As transfer points between different economic and cultural zones, cities are crucial to shaping processes of cultural exchange. Urban culture embraces cultural traits borrowed or imported from afar and those of local neighbourhoods, professions and social groups, yet it also offer possibilities for the survival and reinforcement of minority identities. This volume compares and contrasts the characteristics and patterns of change in the spaces, sites and buildings which expressed and shaped inter-cultural relationships within the cities of early modern Europe, especially in their ethnic, religious and international dimensions. A central theme is the role of foreigners and the spaces and buildings associated with them, from ghettos, churches and hospitals to colleges, inns and markets. Individual studies include Greeks in Italian cities and London; the ‘Cities of Jews’ in Italy and the place of ghettos in the European imagination; and the contributions of foreign merchants to the growth of Amsterdam as a commercial metropolis.

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At a time when the enlarged European Community asserts the humanist values uniting its members, these volumes of essays by leading scholars from twelve countries seek to uncover the deep but hidden unities shaping a common European past. These volumes examine the domains of religion, the city, communication and information, the conception of man and the use of material goods, identifying the links which endured and were strengthened through ceaseless cultural exchanges, even during this time of endless wars and religious disputes. Volume I examines the role of religion as a vehicle for cultural exchange. Volume II surveys the reception of foreigners within the cities of early modern Europe. Volume III explores the place of information and communication in early modern Europe. Volume IV reveals how cultural exchange played a central role in the fashioning of a first European identity.

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CULTURAL EXCHANGE IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE

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The four volumes of this series represent the synthesis of works from ‘Cultural Exchange in Europe, 1400–1700’, a research programme sponsored by the European Science Foundation and financed by eighteen councils for research from seventeen countries. The adventure began in January 1997 when its originators decided to conduct an international investigation of the cultural roots of modern Europe. Research has increased considerably since this programme began and identifying the origins of the European identity has become a fundamental issue at the dawn of the twenty-first century.

Ultimately, our programme brought together over sixty regular members, plus a few dozen individuals who participated in one or more of our group meetings. It was a real linguistic Tower of Babel including specialists from various disciplines: history, art, architecture, theatre, literature, linguistics, folklore, clothing and dance. We have recruited well beyond the borders of the European Union, from St Petersburg to Chicago by way of Istanbul, although it was not always possible for every geographical location to be fully represented in each of our four groups.

This series is devoted to four major themes: religion; the city; communication and information; the conception of man and the use of material goods. The four volumes collectively include about a third of the papers presented throughout the programme.¹ Most have been discussed collectively, revised, and sometimes rewritten.

¹ Many other contributions prepared for this programme have appeared or will appear elsewhere: Eszter Andor and István György Tóth (eds.), Frontiers of Faith: Religious Exchange and the Constitution of Religious Identities, 1400–1750 (Budapest: Central European University/ESF, 2001); José Pedro Paiva (ed.), Religious Ceremonials and
It was not always easy to conceptualise our theme collectively. The most difficult and time-consuming task was to get scholars to understand each other unambiguously when employing such apparently clear concepts as ‘culture’, which means different things in different languages and cultural traditions. Our first major task was simply to discover whether or not a European culture existed between 1400 and 1700, an intensely conflictual and profoundly tragic period which seemed to be characterised by ruptures rather than creation. From 1517, when Luther broke with Roman Catholicism, until the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, a series of terrible religious wars drowned the continent in blood, ending the medieval dream of a united Christendom. This age of intolerance was also one of fundamental inequality, particularly with respect to birth and sex, because any woman was considered fundamentally inferior to any man. Not only was the continent divided into at least five different cultural areas – the Atlantic, the Baltic, the Mediterranean, central Europe and eastern Europe – but also, and everywhere, those frontiers established in men’s minds – both visible and invisible – conflicted with any residual hopes of unity, whether expressed in terms of imperial ideology, papal universalism or Thomas More’s humanistic Utopia, all of them swept away after 1520 by a wave of persecutions.  

