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## PRODUCING VENICE, CONSUMING VENICE IN ENGLAND?: SPECIAL CHARTERS IN *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*

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### Abstract

In the sixteenth century the Republic of Venice allowed Jews who were moneylenders and merchants to engage in business activities and live in ghettos inside Venice. The non-business anti-Semitic biases of Christian citizens could not be separated from business. The contract signed by Shylock and Antonio in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* mentions a pound of flesh as the penalty for the borrower's inability to repay the loan – such a bond would have been modified or rejected in Venetian courts by referring to the principles of equity, contra bonos mores and abuse of rights. But Portia and the Duke of Venice are in accord with Shylock that the special charters of the Jews of Venice do not permit the rejection of the bond. Shakespeare's play seems to suggest in the trial scene that the bond permits the enslavement of a Christian by a non-Christian under the special charters of the Jews of Venice. This essay examines *The Merchant of Venice* as a text that champions the repressive or partisan assimilationist policies of Elizabethan England – in which no Jew could officially reside, in which blacks resided without an authorized denizenship status and in which Catholics and Puritans encountered religious intolerance – over Venetian ghettoization or isolationist policies. The play seems to suggest that imperceptibility in the public sphere might lead to the survival of difference that might later be allowed as a part of the full citizenship of countries such as England.

**Keywords:** citizenship, denizenship, assimilationism, isolationism, *The Merchant of Venice*, race and gender in the Renaissance, production, consumption

### Introduction

When William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* was first staged at the end of the sixteenth century, Elizabethan audiences would have had to acknowledge that there were no Jews such as Shylock in England. The irrational anti-Semitic motive that constructed the decree for the removal of Jews from England in 1290 was to be found in the dominant anti-Semitic practices of the Elizabethan era, which were allied to the lack of religious

tolerance in England with respect to Catholics, Puritans and others (who were fined if they did not attend Protestant services and executed if they propagated their beliefs publicly). Marrano converts to Christianity from Judaism who lived in England and had their origin in the Iberian peninsula practiced Protestantism in public and Judaism in

secret.<sup>1</sup> It could be argued that Elizabethan audiences would have compared the Venetian trade and colonization project, which was on the decline (its maritime territories had been seized by the Ottoman empire although it had expanded into the mainland of Europe), with the Elizabethan one at the turn of the seventeenth century as England had extended its trading network to Russia, Africa, the Mediterranean, the Americas and Asia, including India, and would soon establish a successful colony in North America in 1607 in Jamestown (following the failure of the Roanoke settlement in 1585-87).<sup>2</sup> As a small nation state that became an imperial power through its navy and its trading ties in the Mediterranean, Venice was to suffice as a “model” for the Netherlands and Britain, with its multiracial and multicultural residents – including Jews – and citizens, and as a “warning” with respect to the perils of administering remote segments of an empire.<sup>3</sup> Its development in the Renaissance has been seen to have engendered the transition from a feudal state to a democratic capitalist state in which the medieval knights were no longer exemplary figures of the population of the nation; the “man of business”, the merchant, was the ideal citizen now.<sup>4</sup> Elizabethan England was involved in commercial relations with the Republic of Venice and Shakespeare’s audience itself would have been emplaced as traders and merchants in such associations – they would also have been affected by the financial actions of Venice to furnish credit for its commerce and its colonization campaigns and by the English state’s strategies to provide capital for its wars and its trade and conquest enterprises. Production as well as consumption, selling and buying, by Venetian and English citizens expanded foreign dealings and the subjugation of colonies. Commercial relations with foreign nations and the annexation of foreign territories could not be fostered by Venice and England without cultivating

an association with people who were different and nonidentical. Both Venice and England attempted to privatize, represent as unnecessary and to make a secret of differences through public relationships of similarities as they moved towards the capitalism and democracy which was associated with the nation-states of Europe and America from the seventeenth century onwards.<sup>5</sup> It is possible to argue that differences did not merely turn private when they were not allowed in government, legislatures and public places, as John Stuart Mill was to argue later,<sup>6</sup> but that the knowledge of differences also did not advance as the majority of the population did not participate in private lives that were different, either through friendship or marriage.

Elizabethan England did not permit Jews to become denizens or citizens unless they had officially converted to Christianity but it did have residents who belonged to other races and cultures just as Venice had. Venice’s representation of differences (for instance, Jews, Greeks, Slavs, blacks permitted manumission from slavery and interracial marriage) as undeserving of full citizenship of its republic governed by patrician Doges but as deserving of the right to freedom of business could induce the question as to whether such freedom was possible while biases “outside” business (seen for instance in the confinement of Jews to ghettos and later of the Ottoman Muslims to fondacos as well as the 25-year waiting period for citizenship rights for Christian non-citizens)<sup>7</sup> could not be amputated by business. This is a question that is also generated by *The Merchant of Venice*. Elizabethan England was not non-restrictive in its actions and position on Catholics, Puritans and non-Christians and even experienced riots against Protestant refugees from other countries.<sup>8</sup> Shakespeare is believed to have co-written or revised the script written by Anthony Munday of the unperformed play (it probably did

<sup>1</sup> See Roth, *A History of the Jews in England*, Chapter 6.

<sup>2</sup> See Picard.

<sup>3</sup> See Crowley, *City of Fortune: How Venice Ruled the Seas*, Chapter 21.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> See Sengupta, “Fugitive Feminisms and Nation-States” for the relationship between the evolution of democratic government and the shrouding of differences.

<sup>6</sup> See Mill, “On Liberty”.

<sup>7</sup> See Ravid, “Venice and Its Minorities”.

<sup>8</sup> A riot against foreigners occurred under Henry VIII in 1517. In 1588, 1593 and 1595 there were riots against aliens in Elizabethan England too.

not receive the approval of the Master of the Revels) *The Booke of Sir Thomas More* after Queen Elizabeth I's death in 1603. In the play, More (the Lord High Chancellor under Henry VIII) makes an attempt to persuade rioters against foreign refugees to consider the violence that could be inflicted against them in other countries if the monarch were to deport them from England to hostile countries where they could live only under charters.<sup>9</sup> Shakespeare might have expanded or revised *The Booke of Sir Thomas More* under the impact of the discourse of "love"<sup>10</sup> of the late monarch Elizabeth I. Or the unceasing conflict with Catholics and foreigners – the Gunpowder Plot is one instance – in Jacobean England might have moulded a more liberal and emotional approach to the assimilation of difference in the work of Shakespeare and other playwrights without antagonism towards a policy of assimilation. Shakespeare's plays were never charged with disseminating seditious propaganda against English policies on assimilation, trade and colonization. This essay examines Shakespeare's earlier play *The Merchant of Venice* (thought to have been written in 1596-97 or 1596-98 while Elizabeth I was alive) as a text that champions the repressive or partisan assimilationist policies of Elizabethan England towards differences such as those of Jews and blacks – assimilation in that age most often did not signify the integration of differences but their erasure – over Venetian ghettoization or isolationist policies related to the special charters of aliens or foreigners by arguing that the latter allows the enslavement of Christians by non-Christians.

