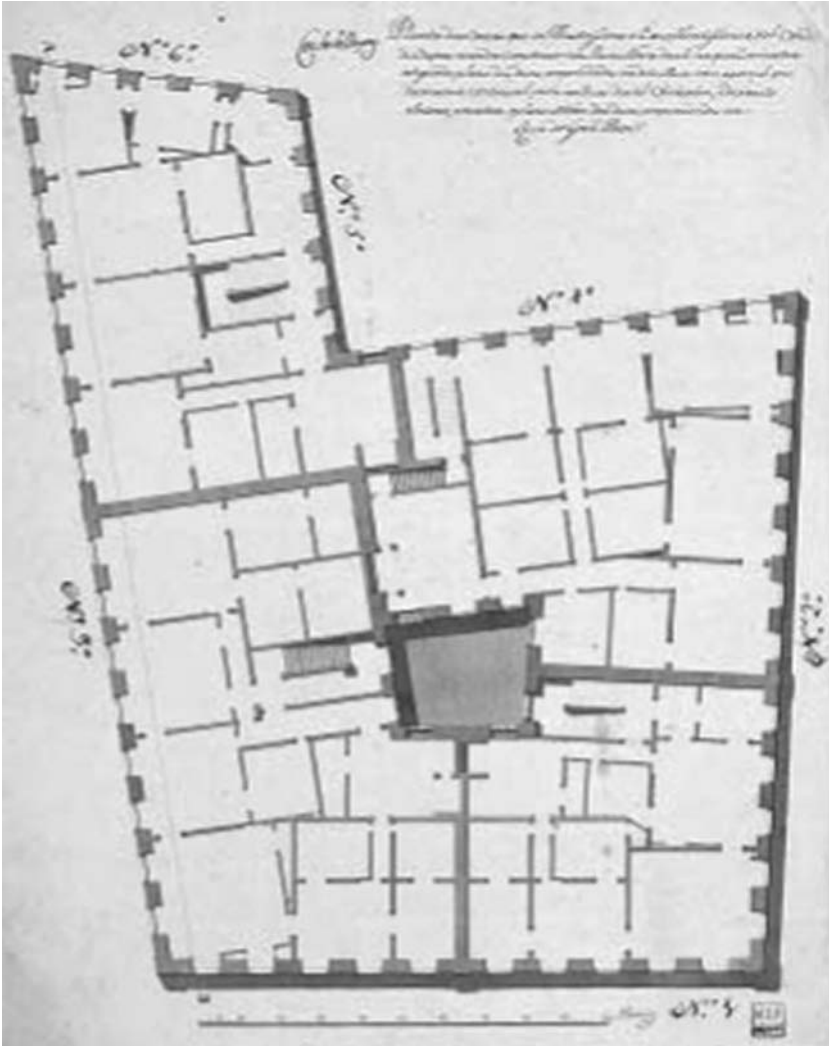


Fig. 7. Anonymous, apartment building in *Rua Nova da Sé* (New Street of the Cathedral, now *Rua de Santo António da Sé*) built as an investment by Pombal. Plan of the third floor of the four apartments, dating from 1759 to 1769. Notice the double entrance to each apartment. Arquivo Histórico do Ministério das Obras Públicas, Lisbon.

could be dramatic, as can be seen from a later statement: "It is very scandalous to have prostitutes living not only in the same streets where capable families inhabit but also *in the same stairs*" [italics mine], complains in 1829, a city magistrate of the Pombaline rebuilt area of Cais do Sodré.⁵¹

Despite the mixing, it was mainly trades-people and craftsmen who would occupy post-1755 Baixa. The large merchants tended to settle a little further afield on the rebuilt slopes of the Chiado, to the West, still close enough to their place of work.⁵² Here, too, the fabric was now Pombaline, thanks to both the official plan and to its effect on the tastes of the middling strata.⁵³ Nevertheless, some *Homens de Negócio da Praça de Lisboa* (Business Men of Lisbon's Market) did, as Da Maia hoped, choose Baixa.⁵⁴ In 1805, Portuguese and foreign merchants' dwellings concentrated along Rua do Ouro (Gold[smith] Street), Baixa's main axis, the first street re-built—in the blocks nearest to the Real Praça do Comércio—and, as mentioned above, on the Chiado slopes, where their number increased in the first decades of the 19th century,⁵⁵ at the pace of the reconstruction. No nobleman seems to have moved to rebuilt Baixa.⁵⁶ The social program

⁵¹ Quay of Sodré, some blocks away from *Real Praça do Comércio*, further west. Reported by Maria Alexandre Lousada, "Espaços de sociabilidade em Lisboa, finais do século XVIII-1834" (Lisbon, 1995), 116. Doctoral thesis in Human Geography, unpublished. My underlining.

⁵² Also on the basis of data from 1796 collected by Madureira, *Lisbon 1740-1830*, 48-49.

⁵³ In the 19th century, the inclined streets of the West flank of the Baixa were to become the elegant center of Lisbon (the *Chiado*) both for commercial and cultural offer (shops, theatres, bookshops) and social life (cafés and restaurants, meeting places and clubs). The *Baixa* grid was to confirm its production and retail vocation, determined by the division of the streets according to trades in 1760, which effectively democratized the "access to the center of the city, uniting the old and new downtown area" (Madureira, *Lisbon 1740-1830*, 43).

⁵⁴ The last expression was first used in the decree of constitution for an overseas trading company, the *Companhia Geral do Grão Pará e Maranhão* (Brazil), in June 1755, a few months before the earthquake. It reveals the new social status acquired by the mercantile bourgeoisie. Jorge Miguel Pedreira, "Os negociantes de Lisboa na segunda metade do século XVIII," *Análise Social* 116-117 (1992): 407-40.

⁵⁵ See Lousada, *Espaços*, 117-118, mapped data taken from the *Almanach Portuguez*, for 1805 and 1826.

⁵⁶ Almost none. See Lousada, *Espaços*, 113-114, mapped from data taken from the *Almanach Portuguez*, for 1805 and 1826. Only one aristocrat is reported to live in one apartment facing the Terreiro do Paço in the troubled year 1826, which saw the beginnings of the civil war opposing liberals and absolutists.

of the reconstruction excluded the old aristocracy,⁵⁷ who retired to its suburban estates. Hence the criticism of the Marquis of Bombelles, French ambassador at the eve of 1789: “There is not a quarter reserved for the nobility. Each of its members established himself at random wherever he had an estate or could provide for one.” Bombelles goes on complaining about “the horrible distances” he had to go through to pay his protocol visits to the most prominent Portuguese aristocracy.⁵⁸

The baroque imperial capital once dreamed of by king John V was to give way to a pragmatic bourgeois new town, forever deprived of royal and aristocratic monumental landmarks. Except perhaps for the design of Terreiro do Paço, inspired by the Philippine palace and south tower-pavilion, the rational urban values of the mercantile elite spoke louder, as they once did at the beginning of Discovery era.⁵⁹

“Une ville policée”⁶⁰

Urban control, in all its aspects, mainly the public ones, was one of the primary tasks of the *Intendência Geral da Polícia da Corte e Reino* (General Intendancy of the Police of the Court and Kingdom), created in 1760 as the first Portuguese professional police corps. Waste disposal was one of its

⁵⁷ In fact, a royal decree passed in July 1759, four years after the first plans for the reconstruction of the city and one year after its official master plan (decrees of May and June 1758), defines the place and the program of a new royal palace with its aristocratic neighbourhood located in the western limits of the city (Rossa, “Do plano de 1755-1758 para a Baixa-Chiado,” 30). Neither of them was carried out.

⁵⁸ Marquis de Bombelles, *Journal d'un ambassadeur de France au Portugal 1786-1788* (Paris, 1979). Quoted by Lousada, *Espaços*, 115.

⁵⁹ On this issue, see the striking contrast pointed out by Rossa (“Lisbon waterfront,” 162-63) between two 16th c. accounts of Lisbon: one, “liberal” and “mercantile”, by Damião de Góis (1554), a well travelled Portuguese humanist; another by the erudite courtier Francisco de Holanda (1571). The first (*Urbis Olisiponis Descriptio*), a laudatory description of Lisbon, ignores the royal palace and favors trading related buildings and a hospital; the latter (*A fábrica que falece à cidade de Lisboa* / The building program that Lisbon needs) is mainly a commented list of monumental architectural proposals that would transform Lisbon into a High Renaissance capital.

⁶⁰ The word “*policée*”, much favored in 18th c. French Enlightenment circles—and afterwards—, meant “civilized”, “polite” or “orderly” city, society and so on, long before it was restricted to “policed” in the repressive sense. The ambiguity of the pair “police/policed” (orig. from the greek *politeia*, *polis*) is the very image of the emerging bourgeois urban society, which had to be “policed” in order to be “polite”.

many assignments. The Pombaline sewage system failed to cover the whole city and in Baixa it proved defective. We learn about the inconveniences this entailed mostly from foreigners or Lisboners of foreign origin.⁶¹ And meanwhile Lisboners still kept throwing sewage and household waste out their windows.⁶² The regime acquiesced in this ineradicable habit and tried to channel it. In May 1801, the Senate of Lisbon prescribed a timetable; such actions could take place only between 9 and 10 p.m., and they should be preceded by three perceptible warnings. One month later, this timetable was extended from 10 p.m. until 5 a.m., since the former caused “nuisance to a part of the residents of the city (...) and it is fair not to disturb the people, if there is no general or particular profit in doing so” (Senate of Lisbon decree of 27 June 1801).⁶³ In one month, Lisbon went from one to seven hours of free rubbish heaving. To walk around Lisbon for leisure or for work was therefore hazardous: according to a popular joke of the time, only lower class people and the Englishmen would walk the city.

The cleanliness of the streets, like the alignment of the façades, served aesthetic values of a “policed city”, and should be enforced by the State police, as with crime or public safety. The perfect street façades’ alignment could even banish “flower pots on window ledges, as they ‘disfigure the streets’ ‘alignment’”, according to one case cited by urban geographer M. A. Lousada.⁶⁴ Here again 18th- to 19th-century Lisbon compares with 17th-century Scandinavian regions in their efforts to build orderly cities, starting with the adoption of regular urban patterns and ending on controlled street uses and behaviors.

The police were caught between public service and repression. Their conundrum is self-evident in the microhistory of Lisbon’s public lighting. It was firstly installed in 1780, by burning olive oil on the initiative of the

⁶¹ Costigan, 1778-1779; Carrère, 1796; Ruders, 1798-1802; Ratton, 1813; Marianne Baillie, 1821-1823. See Arthur William Costigan, *Cartas sobre a Sociedade e os Costumes de Portugal, 1778-1779* (Lisboa, 1989); Jacôme Ratton, *Recordacoens de Jacome Ratton sobre occurencias do seu tempo em Portugal (...) de Maio 1747 a Setembro de 1810 (...)*, 1813, both quoted by José Luís Cardoso, “Água, iluminação e esgotos em Lisboa nos finais do século XVIII”, *Análise Social* 56 (2000): 495-509. For the remaining authors, see references in note 23.

⁶² Leaving the garbage outside the door or heaping it in dunghills was also common practice. Baillie, *Lisboa nos anos de 1821*, 25, 28 passim.

⁶³ Quoted by José Luís Cardoso, “Água, iluminação e esgotos em Lisboa nos finais do século XVIII,” 507.

⁶⁴ Maria Alexandre Lousada, *The police and the uses of urban space. Lisbon, 1780-1830* (Lisboa, 2003), 3.

Intendancy of Police; the system went bankrupt and in 1793 ceased to function. It was re-established in 1802. On a Thursday of April 1820, the police dispersed a group of youths who were playing cards in the street by the light of a public lamp.⁶⁵ The game threatened nobody, but did not fit the new models of street behaviour. Likewise, in the archives of the *Intendência Geral da Polícia*, arrests for misuse of public spaces are frequent.⁶⁶ The control of street use and behavior was guided by an unwritten principle: the street is not to live or to work in, but to circulate and to “please the eyes.”⁶⁷ Traditional practices such as selling goods or preparing food, raising and killing animals for domestic consumption, playing or singing at late hours, and just playing games after 1770 grew increasingly offensive to a “policed” and civilized urban life. Violence, rusticity, and “ugliness” would be proscribed from the ideal bourgeois city, where public urban practices (social, economic, cultural, recreational) were in fact systematised and consigned to specific places, by “the instructions of the Police:”

To pour out amongst my fellow countrymen the brilliant lights that the Police use[s] to bring to every polite and cultivated State (...). To smoothen the martial spirit of the Nation and balance the Nobility’s ardour that built up, supported and increased the Monarchy; to develop Agriculture, Industry, Navigation and Commerce, to maintain the peace in the Realm, and to make more comfortable and more polite the life of Men, nothing is simpler than the instructions of the Police.

João Rosado de Villabobos e Vasconcelos, 1787⁶⁸

At the end of early modern age, “police” (from the ancient Greek *polis*) had the same meaning to Voltaire and to Lisbon’s most feared Intendent of Police, Diogo Inácio de Pina Manique (1733-1805). In the 18th century, the word meant both “urbanity” and “politeness” as well as the repression that helped to enforce civility.

⁶⁵ Reported by Maria Alexandre Lousada, “A rua, a taberna e o salão: elementos para uma geografia histórica das sociabilidades lisboetas nos finais do Antigo Regime,” *Os espaços de sociabilidade na Ibero-América (sécs. XVI-XIX)*, (Lisboa, 2004), 95-120.

⁶⁶ These archives were examined by Maria Alexandre Lousada as a research source for her doctorate thesis. See Lousada, *Espaços de sociabilidade em Lisboa*.

⁶⁷ Lousada, *Espaços de sociabilidade em Lisboa*, 120.

⁶⁸ João Rosado de Villabobos e Vasconcelos, *Elementos da Polícia Geral de hum Estado* (Elements of the General Police of a State), Lisboa, 1786-1787. Quoted by Lousada, *Espaços de sociabilidade em Lisboa*, 69.

Epilogue

*Liberal Lisbon: The City as a House*⁶⁹

The Pombaline period introduced principles of modernization which rationalized the urban fabric and increased the scale of street and block—and which should have produced a Lisbon physically renewed, modern, safe, airy, *enlightened*. A major work of Portuguese military engineering of the Ancien Regime, *it did not yet seek the use of the public spaces for the sole fruition (and instruction) of its users*.

The example of the Passeio Público (public promenade), a park for recreation and socializing, created in 1764 on the northern limit of the renewed city (see Fig. 3), remained as an isolated exception that was to find its due use and significance only in the 19th century.

Pombaline architecture itself by the end of 18th century already seemed monotonous to pre-Romantic sensitivity. In the following account by a Lisbon painter and writer, one of the most significant and best qualified accounts of the time, issues such as religion, taste, and the rivalries of professions converge: “That’s how [by being built by military engineers rather than by architects] Lisbon, which could be the most beautiful town of the Universe, has a freezing monotony and, although the dwelling of Catholics, seems a city of Atheists as even the Churches are marked by the dull and uniform decoration of houses.”⁷⁰

The first liberal generations saw the city as *res publica*, something belonging to them, both in everyday life and in the property-owning sense. The Portuguese liberal revolution took place in 1820; a civil war opposing liberals and royalists went on until the final victory of the liberal party in 1834. The same year, Church assets were nationalized, releasing urban land locked in monastic enclosures. With liberalism, the city came to be understood simultaneously as a public asset, an aesthetic object, and, again, an extension of the home—yet, a different kind of extension from what it had been in early modern times. The very first task undertaken by the Lisbon City Council under Liberalism was the “embellishment” of the

⁶⁹ This topic was partially dealt with by Maria Helena Barreiros in “Arquitecturas do século XIX português,” in *Arte Portuguesa*, Dalila Rodrigues and Bernardo Pinto de Almeida, eds., forthcoming.

⁷⁰ It was written in 1793 by the Portuguese painter, art critic, and art historian Cyrillo Volkmar Machado (1748-1823). Quoted by Paulo Varela Gomes, in *A confissão de Cyrillo* (Lisboa, 1992), 17.



Fig. 8. Newly paved Rossio Square, drawing for a fan, 1840s. Museu da Cidade, Lisbon.

Pombaline public promenade, using subscriptions from citizens willing to further “improvements” in the capital.⁷¹ ‘Portuguese stone paving’⁷² was another liberal “embellishment.” It was applied first to Rossio square, at the end of the 1840s, as a sort of stone carpet for the recently inaugurated National Theatre (Fig. 8). Meanwhile, to suit its bourgeois values of comfort and pleasant domesticity, the city kept on investing in parks into the 1860s and beyond. At the same time, an urge of civic pedagogy—common to 19th European societies—saw to the installation of statues dedicated to national heroes: military, political, or cultural.

Once again city dwellers were using the public space to spend an important part of their lives: leisure and social intercourse took place in public spaces now equipped for that purpose, a complement to the limitations of bourgeois apartments. With one essential difference: throughout the Ancien Regime, public space was the realm of lower classes; during the 19th century, it partly became the promenade and meeting place of wealthier inhabitants, as well as the daily thoroughfare of the less wealthy.

⁷¹ For the architectural and urban history of Lisbon in this period, see Raquel Henriques da Silva, “Lisboa romântica. Urbanismo e arquitectura, 1777-1874” (Lisbon, 1997). Doctoral thesis in History of Art, unpublished.

⁷² A paving technique consisting in applying to sidewalks and squares little cubes of limestone and basalt, forming artistic patterns.

The architectural and urban renovation and the social and cultural transformations after 1755 were a fundamental stage of this process of change. Without the Pombaline urban revolution, the old regime would have died anyway and Lisbon would have still become a bourgeois South European capital—but at a slower and smoother pace. Its material shape would have long remained close to medieval urban patterns.

Pombal, Manuel da Maia and the team of military engineers and architects who designed and built modern Lisbon after 1755 set the architectural and urban framework of the city's development for the century to come. Housing solutions remained Pombaline-based throughout the 19th century. Even the growth of the city towards the North, finally conquering its hinterland, was given its shape and scale by the Pombaline Public Promenade: its width is the same as Avenida da Liberdade's, Lisbon's most important boulevard, which replaced and extended the Passeio Público's axis after 1879, thus giving birth to 20th century Lisbon.

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Unless noted otherwise, all translations are my responsibility.

Mechanisms of the Hue and Cry in Kolozsvár in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century¹

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Abstract

This essay looks at a voluntary form of law enforcement based on trial records of late sixteenth-century Kolozsvár. It reconstructs mechanisms of hue and cry to show how social processes of control touched on culture and bore on the articulation of public and private domains in the early modern town. In witnesses' depositions hue and cry emerges as a customary practice with agents who could equally engage public opinion on behalf of victims against law-breakers, or make the system fail, and turn against the denouncer. Special attention is paid to the ways the town's landscape and soundscape interacted with raising the hue and cry. People's moves in response to the outcry effaced the usual divide between in and out, between domestic space and street, so with hue and cry, street and house, normally distinct, merged in ways otherwise abnormal.

Keywords

Street behavior, law enforcement, public and private, order

Introduction

In November 1591 a judge investigated a street fight in Kolozsvár or Klausenburg (today's Cluj), a royal free town of Transylvania.² In the fight Mihály Cékász had been killed, and the judge accused two men of his

¹ I am enormously indebted to Riita Laitinen and Tom Cohen for ideas upon which I have drawn extensively. During the course of writing this article I received valuable comments from László Bruszt, Katalin Péter, Susan Zimmermann, and my anonymous reviewer. Early drafts were written while I received the Marie Curie Fellowship for Early Stage Research Training (MEST-CT-2004-007066).

² D.J.A.N. Cluj (Romanian National Archives, Cluj County), Fond Primăria Oraşului Cluj-Napoca, Protocoale de judecată (hereinafter: Prot.Jud.) Doc II.8/1590-1594, fol. 162-65.

murder. The clash had occurred after sunset in *Luporum*, the poorest quarter of the town. Mihály and his two companions had been on their way to their lodgings when five aggressors, armed with hatchets and sabers, attacked them. It was a premeditated attack, and the assailed were clearly unprepared. Mihály had his hatchet with him, János a mere stick, and György most likely was unarmed. The sudden attack and the assailants' superiority in number and arms left the victims no option but to invoke help from people in the neighborhood. They raised the hue and cry, and shouted "*Tolvaj!*" (thief), the habitual call of a wronged person, or anyone witnessing offense.³

What came next went fast: Mihály was struck and mortally wounded while his two companions managed to run away. Shortly after the wounded man raised the hue and cry, people from the neighboring houses arrived on the scene. At the trial that followed, of sixteen witnesses, eleven declared that they had been alerted by the outcry, and three had arrived in time to immobilize one of the aggressors. Still holding the bloody saber, he was caught and taken to the captain of the quarter, who arrested him. The other culprit, leader of the group, tried to escape and hide in nearby gardens. Four of the witnesses declared that they had chased him. In the meantime, several women left the scene in order to alert the wounded man's wife. When the captain of the quarter arrived at the scene of the crime, the manhunt was over, the second aggressor taken.

In the streets of Transylvanian towns, violent encounters—quarrels, insults, and the exchange of blows—were not rare episodes. Many went unnoticed and caused little trouble in the daily life of town dwellers, but some incidents became highly publicized and ended in the courts. A seemingly simple act sufficed to detach an incident from private business, and to set into motion a complicated mechanism of control. Whenever somebody shouted "Thief!" the outcry triggered a social and legal mechanism that had a twofold function. On the one hand, this public outcry aimed to

³ "Thief!" was the habitual shout whatever the infraction, and it equaled the supposed cry "Out, out!" in England, or the more ritual "Harol!" in the Norman tradition. See William Renwick Riddell "The Crown Side of the 'Eyre' in the Early Part of the Thirteenth Century" *Journal of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology* 7 (1916) 4: 495-504. In contemporary Romanian the exclamation *Tulai!*—derived from the Hungarian outcry—means 'help'. András Kiss 'A tolvajkiáltás közbiztonsági szerepe az erdélyi joggyakorlatban' in *Más források—más értelmezések* [Other sources—other interpretations] (Marosvásárhely, 2003): 97-111.

assemble a spontaneous public able to assist the wronged person and deter the wrongdoer, and, on the other hand, it was meant to denounce a crime and start a legal process. Hue and cry was therefore the ‘assembling cry’ that turned outsiders, people in the environs, into constitutive parts of social and legal mechanisms. Hue and cry, though a customary practice, intersected with the law and with institutions whose evolving motives in its regard were complex and nuanced. This essay looks at participants in law enforcement, and reconstructs mechanisms of hue and cry to show how they expressed social processes that touched on culture and bore on the articulation of public and private domains in the early modern town.

Trial records give evidence of these public assemblies and illustrate their enforcement of social norms. In Kolozsvár, witnesses’ depositions were recorded in separate books; today these surviving volumes are part of the town’s judicial archive. For the late sixteenth century, records, continuous for 1572-1575 and 1590-1593, contain 497 cases (227 in the first period, and 270 in the second).⁴ I have drawn on these rich depositions to reconstruct the mechanisms provoked by hue and cry, using nine cases to illustrate its different uses. The examples presented below exhaust the record; they represent all trials in which witnesses referred to this practice; because the judicial archive might at times be silent, to assess the actual scale and frequency of hue and cry in Kolozsvár is not possible.⁵

In Kolozsvár—just as other parts of Europe—a large part of justice was carried out away from the courtroom,⁶ and we cannot be sure what fraction these cases represent.⁷ Nor do these nine cases show a clustering

⁴ Documents are fragmented or missing after 1575, and an equally ample set of trial documents starts in 1590. Trial records of 1590-1593 by courtesy of László Pakó (unpublished transcripts).

⁵ According to the records of two manorial courts in medieval England (Badbury and Brandon) the hue was raised typically between 2 and 14 times a year. The records note whether it had been raised justly or unjustly against a certain person. Nevertheless, the number of the cases reported in court did not mirror actual occurrence, as they reflected the peasants’ willingness to conceal or ignore offenses, or the lords’ pressure to report more cases. The same data reveal a wide range of offenses that were met with hue and cry (including some by animals) but most cases involve violence. See Miriam Müller, ‘Social control and the hue and cry in two fourteenth-century villages’ *Journal of Medieval History* 31 (2005) 1, 29-53.

⁶ John Bossy (ed.), *Dispute and Settlements. Law and Human Relations in the West* (Cambridge, 1983).

⁷ For the limitations of judicial records and the usefulness of individual trials see the debate between Sbriccoli and Grendi. Mario Sbriccoli, ‘Fonti giudiziarie e fonti giuridiche.

around specific types of crimes or offenses. Rather, witnesses' depositions reveal the wide range of motives for crying thief, and the varied dynamics of the legal action that followed the outcry. People used this cry just to attract attention and evoke help or cooperation. For instance, people yelled 'Thief!' when someone attacked them in the street, as on one summer night in 1592. The quarter captain was resting in his bed when he heard the cry, and left the house to see an old man, covered with blood and mud; the victim beseeched the captain to arrest his son, who had beaten him so cruelly.⁸ In another case a witness declared in court that he went out into the street when he heard noises of a fight and the outcry that followed.⁹ The same call could be heard when one saw fire in or around the town. In 1573, fire started at some farmhouses outside the city walls, and everybody in the neighboring houses rushed out when somebody cried thief.¹⁰ Likewise, disturbing events that threatened household tranquility were announced and publicly denounced by the same outcry. In 1593 a witness told the judge that Mihály Kis "went out into the street and cried: 'Look here, I have found my wife, the damn whore, with her rogue lover'."¹¹ These trial records prove that hue and cry could be heard in diverse situations, from bloodshed to sexual offence. Moreover, despite the cry's literal meaning, none of these nine stories touched on the theft of goods. The most usual phrase in these sources is 'to cry thief' (*tolvajkiáltás*), but the verb 'to cry' (*kiált*) and the noun 'outcry' (*kiáltás*) have the same meaning and function. In some depositions the word *tolvaj* (thief) appears not as an outcry but as a scolding: when, in one case, two enemies met in a dark back street, a fight broke out and the witness heard the attacked person

Riflessioni sulla fase attuale degli studi di storia del crimine e della giustizia criminale' *Studi storici*, 29 (1988); 491-501; E. Grendi, 'Sulla "storia criminale": risposta a Mario Sbriccoli' *Quaderni storici*, 73 (1990), 269-75. Whereas earlier historians had used these sources to depict or even quantify criminality, more recent works have become more cautious and sceptical when exploring such material. For more extensive literature, see Kate Lowe, "The political crime of conspiracy in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Rome," in *Crime, Society and the Law in Renaissance Italy* eds. T. Dean and K.J.P. Lowe (Cambridge 1994), 184-203; Malcolm Greenshields, *An Economy of Violence in Early Modern France. Crime and Justice in the Haute Auvergne, 1587-1664* (Pennsylvania, 1994).

⁸ Prot.Jud. Doc. II.8/1590-1594, fol. 364.

⁹ Prot.Jud. Doc. II.8/1590-1594, fol. 162.

¹⁰ Prot.Jud. Doc. II.6/1572-1575, fol. 143.

¹¹ Prot.Jud. Doc. II.8/1590-1594, fol. 369: "Az utcára kiállott vala, és azt kiáltja vala, im az esse lélek kurvát, a feleségemet, egy latorral kaptam."

yell: "You are a thief because you stood in my way!"¹² In the multiethnic setting of Kolozsvár the outcry could be Hungarian or German¹³ but as a rule, court proceedings were registered in Hungarian, so that we cannot be sure whether Germans actually cried "thief" or used another formula.¹⁴

Most often, the scene of a hue and cry and of the ensuing interventions was the street. By day, streets were full of people and alarm spread quickly. The victim of a robbery or an assault could easily mobilize the whole neighborhood with this outcry, and randomly assembled people helped their wronged peer, and later testified in court when legal action started. During the night, empty streets amplified a hue and cry, and this effective signal made people jump out of bed, go to the windows, look down in the street, and eventually rush out to help those in need. In an era when sounds conveyed the most important news for town dwellers, an outcry was an essential source of information, crucial for the organization of communal life.¹⁵

The urban structure of Kolozsvár facilitated both the victim's cry and the subsequent actions of the crowd. Built on the right bank of a river, at the crossroads of two commercial routes, the old medieval town had slowly expanded beyond its regular quadrangle of walls, growing east and south. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries *Civitas Kolozsvár* developed into an important commercial and artisan center of approximately 8000 Hungarian and German inhabitants.¹⁶ New walls encircled the wealthy town and

¹² "Arról vagy tolvaj, miért utamat megállottad." Prot.Jud. Doc. II.6/1572-1575, fol. 316-7.

¹³ By the 1450s, Kolozsvár's Hungarians outnumbered Germans but did not yet dominate political and commercial life. Supported by the central government, Hungarians soon arranged for a parity principle, and shared the seats of the high council (*centumviri*; *felső tanács*), with 50 Hungarian and 50 Saxon councilors. Councilors elected the judge (*judex primarius*; *főbíró*) and the senate of twelve (low council, *alsó tanács*) whose first senator was the second judge (*judex regius*; *királybíró*), the king's representative. Hungarian and German judges took yearly turns: when the first judge was Hungarian, the second judge was Saxon, and vice versa. This system did not always make for peaceful cohabitation; at times inner tensions and struggles translated into ethnic conflicts between Hungarians and Germans.

¹⁴ In a deposition of 1573 a witness declared that a serf raised the hue and cry in German ("szászul kezdte tolvajt üvöltetni") but the original phrase was not repeated in the document. See Kiss, 'A tolvajkiáltás közbiztonsági szerepe az erdélyi joggyakorlatban', especially 97-98.

¹⁵ David Garrioch, "Sounds of the city: the soundscape of early modern European towns" *Urban History* 30 (1), 2003: 5-25.

¹⁶ Urban development in Transylvania took place mainly within the political framework of the Saxon nation, and under its effective protection towns grew into important craft and

allowed for a large main square and broad streets that met at right angles (Fig. 1). The spacious new locality was in many ways different from the old nucleus, which became a quarter of the town. *Vetus Castrum* had narrower, often winding streets and a more crowded layout; it was the relatively peaceful quarter inhabited by wealthy German patricians. Four newer, rougher quarters (*Longa, Media, Luporum, and Rapular*) aggregated around



Fig. 1. Detail from "Pianta della città di Calusamborgh, in Transilvania nel stato si ritrova, e sua situatione" by Giovanni Morando Visconti, 1691-1699 (Kriegsarchiv, Vienna)

trade centers that formed dense economic networks. Three such towns were the biggest centers in Transylvania (Szeben, Brassó and Beszterce), and they dominated the commercial roads leading to the Romanian voivodates. Only Kolozsvár could compete with them as the town's position facilitated control over the traffic between Transylvania and other parts of Hungary.

sections of two parallel main streets that crossed the town east-west and traversed the northern and southern margins of the principal square. Houses and courtyards were closed off from the street by façades with a gate and smaller apertures for windows (Fig. 2).¹⁷ Notwithstanding the massive gates, parts of the houses were accessible to outsiders—as with the Roman and Venetian practices described by Elizabeth Cohen and Alexander Cowan in this volume. While most of the commercial activity took place in shops and chambers in the central square around the cathedral, some houses elsewhere were turned into short-term taverns selling the wine of the surrounding hills. Each house was built along one side of a narrow plot, as a train of interconnected rooms, four or five or even eight or nine in number. Of these rooms, some had openings onto the courtyard,

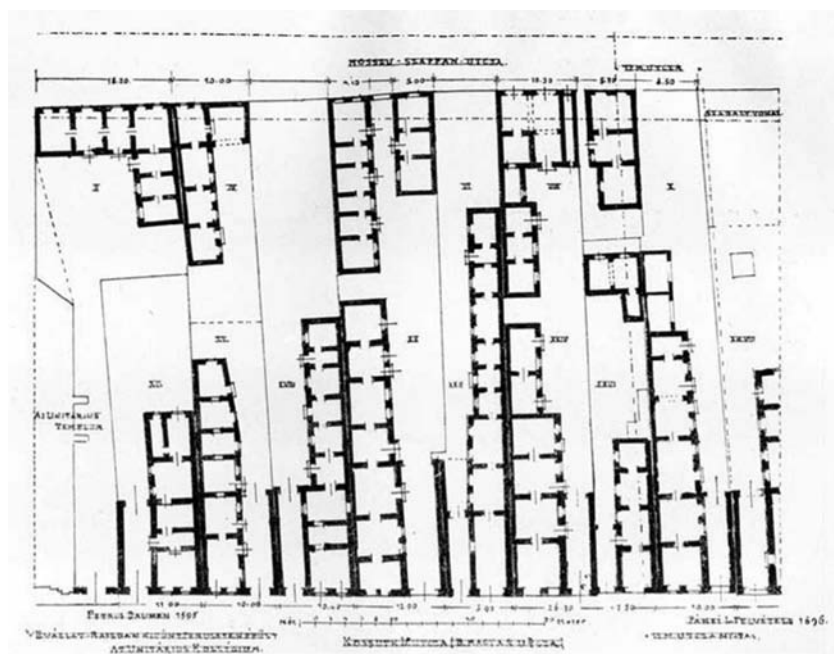


Fig. 2. “Groundplan of demolished burghers’ houses” by Lajos Pákei, 1896 (Bequest of Jolán Balogh)

¹⁷ András Kovács, ‘Kolozsvár városképe a XVI-XVII. században’ [Urban landscape of Kolozsvár in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries] in *Kolozsvár 1000 éve* [One thousand years of Kolozsvár] eds. Tibor Kálmán Dáné, Á. Egyed, G. Sipos, R. Wolf (Kolozsvár, 2001), 53-73.

and others could only be accessed from other rooms of the house. The layout of streets and houses influenced the effectiveness of hue and cry. The outcry needed to be heard by a sufficient number of people; thus a cry from inside a house seldom worked. As we will see shortly, the outcry was successful if it summoned sufficient crowd to do the policing and reestablish public order.

In a time when law enforcement was not a state monopoly, the voluntary participation of private persons was indispensable.¹⁸ To return to our opening case, when Mihály Céklás and his companions cried thief in the dark street, the hue and cry spurred voluntary intervention of townsfolk, and started the prosecution. The outcry thus assembled a public that performed multiple roles: from the immediate environment came helpful participants, seemingly driven by the communal desire to keep public order. The people assembled by the hue and cry captured the aggressors, informed the quarter captain, and notified the wife.¹⁹ In the 1570s and 1590s, laws did not oblige private participation of citizens; but every person in the town was a guardian of law and order, and had a moral and civic obligation to intervene when order was endangered. In such situations, it was the publicly sanctioned assembly of 'private' people that had to preserve or reestablish order.²⁰ Private participation in prosecution equally put power in the hands of ordinary individuals: the power to accuse others of crime and thus set the law in motion. Litigation in the 1570s was shaped by local legal practice: Kolozsvár did not have a public prosecutor; thus prosecu-

¹⁸ The importance of the hue and cry as a law-enforcing mechanism is evident in its evolution from a community affair in the sixteenth century to an extension of the state. In regulations of later centuries, it became more than a neighborhood obligation. In the seventeenth century, and up to the eighteenth, town statutes and laws of the principality amended the previously informal custom to make it mandatory. Failure to respond to hue and cry was penalized with fines or sequestration of property; thus the mechanism not only invited but imposed civic participation in prosecution.

¹⁹ After such an outcry, in most Hungarian settlements and especially in the rural areas, bells rang the alarm, village officials publicly announced the search, closed all entry-points of the village, and seized offenders. *Magyar Néprajzi Lexikon* [Encyclopedia of Hungarian Ethnography] volume 5. (Budapest, 1982). Kiss, 'A tolvajkiáltás közbiztonsági szerepe az erdélyi joggyakorlatban,' 97.

²⁰ The idea of individuals' conciliatory interventions for keeping the peace is described through the practice of "peace bidding" in Susanne Pohl, "Uneasy Peace. The Practice of the Stallung Ritual in Zurich, 1400-1525," *JEMH* 7 (2003): 1-2; 28-54. In Müller's examples the hue and cry allowed for aggressive and conciliatory purposes, the latter being used especially by women. See 'Social control and the hue and cry'.

tion started upon the accusations of a private complainant, in most cases, the wronged person or, in case of murder, a relative. This system changed in the 1580s when the high council appointed prosecutors, first *procuratores* (*prokurátor*) and later *directores*, to represent the town.²¹ Until then, because the court only used evidence brought by the complainant, hue and cry was meant to assemble witnesses who could turn up at trials on the side of the accuser; their testimony was indispensable. This is true not only for street fighting but also for adultery or domestic violence, affronts less public, more familial.

The cry's use in domestic matters bears on the articulation of public and private domains. The community's regulatory practices obliterated a clear-cut demarcation between the spaces of the household and spaces of the street, and set up flexible and multiple boundaries between them. The publicizing function of the outcry created situations in which the public-private division became complex and ambiguous.²² When a wife's infidelity was hauled out from the space of the household and cried out in the public space of the street, it no longer concerned the cuckolded husband alone but the whole community. Thus, the household became permeable to outsiders who could exercise their control and turn such episodes into events of public concern inviting solution. Such cases usually ended with the removal of the culprits from the common urban space—either by capital punishment or banishment.

