

THE THIRD CHARTER OF THE JEWISH MERCHANTS OF VENICE, 1611: A CASE STUDY IN COMPLEX MULTIFACETED NEGOTIATIONS

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For over twenty years, the Jewish "projector" Daniel Rodriga sought to convince the Venetian government that it could revive its declining commerce with the Levant, which had once been the source of the greatness of Venice, and thereby also greatly increase its diminishing customs revenues, by issuing a charter allowing Levantine and Ponentine Jews (the euphemism used for Iberian New Christians) to settle in Venice as Venetian subjects. Finally, in 1589, the Venetian government responded favorably, as the Senate approved, for ten years, a slightly changed version of a charter-text that Rodriga had proposed. The Venetian government was pleased with the results, and consequently, at Rodriga's request, it routinely renewed the charter for another ten years in 1598. Five years later, in 1603, Rodriga died, but the special privileges which he had secured for Jewish merchants in Venice were to remain in effect until the end of the Republic in 1797.

This article will examine the complex discussions and negotiations over the renewal of the second charter of 1598, which are of special interest because they yield considerable insight into many complex issues, including the general attitude of the Venetian govern-

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ment toward the Jewish merchants, the economic activities of the merchants, their relationships with the Jewish moneylenders living in Venice, the arrangements for their residence in the ghetto, and a sharp conflict regarding jurisdiction over them between two Venetian magistracies. Thus this article serves as a contribution to Jewish history, to Venetian history, and to economic history.

I

In the latter years of the sixteenth century, the commercial preeminence of the Republic of Venice was declining. Trade with the eastern Mediterranean, which had been the traditional source of wealth of the city, providing its treasury with income from the customs duties and its merchants with profits from their import and export trade while enabling the city as a whole to assume the role of a major entrepot center, was diminishing as a result of the combined effect of numerous negative external factors far beyond the ability of the Republic to overcome. They included the discovery of the direct sea-route to the Indies around the Cape of Good Hope which meant that less goods from the East reached the eastern Mediterranean, the concomitant shift in trade from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, and the increased competition of ships from England and France — later also Holland — for the reduced quantity of goods still coming to the eastern Mediterranean Ottoman ports. As a result of these developments and others, such as the attractiveness of investing in land on the Venetian mainland, Venetian merchants increasingly tended to withdraw from maritime trade.

The indefatigable Jewish commercial entrepreneur Daniel Rodriga asserted that he had found a way to alleviate the situation. Starting not later than 1577,¹ he urged the Venetian government to grant the status of Venetian subjects with extensive residential and commercial privileges to visiting Levantine Jewish merchants, who as subjects of the Ottoman sultan already were recognized as a distinct group with permission to stay temporarily in Venice. Rodriga also sought a similar status for New Christians of Iberian origin, with the understanding that in Venice they would unambiguously revert to Judaism; in order to avoid any specific mention of where these merchants

were coming from or the change in religion that they were to undergo, he discretely referred to them as "Ponentine [i.e., Western] Jews" (*ebrei ponentini*).² Rodriga promised that with their far-flung kinship networks these Jewish merchants would attract trade back to the city and thereby restore its customs revenue and enable it to maintain its entrepot nature. Simultaneously, he urged the establishment of a free-transit *scala* on Venetian land at Spalato (today Split), on the Adriatic-Dalmatian coast north of Ragusa (today Dubrovnik), in order to divert trade away from the Ragusa-Ancona route and instead attract it to Venice, claiming that if the Jewish merchants were granted the privileges he sought, then they would be able to play a major role in developing that new trade between Venice and Spalato.³

Finally, in 1589 the Venetian government accepted the plan of Rodriga. The College, which among other duties was responsible for formulating official government legislation for subsequent Senate approval, introduced into the Senate a charter based on a text submitted by Rodriga and somewhat modified by the magistracy of the Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia, which was usually consulted by the government in matters of maritime commerce. Approved in the Senate by the substantial majority of 110 in favor with 11 opposed and 13 abstentions, this charter allowed Levantine and Ponentine Jewish merchants to come and settle in Venice with their families for the following ten years. They could trade freely with the very coveted privilege of engaging in commerce between Venice and the Levant, which was granted only to the two upper groups of Venetian society — the nobles and *cittadini originarii* — and also reciprocally to Ottoman subjects, while all other non-Venetians had to live in the city and pay taxes for twenty-five years before they could receive it.⁴ Additionally these Jewish merchants were given the right to practice Judaism without disturbance for reasons of religion by any magistracy, which meant that Iberian New Christians could freely abandon Christianity and live openly as Jews; however, understandably they were required to dwell in the ghetto and wear a special yellow head-cover as were those Jews already residing in the city, the Tedeschi Jews — so called by the Venetian government because, notwithstanding the inclusion of native Italian Jews, the preponderant element was descended from Jews originally from the Germanic lands even

though their families might have lived on the Venetian mainland for generations — who officially could only engage in moneylending, deal in second-hand goods (*strazzaria*), and make veils and coifs.⁵ Significantly, on the same day the Senate also approved two measures providing for implementing the *scala* at Spalato, which had been previously authorized in 1577.⁶

Rodrigo easily secured the renewal of the charter in 1598 for another ten years, with certain changes that experience had indicated were desirable, most suggested by him but a few proposed by the Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia.⁷ Five years later, in 1603, Rodrigo died but the special privileges which he had secured for Jewish merchants in Venice were to remain in effect until the end of the Republic in 1797.

An examination of the complex discussion over the renewal of the second and last ten-year charter originally secured by Rodrigo in 1598 is of special interest because it constitutes the most detailed and involved ever to take place in connection with the charters of the Levantine and Ponentine Jewish merchants of Venice.⁸ That discussion yields insight into many complex issues, including the general attitude of the Venetian government toward the Jewish merchants, the economic activities of the Jews (with some only too rare citations of figures of customs payments and other statistics), the relationship between the two Jewish communities of merchants and moneylenders,⁹ the official arrangements for their residence in the ghetto, differences of opinion on how to treat the Jewish merchants on the part of the individuals who comprised the magistracy of the Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia,¹⁰ and a sharp conflict regarding jurisdiction over the Jewish merchants between the two Venetian magistracies of the Cinque Savii and the Cattaveri. Thus this article serves at the same time as a contribution to Jewish history, to Venetian history, and to economic history.