<sup>9</sup> See Dickson, et al., "*The Book of Sir Thomas More: Shakespeare's Only Surviving Literary Manuscript*". Also see Tretiak, "*The Merchant of Venice and the 'Alien' Question*" – he argues that Venice represents England in Shakespeare's play. My essay argues that Shakespeare's play actually does not suggest that Venice and England are identical. For More's speech, see Shakespeare, et al., *Sir Thomas More*. In Act II, Sc. iv of *Sir Thomas More*, the main figure More asks rioters –

...would you be pleased

To find a nation of such barbarous temper,

That, breaking out in hideous violence,

Would not afford you an abode on earth,

Whet their detested knives against your throats,

### Production and Consumption, Selling and Buying in Renaissance Venice and England

"Three thousand ducats for three months, and Antonio bound"<sup>11</sup> – the debt bond or the single obligation bond (also resembling a contract of pledge) that is mentioned here by Shylock, the Jewish moneylender, who was used as an exemplar of the cruel Jew in anti-Semitic discourses of the English Renaissance along with Barabas of Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* (first performed in 1592), is not meant to be an agreement uniquely concerning a commercial or mercantile loan. It is related to a consumer loan, a type of finance allowing individuals the right to expenditure related to themselves. This type of loan would become more popular with the evolution of capitalism and democracy, which ostensibly did not nourish merely the production of goods inside a country and their sale internally and to other countries but also consumption through purchases made internally or from foreign countries and colonies. Both Venice and England had passed sumptuary laws against thriftless and irresponsible consumption or private expenditure during the Medieval Age and the Renaissance. Bassanio's imprudent consumption makes it necessary for Antonio to sign a single obligation or debt bond. Since such a bond is not supported by an investigation of its goal – in this case the application of the loan for the purpose of Bassanio's romance with Portia ("the means to hold a rival place with one of" the suitors of a "lady richly left")<sup>12</sup> – unlike commercial or mercantile loans, it might have been difficult for the sumptuary monitors to trace the relationship between the debt bond or the single

Spurn you like dogs, and like as if that God  
Owed not nor made not you, nor that the claimants  
Were not all appropriate to your comforts,  
But chartered unto them, what would you think  
To be thus used?

In Act II, Sc. ii of the play, one of the rioters Lincoln contends that if foreign denizens "enjoy more privilege than we ... let's, then, become their slaves".

<sup>10</sup> See Elizabeth I's Golden Speech – "And as nothing is more deere unto us then the loving conservation of our subjects hearts", 30 November 1601.

<sup>11</sup> See Act I, Sc.iii, ln. 9-10 of *The Merchant of Venice*.

<sup>12</sup> See Act I, Sc. i, ln. 161-76 of *The Merchant of Venice*.

obligation bond and Bassanio's profligacy, had the event taken place in real life.

Shylock appraises Antonio as "sufficient" or as the owner of adequate assets for repayment of the proposed loan.<sup>13</sup> Elizabethan audiences might have possessed information of the Venetian banking system that spanned private banks as well as public banks such as the Bancogiro and the Banco di Rialto in the sixteenth century – the Bancogiro was to become known as the Bank of Venice.<sup>14</sup> Single obligation bonds were hindered as an act of 1467 designated that only loans worth ten ducats and less could be granted by banks to individuals through bonds in this category and mercantile loans were more in vogue.<sup>15</sup> Jewish moneylenders such as Shylock would have been able to grant loans of larger amounts under single obligation bonds although it was de rigueur that they first lend money to poor Venetians seeking smaller loans through the pawning of objects that they owned. The Venetian government had mandated that three loan-banks be launched in the ghetto by Jews from whom poor Venetians could borrow at an interest rate of five percent by 1638 (this rate was 10 to 12 percent in the sixteenth century). It was not essential for these pawnbrokers or loan-banks to give credit of more than three ducats but the "sum of the loan has no limitation", according to *Discourse on the State of the Jews* by Simone Luzzatto.<sup>16</sup> The banks of the ghetto usually would not have loaned money to wealthy merchants as it was "not in a Jew's power to force a Christian to redeem his property at any time", according to Luzzatto, and they usually had as customers indigent widows and orphans.<sup>17</sup> So the single obligation bond that is signed by Antonio not for a mercantile purpose but to enable Bassanio's consumption expenditure might have been unusual

in Venice but was possible.<sup>18</sup> Ravid also mentions that Jewish moneylenders were often criticized for refusing to serve as moneylenders to poor Venetians.<sup>19</sup> The Jews were permitted to reside as moneylenders in Venice under special charters granted to them by the government from the 1380s because war had ruined the financial health of the republic. But these charters or condotte were often not prolonged and Jews were often told at the end of the chartered period that they would be able to stay in Venice only for short periods of time and would not be authorized to engage in moneylending but could earn their living as merchants and doctors. It has been argued that a Jewish community was a part of the city of Venice in 1492 and that Jews did not live merely on the mainland of the Republic of Venice. The Jewish moneylenders of the mainland could rent houses in the city of Venice from 1503 and after the republic was defeated by the League of Cambrai in a war in 1509, the mainland Jews who had taken flight to the city were permitted to stay in the city and engage in moneylending, especially for poor citizens, and to pay sky-high taxes to the government – they were isolated from other Venetians through the separate residential area of the ghetto nuovo in 1516.<sup>20</sup> The desirability of Jewish moneylenders was related to their liquid assets (usually cash and pawns) and their "strong economic and social ties among themselves"<sup>21</sup> – Shylock declares that he "cannot instantly raise up the gross / Of full three thousand ducats" and that "Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe, / Will furnish me".<sup>22</sup> The Monti di pietà credit institution founded by the government and Franciscan preachers to grant limited loans to the poor against pawned objects in other parts of Italy at low rates of interest was not approved of in Venice as the government could not control it and as it permitted Christians to

<sup>13</sup> See Act, Sc.iii, ln. 15-26 of *The Merchant of Venice*.