Although boundaries between households and the street were, or at times became, porous and outsiders could enter the house, certain domains of

²¹ András Kiss, 'Ante Claram Boci' in *Más források—más értelmezések*, 291-310.

²² Spatial models of 'private' and 'public' (either conceived as separated by a line or as being situated in concentric circles) usually do not attend to or distinguish how people move, or desire to move, between the supposedly private and the public domains. See Diana Coole, 'Cartographic Convulsions: Public and Private Reconsidered' *Political Theory*, vol. 28 (2000) 3: 337-54. Various models of socio-spatial exclusions stress the concept of plurality of publics and the expanded sense of the locales of publicity. For excellent argumentation see Mustafa Emirbayer, Mimi Sheller, 'Publics in History' *Theory and Society*, Vol. 28 (1999) No.1: 145-197; and Mimi Sheller and John Ury, 'Mobile Transformations of "Public" and "Private" Life', *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol. 20 (2003) 3: 107-25. The need for reconsideration of the static divide between public and private and multiple meanings of the term 'public' is well described in Dena Goodman, 'Public Sphere and Private Life: Toward a Synthesis of Current Historiographical Approaches to the Old Regime,' *History and Theory*, Vol. 31 (1992) 1: 1-20 and Sarah Maza 'Women, the Bourgeoisie, and the Public Sphere: Response to Daniel Gordon and David Bell,' *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 17 (1992) 4: 935-50.

the household were not accessible to all persons. A home included well-distinguished areas with imposed hierarchies of openness, so that some persons were allowed to go to certain parts of the house, and some could go further than others.²³ Alleged abuse of the household's restricted parts was certainly a rationale for a hue and cry—as an example later will show. Orderliness (“good customs, order, and discipline”) was a fundamental preoccupation of the society, one involving not only policing in the strict sense but also intricate regulation of property rights and marriages. In what follows I analyze diverse cases that started with a hue and cry and trace out their disparate courses and outcomes.

Public Concerns

In 1573 a big fire started at the farmhouses outside the town walls,²⁴ and flames devoured several hedges, haystacks, barns, and stables. András Kakas, an influential man and member of the high council, represented the aggrieved owners in the *Rapular* quarter and accused János Daróczi, whose servants, witnesses asserted, had started a fire that rapidly spread to the property of others.²⁵ Fire was one of the greatest common enemies in a town where most houses were made of wood; therefore, constant vigilance was required. Caution was justified; huge parts of the town burned down

²³ In Roman houses of the *Cinquecento*, some areas—the stairway, the *sala*, and the kitchen—were more open to outsiders; occasionally, more intimate parts of the house, like bedrooms or beds, could open up to persons other than household members. These inner “spaces and boundaries derived their shifting meanings from their uses and users.” See: Elizabeth S. Cohen and Thomas V. Cohen, “Open and shut: the social meanings of the Cinquecento Roman house,” *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, IX, 1 (Fall-Winter 2001-2): 61-84; especially 67.

²⁴ The closed town's large outskirts, the *Hofstadt*, was a terrain for agriculture and farming. These were in fact villages with large yards, stables and farmhouses (*majorok*). Lajos Asztalos, *Kolozsvár. Helynév- és településtörténeti adattár* [Kolozsvár. Directory of toponyms and historical data]. (Kolozsvár, 2004), 209-11. Giovanandrea Gromo, the personal guard and advisor of Transylvania's Prince John Sigismund visited Kolozsvár in 1564–65, and described these terrains as *borghi* (hamlets): “*Fuori della cinta della Città sono tre Borghi: uno uerso mezo giorno, quale non meno di una miglia tira, l'atro uerso Maestro, quale due grosse miglia tira, il terzo uerso leuante, grosso anch'egli, ma delli due altri assai minore. Questi tre Borghi sono per il piu fatte le case di legno et il primo da Sassoni, il secondo da Vngheri e'l terzo da Valacchi è habitato.*” Cited in Elek Benkő, *Kolozsvár magyar külvárosa a középkorban* [Kolozsvár's Hungarian outskirts in the Middle Ages]. (Kolozsvár, 2004): 15.

²⁵ Primăria Municipiului Cluj-Napoca, Prot.Jud. Doc. II.6/1572-1575, fol. 143-146.

in 1653 and again in 1679. For vigilance, the tower of the weavers' guild in the eastern part of the town functioned as a permanent watch post for fireguards.²⁶

In a time when the state lacked specialized forces for policing, the authorities of Kolozsvár combined two modes of control and law enforcement. One, collective, worked through customs like the hue and cry, which relied on public spirit. The other was individual, using the rotating services of citizens in informal offices with policing functions. Such offices, in German settlements of Transylvania, were the neighborhood fathers (*Nachbarväter*). The organization of the neighborhoods (*Nachbarschaften*) rested on a number of adult married males from households in one particular street or part of the town.²⁷ Subordinated to the ecclesiastical and secular authorities, these organizations controlled public morality, religious discipline, and peaceful cohabitation of neighbors.²⁸ In Hungarian settlements, the elementary administrative unit matching the functions of a *Nachbarschaft* was the street with its resident officers.²⁹

Kolozsvár followed neither the German model of the neighborhood, nor the Hungarian model of street division. Given the uneven length of the streets in the town, the number of houses was different in each street; thus the main administrative principle was a system of quarters (*fertály*) and smaller tenths (*tized*). The arrangement of the tenths in a quarter is unknown; the average number of houses per tenth was fourteen.³⁰ Each

²⁶ *Kolozsvár. Helynév- és településtörténeti adattár*, 475; 505.

²⁷ The number of male members in a *Nachbarschaft* varied, lower in villages (20-30 members), higher in towns (roughly 40 members). For detailed description of the functions of neighborhoods see Mária Pakucs, "'Gute Ordnung und Disciplin': Patterns of Social Discipline in Sibiu (Hermannstadt) in the Sixteenth Century" *N.E.C. Yearbook 2003-2004*: 175-205. Doina Naegler, 'Die siebenbürgisch-sächsischen Vereine im Mittelalter und der frühen Neuzeit' *Transylvanian Review* 9 (2000): 3-7.

²⁸ See for example the *Nachbarschaft* statutes of Schässburg (Segesvár, Sighisoara) and Szászváros (Broos, Orăștie). *Corpus statutorum Hungariae municipalium. A magyar törvényhatóságok jogszabályainak gyűjteménye*, (hereinafter: *Corpus statutorum*) vol. 1, eds. Sándor Kolozsvári, Kelemen Óvári (Budapest, 1885): 572-74; 607-13.

²⁹ *Magyar Néprajzi Lexikon*, volume 5.

³⁰ In the late 1500s tax rolls contained 1572 houses and 2180 taxpayers (owners of houses and tenants). Starting from the number of foot soldiers sent by the town to the prince's army, Kiss gives the number of 111 tenths, assuming that each tenth gave one soldier. András Kiss, 'Kolozsvár településrendszere a XVI. században: fertályok, tizedek' [The structure of Kolozsvár in the sixteenth century: quarters and tenths] in *Más források—más értelmezések*, 193-202.

quarter had a captain (*fertálykapitány*) and each tenth had its own official (*tizedes*), nominated from among the most respectable residents. The source for their role and functioning is a statute (1585) of Kolozsvár, which regulated the functioning of the quarters and the tenths in twelve articles.³¹

These offices were usually unpaid, but the town council made exceptions in times of war, when captains were requested to participate in the town's defense. Besides their occasional military services, captains and tenth officers were responsible for mediating in both directions between the town council and the units for which they were responsible. Captains and tenth officers proclaimed and implemented town decrees, kept public order in their districts, supervised communal works and cleanliness of the streets, and oversaw the watchmen and fireguards.

In the 1585 statute describing duties of the tenth officer, two articles, the first and the sixth, concern fire. According to the first article, the tenth officer was in charge of a weekly check-up on each house and incineration place, and was required to ask owners to fix or secure anything he deemed dangerous. If that did not happen, the statute authorized tenth officers and quartermasters to tear structures down. The sixth paragraph concerns "fire-proof" streets. Under the command of their officers, each tenth was to maintain a long ladder and to care for communal wells. The captains controlled cleanliness: no waste or dung was allowed in the streets and back alleys; therefore captains could employ severe measures "for the benefit of the town."³²

When the fire of 1573 threatened the farmhouses in the western outskirts, the threat generated a public alarm and people came to fight the flames. The judge wanted to find out how that fire started; therefore, witnesses recounted what had happened shortly before the alarm bells rang. People around János Daróczi's farmhouse had been alerted by an outcry. One witness heard someone raising the hue, another stated that it was Daróczi's servant, and a woman testified that she cried thief when she saw smoke and flames.

The assemblage and mobilization of a public succeeded here because this event threatened the whole community. It had been no single outcry that functioned, but rather a chain of hue and cries carried by several people until the warning reached the alarm bell. The bell then amplified and

³¹ *Corpus statutorum*, 202-04.

³² *Corpus Statutorum*, 202-03.

extended the publicness of the event, galvanizing the crowd into actions that contained the disorder and reestablished order, all for the collective good. A different logic set this complex social and legal mechanism in motion in cases that pertained more to individuals and their private affairs. The following cases will show how individuals starting a hue and cry manipulated the powers granted them by such an outcry.

Street Fights, from Private to Public

The task of keeping a community ordered required scrutinizing individual behavior in public places. The privileges that fostered trades and crafts and the attractions of civic freedom lured many of the local serf population. In response, Kolozsvár used strict rules to prevent outsiders from settling in large numbers. The council, however, could not prevent foreigners from spending a certain amount of time in town. Many council decrees concerned male and female servants who came to the town searching for a job. They were described in the decrees as coarse and scandalous, threatening civic peace, and given to conduct contrary to proper Christian behavior. The council watched vigilantly over the stability of the community, and conceded jobless servants a mere week to find work and lodging; those found loitering in the streets and taverns faced arrest; they were to be taken to the prison, or kept in the public cage and exposed in the main square for three days.

Following a long tradition of public legislation, the ordinances of the 1585 statute repeated regulations regarding *actus maioris potentiae* and *actus minoris potentiae*, in attacks on persons, properties or houses. The same sanctions applied to the burgher population, to noblemen, or any foreigner on the territory of the town. For the law, it made a difference whether the assault resulted in little bodily harm (or none at all), or caused serious injury or death. When fights resulted in minor wounds, captains were entitled to intervene and punish with fines. More severe cases of violence resulting in serious bodily harm or death merited capital punishment; in such cases, captains were required to act as police and arrest the criminal.

Physical violence in the streets did not involve idlers alone. The protagonists in the examples that follow were established burghers of Kolozsvár who raised the hue and cry in order to attract the attention of fellow citizens. In November 1574, a tenth officer brought to court Stephan

Unch for a tavern fight in which Ferenc Trombitás had been so badly beaten that he died three days later.³³ Lőrinc, involved in the fight on the side of Trombitás, declared that Stephan and a shoemaker had waited for them outside the tavern to redress a previous grievance. When Trombitás and his mate left the tavern, the two attacked them with pieces of wood. Their anger was directed towards Trombitás, and his mate Lőrinc, although badly hurt, was able to raise the hue and cry. According to him, the attackers only let their victims go when neighborhood people ran out and intervened.

Street fights ending with outsiders' intervention also involved women. In 1573 a woman cried thief outside the town walls, near the vineyards, while running for help. From witnesses we learn that a man armed with hatchet and saber had assaulted her and another woman; the two needed the intervention of outsiders to stop the attack.³⁴ Another time, a street fight between two women also resulted in a hue and cry.³⁵ The fight took place in a busy part of the quarter in a location connecting two typically gendered public places: the bakery and the tavern that shared its courtyard. While women were busy at the bakery, men gathered in the tavern. The clash started with insults between the wife of the tenth-officer and the daughter of a blacksmith, and once the hue and cry was raised, the fight swiftly sucked in male family members drinking at the tavern. This fight also provoked the collapse of an interfamily truce, risking familial relationships and public peace. Witnesses indicate that, some time before the open fight, a blacksmith called Benedek had asked three men to reconcile his quarrel with the tenth-officer, Mátyás Cinka. The mediators had managed to pacify the two parties and, as befitted such extra-legal agreements, they had set a rather large penalty, 20 florins,³⁶ on whoever broke the truce. Still, the enmity between the two families continued, causing the fierce fight at the bakery, where the older woman was hit and thrown to the

³³ Prot.Jud. Doc. II.6/1572-1575, fol 390-91.

³⁴ Prot.Jud. Doc. II.6/1572-1575, fol. 291-92.

³⁵ Prot.Jud. Doc. II.6/1572-1575, fol. 227-29.

³⁶ Both the tenth-officer Cinka and the blacksmith Benedek paid the annual tax of six florins or less, while the smallest tax in this period was of 1.5 florins. According to the town accounts of this period, one florin was worth 50 loaves, 49 liters of wine, 25 chickens, or 15 liters of wormwood wine. See also Andor Komáromy, "Kolozsvári polgári konyha a XVI. század végén" [The burghers' kitchen in Kolozsvár at the end of the sixteenth century] *Erdélyi Múzeum* XIX (1902): 76-88.

ground.³⁷ That was when she cried thief, to which her husband reacted with violence, hitting the daughter of the blacksmith. The fight drew in several people on both sides.

This instance raises a problem of the mechanism started by the hue and cry. The process worked well when it engaged neutrals who could act as agents of law enforcement (just as in later centuries a policeman could pull apart brawlers). In the first street fight presented above, the hue and cry mobilized non-involved people who pacified the situation. The latter intervention failed as social self-regulation because, in the range of the cry, neutrals were in the minority or absent. Only partisans were in hearing range; thus, the mechanism that was supposed to transform a private conflict into a public reestablishment of public order turned into its opposite. The outcry just made things worse.

The location of the bakery fight was not, strictly speaking, the street but it was still a courtyard transformed into a public place and, in some sense, into an extension of the street. Thus, this story, like all examples so far, shows hue and cry hauling people out of their houses and into the street to police a public space. But things could also go the other way. The next story shows a domestic space that was policed by a public gathered by hue and cry. In 1591, Mihály Kotró was accused of the homicide of his own son and suspected for his connection to an earlier incident that resulted in homicide.³⁸ We are again led by witnesses' depositions: they inform us how Mihály raised the hue and cry from the garden that surrounded his farmhouse. The farmhouses of the *Hofstädte* outside the town walls were built on large tracts of land leading to the river, and separated by hedges that allowed a visibility impossible inside the town walls. Inside the town, people could witness events happening outside their windows, but here a woman testified that she saw from afar Mihály wondering around the scene of the murder as she was washing at the river. The soundscape was also different from that of the inner town. The best location for a hue and cry in town was the street, but if someone shouted from the garden or yard of a farmhouse, it was easily heard by a number of people who could rush to the scene.

³⁷ Institutionalized forms of enmity and violence—such as feuds, vendettas, raids for those who had extensive resources, and sworn hatred for the simpler folk—are a constant source of honor throughout Europe. For a comprehensive bibliography on the economy of honor and violence see Daniel Lord Smail, "Hatred as a Social Institution in Late-Medieval Society" *Speculum*, 76 (2001) 1: 90-126.

³⁸ Prot.Jud. Doc. II.8/1590-1594, fol. 209-216.

Witnesses who testified against Mihály described him as an extremely violent man who had hit his wife and punished his son on several occasions. This last time, in 1591, he went too far, and his son died. The witnesses recounted in detail the night before the murder: Mihály's son spent the evening with several other young men in a tavern and late in the evening went back to his father's farmhouse outside the city walls, and passed the night in the stable as he was in charge of taking care of the freshly gelded horses. If what witnesses said was true, Mihály's son was supposed to stay awake all night but fell asleep. His father checked on him at dawn, finding him sleeping on the job. Witnesses believed that the father killed his son by beating, strangling, and hanging, and raised hue and cry after realizing this grave mistake. When people arrived, they found the body still warm, but Mihály proclaimed that he had found his son hanging from a tree. On the spot, the father started accusing his son's drinking fellows from the previous night. Some witnesses testified in the drinkers' favor, and others alleged that Mihály was the only person to be seen at the scene of the murder. The body itself bore witness, not by bleeding before its killer, as corpses were sometimes said to do, but by sweating. People helping around the dead body claimed to notice the boy sweating whenever his father approached. Although without eyewitnesses to the killing, the judges accepted such evidence, and ruled that Mihály be tortured for further verification in both his capital cases. The documents omit the transcripts of the torture; the scribe only noted down that he was sentenced to death for killing his son. Raising the hue and cry was here a malefactor's unsuccessful attempt to manipulate public norm enforcement.

This last case involved a part of the household not open to the public, but nevertheless open to scrutiny thanks to a transparency to sight and sound found nowhere in the built town. Our next examples, from inside the town walls, illustrate the rather porous boundaries there as well between domestic and public. Here the hue and cry has implications for the large issue of the slow separation and gradual crystallization of the public and private spheres. This separation is usually understood as the withdrawal of the public power from the sphere today considered 'intimate,' or else it is seen as the extension of the spheres of private life where public power has no role to play. A more nuanced perspective, however, would argue that the transformation in this period altered the mode of enforcement so that on the one hand public regulation of private matters decreased. On the other hand, it suggests that more and more aspects of the private sphere

became strictly regulated and protected by the state.³⁹ The earlier stories showed the authorities' preoccupation with the maintenance of public order through the policing activities of the community.⁴⁰ The tales that follow show how public authorities in sixteenth-century Kolozsvár regulated the private sphere through the licensed interventions of individuals, and at the same time defined the extent and forms of that intervention into domestic affairs.

Home and Street

A case from 1593 involves domestic violence and leads us back inside the town walls to the *Luporum* quarter. Old Mátyás Buzai's errant son—a rascal (*verbero*) in the wording of the scribe⁴¹—was brought to the judge for molesting his father. The first witness in this case was the captain of the quarter who declared on oath:

Last summer, when the guards started their rounds in the night, I was lying in my bed when I heard the hue and cry. Upon leaving my house I saw old Mátyás Buzai, covered with blood and mud. He asked me to arrest his son because he was the one who caused all that, but I told Mátyás that I did not know where to find his son so late in the night.⁴²

The two night guards also testified in this case. Hearing the outcry, they rushed to the place it came from, where old Mátyás stood alone and

³⁹ In Europe, the governments' interventions into the domestic sphere were prompted, for example, by the fear of urban epidemics. See Yoh Kawana, "Trade, sociability and governance in an English incorporated borough: 'formal' and 'informal' worlds in Leicester, c. 1570-1640" *Urban History*, 33 (2006) 3: 324-49.

⁴⁰ In practice, norm enforcement might have been less than perfect; nevertheless it always depended on people "responsible for setting the procedure in train". Trevor Dean and Kate Lowe, 'Writing the history of crime in the Italian Renaissance' in *Crime, Society and the Law in Renaissance Italy*, 1-15, especially 9.

⁴¹ "Testimonia directorum civitatis contra Matthiam Buzai iuniorem ratione verberonis coram domino Petro Eppelj." Prot. Jud. Doc. II.8/1590-1594, fol. 364.

⁴² "Szász Bálint hite után vallja: Tavaly nyárban mikor az őrizők este elindultanak volna, ágyamban nyugszom vala hogy tolvajkiáltást hallék, kimenék házamból, tehát a vén Buzai Mátyás rút véres, sebes és sáros, és kezdte engemet kérni, hogy megfogtassam a fiát, Mátyást, mert ő cselekedte azt rája. De én azt mondtam, hogy én nem tudom hol kerestetni olyan későn." Prot. Jud. Doc. II.8/1590-1594, fol. 364.

denounced his son. Nothing indicates where the outcry happened. Old Buzai's wife declared in court that her husband and son had often quarreled verbally, but she did not see what happened between them when the old man raised the hue and cry. Even distant neighbors living down the street could hear his outcry, and testified in court that they were aware of the fight between father and son. All these indicate that the supposed fight took place outside the household, most probably in the street.

According to witnesses' declaration, the old man called one of the neighbors: "Thief! Thief! neighbor Demeter, because my son is killing me!" The neighbor, however, did not leave the house because old Mátyás's son immediately reassured him that no harm had been done to the father. Another witness, a woman, declared that she heard the hue and cry, and had already heard several spats before, but nothing in the testimony indicates that people assisted the old man. The judge pronounced the verdict: no evidence of physical mistreatment was found, only of verbal abuse, therefore young Mátyás Buzai was put in the stocks during the church sermon, and had to ask his father's pardon and that of the whole community. A month later the judge ruled once more: he "did not follow the law but menaced his father yet again, therefore he shall be flogged with three canes." The punishment was executed and all expenses related are listed in the town accounts.⁴³

This case has telling implications: in order to summon outsiders for assistance and eyewitness, the hue and cry had to be performed in a relatively open place where enough people could hear it. As houses and courtyards in town were closed off from the street, an outcry coming from inside the household could not rally unbiased outsiders to reestablish order. That is why the next protagonist, upon discovering his wife's infidelity, ran from his house and raised the hue and cry in the street. This story proves how easily domestic life might spill outdoors, onto streets. It is out of the ordinary not only because it shows domestic life brought into the public but also because it features an attempt of denunciation that turned against the wronged person who raised the hue and cry. In 1593, Mihály Kis, a bricklayer, was held in prison and charged with supporting his adulterous wife.⁴⁴ Early on, he had denounced his wife and their carter lodger to the authorities, but before starting the legal procedure by reporting it to the captain, had stood out in the street and cried: "Look here, I have found my wife,

⁴³ D.J.A.N. Cluj (Romanian National Archives, Cluj County), Fond Primăria Oraşului Cluj-Napoca, Socoteli Pach.5(XVII-XXV)/1593, fol.170.

⁴⁴ Prot.Jud. Doc. II.8/1590-1594, fol. 369-70.

the damn whore, with her rogue lover.”⁴⁵ His outcry did not start the usual policing mechanisms that followed a hue and cry. For, in fact, the cuckolded husband had been in no need of help; nevertheless, ignominiously, breaking manhood’s codes and broadcasting his disgrace, he created a public to witness his wife’s infidelity. In court, witnesses summoned by the outcry testified against him. Ten bystanders averred that he had known all about the infidelity of the woman, but nonetheless continued living with her.

The man’s actions, which first seem inconsistent and confusing, are meaningful if viewed on the triple level of personal, familial, and community reputation, in addition to legal action. Numerous adultery cases show that neighbors indeed often did police morals and accepted individual intervention in case of suspicions. Sources of mistrust were many, either a locked door or reluctance to open it when requested, or suspect noises heard by housemates or neighbors. With the help of this declaration, a victim then summoned officials (quarter captain and the guards) and neighbors to start a legal process. Here, though, things were oddly scrambled, as not a neighbor, but the husband himself, as if a surrogate neighbor, intervened not from inside, but from outside his own family.

The witnesses tell Mihály’s story: he was on his way to the marketplace when heard noises in the house, became suspicious, and went inside where he found his wife lying—not in her birth bed but on the chest—with lifted skirt and the lodger over her with loosened pants. In a rage, Mihály left the house, in the street cried out his wife’s infidelity, and went to the captain of the quarter to lodge a complaint.⁴⁶ Squeamish, cautious, or diplomatic, the captain elected to move slowly, and adjourned. In the meantime Mihály went back to the captain, this time accompanied by his wife. They said they wanted to retract the previous complaint, saying that when denouncing his wife earlier that day he had been drunk. The captain nonetheless hauled him to the public prosecutors, and there Mihály reaffirmed the betrayal and unruly conduct of his wife. The prosecutors wanted to have the woman arrested, but she and he fled town, together. They continued living, together still, in Torda, a town 30 km south of Kolozsvár. By the time of the trial they had returned to the town, and Mihály was held prisoner, charged with support of an adulteress.

⁴⁵ Prot.Jud. Doc. II.8/1590-1594, fol. 369.

⁴⁶ According to the statute of 1585 the captain had to report any improper sexual behavior to the judges or prosecutors. *Corpus statutorum*, 204.

Adultery was a capital crime always severely punished, if not by death itself, by some heavy penalty. That is why the wife fled. But why did the husband follow her? Affection, perhaps, or their interdependence—economic or other benefits—pushed the husband to this choice.⁴⁷ The reasoning of the judge picked up on the ignominy of husband and wife alike: “For this woman, wife of Mihály Kis has not led a faithful life, which she admitted with the proof of her tongue. Notwithstanding, her husband had been aware of her dreadful life; moreover, he cried it out, but continued living with her. Therefore both will be flogged out of the town.”⁴⁸

Mihály's errors were many. Not only did he tolerate his cuckoldry, but time and again his wife sold her body in order to balance the family's meager economy. A woman in court told how the wife turned public opinion against Mihály, blaming him for not maintaining her while in birth bed. With no money from the husband, her only option was to find finances. And she did so, trading sexual favors for the lodger's money.⁴⁹ On discovering unmistakable evidence, *in flagrante*, Mihály failed to assault the lover and wife; instead he called on the neighbors, an action maybe downright disgraceful, maybe even worse. He lost standing with the authorities when he backed off, with the captain, and claimed drunkenness. Fleeing justice—a reasonable, if illegal deed—he stayed with his unfaithful wife rather than drive her from him. And last, with her still, he provoked public opinion with their return to Kolozsvár, afflicting the town with his shameful condition. So, six times disgraceful, he deserved the shameful punishment of a public whipping, which cleansed the town of this disgrace under the indignant eyes of many burghers. If a previous example of a street fight showed enmity and violence as a social mode of re-establishing honor, this

⁴⁷ Similar examples confirm that husbands chose to forgive their unfaithful wives and allow them back into the family. Kiss gives several examples of accommodating husbands. A wealthy man gave his wife exceptional freedom in exchange of her parsimony and loyalty. In a different context, a married woman of low standing was facing capital punishment for her unruly life when her husband intervened. In the letter sent to the judges, the husband put in plain words his helplessness without a wife, and mitigated the death penalty to flogging. See András Kiss, *Boszorkányok, kuruzslók, szalmakoszorús paráznák* [Witches, Quacks and Straw-Wreathed Adulteresses] (Kolozsvár, 1998), 96-97; 165-76.

⁴⁸ “1593 die 4 Maii. Deliberatur: Miérthogy ez asszony, Kis Mihályné nem jámborult, kit nyelve vallásával is megbizonyított. Az ura is pedig ezt tudván a felesége latorságát, sőt ugyan kikiáltván, mégis vele lakott. Azért mind a kettő kivesszőztessék a városból.” Prot.Jud. Doc. II.8/1590-1594, fol. 370.

⁴⁹ *Idem*.

case can stand in contrast for the state's regulation of honor and public display.⁵⁰

In Mihály's story, the hue and cry played out oddly and eventually worked against the denouncer. The usual pattern of such outcries was public compliance when the wronged person called a crowd out into the street, or into a house, to catch a malefactor, to gather witnesses, and to start a prosecution. Mihály instead ran out and gathered a crowd asking them to witness his wife's infidelity. No one entered the house to see the adulterous wife, and witnesses did not see the lodger either, for he had fled when the husband first walked in on the couple. As often with the hue and cry, people in the street witnessed neither the crime itself, nor the injurious aftermath of the crime, but the denunciation. Despite the public outcry, the legal step that usually followed such a public accusation faltered that afternoon and the complaint collapsed. Already soiled in reputation, Mihály by his subsequent actions reinforced his complicity in the crime when he fled with the woman. After so many proofs of the plaintiff's unmanliness, one more piece of rumor circulated in town, about the lover's following the married couple to the other town. The hue and cry in this case seems like an abuse of the rite: the person who raised the outcry was unworthy of communal support, and witnesses easily turned against the crier.

So far, the described episodes showed many of the ambiguities and tensions between public and private in the period prior to the rise of a separate body to maintain public order. One last story shows how, when a household had high status, outsiders enjoyed limited access. Some household domains, then, were more private than others, and less open to public discipline. In 1573, an alleged abuse of hospitality and penetration into the reserved parts of house was widely publicized.⁵¹ A nobleman, Péter Keresztúry, spent the night at the house of an artisan and, supposedly, the host and his household set a trap: they instructed their maid to lure the nobleman to her room; then the apprentices, waiting in ambush, assailed

⁵⁰ Authorities of the early modern state imposed norms and exercised control without the older institutions' ever completely losing their influence. In this fashion, public authorities made an effort to trivialize the emotional context of violent public confrontations, thus minimizing the honor available to combatants. Smail, "Hatred as a Social Institution"; Heinz Schilling 'Discipline: The State and the Churches in Early Modern Europe,' in *Social Control in Europe, 1500-1800* eds. Herman Roodenburg and Pieter Spierenburg (Columbus, 2004): 25-37.

⁵¹ Prot.Jud. Doc. II.6/1572-1575, fol. 49-71.

him. Keresztúry's wounds were so serious that he died few days later in the house of the barber who cared for his injury. A woman testified:

The night Keresztúry was slain she heard the servant of Mihály Kapa who called for Antal Asztalos saying: 'Come with me, lo, a nobleman went for the maid servant, let us capture him and truss him up!' She [the witness] found in the morning the wife of Mihály Kapa and asked her twice about the incident of the previous night at her house. She [Kapa's wife] denied it twice, saying that she heard nothing. She [the witness] said: 'Do not deny it because others heard it as well, those who were further away'. After that she [Kapa's wife] said: 'I heard my maid crying out but as I ran to the door and could not open it, I turned back to my bed.'

The testimonies disclose two outcries: first the cry of the maid that justified the "policing" action of the apprentices, and second the outcry of the wounded man. Various stories slipped out in court. Some witnesses underpinned the story of a household disturbed in its tranquility; others supported the tale of vengeance concocted by the master and his wife. So the host's plan, seemingly, was carefully worked out. On the night of the fight, traveling burghers saw Kapa in a distant village. This was his alibi, and his absence also suggested a household without male surveillance, vulnerable to outsiders' harassment. Gradually, however, a fuller picture emerged and blame shifted from the noble to his hosts. After the death of the nobleman, the authorities arrested the maid and two of the apprentices, while the artisan's wife was released on bail. Rumors of scandal circled around town. Men and women alike had visited the dying nobleman, and his version of the story spread in the streets; people met the artisan's wife and discussed it in the shops and even in the prison, where they managed to grasp some more details from the arrested maid. Apprentices and maid alike told how Kapa's wife offered gifts and tried to talk them into the assault.

The false outcry from inside the house had gathered a biased crowd of apprentices, who claimed to protect the honor of their master's household. It was they who involved outsiders by running out in the street and calling through neighbors' windows, and they were keen for legal action against nobleman Keresztúry. None of these circumstances much convinced most witnesses of the noble's guilty conduct, but, in their testimony, they failed to give grounds for their doubt.

Conclusion

These stories, if tangled and a bit obscure, still brim with lessons about the dynamics of a sixteenth-century Transylvanian town. Through the analysis of a specific social mechanism, certain aspects of the whole community become visible: response to hue and cry depended first of all on the cohesion of neighborhoods and on people's readiness to embark on policing upon hearing the outcry. By drawing citizens together, it set up a crowd that had functions at once official and social: private people undertook persecution of felons caught red-handed or suspected of offense, and took an active role in reestablishing order (either by violence or by pacification). Equally important was the role of hue and cry in redressing honor. In fact, hue and cry represented a process in which private persons, victims and witnesses alike became active agents of social control and law enforcement. This seemingly unselective clamor merged social control from below with control that worked top down: order not only involved private people but depended on them, and so hue and cry softened the boundary between regime and people, that is, between high and low.

Also, the landscape and soundscape of the town interacted with raising the hue. People's moves in response to the outcry effaced the usual divide between in and out, between domestic space and street. The cry itself, whether from inside or outside buildings, rendered their boundaries more than normally porous. Hue and cry worked a bit like those molecules that make cell membranes permeable; it facilitated transit not, in Kolozsvár, of molecules but of persons, not only of their bodies, but of their observing eyes and their peremptory moral actions. Thus, with hue and cry, street and house, normally distinct, merged in ways otherwise abnormal.

Urban Order and Street Regulation in Seventeenth-Century Sweden

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Abstract

This article examines how, in the early modern towns of Stockholm and Åbo, royal interests, town planning, street building and maintenance, and street behavior related to ideas and ideals of urban order. Town laws and ordinances, royal letters and some town court records are employed to tell a story of royal interest in well-ordered, impressive, successful towns; various street plans for the capital and the smaller provincial towns; and the varying execution of renewal plans. It is evident that the capital was to reflect the royal person and the state and that streets and street behaviour were important in this regard. But in towns outside the capital, especially in concrete street maintenance, the centrality of streets does not clearly emerge. The burghers in towns operated as individuals—there was no bottom-up or top-down plan or supervision.

Keywords

Street, order, town planning, hierarchy, urban

Introduction

In Sweden, the seventeenth century was a time of intense urban formation. New towns were founded, old towns resituated or given new regulations. This was also an era of a town planning frenzy unparalleled elsewhere in Europe. A great number of new town plans were drawn up. They reveal a strong interest in commerce and fortification and an equally strong ambition to express the glory and greatness of the king and his kingdom. The latter was especially important at the capital. Consequently, in the seventeenth century Stockholm became the symbolic centerpiece for Sweden's growing Baltic empire.¹ In other towns, development was often less

¹ Birgitta Ericsson, "De anlagda städerna i Sverige ca. 1580-1800," in *Urbaniseringsprosessen*

dramatic, as across the Gulf of Bothnia, in the province of Finland, where the town of Åbo² developed in its own, less dramatic, way. Early modern statehood, with its desire for grandeur, aspirations for order and harmony, and need to arrange trade and administration efficiently, left its mark upon the streets, both in the capital and in other towns.

Although creating new street systems was one of the central goals of seventeenth-century town planning, the street, in early modern Swedish and Finnish history, has received scant attention. This article develops some central aspects of the early modern Swedish and Finnish cultural history of the street.³ We ask how royal interests, town planning, street building and maintenance, and street behavior related to ideas and ideals of urban order. We discuss both elite perception and burgher experience. Scholars of urban history in both Sweden and Finland have often emphasized governmental perception. Given the strong royal influence on urban development in early modern Sweden, this approach has made good sense. Here, too, we discuss the various timbres of the royal voice as expressed in law codes, ordinances, town plans, and town charters, but we also assess royal initiatives in response to practical realities of town and city life and we contemplate other voices in and about the streets. We treat two towns:

i Norden 2. De anlagte steder på 1600-1700 tallet [Founded towns in Sweden ca. 1580-1800] The process of urbanization in the Nordic Countries 2. Founded towns of 1600s and 1700s), ed. Grete Authén Bolm (Oslo-Bergen Tromsø, 1977), 103-109; Sven-Erik Åström, "Anlagda städer och centralortssystem i Finland 1550-1785," in *Urbaniseringsprocessen i Norden 2. De anlagte steder på 1600-1700 tallet*, [Founded Towns and the Central Place System in Finland 1550-1785] ed. Grete Authén Bolm (Oslo-Bergen Tromsø, 1977), 135-157, 160f; Linnea Forsberg, *Stormaktstidens Stockholm tar gestalt. Gaturegleringen i Stockholm 1625-1650* [Stockholm of the Age of Greatness takes form. Street regulation in Stockholm 1625-1659] (Stockholm, 2001), 24-31; Nils Ahlberg, *Stadsgrundningar och planförändringar. Svensk stadsplanering 1521-1721* [New Foundations and Change of plan. Swedish Town Planning 1521-1721] (Uppsala, 2005); Spiro Kostof, *The City Shaped. Urban Patterns and Meanings Through History* (London 1991), 111.

² The Finnish name of the town is Turku (and it appears in some of the bibliographical notes). As we are writing about the Swedish kingdom, we use the Swedish names of the towns, even if usually in English publications today, Finnish names of Finnish towns are used.

³ We talk about Sweden and Finland when discussing current scholarship, but Sweden or the Swedish kingdom when talking about seventeenth-century society and culture. Finland was part of Sweden from the Middle Ages on. Even if Finland was more than just one province among others, it was in no way an autonomous part of the state. In the seventeenth century, the eastern part of the kingdom had a Governor General (in addition to provincial governors); also, laws were often translated into and printed in Finnish. In the field of history both countries have their own national traditions.

Stockholm, the capital of Sweden and the place of royal residence; and Åbo, an important provincial town now in southern Finland, then in the eastern part of the kingdom.

In our essay we will show that there was a clear tendency to organize ordered streets, but the multitude of actors with their varied views to order and urban space (general and particular) made what happened in and to the streets quite complicated.⁴ We will view the complexity of street order from three perspectives: royal orders, town plans, and local conditions.⁵

Urban development had a complex early modern context: the bureaucratization of the central royal administration; the development of economic policy; increasing state intervention in urban life; and the spread of town planning ideals among the aristocrats and administrators. In seventeenth-century Europe's state building process, Sweden took a leading role. From the century's early decades, one of the most efficient of state bureaucracies developed, and Swedish society, various scholars claim, was characterized by growing social discipline and political control.⁶ Central government and regional governors tried to control town councils and integrate them into the royal administration. Not that they always succeeded. Indeed, burgomasters and councilors were extremely creative when it came to avoiding and obstructing state control.⁷

⁴ See about the complicated nature of order, for example, Michael J. Braddick and John Walter, "Introduction. Grids of Power: order, hierarchy and subordination in early modern society," in *Negotiating Power in Early Modern Society. Order, Hierarchy and Subordination in Britain and Ireland*, ed. Michael J. Braddick and John Walter (Cambridge, 2001).