II

Although the Jewish merchants first requested the renewal of their charter of 1598 as it was expiring in 1608, in order to understand some of the issues that were raised during the course of the subsequent discussions, it is necessary to review

briefly certain provisions that had been made when the ghetto nuovo had been established in 1516¹¹ and the ghetto vecchio in 1541, as well as certain other developments prior to 1608.

When in 1516 Senate legislation required all the Jews living in Venice to reside segregated in the area known as the ghetto nuovo, the magistracy of the Cattaveri was designated as executor of the arrangements for its establishment and maintenance. It was provided that at least once a week one of the three Cattaveri was to go there to make sure that all the laws were being observed correctly and the Cattaveri were given authority to suggest to the College any additional provisions that would be needed to deal with new situations as they arose.¹²

After the visiting Levantine Jewish merchants complained that they did not have enough room there in the ghetto nuovo, on June 2, 1541, the Senate provided that the College was to assign the responsibility of accommodating the merchants in the ghetto nuovo to whichever magistracy it wished. Should there not be sufficient room in the ghetto nuovo, then that magistracy would have the authority to lodge them in the adjacent not yet fully built-up area known as the ghetto vecchio located across a small canal from the ghetto nuovo, with whatever conditions and regulations would be given to that magistracy by the College; however, the Jewish merchants always were to remain closed up and guarded as were the other Jews living in the ghetto nuovo. Seven days later, on June 9, the College unanimously decided that the Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia were to go to the ghetto to investigate the situation and then report back. On July 8, after the Savii reported that indeed there was no room for the merchants and their goods in the ghetto nuovo, the College authorized the Savii to give the visiting Jewish Levantine merchants dwelling space in the ghetto vecchio and to establish the details regarding the area of dwelling and the conditions under which the Jewish merchants could live there, subject to approval by the College. Twelve days later, on July 20, the Savii reported back in detail their proposed arrangements for walling up and preparing the area in which the Jewish merchants were to live, as well as the terms under which the merchants were to live in it, with the recommendation that the implementation be entrusted to their magistracy. The College approved this report and thus the ghetto vecchio of the Levantine Jewish merchants

came into being.¹³ Initially, the merchants were only permitted to reside there alone without their families for four months, but at their request the College extended that period to two years. Although reduced to one year in 1549, the restriction does not appear to have been enforced as Jewish merchants settled in Venice for extended periods, sometimes with their families.¹⁴

A key development occurred several years later, in 1560. The brothers Giacomo and Zuanne Minotto, the Christian owners of the dwellings in the ghetto vecchio,¹⁵ came to the government and, claiming that the Levantine Jews did not wish to rent some new dwellings which they had built in the ghetto vecchio,¹⁶ requested that the Cinque Savii be authorized to allow them to rent those empty dwellings to the agents of the Tedeschi Jewish community, which according to the legislation of 1516 had been required to live in the ghetto nuovo. In a report of August 2, 1560, the Savii related that they had gone into the ghetto vecchio to look at the new dwellings and the others in which Levantine Jews were living and, considering that the Jews of the ghetto nuovo were now even more hemmed in than they had been in 1516 when that ghetto had been established, recommended that the agents of the Tedeschi Jews be permitted to rent in the ghetto vecchio. As a further justification, the Savii pointed out that because of the crowding, plague could easily break out.¹⁷ However, they proposed that the Tedeschi Jews moving into the ghetto vecchio not be permitted to open stores, or to sell second hand goods, veils and coifs or to engage in moneylending in the ghetto vecchio (the only activities they were legally allowed to engage in), for those dwellings were being granted only for their residence. Somewhat strangely and — as will be seen — to their later great chagrin, the Savii recommended that the implementation of certain specific proposals to prepare the houses as well as the general management of the ghetto vecchio be entrusted to the Cattaveri and whichever other magistracy the Signoria — a key government body, consisting of the Doge, his six Ducal Councilors and the three Heads of the Council of Forty — desired. Less than two weeks later, on August 14, the Signoria approved the request of the Minotto brothers and ordered the Cattaveri to prepare the ghetto vecchio for the Tedeschi Jews in accordance with the recommendations of the Cinque Savii.¹⁸

At some point, a conflict arose between the Cinque Savii and the Cattaveri regarding jurisdiction over both Jewish merchants and the actual ghetto vecchio itself. Thus, in 1579, presumably not for the first time, the Cinque Savii enjoined the Cattaveri from involving themselves in matters concerning Levantine Jews on the grounds that by law the merchants were subject to the Cinque Savii, and in the following year the Savii specifically objected to the Cattaveri involving themselves in the case of a certain Jew who had been denounced to the Cattaveri for having been outside the ghetto after hours and also for illegally wearing a black hat.¹⁹ Then in 1586, for the first time encountered to date, the conflict came to involve the wider issue of jurisdiction over the ghetto vecchio. At that time, the five-year charter of the Tedeschi moneylenders issued in 1580 had expired, and the Signoria was concerning itself with the renewal. In that connection, it asked four Venetian magistracies to comment on those specific terms of the charter which fell under their jurisdiction. To date, only two of the reports have been located, those of the Cattaveri and the Cinque Savii.²⁰

The report of the Cattaveri dealt with six clauses of the charter, but only their reactions on one are directly relevant to the issue of jurisdiction. Commenting on the last clause of the charter — which provided that Jews who had rented dwellings in either ghetto could not sublet to other Jews without the approval of the Cinque Savii, subject to expulsion from the city for both the lessor and the lessee — the Cattaveri wrote that in 1516 they had been given custody over the ghetto nuovo and its houses in which then lived not only the Tedeschi Jews but also the Levantine Jews, who subsequently in 1541 because of lack of space were settled in the ghetto vecchio also under their custody.²¹ Then Zuanne Minotto built some additional dwellings in the ghetto vecchio and since the Levantine Jews did not want to rent those dwellings because they did not need them, Minotto requested permission to rent the dwellings to the agents of the Tedeschi Jews. As a result, a very large number of Tedeschi Jewish inhabitants of the ghetto nuovo went to live with the Levantine Jews in the ghetto vecchio and committed various misdeeds with security, claiming that the ghetto vecchio was under the custody of the Cinque Savii, even though in 1560 the Cinque Savii had wanted the custody of the ghetto vecchio to be

under the Cattaveri as was that of the ghetto nuovo and the Signoria had agreed. Otherwise, the Cattaveri claimed, it would be hard to guard that ghetto if the Jews could easily evade jurisdiction. They concluded with the observation that it was much more proper to consider the nature of the persons involved rather than the place where they lived, and that all the Jews included in the charter, irrespective of where they resided, should be subject to the Cattaveri.

