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PALERMO FACING A HISPANIC POPULATION: DELIBERATIVE PROCESSES OF ACQUIRING CITIZENSHIP IN EARLY MODERN PALERMO

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to examine, through a historiographical review of the issue of foreignness in the early modern period, the paradoxical situation of the Spanish population residing in Palermo, Sicily, between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Although subjects of the same Monarchy, they belonged to different kingdoms with their own legal and cultural traditions, and were thus perceived in Palermo as a kind of “recognizable” foreigner. Through textual analysis of primary sources and their integration into contemporary theoretical frameworks, this article seeks to explore the capacity of individuals to adapt to foreign institutions and environments.

Keyword: foreigners, early modern period, Sicily, migrations, institutions, Mediterranean mobility

PALERMO E LA SUA POPOLAZIONE ISPANICA. PROCESSI DELIBERATIVI DI ACQUISIZIONE DELLA CITTADINANZA NELLA PALERMO D'ETÀ MODERNA

SINTESI

Questo articolo si propone di analizzare, attraverso una revisione storiografica della questione della condizione dello straniero in età moderna, la situazione paradossale della popolazione spagnola residente a Palermo, in Sicilia, tra il XVI e il XVII secolo. Pur essendo sudditi della stessa Monarchia, gli spagnoli e i siciliani appartenevano a regni differenti, ciascuno con proprie tradizioni giuridiche e culturali; per questo motivo, gli spagnoli erano percepiti a Palermo come una sorta di stranieri “riconoscibili”. Attraverso l'analisi testuale di fonti primarie e il loro inserimento in modelli teorici contemporanei, l'articolo intende approfondire la capacità degli individui di adattarsi alle istituzioni e agli ambienti stranieri.

Parole chiave: stranieri, età moderna, Sicilia, migrazioni, istituzioni, mobilità mediterranea

THE FOREIGNERSHIP HISTORIOGRAPHICAL DEBATE¹

Is foreignness an inherent condition for a *non-regnicole* or outsider? In pre-modern states, characterized by a gradual—though never complete—concentration of power, what role did institutions play in recognizing belonging? What remained of the capacity of local communities and cities to govern themselves? These are some of the questions that have shaped the recent international historiographical debate on early modern foreigner condition. I will now focus on highlighting some of the most relevant aspects of the extensive historiography that has recently emerged, with the aim of identify the most promising approaches and, at the end of the article, to suggest a new analytical path that mediates between seemingly antagonistic currents.²

After overcoming the nationalist frameworks of analysis typical of the nineteenth century and part of the twentieth century, historians began to explore the legal condition of foreignness in the early modern period. One of the best examples is found in the edited proceedings of the annual meeting of the *Société Jean Bodin pour l'histoire comparative des institutions*, which in 1958 organized a seminar expressly to foreigner condition on history. The coordinator of the sessions, John Gilissen, contributed with an article in which he emphasized the geographical and temporal universality of the phenomenon of foreignness. Furthermore, Gilissen included a theoretical proposal that highlighted two major thematic areas. The first, dedicated to defining the object of study, addressed highly topical issues such as the conditional nature of the category of foreigner depending on the social group to which one belonged, the mechanisms of acquisition or loss the status, the paths to integration, and the various types of foreigners—tolerated, privileged, or disadvantaged. The second area focused exclusively on the legal status of foreigners in different historical societies (Gilissen, 1958).

However, this paradigm has proven not complete, and various voices have questioned the wisdom of limiting the study of foreigners in the early modern period to the “formal” or legislative aspects. Recently, many historians have become interested in how it worked in practice.

One of the first and best-known scholars to rigorously address this question has been Tamar Herzog (2006). She has explored the issue of foreignness in the Spanish case starting from the methodological premise of studying the social and legal practices surrounding *naturaliza* and *vecindad*. Her goal has been to understand who could be considered an integral part of the community that made up the Spanish Monarchy. Herzog proposed an interesting methodology, based on the awareness that modern categories of belonging did not depend on legal definitions or authoritative acts. They were generated by the ability to exercise rights or be compelled to fulfil

1 This article is based upon work from the COST Action CA22149 *Research Network for Interdisciplinary Studies of Transhistorical Deliberative Democracy (CHANGECODE)*, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology).