<sup>14</sup> See Dunbar, "The Bank of Venice".

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> See Consideration IX of Luzzatto, *Discourse on the State of the Jews*.

<sup>17</sup> See Consideration XII of Luzzatto, *Discourse on the State of the Jews*.

<sup>18</sup> See Botticini, "A Tale of 'Benevolent' Governments: Private Credit Markets, Public Finance, and the Role of Jewish Lenders in Medieval and Renaissance Italy." Botticini argues that wealthy borrowers usually signed

notarial deeds that mentioned the collateral pledged with Jewish loan-banks like Antonio does while the loans given to poor people to buy, for instance, draft animals and to pay daughters' dowries were merely entered in the Jewish loan-banks' account books against pawned items such as clothing, jewels, shoes and tools.

<sup>19</sup> See Ravid, "The Legal Status of the Jews in Venice to 1509".

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> See Botticini, "A Tale of 'Benevolent' Governments."

<sup>22</sup> Act I, Sc. i, ln. 52-55 of *The Merchant of Venice*.

practise usury, which was believed to be a violation of Christian codes.<sup>23</sup> Levantine Jewish merchants were permitted to stay in the ghetto vecchio next to the ghetto nuovo from 1541.<sup>24</sup> All Jewish denizens of Venice had to wear a yellow circle or badge on their clothing until the end of the fifteenth century and a yellow hat in the sixteenth century.<sup>25</sup> These instances of anti-Semitic bigotry against Jews probably made business transactions difficult to engage in as “non-business” biases could not have been prevented from being hybridized with business. Shylock describes the contradictions and inconsistencies of early capitalism to Antonio, who “hates our sacred nation”<sup>26</sup> – “...In the Rialto, you have rated me/ About my moneys and my usances<sup>27</sup>...Fair sir, you spat on me on Wednesday last,/ You spurned me such a day, another time/ You called me dog, and for these courtesies/ I’ll lend you thus much moneys?”<sup>28</sup> There is no reference to the laws that did not let Jews live outside ghettos in Renaissance Venice or to curfew laws against Jews in *The Merchant of Venice* but the representations of Shylock’s residence in the play are viewed when there is also a reference to masques – this could perhaps be a reference to participants (Shylock, who has not been “bid for love” to have supper with Bassanio and his friends, instructs Jessica not to “thrust your head into the public street / To gaze on Christian fools with varnished faces”<sup>29</sup>) who would have celebrated the Carnival of Venice on the streets in masks at a time when ghetto and curfew laws were perhaps violated or not implemented.

Elizabethans could not have attested that they had banks such as those existing in Venice in the sixteenth century. The first banks were established in England in the middle of the seventeenth century and the Bank of England only towards the end of the same century. But merchants

(including goldsmiths) often lent out money by charging interest – borrowing to lend to others as Shylock does in *The Merchant of Venice* was a typical practice. Brokers, scribes, craftsmen and aldermen also operated as moneylenders. Borrowers included the rural and urban poor, householders, wealthy merchants and young gentlemen (men with good social positions in court or government). Evidence is available to show that illegal changes in the ownership of bonds often took place.<sup>30</sup> Associations of merchants employed the cash held for citizens by them to raise money for the government to repay its loans, performing like a national bank.<sup>31</sup> Laws against usury that conformed to the Church’s beliefs existed in Elizabethan England but interest was often charged on loans during the sixteenth century. The laws perhaps existed only for the profit of informers against the practice of usury.<sup>32</sup> The title of Shakespeare’s play which was entered in the Stationer’s Register in 1598 as *The Merchant of Venice or otherwise called The Jew of Venice* could have been inspired by the merchants of London who loaned money by charging interest as well as by the Jewish moneylenders of Venice who charged interest at legal rates. Shakespeare’s own father John Shakespeare was convicted of indulging in usury.<sup>33</sup> When the English government stopped borrowing in Europe (where it had to pay interest on loans), it had to grant immunity from usury laws to the associations of London merchants who lent it money. An Act was approved by the Parliament in 1571 that nullified a law against usury that had been passed under King Edward VI’s rule in 1552. It also restored the directions included in the Act of 1545 (in Henry VIII’s reign) under which persons demanding more than 10 percent as interest on loans would have to pay the penalty of paying “the treble value of the wares and merchandizes” and

<sup>23</sup> See Botticini, “A Tale of ‘Benevolent’ Governments” and Ravid, “The Venetian Context of the *Discourse*”.

<sup>24</sup> See Ravid, “The Legal Status of the Jewish Merchants of Venice, 1541-1638”.

<sup>25</sup> See Ravid, “The Legal Status of the Jews in Venice to 1509” and “The Legal Status of the Jewish Merchants of Venice, 1541-1638”.

<sup>26</sup> Act I, Sc. i, ln. 45 of *The Merchant of Venice*.

<sup>27</sup> social and religious practices as well as the time for repayment of a loan determining the rate of interest.

<sup>28</sup> Act I, Sc. i, ln. 104-26 of *The Merchant of Venice*.

<sup>29</sup> Act II, Sc. v, ln. 11-38 of *The Merchant of Venice*.

<sup>30</sup> See Travers, *The Practice of Usury in Mid-Sixteenth Century England*.

<sup>31</sup> See Judges, “Historical Revision: LVIII – The Origins of English Banking”.

<sup>32</sup> See Travers, *The Practice of Usury*.

<sup>33</sup> See Thomas and Evans, “John Shakespeare in The Exchequer”.