In their report, the Cinque Savii only reacted to that of the Cattaveri. They asserted that in 1541 they had been entrusted by the College in accordance with the legislation of the Senate with lodging the visiting Levantine merchants in the ghetto vecchio, and had assigned them twenty dwellings with regulations that seemed suitable both for their management and for their custody by guards as well as other necessary things, especially providing that no other category of Jews could be lodged there. Then in empty spaces in that ghetto Zuanne and Giacomo Minotto built some houses which were assigned to the Jews of the ghetto nuovo at the request of the Minotti. Also at that time, on August 14, 1560, the Signoria had given the implementation of the provisions concerning the houses to the Cattaveri, but the Savii now claimed that should not have been done since it was against the Senate legislation of 1541 (which had granted jurisdiction over the ghetto vecchio to the Cinque Savii) and the rulings made by previous Savii in accordance with that legislation. That decision of 1560 had caused much strife and confusion in the ghetto vecchio, for that ghetto had always been under the custody of the Savii as could be seen from the many arrangements affecting it, most recently those of March 28, 1584,²² and the reviewing of all its inhabitants in accordance with the provisions of the clause in question, which had been entrusted to their magistracy by the Senate in several charters.²³ The Savii thought that it was proper that this arrangement be maintained in order to prevent bad people from coming to live in the ghetto vecchio to the dissatisfaction of all. However, they continued, all the inhabitants of the ghetto nuovo and the ghetto vecchio who deserved punishment should be punished by the officials entrusted with that task by law, and should the Levantine merchants be harassed by other inhabitants of the ghetto vecchio, as was happening constantly²⁴ but should not be tolerated for the

sake of trade which was so important for the city, then their magistracy should take whatever action was required. In the end, no changes were made in the clause in question in the charter of the Tedeschi Jews and it was repeated verbatim in their new charter of 1586.²⁵

However, this conflict between the Cinque Savii and the Cattaveri over the ghetto vecchio became an ongoing issue. Thus, in 1597, at the request of Rodrigo, the Cinque Savii enjoined the Cattaveri from involving themselves in any matter appertaining to the visiting and sojourning Levantine and Ponentine Jewish merchants, singling out the employment of Christian women (presumably as domestics and wet-nurses) or others who were accustomed to render them services in the ghetto,²⁶ on the grounds that such matters were under their own jurisdiction. In response, the Cattaveri counter-enjoined on the grounds that granting permission to employ Christian servants, and to stay outside the ghetto at night, and all other things pertaining to the custody and management of the ghetto were entrusted by law to them, while the Cinque Savii only had jurisdiction in commercial matters.²⁷ In retrospect, this conflict was to last for at least a century.²⁸

III

When in December 1604 the Cattaveri ordered that certain doors of houses in the ghetto vecchio be walled up, that balconies on the first two floors of certain houses be barred up with iron²⁹ and that a wall be built in a certain place so that the Jews could not go out there, the Cinque Savii enjoined the Cattaveri from implementing those orders on the grounds that the Cattaveri did not have the authority to issue them. The Cattaveri responded with a counter-injunction and on December 2, 1605, the Ducal Councilors ruled in favor of the Cattaveri.³⁰

This, however, was not the end of the matter, for now the Levantine and Ponentine merchants submitted a petition to the Signoria.³¹ The merchants related that when, many decades previously, the Levantine Jews had begun to settle in Venice because of the abundance of its trade, the government (*Vostra Serenità*, referring to the Doge as the symbol of the government)

had recognized that they were merchants and that it was necessary that they be separate in all respects from the other Jews in the city with whom they had nothing in common. Consequently, not only had it given them separate dwellings but had placed them under the Cinque Savii who were to supervise their commerce and related matters and the enclosure within which they were to live. With singular prudence the Savii had done this without any disturbance, and the Levantine merchants received from them all convenience in matters involving their religion and way of life such as bread, wine, meat and other victuals. Leaving other ports, they came in increasingly large numbers to Venice, so that while at first their trade was not of great importance, soon, without any significant disturbance by minor officials (*ministri*), it increased with much benefit to the customs revenue and other matters of concern to the government. Thus the Jewish merchants had lived in peace and quiet until shortly previously, when the government allowed some Ponentine Jews approved by the Savii into the ghetto vecchio. Since this caused crowding, the Savii, who were custodians of that ghetto, ordered the construction of some buildings for the new inhabitants, and in the course of building the houses, some disagreements arose. The Cattaveri then intervened, claiming to have acquired jurisdiction over the Levantine merchants and their dwellings, and obtained possession of the keys to the gates of the ghetto vecchio which had been assigned for the residence of the merchants.³² While previously in matters of their trade the merchants had gone to the Cinque Savii who were their natural judges, now with scandalous innovation, unless the government took action they would be exposed to the Cattaveri and their *fanti* (staff, or more precisely, messengers), so that instead of attending to their business, they would constantly be required to have to have recourse to the Cattaveri for thousands of matters that could occur daily. This they considered to be the most serious thing that could happen; consequently they asked the government that with the favor that it had always shown to them and its desire that trade be increased in Venice, it remove the interference of the Cattaveri and provide that as in the past their trade and dwellings be subject only to the Cinque Savii who represented the authority of the Senate, so that they could continue to attend to their business and constantly increase it by

diverting commerce from other ports and thus augment the customs revenue. On March 8, however, the College, after hearing the petition of the Jews and the arguments of the Cattaveri that it be rejected, decided by the vote of 12-9-2 to reject the petition and to uphold the position of the Cattaveri.³³

This led the Levantine and Ponentine Jewish merchants to submit a petition to the Cinque Savii.³⁴ They related that for many decades they had traded in the city to the benefit of its customs duties as was very well-known to the government. They had been always under the jurisdiction of the Cinque Savii who, in accordance with the legislation of the Senate which had provided them with separate dwellings from the other Jews, had appointed the guards of their ghetto and had enclosed it in the manner that they thought best, while the Senate had granted the Jewish merchants the right to appoint their own officials as their good management required, since it was always well-known to the authorities that in their case different considerations were involved from those governing the other Jews of the city who were explicitly forbidden from engaging in anything other than dealing in second-hand goods. Under the orderly supervision of the magistracy of the Cinque Savii, the business of the merchants had greatly increased as they came to Venice and diverted to it merchandise from other ports to the great benefit of the customs, knowing that under the supervision of the Cinque Savii, their tranquility and trade would not be troubled. The merchants asserted that they did not know why the Cattaveri desired to remove them from the jurisdiction of the Cinque Savii and to subject them to its own in whatever manner it wished, for in addition to having taken away the keys from the guards approved by the previous Savii, the Cattaveri now seemed to make new arrangements different from those previously made by the Savii, which if placed into effect would subject the merchants to constant disturbances by the *ministri* of the Cattaveri and necessitate that they devote themselves to continuous lawsuits instead of attending to their own business. Moreover, the Cattaveri had issued a ruling which prohibited the merchants from appointing their own Jewish officials as had been permitted by the Senate³⁵ and stopped their good procedure, which had always been observed without interruption, whereby when both parties agree to it, their officials could end civil disputes and when one

