VENICE'S

MEDITERRANEAN COLONIES

ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM

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THE CITY AS LOCUS OF COLONIAL RULE

I believe that one of the major tasks (of a ruler) is to know how to maintain the loyalty of the people and the subjugated cities, how to avoid and resist all the evils that can sometimes incite rebellion. Such vices are peculiar to every city and nation, but happen primarily and more frequently in newly conquered cities and nations whose native language is different from that of the ruler. Because people obey more easily a fellow countryman than a foreigner. . . . So, even the slightest opportunity is enough to instigate a fight to shake off the yoke.

The princes have thought of diverse strategies to deal with this evil. But I would think that nothing is more secure than what the Romans have already done: as soon as a city came under their jurisdiction, they elected a number of their own people that seemed sufficient, and they sent them to inhabit [the city]. And these were called colonies. This practice produced an infinite number of good results, and was the reason why the cities became populous, why damaged buildings were restored and why in some cases other new cities were founded; empty spaces were filled with laborers, and uncultivated land was rendered fertile; the arts flourished, trade increased, the new inhabitants became wealthy, the locals were loyal, and thus the people could live securely without fear of being disturbed by foreign or domestic enemies.

Antonio Calergi[1]

In the words of the sixteenth-century chronicler Antonio Calergi the Venetian colonization of Crete is projected as a continuation of antique practices as if the strategies of the Romans were current in the late Middle Ages. In fact this rhetoric does not reflect the realities of the thirteenth century, when the Venetians struggled to invent a system to sustain their newly amplified maritime enterprise. This is apparent above all in the physical appearance of the colonies and the monuments that adorned them. The first concrete reference to monuments in the colonies dates to 1252: a unique

text containing prescriptions from the doge for rebuilding the city of Canea instructs the colonists to found public squares, administrative buildings, a main street (*ruga magistra*), one or more (Latin rite) churches, and city walls:

> Cum itaque a nobus ordinatum sit, quod civitas fieri *debeat* in dicta terra Puncte de Spata, et dicto capitaneo et consciliariis iniunxerimus et comiserimus, quod civitatem Chanee rehedificare. . . . Et sciendum est, quod, sicut comisimus dicto capitaneo et eius consciliariis, debet idem cum suis consciliariis vel altero eorum accipere ante partem in civitate pro comuni plateas pro domo et domibus comunis et ruga magistra et ecclesia seu ecclesiis et municionibus hedificandis, sicut eidem capitaneo et eius consciliariis vel ipsi capitaneo et uni ex ipsius consciliariis bonum videbitur; et muros dicte civitatis facient capitaneus et consciliariii hedificari, et pro ipsis hedificandis et foveis civitatis seu aliis munitionibus faciendis rusticos dictarum partium habere et angarizare debent, scilicet unum rusticum pro qualibet militia, sicut idem capitaneus et sui consciliarii vel ipse capitaneus eu unus illorum voluerint.[2]

Forty years after the establishment of the first Venetian colony on Crete (Candia), the doge Marino Morosini defined a new Venetian colonial city as an ensemble of public official structures and Latin churches that were closely related to the state. A comparison of this detailed enumeration of specific architectural elements with the first charter of colonization composed in 1211 for the settling of the western and central part of Crete, the so-called *Concessio insulae Cretensis*, reveals tons about the sophistication in Venice's colonial approach as the thirteenth century progressed.[3] In 1211 there is no mention of urban features and monuments; the colonial city was still not a realized focus of Venetian rhetoric for the first colonists who were sent to Crete. The 1252 document represents a mature understanding of the essential components of the Venetian colonial city, which now consists of distinct urban spaces that presumably work for the success of the colony.

Moreover, this document emphasizes the crucial role that the city played in the imperial strategy of the Venetians. Cities had formed the core of Venice's mercantile involvement with the Levant from the twelfth century. Not only did the Venetians have emporia on many coastal cities on the shore of Palestine, but they also had especially designated quarters in Constantinople and Acre that took advantage of the tax exempt status that was accorded them by the Byzantine emperors in 1082 and 1147.[4] These quarters provided the Venetian merchants and their families with places to gather as a community, including a church typically dedicated to St. Mark, a palace for the leader of the community (*podestà* or *bailo*), as well as mercantile facilities such as loading docks and warehouses. These localities were highly important to the establishment and betterment of Venetian commercial activities over-

seas, but they also offered the citizens of the Republic a haven away from home. The original quarter of the Venetians in the region of Perama in Constantinople (created in 1082) was expanded in 1147 to accommodate the growing population of Venetians in the capital of the Byzantine empire.[5] Until the third quarter of the twelfth century this quarter sealed the monopoly of the Venetian merchants in Constantinopolitan trade. By the year 1200 they were in possession of two churches, St. Mark de Embulo (of the market) and St. Akindynos.[6] Nevertheless, these quarters within the cities of the Byzantine empire were not real colonies of Venice, as many of their inhabitants seemed to be transient and the very existence of the colony itself depended on the flow of international politics. For instance, in the year 1171 the emperor Manuel Komnenos reportedly arrested twenty thousand Venetians throughout the Byzantine empire in response to Venice's alliance with Hungary for the recapture of Dalmatia.[7]