“fines and ransom at the King’s will and pleasure” and be incarcerated.<sup>34</sup> According to some scholars, under the Elizabethan act, those who charged interest below 10 percent, if reported by the debtor, would have to surrender the interest, but the debtor could complain only if he wished to complain and could decide to pay the interest to “remain on good terms with the money market”.<sup>35</sup> Elizabethan debtors would have, like Antonio who agrees to surrender a pound of flesh as the penalty in his bond with Shylock, agreed to pay interest on a loan, so that moneylenders would lend them money. The Act of 1545 had also declared that it did not “extend to any lawful obligation endorsed with a condition”, or to any law or bond for “the payment of a lesser sum” or a “true, just and fit debt”.<sup>36</sup>

To Launcelot Gobbo, a domestic worker employed by Shylock and Bassanio in progression in *The Merchant of Venice*, the change of employer seems to have brought him upward mobility as “Master Bassanio ... indeed gives rare new liveries”.<sup>37</sup> Launcelot maintains that he has been “famished”<sup>38</sup> as an employee of Shylock, who insists that Bassanio will not let his servant “gormandize”<sup>39</sup> as he has done at the moneylender’s house because Antonio’s friend is living on a “borrowed purse”.<sup>40</sup> Bassanio’s debts, which persuade him to request a loan from Antonio, who then commits himself to a bond with Shylock, are a dramatic representation of the exorbitant expenditure on clothing and events such as weddings and feasts that the Venetian republic and other Italian states attempted to restrain during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance through sumptuary laws. The evolution of the economies of the Italian states, including Venice, in this period of transformation from feudalism to capitalism drove foreign luxury (non-essential) goods for consumption into the Italian markets and also generated a rise in the number of domestic luxury goods for sale in Italy. Both the Church and the state were hostile to the upward mobility and

the reorientation of the class hierarchy as well as the purported dissipation in morals and concentration on materiality that the expansion of the economy and equal access to luxury goods had seemed to provoke. The sumptuary laws of Venice and other Italian states provide evidence of the accent on devoting money to production – luxury goods were not prevented from being produced but the aim was to ensure that they were sold abroad if they entered or were produced in Italy. Import duties levied on foreign luxury goods were supposed to shield domestic industry. But the conformity of the citizens to sumptuary laws adopted by particular states was difficult to put into effect. The desire of the government officials and the upper classes to exemplify the position of the nation and the community through luxury goods at international meetings and in international interaction in cities such as Venice and the wish to argue that luxury goods were an imperative part of religious practices related to marriage as they often charmed a spouse and prevented adultery drove the government to exempt certain persons such as knights, doctors of medicine, doctors of civil and canon law, judges, nobles, magistrates, rulers, jurists, clothiers, bankers, “lettered men”, bishops and others from adhering to the sumptuary laws. Punishment for noncompliance with sumptuary laws included fines, imprisonment, excommunication by the Church and corporal punishment for certain individuals.<sup>41</sup> The “gifts of rich value”<sup>42</sup> that Bassanio sends to Belmont through Gratiano before his arrival would probably also have been forbidden under Venetian sumptuary laws unless he had been granted an exemption as a “scholar and a soldier”.<sup>43</sup>

The sumptuary laws of medieval England were not framed to accommodate upward mobility as the latter was to be associated with a larger number of people only following the arrival of the Renaissance. As landlords and merchants could not meet the food needs of the growing population and

<sup>34</sup> See *Statutes of the Realm*, vol. 3, p. 996-97 (37 Hen. VIII. c. 9-11).

<sup>35</sup> See Tawney, ed., *An Historical Introduction*.

<sup>36</sup> See *Statutes of the Realm*, vol. 3, p. 996-97 (37 Hen. VIII. c. 9-11).

<sup>37</sup> Act II, Sc. ii, In. 101 of *The Merchant of Venice*.

<sup>38</sup> Act II, Sc. ii, In. 98 of *The Merchant of Venice*.

<sup>39</sup> Act II, Sc. v, In. 3 of *The Merchant of Venice*.

<sup>40</sup> Act II, Sc. v, In. 49 of *The Merchant of Venice*.

<sup>41</sup> See Killerby, *Sumptuary Law in Italy 1200-1500*.

<sup>42</sup> Act II, Sc. ix, In. 91 of *The Merchant of Venice*.

<sup>43</sup> Act I, Sc. ii, In. 107 of *The Merchant of Venice*.

as Biblical sins such as gluttony and greed were also blamed for “dearth”, sumptuary laws were involved with the abatement of pauperization of landowners and of the simulation of aristocratic actions by the poor through the placing of limits on the ingestion of food. Some sumptuary laws devoted to clothing aimed to secure the wool industry against the sale of furs. Although no laws were adopted against the sumptuous liveries of servants in the medieval period, every citizen was expected to dress in harmony with their social status. A considerable number of sumptuary laws were sanctioned during the English Renaissance in 1510, 1514, 1515, 1533 and 1553. Only a few sumptuary statutes could be approved during the Elizabethan period as bills promoted by the House of Lords were contradicted by the House of Commons. Royal proclamations by Elizabeth I directed that the 1533 and 1553 sumptuary laws be executed and inveighed against the destabilization of the hereditary social order by immoderate consumption. Punishments included imprisonment and fines. A royal proclamation of 1562 declared that the Lord Chamberlain and the Lord Steward would be liable for the control of expenditure and application of the sumptuary laws in the Royal household.<sup>44</sup>

Shakespeare was employed with the Lord Chamberlain’s Men from 1594, the year in which it was launched by Lord Hunsdon, the Lord Chamberlain, and the year in which he moved from the Earl of Sussex’s Men to the new dramatic company and into new living quarters in Bishopsgate. He was a “sharer” in the new company, and furnished the fifty pounds that were necessary to become a “sharer”. As an actor-sharer (unlike “hired men” who were given minor roles), Shakespeare would have had to be accomplished in managing the finances of the company – he received a “portion” of the money earned from each performance of a play which was also divided among the owner of the theatre where the play was staged and the rest of the company. He even served as a “housekeeper” of theatres at which company plays

were staged later – for instance he “was part of the group who owned the Globe playhouse”. The actor-sharers of the Lord Chamberlain’s Men and other dramatic companies selected the plays to be staged at a particular theatre and managed rehearsals, costumes, playbills and other related issues. They also paid for licences for the performances of their plays that were granted by the Master of the Revels.<sup>45</sup> The Lord Chamberlain’s Men probably did not need “borrowed capital” (loans) like some of the other dramatic companies and its members probably were not penalized under sumptuary laws. Companies such as The Admiral’s Men (associated with Christopher Marlowe’s plays) often borrowed from the chief housekeeper Philip Henslowe of the theatres owned by Henslowe himself at which their plays were staged to provide capital for themselves.<sup>46</sup> Actors and theatre builders such as James Burbage were also accused of indulging in usury as moneylenders.<sup>47</sup> Shakespeare would have possessed sufficient knowledge of the lending and borrowing, production and consumption problems of his peers in the theatre.