of the parties wanted it, they could order the other to submit to arbitration, but when both parties wanted to go to the usual Venetian magistrates, they would do so;³⁶ however, they had never involved themselves in any criminal matters, as, they related, the magistracy of the Cattaveri seemed to assert in one of its rulings. Since the merchants knew that nothing could disturb their trade more than removing them from the jurisdiction of the Cinque Savii and subjecting them to that of the Cattaveri, they wanted to explain the situation to the Savii and also to show them the rulings and orders of the Cattaveri so that their status could be clarified.³⁷

Thereupon, no doubt motivated by a concern for their own jurisdiction as well as for the well-being of the Jewish merchants and for the maritime commerce of Venice and its customs revenue, the Cinque Savii submitted a memorandum on March 14, 1606, which reiterated many of the points of the merchants.³⁸ Its opening section clearly affirmed the high regard in which the Savii held the commercial activities of the Levantine and Ponentine Jewish merchants. It asserted that it was not necessary to point out how their commerce had always been beneficial to the public interest in all respects in the past and at the present more so than ever. It sufficed to point out, it continued, that the most important *scala* of Spalato, on which the maintenance of the galley routes depended, was sustained by the trade of the Jews, which ought to be highly valued and preserved since all the other routes were having such bad results while it alone seemed to remain secure.³⁹ Furthermore, trade with Constantinople and the Morea was for the most part in their hands.⁴⁰ For these reasons, which had already been valid in 1541,⁴¹ the Savii recollected, the Senate had then authorized their magistracy to provide the Jewish merchants with a place separated from "the other Jews" and to issue those orders and regulations which they saw fit for their care and custody, and so they had done. From that time on until recent days, their magistracy had kept the keys of the ghetto assigned to the Levantine Jews without any opposition from the Cattaveri or from any other magistracy. The Savii had given the keys to special guards whom they had appointed to implement their orders, since different considerations were involved from those that applied to the other Jews of the city who were explicitly forbidden from engaging in mercantile

trade. Thus the merchants were looked after by the Savii appropriately in accordance with the desire of the government to augment trade and no disorder occurred during that long period of time. However, the merchants were now very disturbed by the claim that the Cattaveri were asserting over them by seizing the keys from the guards posted by the Savii to look after their ghetto, which really constituted a great innovation after so many years and made the Savii uncertain about their mandate from the Senate. Since the merchants had related that they had been unable to state their case to the government, the Savii considered it in the public interest to advise the government so that it might consider the bad consequences that could result from either the departure of the merchants or the diminution of their trade, especially at that time because of the fluctuations at Spalato on account of the new orders of the pasha of Bosnia, and then decide as seemed best for the preservation of the trade of the city with the accompanying benefits to the customs as well as the many other advantages resulting from the trade of the Jews. In conclusion, the Savii recommended that the nature of the jurisdiction granted previously to their magistracy be more explicitly declared, even though it seemed clear enough in the legislation, and everything restored to its former state, both regarding the keys as well as anything else that might be attempted in this matter in the future.

As could be expected, in response the Cattaveri submitted a lengthy memorandum.⁴² Opening with a long historical explanation, it recollected that although the government had allowed the Jews into the city for the common good, it had legislated in the Senate in 1516 that the Jews were to live in the ghetto with gates and guards so that out of respect for Christianity they could not wander around at night, and to prevent potential troubles it established certain regulations and entrusted their implementation to the Cattaveri, who since then had always carried out that task with diligence and justice. Then, in 1541 the government wanted to provide dwellings also for the Levantine Jews and gave that task to the Cinque Savii, and since those Jews could not stay in the ghetto nuovo where the other Jews were, the Savii were authorized to give them lodgings in the ghetto vecchio as they saw fit on the condition that the Levantine Jews remained always closed up and guarded as were the other Jews.

Thus it came to pass that the Levantine Jews resided both in the ghetto nuovo and in the ghetto vecchio and lived intermingled with the other Jews, for just as in the ghetto nuovo there were some families of Levantine Jews, so in the ghetto vecchio there were over 130 families of Tedeschi Jews and others from the Venetian state, even though that ghetto had been intended for the Levantine Jews; thus the Levantine Jews were together with the Tedeschi Jews under the authority of the Cattaveri, who however had not exercised any jurisdiction in connection with their business or the regulations which it was necessary to give them since the government had granted that to another magistracy (i.e., the Savii), but they had not had their authority diminished with regard to the custody of the ghetto vecchio. Therefore, although the magistracy of the Cinque Savii had by order of the government made some provisions, it recognized that the implementation belonged to the Cattaveri, as it had stated in a report of 1560 which had been confirmed by the College (see above). Similarly, in 1566 and 1567, the government had entrusted the Cattaveri with the implementation of the custody of the Levantine Jews,⁴³ and the Cattaveri always exercised it, appointing guards, punishing violators, and implementing the orders of the government so that those Jews were closed up and guarded, and the Levantine Jews themselves knew that they could not have recourse to any other magistracy in that matter. When a disagreement arose as a result of the injunction of the Cinque Savii, after listening to both sides the government had ruled in favor of the Cattaveri, and this had led the Levantine Jews to petition that the implementation be granted to the Cinque Savii but their request was rejected. Accordingly, the Cattaveri could not see on what basis the Savii could ask for a declaration that the authority belonged to them and that the keys be returned to them, for it was not true that such authority had been granted to the Savii by the legislation of 1541 nor that they had exercised it subsequently, as they claimed. Although indeed the Savii had sometimes appointed guards, the Cattaveri had more often done so and had always initiated proceedings against violators. Nor could one justify such a new decision under the pretext of the public well-being because of the trade of the Levantine Jews, since the Cattaveri did not wish to involve themselves in trade but only to exercise custody over all the Jews

who lived, as was stated, mixed together. In conclusion, the Cattaveri acknowledged that although the Jewish merchants were to remain closed up, they undoubtedly could not be subject to the same conditions as the others, and if indeed for the needs of their trade they had to have some special treatment, they could be assured that they would receive it from the Cattaveri just as they had from the Cinque Savii, who should be limited to jurisdiction only over their trade, and the innovation that they sought was contrary to the laws and to decorum and should not be granted.