And yet this very same Europe also bequeathed us powerful roots for the slow and difficult construction of a collective sensibility. Our research has unearthed traces of underlying unities, despite (or because of) formidable obstacles. This stubborn growth in some ways resembled an earlier process described by a prominent medievalist as the ‘Europeanization of Europe’. They have given substance and meaning to my working hypothesis: that European culture from 1400 to 1700 contained expressions of hidden cohesion against a background
of intense conflicts. If those conflicts were destabilising, they also created a dialectic which contributed to the overall advance of European civilisation. Following Norbert Elias’s argument, I believe that every human society is constantly seeking to attain a ‘balance of power’ through a mechanism of ‘reciprocal dependency’ which produces a clear evolutionary trend. Culture is a symbolic arena for both collective negotiations and the fashioning of the Self. The enormous importance of the Self in today’s Europe (and in the United States) is the result of a major cultural change which began during the Renaissance. In the face of the tragedy of real life, this new individualism provided a fresh means of expressing the continent’s collective vitality and produced a growing conviction of its superiority and differences from all other places and people in the world.

The ‘culture’ analysed in this series may be defined as that which simultaneously holds a society together and distinguishes it from other societies. If the Europe of 1400–1700 had little obvious regard for human rights, it did at least prefigure the time when they would be important. The humanistic lights which glimmered from time to time in the two dark and bloodstained centuries after 1520 were never to be completely extinguished. The Enlightenment revived them and honoured their Renaissance origins. But the tragic events that polluted its soil during the first half of the twentieth century proved that the Old Continent was not yet fully free from intolerance and persecution.

I should like to thank Wim Blockmans, who warmly supported the creation of this research programme; the European Science Foundation for its constant help; the eighteen institutions which provided generous funding over four years; all the scholars who participated...
General editor’s preface

in the experience, notably E. William Monter without whom this series would probably not have been published, and the late István György Tóth, co-director of volume 1, who passed away unexpectedly on 14 July 2005; and last but not least Cambridge University Press for producing four superb books proving the great vitality of past and present European culture.

Robert Muchembled
Chair of the ESF programme
‘Cultural Exchange in Europe, 1400–1700’
The genesis of this book lies in the invitation, in 2000, to its editors to join the European Science Foundation programme on ‘Cultural Exchange in Europe 1400–1700’, directed by Robert Muchembled. The brief was to explore the role of cities in cultural exchange over the period. A core team of scholars, ‘Team Two’ in the programme, was assembled to organise and participate in a series of thematic seminars and workshops held in six European cities between 2000 and 2003, at which the ideas expressed here were collectively evolved. The workshops covered six areas which initially seemed to cover most aspects of the role of cities in cultural exchange:

1. The migration and status of foreigners
2. The zones, buildings and cultural and welfare facilities occupied and used by foreigners
3. Commerce, consumption patterns and the circulation of cultural models
4. Markets and other public spaces as sites for encounters with the new
5. Enclosed and supervised spaces for the exchange of goods, credit and ideas
6. Sites of elite culture, including courts and universities.

Wide-ranging debate introduced new categories and cut across the old ones, which nevertheless continued to inform the emerging themes and structure of the book. Although it represents a new initiative, the ESF team’s cross-national, interdisciplinary and comparative approach to cities and foreigners has drawn on previous experience from the ‘permanent seminar’ on ‘The Foreigner and the City’, organised jointly.
xxvi

Volume editors’ preface

by the Department of History of Architecture in Venice and the Maison des Sciences de l’Homme in Paris. This seminar’s results have been published in two books, one in Italian (Donatella Calabi and Paola Lanaro (eds.), *La città italiana e i luoghi degli stranieri* (Bari: Laterza, 1998), and the other in French (Jacques Bottin and Donatella Calabi (eds.), *Les Etrangers dans la ville: minorités et espace urbain du bas Moyen Âge à l’époque moderne* (Paris: Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, 1999)). Several participants in our ESF team’s workshops are alumni of these Italo-French seminars. Furthermore, the ESF programme’s approach to cultural exchange from the points of view of migration and reception inspired a conference on ‘Cultural Traffic and Cultural Transformation around the Baltic Sea, 1450–1720’ at the Carlsberg Academy in Copenhagen in March 2003, now published under the same name in a special issue of the *Scandinavian Journal of History* 28 (2003), edited by Stephen T. Christensen and Badeloch Noldus. All this continues and develops a long-established tradition of comparative work in urban history.