### **Special Charters, Race and Gender in Renaissance Venice and England**

Sixteenth-century Venice was engaged in trade with other European nations, including the other Italian city-states; with Asia, especially the Levant; and with North Africa, and through them, with other parts of the world.<sup>48</sup> It was the discovery of new sea routes to India and the Americas and the establishment of European colonies such as those of Spain, Portugal, England and the Netherlands in Asia, Africa and the Americas that lessened the importance of Venice as a regulator of all the important trade routes of the earth.<sup>49</sup> The marriage of the sea ceremony of the Doge with the Adriatic Sea was a religious and social event that recognized the republic’s nautical imperialism, its dominion over trade and its colonial exertions from the eleventh century onwards (it is the Mayor of Venice who weds the Adriatic in the ceremony held

<sup>44</sup> See Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law*.

<sup>45</sup> See Ackroyd, *Shakespeare: The Biography*.

<sup>46</sup> See Thaler, “The Elizabethan Dramatic Companies”.

<sup>47</sup> See Milling, “The Development of a Professional Theatre, 1540-1660”.

<sup>48</sup> See Martin and Romano, “Reconsidering Venice”.

<sup>49</sup> See Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic*.

nowadays).<sup>50</sup> It has been argued that the ceremony indicated that the Adriatic and by implication all oceans were the wife of Venice, bringing wealth as dowry to the Doge and all Venetians and that other countries cuckolded Venice by the profits they made from its wife.<sup>51</sup> It could also be argued that the ceremony was an event that epitomized the gendering and sexualization of all foreigners engaged in trade with Venice as members of the family of the wife of Venice, the Adriatic, who arrived with her. Owing to the fact that non-Venetians could not become full citizens of Venice immediately and since non-Christians could never do so, their position in Venice was similar to that of the housewives, mistresses and daughters of the Venetian patriarchs who never granted women full social, economic and political freedom. Any Venetian who did not possess the aptitude or the capital to dominate foreigners in trade and military action would thus be transfigured symbolically from a citizen into a “housewife” or a “foreigner”. But such “housewives” or “foreigners” who did not generate wealth for Venetians would be unwanted and/or considered sullied. Antonio compares himself with a castrated sheep (that is emasculated and believed to be deprived of its energy and aggression) when his foreign mercantile enterprises fail and he cannot perform or accomplish the repayment of the loan taken from Shylock<sup>52</sup> - “I am a tainted wether of the flock, / Meetest for death. The weakest kind of fruit / Drops earliest to the ground, and so let me.”<sup>53</sup>

<sup>50</sup> See De Vivo, “Historical Justifications of Venetian Power in the Adriatic”. De Vivo has asserted that in the account of the marriage of the sea ceremony which most Venetians related, when the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I attacked Italy in 1175 AD, Pope Alexander III arrived in Venice as a refugee. The Venetian Doge contacted the Holy Roman Emperor who demanded that the Pope be surrendered to him. In a battle between Frederick I’s son and Venice, the military forces of the latter were victorious and the prince was captured and brought to Venice in 1177. The Venetian naval ships were hailed by the Pope at the Lido. Frederick I then came to Venice and the Doge encouraged the peace treaty that was initiated by him with the Pope, who expressed his gratitude to the Doge through many gifts, including a ring “as a symbol of dominion over the sea” (p. 161). The marriage of the sea was performed on Ascension Day every year to commemorate the events of 1177. Also see

Antonio is jailed for not performing as a borrower as per the promise made by him in the single obligation bond. Shylock had hoped to sign a debt bond with Antonio in Act I of Shakespeare’s play. The bond would mention that the penalty for not repaying the loan would be “an equal pound / Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken / In what part of your body pleaseth me”.<sup>54</sup> In Act IV of the play, Portia disguises herself as a “Doctor of Laws”, Balthasar, and divulges the penalty – that “this bond is forfeit, / And lawfully by this the Jew may claim / A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off / Nearest the merchant’s heart”.<sup>55</sup> Shylock puts Antonio on notice and goes to court to obtain the enforcement of the penalty clause in the bond as Antonio has defaulted in legal terms by failing to repay the loan. The penalty clause is permitted, as has been argued, to be included in contracts under civil law to “operate in terrorem: to compel performance”. A court may modify the penalty after the debtor appears in court but civil law guidelines of “abuse of rights and *contra bonos mores*” are not implemented to act against the penalty clause in the play. It is possible to argue that the legal acceptability of the contract to the Notary should have been impossible when it was being signed if such guidelines could be used against the penalty clause later. But the Notary merely accords in writing a “form and authorization to the transaction that has been agreed to”. It seems that the Notary of Venice in Shakespeare’s play approved of the contract because it is signed by parties who “have the required capacity, the agreement is free

Eschner, “Venice Has Been Married to the Sea For Over a Thousand Years”. According to Eschner, other historians have claimed that the marriage was celebrated on Ascension Day from around 1000 AD when the Doge of Venice won a battle to defend Venetian trade and enlarge the Venetian empire.

<sup>51</sup> See McPherson, *Shakespeare, Jonson and the Myth of Venice*.

<sup>52</sup> See Shell, *Money, Language and Thought: Literary and Philosophic Economies from the Medieval to the Modern Era* for a discussion in Chapter 3 of the relation between monetary production and sexual reproduction in Shakespeare’s play.

<sup>53</sup> Act IV, Sc. i, ln. 114-16 of *The Merchant of Venice*.

<sup>54</sup> Act I, Sc. iii, ln. 145-48 of *The Merchant of Venice*.