Around this time, on April 28, 1606, presumably both to reassure all concerned that they recognized the special position of the Jewish merchants and also to eliminate certain abuses, the Cattaveri issued a proclamation regarding the ghetto gates.⁴⁴ It provided that in order to prevent violations that had occurred in the past, henceforth the guards of the gates of the ghetto vecchio and nuovo were to close them at the second hour of the night in the winter and at the first in the summer in accordance with the laws,⁴⁵ and to close the door of the *rive*⁴⁶ at the bridge of the Aggudi immediately when the Ave Maria sounded, subject to deprivation of office and eighteen months in the galleys. However, should any Levantine, Ponentine or other Jewish merchant⁴⁷ wish to enter or to leave through those gates or the *rive* because of important mercantile business, or to depart on or to arrive from a voyage, or to load or to unload merchandise, then the guards were to let them pass after writing down their name and their destination or where they were coming from and next morning to report to the Cattaveri who were to verify the information, subject to the same penalty.

Finally, on June 21, 1606, the College took up the matter. After hearing the arguments of the Cattaveri and the Cinque Savii and having had read to it the laws of 1541 and 1598 concerning the authority granted by the Senate to the Savii regarding the custody over the merchants, the keys and the guards, the College decided by the vote of 15 to 5 to grant the custody and keys of the ghetto vecchio to the Cinque Savii rather than to the Cattaveri.⁴⁸

IV

This, however, did not settle the jurisdictional conflict between the Cinque Savii and the Cattaveri, which continued sharply for another three years, and came to involve several other matters, including the ongoing issue of the payments of the Levantine and Ponentine merchants toward maintaining the so-called loan-banks — in reality, pawn-shops — of the Tedeschi Jews. This complex issue of the contributions of the merchants to the loan-banks predated the negotiations over the renewal of the charter of 1598 and was to recur intermittently throughout the seventeenth century.⁴⁹ From the reports of the Cinque Savii and a memorandum of Joshua Ferro, the consul of the Jewish merchants (see below), it appears that sometime prior to 1589 the resident Tedeschi Jews, who originally had supported the loan-banks entirely on their own, induced the visiting Levantine merchants to contribute; on the other hand, presumably the Ponentine Jews, who had no official status in the city prior to 1589, did not contribute. When Rodriga submitted his draft of the charter of 1589, he included a provision that from the time of that charter on, the Levantine and Ponentine merchants would not have to contribute to any tax or imposition for the loan-banks of the Tedeschi Jews, but this was not included in the final text of the charter of 1589.⁵⁰ Accordingly, in a memorandum that he submitted later that year, he requested that the merchants not be required to make any payment to the loan-banks, pointing out that it was neither proper nor the practice in either Ancona, Pesaro, Ferrara, Florence, or Savoy. As a compromise, Senate legislation of 1590 provided that all Levantine and Ponentine merchants who had been away from the city for over five years and were to return in the future and also those who were to come in the future and had not previously contributed were not to be subject to any contribution; on the other hand, all those who would leave Venice during the next five years and then return would have to contribute.⁵¹

The charter of the Tedeschi Jews of 1591, their first issued after the initial charter of the Levantine and Ponentine Jewish merchants of 1589, contained a new provision requiring all the Jews of the *terra ferma* to contribute to the loan-banks, and exempted only the visiting Levantine Jewish merchants who

were Turkish subjects, the Corfuites who had their own privileges, and also the Jews of Padua and Verona until the expiration of their separate charters. Accordingly, the next charter of the Tedeschi Jews, issued in 1597, specifically stated that the Levantine Jews who lived in Venice with their families were to contribute.⁵² Then the subsequent charter of the Jewish merchants, issued in 1598, provided that the resident Levantine and Ponentine Jews were to pay with the Tedeschi Jews to maintain the loan-banks of the poor, in accordance with the agreement recently made between them and as provided for in the previous charter of the Tedeschi Jews.⁵³

In the spring of 1607, Joshua Ferro was serving as consul of the Levantine and Ponentine Jews, the position first held by Rodriga who had died in 1603. In late March 1607, he submitted three memoranda to the Signoria.⁵⁴ In the first, he explained that he was submitting a proposal that would be financially beneficial for the government and the customs and advantageous for the population of Venice, and especially those merchants who provided goods for export (i.e., the native middlemen, not the actual exporters who might be foreigners); in return, he desired that should his proposal be adopted at any time, then he — or his heirs — should receive five percent of the resulting profits. The second introduced his proposal. It commenced by relating that according to the customs record books, the Levantine and Ponentine merchants were paying around 50,000 ducats annually in import duties, but the government was not aware that their benefit to the customs was much greater, since the Ponentine Jewish merchants traded under other names in Spain, Portugal, France, Flanders, Holland, England, the East and the West Indies, Brazil and elsewhere, and paid the regular import and export duties on all the goods they brought to Venice and took out from the city. But since these merchants found themselves more subjected to the Tedeschi Jews than to the Venetian authorities, very many had left and for that same reason, many Ponentine Jewish merchants who were then in France, Holland and elsewhere who wished to come to live and trade in Venice were not doing so. Therefore, Ferro related, he was making a proposal that would please the government and the merchants to the benefit of all, and also would help the poor of Venice who would be better served by the loan-banks in the ghetto. Finally,

he expressed his hope that if the government approved, it would take the appropriate action before renewing the charter of the Tedeschi Jews (which had expired on February 28, 1607), so that the Ponentine Jews would not be negatively affected.⁵⁵

The third memorandum was the main one.⁵⁶ It commenced by asserting that the reason why many Ponentine Jewish merchants had gone from Venice to the Ottoman Empire and elsewhere and why some from the Ottoman Empire had gone to Ancona while others resided in France, Flanders, Holland and elsewhere and only a relative few had come to Venice, was the agreements that the Levantine and Ponentine Jews, who although initially free from contributing to the expenses of the Tedeschi Jews, later voluntarily had made to contribute to the loan-banks and be subject to the "rule, or better, misrule" of the Tedeschi. Actually, he alleged, those agreements had never been made with the consent of the Ponentines, but rather they had been pressured by the Levantine and Tedeschi Jews, for the Levantines wished to be the only Jewish merchants in Venice, and accordingly they had joined with the Tedeschi, giving up their privilege of exemption from the obligations of the Tedeschi Jews and subjecting themselves, and so frightening the others that no one dared to complain to the government.