2 For a more complete analysis of the state of the question, I refer to my PhD thesis *Españoles en Palermo. Extranjería, ciudadanía y presencia urbana (ss. XVI-XVII)*, read on January 23, 2025 and pending publication.

obligations. In this way, Herzog prioritizes the study of legal and social practices over the types of sources that had previously dominated the field, such as *cartas de naturaleza* or citizenship privileges. In her view, these merely ratified a status that could, in most cases, be recognized in fact without requiring royal validation.

While Herzog's work popularized this thesis within Spanish academia, earlier examples can also be found that already called for abandoning "formalist" positions, such as Simona Cerutti's work on the Duchy of Savoy in the eighteenth century or studies focused on the city of Rome (Feci, 2003; Cerutti, 2012; Cabibbo & Serra, 2017). These works highlight the importance of understanding the condition of foreignness in the *Ancien Régime* through the lens of the social dynamics inherent to a corporative society—such as patronage or clientelism—in shaping categories of belonging in practical rather than legal terms.

The *cittadinanza*—a category comparable to the Spanish *vecindad*—was the status that recognize inhabitants of a city and normally in early modern Europe required three general conditions for its application: residence, property, and family ties. However, the legal recognition of citizenship did not define someone's status as a "member of the community" but rather confirmed a status already assumed in practice. Recognition occurred not as a rule but as an exception in trouble cases. The *cittadinanza* "*rappresenta un indicatore dell'integrazione piuttosto che dell'immigrazione in senso stretto*" (Belfanti, 1994, 23). In his excellent work *Civitas*, Pietro Costa highlighted the subjectivity of the category, assigning it two essential characteristics: an inherent inequality—which clashes with modern conceptions of citizenship—and a negotiated nature (Costa, 1999, 15).

Applying the same interpretive framework seen in the case of *cittadinanza*, Herzog infers that Castilian *vecindad* was acquired through continuous social negotiation between the individual and the group, independent of formal declarations. However, these declarations responded—though with significant differences in every situation—to the individual's need to demonstrate fulfilment of their commitment to the community, a commitment that was often on doubt. These requirements would only be applied in cases of conflict, and what was evaluated was always the subject's intention or activity, interpreted by the local council. In other words, a deliberative process was carried out—understood as a particular interpretation of general legal precepts—in which those agents who held the authority to determine an individual's degree of belonging to the community participated (Herzog, 2006, 78–79).

To solve some problems of the practical application of these theoretical appreciations about early modern foreign status, Simona Cerutti proposed to overcome the concept of the "foreigner" itself. She argued for replacing its academic use with what she defines as the *condition d'étranéité*. For Cerutti, this concept allows researchers to account for the particularities of the phenomenon of foreignness in the modern period. Specifically, it delimits, based on everyday social practices, which individuals or groups could be said to occupy that condition and suffer its legal consequences. For the city of Turin in the eighteenth century, the basic characteristics of a foreigner were family and inheritance, property, occupation, and justice (Cerutti, 2012, 10). Cerutti asserts that the *condition d'étranéité* was a threat hanging over any inhabitant of a community, regardless of their place of birth.

As I am attempting to explain, the last two decades have seen the emergence of an opposition between two scholarly positions. However reductive the labels may appear to be, on one side we find the more “institutionalist” or legal perspective, and on the other, the “social” one. While at times the debate may have relied on a straw man fallacy, there is no doubt that Cerutti’s position contributes to the discussion. Of course, Cerutti’s proposal was not without criticism. The first and perhaps most notable is that Cerutti’s proposals—focused on the *ius albinagii*—tend toward a certain pretension of universality. Aiming to overcome the supposed dichotomy between formal and social positions, Peter Sahlin stated—in response to an article by Cerutti on French citizenship in the early modern period: “*La bonne façon de faire de l’histoire, telle que je la conçois, n’implique pas de choisir entre l’officiel et le vernaculaire, les normes et les pratiques, les États et les individus, mais de trouver des manières créatives de les rapprocher*” (Sahlin, 2008, 398).