<sup>55</sup> Act IV, Sc. i, ln. 227-29 of *The Merchant of Venice*.



from any vice of consent, and both the object and the cause are legal". The guideline of abuse of rights is used to inspect whether a right is being abused – whether the "right is exercised with the sole purpose of harming someone without any benefit to the owner of the right". Although Antonio's death would free Shylock from the anti-Semitic abuse inflicted on him by Antonio and from Antonio's own lending in opposition to Shylock's practices, it is hardly possible that the death of merely one Christian moneylender would make a Jewish moneylender bound by discriminatory Venetian charters sovereign in his practices. It might have been possible to abolish the penalty clause under the guideline of abuse of rights. The intentions of the parties to a contract also matter more than its phrasing under civil law. Without reference to the phrasing of a contract, its *causa* or the "motivation for each party's promise" cannot be *contra bonos mores* (against public morality and the public good). The penalty clause of the bond signed by Shylock and Antonio that necessitates the removal of a pound of flesh could also have been eliminated under the guideline of *contra bonos mores*.<sup>56</sup>

In early Renaissance Venice, physical mutilation and corporal punishment were eradicated for most crimes and the penal system was migrated towards jail terms and fines, "with vengeance becoming secondary to rational repression". Capital punishment was identified in Venice with "serious crimes" such as murder, robbery, counterfeiting and homosexuality. (It could be contended that Shylock seems to be "punishing" Antonio for his "criminal" intimate / perhaps queer friendship with Bassanio with a clause that threatens death.) The republic also employed a procedure of rendering *gratia* which authorized "the partial remission of fines based upon time served, upon need or for good reputation, or, most often, by setting time payment schedules, including interest to be paid to the state". This also enabled the depopulation of congested jails and fulfilled the

desire for labour of the merchant navy and of Venetian industries.<sup>57</sup> The penalty for Antonio's inability to perform as a borrower who should have repaid Shylock's loan is perhaps not concordant with the erasure of physical penalties in early Renaissance Venice. But Portia seems to argue that the contract should be governed only by the charters awarded to the Jews of Venice or by Venetian laws for "aliens" and not by the guideline of *contra bonos mores*. The Duke and Portia seem to be in sympathy with Shylock's claim that the decision on his bond should be congruous with the Jewish charters of Venice – "If you deny it, let the danger light / Upon your charter and your city's freedom!".<sup>58</sup>

The Republic of Venice had special courts assigned for court cases related to foreigners – the Forestier. From 1625 the Cinque Savi judged all mercantile disagreements involving Turkish merchants and Levantine and Ponentine Jewish traders. The Forestier continued to adjudge all disputes involving foreigners although in the case of some denizens and mercantile disputes, its duties were now executed by the Cinque Savi. The Petizion court could sit in judgement on cases that had been inaugurated in another court if they could not be unraveled through the "strict application of a juridical norm (*ratio*)" but necessitated "greater flexibility (*justitia*)", and cases involving debts were often judged by this court.<sup>59</sup> It thus appears as though the standard of *contra bonos mores* could have been referred to by the Petizion if a case in the Forestier was later decided by it. The Cinque Savi that was permitted summary procedure later would have had in mind that judges usually did not avoid standards of equity (*justice*, which also includes *contra bonos mores*) in their decisions. In *The Merchant of Venice*, Portia, who engages in unlicensed practice of the law by impersonating a lawyer (apparently like an *amicus curiae*) and thus commits a crime, focuses on the Jewish charters and the wording of the bond, repudiating equity – "A pound of that same merchant's flesh is thine / The

<sup>56</sup> See Friedler, "Shakespeare's Contribution to the Teaching of Comparative Law – Some Reflections on *The Merchant of Venice*".

<sup>57</sup> See Ruggiero, "Law and Punishment in Early Renaissance Venice".

<sup>58</sup> Act IV, Sc. i, ln. 38-39 of *The Merchant of Venice*.

<sup>59</sup> See Fusaro, "Politics of Justice / Politics of Trade: Foreign Merchants and the Administration of Justice from the Records of Venice's *Guidici del Forestier*".

court awards it, and the law doth give it"<sup>60</sup> – and providing evidence of her own biases against foreign denizens and foreigners, who could be seen to be members of the family of the wife of Venice or the Duke of Venice, and comparable to housewives such as Portia herself in their lack of full citizenship rights.

In sixteenth-century England, a pound of flesh was often a part of the callous penalty clauses of conditional bonds. Litigants who were involved in unjust cases or “defendants in debt actions who felt they were the victims of unconscionable behaviour could ... bring actions in Chancery seeking equitable relief” but this meant that the litigants had to pay “two sets of court fees and legal costs” for the common law courts and the courts of equity. The English court of equity seems to have resembled the Venetian Petizion court. Debtors were usually enjoined to pay “the amount of their original debt, and depending on the delay involved, ‘something for forbearance’” by courts of equity.<sup>61</sup>

The demand for a pound of flesh made in the single obligation bond of *The Merchant of Venice* and Portia’s decision that is ratified by the Duke of Venice could be said to permit the argument that “even as the law acknowledged that a creditor had an interest in his debtor’s person, the state maintained that no debtor could forfeit his right to life” as God was the owner of all life and the environment and men could only be second and third users of others and the environment under the principle of usufruct in Christianity.<sup>62</sup> But it could also be argued that Portia’s arguments in Act IV, Scene i of Shakespeare’s play might not be associated only with Christian principles of usufruct but with her analysis of the charters of the Jews of Venice. It could be asked why other principles of equity, *contra bonos mores* and abuse of rights are not cited by Portia when Venice had courts for foreigners as well as for Venetians entrapped in interethnic and international disputes. It could be argued that Shakespeare was perhaps ignorant of the existence of courts for foreigners in Venice but it

should also be conceded that Portia concentrates on the charters of the Jews of Venice as media that permit inequity, immorality and abuse of rights against Venetian (Christian) citizens. The Duke and Portia seem to argue that the contract between a Venetian citizen and a Jewish denizen may not be invalidated by the state but that it depends on the will or “mercy” (a desire to alleviate suffering)<sup>63</sup> of the foreigner to abandon it. Thus the charters of the Jews of Venice seem to permit the enslavement of Christians by Jews in Shakespeare’s play. Portia avers to Shylock that “Of a strange nature is the suit you follow, / Yet in such rule that the Venetian law / Cannot impugn you as you do proceed”.<sup>64</sup> The ownership of the flesh of Antonio authorized by Venetian laws sanctions the status of slave master for Shylock – as per Portia’s arguments, this does not seem to violate the charters of the Jews of Venice. It could be argued that Shylock owns only a part of the body when Antonio defaults but since this part is related to the rest of the body until it is separated from the latter, the ownership of a part of the body turns virtually into the ownership of the whole body.

The representation of Venice in Shakespeare’s play thus seems to be quite different from the Catholic doctrines related to slavery under which a Jewish slaveholder such as Shylock would not have been permitted to hold a Christian slave such as Antonio. Pope Gelasius is believed to have permitted Jews to become slave traders in Italy but this approbation did not incorporate followers of Christianity. Pope Gregory the Great was apprehensive about the conversion of the Christian slaves of Jewish slave masters to Judaism but such conversions were not enforced by most Jewish slave traders who could not retain possession of non-Jewish slaves under Jewish laws and had to sell them to other slave masters, usually within a year.<sup>65</sup> Shylock’s ownership of Antonio’s body in Shakespeare’s play encourages the construction of an argument in the play that the charters of the Jews

<sup>60</sup> Act IV, Sc. i, ln. 296-97 of *The Merchant of Venice*.