⁵ Our focus will be on the times of King Gustavus Adolphus and Queen Kristina (and going slightly past her rule), c. 1611-1660, when the town renewal was at its strongest.

⁶ Jan Lindegren, "The Swedish 'Military State', 1560-1720," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 10 (1985); *A Revolution from Above? The Power State of 16th and 17th Century Scandinavia*, ed. Leon Jespersen (Odense, 2000).

⁷ Petri Karonen, "Raastuvassa tavataan". *Suomen kaupunkien hallinto- ja oikeuslaitoksen toimintaa ja virkamiehiä suurvalta-aikana* ["Meet you in court." Activities and officials in Finnish urban administration and court during the Age of Greatness] (Jyväskylä, 1995); Petri Karonen, "Borgmästare mellan staten och stadssamhället. Förvaltnings- och rättskulturer i det svenska rikets städer under stormaktstiden," in *Mellan makten och menigheten. Ämbetsmän i det tidigmoderna Sverige* [Burgomasters between state and society: Administrative and legal culture in early modern Sweden], eds. Börje Harnesk and Marja Taussi Sjöberg (Stockholm, 2001); Dag Lindström, "Från lokal konfliktlösare till administrativ stab. Råd och kämnärsrätt i Karlstad under 1600-talet," *Scandia* 69 (2003) [From local conflict-solvers to administrative staff. City council and the lower court of justice]; Dag Lindström, "Förhållandets praktik. En politisk och social strategi i det tidigmoderna Sverige," *Historisk Tidskrift* 2005, 10-14. [The practice of dragging things out. A Political and Social Strategy in early

Already in the Middle Ages, the Crown had started to stress its relationship to urban centers, especially emphasizing the importance of commerce.⁸ However, urban development accelerated in the seventeenth-century, when urban policy became one of the keystones of the economic system. The later sixteenth century and the seventeenth century saw many new towns founded; the number of towns doubled, almost all built by royal initiative.⁹ Some of the new towns were founded for military reasons but most were expected to promote trade and commerce and to facilitate commercial control and taxation. The royal interest in planning well-ordered, impressive, successful towns always went hand in hand with a desire to increase state revenues.¹⁰ One of the crucial measures taken by the government, from the early seventeenth century on, was the organization of a staple system. Foreign trade was concentrated in a few staple towns like Stockholm, Göteborg and Åbo. Most Swedish towns were thus cut off from foreign trade. The system also aimed at allocating rural commodities to specific towns and specific trade routes. Through these measures a new urban hierarchy and a new urban-rural relationship emerged.¹¹

The ruling elite were sometimes dismissive of the existing towns. King Gustavus Adolphus described his towns as 'lacking in trade, rotten and broken down.' Chancellor Axel Oxenstierna called them 'insignificant

modern Sweden]. In 1690 the governor became aware that the accounts for Karlstad, a town in western Sweden, for many years had not been completed and delivered to the regional authorities. The council promised to settle the accounts, but at every meeting one councilor or another pointed out some obscurity that needed a closer look. Others declared that they had not seen the accounts, or that they had just recently become members of the council, and therefore needed more time before they could approve the accounts. Other councilors refused to approve the accounts if other councilors had any doubts about them. (Lindström, "Förhållandets praktik," 11f.)

⁸ Anders Andrén, "State and Towns in the Middle Ages. The Scandinavian Experience," *Theory and Society* 18 (1989), 598-607.

⁹ During the reigns of Gustavus Adolphus and Kristina, 1611-1654, 12 towns were founded in Finland and 26 in Sweden. By the middle of the century the kingdom boasted over 80 towns. Only about 40 towns were of medieval origin. Petri Karonen, *Pohjoisen suurvalta. Ruotsi ja Suomi 1521-1809* (The Nordic great power. Sweden and Finland 1521-1809) (Porvoo, 1999), 176.

¹⁰ Ericsson, "De anlagda städerna," 100-02, 109-10; Robert Sandberg, "Town and country in Sweden, 1450-1650", in *Town and country in Europe, 1300-1800*, ed. S. R. Epstein (Cambridge, 2001), 179.

¹¹ Sandberg 2001, 49-52.

market places' and 'thieves' dens.'¹² According to Sven Lilja, the two men were right; he writes that most towns were "merely agglomerated villages with a few 'urban' functions."¹³ But recent research indicates that even the smaller Swedish towns may have been less insignificant than commonly assumed.¹⁴ Even if most towns were small, by the mid-seventeenth century, Stockholm, with a population of 30-40,000, was definitely being transformed into a splendid center of an expanding empire, and there is no denying that many other towns were slowly growing and developing as well. In this general urban development, the street had an important role to play.

Town Laws and Royal Interventions—A Well-Ordered Town

In the seventeenth century, early modern Swedish towns faced a number of new regulations, many of them commercial. The royal government extended its ever-growing control over the local urban administration. But, even during the seventeenth century, Magnus Eriksson's town law from the mid-fourteenth century was still in force. The law had only a few specific provisions dealing with the street. It stipulated that every town should have two building inspectors to assure that anyone building in the town would do so according to accepted custom and in a manner that caused no trouble for his neighbors.¹⁵ The street (*almänningis gatur* = public, common streets) as such is mentioned only a few times: no one was allowed to build a latrine too close to the street, streets should be at least

¹² Quoted in Sven Lilja, "Small Towns in the Periphery: Population and Economy of Small Towns in Sweden and Finland During the Early Modern Period," in *Small Towns in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Peter Clark (Cambridge, 1995), 50.

¹³ Lilja, "Small Towns," 50-51; also Robert Sandberg talks about the lack of central place functions in early Swedish towns and the non-urban appearance of most towns, even if he generally stresses the strong urbanization process, see "Urban Landownership in Early Modern Sweden," in *Power, Profit and Urban Land. Landownership in Medieval and Early Modern Northern European Towns* (Aldershot, 1996), 180-81.

¹⁴ For example, Claes Westling, *Småstadens dynamik. Skänninges och Vadstenas befolkning och kontaktfält ca 1630-1660* [The Dynamics of Small Towns. Skänninge and Vadstena—People and Contacts ca. 1630-1660], (Linköping, 2002). Westling shows that population estimates based on tax registers strongly underestimate the actual population and demonstrates a much richer and more diversified economy than earlier believed to have existed.

¹⁵ However, there are no specific instructions as to how this should be done.

4.75 meters wide and they had to be kept clean, and no overhang should be more than half the width of the street.¹⁶

In addition to Magnus Eriksson's town law, in 1619 a draft for a general town ordinance (never passed as law) was written. According to the ordinance, the burgomasters and the councils were obliged to protect, order, and promote prosperity and expansion. The ordinance gave the burgomasters and councils extensive powers, including decisions about streets and buildings. Two inspectors were to be appointed in each town, but now their task was defined more extensively as supervising houses, bridges, wharves, streets, and alleys. They were to carry out inspections and make notes about defects four times a year. They were also expected to make sure that the streets were paved and kept clean.¹⁷

While the old town law focused on individual builders and their houses, the directives in the ordinance of 1619 emphasized the public town. Where the medieval law restricted how new houses could be built by regulating relations between neighbors, the inspections ordered by the 1619 ordinance concerned above all the town hall, gates, towers, fortification walls, market booths, wharves, bridges, streets, and alleys, i.e. common structures and public spaces.¹⁸ This change in approach would imply that the concern of the state had shifted towards the shared urban space, of which streets, of course, were part.

¹⁶ *Konung Magnus Erikssons Stadslag*, ed. H. S. Collin and C. J. Schlyter, (Samling af Sveriges gamla lagar, vol 11) (Stockholm, 1865). The town law was translated into Finnish in 1609 at the latest, but the translation was never printed—probably because towns were so few in Finland and the language in urban administration was always Swedish. The only remaining Finnish manuscript contains mistakes and misunderstandings in its translation. *Sveriges rikets stadslag öfversättning på finska språket af Ljungo thomae*, ed. Wilh. Gabr. Lagus (Helsingfors, 1852).

¹⁷ *Privilegier, resolutioner och förordningar för Sveriges städer V*, ed. Folke Sleman (Stockholm, 1964), 309, 311f, 367, 381f, 385-87, 411f, 416-18, 430; *Privilegier, resolutioner och förordningar för Sveriges städer VI*, ed. Folke Sleman and Carl-Fredrik Corin (Stockholm, 1985), 200, 240, 245f, 286.

¹⁸ *Privilegier, resolutioner och förordningar V*, 311; Riitta Laitinen, "Rakentamassa 1600-luvun järjestyksen kaupunkia," *Ennen & Nyt* (2) 2006, http://www.ennenjanyt.net/2006_2/referee/laitinen.html [Building a seventeenth-century orderly town]. This kind of development can be placed in the context of some wider developments all over Europe, where emphasis seems to go from lived shared urban space to government controlled public space. In this volume Maria Helena Barreiros discusses this development in the case of Portugal. This development was, however, by no means simple and straightforward and more work should be done on this issue by urban historians.

The way the authorities identified the street changed. The medieval law, defining the width of common land between houses by stating that a horse and a wagon must be able to pass each other, treats the street as space between buildings.¹⁹ The 1619 ordinance, on the other hand, treats the street as a part of the material structure of a town, something that needs to be built and maintained.

In addition to drawing up the ordinance of 1619, the government promoted urban development further by issuing many town charters based upon it. The charters, which in content and at times even in phrasing echoed the 1619 ordinance, included explicit visions of the desired urban development. Streets were important in those visions, even if the instructions, as in the 1619 ordinance, lacked detail. In 1617, the new town of Nystad (Newtown in English) received her royal charter. The town's burgher community was expected to build good streets and houses. Similar expectations were expressed in the charters of Norrtälje in 1622.²⁰ Several royal charters between 1620 and 1623, both to new towns and to old, pointed out the council's obligation to maintain order and prosperity. The charters' attention to building and maintaining good streets was no mere talk. Negligence in street maintenance also called for action, as a letter to the governor and royal councilor Lindorm Ribbing indicates. In 1623, the king complained that house-owners in Söderköping, a town of medieval origin, did not keep the streets paved as was expected. The streets were in decay and needed attending by house owners, at the risk of losing their property rights in the town.²¹ The royal will, clearly, was both to build good streets in new towns and to better the conditions of the streets in extant settlements.

In the Norrtälje and Nystad charters, the instructions for good streets appear in a paragraph that speaks of the town council's obligation generally to provide good conditions and good order in the town. Population growth, good streets, proper houses, and the duty to foster a sufficient supply of shops and taverns, are all mentioned in the same context. In connection with this, burgomasters and councilors were also urged not to allow any vagrants to enter the town. Together these measures would benefit the

¹⁹ It is not clear in the law text whether two wagons should be able to pass or just a wagon and a horse.

²⁰ *Privilegier, resolutioner och förordningar* V, 227; *Privilegier, resolutioner och förordningar* VI, 118f.

²¹ *Privilegier, resolutioner och förordningar* VI, 194

burgher community, visiting merchants, and the whole kingdom. The paragraph opens and closes with an emphasis on the need to maintain honor. Obviously the issue of street conditions was included in a wider context of order and prestige.²²

Stockholm's streets received attention from the early seventeenth century on. In 1614, a royal resolution encouraged the council to keep the streets in better order. Streets and alleys were filled with filth and dirt, a disgrace not to be tolerated.²³ A letter from the royal government in 1640 approaches the street from a slightly different angle. The streets in the northern part of the town had been built in a disorderly manner, but should now be made regular and better built. This would credit the crown, and benefit royal subjects and increase their comfort.²⁴ Here again, the street turns into a built space of order which adds a new dimension to street regulations.

Royal concern about the capital's streets surfaced in various ordinances now and again during the seventeenth century. In April 1649, Queen Christina issued an ordinance establishing that good and well-paved streets were one of the "graces and utilities of wealthy towns" (*til wälbestälte städers prydnad och nytto*). The Queen went on, expressing her concern about street conditions in her capital. The streets were uneven and in some areas there were no proper streets at all. To put this right, the queen ordered the house owners to pave the streets evenly. This should be done before the end of September. Filth and waste was another problem; dirty streets caused odors and diseases. To avoid this, every house owner was to keep his part of the street clean, removing filth and waste every week. Anyone unable to do this himself was to pay the town servants to do it instead.²⁵

In seventeenth-century Sweden, generally, owners were responsible for the maintenance of the street in front of their house. They could do the

²² A comparable way of equating the material order with the benefit of the town can be seen in Emese Balints treatise of Transylvanian urban fire prevention in the sixteenth century. See p. 50 in this volume. Also about the wider context of urban order see, for example, Michel Foucault, "Space, Knowledge and Power," *The Foucault Reader*, ed Paul Rabinow (New York, 1984), 241 and Christopher Friedrichs, *The Early Modern City 1450-1750* (London 1995), 75, 246.

²³ *Privilegier, resolutioner och förordningar* V, 126.

²⁴ *Stockholms stads privilegiebref 1423-1700*, (Urkunder rörande Stockholms historia 1), eds. Carl Hildebrand & Arnold Bratt (Stockholm, 1900-1913), 246.

²⁵ *Samling utaf kongl. bref, stadganden och förordningar ang. Sweriges rikets, commerce, politie och economi*, del 2, ed. A. Stiernman (Stockholm, 1750), 583f.

paving of the street themselves or hire someone else to do it. Sometimes there were communal obligations: for example, in Linköping in 1698 it was decided that everyone who used *Ågatan* (Riverstreet) to carry water should help with the paving of the street. When the market place or a bridge needed paving, work could be divided among the burghers or someone could be hired to do the work and a levy would be collected.²⁶ Both of these methods were used, for example, in Åbo.²⁷ According to the 1619 ordinance's general instructions, the town magistrate had authority to decide such details.²⁸ But in Stockholm the queen took a different approach. The 1649 ordinance about the streets announces a new street paving order for the town. While everyone was still responsible for his or her bit of street, the Queen now ordered the appointing of street pavers, with fixed pay for the work. Now the burghers should not pave the street themselves, but merely pay for the work, and the result would be even streets, good enough for the queen.²⁹

But not all towns received royal charters, ordinances, or letters that touched on street building and maintenance. One that did was Åbo, the most important town of the Province of Finland. Åbo, the second largest town in the kingdom, traced back to the thirteenth century. It was Sweden's commercial gate to the eastern part of the nation and, for Finland, a gate to Stockholm and the whole of the Baltic region, but, still, charters of Åbo have no references to streets. In the documents of the central administration regarding Åbo, the streets appeared only in the 1640s, when new town plans started to emerge. So, regarding Åbo, if one were to view the authorities' interest in street merely through town law and town ordinances, with their short forays into such matters, it would seem that the crown was little interested in the physical appearance or condition of the streets. Not even the 1619 general ordinance included any detailed regulations about street building and maintenance.³⁰ The details were left to the

²⁶ Folke Lindberg, *Linköpings historia, del 3* (Linköping, 1975).

²⁷ For example, *Turku Court Records*, Turku City Archives, 9.1.1663, 29.8.1663.

²⁸ *Privilegier, resolutioner och förordningar V*, 309.

²⁹ *Samling utaf kongl. bref*, del 3, 583f. The question of street ownership, and the question of public and private in regard to it, are very complicated and should be studied further. Here, it suffices to say, that there was no clear division of public and private regarding the streets, or even the plots lining the streets—as is with private and public in general in early modern Europe as can be seen in all articles of this collection. In Swedish old towns urban land could be owned by the crown, the town, or private townspeople.

³⁰ It is not possible to establish to what extent the contents of the 1619 ordinance were

town administration, and with no new charters, Åbo's administration was left completely on its own.

As we as we shall see later when we turn to town planning, the laws and ordinances were not the only thing affecting local urban development. Still, the documents are telling. When Stockholm and Åbo are compared, the importance of the capital to the monarch becomes evident. The capital was the royal town; it reflected the royal person and the state. The interest in other towns was less intense. Some towns, for example those that the monarch founded, received particular attention at times and the royal interest in the general development of towns was strong,³¹ but the tale of Åbo, the kingdom's second largest town, indicates that, often, this interest faltered.

The authorities were interested not only in street regulations, street paving, and street cleaning. They were equally concerned about the behavior in the street. Several ordinances from the seventeenth century deal with unseemliness in the streets, and again especially in Stockholm. A 1649 Stockholm ordinance on Christmas peace ordained that turmoil, noise, fights, and shouting in the streets be avoided lest they raise God's wrath.³² Christmas peace had been proclaimed regularly in Stockholm since the late Middle Ages.³³ However, the 1649 ordinance was a much more detailed than medieval and sixteenth century announcements and its central message was this: that people should behave like good Christians, listen to the word of God, and stay away from drunkenness and fighting.

A number of subsequent ordinances dealt with similar problems. In 1659, the Council of the Realm issued an ordinance against shouting and shooting in Stockholm's nocturnal streets (*förbudh på ropande och skiutande nattetidh på gatorna*). Guards were to be appointed to patrol the streets and to uphold peace and order.³⁴ (Unlike most other Swedish towns,

known by the town magistrates, but copies are kept at least in the town archives of Stockholm and Gothenborg, and a number of new town charters were based on the 1619 ordinance. *Privilegier, resolutioner och förordningar* V, 306.

³¹ Göteborg was the most important of the new towns. It was founded for both economic and military reasons. Many of the new towns were established to facilitate and also to control trade and commerce, and a number of important new towns were founded as mining centres. Ericsson, "De anlagda städerna."

³² *Samling utaf kongl. bref*, del2, 620f.

³³ Eva Österberg and Dag Lindström, *Crime and Social Control in Medieval and Early Modern Swedish Towns* (Uppsala, 1988), 93f.

³⁴ *Samling utaf kongl. bref*, del 2, 897. Similar orders were given also elsewhere in Europe. See for example Graig Koslofsky, "Court Culture and Street Lighting in Seventeenth-Century Europe," *Journal of Urban History* (26) 2002: 759.

Stockholm already had a regular guard organized as a military squad, from the late sixteenth century on.)³⁵ The problems obviously continued, as additional ordinances were issued in 1660 and 1661. According to them, noise was not the only problem. Verbal and physical attacks on pedestrians were a major problem as well. The 1660 ordinance mentions that the national Diet risked being disturbed, and the 1661 ordinance talks about scoffing, blows, violence, robbery (*hänische ord, hugg & slag, wåld, roof*) violating the public peace (*den allgemene Freden*).³⁶ In 1664, a more extensive ordinance talks about attacks against burghers' booths and shops. The troublemakers are identified as "a bunch of high-handed people, especially of lower company" (*een hoop silfzwäldiger folck, besynnerligen aff det gemena sällskapet*). According to the ordinance, often servants and other people without any established position (*tjänare, eller annat löst sällskap*) abused passers-by and even threw things at them. On the other hand, it is indicated that some of the shootings may also have had upper-class origins, as the ordinance forbids the new fashion of firing guns at feasts and banquets.³⁷

The 1649 ordinance referred to the Christmas peace, whereas the ordinances from the 1660's refer to street disturbances as a more general problem. Why was this problem addressed so eagerly in the 1660s? The street had always been a stage for interpersonal conflict and violence.³⁸ As a matter of fact, the frequency of registered violent crimes actually declined rapidly in seventeenth-century Stockholm.³⁹ These ordinances tell us a story about increasing tension between elite groups and lower classes, expressed in street violence. The 1664 ordinance maintains that assaults in the streets,

³⁵ Hj. von Sydow, "Stockholms polis," [Stockholm's Police] in *Stockholm, Sveriges huvudstad*, del 1, ed. E. W. Dahlgren (Stockholm, 1897), 256.

³⁶ *Samling utaf kongl. bref, stadganden och förordningar ang. Sveriges rikes, commerce, politie och economi*, del 3, ed. A. A. Stiernman (Stockholm 1753), 5, 57.

³⁷ *Samling utaf kongl. bref*, del 3, 191-97.

³⁸ E.g. Maria Kaspersson, *Dödligt våld i Stockholm på 1500-, 1700- och 1900-talen* [Deadly violence in Stockholm in 1500s, 1700s and 1900s] (Stockholm 2000).

³⁹ Arne Jansson, *From Swords to Sorrow: Homicide and Suicide in Early Modern Stockholm* (Stockholm, 1998), 14-23. Similar decline of interpersonal violence, especially homicides, has also been found in Åbo as well as elsewhere. Heikki Ylikangas, "Reasons for the Reduction of Violence in Finland in the 17th Century," *Crime and Control in Europe from the Past to the Present*, eds. Mirkka Lappalainen and Pekka Hirvonen (Helsinki, 1999), 165-66, 170-71; Petri Karonen, "In Search for Peace and Harmony? The State and Capital Crimes in Late Medieval and Early Modern Swedish Realm (ca. 1450-1700)," *Crime and Control in Europe from the Past to the Present* eds. Mirkka Lappalainen and Pekka Hirvonen (Helsinki, 1999), 218.

sometimes with severe injuries, were committed “without any due cause.” To the elite and other well established residents this was more frightening than ordinary honor-linked fighting in the streets. These tensions and feelings of discomfort grew at the same time as the authorities, for other reasons, wanted to regulate and control the streets.⁴⁰

The royal ordinances concerning disturbances of peace in city streets deal mostly with Stockholm. A thorough investigation of the archives on this matter has not been done, so nothing definite can be said about towns in general. We do know that the king was concerned about conditions in Göteborg in 1624, when he twice made it known that assaults and robberies in the streets must stop. A group of rogues and villains (*en hoop skalkar och bofiwar*) was allegedly responsible for these attacks, and for smashing windows. The king also stated that, as the town was fortified, anyone who stayed in Göteborg should enjoy the same security and peace as in any royal castle.⁴¹ Again, there were no royal proclamations about orderly living in Åbo, even if the town court records clearly show that nightly disturbances were very much part of Åbo town life as well. Then again, General Governor Per Brahe’s concern over peace keeping in his administrative center is also evident, as there is information about a guard regulation he wrote for Åbo in 1650 (of which no copies have remained) and about a plan of his for a permanent night guard. The permanent guard was not realized and the burghers remained responsible for maintaining order in the town,⁴² but the disorderly behavior of the town had not escaped the attention of the high authorities.⁴³

The royal concern over orderly town life did not limit itself to violence or noise making. Stockholm’s 1664 ordinance takes up the matter of processions—funerals and weddings, where uninvited people caused trouble and inconvenience. The ordinance associated such problems with the

⁴⁰ Also about the tension between elite and other groups see, for example, Graig Koslofsky, “Court Culture and Street Lighting in Seventeenth-Century Europe,” *Journal of Urban History* (26) 2002, 759.

⁴¹ *Privilegier, resolutioner och förordningar VI*, 224, 232.

⁴² Åbo town was divided into four quarters, which were arranged into files. In each file each burgher in his turn was to keep watch at night. Guard duty was not popular and burghers were often fined for non-appearance.

⁴³ Riitta Laitinen 2007, “Night-time Street Fighting and the Meaning of Place. A Homicide in a Seventeenth-Century Swedish Provincial Town,” *Journal of Urban History* (33) 2007, 604-08; Raimo Ranta, *Turun kaupungin historia 1600-1720* [History of Turku town 1600-1729] (Turku, 1975), 600, 602.

lower classes. Consequently, masters and mistresses were to urge their servants not to take part in any such activities. According to the ordinance, riders, carriages, and sleighs caused additional problems by disturbing processions and even scattering them.⁴⁴

In early modern society, funeral processions were an important social event and the street was their logical setting. The most spectacular processions took place in the capital when members of the royal family or the high nobility were buried. But there were processions there for less prominent members of the nobility and for burghers as well. This was an event where social positions and social prestige could be displayed. But the records show that the social and cultural use of street processions was far from simple. Traditionally, clergy, students, and schoolboys took part in the processions more or less uninvited. They sang their songs and read their poems and even expected payment. Disagreements commonly arose over money. Members of the nobility and the burghers became less and less willing to pay for sermons, songs, and poems they had not ordered, and some even wanted to abandon the traditional processions altogether. For the clergy and schoolboys this had been an important source of income and they wanted to keep the tradition. The elite, on the other hand, gradually became less and less willing to mix with ordinary people, especially with members of the lower classes. Popular customs were frequently reinterpreted as manifestations of disorder. Gradually, funeral processions and similar events became more restricted, or were even abandoned altogether, which meant that these important social events left the streets and the public sphere and moved indoors and into a more closed and private sphere.⁴⁵

Both the church and the royal government wanted to restrict the processions.⁴⁶ Several regulations even reveal possible conflicts between social

⁴⁴ *Samling utaf kongl. bref*, del 3, 191-97.

⁴⁵ Bengt Sandin, *Hemmet, gatan, fabriken och skolan. Folkundervisning och barnuppföstran i svenska städer 1600-1850* [Home, street, factory, and school. Folk education and child rearing in Swedish towns 1600-1850] (Lund, 1986), 126-40. Cf. Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York, 1978), 270-81. About the restrictions of ceremonies elsewhere see, for example, Carl B. Estabrook, "Ritual, Space, and Authority in Seventeenth-Century English Cathedral Cities," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 32 (2002); Charles Phythian-Adams, "Ceremony and the citizen: the communal year at Coventry 1450-1550," in *The Early Modern Town. A Reader*, ed. Peter Clark (London, 1976), 106-128.

⁴⁶ The Church Law of 1571 did not say much about the matter, but the church law drafts and the Church Law of 1686 paid more attention to it.

elites and the authorities. One church law proposition from 1650 stated that only invited persons should attend the funeral and the procession and that there should be no additional clergy, students, or schoolboys. The procession should sing three songs only, the first when picking up the coffin, the second on the way to the church, the third when arriving at the churchyard. No one should be obliged to pay anything for the singers and priests, but one could pay if one wished. The Church Law of 1686 stressed that one must act according to one's status; there should be: no expensive coffins and shrouds; as few relatives present as possible; no wakes; silence at the coffin's carrying to church; and no great processions.⁴⁷

In 1664, a number of royal ordinances put restrictions on clothing, banquets, and festivities around betrothals, weddings, christenings, and funerals. All vain extravagances (*färfänge bekostningar*) should be avoided, and a practice among burghers and clergy of arranging several processions was forbidden. Only one procession should be allowed. The dimensions of noble funeral processions were curtailed: just two horses, a banner of moderate size, and the decorations modest.⁴⁸ In 1668, a new royal decree followed, prohibiting all ostentation and abundance (*prål och överflöd*) at noble funerals and processions.⁴⁹ These new rules put immediate restrictions on the possibilities of expressing ritually social prestige and position in the street.

Curiously, the nobility and the burghers also argued in favour of restrictions and even of abolishing the funeral processions. The clergy, on the other hand, even though they argued against any extravagances, actually wanted to keep them. According to them, this was an important original Christian tradition. If funeral processions in the streets were to be abandoned this could lead to religious confusion. In 1680, the nobility nevertheless strongly argued that funeral processions, where the body was carried in the street from house to house, were an abuse that would lead to nothing but God's punishment. According to the argument, processions were a major problem for the nobility, as they could not neglect the obligation to express their social position.⁵⁰ If, on the other hand, the funeral was removed

⁴⁷ "Förslag till kyrko-ordning, Olof Laurelius (1650)" in *Kyrko-ordningar och förslag dertill före 1686* (Stockholm, 1881); "Förslag till kyrko-ordning, Erik Empogarius (1650)," in *Kyrko-ordningar och förslag dertill före 1686* (Stockholm, 1881); *Kircko-Laki ja Ordingi—/ Wuonna 1686 on andanut coconpanna..* (Turku 1688).

⁴⁸ *Samling utaf kongl. bref*, del 3, 233, 237, 259, 267, 273, 282.

⁴⁹ *Samling utaf kongl. bref*, del 3, 730.

⁵⁰ *Borgarståndets riksdagsprotokoll före frihetstiden* (Uppsala 1933), 76f; *Prästeståndets riksdagsprotokoll*, Ed. Sven Olsson, del 3, 1668-1678 (Stockholm 1956), 44-46; *Prästeståndets*

from the public street and transferred to a restricted private sphere, it was also possible to limit expenses. The nobility was allowed to refrain from funeral processions altogether and, in 1681, a royal resolution permitted the burghers in Stockholm to do the same. In 1686, the burghers of other Swedish towns were also permitted to abandon the funeral procession.⁵¹

Ironically, the very members of the Swedish regency who issued the restrictive ordinances in the 1660s were themselves among the leading consumers of luxury and organizers of processions. In mid-seventeenth century Sweden the importance of conspicuous consumption grew rapidly. Impressive processions, expensive banquets, and costly carriages proclaimed importance, influence, and social prestige. The high nobility led this development but others followed.⁵² These practises might express order but they could also disturb it. The high aristocracy and other elites shared the same uneasiness with popular interference, which would cause disorder. They probably even shared a similar understanding of prestige and how it could be expressed. But, to the high nobility, conspicuous consumption might also disrupt good order when practiced by burghers, lower nobility, and others. This could challenge the existing social hierarchies and accordingly had to be restricted.

It is even more ironic that in the late seventeenth century, when funeral processions were restricted and most of the social elite perhaps abandoned funeral processions, royal funerals and other processions were arranged on a scale never experienced before. Many of them were orchestrated by Nicodemus Tessin, the leading architect of Stockholm and Sweden. These royal rituals and processions in the Stockholm streets were minutely arranged. Even soldiers were present in the streets to guarantee that common people be separated from the processions and not interfere and disturb them.⁵³ The streets of Stockholm became a space where royal glory

riksdagsprotokoll, Ed. Lennart Thanner, del 4, 1680-1714 (Stockholm 1962, 154-157; *Sveriges ridderskaps och adels riksdags-protokoll*, del 10, 1668 (Stockholm 1893), 584f; *Sveriges ridderskaps och adels riksdags-protokoll*, del 13, 1680 (Stockholm 1896), 281f.

⁵¹ "Stockholms stads privilegiebref," 462, 489.

⁵² Margareta Revera, "En barock historia. Om den svenska 1600-talslyxen och dess plats i samhällsomvandlingen," [A baroque history. On Swedish seventeenth-century luxury and its place in social development] in *Tre Karlar. Karl X Gustav, Karl XI, Karl XII*, ed. Gudrun Ekstrand (Stockholm: Livrustkammaren 1984).

⁵³ Mårten Snickare, *Enväldets riter. Kungliga fester och ceremonier i gestaltning av Nicodemus Tessin den yngre* [Rites of absolutism. Royal feasts and ceremonies sketched by Nicodemus Tessin Jr.] (Stockholm 1999).

was expressed in even more impressive manner at special occasions. At the same time, the nobility and the burgher elite tended to abandon the street as a space to express their position.

It is also likely that, what the authorities understood as disorder, to others actually expressed order. To the schoolboys, funerals were of obvious economic importance. The records sometimes also indicate that chanting and singing in the streets may have been a part of a broader street culture not restricted to funeral processions. In 1672, the Swedish clergy remarked that the school choir in Kalmar had been forbidden by the town council to walk around the town and sing their choruses on St. Martin's day. The clergy argued that this was an old custom practiced in many towns and that prohibitions against street singing could not be applied to school choirs. According to the clergy, there was a difference between an educated choir and just anybody singing songs in the streets.⁵⁴ The street culture practiced by the schoolboys may very well have been a part of a well-established custom that reproduced social roles and expressed one interpretation of urban order. Popular participation in funeral and other street processions may have had the same character. These practices did not become representations of disorder until urban elites and the authorities decided that they interfered with their new concept of order.

Planning Perfect Towns

The symbolic importance of the streets as a fundamental part of the urban environment, at least for the higher elites, shows clearly in the town plans of seventeenth-century Sweden. Drawn according to Renaissance and baroque aesthetics, such plans came down from the highest authorities and touched the townspeople only when realized. Several Swedish rulers, Gustavus Adolphus (1611-1632) for example, were personally interested in town planning and followed European trends quite closely. A number of leading officials, like Axel Oxenstierna (Chancellor of the Realm, 1612-1654) and Erik Dahlbergh (head of the Fortifications Administration, 1676-1703), also took a strong interest in town planning and devoted much time to it. The plans, on one level ideological exercises, spoke the language of royalty, the educated, and the administration, but they were also thoroughly pragmatic; they were based on actual survey measurements

⁵⁴ *Prästeståndets riksdagsprotokoll, del 3, 1668-1678* (Stockholm 1956), 80.

and aimed at real physical changes in the towns.⁵⁵ Thus, they can and must be approached from the point of view of both the crown and the townspeople themselves.

Engineers measured lands of new and existing towns, and architects and other town planners drew various kinds of new plans. Some plans covered the whole towns, some parts of towns, and some laid out just one new central street. Planning first flourished at the beginning of the seventeenth century, but its high point was in the 1640s and the 1650s. It was a massive enterprise; in all, according to the thorough investigations of Nils Ahlberg, between 1521 and 1721 there were 170 new town plans, 65% of these in Sweden and Finland and the rest in the newer provinces in the Baltic Countries, Poland, and Germany.⁵⁶

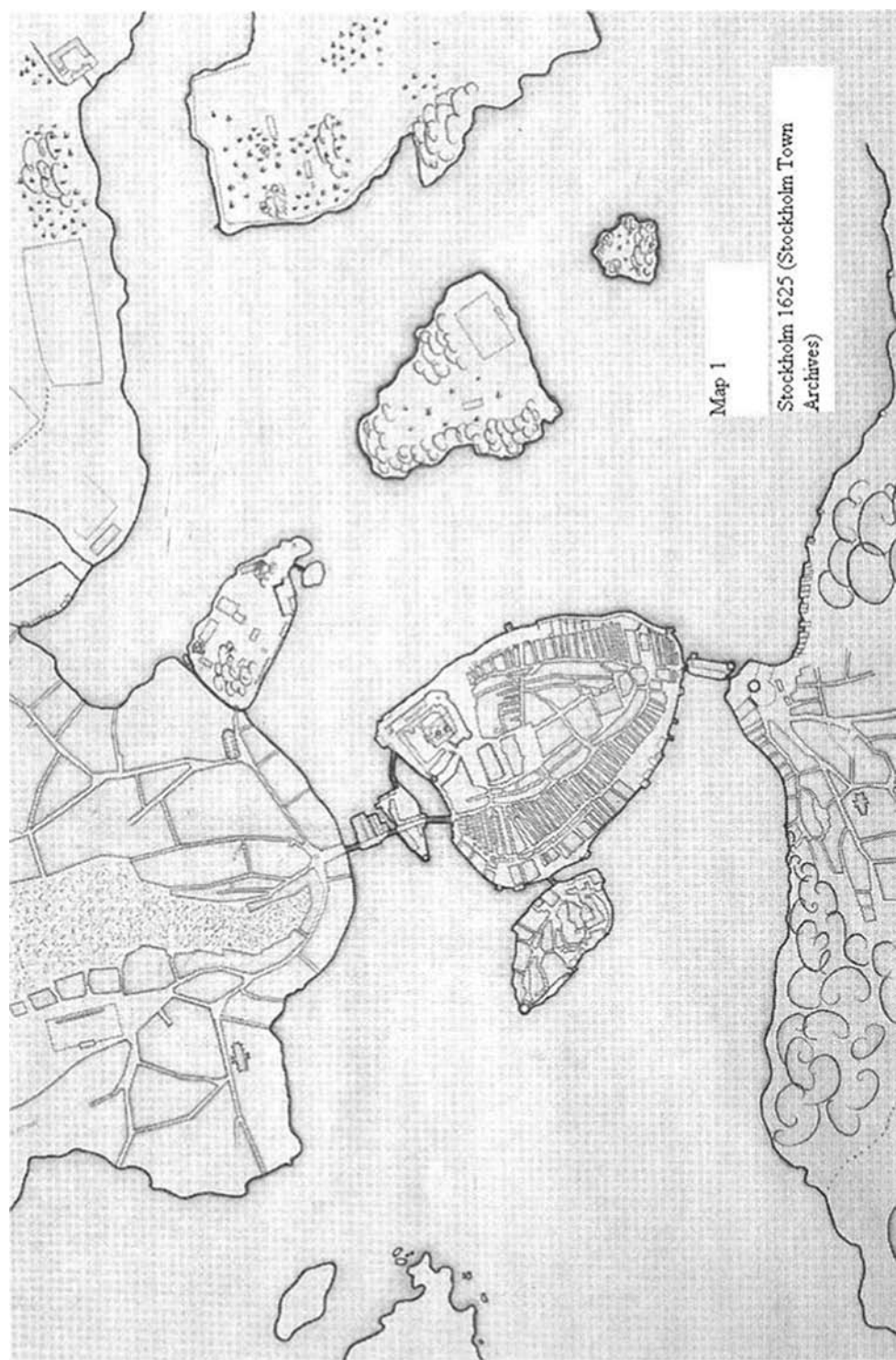
Our central towns in this article, again, had quite different destinies. Stockholm, as the capital, was at the center of both the plans and their realization. The transformation of Stockholm into a distinguished capital was one of the most important town planning projects of seventeenth-century Sweden, and, in fact, one of the most far-reaching urban restructuring projects realized in seventeenth-century Europe. It included both the construction of impressive buildings like the House of the Nobility and several private palaces, and the application of a regular street system. In 1625, a fire destroyed much of the western part of the old town center. When it was rebuilt, the medieval street system with narrow alleys was abandoned and replaced with a regular street system, and a new main street (Stora Kungsgatan, now called Stora Nygatan) was built, with stately houses. The medieval town wall at the eastern waterfront was also to be torn down. In 1629, the grand building project started and by 1669 a magnificent row of private palaces and splendid merchant houses was complete. The face of the old town center had changed fundamentally.⁵⁷

Stockholm was originally built on a couple of islands. The main island, with the royal castle, became the place of an urban settlement sometime after the mid-thirteenth century. The town grew rapidly and soon became the most populated and most important town in Sweden. The medieval street system probably developed organically; there is no indication of a

⁵⁵ Forsberg, *Stormaktstidens Stockholm*, 24-31; Ahlberg, *Stadsgrundningar*.