Cities contain, attract and transform cultures of many kinds. As shown in Chapter 1, urban cultures, as patterns or gestalts of human manners, beliefs, ideas and emotions, are often embodied in and reinforced by material symbols and the circulation of goods. They encapsulate and can integrate the individual cultures of neighbourhoods and of professional and social groups, yet they also offer possibilities for the survival and reinforcement of various forms of minority identity. Many of these complex relationships are determined or made possible by commercial contacts and exchange. Cities thus play a crucial role in cultural exchange as transfer points between economic and cultural zones.

The following chapters focus especially on questions concerning space and networks within and between cities. Social, cultural and political topographies in cities express less visible relationships which are often not well recorded in surviving textual sources. Moreover, they provided, and still provide, a framework for acculturation and for learning the rules of city life which is exploited by native and outsider alike. Common to many of the chapters is a concern to compare and contrast the regions of early modern Europe in terms of characteristics.
and patterns of change in the spaces, sites and buildings which expressed and shaped intercultural relationships within the cities, especially in their ethnic, religious and international dimensions.

Underlying many of these characteristics are important legal and customary considerations, which explain, for example, certain differences between the Mediterranean and other regions. These inform the chapters but are not a prime focus of concern. A central theme is the role of the ‘foreigner’, a person from outside the city who was recognised as culturally different by virtue of having come from afar or from another political regime. The ‘foreigner’, ‘stranger’ or ‘alien’ had a status different from that of the native or citizen, and was often also distinguished by language, religion, dress and other habits of consumption. Such a person might be a merchant, craftsman, scholar, artist, ambassador, princess, itinerant labourer or refugee. As is still the case today, foreigners sought, carved out or were assigned to their own spaces in cities. Moreover, despite wide variations, both between and within cities, in the degree to which foreigners were assimilated or acculturated, the presence of foreigners, of which there are many enduring signs, marked out those European cities which were most dynamic as centres of cultural exchange (see Chapters 3–10, 16, 17).

Since the early Middle Ages, Europe has been characterised by an accelerating circulation of people, commodities and ideas, the rate of which increased markedly between 1400 and 1700. This pattern of change was also reflected in the formalisation of sites, spaces and buildings that facilitated commercial exchange and the circulation of news and ideas, and that in turn assisted the intermingling of cultures (see Chapters 12, 13, 15).

The spaces and buildings associated with foreigners took many forms, including ghettos (or districts resembling ghettos), churches, hospitals, colleges, inns and other forms of lodging, and buildings to which markets in certain commodities were confined. In some places, civic or princely regimes regulated or accorded privileges to foreigners in ways which had distinctive spatial and architectural expressions, but less strict approaches were also common, especially in northern Europe (see Chapters 5, 6, 16, 17). Princes and their courts had a distinctive impact through their demands for the exotic, their patronage
of foreign artists and scholars, their exploitation of public space and their reshaping of urban landscapes according to newly devised principles (see Chapters 13, 14). In considering the built and spatial expressions of such forces, the chapters draw attention both to architectural signs of the transmission of models and ideas and to the way in which they promoted the circulation of knowledge.

Inevitably, the most robust and sensitive approach to the complex problem of cultural transfer proved to be through case-studies. Those presented here provide an uneven geographical coverage of the cities of early modern Europe. Parts of the Mediterranean region and of north-western Europe are well represented, but no chapter specifically deals with the reception of foreigners and cultural exchange in the cities of Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Nevertheless, the chapters and the introductions to each part of the book draw attention to what appear to have been common phenomena and to approaches to the topic of cultural transfer and exchange used in a variety of disciplines. In this way, the chapters often reflect the discussions at the workshops and continuing exchanges among the authors and participants subsequently, thereby underlining the collective nature of the enterprise.

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Abbreviations

ASP Padua, Archivio di Stato
ASV Venice, Archivio di Stato
BAV Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
BNF Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France
BNMV Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana
ODNB Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (Oxford University Press, 2004; also available online in updated form)