Also, Ferro maintained, the Levantines had falsely asserted that there were no dwellings where newly arriving merchants could live, so "in the past days" the Ponentines had taken from a certain noble an area of around a hundred and fifty dwellings outside the ghetto so that there would be housing for those merchants who would come, but then the Levantines took them away with falsehoods and the aid of the Tedeschi by giving over 200 ducats. Consequently, the government ordered Minotto and Belforte to build dwellings in the ghetto to accommodate them, and the Levantines did not take the dwellings outside the ghetto.⁵⁷

Actually, Ferro continued, the Tedeschi Jews did not need any help with the loan-banks, because previously when there had been only the few and poor Tedeschi Jews, they had supported the loan-banks, and therefore, now that they were more numerous and wealthy, they could do so better; indeed, the banks were so profitable that were the government to demand from the Tedeschi Jews half of what they paid for the loan-banks

in return for ending those loan-banks, they would object.⁵⁸ Furthermore, Ferro alleged that the Tedeschi Jews did not give any other benefit to the government nor pay customs duties as did the Levantine and Ponentine Jews who were called in for that purpose with the freedom of not having to contribute to the loan-banks or of being subject to the rule of the Tedeschi Jews, but since they saw that they were subject, they left the city and others did not come but rather stayed where they were, causing great harm to the customs.

Ferro suggested a remedy to provide that those merchants who wanted to come to Venice would gladly do so and that those who were already in the city would not leave, thus causing the customs to increase considerably, for since so few merchants gave such great profit, a larger number would give even more, and Venice would be more thriving with merchandise. Specifically, he proposed that all those Ponentine Jews who would return to the city, all those who up to the present day of March 28, 1607, had not contributed to the loan-banks, and all those who were to come in the future, as well as eight or ten of his friends already in the city who would aid him, could live in the city with the privileges granted in the past to the Levantine and Ponentine Jewish merchants and be free from contributing to the loan-banks and other expenses of the Tedeschi Jews. Moreover, the government should order the Tedeschi, Levantine and other Jews in the city not to make any further deals or agreements with the Ponentine Jews, and allow them to congregate in their synagogues as they used to, and similarly assure them that they would be given all the housing they needed at suitable prices and a place to bury their dead (as provided for in their charter). Then, Ferro believed, once the fear of being disturbed had been removed, many would cheerfully come. Finally, Ferro suggested that the government could provide that those Ponentine Jews who against their will were included in the agreements with the Tedeschi Jews could extricate themselves by paying ten ducats each.

The memoranda of Ferro were referred to the Cinque Savii, who commenced their response by recapitulating the history of the contributions of the merchants to the loan-banks.⁵⁹ They related that the Tedeschi Jews living in the ghetto nuovo were obliged by the terms of their charter to maintain loan-banks for

the poor and in order to do so, they undertook to tax themselves from time to time for the necessary expenses for which they alone were liable. Then, along with the visiting Levantine Jews, Ponentine Jews began arriving without any legal basis. As a result of the requests of Daniel Rodriga, in 1589 the Levantine and Ponentine Jews were given a charter for ten years, which was extended for another ten in 1598. The Tedeschi Jews, who should have supported the loan-banks on their own as in the past, conceived of inducing the Levantine and Ponentine Jews to contribute, and for various reasons, the latter consented, despite the fact that the charter of 1589 had indicated to what they should be liable,⁶⁰ and in this way, the burden of the Tedeschi Jews was eased. However, the Tedeschi Jews did not have authority to introduce such a levy for it was the exclusive prerogative of the Venetian government. Now the levy was troubling the merchants by hindering them from attending to their business with a quiet mind. Additionally they could not stand being subjected to the Tedeschi Jews, whom they considered their enemies rather than anything else (*da loro reputati più tosto nemici suoi che altramente*). The Savii pointed out that the Jewish merchants clearly brought important benefits to the customs, which might be greater than appeared because they also imported much merchandise in the name of others.⁶¹ Summing up, the Savii thought that the merchants ought not to be subject to payments for the loan-banks, which should be financed only by the Tedeschi Jews who were obliged to do so by the terms of their separate charter. Finally, they concluded that the merchants, by attending to their own business and paying the customs duties, were fulfilling their responsibilities satisfactorily and in order that they would not depart and others indeed would come to the benefit of the customs, it seemed completely wrong to subject them to the expenses of the loan-banks.

V

On, or shortly before, August 8, 1608, as the expiration date of the charter of 1598 approached, the Levantine and Ponentine merchants submitted a petition to the Signoria seeking its renewal for ten more years.⁶² Unlike Rodriga's practice in 1589 and

1598, they did not submit a proposed text. Instead, they merely expressed their desire to continue to serve the city by augmenting its customs revenue and commerce as in the past, and requested that the previous terms be confirmed for ten more years, with whatever provisions the government wished to add on the basis of the recommendation of the Cinque Savii, so that those families already in Venice would remain and many others would come to the city. They only asked that all impediments imposed by other magistracies be removed. Then, they concluded, many new families would come, with the result that just as during the past ten years they had carried out extensive trade which, they claimed, had yielded over 80,000 ducats annually to the customs, so in the future they hoped that they would be able to contribute almost as much by firmly establishing Spalato and diverting trade from other ports.

The above-mentioned issue of legal jurisdiction over the persons of the merchants, which the merchants had raised in their petition, had continued over the years. The charter of 1589 had provided that the Cinque Savii, who since 1586 had been inappellable judges of the disagreements between Jewish and Turkish merchants, similarly were to be also inappellable judges of contracts made between the Levantine and Ponentine Jews.⁶³ In the proposed charter text that Rodriga had submitted in 1598, he had sought to expand the jurisdiction of the Cinque Savii to cover civil disagreements between the Jews and all other persons, including Christians, even for debts incurred and proceedings initiated outside the Venetian state before they came to Venice; however, the final text approved by the Senate modified this to make the Savii the summary and inappellable judges of the civil disagreements between the Jewish merchants and other Jews or Turks, both male and female, and also for debts and contracts or cases originating outside the Venetian state before they came to Venice. Shortly after the Senate approved the charter, Rodriga made three requests, one of which was that the Cinque Savii be judges of the commercial disputes between the Jewish merchants themselves and between them and other Jews, Turks, and all others. The Savii could not agree on how to react to the requests of Rodriga and submitted both a majority and a minority report. The majority report endorsed the request of Rodriga, asserting that nothing could give the merchants greater

satisfaction than the smooth expedition of their business and the resulting disputes so that they could attend to their affairs with peace of mind. However, the minority report asserted that nothing proper or beneficial to the state could result from allowing the Savii to judge the commercial cases of the merchants with all others; furthermore, it claimed, if such a privilege were to be granted to the Ponentine Jews, then with how much more reason should it be granted to many Christian nations, thereby subverting all the regulations and laws of the city.⁶⁴

On August 8, the Ducal Counsellors ordered that the petition of the merchants for the renewal of the charter be passed on to the Cattaveri, the Cinque Savii, and the Sopraconsoli for their written recommendations.