In the wake of the Fourth Crusade Venice followed similar settlement patterns in her new colonies and outposts along the coast of the Adriatic, the Ionian, and the Aegean Seas. On the one hand, the port cities of the territories left to the Byzantines continued to serve as entrepots where Venetian merchants had special trading posts. The treaty between the ruler of the Byzantine despotate of Epirus, Michael Komnenos, and the Venetians in 1210 is indicative of the kinds of services the Venetians expected to find in such an entrepot: "habere ecclesiam et curiam et fondicum et omnes alias honorificentias tam in spiritualibus, quam in temporalibus, quas habebant tempore domini Emanuelis Imperatoris."[8] On the other hand, the majority of the coastal territories were nominally colonies of the Venetians: Zara (Zadar), Ragusa (Dubrovnik), Corfu (Kerkyra, which was originally under Angevin control and was finally taken by the Venetians in 1386), Cephallonia, Zante (Zakynthos), Modon (Methoni), Coron (Koroni), Cerigo (Kythera), Crete, Negroponte (Euboea), many of the Aegean islands (Cyclades), and eventually Cyprus. The position of each locality within the trade system of the Mediterranean and the degree of involvement that the Republic intended to have with the colony's hinterland determined the adoption of varied governing solutions for each place (Fig. 3). The Aegean Cycladic islands (known also as the *Archipelago*), for instance, formed the Duchy of Naxos, a political entity where each of the islands was governed by a different Venetian overlord.[9] The island of Negroponte, which was perceived as a buffer zone between the Byzantines and the regions of central Greece and the Peloponnesos, was nominally a Venetian colony, which until the end of the fourteenth century was the fiefdom of three Veronese barons, the *Tercieri*, who were vassals of the doge.[10] The towns of Modon and Coron, which were vital lookouts for the navigation of the waters in the southern

Ionian and Aegean Seas, remained in Venetian hands much longer than any other of their colonies in Romania. They were referred to as the "eyes" of the Republic because of their strategic position in the southern tip of the Peloponnesos at the point of convergence of the maritime routes to Syria and to the Black Sea. The Venetian convoys stopped there to get supplies and information and to repair the ships in the arsenals on their way to the Eastern Mediterranean. Crete with its hinterland rich in agricultural resources and wood was fully colonized.

THE ACQUISITION OF CRETE

Crete had been given to the leader of the Fourth Crusade, the marquis Boniface of Montferrat, by the Byzantine emperor Alexios Angelos as a token for his help in establishing the Byzantine emperor Isaak II on the throne before the crusaders captured Constantinople.[11] In 1204 Boniface sold the island to the Venetians for 1,000 marks of silver in order to assure the support of the Republic in his dispute with the Latin emperor, Baldwin of Flanders.[12] The Venetians had already been assigned the islands of the Archipelago, so the acquisition of Crete was critical for the establishment of their maritime hegemony in the Aegean. The Republic, being engaged in establishing her rule in her new possessions in Byzantium, did not send armed forces to Crete immediately after 1204.[13] The imposition of Venetian rule on the island was not easy, however, because the Genoese, who, like the Venetians, must have also used the port of Chandax (the Byzantine name of Candia) as a stopover on the way to Constantinople in the second half of the twelfth century, were also keen on taking control of Crete.[14] In 1206 a pirate assault led by Enrico Pescatore, count of Malta, and supported by the Genoese succeeded in occupying Crete. No Venetian presence is recorded in the sources – mostly chronicles – which state that the only opposition Pescatore encountered in Crete came from the local population. Profiting from the absence of a Venetian army, the Genoese of Pescatore established their presence on the island by reinforcing or building fourteen castles: Mirabello, Monforte, Bonifacio, Castelnuovo, Belriparo, Milopotamo, Pediada, Priotissa, Belvedere, Malvesin, Gerapetra, Chissamo, Bicorna, and Temene (or S. Niccolò).[15] The Venetian reaction was not slow in coming this time. In the summer of 1206 the Republic sent a fleet of thirty-one galleys to Crete under the command of Ranieri Dandolo and Ruggiero Premarino. After an unsuccessful attempt to reconquer the island, the two commanders were sent back to Crete in 1207 and occupied its capital city, Chandax, after a fierce fight.[16] Pescatore man-

aged to hold his territory on the island against the Venetians until the Venetian fleet and army under the leadership of the new duke of Crete, Jacopo Tiepolo, arrived in 1209. Trying to boost Pescatore's efforts against the Venetians, in 1210 the Genoese offered him privileges, but the count was forced to concede the island to the Venetians at the beginning of 1211.[17]

After five years of fighting for Crete and cognizant of its strategic importance, the Venetians realized that it was not enough to oversee the ports and to establish emporia in the cities: they had to impose their direct political and economic control over the whole island. The consolidation of Venetian rule proved particularly difficult, however, because the local population resisted it fiercely. This presented a major problem for the Venetians, who, in addition to the wars against Genoa and the Byzantines, had to man a skillful navy to safeguard the Mediterranean voyages of their commercial fleet.[18] The Republic could not afford the additional cost of maintaining a regular army stationed on Crete, so she opted for the solution of a landed aristocracy of colonizers who were to defend the island militarily.

VENETIAN COLONIALISM

Crete stands as a unique case in the maritime possessions of the Venetians, but the extent and longevity of the Venetian empire indicate that the Venetians found effective ways to "package" their authority in territories away from the metropole, first in the Levant (Oltremare) and later on the Italian peninsula (Terraferma).[19] In general, relatively few Venetians moved to the colonies (roughly up to ten percent of the whole population) and when they did so they lived almost exclusively within the limits of the towns.[20] A Venetian was placed at the head of the colony and the colonists spoke their own language and lived according to the customs and laws of the metropole, observing the same feast days as in Venice and recognizing St. Mark as their patron saint. Only occasionally did the Venetian settlers form close ties with the locals.[21] In many ways, therefore, this system may be compared to the modern colonialist empires of the French and the British.