⁵⁶ Ahlberg *Stadsgrundningar*, 78.

⁵⁷ Thomas Hall, *Huvudstad i omvandling. Stockholms planering och utbyggnad under 700 år* [The changing capital. 700 years of planning and building Stockholm] (Stockholm, 1999), 60f.



general street plan. The oldest part of the town is characterized by rather large irregular blocks and long curved streets. Outside of the oldest settlement and outside the original wall, narrow alleys lead down to the shore. These alleys form a ring of long and narrow blocks surrounding the oldest town center (Map 1).⁵⁸

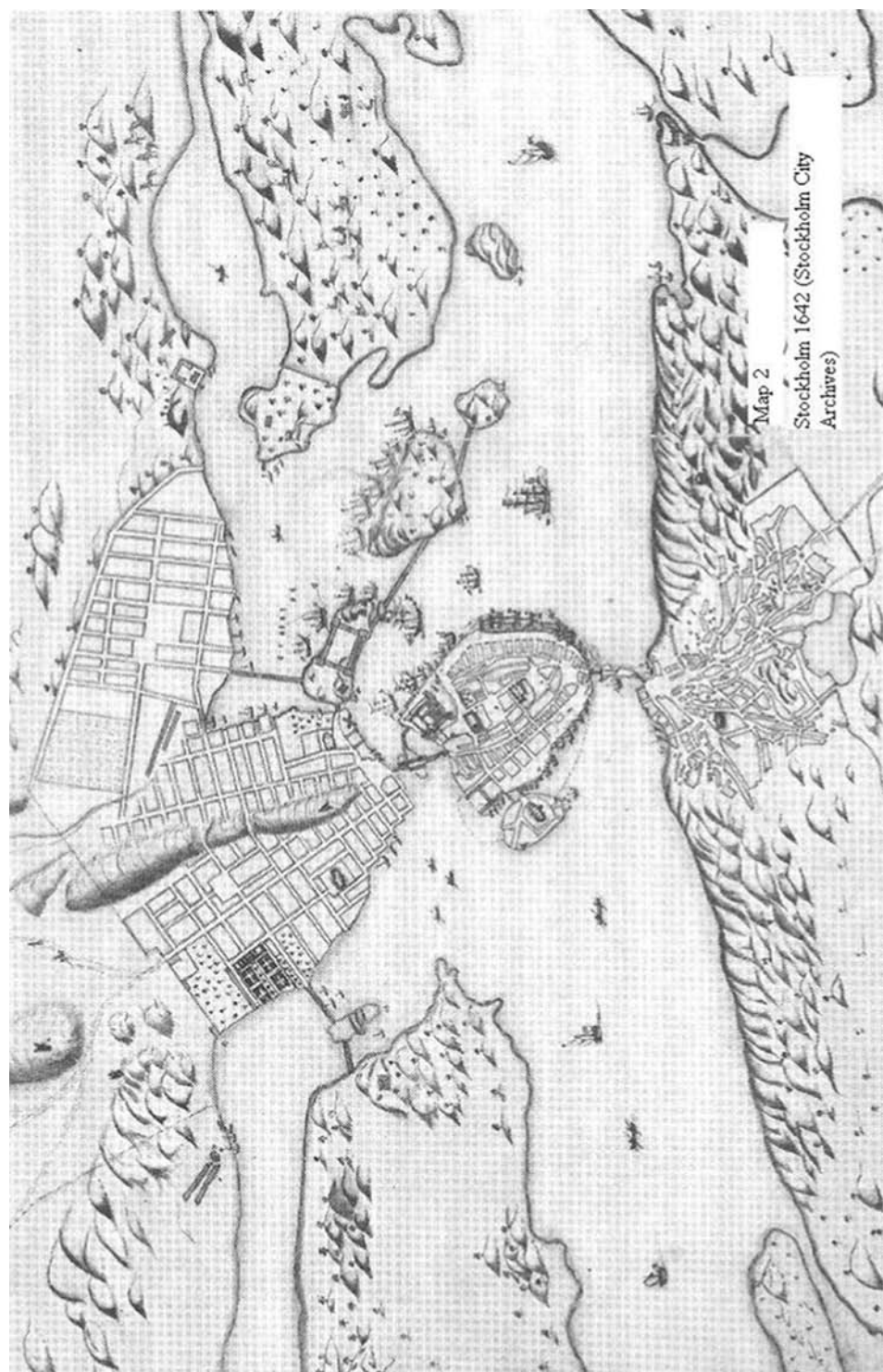
Stockholm had already expanded beyond the original islands in the Middle Ages, but it was not until the seventeenth century that the suburban street system was regulated according to a set plan. Several town plans followed the principles of a regular street system. In 1637 the regulation of western Norrmalm, north of the medieval nucleus, began. The existing houses were pulled down and the new street and regular block system was systematically implemented. Soon the work continued and the other suburbs (eastern Norrmalm, Östermalm and Södermalm) were restructured according to similar plans. By the mid-seventeenth century, the new street regulation of Stockholm was basically completed and the street plan that largely still remains was established (Map 2). The Stockholm town plans have been described as a town-planning project for a rapidly growing capital, and Stockholm's population indeed grew from around 10,000 inhabitants in the early seventeenth century to almost 60,000 at the end.⁵⁹ The restructuring of the capital was a complicated project. It meant heavy expenses for the town, and it stirred opposition among the inhabitants. The royal government had allocated revenues to finance the changes and compensated house owners when they had to tear down and rebuild their houses. Recent research actually indicates that the realization of the new town plan was less hard on the burghers than had been assumed.⁶⁰

The new Swedish capital was very much a continental creation. Simon de la Vallée, born in France, was the first professionally trained architect in Sweden. He started the construction of the House of the Nobility in 1641, and he also created several private palaces in Stockholm. His son Jean studied in France and Italy. Together with Nicodemus Tessin, Jean de la Vallée continued the work of his father. Tessin's son, Nicodemus Tessin the younger, completed the splendid baroque transformation of Stockholm,

⁵⁸ Hall, *Huvudstad i omvandling*, 25-42.

⁵⁹ Marianne Råberg, *Visioner och verklighet. En studie kring Stockholms 1600-talsplan* [Visions and reality. A Study of Stockholm's town plan of the 1600s] (Stockholm, 1987); Hall, *Huvudstad i omvandling*, 53-97; Forsberg, *Stormaktstidens Stockholm*; Ahlberg, *Stadsgrundningar* 2005, 527-44;

⁶⁰ Forsberg, *Stormaktstidens Stockholm*, 161-82, 194-96.



Map 2

Stockholm 1642 (Stockholm City Archives)

with the new royal castle as the crowning glory. He studied architecture and landscape gardening in France and Italy. Tessin spent several years in Rome, where he studied under Carlo Fontana. In the restructuring of Stockholm, Rome became an explicit role model. In his own diary, Tessin describes how he searched out important architectural sites in Rome, and how he made sketches of anything that could be of use in Sweden. He also pondered how to overcome the difficulties of Swedish climatic conditions and the poor quality of available craftsmen.⁶¹ Nevertheless, palaces and impressive houses with rich sandstone decorations gave the important streets their desired splendor. On the other hand, in the less wealthy neighbourhoods, small wooden houses still dominated, even on straight streets.⁶²

Stockholm was not the only town where grand town plans resulted in a regular street structure. Another grand project of Swedish seventeenth-century town planning was the foundation of Göteborg. The new town began in 1619. It was built for both military and commercial reasons, to secure and to develop Sweden's connections to the North Sea and to attract, especially, Dutch merchants. A town plan existed by 1619. It was revised several times, but the new town, soon one of Sweden's most important ports, acquired a regular street system, modern fortifications, and a system of broad, straight canals. The Dutch influence—basing on King Gustavus Adolphus's interest and connections with Dutch planners—on the layout of Göteborg is obvious, including the wide quays and straight, broad avenues with trees along them.⁶³

Åbo, on the other side of the Gulf of Bothnia, also received its street regulation plans; it is an example of less magnificent planning and realization, common to many Swedish towns. Åbo differed from Göteborg by being a medieval town with existing narrow streets and an irregular town plan and from Stockholm by being much smaller and less important to the monarch. At its largest, Åbo had 6000 inhabitants yet, among the small towns of Sweden, it was second only to Stockholm. Åbo had a university, a royal court of appeals, a cathedral (the only one in Finland), the seat of a

⁶¹ Mårten Snickare (ed.), *Tessin. Nicodemus Tessin d.y. Kunglig arkitekt och visionär*, (Stockholm, 2002); Claes Ellehag, *Jean de la Vallée. Kunglig arkitekt*, (Lund, 2003).

⁶² Forsberg, *Stormaktstidens Stockholm*, 189; Hall, *Huvudstad i omvandling*, 61-63.

⁶³ Råberg *Visioner och verklighet*, 47f; Bertil Andersson, *Göteborgs historia. Näringsliv och samhällsutveckling. Del 1. Från fästningsstad till handelsstad 1619-1820* [History of Göteborg. Livelihood and social life. Part 1. From a fortress town to a trading town 1619-1820] (Stockholm, 1996), 51-60; Ahlberg, *Stadsgrundningar*, 316, 411-23

Governor General (to administer the whole of Finland; the county governors answered to him), and full trading rights (for domestic and international trade, one of three such towns in Finland).⁶⁴ Thus, Åbo was an important town, but the new town plans were not realized systematically or widely.⁶⁵

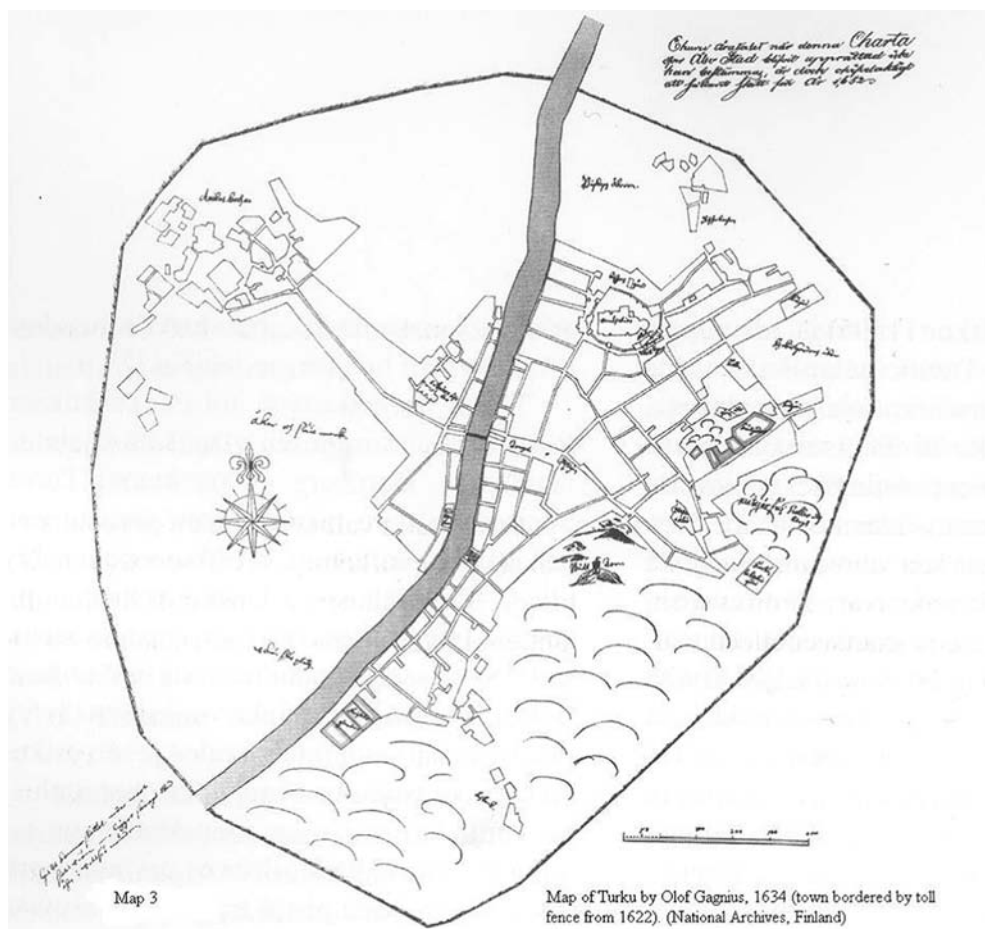
Åbo had a medieval town plan similar to that of many Baltic towns (see Map 3). In the Middle Ages, it followed German traditions, being built around a church and a market place beside it. The central market place for the seventeenth century, further from the church, was built in the fourteenth century and followed a German market place / town hall combination. In general, Åbo's streets and houses followed the low lands between seven hills.⁶⁶ In 1700, in the earliest surviving description of Åbo, Daniel Juslenius writes that, among the rocks, there were only enough openings for the needed roads to town. No pictures of seventeenth-century Åbo remain, and only few maps have survived. We do know that houses mostly surrounded their plots, forming a courtyard, much as did houses in the countryside. Juslenius, trying to elevate the status of his grey and low-lying, mostly wooden town, reports that visitors admired the openness of the town as well as the fruit and herbal gardens in courtyards. He writes that around the market place and in the quarter of town near the market, people had stone houses, which did not stand out for their façades, but did raise admiration with their fine interiors. In the seventeenth century, stone houses existed only around the market place and the church, and archaeological research indicates that most of the streets in those areas were also paved. Elsewhere, the town was only just trying to get rid of chimneyless houses: an order to tear down these primitive, fire-hazardous dwellings was given in 1631, and new houses were usually built with chimneys.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Karonen, *Pohjoinen suurvalta*, 38-39; Ranta, *Turun kaupungin historia*, 145-50.

⁶⁵ Juhani Kostet, "Turun asemakaavallinen kehitys keskiajalta vuoden 1827 suurlouheen," in *Turun nimistö 1, Turun Maakuntamuseo, Monisteita* 8 (1996), 23-63, 29, 40-43 [Town plan development in Turku from the Middle Ages to the great fire of 1827]; Lilius, Henrik, "Kaupunkirakennustaide suurvalta-ajalla," in *Ars. Suomen taide*, ed. Salme Sarajas-Karte (Helsinki 1988), 59, 65 [Urban architecture in the age of greatness]; Forsberg, *Stor-makstidens Stockholm*, 27, 29.

⁶⁶ Kostet, "Turun asemakaavallinen kehitys," 31, 36-37.

⁶⁷ Daniel Juslenius, *Vanha ja uusi Turku*, transl. from original *Åboa vetus et nova* by Tuomo Pekkanen ja Virpi Seppälä-Pekkanen (Helsinki, 1988 (1700)), 25-27; Ranta, *Turun kaupungin historia*, 96-97.



When, in 1640, Brahe's first term of office ended, the planning pretty much ground to a halt, but at the edge of the existing settlement, in New Town, new streets that followed his design crept slowly along the riverside. In 1640, burghers were asked to demolish all their granaries by the riverside to make way for the survey of new lots, on which wealthy administrators and nobility were to build their new lofty houses.⁶⁹ The plans went slowly, however, and there was no intense pressure to tear down anything. Still, in the mid-1640s, persons who began building houses on the new lots asked the town council to have the granaries pulled down.⁷⁰

Per Brahe returned to his governorship in Finland in 1648 and resumed his town-planning project immediately. There were new measurements and new plans, proper plans by a trained town planner.⁷¹ The project by engineer Hans Hansson, based on measurements made in Åbo by himself, included straight streets and a grid for the New Town, but left the old center around the cathedral and the market place mostly in peace (see Map 4). Burghers registered some complaints about the building of new streets on their lots or where their houses lay; clearly, then, parts of the plan were carried out. Town court records indicate, however, that the works disturbed especially the poor parts of town; in two less fashionable areas, people were ordered to move out. A fire in 1656, destroying most of the town, expedited reconstruction, even if pestilence and war efforts slowed things down. By the end of the century, the New Town across the river began to resemble the grid-plan town, but the medieval center's basic layout did not change. It was transformed only after the 1827 great fire, when wider and straighter streets were built and parks established.⁷²

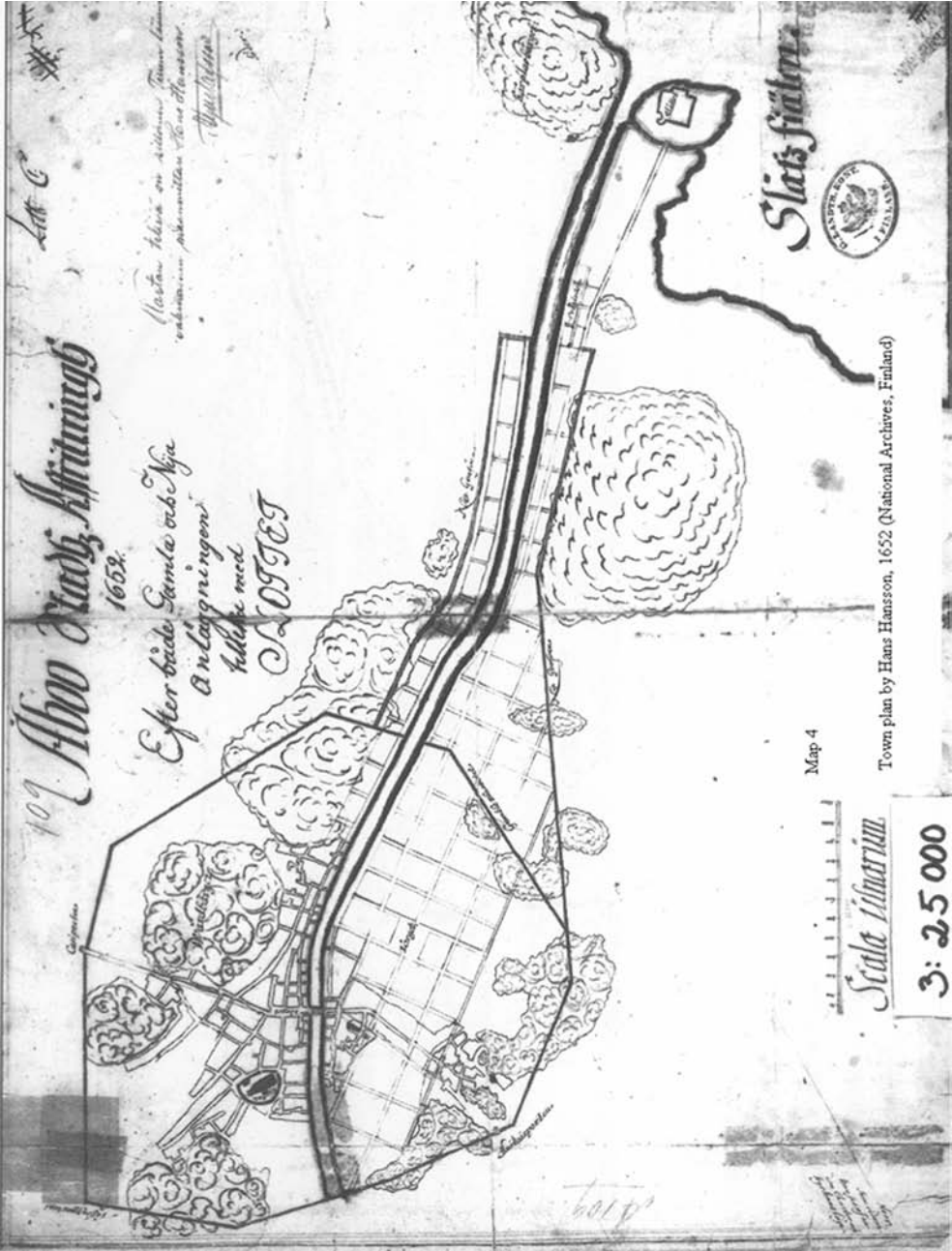
Earlier research has opined that the burghers strongly resisted the regulation of Åbo's streets, hindering the plan's full implementation. As with Stockholm, however, so recent scholarship on Åbo has pointed out that

⁶⁹ In Sweden in general, nobility did not live in town even if they had houses there. They mostly resided in their country mansions. There is no knowledge of what Åbo riverside granaries looked like. Even the buildings's use as granaries is only an assumption as *boden* means both granary and shop. It is most likely however, that the buildings in question were granaries lining the riverside.

⁷⁰ Hanna-Leena Väisänen, *Kaupunkisuunnittelu ja kaupunkirakentaminen Turussa 1638-1661* [Town planning and building in Turku 1638-1661], unpublished MA thesis, (Turku 2007), 21, 23, 26-28 ; Kostet, "Turun asemakaavallinen kehitys," 40-41.

⁷¹ Väisänen, *Kaupunkisuunnittelu*, 48-54; Kostet, "Turun asemakaavallinen kehitys," 41.

⁷² Väisänen, *Kaupunkisuunnittelu*, 53-54, 79-81, 89; Kostet, "Turun asemakaavallinen kehitys," 42-44.



things were probably less black and white. For example, the complaints to the crown, central to earlier analysis, mostly angle for compensation after the houses have been torn down and the streets have been built. The burghers did not make official complaints before the building project, but did complain about other things, for example, some trade regulations they wished abolished. At no point that we know of did the burghers officially ask that the town regulation plans be annulled.⁷³ It seems that, both in the capital and in provincial Åbo, earlier interpretations about a clear opposition between the crown and the burghers do not hold up.

When looking at towns other than the capital, it seems that the ideas and activities of provincial governors and town officials dictated what happened. In Åbo, Governor General Per Brahe played the key role. Elsewhere, the provincial governors were important. For example, in the town court records of Vasa, the governor himself stresses both the fire-safety and the esthetic value of wider streets.⁷⁴ Whatever the impetus for the actual renewal in street plans—the initiative of a keen official or some grave fire—behind the renewals were the administrators' and planners' Renaissance and Baroque ideals of wide streets and straight street lines. Even the most mundane street repair work could be influenced by the lofty ideals from the town planners' drawings and the royal halls. When we look at the perception and experience of the street, from the monarch on down to the burgher, as a continuum and not as a strictly two-layered relationship where the ruler orders and the burgher either opposes or knuckles under, we can see both the ideal street and the local material and social street as the complex symbolic and material entities that they were. A closer look at one particular street maintenance case in Åbo illuminates well the various levels of street renewal in everyday urban life.

Street Building and Maintenance—Planning, Confusion, and Inefficiency (A Case Study)

Stockholm supplies a case study where street regulation was realized and where the regime kept close watch on maintenance and street behavior. In Åbo, things were less clear-cut. One problem for our comparison is that Åbo has far fewer sources. It was still just a provincial town, and then the great fire of 1827 destroyed much paper. But the town court records, both

⁷³ Väisänen *Kaupunkisuunnittelu*, 68-74.

⁷⁴ Lilius, "Kaupunkirakennustaide," 65. See also Ranta, *Turun kaupungin historia*, 544.

judicial and administrative, mostly intact, allow us to take a closer look at Åbo's streets.

In the records, material streets figure mostly in pleas to participate in their repair. Every couple of months, burgomaster and council gathered the burghers to town hall to hear official announcements. These most often included the following: warnings against illegal lodging of visitors; admonitions to be careful with fire; demands to follow the trading rules; and requests to participate in street repair. As pointed out earlier, it was every burgher's duty to help maintain the material town. Everyone had to furnish, one way or another, materials for the street in front of his house, and also for other streets nearby.⁷⁵ The appeals for street maintenance often came up in relation to practical, concrete things, for example, when streets had sunken, or when water had flooded the street, or when a street was in such bad shape that it was hard to reach the place it led to.⁷⁶ In addition to repairs, the burgomaster and council demanded cleanliness of streets, and of the river. Some town documents record work done; most are just pleas for help.

We have a couple of references to an actual maintenance project, one to rebuild Åbo's street drainage.⁷⁷ In early September of 1642, the town council relayed a wish of the governor's: Aninkaisenkatu-street (*Aningaisgatan*, name coming from a medieval house/family name), with a stone-paved gutter in the middle, should be rebuilt to crown the middle and shift the gutters to the edge.⁷⁸ Each burgher should take in hand the stretch of the street before his house.⁷⁹ Next spring, an order to continue the work in town was given. The new order insisted that last fall's work should not be taken as a model; everybody on Aninkaisenkatu-street had started work on his stretch of the street on his own time. So the gutters failed to meet and the drains failed to drain. Rather, the building should now happen in an orderly manner, each house after another, from one end of the street to the other.⁸⁰ Stockholm too saw similar problems, although for different reasons; in 1699 a royal resolution was needed to make citizens of the town

⁷⁵ For example *Turku Court Records* 21.8.1643.

⁷⁶ *Turku Court Records* 25.4.1663, 25.2., 5.2., 2.4.1643; Ranta, *Turun Kaupungin Historia*, 55.

⁷⁷ How extensive this change was to be is not clear from the sources; no overall plan exists.

⁷⁸ There is no information whether there was a sidewalk and therefore we do not know how close to house walls these gutters at the sides of the street would have been.

⁷⁹ *Turku Court Records* 3.9.1642.

⁸⁰ *Turku Court Records* 6.5.1643.

comply in street maintenance. There, people under the power of the magistrate had done their part, but others had done nothing.⁸¹

Seen as local history, separated from the wider Swedish or even European connections, the Åbo street repair incident just shows maintenance work at its simplest and most practical. But, seen with ideals of order and of town planning in mind, it is telling. We start by remembering the role of the provincial governor who initiated the drainage project, but does not appear in the case otherwise. In the hierarchy of urban administration, the provincial governor was quite high. His role was to supervise all administration in his province—taxation, worship, the care of the poor, schools, courts, and buildings—as well as to inform town council and burghers about royal decisions and orders and to implement them.⁸² From 1635, according to new regulations, the governor did not have to attend the town council meetings;⁸³ He could send his letters to the town council, who tended to read his suggestions and advice as orders.⁸⁴ So, even if the governor appears as rather invisible in the sources, he was not without influence.

The governors were high in the national hierarchy and often were kin, patrons, or clients of persons in the court or royal administration.⁸⁵ The position at Åbo was very sought after, as Åbo was the administrative center of the province of Finland.⁸⁶ These governors of noble status were intermediaries between the state administration and the burghers of the town and with the burghers' own officials. For example, in 1638, Governor Schering Rosenhane from Norrköping first recommended to the

⁸¹ "Stockholms stads privilegiebref," 246.

⁸² Liisa Lagerstam, *A Noble Life. The Cultural Biography of Gabriel Kurck (1630-1712)* (Turku, 2007), 216.

⁸³ The role of the governor in this respect changed in 1634 and 1635, when new regulations for the provincial governors were given. Both the responsibilities and the rights to participate in the town administration diminished, but the governors apparently lost little of their influence in practice. Ranta, *Turun kaupungin historia*, 543-44.

⁸⁴ Petri Karonen, "*Raastuvassa Tavataan*," 48; Ranta, *Turun Kaupungin Historia* 544, 592. A good example of a very active governor comes from Karlstad, where in the late seventeenth century the governor frequently intervened in the work of the town council. About one quarter of all administrative cases handled by the council were initiated by the governor, often via letters to the council. Lindström, "Från lokal konfliktlösare till administrativ stab," 21.

⁸⁵ Lagerstam, *A Noble Life*, 211-15.

⁸⁶ Lagerstam, *A Noble Life*, 212.

crown his candidate for burgomaster and then at the crown's behest imposed him on the town.⁸⁷

The general governors' role and high status can be read to imply that even if the implementation of the drainage work in Åbo points towards practical repair of particular streets, Åbo governor's role in instigating it can connect it to wider town planning ideals—at least hypothetically: unfortunately very little is known about the opinions of particular Åbo governors, including Knut Lilliehöök, governor at the time of our case.

Whatever the governor's possible high ideals for order, the execution was distinctly far from orderly. The burghers operated as individuals—there was no bottom-up or top-down plan or supervision. Thus, the maintenance of shared urban spaces was not fully organized (and thus the ideals of the ordered town were well out of reach even if they may have been present more than we think at first glance), but it also tells us something about how the burghers saw themselves in regard to their council, their governor, and their duties. The burghers were subservient to the burgomaster and the council (who subserved the crown), but they were not always very keen to carry out 'chores' expected of them and, as here, operated as individual property owners, not as an administered community.

The burghers were not inclined to rebellion, but often dithered. When they were slow in helping in street repairs, the town watchman was to go to each house with a written order, insisting on compliance, with a due date, under penalty of fine.⁸⁸ Foot-dragging, in early modern Sweden, was a common social and political strategy. It defied irksome orders and showed independence. It worked as a tool for bargaining and negotiating, for example, while one awaited one's sentence for an offence; time could be on one's side and procrastination could help settle a case. On the other hand, procrastination let one display disapproval without openly opposing social order.⁸⁹ So, dithering about their duties did not detach the burghers from the administration of the town or imply direct rebellion. It was a way of working with and in the administration. Thus, burghers could both complain of disrepair and still fail to fix the streets. For example, in 1663 a group of men approached the burgomaster and the town council in writing, proposing that one street be paved in wood for easy passage.⁹⁰ Such

⁸⁷ Karonen, "Raastuvassa Tavataan," 50. About this also in Lagerstam, *A Noble Life*, 190.

⁸⁸ *Turku Court Records* 9.1.1663

⁸⁹ Lindström, "Förhållandets praktik," 2005.

⁹⁰ *Turku Court Records* 25.4.1663.

appeals were not as usual as the continuing pleas from council to get the burghers to participate in street maintenance, but they imply that urban order was something that the burghers expected from the administration of the town. The burghers may have not been eager to lay out their own wealth and labor for the council's use, but they presumed some kind of order in the street repair as well as elsewhere in street life.⁹¹

As read from the Åbo street drainage case, the world of streets, regulations, and everyday life was in one way a well defined, ordered system of burghers, councils, governors, and the crown, just as the authorities had planned. But it was also unstable because of differing conditions in each particular town, and especially dependent on each particular official's thinking, as well as on the burghers' views towards shared urban work. In Åbo, as also in other towns in the Swedish kingdom, the seventeenth century was a time when the urban administrative system was taking hold and the newness of it all appears, for example, in the way that streets were maintained.

In the capital, a new street regulation was realized, and street paving and street behavior became a major governmental issue. The street was a space where social order and social prestige were expressed. When street order was addressed in seventeenth century Stockholm, it was very much the order of the social and political elite, which did not necessarily coincide with popular concepts of order and definitely misfit popular practices. Yet the social and ideological importance of the street is further emphasized in that the quality of the streets is often perceived in official documents as corresponding to the quality of the town; implicitly, well built and impressive streets would add to the glory of the ruler.

Especially in concrete street maintenance, and towns outside the capital, a slightly different perspective surfaces, where the centrality of streets does not clearly emerge. Most references to streets as material entities in Åbo come either from laws and ordinances or the town council's proclamations to the burghers, and both are very inexact. No court cases between townspeople concern the condition of the streets or touch on the processes of building or repairing them. It seems that everyday street maintenance concerned the town administration most of all, the Crown somewhat, and the burghers little indeed. Both the crown and the burghers, in their own ways and through their own agendas, regarded the appearance and func-

⁹¹ The cases in court and church records, which reflect the townspeople's understanding of order, include, for example, cases of slander, students' and journeymen's fights, and rows over church benches.

tionality of the street as important, but they both fundamentally understood the matter as a thing for the local administration.

The seventeenth century was a time in Sweden when new understandings of the street evolved. At least in royal expression the street became more than a space between buildings. It developed into a built space that had to be regulated and maintained. In practice this began to mean that the street became more restricted, and, from certain points of view, less social. The authorities partly monopolised the streets as a space where royal glory and prestige was staged; private rituals were curtailed and even abandoned to more private spaces. But, on the other hand, frequent ordinances and regulations about street behaviour and street use also reveal persistent popular practices and popular understandings of the street. In local conditions the voices of royal and popular understandings—and those in between—are hard to decipher and separate, but it is clear that even with the advent of the early modern state, the street prevailed as a space for social interaction and social expression. Town planning ideals were central to all urban development in Sweden, but the realization varied according to the importance of the town to the ruler, according to the interests of the local officials, and according to the views of the burghers. It is clear that the development of the streets was connected with general ideas of order (which different actors had their own take on). In provincial towns, the effects of early modern statehood and its aspirations were limited. While, in the capital, building practises and the understandings of the street had already changed fundamentally, elsewhere, the movement toward the modern street had only just begun.

To Pray, to Work, to Hear, to Speak: Women in Roman Streets c. 1600

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Abstract

Using pictures, city regulations, and judicial records, this essay claims a place for women of varying rank and status in the street life of early modern Rome. It revises the conventional binary of male public realms and female domesticity that, reinforced by scholarly expectations of Mediterranean gendered seclusion, obscures a necessary female presence in the city. In urban spaces outside their homes beggars, prostitutes, servants, working wives, nubile daughters, and even gentlewomen faced risks, but also cadged opportunities. Though excluded from government and corporate decision-making, women routinely ventured into the streets in pursuit of many goals: heavenly salvation, earthly livelihood, neighborly support, vital information, or momentary pleasure. While Rome's patterns of physical and demographic growth distinguished it in important respects from other Italian cities, it is nevertheless likely that, as in Venice, these female uses of urban space had analogues elsewhere.

Keywords

Women, urban space, public, private, neighborhood, communication

Introduction: Beyond Public and Private

Streets in early modern Rome were lively, untidy, often dangerous. They were also central to survival and well-being for most city dwellers. Especially during daylight hours, the streets teemed with a promiscuous hurly-burly of adults and children, men and women, neighbors and strangers, some moving purposefully about their business, others just hanging about. Porters and carters with mules distributed goods on which the city depended for its livelihood. While the affluent, those on official business, and even modest folk with far to go might travel in closed coaches drawn by horses, Roman residents mostly moved about on foot. They often engaged with others met along the way, so that, besides activity at a destination, a welter

of impromptu encounters gave texture to daily life. Through a complex web of streets circulated not only people and goods, but also, vitally, information. In many more and less spontaneous oral exchanges city dwellers collected, assayed, and delivered news—observing, gaping, listening, gossiping, shouting, and singing, as well as reading aloud official declarations posted at public gathering spots or scurrilous libels tacked to “talking” statues and doorways. It was unpredictable who might learn what, how and when. Hot news might flow swiftly, but much useful data and commentary moved only erratically through networks that stuttered. This turbulent motion of bodies—human and animal—and of messages and cultural signs challenged and sustained both the city as a whole and the individual fortunes of its denizens.

In the rich life in Roman streets women, both high and low, had roles to play. This essay contests a persistent, if not universal, scholarly presumption that in early modern Italian cities the husbanding of honor routinely banished women from public spaces. Underpinning the historian’s discourse of seclusion is a discourse of risk. Streets and piazzas in the past held real dangers—bodily, material, social and psychological.¹ Yet for most early modern *Romane* avoidance was neither possible nor expedient. We should not imagine women only as scuttling fearfully across dangerous public terrain in search of safe domestic refuge. Indeed, we may well misconstrue not only the perils of the outdoor terrain, but also the security of the indoor haven. Besides risks, there were important, sometimes critical benefits for women in participating in the urban culture beyond their doorsteps. Never leaving home had opportunity costs. Religious devotion, many kinds of work, sociability both private and collective, and vital communication and networking all drew women into the streets. Males did dominate urban places, but females regularly used many of them too. Rank, civil status, wealth, and occupation shaped variant norms and patterns for women’s public behavior. Not all knew the streets in the same way, but even those who ventured only occasionally into them depended on the movement, deeds, and words, often of other women, that happened there.

¹ For a nuanced account of the risks, anxieties, and benefits of street life for city women in London, see Laura Gowing, “‘The Freedom of the Streets’: Women and Social Space, 1560-1640,” in *Londinopolis*, ed. P. Griffiths and M. Jenner (Manchester, 2000), 130-51. I do not dismiss for Roman women the kind of stresses Gowing describes, but to counter the image of woman-empty Italian streets, I here broaden my argument for female visibility and activity; see Elizabeth Cohen, “Seen and Known: Prostitutes in the Cityscape of Late Sixteenth-Century Rome,” *Renaissance Studies* 12:3 (1998), 392-409.