Other scholars such as Roberto Zaugg, Domenico Maione, and Diego Carnevale have more recently joined the critiques of the presumed opposition between methodological approaches (Zaugg, 2011; Maione, 2020; Carnevale, 2024). Cerutti’s concept of *condition d’étranéité* sought to bypass the institutional frameworks of the *Ancien Régime*, leading to a denaturalization of the concept of foreignness. How can we, for instance, ignore the peace treaties signed between early modern states? These regulated—not only the presence of embassies—but also that of other state-recognized individuals in the territories of the signatories. And what of the *nations* corporations? These were hierarchical community organizations that created spaces generally tied to mercantile activity, though not exclusively.

Thus, the current historiographical situation urges us to seek points of convergence between the analysis of social practices and legal-institutional frameworks. Yet one of the fundamental challenges we face when addressing the issue of foreignness in the early modern period is the multiplicity of jurisdictions. Roberto Zaugg already warns that this must not be overlooked in any study seeking to analyse the phenomenon of foreignness in the *Ancien Régime*. Indeed, Zaugg’s object of study—the mercantile communities of powers such as France or England in eighteenth-century Naples—reveals the construction of a concept of the foreigner tied to the dynamics of jurisdictional unification pursued by eighteenth-century absolutist monarchies. However, beyond the normative framework established in peace treaties—which he acknowledges and emphasizes—Zaugg aims to study the situations of conflict faced by mercantile consulates (Zaugg, 2011, 59). These case studies allow him to argue that it was precisely in these conflicts and their resolution that a particular conception of the criteria for belonging emerged. In his case, belonging to the community of foreign merchants was based on the defence of legal privileges and mainly reflected the mercantilist ideology typical of the eighteenth century.

Summarising, the current state of studies on foreignness calls for a synthesis between the more “formalist” and the more “subjectivist” theses. From origins rooted in the nationalist fervour of their time to a problematization of the concept that has demonstrated the need to develop a rigorous, yet adaptable, methodology suited to

diverse contexts. Constructing a universal discourse on the condition of foreignness in the *Ancien Régime* is not only unattainable, but perhaps not even desirable. While this might appear to be an analytical shortcoming, it instead opens an optimistic path for new researches on the subject. It is in this paper that I wish to explore the potential of the concept of *deliberation* as a way to bring together these seemingly separate spheres of historical analysis and, at the same time, to present it through the case study of Hispanic communities in Palermo during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

NATURALEZA AND FOREIGNERSHIP IN THE HISPANIC MONARCHY

What did it mean to be a foreigner in the Hispanic Monarchy? In the *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, published in 1611 and considered the first vernacular dictionary in Europe, Sebastián de Covarrubias defined *extranjero* as the stranger in that land where he is (Covarrubias, 1611, *ad vocem*). This is one of the main characteristics of the concept, which will be repeated in all his enunciations up to the present day: his antithetical position. In other words, it was—and still is—a category defined based on its opposite. Very similar will be the definition that this lexicographer from Toledo, who became chaplain of King Philip II, gave for foreigner: one who is not from the same place, nor from the same land (Covarrubias, 1611, *ad vocem*). Now, in addition to the general meaning of the definition, I will pay attention to the terms used by the seventeenth-century writer: to what type of political unit does Covarrubias refer when he uses the word *tierra*—which can be translated as “land”? Is he talking about the kingdom, the diocese or the municipality?