Nevertheless, the discourse of modern imperialism seems to have little resonance for earlier periods.[22] The application of its models to a precapitalist society questions the validity of certain definitions and theoretical paradigms used in the context of modern colonialism. A crucial question needs to be raised at the onset: can we speak of colonialism in the thirteenth century?[23] First and foremost, the absence of a racially informed agenda against the colonized peoples makes Venetian imperialism less systematic than its mod–

ern counterparts about invalidating local culture.[24] Furthermore, in contrast to most colonial situations, the Byzantine empire was not a completely foreign territory for the Venetians. Indeed, the cultural kinship between Venetians and Byzantines/Greeks makes Venetian colonies stand apart from later colonial enterprises. Yet, the administration, politics, and ideology of the Venetian imperial enterprise were similar to modern colonialism. A cogent administrative apparatus of governors and their associates that was closely overseen by the metropole duplicated the organizational and linguistic schemes of the metropole and stressed the coherence of the Venetian empire. Moreover, layers of symbolism embedded in religious associations or calendrical choices (e.g. the decision not to adopt the Gregorian calendar in the colonies in 1582)[25] transformed economic transactions and political choices into significant symbolic expressions meant to subdue the indigenous population to colonial authority.

Along the same lines distinct public spaces and certain architectural symbols defined a city as part of the Venetian maritime empire. The built environment of a colonial settlement works by definition as an agent that mediates social strife. The allocation of space and the prescription of architectural norms are in the hands of a foreign ruling elite, but the built environment addresses two audiences at the same time: the colonists and the colonized. The masters of a new colony usually take their own artistic style with them (often along with architects and artists) in order to recreate individual elements and whole spatial units of the metropole in their newly acquired territory. In this way, the settlers feel at home, and, perhaps more importantly, the locals are constantly reminded of who is in charge. It is usually only after many years of successful colonial rule, when the supremacy and confidence of the colonizers have been established, that a hybrid style allowing for the intrusion of local elements may occur in the monuments of the colony.

By creating a framework within which the city dwellers function, the urban environment plays a major role in defining the parameters of life within the city. If the intentions of a city's architect shape its built environment, they also affect the way its inhabitants view and use the city space. Along with its designer, the inhabitants of a given city create their own meanings by taking possession of and by changing the urban environment according to their needs and aspirations. Thus, the creation of meaning is a question of personalizing the built environment, a question of power and control, a latent (or open) clash between the various publics of the city. Consequently, no city is neutral in terms of meaning. Meaning for whom, however? A city has a different meaning for its designers and for its users, on the one hand, and it has multiple meanings for its inhabitants, depending on their political, social, and economic status, on the other.[26] Matters become

even more complicated when the population consists of different ethnic groups that do not equally share the control of city resources, as in the case of a colonial society. The less homogeneous a society is, the more meanings the cityscape has for its users.

Obviously, there are parts of the urban environment where the designers' meaning is more permanent; this is the case of the public official spaces, be they military, administrative, or religious structures. The institutional character of these establishments and their close association with the authorities – who in the Middle Ages were usually identified with the designers of the urban environment – prevent the users of the city from modifying the already established meanings of these structures for the different publics. Only a change in the sociocultural conditions would bring about a modification in the meaning of these structures. On the other hand, the meaning of private dwellings is less easily controllable by the designer of the city and thus cannot be imposed from above. Here it would be beneficial to bring to mind Michel de Certeau's brilliant distinction between strategies and tactics: those in power can have a concrete, long-term plan, i.e. a strategy, while the weak can only act through small-scale, short-term, isolated actions, i.e. tactics (or trickeries). It follows that strategies are related to place, they have a definite *locus*, and they are more or less "independent with respect to the variability of the circumstances," whereas tactics are connected with time (or circumstances), they take place in "the space of the other," and they "are organized by the law of a foreign power."[27]

ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

When we think about the archaeological record in the context of de Certeau's analysis we are struck by the disparities in the material at hand. In the core of this study stand grand defensive, administrative, and religious structures not only because they commanded a significant urban space but also because they are showcased nowadays by local authorities as major tourist attractions. The outlook of a city, however, may depend to a large degree on unpretentious domestic structures that make up the bulk of the urban fabric. As in most medieval towns that have outlasted the Middle Ages, few remains of domestic architecture can still be detected in the cities of Crete and even fewer in other colonies in the Aegean. Since many of the humbler medieval structures in the towns have fallen victim to twentieth-century urban developments, I have made extensive use of the invaluable photographs taken by Giuseppe Gerola in the years 1902–3 and published in his

monumental oeuvre *I monumenti veneti nell'isola di Creta*, because until the beginning of the twentieth century the towns of Crete had conserved more of their medieval appearance.[28] Fortunately, recent projects of preservation and restoration of the medieval monuments of Herakleion, Rethymnon, and Chania in Crete have once again made these structures visible and "user-friendly." Moreover, as more attention is paid to the material culture extracted from salvage excavations, we may soon be able to answer pressing questions of chronology and everyday life by placing the pottery and other finds within a more coherent archaeological context. Indeed, the newly established wing of the Historical Museum of Herakleion focuses on the topography and archaeology of medieval Candia and invites a fresh, comprehensive look at this material.