Studies of the gendered inflections of social space in early modern Europe seem doomed to wrestle with the troubled binary, skirted already in this essay, of public and private. Scholars regularly deploy this pairing and link maleness to outside and public and femaleness to inside and private. These associations are convenient and do bear some truth, but reducing a complex environment to a sharply bounded theoretical dichotomy is often awkward. For this Roman inquiry I need a third, intermediate or overlapping category, one that may well prove helpful elsewhere, too. Writing of the politics of space and spaces in early modern Rome, historian Laurie Nussdorfer points the way by positing the significance of “a great diversity of types.” When she organizes these around the familiar binary, “public” means explicitly governmental and, I would add, communal or collective, and is resolutely male. In her model a second large zone of the “private” hosts many individual affiliations and transactions—commercial, social, recreational, religious, cultural—involving both men and women outside as well as inside their homes.² Rather than claim for the streets a uniformly public dimension that distorts Nussdorfer’s useful identification of a male, governmental domain, it seems more fruitful to divide her category of the “private” into two distinguishable but interactive social landscapes: the “domestic” (inside) and, for present purposes, the “urban” (outside).³ More than an obscure residual of the “public” or communal territory, where all that mattered happened, the “private” in its urban as well as its domestic aspects made place for a complex of activities essential to everyday lives. These domestic and urban spaces should alike be gendered as both male and female. Within this frame of a mixed urban terrain women conducted a sometimes fraught, but always lively Roman street life.

Gendering Urban Geography

Before we follow women through Roman streets, it is helpful to review historians’ thinking on the gendered social geography of Italy. Especially in

² Laurie Nussdorfer, “The Politics of Space in Early Modern Rome,” *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 42 (1999), 161–86; about women, 162–64. Nussdorfer’s section on “Family and Institutional Rivalries,” 164–68, does not mention women (or many men as individuals), but studies by Renata Ago, Benedetta Borello, Caroline Castiglione, Marina D’Amelia, and Carolyn Valone, among others, draw attention to women who contributed significantly to Roman familial advancement, including through art patronage.

³ While country and village spaces differed from urban ones, a parallel reviewing of public and private domains beyond city walls would likely prove fruitful.

general or synthetic discussions, several lines of inquiry often converge on the notion that women, because secluded and enclosed by moral norms, were typically absent from urban public spaces.⁴ Some historians of early modern Italy have found the anthropological model of Mediterranean honor culture a good fit. In that construction women's honor resides mainly in sexual propriety and in subordination to the male kinfolk who guard it.⁵ To this end, females may pass most of their lives inside family compounds and there even in separate quarters where visiting men may not gaze upon them. By extension, a kind of Mediterranean "orientalism" expects to find radically constrained early modern *Italiane* dwelling behind veils and walls. In my view this construct misleads in several ways. First, even if it did accurately represent women's situation, it suggests, falsely, that enclosed women must lack power and agency.⁶ Second, this presumption of seclusion often overstates normative clout and, third, it fails to differentiate the many circumstances in which women lived.

When foregrounding the seclusion and enclosure of Renaissance Italian women, historians have relied heavily on didactic and prescriptive literature—texts describing ideals and imperatives rooted in both religious and secular moralities. Conduct books, for example, advocate a range of constraints to keep women safe and, by extension, familial reputation intact. Two treatises from fifteenth-century Florence and Venice, though not representing all Italian regions, periods or social classes, are often cited as normative. In "On the Family," Leon Battista Alberti, explicitly contrasting the two sexes and their essential natures, writes, "The woman, as she

⁴ For example, in a recent synthesis, Katherine Crawford, *European Sexualities, 1400-1800* (New York, 2007), 40-41.

⁵ David Gilmore, ed., *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean* (Washington, D.C., 1987), especially essays by Carol Delany and Maureen Giovannini. James Amelang, "The Myth of the Mediterranean City: Perceptions of Sociability," in *Mediterranean Urban Culture, 1400-1800*, ed. A. Cowan (Exeter, 2000), 15-30, considers urban culture but without direct address to gender.

⁶ On powerful secluded women, see, for example, Leslie Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York, 1993). Recent feminist and post-colonial scholarship challenges both the postulated freedom of eighteenth-century Europe's women and the imputed "slavery" of women in Muslim harems. See Margaret Hunt, "Women in Ottoman and Western European Law Courts: Were Western Women Really the Luckiest Women in the World?" in *Structures and Subjectivities: Attending to Early Modern Women*, ed. J. E. Hartman and A. Seeff (Newark, DE, 2007), 176-78. Another study of comparative interest is Nancy van Deusen, *Between the Sacred and the Worldly: The Institutional and Cultural Practice of Recogimiento in Colonial Lima* (Stanford, 2001).

remains locked up at home, should watch over things by staying at her post, by diligent care and watchfulness.”⁷ Roughly contemporary, Francesco Barbaro’s “On Wifely Duties” leaves a bit more leeway:

wives should not be shut up in their bedrooms as in a prison, but should be permitted to go out, and this privilege should be taken as evidence of their virtue and propriety... I would have wives be seen in public with their husbands, but when their husbands are away wives should stay at home.⁸

Religious rules and commentaries also sought to confine women, wives as well as nuns, as Gabriella Zarri shows in her aptly titled *Recinti*, or “enclosures.”⁹ Although for early modern Italy, as elsewhere, actual practice departed from social precept, these sources’ insistence on what women *must* not do slides deceptively into many scholarly assertions about what women *could* not or dared not do.

Early travel literature similarly appears to show Italian women walled—figuratively, if not always literally—into a deeper seclusion or darker invisibility than their counterparts in northern Europe. The sixteenth-century Scotsman Fynes Morison, for example, wrote of Venice, “Woemen... if they be chaste [are] rather locked up at home, as it were in prison.”¹⁰ And, by inversion, the women of early modern London could appear to an Italian startlingly untrammelled. In the words of a visitor, Alessandro Magno,

Englishwomen have great freedom to go out of the house without menfolk... many of these women serve in shops. Many of the young women gather outside Moorgate and play with young lads, even though they do not know them...¹¹

⁷ Leon Battista Alberti, *The Family in Renaissance Florence*, trans. R. Watkins (Columbia, SC, 1969), 207-8. Although only tangentially concerned with women, John Najemy, “Giannozzo and His Elders: Alberti’s Critique of Renaissance Patriarchy,” in *Society and the Individual in Renaissance Florence*, ed. W. Connell (Berkeley, 2002), 51-60, cautions against reading this dialogue reductively as prescription.

⁸ Francesco Barbaro, “On Wifely Duties,” in *Civilization of the Italian Renaissance*, ed. K. Bartlett (Lexington, MA, 1992), 149-50.

⁹ Gabriella Zarri, *Recinti. Donne, Clausura e Matrimonio nella Prima Età Moderna* (Bologna, 2000).

¹⁰ Quoted in Robert Davis, “The Geography of Gender in the Renaissance,” in *Gender and Society in Renaissance Italy*, ed. J. Brown and R. Davis (New York, 1998), 21; other examples, 20-22.

¹¹ Quoted in Gowing, “Freedom,” 130. For more discussion of the relative freedoms of northern European women, see Anne Laurence, “How Free Were English Women in the Seventeenth Century” and Mary Prior, “Freedom and Autonomy in England and the

Opportunities for females to leave the house to engage with other women and men are an important dimension of human experience that may vary from place to place. Yet there are difficulties on both sides for a comparative hypothesis that simply contrasts the regional cultures of a free northern and a restrictive southern Europe. In this volume, for instance, Anu Korhonen explores the ambiguities of visibility for women's honor in early modern England. At the same time, as I argue here, for Italy there was an unworkable gap between an ideal of protective, and constraining, enclosure and the realities of most women's lives. Restrictions and social costs there were, but, according to ages, ranks, statuses, and localities, these affected women differently. An image of generalized female seclusion misrepresents the urban life of early modern Italy.

Historians of early modern Venice, the most fully studied case of gendered geography in Italian cities, have begun to nuance this picture. They emphasize the public primacy of men, but acknowledge a smaller or larger place for women, too. For the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Dennis Romano sees "marked and powerful dichotomies" in gendered urban space.¹² The public matters of government and commerce, and the Piazza San Marco and the Rialto where this weighty business transpired, belonged almost exclusively to men; women normally acted only in and near their homes. While Robert Davis opens his essay with travelers' attestations of female invisibility, he then complicates this perceived absence in several ways.¹³ Citing differences in class practices, he notes that the missing females were in fact ladies rather than servants or working women. Certainly, the large proportion of well-born *Veneziane* who lived enclosed in convents fit the foreigners' picture.¹⁴ Yet their secular sisters, while they typically traveled the city sheltered in gondolas and wrapped in veils, caught the public's gaze with lavish displays of clothing and high wooden *zoccoli*—encumbering to be sure in their own way—as they attended church. Davis also reports change with time; during the eighteenth cen-

Netherlands: Women's Lives and Experience in the Seventeenth Century. A Response to Anne Laurence," in *Women of the Golden Age*, ed. E. Kloeke, et al (Hilversum, 1994), 127-35, 137-40.

¹² Dennis Romano, "Gender and the Urban Geography of Renaissance Venice," *Journal of Social History* 23:2 (1989), 339-53; quotation, 339-40.

¹³ Davis, "Geography," 31-37.

¹⁴ Jutta Sperling, *Convents and the Body Politic in Late Renaissance Venice* (Chicago, 1999); Mary Laven, *Virgins of Venice. Enclosed Lives and Broken Vows in the Renaissance Convent* (London, 2002).

tury constraints loosened and even noblewomen emerged into public view.¹⁵ In her study of working *Veneziane* in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Monica Chojnacka puts ordinary women's street life at the center.¹⁶ Highlighting female mobility beyond, into, and within the city, she contends that women pursuing their economic and social business may sometimes even have dominated neighborhood streets. Time may indeed have altered the public behavior of patrician women and their *cit-tadine* imitators. But for the female working class the difference among the three authors lies rather in perspective. For those scholars interested in looking, many women of lesser status were present and visible all along. They likely spent much time in their neighborhoods—in Romano's terms "near" their dwellings and parish churches. But, as Chojnacka shows, Romano's binary, even as nuanced by Davis, needs revision. Ordinary *Veneziane* were often active in a third, more capacious, "urban" space that I have proposed here.¹⁷

Rome's Evolving Urban Settings

Rome, by the early seventeenth century another large cosmopolitan city, displays patterns of women's mobility broadly similar to those of Chojnacka's Venice. At the same time, in its physical, economic, and governmental arrangements the papal capital was a very different place. Circa 1600, Rome's urban fabric continued to experience a dramatic transformation begun 150 years before. The medieval remnant of the once vast ancient metropolis, with its mostly small, irregular, and unpaved streets, huddled in the bend of the Tiber River. Following the mid-fifteenth-century reconsolidation of the papacy, population grew, the core of dense settlement expanded again on both sides of the river, and early efforts at urban design began.¹⁸ Onto the old medieval jumble and the organic renewal of the *abitato*, Renaissance designers sought to lay a clarified network of major

¹⁵ Davis, "Geography," 38.

¹⁶ Monica Chojnacka, *Working Women in Early Modern Venice* (Baltimore, 2001).

¹⁷ Filippo de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Oxford, 2007), 112-17, acknowledges the participation of women of varying ranks.

¹⁸ Italo Insolera, *Roma: Immagini e Realtà dal X al XX secolo* (Rome, 1980), 24-147; Charles Burroughs, *From Signs to Design: Environmental Process and Reform in Early Renaissance Rome* (Cambridge, MA, 1990), 72-96.

streets. The popes' traditional processional route from the palace complex at San Giovanni in Laterano to the burgeoning quarters at the Vatican claimed special attention. Planners also aimed to transect the city with novel, startlingly straight thoroughfares, such as the Via Giulia, Pope Julius II's eponymous street linking on the left bank the Tiber crossings at Ponte Sant'Angelo and Ponte Sisto. From these projects emerged a distinction between a set of "principal" streets and a spreading web of ordinary ways and back alleys. Even some lesser streets improved under the oversight of the *maestri di strada*. Dedicated taxes (*gettiti*) funded local paving and other projects to remove refuse and erratic structures, like loggias, that blocked passage.¹⁹ Such progress stitched its way slowly into the urban fabric, but failed to reach many back corners of the city. In the later seventeenth century, for example, many secondary streets remained muddy and cluttered.²⁰

An ever fuller screen of buildings in gradually tidier alignments edged and contained both grander and smaller streets. With astonishing energy, palaces, churches, and monasteries proliferated and expanded.²¹ These grand edifices peppered the city, their decorated facades and handsome portals facing onto major streets or their own squares and their back walls often looming blankly into narrow side streets. Some palaces had outbuildings, such as stables, nearby, and some more old-fashioned ones had shops or other rented premises in their skirts. Between these big establishments, modest two- and three-story buildings of brick and plaster filled in the streetscape; doors led back to stairways and, sometimes, small courtyards. Some houses sported shop counters on the ground floor or loggias at the top. In addition, most residences, both lordly and lowly, had second-floor windows that routinely framed interventions in neighborhood sociability. Thus, while the flat facades rimmed the three-dimensional life of Rome's streets, built openings on several levels fostered customary interaction between inside and outside, between domesticity and an external urban domain.

Rome's ever larger, denser, and more beautiful built environment provided the set for a lively outdoor social life. The metaphor of theatricality

¹⁹ Laurie Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics in the Rome of Urban VIII* (Princeton, 1992), 49, 70-71, 79, 89. More generally, this study explains many aspects of the city's early modern governance.

²⁰ Richard Krautheimer, *The Rome of Alexander VI, 1665-1667* (Princeton, 1985), 15-36, for an overview of urban improvements not yet achieved.

²¹ Besides Burroughs, Krautheimer and Connors (cf. note 22), see, for example, Patricia Waddy, *Seventeenth-Century Roman Palaces* (New York, 1990).

has served scholars of Roman streets in several disciplines, as, for example, architectural historians, Richard Krautheimer and Joseph Connors.²² Drawing on anthropology, social historian Peter Burke has also evoked early modern Italian life as drama, many of its transactions enacted with flair, heightened gesture, and inconstant sincerity before an audience often composed of the public in the streets.²³ A seemingly endless repertory of scripts—for ceremonial challenges, revenge plots, practical jokes, and also swagger, sacrifice, laughter, and pathos—were encoded in a widely shared vernacular culture and improvised to fit daily circumstance.²⁴

As a social world Rome in the early seventeenth century had several distinctive features. The capital at once of a small princely state and of global Catholicism, it was economically more consumer than producer of goods or merchant entrepot. Its population of just over 100,000 was swollen by more and less temporary migrants, both many who commuted intermittently from nearby hinterlands and others who came from further afield, stayed a while, and then moved on. The ebb and flow not only of celibate clerics, but also of swarms of soldiers, male servants, artisans, and day laborers produced a sharply skewed sex ratio—no more than 70 women for every 100 men.²⁵ Many Roman residents did live in typical households centered around a man and wife, but mortality and migration left a good portion to dwell with other kin, with masters, or often with unrelated folk. Rome was a city thus full of strangers where people improvised alliances and networks with compatriots, co-workers, and neighbors to solve the problems of everyday living that in a less fluid society might more usually have fallen to family. Though relatively few in numbers (and thus, one might think, in high demand), Rome's women quite often lived on their own without the constraints or supports of male kinfolk.²⁶

²² Krautheimer, *Rome of Alexander VI*, chap. 4 and 6; in Joseph Connors, "Alliance and Enmity in Roman Baroque Urbanism," *Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana* 25 (1989), 207-94, buildings are social actors.

²³ Peter Burke, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge, 1987), 9-13; the theme appears in various contexts throughout the book.

²⁴ The metaphors of theatre and social drama intuitively fit early modern Rome, but we should not presume, without inquiry, that this aspect is exclusively Roman, or Italian.

²⁵ Eugenio Sonnino, "The Population in Baroque Rome," in *Rome/Amsterdam. Two Growing Cities in Seventeenth-Century Europe*, ed. P. van Kessel and E. Schulte (Amsterdam, 1997), 50-70.

²⁶ While it is difficult to compile strictly comparable statistics, we can get a sense of order of magnitude. Based on the 1526/27 census, women headed 23% of Roman households:

This fragmented demography obliged them to reach outside their homes to help find a livelihood and to weave essential social and economic connections.

Social usage mediated Roman understandings of physical space and urban mobility. Romans had a conceptual sense of the difference between outside and inside, between what I have elected to call the “urban” and the “domestic.” But the complex built geography of the city set no firm boundary between these domains. As I have argued elsewhere for Rome and as Alexander Cowan here suggests for Venice, facades along the street formed not a barrier but an interface pierced by thresholds and windows.²⁷ This much negotiated spatial border could be porous indeed. On the one hand, families lived at close quarters with their neighbors. Shared internal spaces of courtyard and stairway sometimes allowed even strangers to penetrate from the street toward domesticity’s inner reaches. On the other hand, daily life—for women as for men—tumbled out of the dwelling and shop into the public thoroughfare.

Roman streets and their built margins were places full both of risk and of opportunity. There city dwellers encountered lots of people, some well-known, some with recognizable connections, some merely familiar by sight, and others strangers. Because residents’ turnover was often high, city life meant dealing frequently with new neighbors and making new friends and new enemies. As each person and family, seeking to grab a livelihood and defend a reputation, scrambled for scarce resources, the streets saw accidents multiply and rivalries burgeon. Injuries to life and limb and to honor were common.²⁸ Nevertheless, if by modern standards early modern Roman streets were perilous, urban spaces were no lawless free-for-all. City governments, both communal and princely, with support from the church,

Livio Livi, *Un Censimento di Roma avanti il Sacco Borbonico* (Rome, 1914), 17. For the period c. 1600, city-wide figures are not available; from the *stati delle anime* I have computed parish rates for female-headed households that varied from 13% in some parishes to 32% in others.

²⁷ Elizabeth Cohen, “Honor and Gender in the Streets of Early Modern Rome,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 22:4 (1992), 597-625; Elizabeth Cohen and Thomas Cohen, “Open and Shut: The Social Meanings of the Cinquecento Roman House,” *Studies in the Decorative Arts* 9 (2001-02): 61-84.

²⁸ Peter Blastenbrei, *Kriminalität in Rom, 1560-1585* (Tübingen, 1995), 72-173; for violence against women, 163-68. On honor offenses in Italian cities, see also Sharon Strocchia, “Gender and the Rites of Honour in Italian Renaissance Cities,” in *Gender and Society in Renaissance Italy*, ed. J. Brown and R. Davis (London, 1998), 52-60.

labored slowly, but to real effect, to discipline the heterogeneous polity and ensure a growing measure of public order and physical, economic, and social security.²⁹ Besides written and institutionally enforced strictures, customary self-help strategies offered Romans some, if uncertain, succor as they navigated urban space.³⁰ Confronted with a bully, a conflict, or a debt, ordinary men and women sometimes resorted to each other and to networks of informal obligation to ease their jeopardy.

Women in the Street: Images and Norms

Let us now adjust our historian's glass to spy out the women in Rome's urban spaces. As a city of pilgrims, visitors, and migrants, the pope's capital saw much coming and going of women. Many traveled in company with family members, but others arrived or left alone. Here our focus is female mobility not to and from the city, but rather within it. As in Venice, the circulation of women in Roman streets, especially on foot, typically involved females of modest means and more or less transgressive livelihoods. Nevertheless, respectable women, young and old, and sometimes even gentlewomen, could be seen and heard as they carried on their business and an important part of their social lives in urban spaces outside their dwellings.

Images of Rome's monuments and city views that multiply after the mid sixteenth century offer *prima facie* evidence of women's urban visibility. One example, among many, are the frescoes in the Vatican Library of Roman streetscapes made for Sixtus V (1585-90) by the workshops of Cesare Nebbia.³¹ As in modern architects' drawings, notional people often garnish such views. Alone or in pairs and small clusters, men *and* women, usually rendered in miniature compared to lofty buildings or long receding streets, stride or loiter through these images. Women usually appear with

²⁹ Irene Fosi, *La Giustizia del Papa. Sudditi e Tribunali nello Stato Pontificio in Età Moderna* (Rome, 2007).

³⁰ Robert Jutte, *Poverty and Deviance in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1994), 83-99.

³¹ Jörg Garms, *Vedute di Roma dal Medioevo al Ottocento* (Naples, 1995), v. 1, plates 14-26; v. 2, pp. 46 (A51), 65 (B14), 267 (E54), 270 (E61), 468 (I56); Krautheimer, *Rome of Alexander VI*, 31. See also for the 1680s the images of Lievin Cruyl in *Specchio di Roma barocca: Una guida inedita del XVII secolo*, ed. J. Connors and L. Rice (Rome, 1991), 48, 104, 169, 181, 183, 198.

their heads veiled, their faces uncovered, and sometimes a child at hand. Emblematic of gender and age, figures may ply a spindle, bear bundles on their heads, or stoop over a walking stick. Sometimes, dress suggests a range of means from modest working folk to elegantly clad ladies. In these cityscapes, Nebbia's and others, another theme extends the memory of public spectacles such as processions or papal blessings at St. Peter's, where we see crowds gathered to marvel and reap holy merit.³² Some of these heavily clerical events show only men, but others record the female faithful as well. This genre of pictures also occasionally shows details of women working at urban sites, notably laundresses at fountains.³³ While none of these conventional images should be read as candid snapshots, the inclusion of women, variously clothed and accompanied, indicates that no one would be surprised to see them in the street.

As in other early modern cities, women in Roman streets faced dangers to life, limb, and reputation. Serious physical violence flared often, but males, the usual perpetrators, were commonly also the victims. In the judicial records women only rarely suffered murder or injury by firearm or knife. They were, however, vulnerable to common battery in the street by other women as well as men. Typically, people nearby—of both sexes—stepped in to break up such fights, but the injuries sustained, though often minor, occasioned many complaints to the magistrates. But for grievous harm the streets may have been, especially by day, safer for women than indoors. Wife beating, sexual assault, and even murder were more likely to occur inside buildings, where the watchful eyes and peacemaking arms of neighbors did not reach so well.³⁴ Moreover, though damage to honor need not leave traces on the body, life in the street, with its ready audience to see and report shame, could pose real risks to a woman's reputation. Yet those same ever present eyes and ears that blamed could, especially in a familiar

³² Garms, *Vedute*, v. 2, pp. 14-16 (A8-13), 61 (B10), 75 (B32).

³³ Katherine Rinne, "The Landscape of Laundry in Late Cinquecento Rome," *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, 9 (2001-02), Figures 6, 9; Rinne's comments, pp. 53-56, caution against literal readings of these pictures. See also, for the Fontana di Trevi, Lievin Cruyl in *Specchio di Roma barocca*, 122.

³⁴ Archivio di Stato di Roma, Tribunale criminale del Governatore (henceforth TcG); unless otherwise indicated, all examples cited in this paper date between 1600 and 1610. Murder: TcG: Processi, xvii secolo, busta 58, ff. 302-92. Beatings: TcG: Processi, xvii secolo, busta 48, 1463-75; Costituti, busta 593, f. 57v; busta 598, ff. 175v-76v. *Sfregio*, a scarring wound, usually with a knife to the face, carried weight as threat, but such real injury to women was uncommon.

neighborhood, also confirm a person's virtue and offer practical aid when trouble brewed. To mark their status and concern for reputation, affluent women liked to bring attendants, often females, when going about urban errands. A tailor's wife, arranging to escape her marriage, testified self-servingly to make her appearance alone in the street seem unusual. According to her tale, when she met her lover by chance, he remarked with surprise to see her "sola" and asked why; she could thus justify accepting his offer of aid.³⁵ Women of middling means also spared themselves by sending servants, usually alone, to fetch water from the fountain, make small purchases, and deliver messages.³⁶ Poorer matrons sometimes called on friends or kin, but often went on their own. Rather than avoiding the streets, many early modern *Romane* negotiated urban passages and spaces for themselves by drawing on informal local networks and sometimes, in distress, on public authorities.

To address such dangers and to secure general public order, the city's governors patiently reiterated and sometimes revised by-laws that the police enforced with erratic efficiency.³⁷ Most rules were not explicitly gendered, but a handful dealt directly with women. A very few addressed them as victims of male aggression. For example, just before and after 1600, editions of the *Bando generale*, a summation of the city's by-laws, highlighted penalties for men forcing entry into convents and into private houses to molest women.³⁸ More often, city regulations demanded that women, for their own and for the public good, discipline themselves. Because these measures dealt largely with female behavior outside the house, they implicitly recognized an extra-domestic, urban domain where women regularly took part. Much of this legislation aimed to distinguish different categories of women, to make identities visible, and to contain the social and moral ambiguities attached to prostitution. In the 1560s, Roman sumptuary laws dictated, as in other Italian cities, the clothes and ornaments that a

³⁵ TcG: Processi, xvii secolo, busta 85, ff. 418r-v.

³⁶ TcG: Processi, xvi secolo, busta 270, f. 1490 [1593]

³⁷ *Statuta almae urbis Romae*, 1580; for summaries of the many supplementary regulations, including to control prostitutes, see *Registi di bandi, editti, notificazioni, e provvedimenti diversi relativi alla città di Roma e dello Stato Pontificio* (Rome, 1928-50), v. 1-2 for the sixteenth century.

³⁸ *Bando generale concernante il governo di Roma* . . . , 16 settembre 1595, Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Miscellanea, Armadio IV-V, busta 47, f. 95v; reissued in 1599, f. 99, and 1610, ff. 103-6, Item 43. It was also illegal, for example, to abduct girls or to deflower virgins or elope with women without first contracting marriage.

roster of social ranks could legitimately display; the legislation assumed that practices of dress also distinguished women by status—nuns and widows from wives and nubile girls.³⁹ Vecellio's late sixteenth-century images, for example, registered these distinctions.⁴⁰ It was also crucial to mark the difference between respectable women and those of ill repute (*mala vita*) and especially to prevent confusion between proper ladies and well-dressed courtesans. A 1563 *bando* forbade unmarried girls (*zitelle*) or wives to "go around Rome" without a head-cloth on pain of a hefty 50 *scudi* fine.⁴¹ If Vecellio's pictures are a fair guide, the Roman veil did not, however, obscure the face nor in many cases the upper torso. Courtesans, on the other hand, might sport the curls and earrings prohibited to their betters, but not the veil (*lenzuolo*) that designated a gentlewoman.⁴² Head covering was a significant marker of status in Roman streets, but less a portable form of seclusion such as costume books represent for some other parts of Italy.

Official preoccupation with prostitutes' high visibility derived not only from their literally catching the eye, but also from the moral resonances Catholic reformers imputed to that sight. Prostitutes were, therefore, those women whose public presence and mobility the city's governors sought most strenuously to constrain. Even after the 1560s, when the popes gave up on the policy of enclosing sex workers in a small ghetto with lockable gates, a battery of regulations sought to hedge their movements.⁴³ Repression of the male violence that erupted around these women was a continuing concern, but the authorities worried as well about social and moral order. For example, courtesans were prohibited from meeting men in churches or attending them on the Seven Churches pilgrimage around the

³⁹ *Bando & riforma sopra l'Immoderate spese, & pompe del vestire delli huomini & donne di quest'Alma Citta*... 10 dicembre 1563, section addressed to "Gentildonne e cittadine romane, e altre": Biblioteca Casanatense. While elements of these guidelines must have been observed as custom as much as by law, it is hard to judge the enforcement or impact of such rules.

⁴⁰ Cesare Vecellio, *Vecellio's Renaissance Costume Book* (New York, 1977), 7-9.

⁴¹ *Bando & riforma*... 10 dicembre 1563. The obligatory head cloth appears twice: "senza tela, o panno listato in testa" or "senza lenzuolo."

⁴² *Bando & riforma*... 10 dicembre 1563, "Delle meretrice." See also, *Bando generale* of Pius V, 15 gennaio 1566, Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Miscellanea, Armadio IV-V, busta 47, f. 56v. It is hard to judge whether these rules were formally enforced; in "Clothing Courtesans: Fabrics, Signals, Experiences," in *Clothing Culture, 1350-1650*, ed. C. Richardson (Aldershot, 2004), 99, Tessa Storey discounts the impact of restrictions on Roman prostitutes' apparel before 1600.

⁴³ Cohen, "Seen and Known," 401-07.

city. The clerical wish to guard sacred from profane made good sense of these prohibitions; nonetheless, if the annual Lenten reissue was any indicator, the popularity of such rendezvous persisted, or at least the idea continued to mark disordered space. The city also forbade courtesans to cross the river in boats or to ride in closed carriages.⁴⁴ The latter restriction was perhaps also intended to preclude courtesans being mistaken for ladies. Nevertheless, as I have argued elsewhere, despite what we might expect of a Catholic Reformation capital, for much of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries prostitutes and their allurements grabbed a lot of attention on Roman streets and even at many churches.⁴⁵

Related concerns about public order underpinned an official curfew that did restrict female mobility after sunset's *Ave Maria* bell. For shutting women in, daylight and nighttime regimes contrasted sharply. The policy sought to protect women in general, but targeted prostitutes as magnets for troublemaking men. When sex workers ventured into the evening streets either alone or "in company" with unrelated males, they became the principal female prey for the policemen's dragnet.⁴⁶ Respectable women could circulate after dark, but only if shepherded by husbands or male kin. Police patrols focused on the hot neighborhoods where violence and other malfeasance flourished and arrest records concentrated.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, these districts were home not only to prostitutes but also to many other female-headed households. When caught breaking curfew, some women claimed ignorance or said they were new in town. Others knew that they should keep to their houses after sunset, but protested necessity, like the claims of a sick relative, or hedged with suggestions that they had not gone far or that it was scarcely night. Nonetheless, the police did, on occasion, haul in solitary women, even if they had only slipped out in the evening to buy fruit or firewood.⁴⁸ Alternatively, a woman might recruit a surrogate escort; a fugitive wife claimed that she paid a boy, sitting on his doorstep,

⁴⁴ Arrests and trials for coach-riding occurred occasionally: TcG: Processi, xvii secolo, busta 90, ff. 548-56; busta 91, ff. 1137-47; Relazioni di birri, busta 96, f. 11. Like affluent women, courtesans sought security and also respectability by moving around the city with attendants; e.g. TcG: Processi, xvii secolo, busta 44, ff. 703-4, 728-9; busta 58, ff. 307r-v, 360v; Costituti, busta 589, f. 33; busta 594, f. 195.

⁴⁵ Cohen, "Seen and Known."

⁴⁶ TcG: Costituti, busta 594, f. 38v; busta 597, ff. 38v-9; busta 598, f. 32; busta 599, f. 47.

⁴⁷ TcG: Relazioni di birri, buste 101-03.

⁴⁸ TcG: Costituti, busta 592, f. 38; busta 596, f. 104.

to accompany her in the evening from one house of refuge to another.⁴⁹ This strategy may have made Virginia Cherubini feel safer or more proper, but it failed to satisfy the curfew rules. Lacking kinsmen in the city, respectable women who went out at night were liable to be treated like courtesans, by the police as well as by men about town. All told, Rome's governors expected that, despite dangers to body and reputation, women would be in streets; regulation sought to minimize those risks and to secure the order and honor of the city as a whole.

Women in the Street: Work and Words

The archives of the criminal courts of the Governor of Rome afford more textured images in which we may better distinguish the urban movements and activities of women of different statuses. Not only the full records of trials, but also the several series of shorter documents—complaints, preliminary interrogations of prisoners, and notes from the police blotter—provide many incidental details of women's street life. Significantly, these documents, though generated by law and its enforcement, yield a picture not of precept, nor necessarily of typicality, but of a range of lived practices. While these sources too demand more than a literal reading, they allow us to sketch the real complexities of Rome's gendered urban geography.

In the early seventeenth century seclusion was for Roman laywomen the exception and not the rule. Well-born ladies watched street festivities from their palace windows and traveled by carriage to pay social calls.⁵⁰ They, like other women who eschewed the public eye due to religious devotion or high-minded propriety, often used women of lesser status as their urban eyes, ears, and feet. Harried by the Council of Trent, nuns in Rome, mostly, accepted obligations to stability and cloister that indeed distinguished them from their secular sisters.⁵¹ Yet from behind their walls and grilles nuns might rely on women servants or kin to run errands and carry messages through the streets. For ordinary laywomen, strict enclosure was in

⁴⁹ TcG: Processi, xvii secolo, busta 48, f. 1472v.

⁵⁰ Waddy, *Seventeenth-Century Roman Palaces*, 25-28.

⁵¹ According to the *Liste dei stati delle anime* in the Archivio storico del Vicariato di Roma, there were in 1600 something less than 37,000 *femine* in Rome (with relatively small proportions of children) and under 2400 "monache"; such summaries from the Easter census are problematic in detail, but indicate well enough that enclosed nuns were a small minority among women.

Rome an anomaly. From time to time a man, seeking to remove his womenfolk from some specific harm, might forbid them to go out or even lock them in.⁵² For example, a goldsmith kept his wife “ristretta” when he learned of her liaison with a painter and locked a window through which the pair were wont to talk.⁵³ Among Rome’s working classes a real concern with women’s honor touched nubile girls and young brides more than mature matrons.⁵⁴ The recourse to lock and key was occasionally necessary precisely because, while socializing in their doorways and moving about the city on errands for their seniors, young women often met suitors and lovers.

As depicted in painted and engraved cityscapes, when women and girls left their homes, religious duty was for all social ranks a legitimate purpose. While we do not know how many regularly attended mass, in explaining their movements to the court women readily cited this pious obligation. At a nearby parish church they heard an early service after daybreak or sometimes vespers.⁵⁵ Alone or in company, women also followed religion further afield, seeking out churches locally known for preaching, indulgences, or midnight mass on Christmas Eve, the last sometimes causing problems because of the curfew.⁵⁶ The home of *cortigiana* Gentile Romagnola, in the dodgy district of the Armata by the Tiber, got robbed after she went with three other women to collect “la perdonanza” at San Pancrazio, beyond the city gate on the Janiculum hill.⁵⁷ In another trial, a witness attempted a plausible fabulation in describing a barber, afflicted with gout, accompanying his wife to a special sermon at San Giacomo degli Incurabili. According to this version, the wife joined the women sitting to one side, while the barber stood near the altar. A second account said the man rather met his

⁵² TcG: Processi, xvii secolo, busta 19, ff. 1228v-29; busta 44, ff. 734v, 754v; Processi, busta 37, ff. 1389-95; Investigazioni, busta 387, f. 214; Costituti, busta 590, ff. 15-52.

⁵³ TcG: Processi xvii secolo, busta 19, f. 1226.

⁵⁴ Elizabeth Cohen, “No Longer Virgins: Self-Presentation by Young Women of Late Renaissance Rome,” in *Refiguring Woman: Perspectives on Gender and the Italian Renaissance*, ed. M. Migiel and J. Schiesari (Ithaca, 1991), 182-84; Thomas Cohen and Elizabeth Cohen, “Camilla the Go-Between: The Politics of Gender in a Roman Household (1559),” *Continuity and Change* 4 (1989), 53-77. Note that the special focus on young women figures in some of the northern visitors’ reports on Venice as well; see Davis, “Geography,” 21-22.

⁵⁵ TcG: Costituti, busta 590, f. 75v; busta 597, ff. 78v, 79v; Querele, busta 8, f. 92; Investigazioni, busta 389, f. 157.

⁵⁶ TcG: Costituti, busta 590, f. 87; Querele, busta 8, f. 95v; Processi, xvii secolo, busta 85, f. 418; also Relazioni di birri.

⁵⁷ TcG: Denunce di furti, busta 5, ff. 2-3, 5.

wife at the church after she, alone, had listened to the preacher.⁵⁸ Similarly, for holidays like Corpus Christi or the Annunciation, when poor girls nominated for charitable dowries paraded, women flocked to watch the processions. The religious goals of these urban journeys were deeply held; at the same time, holy observances provided ordinary Romans, as they did Chaucer's pilgrims to Canterbury, the welcome occasion for gossip, sociability, and even flirtation. For the teenaged painter, Artemisia Gentileschi, among others, a junket to the basilica of San Giovanni in Laterano had social and artistic ends as much as religious resonance.⁵⁹

The experience of the "Most Illustrious" Pantasilea Otteria illustrates how a gentlewoman decorously going to church could attract unwelcome attention. While she had male kin living elsewhere, Pantasilea had spent several years on her own in Rome to pursue some lawsuits.⁶⁰ Witnesses from serving women to clerics expressed shocked dismay at the behavior of Niccolo de Gerardo, a Flemish scribe besotted with the lady. Niccolo's intemperate suit transgressed not only the boundaries of class, but also those of place. He had indecorously shouted at her window from the street to attract her attention and on one occasion penetrated uninvited into her home.⁶¹ Another time he had tracked her coach, as she, too, traveled across town to visit the church at the Lateran. The stalker also followed the lady, as with her servant she crossed the piazza from her house to attend mass at San Salvatore in Lauro, and then accosted her in the church itself. The Fleming explained that he only wanted money so he could return to his country, but his ill-judged harassment of a well-born woman earned him legal banishment from Rome. For our purposes there are several lessons here. Pantasilea moved about the city in various ways: for church and for business, on foot and by carriage, accompanied only by a female servant. In so doing, the gentlewoman did not behave immodestly, nor did she place her honor at unseemly risk. When the police and the courts intervened, she represented her misadventure as a scandal. But the man, not she, was the culprit.