Tierra was an ambiguous term, used both to refer to the ground that is being trodden on and to political entities such as the principality of Catalonia, as Xavier Torres i Sans (2008, 89–95) points out. But in addition to *tierra*, Covarrubias also refers to another term, which is somewhat more precise. Specifically, in his definition of *estrangeria* he states: that quality and condition of being a foreigner, and of another Kingdom (Covarrubias, 1611, *ad vocem*). What made Covarrubias complicate the definition by adding the word *reino*? The author himself gave us, indirectly, the answer when he cited as his source of information on which he based his definition the law 14 of title 3 of the *Recopilación de las Leyes destos Reynos* of 1581. This was a law which, in line with what was done *en todos los reynos y provincias de Christianos*, forced to give the ecclesiastical benefices to natives of the Crown of Castille. However, implicit in the formulation of this law itself is the fact that the construction of “foreignness” is based not so much on the strictly geographical origin of an individual. Moreover, as the recent historiography subscribes, the authorities are more interested on the ascension and domiciliation, signs through which to corroborate his integration—and presumed fidelity—to the community.

At this point, the lexicographic analysis agrees with the conclusions of Tamar Herzog about the Castilian conception of *naturaleza* and *vecindad* (Herzog, 2006). But in order to apply these concepts to the situation of the Spaniards in Sicily, we must first ask ourselves: what was the status and the role of Sicily in the Hispanic Monarchy? The Monarchy considered the island part of its Italian possessions by including its government in the Council of Italy formed in 1555 by Charles I/II, which decided on matters

concerning Naples, Sicily and Milan. Where then, were the Spanish residents in Sicily? Were they foreigners, natives, rulers, invaders, settlers...? Who were they? How did they present themselves to the institutions of the Monarchy and the local institutions? And to Palermitan society? In this case, the complexity of the question of foreigners is clear, because Sicily, while part of the Hispanic Monarchy, was a “foreign” kingdom for those arriving from the Iberian Peninsula.

A PLURAL SPANIARD COMMUNITY BASED IN PALERMO

The historical connections between the Iberian Peninsula and Sicily started in 1282, with the revolt of the Sicilian Vespers. From that moment, Sicily became part of the dynastic possessions of the monarchs of the Crown of Aragon. Later, with the union of the Crowns of Castile and Aragon, the island passed into the hands of the Spanish Habsburgs. This secular union is the key to understanding the abundant and heterogeneous Hispanic presence in Sicily.

To apply these frameworks to the case of Palermo, it is necessary to delve into some of the historical particularities that characterized the relationship between the Hispanic population and the *felice*. From the early sixteenth century onwards, Habsburg rule profoundly shaped local power dynamics, while at the same time Sicily and its capital became increasingly integrated into the global sphere offered by the Monarchy. In this sense, Palermo engaged in an ongoing dialogue with the various dynasties that, since the thirteenth century, had co-governed the Kingdom from the Iberian Peninsula. For this reason, it would be inaccurate to adopt an interpretative model based on unidirectional decision-making.

The relationship between the Iberian Peninsula and the island of Sicily had already taken specific political forms during the medieval period—first under the Crown of Aragon and later within the Hispanic Monarchy. I do not intend to go so far back in time, nor to devote excessive space to what Braudel called “an almost motionless history” (Braudel, 2016, 18). While the proposal of the *Annales* master should not be misunderstood, my aim is not to produce a “totalizing” history that reduces the role of the individual to that of a mere “prisoner of a destiny over which he can exercise little influence” (Braudel, 2016, 892). On the contrary, I wish to situate this historical trajectory within the more recent scholarly tendency to consider mobility as an intrinsic feature of human societies (Nelles & Salzberg, 2023, 8). Emphasizing the significance of the everyday experience of mobility does not imply diluting it into a *totum revolutum* in which “mobility” comes to mean everything and nothing at once. Rather, it involves taking into account, as far as possible, the various analytical scales that may have influenced my object of study.