In contrast to this largely uncharted material, the prolonged rule of Venice over most of its colonies in the Oltremare and the Terraferma (mainland Italy) has resulted in impressive sixteenth-century fortifications that overshadow all other parts of the city and figure prominently in surveys of fortifications and Mediterranean urbanism. In 1538 the famous architect Michele Sanmicheli redesigned the fortifications of Candia, Canea, and Retimo as well as other places in Dalmatia according to the demands of the military inventions of the sixteenth century: the new line of walls enclosed a much larger space that was strengthened by heart-shaped bastions. The wall circuit of Canea was rectangular in form and had four heart-shaped bastions (Fig. 4).[29] Retimo's new walls consisted of a rampart wall that followed an east-west direction connecting the two coasts on either side of the acropolis (Fig. 5). One of the three gates that pierced this wall, the Porta Guora, still marks the entrance to the old city of Retimo/Rethymnon from the south (Fig. 6). Its decorated gable (preserved in a photograph taken by Gerola) and the rustic masonry around the opening of the gate confirm its Renaissance date.

The few topographical drawings that predate these grand fortification campaigns suggest that the appearance of the medieval colonies of Venice was quite uniform until the end of the fifteenth century and did not differ much from that of other Mediterranean cities. In fact, the woodcuts of Erward Reuwich in Bernhard von Breydenbach's *Transmarina Peregrinatio*, a bestseller of the second half of the fifteenth century, provide unique testimonies to the urban history of the Mediterranean port cities that were located on the main trade and pilgrimage routes (see Fig. 7 and following section). These images offer concise if rather generic urban portraits confirming the fact that the urbanistic and architectonic outlook of the port cities of the Eastern Mediterranean gave out an air of familiarity, displaying a common Mediterranean vernacular architecture with the notable exception of Venice itself.
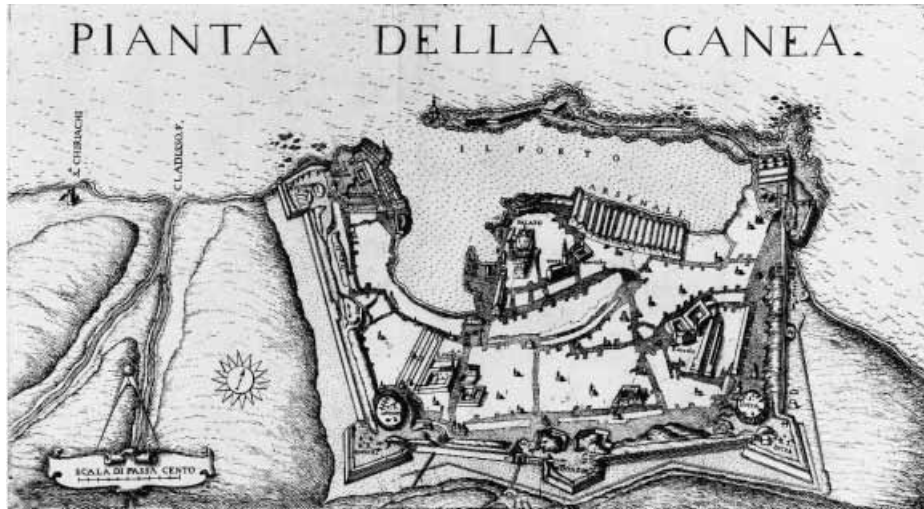
FIGURE 4. M. Boschini, "Pianta della città di Canea," *Il Regno tutto di Candia* (Venice, 1651) (The Gennadius Library, American School of Classical Studies)

The city walls were quite low and were fortified with square or round towers. The cityscape was primarily individualized by the silhouettes of churches, their lofty bell towers, and a few governmental buildings. The apparent absence of famed architects moving along the Aegean, Adriatic, and Dalmatian coastlines to supervise the construction of civic or religious monuments in the Venetian colonies makes one wonder what distinct features if any would identify a city as Venetian, Latin, or Byzantine other than the Gothic spires of churches broadcasting their connection with the Roman church and their break with the Byzantine empire. Even for these features, however, we do not possess enough material to know with certainty what they demarcated in the eyes of the medieval inhabitants and visitors of the cities.

The lack of significant Venetian trademarks on these city views should not lead us to the immediate conclusion that there were no unifying urban or architectural themes in the colonies, however. To a large extent, we expect to discern "signature buildings" in these cities because of our own experience of modern cityscapes. Urban spaces are not exclusively spatial or architectonic: urban monuments and other spaces also exist within a linguistic nexus and make their mark on the city by inscribing their presence in verbal utterances and by extension in the oral history of a site and in the memory of its users. This is particularly true of medieval cities, which were much smaller in size than their twentieth-century counterparts. What is sometimes invisible to the remote observer or to the cartographer who intends to capture a wholistic, bird's-eye view of a place may be immediately

FIGURE 5. M. Boschini, "Fortezza di Rettimo," *Il Regno tutto di Candia* (Venice, 1651) (The Gennadius Library, American School of Classical Studies)

discernible by the person who walks the streets of the city. Compare, for instance, the neatly orchestrated view of Manhattan that one gets from the top of the Empire State Building and the infinitely more chaotic impression that a pedestrian has of the city.[30] So, the existence of an imperial master plan or lack thereof in the Venetian colonies at large depends on the extensive survey of the archaeological remains, the careful reading of accounts of life in the city, and the understanding of economic and social relations.