While religion legitimated many female ventures into urban space, for most women the demands of work, in the broadest sense, were also imper-

⁵⁸ TcG: Processi, xvii secolo, busta 44, ff. 759v, 768v.

⁵⁹ Mary Garrard, *Artemisia Gentileschi* (Princeton, 1989), Appendix B: Trial transcript, 415, 422.

⁶⁰ TcG: Processi, xvii secolo, busta 48, ff. 962-73.

⁶¹ Other examples of home invasions threatening women: TcG: Processi, xvii secolo, busta 26, ff. 815-74; Processi, busta 89, ff. 48-66.

ative. For many households women's labor, paid and unpaid, economically productive and socially reproductive, was essential to survival. In Rome, with its skewed sex ratio, much domestic labor fell to men. Housekeeping occupied women, too, not only in their own homes, but regularly or occasionally in others' as well. As elsewhere, women's work typically meant improvising a medley of chores and activities at their own hearths and doorsteps, but also beyond. For example, Eugenia with her husband lived in and served two gentlemen, she as housekeeper and he as purchaser and errand boy (*spenditore*). Although the hardworking Eugenia spent most of her time in the house, every morning she left before dawn to weave for several hours on a loom in the home of a friend.⁶² Nursing, midwifery, and the preparation and sale of medicines and cosmetics often carried women out and into other people's dwellings. They also had to chase after wandering children and animals. Selling, buying, and moving goods likewise sent women into the streets. A late sixteenth-century broadsheet depicting scores of Roman peddlers and strolling service-providers shows only a handful of female figures, including sellers of finger-rings (*anneletti belli*), mixed produce (*mescolanza de vigna*), and hair extensions (*suffe e capelli*).⁶³ Although market women are elusive in the Roman records, those few we see, such as a doughnut seller who tended an outdoor stall, often dealt in foodstuffs.⁶⁴ Other women like Ginevra, the wife of a candy maker and pregnant mother of five young children, sold merchandise from family-run shops, a kind of intermediate zone where public and private could overlap.⁶⁵ While male servants, like Eugenia's husband, usually did the shopping for palatial *famiglie* and even smaller gentlemen's quarters, women did buy for themselves and their households. They would commonly stop at a nearby tavern for wine, bread, and cooked meat.⁶⁶ They also fetched water from fountains, ran errands, and transported goods and

⁶² TcG: Costituti, busta 594, f. 181v.

⁶³ Anna Modigliani, *Mercati, Botteghe e Spazi di Commercio a Roma Tra Medioevo ed Età Moderna* (Rome, 1998), Plate 10, shows 128 figures, about half of the total.

⁶⁴ TcG: Querele, busta 8, f. 116v. For a mid-seventeenth-century drawing, Garms, *Vedute*, v. 2, 411.

⁶⁵ Elizabeth Cohen, "Miscarriages of Apothecary Justice: Un-separate Spaces for Work and Family in Early Modern Rome," *Renaissance Studies* 21 (2007), 480-504. A few women are identified in the early sixteenth-century censuses and in the later *stati delle anime* with shop labels like *pizzicarola*.

⁶⁶ TcG: Costituti, busta 590, f. 154; Investigazioni, busta 351, ff. 213v-14; Processi, xvii secolo, busta 10, f. 146v.

equipment. A principal form of paid female employment, laundry required women to carry linens and clothes to and from the river or a *lavatoio*, a fountain fitted for washing.⁶⁷ Like church, gathering at the water supply was a recognized moment for female sociability. Hauling wet laundry around the city was heavy work. Drying it, either spread on banks or hill-sides or hung in shared loggias or over the streets, obliged women to lay temporary claim to bits of common terrain and to fend off rivals; these exchanges bred frequent squabbles and sometimes battery.⁶⁸

The city leaders' campaigns for public order could not prevent all injury to female bodies and honor. As we saw in the stalking of Signora Pantasilea, in the minds of both witnesses and judges, rank should have afforded the gentlewoman greater respect in public than, by implication, working class matrons could claim. Several incidents show the harassment these lesser *Romane* might face. An ailing doughnut-seller complained that, when his illness forced his wife to mind their stall near Santa Susanna alone, a noble's footman repeatedly pestered her, flirting and flustering her with stares and gestures.⁶⁹ A fisherman's wife carrying ropes through the Piazza Catinara encountered insult and injury; a carpenter's apprentice goaded her: "where are you going, old bag, taking cords to the hangman?" When the woman raised her hand to whack him, the youth hit her head with a piece of wood he had been measuring.⁷⁰ Because streets and piazzas could be dangerous, or at the least disconcerting, respectable women of middling means sometimes preferred to go accompanied, often by a servant or another woman. But, a chaperone was not imperative, nor, as for Lady Pantasilea, did having one assure impunity. Even a kinsman's presence was no guarantee: when Clarice stopped with her husband in the Piazza Navona market to buy "a bit of fish," a pickpocket dipped into her bag and made off with 6-1/2 *giulii* knotted in a handkerchief.⁷¹ Roman women had to learn to parry such affronts with both defensive and offensive strategies.

The lower down the social scale, the more extensive and socially exposed women's mobility became. Even when they had their own rooms or slept in their workplaces, several sorts of women—beggars, prostitutes, and

⁶⁷ Rinne, "Landscape," 34-60.

⁶⁸ TcG: Investigazioni, busta 319, f. 30v; busta 383, f. 39v; Costituti 591, f. 2.

⁶⁹ TcG: Querele, busta 8, f. 116v.

⁷⁰ TcG: Investigazioni, busta 383, ff. 72r-v. See also, Rinne, "Landscape," 46.

⁷¹ TcG: Processi, xvii secolo, busta 37, ff. 1634r-v.

many servants—lived in and from the streets. These socially marginal women competed, sometimes roughly, amongst themselves for the material benefits trickling down from those richer. At the same time, they had to barter with their peers for support and information. Street women spun webs of acquaintance that informally circulated and brokered resources crucial to life in a large city full of strangers.⁷² Often moving in and out of the city and frequently from post to post, servants got to know people in many neighborhoods. To find work, a temporary place to sleep, or a way to drop from sight when trouble erupted, they sought out other women, compatriots and new-made friends. Staking out their turf at the doorways to busy palaces and, then as now, on church steps, beggar women similarly had to balance personal need and collective welfare. On the one hand, they quarreled over prime spots; on the other, they strategically shared tidbits of news in hopes of a *quid pro quo* to turn to profit. For women the streets structured valuable social resources, in particular, a reservoir of information and a network of channels through which selectively to circulate it.

As an example of the street as a place of economic opportunity for poor women, consider Thomassina, some three years a widow. A witness in a trial in 1603, she testified: “my work is to beg at the steps of St. Peter’s and I sew and I wash.”⁷³ Like Eugenia, the gentlemen’s housekeeper and weaver, Thomassina described her activities as a composite of typical female tasks. Unlike Eugenia, the beggar took her primary work identity from the street. Living by herself, in a rented room in the Borgo, near her Vatican “work-place,” Thomassina did not beg alone. She was part of a loose sorority who shared informal rights to this good location. As the trial unfolds, it becomes clear that these women not only sat together but also talked and exchanged, I suspect strategically, information they culled from contacts elsewhere in the neighborhood and city. Thomassina thus supplemented her alms by brokering jobs for servants in return for tips. As she moved through familiar streets on the way to her post at St. Peter’s, she kept her ear out for useful scraps of news. One day when a jobless woman named Madalena came by and asked the beggars for help, Thomassina said she could oblige. She led the would-be servant first to the home of a tailor and then to that of a goldbeater, because his sister-in-law, a gossip of Thomassina’s, had said that he wished to let one serving woman go, if a replacement could be

⁷² TcG: Processi, xvii secolo, busta 20, ff. 941v, 955v-57, 962v; Investigazioni, busta 388, ff. 127-30.

⁷³ TcG: Processi, xvii secolo, busta 25, ff. 442-43v.

found. When neither post panned out, the broker had yet another card to play. That morning she had learned that a servant engaged out of town by her neighbor, Antonio Boschetti, an attendant in the nearby palace of Cardinal Rusticucci, had decided not to come. With an ailing wife, Antonio was in a hurry to find someone else, and Thomassina introduced her new client. A match was made, although Madalena proved an ungrateful schemer and never gave the broker her due. Poor, without family, living from the street, Thomassina was vulnerable, but not altogether marginal. She gathered with her peers, who were at once her rivals and her protection. From neighbors, kin, and strangers, she harvested information and then, in hope of recompense, doled it out to others with needs. The mobility and street savvy of women like Thomassina served not only themselves, but also many others of both genders and varied ranks.

Though classically labeled as women of the streets, sex workers were *not*, as we have seen, the only women to occupy Rome's urban terrain. Indeed, most prostitutes who appear in the judicial records were not streetwalkers, but operated from privately rented rooms in neighborhoods they shared with other working class households, including some headed by respectable women. There, like other householders, sex workers often engaged with prospective clients and with their neighbors through the liminal spaces of windows, doorways and the street just in front. Though typically noisier and more abrasive than feminine ideals would dictate, much of prostitutes' street behavior was not radically distinct; rather it fell toward one end on a spectrum of working class practices. Similarly, when they moved out into urban space, prostitutes' clothing was only sometimes unusually colorful and their destinations were often mundane. Lucky ones with more gentlemanly clients might travel to those posher quarters, but outings often had quite ordinary ends: to get food, to visit friends, to watch a procession, or even to go to church.

Women, especially working class women, spent time in the streets for many reasons. Occasionally, they left their neighborhoods to gape and listen at special religious and civic events or to visit suburban gardens for recreation or work. More routinely and often closer to home, they performed chores, watched children, bought and sold, socialized, and gathered and exchanged precious information. Many also engaged in informal, self-help policing of neighborhood spaces that were at least in part theirs. Doorstep sociability bred conflicts in which women took lively part. They picked fights with one another and also weighed in to assist male family members. Grouchy neighbors habitually flung sharp insults and, now and again, resorted to shoving, scratching, hair-pulling, or blows with stones,

broom handles, metal jugs, and the wooden soles of slippers. But then women often intervened as peacemakers and offered moral and material support to those wrongly abused. One rude, but banal story will illustrate several typical stages: the exercise of local social discipline, angry response that escalates from verbal to physical violence and, finally breaking up the battle before much harm is done. In October 1609, in a tangle of small streets near the modern Piazza di Spagna, Artemisia, wife of Pellegrino and self-proclaimed *donna da bene*, was watching the street from her house. She spied Francesca di Castelfiorentino, likely a prostitute, urinating in the alley. When the matron, claiming moral high ground, reprimanded her, the offender resentfully and without “any respect” retorted, “slut, witch, buggeress, go screw the locksmith who comes to open your cunt.” Then Francesca’s female companion, another prostitute, threatened Artemisia with a metal bar she had in hand. Several other neighbor women watched this encounter, and one stepped forward to disarm the would-be assailant.⁷⁴

Conclusion

Official efforts to discipline prostitutes signaled elite fears of the dangers of public female presence: women both posed risks and faced them. But Rome’s streets offered much more than danger. And courtesans were not the only visible females. Rome’s squares and thoroughfares were spaces both public, in Nussdorfer’s sense, and urban; they hosted social relations both communal and private. The streets, small and large, medieval contorted or Renaissance straight, were sites for important exchanges that sometimes burdened women’s lots, but often enlivened and enriched them. To pray, to work, to hear, to speak, to watch, to play, to quarrel, to defend: there were many reasons for women to join the life in and of the streets. The extent and manner of women’s participation varied with regard certainly to rank, but also to circumstances of household composition, work, and even temperament.

The larger comparative question remains open: did Italian citywomen occupy their streets—in norm and, especially, in fact—less or more than their counterparts in northern Europe? A better inquiry asks not how much, but who exactly and how? With more precise and imaginative categories we can track women’s various footsteps through urban space in Italy, and elsewhere.

⁷⁴ TcG: Investigazioni, busta 387, f. 226.

Gossip and Street Culture in Early Modern Venice

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Abstract

This is a study of the spatial, social and cultural context of gossip in early modern Venice based on oral testimony to the magistracy of the Avogaria di Comun, and centering on the making of marriages. Recent studies in sociology and anthropology suggest that gossip was part of a complex system of social relationships, particularly within an urban context. Far from being an exclusively female practice, both men and women engaged in gossip, and this exchange of information has much to tell us about a range of social norms. A consideration of the spatial locations within which gossip took place concludes that the circulation of information undermined formal distinctions between the public and the private. It also emphasizes both the importance of visual observation in starting a chain of comments based first on unspoken assumptions, and the role of individuals in deliberately supplying information about themselves to gossip networks.

Keywords

Venice, gossip, space, street

Introduction

Linking Venice with the concept of 'street culture' may at first sight appear to be slightly odd. According to popular imagery, the city rises from the waters of the lagoon and is symbolized above all by a form of water transport, the gondola. From the middle ages onwards, access to the Adriatic Sea and the extensive network of canals that branched off either side of Venice's main thoroughfare, the Grand Canal, underpinned its wealth and these waterways permitted access to all parts of the city. But Venice had far more in common with other urban centers of its time than this might suggest. Much of its economy and culture was land-based. It too had streets and other spaces that enabled people and goods to move from place to place on foot. These ranged from small yards and paved areas alongside canals to narrow streets linking different quarters of the city and crossing

the canals by means of bridges, mostly with very low parapets. Larger spaces permitted markets to be held and provided the context for a wide variety of religious and secular activities. The nature of these Venetian open spaces created some distinctive differences but there were also enough similarities for the 'street culture' that took place within them to be treated alongside that of other early modern centers. The most important contrast with other cities was the absence of horses and consequently of wheeled vehicles, which obliged people to move on foot or by water, leading to interactions which took place slowly and at a uniform level.

As in other cities, however, external spaces in Venice were both highly localized and part of the broader urban fabric. This meant that while much of the activity which took place in the streets or squares was primarily concerned with people who lived a very short distance away, there was always the potential for an outside interruption to the customary daily rhythm. This can be characterized by certain aspects of the seasonal bull baiting that often took place in Venice in the autumn. In his study of these parish entertainments, Robert Davis suggests that the baiting was often preceded by a mad dash through the streets from the abattoir on the edge of the city to the square designated for the baiting the following day. Youths from the parish in which it was to take place made their way to the abattoir, chose the most frightening looking animals, and then drove them noisily and aggressively through the streets of rival parishes to demonstrate their capacity to occupy a space which was not normally in their possession.¹

Contemporary descriptions of the bull baiting also emphasize how public squares in Venice became arenas, in which the spectators watched as the tethered bulls were set upon by dogs. Some onlookers were in the square itself, outside the barriers set up to delimit the bullring. Many others watched from the windows of the houses lining the square.² Their participation, like that of the crowds who witnessed the so-called 'Wars of the Fists,'³ is a reminder that public spaces, such as the streets, were not divided sharply from domestic interiors, particularly at key points such as doors,

¹ Robert C. Davis, "The trouble with bulls: The *Cacce dei Tori* in early modern Venice", *Histoire Sociale*, 22 (1996), 286-89.

² Davis, "Trouble", 280-84.

³ Robert C. Davis, *The War of the Fists. Popular Culture and Public Violence in Late Renaissance Venice*, (New York and Oxford, 1994).

windows and balconies, and that street culture and domestic interiors could impinge on each other in multiple ways.⁴

This article explores some of the issues in relation to the interaction between the street, shops and domestic interiors in early modern Venice through a study of gossip. Early modern street culture had many elements to it, some of them observatory, some of them participatory. Gossip brought the two together, for the topics of conversation were often stimulated by sight, smell or sounds rather than by what had been heard from others.⁵ At a later stage, this initial perception was translated into speech and the value-loaded information took on a life of its own.

Definitions of gossip vary. For the men of early modern Europe, it was a pejorative term for conversation between women, and was used to counteract a perceived threat to male hegemony from an activity over which they had no control.⁶ The content of these conversations was belittled in order to give greater value to the purposeful exchanges between men. These value-loaded associations persist in present-day terms such as *commèrage* (French) or *pettegolezze* (Italian), the one drawing attention to the exclusive participation of women, the other to the potentially scandalous subject matter of gossip. In the English language, the term 'gossip' has begun to lose some of these associations as it has become the subject for serious academic study. In anthropological terms, it can be considered as two associated phenomena that have endured over time and in different societies: the transfer of information through conversation, and the actual information that is communicated. These bring together process and content. Gossip is no longer considered to be gender-specific in the sense that the term embraces both male and female conversation. On the other hand it is also recognized that the process of gossip can be highly gendered. For the history of culture, also, the subjects of gossip and the implications behind their selection and the way in which they were discussed all open the door to an understanding of a widespread set of cultural values. These provided a framework within which people could pass judgment on one another.

⁴ For a stimulating discussion of these issues in relation to early modern Rome, see Elizabeth and Thomas Cohen, "Open and shut: the social meanings of the Cinquecento Roman house," *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, (2001-2), 61-84.

⁵ For a discussion of the role of the five senses in understanding the history of urban culture, see the essays in *The City and the Senses. Urban Culture since 1500*, eds. Alexander Cowan and Jill Steward, (Aldershot, 2006).

⁶ Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet. Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England*, (Oxford, 2003); 49-55.

While there were many subjects for gossip—political speculation, meteorological phenomena, slander, domestic disputes, information about trading conditions and so on—this article will be restricted to gossip about marriage and in particular to gossip about the preliminary stages of the making of marriages. The evidence for gossip here arises out of the records of oral testimony given to the Venetian magistracy of the *Avogaria di Comun* as it investigated the social background of women from outside the ruling hereditary patriciate who sought official approval to marry patricians. Without such approval, all sons of such mixed marriages were automatically deprived of patrician status and the right as adults to participate in the Venetian ruling body, the Great Council.⁷

Using these testimonies before the *Avogaria di Comun*, I would like to make a number of suggestions. The first is that ‘street culture’ was not a distinct phenomenon limited to what took place in the open, but was strongly influenced by the interchange between the domestic and the public. Key places for this interchange were located on the boundaries between buildings and the street—doorways, balconies and windows. Second, when it came to gossip and observation, street culture was not strictly gendered. While research into gossip now accepts that it was not an exclusively female phenomenon, there is still a widespread assumption that both its subject matter and its audience were strictly gendered. I would argue that the subject of impending marriages was an issue so central that it absorbed men and women alike. Further, I would suggest that gossip was never exclusively born out of observation. In some cases, the subjects of gossip deliberately introduced information about themselves or their families into circulation in full knowledge that the operation of gossip networks was among the most efficient ways of ensuring that the news was spread. This article’s four sections therefore consider the role of visual observation as a basis for gossip; the spatial context for visual observation; the gendering of gossip, with a particular emphasis on male gossip; and the role of gossip as a mechanism for deliberately circulating information within the community.

⁷ For an extended analysis of these investigations, see Alexander Cowan, *Marriage, Manners and Mobility in early modern Venice* (Aldershot, 2007). This is based on 579 surviving cases considered by the Avogaria between 1589 (the year in which these investigations were first established) and 1699.

Visual Observation—The Case of the Campo San Barnabà

Visual observation gave rise to gossip for one of two main reasons. In one case, the gender, status or age of the person being observed gave rise to certain expectations about their behavior. Generally, social observation operated within a narrow range of conformity, but in the case of widows or nubile girls, these expectations sometimes provoked appraisal that ranged between two extremes. At such times, they aroused curiosity and invited swift, firm judgment. Was a widow chaste, or was she lusty? Was a nubile girl modest, or was she incautious in her interaction with others in public? Observers looked for evidence to answer these all-important questions, in order to reinforce their cultural world and to police their social world.⁸ Their emotion on observing something out of the ordinary was such that they then proceeded to speak to someone else about it, initiating a chain of gossip.

The Venetian square of the Campo San Barnabà illustrates well how visual observation of a widow's behavior might evoke and exploit the repertoire of Venetian moral culture. The widow, Camilla Colonna, lived quietly in an apartment in the square in the 1640s. In 1649, she married Pietro Bonamigo, a notary working for the *Avogaria di Comun*, the very magistracy that carried out the investigations into mixed marriages upon which this article is based. However, testimony from witnesses interviewed during an investigation into the daughters of this second marriage makes it clear that while she was widowed, Camilla had led a double life.⁹ In the Malipiero family palace in the parish of San Samuele, which lay opposite San Barnabà across the Grand Canal, Camilla was not known as a modest widow, but as the mistress of the rather corpulent Ottavian Malipiero; a relationship that may have continued after she married. Note that the width of the Grand Canal sufficed to separate her two lives. Given its breadth by comparison with Venetian streets and the presence of a single crossing over the Rialto Bridge, the Grand Canal acted as a major barrier to the circulation of gossip. Once Camilla had walked a short distance out

⁸ See Cowan, *Marriage*, Chapter Seven, "Gender, honourable and dishonourable behaviour."

⁹ The case arose when the two daughters of her second marriage were considered many years later by the *Avogaria di Comun*. Archivio di Stato, Venice, *Avogaria di Comun* (hereafter *AdC*) 235/46; 241/70.

of the *campo* and taken the ferry across the canal from San Barnabà to San Samuele, she was literally in a different world.¹⁰

As Camilla's story proves, much of Venetian life was indeed parochial. While contiguous parishes often shared public knowledge of their inhabitants, those separated by the Grand Canal or by greater distances across lesser canals were almost separate spheres. When individuals or families moved from one area to another, it was almost as if they had dropped entirely out of sight.¹¹ Neighbors had no knowledge of someone whom they had ceased to see on a daily basis. Consequently, when Camilla's neighbors in the Campo San Barnabà were later asked about her behavior, they saw what they expected to see (virtuous conduct). They also revealed that they took an interest in their neighbors and spent some time observing them, not for any prurient reasons but because they could see them either from their homes, their places of work, or while crossing the square on day to day business. These observations were also corroborated by what they heard from gossip. Pietro Pischiato had a barber's shop on the Campo San Barnabà. He knew that Camilla had lived in the campo for two or three years in an apartment above the fruit shop in a house belonging to the Pasqualigo family. She had three servants, two maids and a cook, and lived comfortably. He saw the fruit merchant come to her house to do errands for her. He was also asked if she had any other male visitors and replied that, apart from her landlord, her only visitor was her brother. This was a leading question. A woman's moral reputation would have been seriously compromised if it were known that she had several male visitors. On the other hand, the readiness with which the question was answered also suggests that the same question must also have occurred to her neighbors. A youngish widow, living alone with servants, would always arouse curiosity and speculation about her morals.¹²

This witness would also have been able to complement any visual observations with gossip as a result of his profession. As a barber, he not only visited men in their own houses in order to shave them or cut their hair or

¹⁰ *AdC* 235/46; 241/70.

¹¹ See comments by witnesses in the cases of Barbara Raisis (*AdC* 207/63); Vittoria Grotta, (222/47, 2^{do}).

¹² *AdC* 235/46. For attitudes to widows, see Alexander Cowan, "Lusty widows and chaste widows in seventeenth-century Venice", in *Famiglie e potere in Italia tra medioevo et età moderna*, eds. Anna Bellavitis and Isabelle Chabot, (Rome, forthcoming).

give them basic medical treatment, he also worked in a shop in the campo.¹³ In both circumstances, the exchange of gossip was part and parcel of his work. It was quite common for barbers to be called as witnesses before the *Avogaria di Comun* for this very reason. Only a few years later, another barber in the same campo, Giacomo Zanchi, was asked about the sixteen-year old Laura Scaramella, who had grown up in the house of her patrician stepfather, the *Nobil Uomo* Giovanni Paolo Balbi.¹⁴ A second barber member of the same family in San Barnabà explained to the magistrates that he knew about another impending marriage in 1649 because he had seen the father of the future bride, Chiara Marcello, while he was working in the house of one of her relatives.¹⁵

The case of Camilla Colonna illustrates the way in which the campo acted as a place of observation. People watched doorways to see who entered. Some, like barbers, collected and redistributed information in the form of gossip. But Camilla was also able to slip beyond the controls of her observers in the campo by interposing a major canal between its denizens and her secret other life.

Public Space and Domestic Space

In Venice, the nature of observation was also closely linked to the organization of space. The case discussed so far involved a comparatively open space, the Campo San Barnabà, which had houses along two sides only. The other two sides were bounded by a canal, the Rio di San Barnabà, and by the parish church. Most Venetian space, though, was much more densely populated with narrow streets and alleys overlooked by buildings several stories high. To the eyes of local observers, the boundaries between public and domestic space were real, but hardly sharp and not always significant. Observation took place in both directions. This complex observational

¹³ The dividing line between barbers and surgeons was very thin. A barber from the Calle de Bottéri in San Polo claimed to have known Egidio Paganuzzi for thirty years because he always practised medicine in his house. *AdC* 223/58.

¹⁴ *AdC* 217.

¹⁵ *AdC* 207/87. There are close parallels with the behavior of pharmacists, whose shops were also known as centers of gossip and information. See Filippo de Vivo, "Pharmacies as centers of information and sociability in early modern Venice," *Renaissance Studies*, 21(2007), 505-21. I am very grateful to Dr. de Vivo for allowing me to see his work in advance of publication.

relationship between the public and domestic space was enhanced by a flexible organization of work and time that gave individuals ample opportunity to stop and stare, and to process information obtained from a variety of sources. This porousness enabled individuals to learn key details about their neighbors. In the 1660s, Giovanni Maria Mutti was living in the parish of San Giacomo dell'Orio. The patrician, Alessandro Contarini, lived in the adjacent house. As a neighbor, whose contact with Contarini did not extend to friendship or to domestic visits, Mutti had still learned a certain amount of information about him. He knew that Contarini had married Bernardina Tomitano, a widow, with a nubile daughter from her first marriage. He also knew that negotiations to marry off this daughter were in progress.¹⁶ Francesco Bonelli was in an even better position to know about the life of the doctor of medicine, Marc'Antonio Gadaldin. They lived on neighboring floors in Castelforte di San Rocco, an apartment block built by the confraternity of the Scuola Grande di San Rocco, Bonelli below and Gadaldin on the floor above him. Bonelli knew that Gadaldin was a doctor and that he was married to a woman named Isabella Mascherini. He had also learned that Gadaldin's brother-in-law was a canon in Padua, the source of some pride to the family.¹⁷

While this information was conveyed through verbal gossip, other witnesses were close enough to see activities in their neighbors' houses, either from their own homes, or from the street. Steffano Bonini, of the parish of San Pantalon, was able to confirm from eyesight that the behavior of both Alba Gritti, the daughter of his neighbor across the street, and of her mother, Dolfina Dolfin, met the norms of modesty and honesty. "My windows," he said, "correspond to their balconies."¹⁸ Iseppo Antelmi also based his testimony about the fatherless sixteen-year old Maria Michiela Vidali on visual observation. "We have always been close neighbors . . . According to what I have seen as a long-standing neighbor, she has always lived in all civility."¹⁹

¹⁶ *AdC* 223/66.

¹⁷ *AdC* 223/75.

¹⁸ *AdC* 227/5. This can be complemented by the Roman case of Clemente Sanguinea and her Spanish neighbors across the street. Cohen and Cohen, "Open and shut," 73-79. This citation of ways of seeing was characteristic of Roman Law testimony. Bonini's phrase was not intended to demonstrate that he spent much time looking. Rather, he felt that he could cite the balconies as a canonical token of neighborly knowledge.

¹⁹ *AdC* 248/83.

When a woman used a balcony, this always exposed her to the gaze of her neighbors. It was necessary to moderate her behavior in order to guard against imputations against her modesty. Grimana Peracca and her patrician mother, Benetta Grimani, were frequently observed on their balcony by their neighbor, Antonio Cesana. He was at pains to counteract a suggestion from his questioners that they had behaved with too much liberty. "I could see them clearly on their balconies and never saw or heard anything which could possibly cast a shadow on their honesty."²⁰ A wool merchant in the parish of the Angelo Raffaele lived so close to the house of the doctor, Michelangelo Formenti, that he was able to see through the latter's windows. We know this because of negative evidence. He recounted that he had seen the girl leave her house from time to time, but that he had not been able to see her inside her house through the windows. She did not enter these rooms, at least when it was possible to look through the windows. The inference was that she led a modest and retiring life. He concluded that her reputation within the parish was one of great respectability.²¹

It is interesting to see the social effects of this close proximity of houses confirmed by evidence from the Inquisition case of a lusty friar studied by Guido Ruggiero. Ghielmina, the wife of Antonio explained that "certainly I do not want to look because I mind my own business but one has to see the neighborhood from the balcony, and I have seen in three years that I have been in this house that the friar has a reputation for a most evil life and keeps dishonest people in his house."²² These cases of observation from house to house, from balcony to balcony and from window to window modify the principle of private space. The close proximity of buildings to each other rendered the outer parts of houses semi public to a range of onlookers, a situation recognized by everyone involved. This widespread observation of and from balconies is also a useful reminder that sociability operated on a number of different levels and not exclusively down in the street. People looked across from one balcony to another, as well as looking down or up between the balcony and the street.

²⁰ AdC 208/20.

²¹ AdC 317

²² Guido Ruggiero, *Binding passions. Tales of Magic, marriage, and power at the end of the Renaissance*, (Oxford, 1993), 183.

Male Gossip, Female Gossip and the Street

It is not always easy to find out who was engaged in a specific act of gossip, let alone where. Most of what appears in the Venetian *Avogaria* investigations is the end-result of gossip, rather than the process itself. The magistrates were only rarely interested enough to ask their witness to identify their informants. Normally they asked only when seeking further witnesses to test or corroborate what had already been heard. Usually, witnesses gave hearsay evidence that, for instance, a particular woman was soon to marry, or that her parents were living together in concubinage. Battista Manzoni, a fruit merchant living at the Ponte di Santa Caterina was able to testify in 1651 "he heard that La Dardana had arranged a marriage between one of her girls and a gentleman whose name I do not know."²³ A wool merchant living in the parish of San Stai in the 1620s had heard that Zanetta Cucina was going to marry a patrician. He also did not know the man's name.²⁴ Such gossip circulated not only among merchants, barbers, or boatmen, but also among the patricians themselves, who were equally interested in projected marriages outside their own circles. The *Nobil Uomo* Alessandro Gradenigo reported that he "had heard" that Fontana Pigna "was promised in marriage to Ottavian Contarini, the brother of Ruggier, Zuan Antonio, Bernardo and Zuan Battista," but that he was unsure whether or not the marriage had actually taken place.²⁵

Various witnesses had heard about the illegitimate daughters of Pietro Giupponi, a patrician who had acquired his status by purchase. They repeated some information that was generally circulating in the parish, that the girls' mother was a peasant on one of Giupponi's estates on the mainland.²⁶ Cases of patrician concubinage were often not hidden, but publicly known. The information that a couple was not married but living together circulated among the local population in factual terms. This was important, for this knowledge also established that the children of the relationship were illegitimate. Equally important was information about the circumstances in which the relationship began. An artisan with a shop close to the house of Vettor Priuli repeated to the magistrates what he had heard through neighborhood gossip about Priuli's concubine, Virginia

²³ *AdC* 215/57.

²⁴ *AdC* 312.

²⁵ *AdC* 340.

²⁶ *AdC* 226/136. For Pietro Giupponi, see Roberto Sabbadini, *L'acquisto della tradizione. Tradizione aristocratica e nuova nobiltà a Venezia*, (Udine, 1995), 123.

Fidati. "I know that it was said that she was his [Priuli's] mistress, that he had taken her away when she was a virgin, that he kept her in his house as if she were his wife, and that she was a woman of modesty." This emphasis on her virginity at the start of the relationship strengthened the parallels with a conventional marriage sanctified by the Church. It also reinforced the local judgment that she was a woman of high moral standards. The gossip in this case reached a broad social range. One of Priuli's immediate neighbors on the floor below him in the same building in the parish of Santa Maria Zobenigo was another patrician, Todaro Balbi, who gave testimony in similar terms to the artisan: "According to what I have heard, he [Priuli] had a daughter with a young woman whom he kept in his house as if she were his wife." This information was entirely accurate. The written submission to the *Avogaria di Comun* on behalf of Priuli's illegitimate daughter, Marina, was quite explicit that he had taken Virginia Fidati away into his power while she was still a virgin. One of his close friends testified that he had returned from Mass to a villa on the Venetian mainland, where he had found Virginia crying in a room in Priuli's house while he consoled her. After that, they were always together.²⁷

Many historians specifically link gossip with women.²⁸ The predominance of male witnesses before the *Avogaria di Comun* skews our picture of how far gossip was gendered in Venice. On the other hand, this allows us to examine the process of male gossip in general and also brings us to a new set of questions about the gendering of street culture in general and of gossip in particular. More weight was given to male testimony in the belief that these witnesses would be better informed. This applied to the witnesses selected by the magistrates to test the case put forward by the women who wished to marry patricians, and to the witnesses nominated by the women and their families to reinforce their case.

Modern reading of early modern moralists would have us believe that there was a clear distinction at the time between a female dominated domestic sphere and a male-dominated public sphere. This matched best the practices of the wealthy and those of high status, but even here there

²⁷ *AdC* 211/67. For further discussion of patricians and concubinage, see Cowan, *Marriage*, Chapter Six, "Concubinage and natural daughters."

²⁸ Melanie Tebbutt, *Women's Talk? A Social History of 'Gossip' in Working class Neighbourhoods, 1880-1960*, (Aldershot, 1995); Capp, *When Gossips Meet*; Samuel Thomas, 'Midwifery and society in Restoration York,' *Journal of the Society for the Social History of Medicine*, 16 (2003), 12-15.

were certain ambiguities in the gendering of domestic space. Some of these arose from the presence of commercial or industrial activities within a building only partly devoted to domestic accommodation. The two worlds often mixed. Other ambiguities arose from the multiple uses of space inside houses open to male and female outsiders. This is an area in which much work still remains to be completed.

Robert Davis's work on contested public spaces in Venice suggests a similar ambiguity in the gendering of certain spaces outside the home. His argument, however, is that men dominated the streets, making any women who left the private sphere and walked through streets a transitory and subsidiary presence. Only in two public areas, according to Davis, churches and red light districts, was the presence of women so strong that there was air of uncertainty over whether or not they could be considered as male-dominated spaces.²⁹ One might want to modify these views in the light of a court case discussed by Denis Romano, the late medieval equivalent of a modern exclusion order. To ensure that they never met, the Venetian state forbade a man from entering a specific area of the city where a woman whom he had been importuning was known to go about her daily business. The only way of preventing this from continuing was to ensure that they never met.³⁰ In reality, this case was the exception that proved the rule that the streets were substantially a male domain. This did not mean that for a woman going out in public was dangerous, but that she was subjected to male behavior that reinforced men's claim to control the space.

Some of this behavior towards women identified them as sexual objects, but much of it was exclusionary behavior intended to communicate to women that they had no part in this gendered activity. Note the telling contrast between dynamic female and static male behavior. Women, though they might stand in doorways or around wells, mostly used the streets as spaces through which to pass in order to reach their destination—the market, the church, the bake-house, the well, the laundry, or another private house. Men, on the other hand, were frequently static. They stood around in order to speak or to observe, not least because the rhythms and organization of pre-modern work either placed men in buildings open to the streets permitting direct contact with others close by outside, or created

²⁹ Robert C. Davis, "The geography of gender in the Renaissance", in *Gender and Society in Renaissance Italy*, eds. Judith. Brown & Robert C. Davis (London, 1995), 19-38.

³⁰ Denis Romano, "Gender and the urban geography of Renaissance Venice", *Journal of Social History* 28 (1989), 339-53.

requests for work so intermittent that there were many opportunities to stand and talk. The early modern Venetian economy could not have operated successfully without the availability of large numbers of men to transport goods, people or messages from one place to another on foot, or by boat. Between jobs, they waited, and passed their time in the open.

These circumstances facilitated the street as a locus for male gossip. A recent study of political gossip in sixteenth-century Venice by Elizabeth Horodowich helps us to identify where this took place. Since only a very small proportion of the Venetian male population, the patricians, were permitted to engage directly in politics, much political gossip took place where those men could gather close to the center of political activity, the Ducal Palace and in the Piazza San Marco.³¹ Word of disputes and of successes and failures in election to office, however, also interested the disenfranchised, particularly in times of crisis. The Piazza San Marco was an ideal place for gossip to spread. It was one of the two sites in the city, the Rialto was the other, to which merchants and others resorted in order to meet each other and to obtain news. Such news was neither exclusively political nor economic. Subjects of the kind that concern us here, such as news of an impending marriage, sexual scandal, illegitimacy and concubinage, were also part of the conversation.

At this point, I would like to modify the suggestion that gendered street culture was characterized by static males and dynamic females. There seems little doubt that most female activity in the street was dynamic—servants going shopping or on errands, respectable women going to church, or visiting friends and family. However, respectable women preferred to travel by water in their gondolas. This gave them privacy and reduced the distance they had to walk in high shoes through unpleasant conditions on the ground.³² Male activity, on the other hand, was both static and dynamic. This can be seen in the behavior of merchants and shopkeepers, both of whom engaged in gossip as part of their everyday activities. There was little distinction between conversations about buying and selling and other subjects. Rather than stand inside their shops, many merchants stood or sat outside to discuss business. Selling involved talking up one's merchandise.