How, then, might this juridical and social context have affected the case of the Hispanic population residing in Sicily? Helmut Koenigsberger, one of the most influential authors on the political history of the Kingdom of Sicily within the Hispanic Monarchy, begins his work by stating that the Spanish felt in Sicily as members of the same political community, insofar as they were subjects of the same monarch:

The Spanish considered Italy an extension of their own country. Since their sovereign held the title of King of Naples and Sicily, they expected to enjoy the same citizenship rights they enjoyed in Spain. The Neapolitans and Sicilians, on the other hand, considered Charles V and Philip II their own kings. (Koenigsberger, 1997, 55)

To support this claim, he cites the work *Viaje de Turquía* (1557), traditionally attributed to the theologian from Valladolid, Cristóbal de Villalón.³ During a voyage across the Mediterranean, in which the protagonist is captured by Turkish ships, he manages to escape and disembark in the Sicilian port of Messina. Upon setting foot on land, a pair of local guards questioned him about his right to be there, to which the protagonist replied that, since they were all subjects of the king (Charles I of Spain and II of Sicily), he had equal right as the Sicilians to be on that land. His argument spared him from being suspected of being a fugitive or a vagabond, though not from the twenty-eight-day quarantine imposed by the local sanitary protocol.

Through the anecdotic, the situation selected by Koenigsberger serves to illustrate the complex political and social entity that the Hispanic Monarchy represented, and how, within it, individuals played the card of belonging in whatever way they deemed most convenient. Even so, the legal boundaries were clear—albeit under constant negotiation—and the protagonist was unable to obtain any special treatment. Within the Hispanic Monarchy there were indeed legal, political, and cultural differences among the different kingdoms that comprised it. How, then, can we explain the innocence of the *Viaje de Turquía*'s protagonist? Beyond attempting to elude local justice, did his reasoning have any foundation? The truth is that the vision of a unified universal Monarchy in which all its members shared equal legal status was a project defended by more than a few political theorists of the time, and it coalesced into what we now refer to as dynasticism.

This consisted of the affective attachment of individuals in the *Ancien Régime* to a king—or queen—and his or her dynasty, and was materialised through political loyalty, which could acquire devotional methods of expression.⁴ This sentiment is one of the keys to reading the states of the early modern period and, in the Hispanic Monarchy, it was not until the mid-seventeenth century that this system of loyalties began to show deep fractures.

3 The manuscript, which is anonymous, was initially attributed to Cristóbal de Villalón by Manuel Serrano y Sanz in 1905. Subsequently, its authorship has been the subject of debate, with Marcel Bataillon's version standing out, who maintains that the author would have been the humanist, Andrés Laguna. In any case, the author would always have been a literate individual of Castilian origin (Bataillon, 1958).

4 Semantically, Giovanni Muto highlights the use of the expression “loyalty” as the basis of the political system of the Hispanic Monarchy in the Kingdom of Naples: “*un meccanismo di continua negoziazione tra il sovrano e i regnicoli che intuirono sin dall'inizio gli spazi che si aprivano nei rapporti tra un sovrano assente ed un regno che nella congiuntura politica della prima metà del Cinquecento fungeva da frontiera verso la minaccia turca nel Mediterraneo*” (Muto, 2023, 37).

Therefore, the Spaniards who arrived in Sicily between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries coexisted with different sensibilities and ways of recognising identity and juridically belonging. This was manifested in the coexistence of different entities, known by historiography as “nation corporations”, dedicated to different national groups coming from the Iberian Peninsula and located in Palermo. First of all, we must talk about the Catalan nation. It was composed mainly of merchants and businessmen—as the rich families Sánchez and Torongi, mostly from Barcelona, but also from other cities of the Crown of Aragon, such as Valencia and Mallorca. There is evidence of their stable presence from the fourteenth century (Del Treppo, 1976, 134). In the city they founded a *Lonja*, a chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Montserrat in the church of San Domenico and, later, their own church of *Santa Eulalia*, its construction started in 1583. Due to their historical connections to the island, they are the first example of a stable Iberian community in the city, and they maintained their activity at least until the War of the Spanish Succession in 1701.