Obviously, the available material is conditioned by the archaeological remains and the degree of their integration within the modern landscape. A visit to the cities of Chania and Rethymnon (the two provincial capitals of Venetian Crete) nowadays, for instance, reveals picturesque "old towns" that seem to retain a lot of their Renaissance splendor even if their rehabilitation dates to the 1980s and 1990s. Conforming to present aesthetic values, this impression informs a distinct mental image of a Venetian colonial city confirmed by its resemblance to the city of Venice itself. Since the remains of elite houses are scant before the sixteenth century, it is hard to establish whether they possessed distinct architectural or decorative features that stood out, as in the case of the Venetian palazzi on the Canal Grande.[31] The lack of historical documentation does not allow a neat understanding of the various layers of rebuilding or restoration and precludes secure dating of the available architectural and decorative material. Furthermore, the disparity between the limited archaeological remains of Candia/Herakleion – which, as the modern capital of Crete, is highly urbanized – and the more out of

F I G U R E 6. Rethymnon, Porta Guora (Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti. Venezia. Archivio fotografico della Missione in Creta di Giuseppe Gerola)

the way, tourist oriented Venetian colonies along the coast of Dalmatia, Crete, and the Aegean makes any comparison between them quite tenuous. The twenty-five-year-long Ottoman siege that Candia sustained from 1645 to 1669 added to the destruction of certain parts of the Venetian town, whereas the other cities of Crete fell into the hands of the Ottomans without major resistance. The buildings and fortifications of Canea and Retimo suffered only minor damage and a large number of them were reused by the Ottomans. The most impressive religious or administrative structures of the Venetians were also reused and remodeled by the Ottomans to become mosques or palaces. It is mostly the churches/mosques that have survived: e.g. the church of St. Mark in Negroponte became the Friday mosque of the city, and the cathedrals of Canea and Candia were also turned into mosques, just to name a few examples. How, then, are we to picture medieval Candia? As a more lavish version of Renaissance Chania? Or as a modest provincial city with a few significant public monuments that accentuated its importance as an outpost of Venice?

FIGURE 7. View of Candia, etching of Edward Reuwich, in B. Breydenbach, *Transmarina Peregrinatio ad Terram Sanctam* (Mainz, 1486) (Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University)

A look at the urban planning of the main cities of Venetian Crete and the other Venetian colonies in the Aegean offers a better sense of the broader parameters of the Venetian colonial world. The replication of specific monuments in the colonies and their unique spatial interrelations signal the existence of parallel urban strategies across the Venetian empire. Similarities in urban choices, naming of buildings and spaces, appearance of military forts, and repetition of symbols of the Republic are all elements that marked a town as part of Venice's empire. By locating sites that seem indispensable for forging colonial presence and authority we can understand the centrality of certain monuments in the urban context; the multiplication of such sites would broadcast the existence of an empire.[32] In this study I have surveyed six Levantine colonies of Venice whose function and administration closely resembled the Cretan pattern: the main cities of Crete (Canea/Chania, Retimo/Rethymnon, and Sitia), Modon/Methoni and Coron/Koroni in the Peloponnesos, and the colony of Negroponte/Chalkis, where a large Venetian community settled and lived for centuries. The geographical relationship and the political correspondences of these colonies had made them a group apart already by the middle of the fourteenth century as the new monetary policy of Venice suggests. On July 29, 1353, it was decided that a special coin, known as the Venetian tornesello, would be minted in Venice for use only in the colonies of Crete, Negroponte, Coron, and Modon. Displaying the lion of St. Mark holding a book and inscribed as the standard bearer of Venice on the reverse, and a cross and the name of the ruling doge on the obverse, this low-denomination coinage with tremendous circulation in Greece clearly identified Venice's colonial dominion.[33] In addition to these tightly knit colonies, a few references to the town of Corfu/Kerkyra are also included here despite the fact that the island presents a variant in colonial
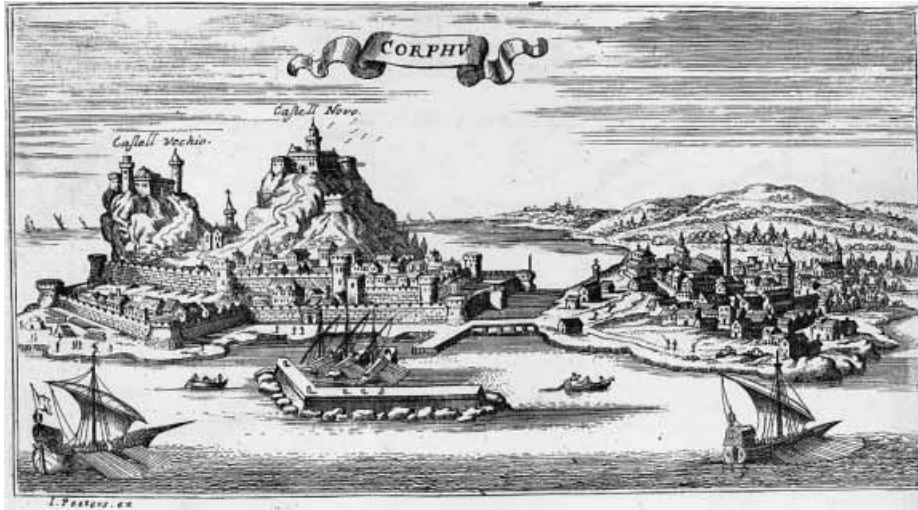
F I G U R E 8. Jacques Peeters, *Corphu*, in *Description des principales villes . . .* (Anvers, 1690) (Civico Museo Correr, M. 43851)

practice, as it was colonized in 1386 (Fig. 8). The particular interest of Corfu lies in the fact that as it was a later addition to the Venetian empire, the formation of its monuments offers a glimpse at a mature stage in Venetian colonial discourse. As former parts of the Byzantine empire all these towns shared certain characteristics: they all had fortifications and ports of varying importance and possibly had in the recent past hosted a high Byzantine official and his chancellery (except in the case of Canea and Retimo, both cities that were administratively dependent on Chandax).