³¹ Elizabeth Horodowich, "The gossiping tongue: oral networks, public life and political culture in early modern Venice," *Renaissance Studies* 19, (2005), 22-45.

³² Denis Romano, "The gondola as a marker of status in Venetian society", *Renaissance Studies* 8 (1994), 360-61. For the Venetian high shoes (*zoccoli*), see Davis, 'Geography of Gender,' 35.

Santo Petrobelli, for instance, who sold oils and other distillations for medicinal purposes in a shop in one of the arcades that bordered the Piazza San Marco, “sat in a chair and discoursed on the quality of his goods to those who came to buy. He showed them the certificates from the Health Office so that they could believe that his goods were perfect, wholesome, unique and rare.”³³ Zuanne Manzoni used to stand outside his stationer’s shop at the sign of the Hen while his employees prepared and wrapped the merchandise.³⁴ Many merchants owned several shops as well as storage facilities on the Rialto.³⁵ They were frequently on the move during the day, checking, informing themselves and supervising their employees.³⁶ The behavior of both Manzoni and Petrobelli involved a degree of dynamism. Petrobelli may have been seated in his chair, but he did receive customers who came to look or buy. Merchants moved around the streets with purpose.

The evidence which we have of men meeting to talk in the streets of many things including gossip about women, their own and others, suggests that there were indeed two worlds, the domestic and the public. Male visitors to houses were either friends and family, or men who came for specific professional purposes—lawyers, messengers, barbers to cut hair and shave customers, music teachers, dancing teachers, tutors for children.³⁷ Lack of access to a man’s home prevented detailed personal knowledge. In 1645, the magistrates’ hopes of detailed information from Daniel Bertolotti about Cataruzza Marcello and her family were frustrated when the man could not identify the female members of the Marcello household: “I do not visit there.” (*Non ho prattica*). Bertolotti was a minor official at the Health Office. Marcello, a patrician, had been elected to a position in the same magistracy. They did not mix socially.³⁸ For them, as for many men, there was no practical purpose in bringing business associates and others with whom they had a day-to-day working relationship into their houses. This would have represented more intimacy than their

³³ *AdC* 209/24.

³⁴ *AdC* 207/65.

³⁵ *AdC* 222/48.

³⁶ *AdC* 214/26; 220/37.

³⁷ For friends and family, see *AdC* 205/1 (Marcello); 285 (Baccucci); 209/40 (Priuli). For others, see *AdC* 218/134 (Ghirardi, notary); 237/86 (Mussi, doctor of medicine); 209/40 (Priuli, dancing teacher); 209/29 (Cocco, barber).

³⁸ *AdC* 209/27.

relationship warranted. Consequently, they exchanged gossip in the open as part of conversations encompassing other business matters.³⁹

Female gossip, on the other hand, represented an important transition between the household and the street. Our cases before the *Avogaria di Comun* contain some stereotypical gossip among female servants, but while the gossip may have begun inside the house, it did not remain there. This can be seen in the story of a relationship between the widow, Laura dal Sol, and the Venetian patrician, Domenico da Mosto. Domenico was the first cousin of her late husband, a middle-ranking administrator in the chancery named Giulio Girardi. Thanks to these kinship links, he was a frequent visitor to the family house, both during Giulio's lifetime and afterwards. According to a number of servants within Laura's household, Domenico tended to come to the house two or three times a week. He would eat with the family. Sometimes he stayed late in the evening after meetings of the Criminal Court. Once, the weather was so bad that he stayed overnight. There was nothing new about this behavior. However, there was now no adult male in the house and Laura was young and potentially marriageable. This meant that a different construction could be placed on Domenico's behavior.⁴⁰

The magistrates investigating Laura's case were anxious to clarify the nature of this behavior. If it could be proved that Laura had committed 'dishonest acts' while a widow, whether or not it was with the man whom she subsequently married, her application for acceptance as a potential mother of future patricians would be turned down on the grounds of immorality. There were strong indications that the magistrates would find what they were looking for. Not only was Domenico on close terms with his late cousin's widow, he dined in her house regularly and stayed the night.⁴¹ Eating together and staying the night were two widely recognized criteria that either a marriage was being planned, or that it had taken place.⁴² The magistrates in the case of Laura and Domenico must have

³⁹ John Lee, "Prologue: Talking organisation" in *Talk and Social Organisation*, eds. Graham Button and John Lee (Clevedon, Pa., 1987), 35-36.

⁴⁰ AdC 212/83. See also Alexander Cowan, "Love, Honour and the *Avogaria di Comun* in early modern Venice," *Archivio Veneto*, 5th ser., 144, (1995), 5-19.

⁴¹ AdC 212/83.

⁴² Daniela Lombardi, "Il reato di stupor fra foro ecclesiastico e foro secolare," in *Trasgressioni. Seduzioni, adulterio, bigamia (XIV-XVIII secolo)*, eds. Silvana Seidel-Menchi and Diego Quaglioni (Bologna, 2004), 365-69; Emlyn Eisenach, *Husbands, Wives and Concubines. Marriage, Family and Social Order in Sixteenth-century Verona*, (Kirkville, MO,

been delighted when one witness, a tailor's widow named Bernardina da Veroni, repeated an important piece of gossip. "Maria Cameriera told me that one night after Giulio's death, the said Laura and Domenico slept together." Maria had told her this in secret, in Laura's house, about a month earlier. The magistrates were duty bound to find out more, and, after having convoked several female servants all named Maria, (a very common name for servants in Venice), identified and interviewed Bernardina's informant. She denied ever having said that the couple had slept together. On the other hand, she made a number of connections between that night's events that explain the gossip. Domenico and Laura were very much at ease with one another. He came late and stayed the night. Above all, her mistress, Laura, had sent Maria out of her bedroom and closed the door.⁴³ There may well have been practical reasons for this, but it was also widely recognized in pre-industrial society that closing the door of a room with a bed in it was a sign that the inhabitants wanted privacy.⁴⁴ At a time when almost all activity except sex took place in the sight or earshot of others, it was very reasonable for Maria to draw obvious conclusions, and to pass them on to someone else when the relationship between Laura and Domenico and their plans to marry were often discussed within the household. Other witnesses who also remembered the night Domenico stayed corroborated Maria's denials. Domenico had slept in one room with Laura's sons, while Laura had slept in another with her mother and grandmother. At the time, she was several months pregnant.⁴⁵ How did these rumors leave the household? The answer is simple. In parallel with Domenico's visits, a secondary group of visitors also gathered in the kitchen and took information out into the street. Menega de Tosia, a carpenter's wife, had been wet nurse to both Giulio Girardi and his younger brother. She continued to visit the house out of affection even after both died of fever. So did Bernardina.

2004), 65-67; Daniela Hacke, *Women, Sex and Marriage in early Modern Venice*, (Aldershot, 2004), 189; Anna Maria Lazzeri and Silvana Seidel Menchi, "'Evidentemente gravida'. 'Fides oculata', voce pubblica e matrimonio controverso in valsugana (1539-1544)," in *Matrimoni in dubbio. Unioni controverse e nozze clandestine in Italia dal XIV al XVIII secolo*, eds. Silvana Seidel-Menchi and Diego Quaglioni (Bologna, 2001) 314-16.

⁴³ *AdC* 212/83.

⁴⁴ Laura Gowing, "'The freedom of the streets': women and social space, 1560-1640," in *Londinopolis. Essays in the cultural and social history of early modern London*, eds. Paul Griffiths and Mark Jenner (Manchester, 2000), 134.

⁴⁵ *AdC* 212/83.

The movement of gossip from house to street was documented in even greater detail in the case of Leonora Cesana, whose father, a wealthy lawyer, gave shelter to a semi-destitute young member of the patrician Grimani family, intending to marry him to his daughter. When a close neighbor, Sebastian Bensi, was called before the magistrates to discuss the impending marriage, they asked him whether any words had been exchanged by the couple before the parish priest, an essential element in the post-Tridentine marriage ritual. He replied that he did not know, but that it was generally said in public (*per pubblica voce et fama*) that she had been either promised or married to the said Gentleman, and that he believed the latter was living in her house. This information emanated directly from the Cesana household. According to another close male neighbor, it was being said in public, and “in particular by the women of the Cesana household”, that Signor Cesana had married one of his daughters the previous Carnival to a Gentleman from Cà Grimani, who was also living in his house.⁴⁶

In Venice, the evidence suggests, male and female gossip had their habitual spaces. It seems that men exchanged gossip outside the house in the open, largely because many of their social interactions took place there, while women exchanged gossip within the house because they met indoors. On the other hand, the movement of information out of the house carried by men and women may have differed in the way in which it was disseminated. The testimony of male witnesses suggests that the information was often, but not always kept to themselves. They learned some information about someone else without feeling the necessity to speak of it to others. References to information emanating from “the women of the house,” as in the Cesana case suggest a more active local female gossip network. The magistrates’ choice to call in witnesses from the immediate locality in which their subjects lived placed a particular emphasis on the circulation of gossip in the parish, square or courtyard that may have given more prominence than necessary to local gossip. On the other hand, this choice was based on long experience of the geographical limits to social relationships within Venice.

⁴⁶ *AdC* 304. As a footnote to this story, in spite of the clear proof to the contrary that the couple had not married, the magistrates were uneasy about their close proximity in the same house. A midwife was called in to test Leonora’s virginity. The marriage was only allowed to go ahead when she confirmed that Leonora was still a virgin. For other cases in which midwives were brought in as expert witnesses, see Joanne Ferraro, *Marriage Wars in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford, 2001), 91-96.

Subjects of Gossip and its Purposes

I would like to move the focus at this point from the location of gossip to its subject matter. The role of gossip in the society and culture of early modern Europe has been greatly underrated, largely because it is normally such an ephemeral phenomenon and therefore passes unrecorded. We know from modern-day anthropological studies that gossip plays a fundamental role in society. Permission to exchange gossip is a sign of social inclusion within a well-defined group. It is often a means of transmitting important information through oral networks. Exchanging gossip, as well as being a way of passing the time and a free form of entertainment, is a useful way of reinforcing pre-existing links between friends, family and neighbors. It is also a potent device for local control and a major zone of female and male agency.⁴⁷

What did people gossip about in seventeenth-century Venice and what was its significance? They passed on information about their neighbors, particularly newly arrived neighbors. They wanted to know if a man and a woman who were living together were married or not. If they were married, they wanted to know something about the wife's place of origin and social background. If she was a widow, they wanted to know to whom she had been married and whether she had any children. If young girls were in the household, there would be speculation after a certain age about marriage plans. If, on the other hand, a girl moved away to a convent for her education, this was also a subject of discussion.

Gossip is frequently characterized as the circulation of confidences, where information to be kept within a restricted group escapes into broader circulation, and is often embellished and sometimes damaging. Some gossip, however, could be instrumental. It was often fed by information that individuals wished known about themselves, not for underhand reasons, but simply because the release of such information about themselves to those around them permitted them to be more easily integrated within society and conveyed positive messages about them and their families.

The deliberate circulation of information about impending marriages, for example, had identifiable objectives. The post-Tridentine emphasis on the presence of witnesses at the engagement and the benediction of a mar-

⁴⁷ Karen J Brison, *Just Talk. Gossip, meetings, and Power in a Papua New Guinea Village*, (Berkeley, 1992); Sally Eagle, "Rethinking gossip and scandal," in *Toward a General Theory of Social Control*, Vol. 1, ed. Donald Black, (Orlando, 1984); Peter Wilson, "Filcher of good names: an enquiry into anthropology and gossip," *Man*, new ser. 9 (1974).

riage belonged to a much older tradition by which promises were frequently exchanged before witnesses to ensure that in future, neither participant could deny their existence.⁴⁸ In many cases of disputed promises to marry, one of the first actions by the couple, or, more commonly by the woman, had been to spread information about an impending marriage first to the family, and then to the wider community.⁴⁹ This gave the link enhanced force and legitimacy. By releasing information about an impending marriage to servants, kin and family in the expectation that the news would spread, proud Venetian fathers or mothers intended to signal a change in their daughter's status. Such an important life-cycle event was something for public knowledge, a subject for congratulation, but also a signal that a family was about to take a step intended to enhance its future social status. Nothing could be clearer from the cases on which this article is based. Each one involved a planned marriage between a Venetian patrician groom and a non-patrician bride. These marriages had important social benefits. Patrician status in Venice still had a certain aura, whether or not its holder was immensely rich, held major political office and lived in a palace on the Grand Canal.⁵⁰

Links with a network of patrician relatives through marriage carried with them considerable cachet and influence. When attempts were made to blacken the reputation of certain families in order to prevent such marriages, the protagonists overtly referred to the kind of influence that could flow from access to a patrician network. In 1663, Giulia Gattamarin tried to prevent her widowed sister-in-law, Cecilia Torre, from marrying the Illustrious Nicolò Magno. She submitted a written petition to the magistrates, accusing Cecilia of marrying a patrician in order to take advantage of her new high status connections to win a lawsuit over an inheritance. Giulia Gattamarin had a lot to lose, and indeed did suffer loss as a result of the subsequent approval of the projected marriage. If Cecilia had remained

⁴⁸ S. Chojnacki, "Nobility, women and the state: marriage regulation in Venice 1420-1535" in *Marriage in Italy 1300-1650*, eds. Trevor Dean and Kate Lowe, (Cambridge, 1998), 128; Cecilia Cristellon, "La sposa in convento (Padova e Venezia 1455-1458)," in *Matrimonio in dubbio*, eds. Seidel-Menchi and Quaglioni, 129-33.

⁴⁹ Sara Luperini, "La promessa sotto accusa (Pisa 1584)," in *Matrimonio in dubbio*, eds. Seidel-Menchi and Quaglioni, 380-81.

⁵⁰ Some marriages with outsider brides involved patricians on the edge of penury. For poor patricians, see Laura Megna, "Grandezza e miseria della nobiltà veneziana," in *Storia di Venezia*, VII La Venezia barocca, eds. Gino Benzoni and Gaetano. Cozzi (Rome, 1997), 161-200.

unmarried, the property she had inherited from her late husband, Zuanne Gattamarin, would normally have passed to his nephews, Giulia's sons.⁵¹

Official government approval for a marriage between a patrician and a non-patrician bride brought with it even more tangible benefits. These women were intended to become the mothers of future patricians, future members of the Great Council and potential office-holders within the Venetian Republic. No wonder that the name of a future patrician son-in-law was deliberately released into public circulation. When the two teenage daughters of the spice merchant Giovanni Battista Donati applied for permission to marry patricians in 1693, the priest of the parish where they had grown up (their widowed mother had remarried and moved away) was still sufficiently interested to note from parish gossip that one was to marry into the long-standing Minio family. The other's husband came from the Lazari, who had purchased patrician status a generation earlier.⁵² The name and family of a future groom were important to priests, particularly to those in the bride's parish so that they had some foreknowledge of a ceremony to come, but priests were not alone in holding this information. Anzolo Bonzanini, a tailor in the parish of San Fantin, became aware of the name of Giustina Fugazzoni's intended husband, while in the case of Apollonia Michiel, the name of her groom was known, among others, to a spice merchant living close to the Arsenal.⁵³ Information out on the street among males enabled the symbolic power of upward social mobility through marriage along the female line to resonate more widely from a very early stage.

Conclusion

The centrality of the making of marriages as a subject for discussion in the wider community and the power of hearsay to disseminate information through gossip networks of varying kinds was an important element of street culture in early modern Venice. The trajectory of gossip is far from easy to trace. Unless pressed by the magistrates, the witnesses whose testi-

⁵¹ *AdC* 221/17. For a more detailed discussion of the perceived benefits of association with patricians by marriage, see Alexander Cowan, "Innuendo and inheritance: strategies of scurrility in medieval and Renaissance Venice," in *Subversion and Scurrility. Popular Discourse in Europe from 1500 to the Present*, eds. Dermot Cavanagh and Tim Kirk, (Aldershot, 2000), 125-37.

⁵² *AdC* 247/81.

⁵³ *AdC* 247/79; 240/38.

monies lie in the archives of the *Avogaria di Comun* did not specify the sources of their information. Nor did they often locate where the gossip had taken place. Certain patterns do emerge. Gossip about forthcoming marriages often took place between men rather than women, although the latter were not excluded, particularly female servants. The subject was of great potential importance and represented not only a major life cycle event for the bride's family, but, in the case of a marital link with a member of the hereditary ruling patriciate, a matter of considerable social importance as well. All links between patricians and those circles immediately below them in Venetian society, from which many of these outsider brides came, had a wider social significance.⁵⁴ As for the physical location of the gossip, we can be more certain about the external boundaries of the area in which it circulated. Venetian parishes were small, yet often witnesses referred to information being 'generally known in the parish'. This may have reflected the intensity of relationships between people who literally lived on top of one another, or it may have been a convention representing the immediate locality. Contiguous parishes were also 'gossip spaces'. Sometimes the information circulated within an even smaller area, as we have seen in the case of the Campo San Barnabà.

These gossip networks could be taken as evidence of an important aspect of the culture of the street, yet in many ways, and particularly if the importance of visual observation as a basis for gossip is taken into account, the dividing lines between the public and the private become much more blurred. Venetians observed each other in the streets and squares but they also looked into each other's windows from outside, or from one balcony to another. Equally important, the street could be observed from within. Even the close physical proximity required by verbal gossip could take place between houses above ground level, or through doors and windows at the level of the street or the canal. While much of the culture of the street took place in the street, this was not always so. In order to better understand this phenomenon, we would be well advised to raise our heads above street level and eavesdrop on the conversations which took place on the edges of the street as well as in the center.

⁵⁴ See Cowan, *Marriage*, Chapter Three, "Outsider brides and their families."

To See and to be Seen: Beauty in the Early Modern London Street

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Abstract

This article discusses physical beauty and its presence in early modern London streets. Based mainly on the evidence of sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century printed literature, it concentrates on how good looks, visibility, and gender were thought to interact in encounters between gazers and the gazed at. Treating the street as both physical space and a metaphor for visibility, it suggests three perspectives through which the relationship between beauty and gender could be approached: firstly, men looking at beauty and reacting to it; secondly, women as spectacle; and thirdly, women's active participation in these exchanges in the streets. Beauty narratives informed the early modern gaze when it confronted the urban scene, assigned affective content to these visual encounters, and inscribed both the seer and the seen with cultural meaning. Viewed as an active process of communication and interpretation, beauty becomes a fundamental category for understanding the cultural history of the street.

Keywords

Beauty, street, gender, gaze, body

Introduction

"Preserue me, O Lord," wrote the Englishman Thomas Bentley in his sixteenth-century collection of prayers for women "—from pranking, pricking, pointing, painting, frisling, & decking of my self to appeare piked, feate, gorgious, & gaie in the eies of men: from taking too much libertie to gad abroad to see and to be seene, or to prance in pride arrogantie."¹ Bentley's advice introduces us to many themes about women on early modern streets. First of all, at least in the imagination, there were enough women gadding on London and English streets to warrant warnings

¹ Thomas Bentley, *The Fift Lampe of Virginitie* (London, 1582), 3.

against it. Secondly, beauty and beautifying were central to how visible women were conceptualized in early modern England. Thirdly, women going out were thought of as a spectacle staged mostly to profit male eyes, but they were also believed to take pleasure in their visibility. In this essay, I will take a look at beauties in the streets, and think about how good looks, visibility, and gender interacted.

My claim is that the heavily gendered concept of bodily beauty was an essential discursive tool for envisioning femininity and masculinity, and indeed women's visibility, in the early modern urban landscape. Culturally speaking, beauty discourses worked towards configuring the experience of the street. Beauty narratives informed the gaze when it confronted the urban scene, assigned affective content to these visual encounters, and inscribed both the seer and the seen with cultural meaning. Viewed as an active process of communication and interpretation, beauty becomes a fundamental category for understanding the cultural history of the street.

My window towards the street is framed first and foremost by sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century printed literature—by no means the 'whole truth' then, but nevertheless, I think, an important source of ideas and scripts that shaped, and were shaped by, the early modern imaginary that people also carried to the physical site of the street.² When possible, I will use the evidence of diaries and memoirs to show that the same conceptual frame also informed a more personal understanding of beauty's powers and its gender structure.

As a conceptual tool, beauty fashioned what people saw, and how they looked at others, in the street. Beauty functioned, I argue here, as a means of 'knowing' and 'doing' gender, in the streets and elsewhere. To say that early modern people thought about beauty constantly is to understate the issue; on another conceptual level beauty was useful for *how* one thought about gender and *how* one conceptualized one's gaze. This is why beauty was an essential ingredient of street culture. Early modern knowledge of beauty assigned subject and object positions that made women and men what they were, positioning women as the looked-at sex and men as the

² Beauty is everywhere in early modern literature. In this article, I have restricted myself to texts that more or less explicitly engage with the problematics of the street, but it is in fact difficult to find a text that does not take part in the masculist beauty discourses in some way. I have written on early modern beauty more generally in *Silmän ilot. Kauneuden kulttuurihistoriaa uuden ajan alussa*. (Jyväskylä, 2005) [Pleasures of the eye. A cultural history of early modern beauty].

primary, but not the only, gazers on good looks in the streets. Men and women thought and acted with respect to beauty whether they conformed to or opposed current norms and practices. In the conceptual negotiations of looks and visibility that touched gendered street behavior, both women and men could use beauty to read actions, be they male or female. To lift a helpful distinction from Alex Cowan's article elsewhere in this volume: beauty was a practice, both observatory and participatory, in which both the beautiful object and the gazing subject had their own powers, and roles both wider and more ambiguous than just to see and to be seen.

Treating the street not only as a physical space but also as a metaphor for visibility, I will venture three different perspectives through which we can think about the relationship between beauty and gender. Firstly, both writers and readers of most early modern texts were assumed to be men. Thus the primary way that beauty figured in these texts is in the relationship between a male viewer and a beautiful female object. What happened when men looked at pretty women in the streets?

But, secondly, women were not mere objects. They had minds of their own, and even writing men knew that. In fact, it seemed to men that women deliberately put themselves on men's way, forcing men to look at, admire and desire them. So women were not innocent, but what did that mean for the women? When appearing to the gaze, what kind of agents were they? It is a paradox of the early modern rationale of beauty that the object was deemed to possess all power, while the looking subject was reduced to a passive receiver of the emotions and desires that the object provoked.

Thirdly, women in the streets also had eyes of their own. They could look at other women's beauty. Even more importantly, they could look at men and engage them in an exchange which made their beauty shine even more brightly and forced men to acknowledge them as living beings and not just passive sights. In a moment, I will consider what happened when women raised their eyes and 'talked' back—for two gazes meeting, in early modern opinion, made for a conversation.

But let us start by looking at the party that we must now consider the more active in the exchanges of beauty. And that is not women—despite our continuing but nonsensical belief that women are the beautiful sex, and that beauty is thus a women's matter. Gendering and indeed understanding beauty must begin with the gesture of looking, not the seen object. The primary gazer, in early modern opinion, was the man. What was the role of men in constructing the image of the woman in the street?

Men Looking at Women

Early modern city life was marked by the street's sights, sounds, and smells, agreeable or not. The throng, variety and noise of busy life constituted the experience of the city walk. While railing against the follies of his age in *Skialetheia* (1598), the grumpy satirist Edward Guilpin described what a "troublesome and tedious" undertaking it was to go out on London streets, forsaking the pleasurable quiet of one's study:

Witnes that hotch-potch of so many noyses,
Black-saunts of so many seuerall voyces,
That Chaons [sic] of rude sounds, that harmony,
And *Dyapason* of harsh *Barbary*,
Compos'd of seuerall mouthes, and seuerall cries,
Which to mens eares turne both their tongs & eies.

To Guilpin's satirical eye, the crowds in the street were made up of disreputable porters, sergeants, and ale-knights, "rotten-throated slaues" and "coney-catching knaues," and the only women in the streets were old bawds and their young whores, all filthily chanting "Kemps ligge."³ But the city was also a "map of vanities," a "marte of fools" and a "magazine of gulls." People walked about to show off their fashionable clothes and painted faces, making outlandish fads that aroused the connoisseur's delight and the satirist's scorn a distinctive feature of city life.⁴ Looking at the various kinds of people who appeared in the streets was central to how London was experienced. Men interpreted open streets as a male-dominated space, where women emerged as a service industry. The street was essential to how early modern masculinity was imagined. An important ingredient to this identity, shared alike by such established figures as Samuel Pepys and young men's counter-culture of fashion and bravado, was the way in which women were objectified as a useable commodity, to be wooed, picked up, drooled over or insulted, according to situation and the desirability of the woman.⁵

³ The allusion here is to William Kemp, the famous dancing fool actor, whose trademark jig from London to Norwich took nine days and gathered crowds all along the way. See William Kemp, *Kemps Nine Daies Wonder* (London, 1600).

⁴ Edward Guilpin, *Skialetheia, Or, A Shadowe of Truth* (London, 1598), sig. D5-D5^v. By 'black-saunts' Guilpin means 'black-sanctus', a term OED defines as 'rough music'—'saunt' was not an uncommon spelling of the word in the late sixteenth century.

⁵ On young men, Paul Griffiths, *Youth and Authority. Formative Experiences in England 1560-1640* (Oxford, 1996), 206-07; Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2003), 246-49.

Beautiful London women seem to have been a sight that men could go to see expressly; indeed they were almost a “tourist attraction.” Mr. Gardiner of Thomas Heywood’s play *The Fair Maid of the Exchange* (1607), for example, visits the Exchange and admires what a “beauteous gallant walke” it makes: “Me thinkes the glorious virgins of this square / Give life to dead strucke youth; Oh heavens!” He then selects the girl he finds the most attractive in one of the stalls and starts flirting with her, making much of her looks.⁶ What went on at the Exchange could take place in any public London space. In the city were special places where people could walk both to display their own mastery of fashion and to take in the beauty of others—places such as Paul’s Walk, the middle aisle of St. Paul’s, that Roze Hentschell has playfully called “the early modern catwalk of the fashionable London.”⁷ Samuel Pepys, whose famous diary of the 1660s testifies to an expert eye, never tired of visiting the theatres, inns, parks, churches and streets where women’s beauty was to be enjoyed. Even the Devonshire yeoman Leonard Wheatcroft, recollecting his youthful days in the mid-seventeenth century, described how he visited London while looking for a wife and appreciatively scanned “the beauteous ladies in the balconies” of “that great and spacious city.”⁸ Beauty in public places authorized men to look at women, to desire them, and often also to seek out closer acquaintance.

In early modern culture, women lacked equal rights with men to use and appear in the streets. Even if the practical necessity of women’s presence was never in question, its meanings were endlessly debated. On a purely ideological level, the possibility of enclosing women in their houses haunts sixteenth-century discussion, even in England, despite its reputation as a “woman’s paradise.”⁹ The reasons for this wish, if such it indeed was, could be manifold, but the problem caused by women’s beauty was one of them.

⁶ Thomas Heywood, *The Fayre Mayde of the Exchange* (London, 1607), sig. F1.

⁷ Roze Hentschell, “Treasonous Textiles: Foreign Cloth and the Construction of Englishness,” *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 32 (2002), 544.

⁸ Pepys’s remarks on seeing beautiful women are too numerous to cite, but see, for example, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, eds. Robert Latham & William Matthews (London, 1970–1971), vol. II: 175, 192–93, vol. III: 24, 153, 167, vol. IV: 153, 185–86, 234, vol. V: 9, 130, 219; Leonard Wheatcroft, *The Courtship Narrative* (Reading, 1986), 40.

⁹ To name just one pertinent example, Geoffrey Fenton discussed a housewife’s duty to be “bound to the circuite of hir owne house,” and linked women’s desire to seek adventures in the streets to their desire for beauty. Geoffrey Fenton, *A Forme of Christian Pollicie* (London, 1574), 264–65. The proverb on England as a woman’s paradise comes from Thomas Platter, *Travels in England* (London, 1937), 182.

Let us proceed with an Italian analogy. In Count Lodovico's¹⁰ ironic commentary in Baldassare Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*, unexpected exposure of women's hidden parts causes most pleasurable sensations to men:

Have ye not had an eye otherwhile, when either in the streetes going to Church, or in an other place, or in sporting, or by any other chaunce it happeneth that a woman lifteth up her clothes so high, that she sheweth her foote, and sometime a litle of her pretie legge unwittingly?¹¹

Castiglione's Count seems to delight in any exposed female part that is normally hidden; a chance glimpse into guarded femininity was more exciting than a woman in full view. This play of practical visibility and erotic half-concealment—in which women collaborated as well, by means of dress, gesture and comportment—also governed ideologies of female beauty. Women in general, when seen in public places in all their layers of clothing, seemingly modest or only fashionably and conventionally uncovered, appeared as eroticized objects that called for a double vision: underneath the dress was that extension of white teeth, gloveless hands and secretly glimpsed ankles, that thing of beauty and desire, the female form that evoked the glimmering vocabulary of Neoplatonic poetry as well as the everyday discourse of sexual surrender and conquest. The male gaze turned women into a sexual presence, and a sexual danger. At the same time, women had to be shielded from this interpretative gesture. According to patriarchal imperatives, men imagined chaste women inside their houses rather than in full view of others, possessed and controlled by their fathers and husbands, without active influence over the male space of the street. When women appeared in the street, with their erotic power to engage male attention, their presence was never without effect on the male psyche. Put together, patriarchal norms of gendered space and the discourse of beauty posited an eroticizing gaze that could inform, condition, guide and give meaning to male experience.

In fact, beauty and the dynamic of gazes in open city spaces is an interesting variation on how women's and men's roles were normally thought about in patriarchal culture, and also on how beauty seems to mean in our culture. In recent feminist writing, gendered aspects of beauty have been seen as problematic for women: the evaluating gaze that lingers on the

¹⁰ Or Count Lewis's, as he is called in Thomas Hoby's translation.

¹¹ Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier* (London, 1561/1974), 67.

surface of the female body and claims the right to assess women by referring to their attractiveness seems to deny their subjectivity. Envisioning women in general as 'the beautiful sex' and assigning them the position of the object of the gaze, viewed primarily by the active male spectator, curbs women's agency. In this view the gaze towards beauty reduces women to objects, without subjective control of what happens, or even of their own visibility, when their looks are publicly evaluated. Whatever agency they might otherwise possess, the prevalence of a masculist understanding of beauty diminishes women's subjective power.¹² Note that not all gazes work in this way; the gaze towards beauty is of a special kind, and has its own specific gender structure.

Of course, the early moderns thought differently, not least because those who wrote on beauty were mostly men. But there is more to it than that. In early modern culture, not only was the power structure between the ideal male gazer and the looked-at beautiful sex a patriarchal given, justified, for example, by referring to the procreative necessity of the otherwise weak and senseless women having at least something to attract men.¹³ The power of beauty constructed a wholly different intellectual and emotional context to the gazer and the gazed-at. In early modern opinion, the women looked at were the more active partner. They were the ones instigating the process of looking and evaluating; they in fact set themselves up to be seen. To the early modern mind, women were regarded as self-evidently aware of their own beauty (which they were often thought to possess in vast amounts) and its effect on men.¹⁴ To gain a position of control, then, women only had to appear in front of the curiously powerless and necessarily admiring male gaze.

The man looking at female beauty was envisioned as only reacting to her appearance and her actions—in fact, to her offering of herself to him, to be possessed by his gaze and often also, as the argument went, possessed by him sexually. When the woman was defined as the seat of human beauty and her body acquired a desired and venerated status through the complex

¹² This is the claim made in Naomi Wolf's *The Beauty Myth* (London 1991), for example. See also Sandra Lee Bartky, *Femininity and Domination. Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression* (New York 1990), 27-29, 39-41; cf. Ellen Zetzel Lambert, *The Face of Love. Feminism and the Beauty Question* (Boston, 1995).

¹³ See Tommaso Buoni, *The Problemes of Beauty* (London, 1606), 4, 12, 19-20.

¹⁴ For different uses of this construction, see for example *A Discourse of the Married and Single Life* (London, 1621), 17-18.

understandings of beauty's properties, the problem here seems to be that men were not thought able to govern their yearnings, emotions and sensations when looking at female bodies.¹⁵ This is the problem with women in the streets.

According to early modern emotion theory, passions were automatic reactions to outward stimuli, each of which had its own peculiar effect on the body and mind. As in medieval love lore or indeed Plato and classical philosophy, the passion that beauty produced was love.¹⁶ In fact, love was the name for an effect of desiring something good and beautiful. There was no way around this: when you saw something beautiful, you loved it. This love might range from Neoplatonic adoration to very earthy reaches of lust.¹⁷ But when beauty was encountered on London streets, no echo of its elevating potential could be heard. Beauty produced a very bodily sensation, usually termed love but understood as what we might call desire. That early modern commentators concentrated here on sexual desire is not surprising: perhaps it is a faithful representation of what men felt, but it was also a safer choice from the perspective of emotions. Romantic love was a dangerous passion that weakened masculine control and could subvert social strategies, whereas sex testified to virility and strength in a way wholly compatible with early modern family and household ideology.¹⁸ What we find here is a rationalization for the fact, discussed by Laura Gowing, that city women were identified with sexual disorder and that the presence of women's bodies sexualized urban space.¹⁹ Desire was produced

¹⁵ All early modern beauty texts affirmed that human beauty resided overwhelmingly in women. See Korhonen, *Silmän ilot*, 17-18.

¹⁶ See, for example, Juan Luis Vives, *The Passions of the Soule. The Third Book of De Anima et Vita* (Lewiston, 1538/1990), 12-13; Agnolo Firenzuola, *On the Beauty of Women* (1548/1992), 19; Thomas Rogers, *The Anatomie of the Minde* (London, 1576), fol. 18"; Annibale Romei, *The Courtiers Academie* (London, 1589), 34-35, 51.

¹⁷ For similar attitudes related to Roman prostitutes, see Elizabeth Cohen, "Seen and Known: Prostitutes in the Cityscape of Late-Sixteenth-Century Rome," *Renaissance Studies* 12 (1998), 395.

¹⁸ Anthony Fletcher, "Manhood, the Male Body, Courtship and the Household in Early Modern England," *History* 84 (1999), 427; Elizabeth Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England* (London, 1999), 56, 139; Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, 78-79; see also Jonas Liliequist, "Masculinity and Virility—Representations of Male Sexuality in Eighteenth-Century Sweden," in *The Trouble with Ribs: Women, Men and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Anu Korhonen and Kate Lowe (Helsinki, 2007).

¹⁹ Laura Gowing, "'The Freedom of the Streets': Women and Social Space, 1560-1640," in *Londinopolis*, eds. Paul Griffiths and Mark S. R. Jenner (Manchester, 2000), 131-32.

by beauty, and women were the beautiful sex, so naturally, according to early modern writers, their presence forced a sexual response.

But note that the male gaze that performed the acts of evaluating beauty and sexualizing its presence was almost wholly left out of the rationalization. In this discussion, the male eye figured only in the belief that eyes in general tended to seek out the agreeable.²⁰ But even here the evaluating performance was understood as virtually involuntary; the operations of the eye and the emotional reactions that followed were not a question of choice. When beauty surfaced, eyes followed, naturally, unavoidably. And if women insisted on showing themselves, all a man could do to protect himself was to follow traditional Biblical advice and not look: "Turne away thine eye from a beautiful woman, and loke not vpon others beautie: for manie haue perished by the beautie of women: for thorow it loue is kindled as a fyre."²¹ The eroticized urban space was constructed not by the desiring gaze but by the mere presence of the desired object.

This view of beauty echoes in men's personal writing, although reflecting on one's emotions was not the favored topic of writers before Pepys. In the latter part of the sixteenth century, the musician and music teacher Thomas Whythorne collected in his autobiography his acquaintances' apt sayings about women (and recorded his delight in them), and came up with a standard misogynist rant where, while ostensibly blaming women for their pride and lechery, he was in fact troubled by what it did to men that women "deck and attire themselves so flaunting and gloriously like peacocks, together with their paintings and frounsing of their hair." Citing Plutarch, Xenophon, Seneca and Ovid, Whythorne worried about beauty, and went on to compose a sonnet on how it "burns" unassuming men.²² Whythorne and his cronies were no Puritan divines or uptight moralists. The anxiety that female beauty awakened in men was a much wider phenomenon, even if we must take misogynist rhetoric with a pinch of salt.

²⁰ Women (and male writers posing as women) complained about the unfairness of these constructions already in the early modern period: Esther Sowernam, "Ester hath hang'd Haman," in *The Early Modern Englishwoman*, part 1, vol. 4, eds. Betty S. Travitsky and Patrick Cullen (Aldershot, 1617/1996), 36-38. On the gaze seeking beauty, see Sergei Lobanov-Rostovsky, "Taming the Basilisk," in *The Body in Parts. Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, eds. David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York, 1997), 202-05.

²¹ Sir. 9:8, *Geneva Bible* 1560. This phrase is indeed one of the most often repeated beauty precepts in early modern literature.