In 1508, after the unification of the crowns of Castile and Aragon, the presence of officials, soldiers and merchants from the Crown of Castile became increasingly evident. For this reason, the secretary of Viceroy Hugo de Moncada, the Biscayan Juan del Río, founded the chapel of Guadalupe in honour of the Castilian and Biscayan nations, in the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, popularly known as the Gancia (INE, AOP, SMG, 53, f. 246r) There were also the foundations directly dedicated to the Spanish nation, which located in the upper part of the city, next to the permanent location of the viceregal palace. These, including the Hospital of San Giacomo and the chapel of the Virgen de la Soledad, maintained a close relationship with the viceregal institutions and were mainly aimed at the Spanish soldiers and civil servants who lived in the city.

Even if this is not the whole picture, it represents a portion of how difficult it is to limit the Iberian presence in Palermo to a single category. What was their relationship with the Palermitan *cittadinanza*?

DELIBERATING THE CITIZENSHIP IN PALERMO

Which institution granted the *cittadinanza*? From the Middle Ages and throughout the early modern period, it was the Senate of Palermo, the council of the city and was held in the Palazzo delle Aquile or Palazzo Pretorio, where the town hall resides until today. Both names are a reference to the source of legitimacy of Palermo’s civic pride: the Roman Empire (Natoli, 2020, 21). However, the origin of this symbolism can be traced back to the Middle Ages rather than to antiquity. The Senate was headed by the *praetor*, who was accompanied by six jurors and a Captain of Justice. All the officers had to be Palermitan citizens. They remained in office for one year and, with a few exceptions, they could not be re-elected consecutively.

But to properly understand the Senate’s agency during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it is necessary to speak of the Crown’s actions to control it. The “practice of empire,” as Helmut Koenigsberger stated, consisted of seeking a balance between the imperial needs of the Crown and the demands of the local oligarchies. In this sense, one

political practice from the “centre” of the system was to place Spanish ministers at the head of the most important offices (Koenigsberger, 1997). Some Spanish viceroys in Italy, such as Juan de Vega and the Duke of Medinaceli, argued that this was the only way to guarantee the proper performance of the imperial system (Koenigsberger, 1997, 95). However, the tradition of self-government in Sicily made things difficult for the viceroys. Although not in an absolutist sense, the Monarchy intervened in Palermo’s politics in a decisive way and changed it, thanks to its prerogatives over those who acceded to local positions of power.

In the Hispanic period, the viceroy was responsible for nominating the *praetor* and the juries. This indirectly gave him some power over the granting of citizenship. Nevertheless, on most occasions he chose members of the urban oligarchy close to the Crown, avoiding appointing Spaniards directly—which could have contravened the privileges of the city. Sometimes the Senate urged the viceroy to distinguish between *cittadini oriundi et per ductionem uxoris oriundi* and *cittadini per privilegio* (ASCPa, Lettere e biglietti, 1, f. 97r–v).

This was not an abstract claim. Rather, it aimed to resolve a conflict that had arisen following the issuance of a royal edict restricting the sale of wine and fruit in the city to those holding the legal status of citizens in 1633. Acting on public counsel, the city resolved to demand that citizens by privilege be subject to a higher tax than native-born citizens. The argument put forth by the Senate was that the viceregal order had led to a situation in which *molte persone s’hanno fatti cittadini per privilegio per godere detti prezzi* (ASCPa, Lettere e biglietti, 1, f. 97r). As a result, the city was losing a significant portion of tax revenues that it considered legitimate. Although the debate extended beyond the municipal sphere, the issue of who constituted “true” citizens versus those who had only recently acquired the status was also raised in the Council of Italy through a speech by the Sicilian regent Pietro Corsetto. Although his opinion was ultimately not taken into account in the final decision, he argued for the necessity of distinguishing between native Sicilians and newly naturalized individuals, in order to reserve municipal offices for the former. Also, in the Council of Italy there was a debate on the supposed distinction between “true” citizens and citizens who had recently acquired that status. Although the viceroy’s power was not absolute, his influence may have been decisive in determining the Senate’s predisposition to grant citizenship to Spaniards residing in Palermo (AGS, SS.PP., 1. 776, ff. 127r–128r).