THE SOURCES

The extensive archival material originating at the seat of government of Crete (Candia) provides unique insights into the appearance, function, and use of parts of the city as well as individual buildings or objects. Unfortunately, extensive archival documents are lacking for the other colonies, so to complement their extant monuments we have to rely on information contained in the accounts of travelers or in church and monastic records – in a very few instances there are notarial books preserved from the fifteenth or sixteenth century. Like public structures, governmental records, which to a large degree form the basis of our understanding of Venetian colonial rule, appear rigid and stable: they portray an idealized and biased version of the

colony from the top down. The information on the nonelite and ethnically different groups is necessarily filtered through the eyes of the Venetian elite on the island and the government in Venice. Preserved in the State Archives in Venice the archival material drafted by or addressed to the Venetian authorities of Crete consists of three groups: (1) the general series of the governmental bodies in Venice, i.e. the Senate, Maggior Consiglio, Council of Ten, Collegio, and Avogaria di Comun; (2) the Archives of the duke of Crete, or *Archivio del Duca di Candia* (hereafter DdC), comprising ninety-seven folders (*buste*) in all;[34] and (3) the acts of the notaries of Candia, which contain a vast amount of information about private, everyday life, including information on private property and churches.[35] These extensive records contain abundant information on patronage, function, use, and repairs of buildings, as well as on important religious matters, movement of population groups into Candia, supervision of the local authorities, military questions, revolts, and other matters. Apart from the technical documentation of building projects how can we see through the prejudices of this material to find the stories of the nonelite groups, the colonized peoples? I believe that a careful consideration of the archaeological remains in conjunction with the documents tells us more than the sources want to elicit about specific urban patterns. They test the official rhetoric of the authorities and provide information on topographical relationships and the behavior of the population.

The vast majority of the documentary evidence is written in Latin (or in Italian after the sixteenth century), but there are some documents written in the language of the colonized peoples, like notarial documents of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which are written in the Greek language transliterated into Latin characters, or the much earlier statutes of the Jewish community of Candia, the *Takkanoth Kandiya*, dating from 1228 with additions throughout the Venetian period to the sixteenth century.[36] These communal statutes regulated the self-government of the Jews, the internal institutions of their community, and their relationship with the other ethnic groups of Candia. These rich documents provide information on the topography of the Jewish quarter, i.e. the synagogues, the ritual bath, the meat market, and other institutions of the Jewish community of Candia.

Although architectural treatises and theoretical writings on art are lacking, descriptions of the cities and their buildings in accounts of travelers of the late medieval and early modern period (up to the nineteenth century) contain helpful and sometimes entertaining details about parts of the city that are absent from all other records. In addition to the invaluable illustrations that are sometimes included in travel books (see for example Figs. 7 and 8), the written accounts of travelers, who typically were pilgrims to the Holy Land, usually record details selected because they seem extraordinary

or different from common practices in their places of origin. They describe monuments, religious litanies, or malfunctions in the organization of every-day life (i.e. lack of inns, garbage odors) or discuss the morality of the inhabitants. Thus, although the late medieval travelers recorded mostly what looked strange to them and never included an all-encompassing account of the places they visited, the curious mind of these early modern tourists captured details that can only be found in the travel literature genre. Even the chronicles written about Crete as a colonial territory do not contain details as distinct as in these accounts.[37]

As far as possible, I have looked into the original placement and function of a representative number of military, administrative, and domestic build-ings, as well as a number of Latin religious institutions that played a key role in the sociopolitical life of the Venetians, in their urban setting and their relationship to each other and to the city as a whole. Working from the archival material I suggest how the buildings, the town squares, and the major arteries of the city were likely to be used and by whom: who were the patrons of the most prominent structures and what was the meaning of the structures for the Venetians and the locals? As expected, the available material privileges the elite of Candia and provides information on the meaning that the city had for the government rather than for its users. Yet, no city is an immutable entity. Venetian Candia continued to function for more than four and a half centuries and its built environment was modified over time. These changes mainly occurred because of the realities of every-day life, which also affected the sociopolitical circumstances in the colony. The strict policy that the Venetians adopted toward the Byzantine aristocracy in the early thirteenth century was gradually replaced by a milder attitude that encouraged cohabitation between the Venetian and Greek communities. By the beginning of the fourteenth century the Greek-speaking middle class had acquired a stronger position in the social hierarchy of the colony; many Greek professionals are recorded doing business and owning large property in Candia. The topography of the city supports this evidence.