The first to respond were the Cattaveri in a report dated September 18, 1608.⁶⁵ Their report began by questioning the figure of 80,000 ducats per annum which the Levantine and Ponentine merchants had claimed to have paid to the treasury. The Cattaveri related that they had investigated the records of the import and export duties and had calculated that the payments made by those Jews approved by the Savii during the previous two years scarcely amounted to one-eighth of the sum claimed, even though their number had increased in those years. Furthermore, many of those privileged merchants, who according to the records of the Savii numbered fifty-eight, had been born in Venice or had lived in the city with their families for a long time and therefore should not enjoy the privileges (since they were intended only for newcomers). Thus, the Cattaveri alleged, in addition to not conferring the benefits that they claimed, the merchants were defrauding the customs. In order to eliminate abuses, the Cattaveri recommended that the privileges be extended only to those Jews who had come since 1598 and who would come in the future, and not to those who had been born in Venice or had lived there for a long time. The Cattaveri claimed that they had no objection to the granting of religious freedom as provided for in past charters or to the merchants remaining subject to the Savii and judged by them in mercantile matters, but did object to the Savii being their judges in all cases, both civil and criminal. This would result in the Jewish merchants being removed from the jurisdiction of the

Cattaveri, to whom they had always been subject as had all the other Jews, and from that of the other magistracies established by the Great Council for civil and criminal cases. Therefore, the report of the Cattaveri concluded, the request of the Jews should not be granted, because it could lead to bad consequences.

Next, the Sopraconsoli submitted their report on December 18, 1608. Since their main concern was the supervision of the loan-banks of the Tedeschi Jews, they asserted that the Levantine and Ponentine Jews should continue to be required to contribute to the upkeep of the loan-banks, as they had been doing in the past in accordance with the charter of the Tedeschi Jews of 1597 and their own of 1598. The Sopraconsoli claimed that the resident Levantine and Ponentine Jews were one of the main contributors, and if they were to be exempted, then the entire weight of maintaining the loan-banks would fall on the Tedeschi Jews, who were unable to sustain it on their own and could be ruined and thus give up their moneylending to the great detriment of the poor for whose relief the government had instituted the loan-banks.

The Sopraconsoli, like the Cattaveri, also opposed granting exclusive jurisdiction over the Levantine and Ponentine merchants to the Savii. They pointed out that the wording of the charter of 1598 authorized the Savii to judge only those civil cases that arose between the Jewish merchants and other Jews or Turks and contracts and debts incurred outside the Venetian state before they came to Venice. It would not be desirable, they continued, to remove the merchants from the jurisdiction of the other magistracies of the state, and especially their own, for then, for example, in the same matter of the loan-banks or bankruptcies, some Jews might be judged by the Cinque Savii while others would be judged by their own magistracy of the Sopraconsoli, leading to different judgments and great confusion.

The Sopraconsoli concluded with an interesting suggestion. They observed that since the charters of the Jewish merchants and of the Jewish moneylenders were valid for different lengths of time and expired at different dates, with that of the moneylenders expiring first, trouble could arise for the Levantine Jews might not pay the levies for expenses of the loan-banks for those years that their charter would still be valid but after that of the

Tedeschi Jews had expired. Such constant disagreements had occurred, they noted, with the Jews of the *terra ferma* who had separate charters, and therefore the government had stipulated in the most recent charter of the Tedeschi Jewish moneylenders of Venice that all the charters of the Jews of the *terra ferma*, even if valid for longer than five years, were to terminate at the expiration of the charter of the Tedeschi Jews of Venice.⁶⁶ Accordingly, the Sopraconsoli suggested that a similar provision be made regarding the charter of the Levantine and Ponentine Jews in order to end many disagreements.⁶⁷

Apparently the Cinque Savii did not submit a response to the petition of the Jews at this juncture. Finally, in February 1609, as a result of the various reports, the Senate ordered the Savii and the Cattaveri to present their cases so that the Senate could arrive at a decision,⁶⁸ but apparently no action was taken.

In the absence of any decision, the Cattaveri took matters into their own hands. According to a report of the Cinque Savii written two days later,⁶⁹ on September 22, 1609, the Cattaveri, on their own authority, with little respect for the legislation of the Senate and decisions of the College and while the issue was being introduced in the Senate, ordered that the locks of the gates, which had been placed at both ends of the ghetto vecchio by the orders of the Savii, be removed in their presence by a locksmith whom they had brought with them. The Cattaveri then prohibited the guards appointed by the Savii in accordance with the authorization of the Senate from obeying any longer the orders of the Savii, and made them hand over, under threat of prison, galleys and banishment, the keys of the guardhouse assigned for their dwelling by previous Savii. Thus, the Savii related, their own authority had been trampled completely, and the decision made by the College and previously observed by the Cattaveri scorned and violated. They thought it in the public interest to relate this to the government so that it could take whatever steps were needed to remedy this action, which they felt was very prejudicial to the general welfare, and to restore the situation to what it had been before the Cattaveri had acted on their own authority against official decisions. Also, the Savii stated that appropriate provisions should be made by the Senate to assure that such harmful incidents not occur in the future. They added that all the Jewish merchants were very disturbed

indeed because the promises which had been made to them by the Senate when they had been invited to Venice were not being observed. If their trade had ever been profitable to Venice, it was so at present, since in their hands was a large part of that little trade remaining both with Constantinople as well as with the Morea and particularly with Spalato, which at that time was the most important because of the bad state of the other routes. Therefore, the Jews should in all ways be encouraged and not troubled, since they were being invited on liberal terms by other states, as was very well-known to the government.⁷⁰