²² Thomas Whythorne, *The Autobiography of Thomas Whythorne*, ed. James M. Osborn (London, 1962), 15-18.

With only a slightest hint of hyperbole—as far as beauty was concerned, every man was a moralist.

What about practice then? Consider Samuel Pepys. Reading his diaries, it almost seems as though women were created for men's viewing pleasure. Their beauty was faithfully recorded among his daily routines and peregrinations around London. Time and time again, he notes his surprise, delight and fulfillment when seeing pretty women: virgins, wives and widows, maidservants, alehouse-keepers and the King's mistresses, in streets and doorways, in their shops and in the court of Charles II. He appreciated his wife's looks, and assessed the beauty of his male friends' wives. He complained when they were too ugly to please him. He found it impossible to be angry at pretty women. He dreamt of the most beautiful women of his time, and, having "glutted" himself "with looking on her" in real life, famously dallied all he desired with Lady Castlemaine in his sleep—his dream being "the best that ever was dreamed." Sometimes he had trouble resisting his urges brought on by beauty, and sometimes, in turn, felt dissatisfied with his lack of "boldness" when he did not try it on, for example with a pretty Dutch woman sleeping alone at an inn. Time and time again, the beauty of the women he encountered justified his sexual exploits, and his language recapitulated the tenets of emotion theory: beauty provoked love and desire, and he could do nothing to resist it. And as for moralism: Pepys too tended to be ashamed at his enjoyment of female beauty when it led to a sexual encounter. Countless times he promised himself never to do this again—but the next pretty woman reawakened his desire.²³ In this, he was totally a man of his world: even if Pepys's obsession with beauty may seem, at first glance, excessive and anomalous to us, it makes perfect sense when read in the context of current beauty discourse.

The gazing man, then, was objectified in emotion theory into a quivering body wholly at the mercy of women's beauty and his own reactions to it; while woman, in turn, was to guard herself against his gaze, but also to shield *him* from the dangers of having to confront her and her beauty. At the same time, however, women were charged with the task of appearing beautiful. One of the highest purposes of womanhood—as early modern writers never ceased to remind us—was to please men's eyes.

When women in the streets were talked about, these basic assumptions were seldom even stated. Still, they formed a steady backdrop against

²³ *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, vol. I: 150, 250, 283, vol. III: 13, 16, vol. IV: 186, 203-04, 368, 416-17, vol. V: 219, vol. VI: 191, and *passim*.

which beautiful women could appear, and they informed the ways in which men confronted women in public places. Moreover, in early modern writing, these tenets allowed women to be presented through a male perspective that stressed not the aesthetic value but the psychological efficacy of beauty. Women's motives for being in the streets were interpreted within this framework. Not that this view of male vulnerability was men's alone; women, too, might easily have shared it.

Women Being Looked At

In the early modern imagination, women's appearance and their liberty to move about were so inextricably linked that in popular literature women's desires could be wrapped into a neat proverbial package:

Women desire three things chiefly.
To bee gorgeously apparelled.
To bee esteemed fayre.
To goe whither they list.²⁴

It was because the visual ran through all thought on women that these three things so readily converged. Even if the list claims to present women's yearnings, it in fact looks at them from the outside. Nevertheless, let us consider whether these desires were indeed important for women. Women, after all, were not exempt from characterizing the category of woman as beautiful and streetwise.

London women were reputedly very beautiful. In all England, and in London especially, women were also allegedly freer to move in the streets than elsewhere in Europe. As Elizabeth Cohen shows elsewhere in this volume, this at least was the perception of many foreign travelers who habitually contrasted Southern Europe with the less constricting English habits. "Now the women-folk of England, who have mostly blue-grey eyes and are fair and pretty, have far more liberty than in other lands, and know just how to make good use of it, for they often stroll out or drive by coach in very gorgeous clothes," wrote the German visitor Thomas Platter in 1599, linking together women walking the streets and their appealing outward appearance.²⁵

²⁴ S. R., *The Choise of Change* (London, 1598), sig. L4.

²⁵ Platter, *Travels*, 179, 181-182; Frederic Gerschow, *Diary of the Journey of Philip Julius, Duke of Stettin-Pomerania, through England in the Year 1602*, ed. Gottfried von Bülow,

However, most English comment condemned this state of affairs. Women in fact had too much freedom, and used it in dubious ways. They made too much of their looks. They put their modesty and chastity at risk by appearing in public, and seemed idle and gossipy when chatting with their neighbors. Most writers conceded that women, even young unmarried women, needed to go abroad every once in a while, but special caution was demanded on these occasions. For example, in his guidebook for Christian women the humanist Juan Luis Vives—not a native but writing in England for Queen Catherine of Aragon and her subjects—after extensive warnings of the perils of going forth anticipated women's insistence that they should not be treated like prisoners in their own homes. However, he snapped that such talk about imprisonment was only an exaggeration of “proud foles” who “desire to se and to be sene.” A woman was to go out only when needed, and when she did, she should “prepare her mynde and stomacke” as if she was going to a fight.²⁶

Those who most insisted on being in the streets, according to moralist writers, were women who saw themselves as beautiful. Their beauty made them want to show themselves, and to prance around in fashionable clothes parading ornaments, jewelry and hairdos that could only reveal their proud hearts. Cosmetics were another danger, as their sole purpose was to deceive onlookers and make women seem more beautiful than they were. Gadding—a female way of spending time in the streets, talking to each other and showing themselves to passers-by—was, it seems, a major problem.²⁷ In fact, men did much the same, but escaped the censure. Indeed their activities in the street were encouraged and understood, even when they bragged and brawled. Men's use of the street was not called gadding, whatever its similarities to women's activities. But there is also an interesting gender division within the imagined activities of the gadding women: while they proffered words, one thought, mostly to fellow women, they offered their appearance mainly to the men. Hence also the tinge of opprobrium in every remark that women went out to see and to be seen.

TRHS new series VI (London, 1892), 29; Rathgeb, “A True and Faithfull Narrative,” and van Meteren's extracts for “History of the Netherlands,” in *England as Seen by Foreigners*, ed. William Branchley Rye, (London, 1865), 7-8, 69-73; cf. Fynes Moryson, *An Itinerary* (Amsterdam, 1617/1971), part III, 34. See also Gowing, “The Freedom of the Streets,” 130.

²⁶ Juan Luis Vives, *The Instruction of a Christen Woman* (London, 1541), fol. 38-38^v.

²⁷ Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet. Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2003), 321.

In London, as in any major city, the margins of the street were coded with cultural and gendered meanings. The famed English freedom allowed women to use these spaces for their interaction with other people in the street. Windows eased exchanges between the street and interior spaces—and allowed women to draw attention to their beauty and beautifying. Doorways were normal places for women to engage in conversation with each other, indeed central loci for female sociability. Women also walked to the well, went shopping, and visited each others' homes, taking to streets every time they left their house.²⁸ Women envisioned moving along the streets in terms of destinations and practical actions, but, like men, they could also think of displaying themselves.

Different kinds of women were, however, by no means in the same position in relation to the street. Women from the highest social strata could be seen and appraised, from time to time and in certain London places, but attention to their beauty was no problem. Indeed, court ladies flunked their task if they did not tend their looks and show off their beauty.²⁹ The poor, on the other hand, could hardly appear beautiful by the early modern standards of fashion and presentation. The group the moralists criticized, then, were the urban middle classes and their servants and employees.

²⁸ For further meanings of windows in city life, see Elizabeth Cohen's and Alex Cowan's articles in this volume. For English women's street behaviour, see Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance* (Brighton, 1984), 171-72, 176; Ian W. Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability* (Cambridge, 1991), 76-77; Lena Orlin, "Women on the Threshold," *Shakespeare Studies* 25 (1997); Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, 330; Marjo Kaartinen, "Public and Private: Challenges in the Study of Early Modern Women's Lives," in *Time Frames. Negotiating Cultural History*, eds. Anu Korhonen and Kirsi Tuohela (Turku, 2002). However, women only tended to go out during the day: at night, being out was dangerous, both physically and to one's reputation. See Griffiths, *Youth*, 208-09; Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England, 1550-1720* (Oxford, 1998), 212.

²⁹ The diarist Henry Machyn described in 1553 how he saw Queen Mary with her court ladies ride through London, and, some hundred years later, Samuel Pepys walked regularly to Hyde Park and around Westminster in order to see the women of the court. *The Diary of Henry Machyn, Citizen and Merchant-Taylor of London, from A.D. 1550 to A.D. 1563*, ed. John Gough Nichols (London, 1848), 38; *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, for example vol. III: 87-88, 92, 175; vol. 4: 120, 142, 229-30. See also Alice Friedman, "Inside/Out. Women, Domesticity, and the Pleasures of the City," in *Material London, ca. 1600*, ed. Lena Cowen Orlin (Philadelphia, 2000), 238; Marjo Kaartinen, "Metropolin illat—kaupunki, maa-seutu ja uuden ajan alun naisten sfäärit," in *Kaupunkikuvia ajassa*, eds. Timo Joutsivuo and Markku Kekäläinen (Helsinki, 2005), 105 ["Nights of the metropolis—city, country and early modern women's spheres," in *Citiescapes in time*.]

These are the women who, one said, reveled in seeing and being seen. The insistence on the delight that women felt when appearing in public is interesting.³⁰ What was the nature of this emotion? We have of course no entry to 'real' emotions felt by past people just as we cannot 'know' the 'real' emotional experience of the person sitting across the coffee table at work. Understanding others' emotion is a discursive act. The same goes for history. What we can know of past emotion comes to us in discourse that let them deal with their reactions and communicate about emotions with others at the time. There was no 'pure' delight outside discourse and cultural interpretation, so the conceptions of the moralists may also shed light on how someone 'actually' feeling delight could have interpreted her or his mental state. The problem is, whatever women actually felt, we have no surviving writing, by women, about their pleasure in the streets. But let us proceed anyway, assuming that men surmised what women thought.

As street life was sociable, women's delight must have had much to do with having fun with friends and neighbors, and knowing about what occurred in the neighborhood. In men's writing, though, female sociability was often considered trivial. Moreover, the male imagination eagerly added men to the picture and envisioned women as performing for their benefit—and turned women in the street into a spectacle. The actresses of this city comedy then, arguably, took pleasure in their role. So, the notion of female delight linked readily to conceptions of beauty and to the idea of men's moral and emotional vulnerability in the face of female beauty. Note the cultural logic: When women were made the agents of men's seeing them in public, women's actual need to be in the streets—whether to move about, to work, to provide for their family, to perform good housewifery, or to meet friends—was conveniently obscured. Women could be treated as if they had no actual business except to appeal to others' eyes, which made their beauty, not their actions, appear as the prime signifier. By extension, women's own attention, too, was thought to be directed on their looks.

Beauty was the conceptual mode that enabled this perception. It was beauty that rendered the onlooker passive, not active. And beauty turned

³⁰ On delight, see for example George Whetstone, *An Heptameron of Ciuill Discourses* (London, 1582), sig. K2; Robert Greene, "A Disputation," in *Life and Complete Works in Prose and Verse of Robert Greene* vol. 10, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (London, 1592/1881-3), 240; Thomas Tuke, *A Treatise against Painting and Tincturing of Men and Women* (London, 1616), sig. K2^v; T. G., *The Rich Cabinet* (London, 1616), 28.

the tables for both genders, offering early modern women a power, if still ambivalent. If women forced their looks on others, they controlled not only their own actions but also the sensations and emotions of others; they were active, had authority, and performed a cultural task.

However, it was difficult indeed to imagine the possibility that women went out only to see, not to be seen. Women were always expected to assume the conscious position of being observed—and we know they did. Their agency, here, remained partial and dependent; it always demanded a second person, man or woman, to witness their outward appearance. This weaving together of subject and object positions was a primary ingredient in women's visibility.

Moral responsibility and sexual agency also had much to do with visibility. A woman's good looks were no mere passive temptation; they enabled her to solicit men actively. Men told women they loved them for their beauty, and women could choose to accept this male claim. Perhaps it was possible for a woman, as men thought, to make herself "a poysoner and sword unto them that see" her, because, by appearing in public, she would entice men's eyes, "drawe the sight of yong men after" her, and "norish the lust of concupiscence" in those witnessing her beauty.³¹ She could further enhance the effect by dressing the part—even grave matrons and modest virgins sold their bodily wares to onlookers:

not only those who are harlots by profession, but euen such as would be reputed pure virgins and chaste wiues, shew these outward signes of their inward filthinesse, and vse these baits to catch the foolish in the nets of vncleannes, by painting their faces & setting forth themselues with adulterate beauty, and laying out their breasts after a whorish manner to be seene and touched: for is it likely, that those who lay them out to the shew wuld haue them only seen?³²

To moralists, the rationale was clear: if women consciously showed themselves, they were ready for any bodily exchange. Leslie Thomson discusses beauty as an exchange in her analysis of shop-girls in early modern drama: shopkeepers' wives and daughters were presented as alluring and inviting, selling themselves along their wares, or at least offering their beauty to the

³¹ Vives, *Instruction*, fol. 27-27^v. See also Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500-1800* (New Haven, 1995), 21-22.

³² John Downname, *Lectures upon the Foure First Chapters of the Prophecie of Hosea* (London, 1608), 165-167.

desiring gaze in order to incite spectators to buy. Women's beauty thus sped the commercial exchanges in London streets.³³

But, of course, not all beauty was about how women presented themselves to men. When beauty entered the picture, a flavor of exchange also accompanied women's relationships with other women. All the craft that went into beauty allowed women to bond—whether by sharing knowledge of beauty practices, cosmetics and fashion, or competing over who was most up to date in applying it. Some texts warned mothers and educators not to bring up girls to heed female fashion in the street.³⁴

If women delighted in their beauty and visibility then it was about empowerment and knowledge. Beauty granted them an effect on others in the street. It let them be admired by other women, even to gain rank. As far as it concerned them, however, women writers in their letters and memoirs kept silent about this. Others, they thought, could make great play about the influence beauty brought them.³⁵

Even if early modern women did often mention other people's beauty, it is difficult to know what they felt about their own appearance—in their personal writing they commented on their looks only disparagingly, humorously, or in retrospect.³⁶ Appreciating one's beauty on paper would have testified to vanity and foolishness. In women's culture, then as now, voicing one's own beauty in any way was highly suspect, it seems to me. Even in women's fiction, all female characters who talk about or take their beauty seriously are stupid and comic—Mary Wroth's lampoons that sparked controversy at the time are a case in point.³⁷ Thus we have little to

³³ Leslie Thomson, "As Proper a Woman as Any in Cheap: Women in Shops on the Early Modern Stage," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 16 (2003), 146-48; Jean E. Howard, "The Evidence of Fiction: Women's Relationship to Goods in London City Drama," *Culture and Change: Attending to Early Modern Women*, eds. Margaret Mikesell & Adele Seeff (Newark 2003), 161-62.

³⁴ Thomas Salter, *A Mirrhor Mete for All Mothers* (London, 1579), sig. C5^v-C6.

³⁵ *Letters of Dorothy Osborne*, 63; Sara Heller Mendelson, *The Mental World of Stuart Women* (Brighton, 1987), 22-23.

³⁶ See Dorothy Osborne's letters to William Temple, *Letters of Dorothy Osborne*, 46, 49-50, 76; and Lucy Hutchinson remembering her childhood beauty, "The Life of Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson", in *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson, with the Fragment of an Autobiography of Mrs. Hutchinson*, ed. James Sutherland (London, 1973), 287-88.

³⁷ See, for example, Wroth's portrait of the "Queen of Bulgaria." Mary Wroth, "The Countess of Mountgomeries Urania," in *The Early Modern Englishwoman*, part 1, vol. 10, eds. Betty S. Travitsky and Patrick Cullen (Aldershot, 1621/1996), 346-48.

go on if we argue that women were complicit in flirtations consciously sparked by beauty, or that they actually saw beauty as flirtation's prime mover in their own personal case. But we can say for sure that they were well aware of this line of thinking and participated in disseminating it.³⁸ If they resisted interpreting what beauty meant for them personally, they were by no means outside the influence of the cultural category and the discursive framework around it.

In popular fiction, at least, pride became a special concern for Londoners, as Laura Gowing has found. In thronged London, there were men and women aplenty to notice or seek out female beauty. And Londoners were also much more exposed to fashion and novelty, and to luxury goods from overseas, more easily available than elsewhere; this was indeed one good reason to visit London. By the turn of the seventeenth century, sumptuary legislation was losing its grip and production of ready-made clothes was well on its way. London was a major market for second-hand clothing and even an important center for trade in stolen clothes. Possibilities for feeding one's pride by fashion were certainly emerging.³⁹ Indeed, London was a place of "Babylonian confusion," where "very Bankrouts, Players and Cutpurses, goe apparrelled like Gentlemen," and women who look "rather sterne Monsters, then chaste Christian Matrones" carry around looking glasses, "the deuilles spectacles, to allure vs to pride, and consequently to destruction for euer."⁴⁰ In this environment, both beautification and attention to others' looks made sense. Bodily beauty could grow into a veritable urban concern, for viewer and viewed alike.

Whereas men linked female beauty to desire and sexuality, however, for women beauty figured more as a question of vanity and pride. Women

³⁸ Again, women's fiction also testifies to this. Elizabeth Cary and Aemilia Lanyer made use of the motif, as did Mary Wroth, even if they did not specifically problematize women's visibility, whether in London or any other early modern streets.

³⁹ Margaret Pelling, "Appearance and Reality: Barber-surgeons, the Body and Disease," in *London 1500-1700: The Making of the Metropolis*, eds. A. L. Beier and Roger Finlay (London, 1996), 92-93; Carlo Marco Belfanti & Fabio Giusberti, "Clothing and Social Inequality in Early Modern Europe," *Continuity and Change* 15 (2000), 360-62; Beverly Lemire, "The Theft of Clothes and Popular Consumerism in Early Modern England," *Journal of Social History* 24 (1990); Derek Keene, "Material London in Time and Space," in *Material London, ca. 1600*, ed. Lena Cowen Orlin (Philadelphia, 2000), 59; John Styles, "Product Innovation in Early Modern London," *Past & Present* 168 (2000), 129.

⁴⁰ Moryson, *An Itinerary* part III, 179; Phillip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses* (London 1583), fol. 33^v, 41^v-42.

focused on the body fabricated by clothes, cosmetics, and gestures, by their own actions, skills, and efforts. In male opinion, women enhanced and extended their natural beauty with props and behaviors, but for women, there was nothing ‘external’ about beauty aids: presentation of the body was in practice inseparable from the body itself.⁴¹ But for both genders, beauty was not just about how you looked, it was about what you did to and with your body. And according to the writing men, this was the more dangerous aspect of women’s beauty; women’s efforts to tend their good looks periled their souls:

Whence proceeded I pray these gadding feagaries of our English dames but from their decking with vnspeakeable pride: For being colloured wyth varietie of vanity, & therefore spotted with shamelesse immodesty then daintely treade they the stones of the streate, and display their Banners throughout their dwelling places...⁴²

William Rankins, a minor satirist and playwright best known for polemics on Englishmen’s foreign fashions, here connects women’s looks and their pride without actually having to say so: the dames gadding in the streets are “decked” and “colloured”—although with pride instead of fashionable accessories, and with vanity instead of cosmetics. They are also “dainty” when treading the streets—but, whether we take ‘daintily’ to mean ‘proudly’ or ‘delicately,’ one cannot step daintily except when fashionably attired.

The expression itself, ‘being decked with pride,’ was so common in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century criticism on women that anyone familiar with beauty discourses could immediately make the necessary connections: beauty, clothes, fashion, pride, and women all played together wherever the expression was used, in a complex and interesting way. What was intended was, first of all, that women were sinfully proud generally, and that their pride made them desire and wear gorgeous clothes, thus displaying their pride for all to see. But, secondly, women were also proud of their clothes, and they indeed dressed in and were covered by their pride when they showed themselves in all their glory in the streets, churches and other public places of London. Through pride, beauty emerges as a problem for women. But Rankins completed his sentence by stating that women:

⁴¹ See Jane Burns, “Speculum of the Courtly Lady: Women, Love, and Clothes,” *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 29 (1999), 259; Korhonen, *Silmän ilot*, 98–100.

⁴² William Rankins, *The English Ape* (London, 1588), 22; Gowing, “The Freedom of the Streets,” 130.

...so sommon the soules of men to the pearill of Hell.⁴³

In the end, a male writer could not envision women's beauty without its male spectators and their emotional involvement. Meanwhile, for women, clothes represented a possibility to 'fashion' themselves and set themselves on display; as Jane Burns has suggested, women's "acts of beautification are designed to take the lady out of an enclosed and controlled space."⁴⁴ Early modern women's beauty practices witness to their attempts to control the gaze directed at them in the streets.

In fact, for many, any attention to being seen straightforwardly revealed women's pride. Pride was the motive for women's insistence that they be allowed to move freely, much more than their domestic or professional responsibilities.⁴⁵ Even women writers, although not necessarily considering the intended audience of women's looks, believed that women were in graver danger than men of succumbing to both fashion and pride. Elizabeth Joceline advised her unborn child in *The Mother's Legacy*:

I desire thee for Gods sake shunne this vanitie, whether thou be sonne or daughter. If a daughter, I confesse thy taske is harder, because thou art weaker, and thy temptations to this vice greater, for thou shalt see those whom perhaps thou shalt thinke lesse able, exalted farre about thee in this kinde, and it may bee thou wilt desire to bee like them if not to out-goe them.⁴⁶

Other female writers went on in the same vein. Elizabeth Clinton, participating in a long-standing debate, argued in *The Countesse of Lincolnes Nurserie* (1622) against proud and wanton women who thought breast-feeding damaged their looks and fashions.⁴⁷ Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick, born in 1625, condemned her girlhood enthusiasm for fashion as vanity and foolishness in her autobiography, and Dame Dorothy Ogle, in

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Burns, "Speculum," 281.

⁴⁵ See, for example, Vives, *Instruction*, fol. 27-27^r; C. Pyrrye, *The Praise and Dispraise of Women* (London, 1569), sig. B3; Rankins, *The English Ape*, 22-23.

⁴⁶ Elizabeth Joceline, *The Mother's Legacy to Her Unborn Child* (London, 1622/1894), 30-33; see also Christine de Pisan, *The Cytye of Ladyes* (London, 1521), sig. P6. Several texts noted the "apish toys" and "confused mingle mangle" of men's fashionable garments too. See, for example, Leonard Wright, *A Summons for Sleepers* (London, 1589), 31, where these phrases are taken from.

⁴⁷ Elizabeth Clinton, *The Countesse of Lincolnes Nurserie* (Oxford, 1622), 13-14.

1625, interpreted her miserable old age as just punishment for her vanity and excessive spending on clothes when young, or so her neighbor Sir Simonds D'Ewes tells us in his autobiography.⁴⁸ It would of course be a grave error to think that women wanted to look beautiful only to men, despite early modern men's wishful thinking. The different manifestations of pride that could be displayed by one's outward appearance were ways of marking one's desired place in female social hierarchy. The tension between godly modesty and social success achieved by good looks was familiar to many women, and the choices between these two also denoted different social and religious goals, albeit sometimes both cherished as befitted time and place.

Women Looking Back

According to male writers, a particular problem of the early modern streets was women who, when they came across other people, would not avert or lower their gaze. They dared look even strangers in the eye. This clearly violated the prescribed feminine way of behaving in public: as Barbara Hanawalt has explained, medieval conduct books advised women to look down and thus preserve their private space when appearing in public, whereas men were encouraged to look up and meet other people's eyes.⁴⁹ Eye contact made the difference: women who looked up, in the Middle Ages or the early modern period, engaged self-consciously and actively with their surroundings. Now why would a woman abandon the prescribed modest gesture? Male writers averred that women refused to make themselves invisible by dodging others' eyes because they believed themselves beautiful. Their looks justified their boldness.

So the sinful Daughters of Syon "walked with their neckes stretched forth to be seene, twinckling their eyes as they passe by," communicating by their raised eyes a will to be acknowledged, and inviting onlookers to engage in a silent conversation where both parties felt beauty's allure.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Mary Rich, *Autobiography of Mary Countess of Warwick*, ed. T. Crofton Croker (London, 1848), 4-5; Simonds D'Ewes, *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Sir Simonds D'Ewes*, vol. 1, ed. James Orchard Halliwell (London, 1845), 283-84.

⁴⁹ Barbara A. Hanawalt, 'Of Good and Ill Repute'. *Gender and Social Control in Medieval England* (New York, 1998), 74-75.

⁵⁰ Echoing the often quoted Isa. 3:16-24, Innocent III, *The Mirrour of Mans Lyfe* (London, 1580), sig. H2-H2^v; see also "An Homily Against Excess of Apparel," in John Jewel,

Sometimes, early modern commentators said, pretty women had too much faith in their looks and imagined everyone who gave them a glance to be in love with them. Answering with liberal gazes and “thinking their beauty increased by their often beholding,” these women only betrayed want of wit and made men weary of their vanity.⁵¹ Others had more luck—although no more sense:

women through want of wisdom are growne to such wantonnesse, that vpon no occasion they will crosse the streete, to haue a glaunce of some Gallant, deeming that men by one looke of them, shoulde be in loue with them, and will not stick to make an errant ouer the way, to purchase a Paramour to helpe at a pinche, who vnder her husbands, the hoddie-peekes nose, must haue all the destilling dew of this delicate Rose, leauing him onely a sweet sent, good inough for such a sencelesse sorte.⁵²

No text by a woman ever admitted to this, but it would hardly be a wonder if women, in the midst of unrelenting beauty demands, would have liked a little validation. More importantly though, these women were never just looked *at*; according to the prevalent view, their own gazes invited responses, almost forced passers-by to look them in the eye. In beauty discourse, one look could be the beginning of an affair, and women were ready to make ‘hoddie-peeks’ or cuckolds of their husbands at the slightest instigation of a glancing gallant. Beauty forged a form of communication; it was defined as an exchange, and thus it depended on the woman’s active partnership in opening her eyes and her body to the gaze.⁵³

Nor was this view only a moralist’s dream. Many women took these precepts to heart: the Tudor medical practitioner and memoirist Lady Grace Mildmay, for example, taught herself, according to her father’s wishes, to keep her eyes from “tossing about in every place”.⁵⁴ While modest women may have tended to avert their gaze from passing men, they were

The Seconde Tome of Homilies (London, 1563), fol. 115^v; Richard Brathwaite, *The English Gentlewoman* (London, 1631), 8-9.

⁵¹ Alberti, *Hecatonphila*, fol. 13^v.

⁵² Thomas Nashe, “The Anatomie of Absurditie,” in *The Works of Thomas Nashe* vol. 1, ed. Ronald E. McKerrow (Oxford, 1598/1958), 17; see also Vives, *Instruction*, fol. 4-40^v.

⁵³ On mutual gazing in settled relationships, see Robert Baldwin, “Gates Pure and Shining and Serene: Mutual Gazing as an Amatory Motif in Western Literature and Art,” *Renaissance and Reformation* 10 (1986), 23, 27-30.

⁵⁴ Linda Pollock, *With Faith and Physic. The Life of a Tudor Gentlewoman Lady Grace Mildmay, 1552-1620* (New York, 1995), 27.

probably more open with other women; at least in early modern opinion that was expected. Control of gestures was essential to good behavior, and although breaking the rules of shamefastness was entirely possible, few would have acted against moral advice without knowing they were breaking the rules. Indeed modesty in the streets may have been less complicated than we think: it was not necessarily easy to look people in the eye when negotiating the dirty and uneven surfaces of the street and the jostling crowds that sometimes gathered there!⁵⁵

Whether street behavior had anything to do with women's sense of beauty is another matter. Still, even when hiding their own gaze, women could not refuse to be assessed or found beautiful when someone chose to look at them. This is why the moral discourse about beauty, whether women subscribed to it or not, and whether it was the full picture of what went on or not, could never be irrelevant to their practical actions.

Early modern literature, in any case, is filled with proud and wanton women who knowingly flaunt their gaze. Some of them may have been inspired by Friedrich Dedekind's popular instructions for "Grobianas," disgracefully unruly maidens, translated into English in *The Schoole of Slovenrie* in 1605:

When through a publike cittie streetes to wander you desire,
(For my part, I am not enforc't to looke to your attire.)
Permit your wandring gadding eyes in every place to bee,
So that before, behinde, on everie side, you all may see.
The minde which nere committed any trespassse may be bold,
Each man, each thing in every corner, freely to behold.
And with a brazen fore-head, looke the prowdest in the face,
Let those looke downe which for offence have suffred some disgrace.⁵⁶

Not only women themselves but their eyes too could gad; Grobiana's eyes wandered everywhere. By looking at every man and each thing the woman also allowed herself to be looked at. In the same way, the 'Shee-Connycatcher' of the romance writer Robert Greene's cony-catching pam-

⁵⁵ On some of the problems of street maintenance, see Riitta Laitinen's and Dag Lindström's essay in this volume.

⁵⁶ Dedekind, *The Schoole of Slovenrie*, 126. The German humanist's popular satire had been published in original Latin in 1549 and in German in 1551, both of which went through several editions of varying length and continued to spread until the eighteenth century. The English translation of 1605 is by a certain R.F.

phlet so “delighted in being looked on” that she frequented all feasts, weddings and merry meetings where being admired was possible. She also saw a clear connection between being looked at and looking: she “spared no glaunces to suruiew all with a curious eye-fauour.” She went to “see and be seen,” taking a dangerously active position.⁵⁷ This girl was also described as a courtesan, a title attached to few on English soil, although Englishmen were certainly familiar with such characters from the travel accounts of Italy that presses churned out. Even in England, allowing oneself to be gazed at could equate a woman with prostitutes, the paragons of painted beauty in the streets.⁵⁸

Women of course disputed this view. Jane Anger, usually taken to be an actual female writer and not a male pseudonym, took part in the raging debate on women initiated by Joseph Swetnam’s well-known diatribe and believed that beauty was just an excuse for men to take liberties with women:

If we cloath our selues in sackcloth, and trusse vp our haire in dishclouts, *Venerians* wil neuertheles pursue their pastime. If we hide our breastes, it must be with leather, for no cloath can keep their long nailes out of our bosomes. We haue rowling eies, and they railing tongues: our eies cause them to look lasciuiously, & why? because they are geuen to lecherie.⁵⁹

As one might expect, women’s objections to blaming women’s beauty for men’s sexual desire centered on who actually was the agent of these exchanges, and then blamed men instead. ‘Venerians,’ lustful and libertine men, claimed Anger, pursued women for their own fun, not because women enticed them, dressed provocatively or used their eyes to lure men to lechery. Men were the active party, in women’s equally pointed opinion. And what Anger suggests is not that women hide their eyes and stop looking, but that men would do well to stop pretending their vices were women’s fault.

What was so dangerous about women’s being able, or being allowed to, look and see the world for themselves? Western discourses of beauty have

⁵⁷ Greene, “A Disputation,” 240.

⁵⁸ Although prostitutes had a reputation for beauty and were known as users of cosmetics, not everybody was pleased. Samuel Pepys, for example, felt his stomach turn when he saw them in Fleet Alley. *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, vol. IV: 301.

⁵⁹ Jane Anger, “Jane Anger her Protection for Women,” in *The Early Modern Englishwoman*, part 1, vol. 4, eds. Betty S. Travitsky and Patrick Cullen (Aldershot, 1589/1996), sig. C1. See also Sowernam, “Ester,” 25-26, 35-37.

insisted that women's bodies are to be seen, interpreted and governed by the masculinist gaze; woman has been the represented, not the representing body. As Margaret Miles has shown in her already classic book, women's bodies "have not represented women's subjectivity or sexuality but have, rather, been seen as a blank page on which multiple social meanings could be projected."⁶⁰ The danger about women looking is in their adopting an agentic position which makes the passive power of their beauty even more threatening. It does not of course follow that women who raised their eyes would have seen themselves differently from how men conceived them; quite the contrary. From men's point of view, the danger was that women might adopt the selfsame discourse on beauty that men had propounded in countless texts: women could empower themselves with their beauty. Even if we should now recognize this as a complex and, arguably, destructive fiction (and I realize not all of us do), we would do well to consider that it may have made sense to women in early modern streets.

Beauty allowed women room to manoeuvre even in the most important decisions of their lives, as when, soon after 1600, Jane Martindale moved to London. As her brother Adam described it, her choice was influenced by her concern for her looks: she did not take to the limitations of country fashions, and "having her father's spirit, and her mother's beauty," decided to go to London, trying to earn a living in the service of some lady, perhaps making use of "being ingenious at her needle." Adam suggested that, in the countryside, anyone who dressed fashionably would have been counted a fool. To look her best, Jane had better try her luck in London. All did not go well, at least in the beginning, and Jane's looks led her to contemplate a distressing way of raising money: she almost had to "sell her haire, which was very lovely both for length and colour." Luckily, a suitor intervened, married her and saved her crowning glory. In the end, she became an inn-keeper, a staple figure of London street life.⁶¹ Judging from all we know about the utility of good looks in city trades, Jane probably benefited from her beauty when working the inn with her husband.

⁶⁰ Margaret Miles, *Carnal Knowing. Female Nakedness and Religious Meaning in the Christian West* (Tunbridge Wells, 1992), 169.

⁶¹ Adam did not approve of Jane and her views on beauty, and tells a rather gruesome tale of her dying of smallpox: because of her pride, says Adam, she "became extremely ugly before she died, her face being sadly discoloured, and so swelled that scarce any forme of a visage was discernible." Adam Martindale, *The Life of Adam Martindale*, ed. Richard Parkinson (Manchester, 1845), 6-8, 18.

Streets of Beauty?

Despite the common opinion that beauty was a women's issue, those worrying about it in early modern culture were mostly men. Although women's presence in public spaces in early modern London was primarily seen as disorderly, even disordering the space itself, seeing beauty in all its potentially troubling aspects was a crucial part of city life: men reported delight, enjoyment, and titillating occasions for play as products of women's beauty, they counted women's beauty as an integral part of what London looked like, and, of course, they also valued the aesthetic pleasure of beauty itself. Despite the dangers of beauty's emotional effects, and despite the patriarchal imperatives that tried to keep women out of sight to reserve power to men, women's presence made city life worthwhile to men.

Women, too, were clearly aware of beauty and its powers. Even if women wrote less about beauty than men, we know that it worked as a signifier of status and as a shared field of expertise in female relationships. For both genders, beauty, especially female beauty, was an undeniable fact of bodily life. Thus it was not to be just set aside for moral, religious or social reasons. That is precisely why it needed good rule, preferably by ordinary people acting responsibly. That is also why it was such a discussed topic—a theme that keeps cropping up, as a foundational given, in most surprising contexts in all genres of early modern literature, only a fraction of which I have cited here.

So what are we to make of beauty in the streets? All this attention to looks should alert us to the workings of the masculinist gaze, shared by both women and men, that insistently essentialized something essentially cultural. Beauty is not an unchanging fact about being human, and its gender structure and street meanings are not ahistorical. In early modern culture, it had very practical consequences, although some of its power is so much alive today that we still find it hard to think and problematize beauty in any other way.

Even if men too could be found handsome—and no writer ever denied that men's beauty could have effects on women and other men—men were beautiful as exceptional individuals, whereas women were expected to be beautiful in kind. All women could be judged on beauty's criteria, although not all women were beautiful. Conceptualizations of beauty as a particularly female property, and assigning at least some power of beauty to most (young) women, placed women in a curious double bind. Beauty was central to their social worth, in both male and female eyes. It paid to be as

beautiful as possible. However, by sexualizing beauty, early modern men—and sometimes women too—could engage the disciplining power of the masculist gaze and mark women's bodies as transgressive and threatening both to men and to women themselves. Beauty, with all its cultural ramifications, could undermine women's ability to function in public. Any man catching a glimpse of a woman's beauty, according to the early modern mindset, could feel forced to try and possess that beauty in any way he wanted. Beautiful women in the streets needed to learn special survival tactics to keep men's reactions in check—men, after all, could not rein in their reactions in the face of beauty.

Furthermore, beauty was a threat to the gender dynamic of early modern culture in general, and masculinity more specifically. While defining female beauty as wholly irresistible, men gave up a central tenet of patriarchy, namely their ability to govern both themselves and their womenfolk—the former being perhaps the more important. The ideologies of feminine beauty (and sometimes male beauty as well) were crucial for the negotiation of masculine emotions, desires and actions and shaped the ways in which maleness could dominate streets. It would of course be naïve to believe that extolling women's beauty would actually have given women a cultural upper hand, but men's insistence on their powerlessness in the face of beauty could shape their interpretations of their own behavior in surprising ways.

In the end, early modern beauty was a question of gendered power. This may help us see why beauty is not in fact a 'feminine' as much as a 'feminist' concern: 'female beauty' as we know it still cannot exist without the idea of a corresponding male response and the 'heteronormative' agenda that I have been describing, no matter how much we may want to stress the functions that beauty has in women's exchanges with other women. Branding beauty feminine may have made it seem less weighty. But beauty is never just about the object. There is no beauty without a 'seeing as,' without the gazer and his or her cultural knowledge. And the discursive frames where beauty is gendered reveal a formidable, if also ephemeral and shifting, power structure.

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