CARTOGRAPHY AND TOPOGRAPHY

To set the stage for the study of Candia let us explore the cartographical renditions that allow us a glimpse into its medieval fabric.[38] Despite the claim that maps are objective, scientific representations of a region, they offer a view of the world that reflects the concerns of the cartographer and/or the preoccupations of the patron. Maps construct the world because they are

selective.[39] As the famous Venetian cartographer Fra Mauro says in his memoirs: "My map . . . was only one version of reality. The likelihood of being of any use to anybody remained entirely dependent upon its effectiveness as a tool of the imagination. It dawned on me then that the world had to be considered as an elaborate artifice, as the inimitable expression of a will without end."[40] This distortion is even more pronounced in cases of territories dominated by a foreign ruling elite where arguably maps were used not simply to record but also to forge a territorial reality that reinforced the claims of the rulers. The six late medieval and early modern maps (or rather city views) of Candia that have come down to us indeed present variable configurations of the urban space. Although the features shared by these maps, i.e. the few prominent Gothic churches with bell towers, the governor's palace, the city walls, and the harbor, strive to affirm scientific (perhaps firsthand) observation, the lack of reference to the local, Greek population that outnumbered the Venetians is suspect. The omissions and "mistakes" in the late medieval maps of Venetian Crete seem to offer a view of the world that conforms to the imagination of the Venetian colonizers as they present selective features of the urban space. By exploring the contents of the maps in relation to the ideological preoccupations of the cartographers and their patrons, we can understand the purpose of each map (informative, encyclopedic, or propagandistic) and infer its impact on the consolidation of Venetian colonial ideology. If we could also determine the patterns of circulation and audience we would have a clearer view of the situation.

In the topographical representations of Candia, a city whose most prominent monuments seem to have been ecclesiastical, it is the presence or absence of churches of the Latin or Greek rite that manipulates the realities of the urban space to create an image that conforms with the intentions of the cartographers and their patrons. The monuments that each cartographer chose to include in his map in conjunction with the orientation of the city views crystallize on paper an imagined view of the colonized space. Thus, these cartographic exercises become an instrument of control by the governing elite and a valuable tool of its "imagined community" − a community devoid of problems and obedient to the demands of the Most Serene Republic of Venice. Because of the nature of the evidence, the reconstruction of certain sections of the city is hypothetical. To facilitate the conceptualization of the city space, I placed all the buildings that are known from the sources onto a plan that captures the appearance of the urban space at given historical moments. This plan is based on the most accurate representation of the urban space of Candia in the seventeenth-century map of General Werdmüller (Fig. 17). One of the difficulties in this reconstruction was the irregular distribution of data over time, especially concerning the churches,

FIGURE 9. Cristoforo Buondelmonti, *Creta – Candia*, in Liber insularum Archipelagi, c. 9v (The Gennadius Library, American School of Classical Studies)

which were not all built at the same time. I tried to overcome this difficulty by arranging the available material in chronological sections, which were primarily defined by textual evidence, so four maps of the city were created (Figs. 21, 103, 118, 119). In the case of buildings that are not well documented, I assembled as much information as possible about the neighboring structures and tried to establish their relations in space. Thus, moving slowly from known to unknown, the texture of the city slowly appears in front of our eyes.

The first two topographical renderings of the city were not initiated by Venice: the *isolario* of the Florentine geographer Cristoforo Buondelmonti made c. 1419 (Fig. 9) and Erward Reuwich's view of Candia in the famous

FIGURE 10. Cristoforo Buondelmonti, "View of Candia," in Descriptio insulae Candiae, 1419. (Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, ms. Plut. 29.42, c. 17 [1429]) Su concessione del Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali. Èvietata ogni ulteriore riproduzione con qualsiasi mezzo

Transmarina Peregrinatio of Bernhard von Breydenbach of 1486 (Fig. 7). Both works were intended to present to their audience snapshots of Mediterranean harbors along with textual descriptions. The degree of accuracy in the depiction of details is not always very high, but in the case of Candia, we can be sure that both cartographers had a good command of its urban space. In fact, Buondelmonti's *isolario* (a common way to represent the islands of the Aegean or Archipelago) is accompanied by another work, the *Descriptio insule cretensis* of 1419/20.[41] The manuscript in the Biblioteca Laurenziana in Florence contains a bird's-eye view of Candia that accompanies the description of the city (Fig. 10). In this careful attempt at recording the urban space Buondelmonti paints the view of Candia as a visitor. The map defies the conventional northward orientation of maps to align the viewer with some-
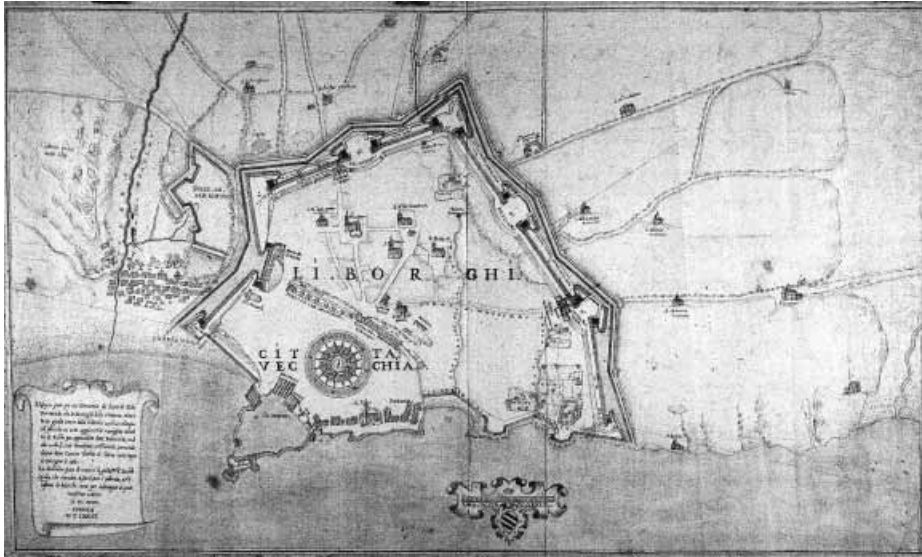
FIGURE 11. Domenico Rossi da Este, Città vecchia di Candia, August 17, 1573. (Biblioteca Marciana, Ms. It. VI, 188 [10039])