<sup>61</sup> See Stretton, “Contract, Debt Litigation and Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*”.

<sup>62</sup> See Bailey, “Shylock and the Slaves: Owing and Owning in *The Merchant of Venice*”.

<sup>63</sup> Act IV, Sc. i, ln. 20 of *The Merchant of Venice* and Act IV, Sc. i, ln. 181-202 of *The Merchant of Venice*.

<sup>64</sup> Act IV, Sc. i, ln. 175-77 of *The Merchant of Venice*.

<sup>65</sup> See Abrahams, *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*.

of Venice violate Catholic doctrine and are therefore to be denounced.

Venetian citizens, that is Christian Venetians, were often reclaimed by the state of Venice, when they were abducted as slaves by Muslim pirates from the sixteenth century onwards near the coast of northwestern Africa and Turkey, if they were impecunious and could not render the ransom to their hostage-takers. Affluent families could pay their ransom directly to the Corsair slave traders but the Venetian state generated ransom for the penurious through an alms-collection operation in churches that was managed by a magistrate dedicated to financial relief and philanthropy. By the eighteenth century, the Republic of Venice, like other European states, held euphoric processions of freed slaves to represent the disposition of the state towards the retrieval of all (Christian) Venetian slaves.<sup>66</sup> The contentions of the Duke and Portia that the Venetian laws about aliens or the charters of the Jews of Venice do not enable the quashing of the enslavement of a Christian slave such as Antonio by a Jewish slave master seem to suggest falsely that such enslavement could have been resisted if the slave master was another Christian without referring to the principles of equity, *contra bonos mores* and abuse of rights. The false statements and the surplus emphasis on the charters rather than these principles represents the anti-Semitic bias of the Duke and Portia. Since the Venetian state cannot be seen as an adversary of Christians, Portia does regain for Antonio his status as a free Christian citizen of Venice through a legal loophole – the contract does not specifically mention the ownership of blood, so Shylock may not cause the loss of blood while cutting off a part of the body of Antonio. It could be argued that the enslavement of Antonio is examined by Portia only through the lens of the charters of the Jews of Venice to steer clear of discussions of the principles of equity, *contra bonos mores* and abuse

of rights that could also be used against Christian slaveholders of non-Christian slaves. There is a reference to a Moorish slave in Belmont who is “with child by” Launcelot,<sup>67</sup> Bassanio’s servant. Portia and Bassanio themselves might have participated in and profited from the slave trade and Shylock argues that his enslavement of Antonio is only as morally wrong, unjust and cruel as the ownership of non-Christian slaves by Christians.<sup>68</sup> Portia and other housewives of Venetian citizens of the Venetian republic might therefore have tried to represent themselves as more irreproachable and honourable than denizens without full citizenship rights and foreigners.

It could perhaps be argued that Catholic codes against the enslavement of Christians are not the only ground for Shakespeare’s play’s interest in the special charters of the Jews of Venice and for the criticism of the charters offered through the enslavement and threat posed to Antonio’s life by his contract with Shylock. Elizabethan England itself was involved in the slave trade with Africa along with and in rivalry with Spain and Portugal that would transport the power of the three European nations to levels far above that Venice had ever possessed at the pinnacle of its imperialism, and it did not advocate the enslavement of Christians either. The interest of Shakespeare’s plays in the assimilation of difference, whether in *The Merchant of Venice* or in its liberal form in *The Booke of Sir Thomas More*, was probably shaped by the increasing expansion of its economic and cultural ties with foreigners, including Jews, who could practise Judaism only in secret in England and camouflaged themselves as Christian converts. Elizabethan merchants who visited Venice would have met Jewish merchants who could avail of economic freedom while living in ghettos under the isolationist policies of Venice towards difference. They were apparently surprised to find their biased opinions of Jews outside England, whom

<sup>66</sup> See Davis, “Slave Redemption in Venice, 1585-1797”.

<sup>67</sup> Act III, Sc. v, ln. 35 of *The Merchant of Venice*.

<sup>68</sup> Act IV, Sc. i, ln. 90-101 of *The Merchant of Venice*:

You have among you many a purchased slave,  
Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules,  
You use in abject and in slavish parts,  
Because you bought them: shall I say to you,  
Let them be free, marry them to your heirs?

Why sweat they under burthens? let their beds  
Be made as soft as yours and let their palates  
Be season'd with such viands? You will answer  
'The slaves are ours:.' so do I answer you:  
The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,  
Is dearly bought; 'tis mine and I will have it.  
If you deny me, fie upon your law!

they had not met in England, being destroyed by their interactions with people who seemed to be ethical and tolerant.<sup>69</sup> Plans to permit Jewish merchants to live in England were being discussed at the end of the sixteenth century and a proposal to settle (or resettle, with reference to the 1290 expulsion) Jews in Ireland was submitted by Sir Thomas Shirley in the early years of the reign of King James I with the objective of profiting from taxes higher than those imposed on other merchants and from the commerce with Spain in Irish commodities. Shirley also recommended that Jews be allowed to become denizens of England or be licensed to recommence trade with English ports if they assented to an inflated rate of taxation in comparison with those imposed on other citizens and denizens. He gave weight to the international connections of Jewish merchants and to the financial capacity of the diasporic community living in various parts of the world to offer mammoth loans to sovereigns in his proposition.<sup>70</sup> Shirley's proposal seems to be comparable to the charters that granted special status to the Jewish denizens of Venice in its intent on higher taxes and the "ghettoization" of Ireland. In the middle of the seventeenth century, Oliver Cromwell's endeavour to permit Jewish merchants to settle in England as Jews (on account of the financial advantages that their presence would engender) did not materialize into a law but Jews who were able to convince the government that they were refugees who were attempting to escape persecution in other countries (especially "Papist" countries) by settling in England were allowed to do so without having to conceal themselves as Christian converts although they did not occupy positions in government or become noteworthy public figures.<sup>71</sup> Higher taxes were paid by the Jewish community even after the Bill of Rights was adopted later in the seventeenth century as they were not viewed as English citizens but as

foreigners authorized to practise their trade but not to serve as government officials.<sup>72</sup>