But these cases of conflict were, as registered in the primary sources, exception of the daily life of the institution. What was the Senate’s position with regard to the foreign population? From different points of view, both early modern authors and actual historians have spoken of Palermo as a city opened to foreigners. During the demographic crisis of the fourteenth century, many Mediterranean cities facilitated the calculated access of foreigners to the status of *cittadino* (Bresc, 2013, 236). The aim of the citizens’ assemblies was to promote the political and economic growth of the city. To this purpose, they established particularly lax formal criteria. In 1335, King Peter II confirmed an edict stating that *exteri* residing in the city with a wife and family could acquire the *cittadinanza* through a privilege given by the Senate. This was immediately followed by the *decreta civilitatis*

issued by King Louis I in 1346, which established that any *exteri* could be declared *cives Panormi* through marriage to a woman native or citizen of Palermo, but also if they could prove, regardless of the origin of the family, *animo habitandi et morandi ibidem* and after having resided in the city continuously for a period of one year, one month, one week and one day (Vigiano, 2004, 11).

Did it mean that any man who fulfilled these requirements acquired the *cittadinanza*? Not at all. Reading the ceremonial speech granting citizenship, the complicity between the applicant and the members of the Senate—*praetor* and juries—is clearly showed. This played a key role in the acceptance of the application for recognition of citizenship, as the case of the Catalan merchant Melchor Bruguera on 1616 states (ASCPa, ABP, Provv., n. 650, ff. 102v–104r). It was not a mechanical bureaucratic process in which only the formal requirements were taken into account, which, on the other hand, any inhabitant of Palermo could have easily met. Beyond these, the “friendship” of the *praetor* and the juries with the applicant was valued. They personally recognised the merits and honour of the candidate and judged if they were enough to represent the city—with mention of its insignia, the eagle (ASCPa, ABP, Provv., n. 650, f. 103r). This may have been the case, for example, of Pedro Hernández de la Rosaleda, sergeant of the fortress of *Castello a mare* and rector of the chapel of Virgin of Guadalupe between 1583 and 1597. He was declared a citizen on August 27, 1588 by the then *praetor* of the city Andrés Salazar, governor of the same castle, captain of the Spanish infantry in Sicily and one of the main exponents of the Castilian nation in Palermo.⁵

Moreover, many of the members of the Catalan nation also enjoyed the status of citizens. One of the most prominent was the Catalan merchant Gabriel Mas. Between 1610 and 1611 he served as treasurer of the Catalan nation, giving him responsibility for the community’s patrimony and for collecting the tax that the nation collected on goods arriving from the Crown of Aragon. Before his death, Gabriel Mas must have attained a very high socio-political prestige in the city of Palermo, as he was appointed as *rettore mercadante* in order to control the spread of the plague that devastated the city between 1623 and 1624 (Di Marzo, 1869, 129).⁶ At a time of deep crisis for the city, this position gave him powers reserved for the most trusted citizens of the local oligarchy.⁷

5 In order to be elected *praetor* of the city, he had previously acquired Palermitan citizenship (ASCPa, ABP, Provv., n. 630, ff. 269r–270v).

6 For more about the plague that devastate Palermo between 1623 and 1624, cf. Mazzola (2018).

7 *Damos licencia al Capitán de iusticia, Pretor y Iurados desta dicha ciudad, para que puedan elegir y nuembrar las personas que les parecieren a propósito, además de las que tienen deputadas para la buena execución de las casas, que fuere conveniente hazer para evitar la dicha enfermedad, que para promulgar bando o bandos en nuestro nombre con las penas a ellos bien vistas, hazer inventarios de bienes, prosider a presión, tortura, azotes, destierro, y asta a cinco años de galera, pur que si la pena huviere de ser de más tiempo, o de muerte, o de mutilación de miembros, las reservamos a nos, quemar rapacebrar las penas que serán puestas, sin dar término ninguno, prosedendo en esto a ex abrupto a modo de guerra, les damos la facultad y potestad que se requiere. Y la misma autoridad concedemos a los deputados, que están nombrados o se nombraren en los quarteles durante el tiempo que la dicha enfermedad no cessare* (Di Marzo, 1869, 127–128).