one approaching from the sea: thus the town is presented not from the point of view of its inhabitants but rather from that of the visitor/traveler. This sets the tone for the majority of later views of Candia. Even when the whole island is represented with a northward orientation in atlases, the close-up view of the city is given in an inverted way. Thus the city of Candia and its harbor are placed not only under the gaze but also in the service of outsiders traveling to the island and its capital. Buondelmonti's sketch indicates the city walls strengthened by towers; the city gate; the central square (in its Greek name *platea*); the harbor; the ducal palace; the churches of St. Titus, St. Mark, St. Francis, and St. Peter the Martyr within the city walls; and those of the Savior, St. Mary of the Crusaders, St. Anthony with its hospital, St. Paul, St. George, St. Athanasius, St. Nicolaus, St. Anthony, and St. Lazarus in the suburbs. A number of other churches are also shown but without specific labeling. These must be the most important Greek churches of the city, all relegated to the suburbs outside the walled city. Their nonde-script presentation renounces their full ecclesiastical power and sanctity within the city. The Orthodox churches are almost equated with the name-less houses and mills that function almost as fillers in the map to indicate the growing suburbs of the city. At the same time, the Jewish quarter is clearly labeled as *Judeca*.

The second earliest surviving view of Candia is the well known etching by Reuwich in the *Transmarina Peregrinatio ad Terram Sanctam* (Fig. 7), the
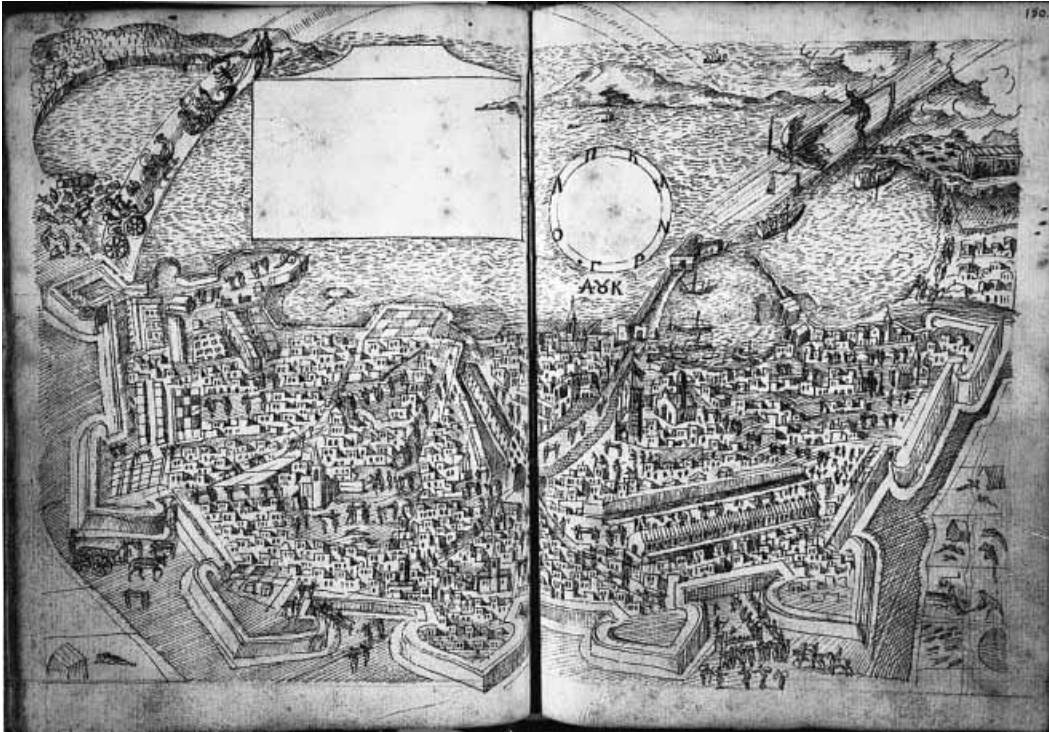
FIGURE 12. George Clontzas, view of Candia during the time of the plague, Istoria ab origine mundi. (Biblioteca Marciana, Ms. Graec. VII, 22 [1466], fols. 149v-150r)

first book where the topographical elements are quite accurate.[42] Here, too, the city was conceived from the point of view of a seafarer, in this case a pilgrim traveling to the Holy Land. The same tall buildings are singled out in the cityscape of Candia: the Franciscan monastery of St. Francis, the ducal chapel of St. Mark with its bell tower flying the flag of the Republic, the fort in the entrance of the harbor and the high walls. Among the rest of the buildings little is discernible as the point of view is on the same level with the sea more or less.

This placement of Crete on the receiving end of the traveler, colonizer, or pilgrim is concurrent with the political developments on the island and its colonial, i.e. subordinate, position to the maritime power of the Venetians. When in the sixteenth century Crete's role as a bastion of Christianity was accentuated by impressive fortifications that encompassed the extensive suburbs of its capital city, the attention of the cartographers also focused on these defenses, which demanded a lot of money, materials, skilled architects, and masons and took more than half a century to complete. These walls were the pride of the city and its Venetian masters, and the majority of the