English merchants in Renaissance Venice at the time that Shakespeare wrote *The Merchant of Venice* were not granted special charters by the Duke of the Republic and access to economical summary procedures of the Cinque Savi courts (although they were granted access to courts such as the Forestier and the Petizion) permitted to the Jewish denizens of Venice, probably because of the non-necessity of a refuge for Protestant English citizens and their position as representatives of a colonial and mercantile rival. The English merchants of Venice therefore relied on their personal and informal networks of acquaintance with local citizens, including the elites, and foreigners.<sup>73</sup> The mercantile effectiveness of such local and international networks was seen in the case of both English citizens and Jewish merchants – the latter were granted "safe havens" in ghettos in Venice if they could pay high taxes and conform to biased laws. In *The Merchant of Venice* Tubal, whose loan helps his friend Shylock to become Antonio's lender, is represented as a Jewish merchant who appears to be less violent in reaction to anti-Semitism than Shylock and whose business trips to various foreign cities help him to acquire profits and to access information on Antonio's ventures. The certificates of denization of medieval England granted by the Crown appear to be a little similar to the charters of the Jews of Venice that granted them the right to reside and work in Venice but did not grant them full citizenship (granted by the Parliament in England), including the right to participate in elections for government positions such as that of the Duke. From the middle of the thirteenth century to the fifteenth century, resident aliens, principally merchants, in England were granted certificates of denization if they did not appear to endanger the nation and make it vulnerable to colonization as England's own trade and colonial operations proliferated.

<sup>69</sup> See the encounter between an Elizabethan merchant and a Jew in the Holy Land discussed in Shapiro, "How Were the Jews Regarded in 16<sup>th</sup>-Century England?"

<sup>70</sup> See Samuel, "'Sir Thomas Shirley's Project for Jewes' – the Earliest Known Proposal for the Resettlement".

<sup>71</sup> See Roth, *A History of the Jews in England*.

<sup>72</sup> See Gossman, "From Expulsion to Emancipation: Jews in England 1290-1858".

<sup>73</sup> See Chapters 8 and 9 of Fusaro, *Political Economies of Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean: The Decline of Venice and the Rise of England 1450-1700*.

Denizenship was approved by the Crown on the swearing of an oath of fidelity to the monarch that repudiated all ties with the countries in which the aliens had been born or had resided earlier,<sup>74</sup> but did not nullify or neutralize the international networks from which the foreign merchants and the monarch of England derived benefits. Shakespeare's play appears to argue that special charters for foreigners such as Jews, instead of other denizenship rules, such as those of the medieval English denizenship certificates, might not only permit the enslavement of citizens but might also permit foreigners to act against the will of the head of the state, as Shylock, with the help of the loan given by Tubal, does against the Duke, before Portia (who appears to be reluctant to take into account the principles of equity, *contra bonos mores* and abuse of rights considered by Venetian courts for foreigners as well as citizens) exploits a legal loophole in the contract.

Shakespeare's play does not focus on the sale of non-Christian slaves to and by denizens and citizens in Venice and England and in their colonies. Residents of Venice who were slaves were not recognized as denizens by the law. Shylock draws an analogy between "asses and your dogs and mules"<sup>75</sup> and slaves. Launcelot, who has had a sexual relationship with a Moorish slave in Portia's household, admits that "if she be less than an honest woman, she is indeed more than I took her for",<sup>76</sup> thus claiming that the white Christian servant considered the black slave to be "worse" than a dishonest woman or prostitute, or like an animal. Black slaves could be manumitted in Venice – many of them became gondoliers, servants and prostitutes after manumission or inherited a portion of their masters' or mistresses' properties<sup>77</sup> – but they would usually never be able to turn upwardly mobile

in the republic. In Protestant England, there were no laws about slavery, so black slaves were not brought into England as slaves but were employed as servants, especially by female employers, and as apprentices to traders and merchants or in other proletarian occupations.<sup>78</sup> The monarch could order their expulsion or deport them if it was decided that their absence would increase the number of jobs available to the English-born white Christians of the working class or fulfil other purposes of the Crown, as was done in 1596 and 1601 through "letters" and "warrants".<sup>79</sup> The black community of Elizabethan England survived such royal proclamations by remaining unnoticeable in the public sphere – like the Jews who did not pretend to be Christian converts but were allowed to "return" to Cromwellian England – as they were neither citizens nor officially authorized denizens.

Shakespeare's play seems to claim that the special charters that allow the enslavement of Venetian Christian citizens and that could lead to the enslavement of English citizens in violation of English laws would also impede the assimilation of foreigners as loyal denizens and citizens unless they converted to Christianity, as Shylock does in Act IV, Sc. i of *The Merchant of Venice*. The "loving" assimilation that is the objective of *The Booke of Sir Thomas More* (that looks back at a figure executed under Henry VIII), in which English citizens are asked to emotionally identify with foreign refugees from other parts of Europe by imagining their condition in a country to which they could be deported, is not present in the discourse of the text. But it appears that Shakespeare's play (*The Merchant of Venice*) suggests that indiscernibility and imperceptibility in the public sphere – such as Tubal's in Shakespeare's Venice and that of housewives in the Republic of

<sup>74</sup> See Lambert and Ormrod, "Friendly Foreigners: International Warfare, Resident Aliens and the Early History of Denization in England, c. 1250 – c. 1400".

<sup>75</sup> Act IV, Sc. i, ln. 91 of *The Merchant of Venice*.

<sup>76</sup> Act III, Sc. v, ln. 38-39 of *The Merchant of Venice*.

<sup>77</sup> See Lowe, "Visible Lives: Black Gondoliers and Other Black Africans in Renaissance Venice".

<sup>78</sup> See Ungerer, "The Presence of Africans in Elizabethan England and the Performance of *Titus Andronicus* at Burley-on-the-Hill, 1595/96". Also see Kaufmann, *Black Tudors: The Untold Story*.

<sup>79</sup> See Weissbourd, "'Those in Their Possession': Race, Slavery, and Queen Elizabeth's 'Edicts of Expulsion'".

Venice, blacks in Elizabethan England and Jews in Cromwellian England – without special charters such as those of the Republic of Venice might lead to the survival of difference that might later be allowed as a part of the full citizenship of countries such as England.

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