The fact that Gabriel Mas reached this position shows us that he was fully integrated into the local oligarchy, enjoying the confidence of both the viceroy and the city's praetors and juries. His activities within the church of *Santa Eulalia*, far from keeping him isolated from the local community, enabled him to establish commercial and personal links with local individuals. And, of course, a national church of the Catalans was revealed, which was at the heart of integration and not just differentiation.

Citizenship was not a requirement for residing in Palermo, nor did it excessively limit an individual's opportunities for social and economic advancement. Even so, the city's openness to its concession and the good socio-political position from which many Spaniards' residing in Palermo started out made the recognition—or non-questioning—of their status as *cives Panhormi* more accessible to them, an important, though not decisive, step in their process of settlement (Canepari, 2012, 101–116).

CONCLUSIONS

The proposal of “deliberation” as an analytical terminology applied to the studies of early modern foreign status would bring us the opportunity to connect two key aspects of the most recent historiographical production: the institutional and the individual points of view.

In the case of the Spanish population, they found in viceregal Palermo a legal framework that was presumably open—both due to its historical tradition and the specific circumstances of Hispanic domination over the island and its institutions. Although the Senate did not come to be entirely governed by Spanish officials, the Palermitan elites who dominated it were inclined to favor the most prominent members of Palermitan society of Iberian origin. Thus, the process of civic deliberation was inevitably shaped by the broader historical and political context.

At the same time, individuals acted according to their own interests and took advantage of this climate of openness to claim recognition of a civic status that, in practice, was not strictly necessary to engage in business in the city. Through the interplay of these two elements—the institutional environment and individual social practices—processes of deliberation in the early modern period emerge as yet another analytical tool available to historians for further exploring the condition of foreignness in the early modern world.

PALERMO IN SOOČANJE S ŠPANSKIM PREBIVALSTVOM: POSTOPKI
DELIBERACIJE O PODELITVI MEŠČANSTVA V ZGODNJENOVOVEŠKEM
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POVZETEK

Prispevek obravnava položaj španskega prebivalstva v Palermu v 16. in 17. stoletju v širšem kontekstu mobilnosti med Iberskim polotokom in Sicilijo v času španske oblasti. Zgodovinsko gledano je Palermo pogosto veljal za odprto in gostoljubno mesto za tujce, ki je omogočalo družbeno, politično in gospodarsko vključevanje. Ta odprtost pa je soobstajala z željo mestnega senata po ohranjanju tradicionalnih privilegijev, zlasti pristojnosti za podeljevanje državljanstva (cives Panormi). Takšno dvojno razmerje je povzročalo napetosti, predvsem zaradi prisotnosti Špancev, ki so bili pogosto imenovani na visoke upravne položaje, običajno rezervirane za domačine. Razprava proučuje, kako se je senat opredeljeval do tega prebivalstva in kako so potekali formalni ter neformalni postopki razmejevanja med tujci in domačini. Analiza presega institucionalni okvir in vključuje tudi perspektivo samih Špancev. Članek razišče, ali so si prizadevali pridobiti palermsko meščanstvo ali pa je njihov družbeni status takšno prizadevanje naredil nepotrebno oziroma nezaželeno. Prispevek obravnava heterogenost španskih skupnosti – od katalonskih trgovcev, ki so imeli privilegiran dostop do lokalnih oblastnih struktur, do vojakov, podvrženih vojaški jurisdikciji – ter poudarja, kako so družbeni položaji vplivali na različne strategije vključevanja. Na podlagi arhivskih raziskav italijanskih in španskih virov se razprava umešča v sodobne historiografske tokove o vprašanju tujstva v okviru Španske monarhije ter obravnava Palermo kot študijo primera sredozemskih praks deliberacije o statusu tujcev. S tem izziva poenostavljeno, homogeno predstavo o španskem prebivalstvu v tujini in poudarja raznolikost njihovih izkušenj ter načinov vključevanja v lokalno okolje.

Ključne besede: tujci, zgodnji novi vek, Sicilija, migracije, institucije, sredozemska mobilnost

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