After reading this report and the depositions taken by the Savii regarding the changing of the locks,⁷¹ the members of the College could not agree on the nature of the legislation to introduce into the Senate, and accordingly on the following day, September 25, two proposals were introduced. Most members of the College supported a proposal which asserted that it was new and unaccustomed for magistracies to take action on their own and in that way all the rules of government could easily be undermined, and ordered the Cattaveri without delay to return the keys to the guards of the ghetto vecchio and to restore everything to its previous condition. However, it was added, this in no way was meant to reflect on the claims of the Cattaveri and the Cinque Savii, whose arguments were to be heard in the Senate within eight days so that a decision could be reached. The legislation concluded by providing that the ghetto vecchio again be closed up and secured immediately with gates and a wall so that the Jews in no way were to be free to go out it.⁷² One member of the College was more certain regarding the course of action to take and proposed a counter-motion. Its preamble related that it was not proper to delay any longer the securing of the enclosure of the ghetto vecchio which had been broken with great offense to God, thereby giving the Jews the opportunity to commit every sort of wickedness and impiety. Therefore, it proposed that the Cattaveri were to be ordered immediately to secure the ghetto as it had been previously, since they were the sole custodians and competent judges over it and things relating to it as provided for by Senate legislation of 1516, all of which ought to be strictly observed.

The vote was taken and the first motion received 86 votes in favor, 3 against, and 15 abstentions, while the counter-motion received 69. Since neither motion passed, for Venetian parliamentary procedure required a majority of favorable votes for a measure to pass,⁷³ a second ballot followed, on which the first motion passed, 96-0-10, with 68 for the counter-motion.

This turn of events induced the Heads of the Levantine and Ponentine Jews to submit a petition on or shortly before November 4 to the government expressing their strong support of the Cinque Savii.⁷⁴ Their petition commenced by recollecting how over sixty years previously, when the commerce of the Levantine Jews began to be significant, the government wanted them to be granted dwelling places and all conveniences by the Cinque Savii, so that having been satisfied they would frequent the Venetian piazza and with greater numbers of them coming, they would increase trade which was so esteemed and desired by all. From that time on, the Jewish merchants had been under the jurisdiction of the Savii, who had promptly settled all their mercantile controversies to their greatest satisfaction and had arranged all matters of their housing and other needs justly and reasonably. Then, the petition continued, when an opportunity had arisen to invite a larger number of Jewish merchants to the city, at the request of the late Rodriga the government had expanded the privileges and extended them also to the Ponentine merchants and the Savii increased the housing in the ghetto in order to give the Jews all convenience in accordance with the intention of the government.⁷⁵ While they lived under the custody of the Savii,⁷⁶ the trade of the Jews, which constituted all the trade of the Morea, the major part of that of Spalato and a great part of that of other places, increased daily to the great benefit of the import and export duties, as could be seen in the record books. Therefore the merchants requested that they remain in the custody of the Savii under which there had been no disorders, for they had been permitted to come and go on their business and to enter and leave the ghetto at the hours appropriate for trade (i.e., even after the closing of the gates of the ghetto), a privilege not granted to the other Jews of the city, and if some problem arose, the Savii, who were stationed at the Rialto where their trade was conducted, would promptly resolve the matter. Now, because of the unprecedented attempt to

make them subject to the Cattaveri who also had custody over the Tedeschi Jews who were treated differently than the Savii treated them, they were fearful that great upheaval could result and were very greatly upset since they saw that the Cattaveri had taken away the keys from their usual custodians, and consequently they might easily depart for those places from which they had sent their goods to Venice on the assumption that they would be under the Cinque Savii. Therefore, the Heads of the Levantine and Ponentine merchants concluded, with their genuine affection for the government and for Venice which they considered to be their most dear *patria*, they were requesting that they continue to be permitted to live in peace under the protection of the Savii without the Cattaveri being able to interfere in matters of trade, or of residence, or anything else, and as in the past have nothing to do with them.

The Ducal Councilors reacted by passing this petition on to the Cinque Savii for their written reaction. The Savii responded on November 13 with a very long report, which then was forwarded together with the petition of the Jews on November 17 to the Cattaveri. Two days later, on November 19, the Cattaveri submitted their report, which elicited another brief one from the Savii on November 24. Finally, on the next day, November 25, legislation was prepared in the College and introduced on the Senate floor on December 15.

The initial report of the Savii of November 13, 1609, commenced with a lengthy review of the legislation establishing the ghetto nuovo and the ghetto vecchio and the respective mandates given to the Cattaveri and the Savii, followed by a brief summary of certain aspects of the relationships between the two ghetti, and culminated in a sweeping refutation of the claims of the Cattaveri to custody over the Jewish merchants and the ghetto vecchio and defense of the role of the Jewish merchants, rejecting the minimization of their customs payments made by the Cattaveri.⁷⁷ Asserting that they were not trying to preserve their own jurisdiction but reacting only because they thought that the course of events could greatly trouble the Jews and thus greatly harm the common good, the Savii stated their intention to present an accurate account of past Senate legislation so that it could be decided whether the public interest required that changes be made. The Savii recollected that according to the old

laws, the Jews were not allowed to dwell in Venice but only to come to the city for fifteen days a year.⁷⁸ But then, since many Jews lived spread out all over the city for longer than the limited time, in order to prevent many troubles, in 1516 the Senate legislated that all the Jews then in the city and also those who were to come in the future were to live in the ghetto.⁷⁹ The Savii then summarized accurately the legislation establishing the ghetto nuovo in 1516, and moved on to deal with the ghetto vecchio and the merchants. They related that in olden times, when all of the maritime trade greatly flourished in the hands of Venetian citizens and subjects, in order to so conserve it, it had been legislated in 1476 that Jews, Turks, Greeks, and Ottoman subjects could not import or export merchandise to the city.⁸⁰ However, because of changing circumstances, it became necessary to make other provisions. Thus, in 1541, seeing that a great part of trade, and especially that with upper and lower Romania, was no longer in the hands of Venetian subjects but rather in those of Levantine foreigners who, because of the prohibitions against trading in Venice, were taking it elsewhere to the detriment of the city and its customs,⁸¹ the Senate, in accordance with the advice of the Savii, took measures to assure that their merchandise be sent to Venice. On June 2, it was decided not only to free that merchandise from all customs payments for two years, but also to permit Levantine Jewish merchants, in whose hands that legislation stated perhaps most of the merchandise was, to bring it to Venice and to live in the city for two years, the period for which the customs exemption had been enacted. This measure was extended for subsequent two year periods until 1577,⁸² when all the customs were set at six percent and those of upper and lower Romania slightly lower, as was still the case. Since in order to enable the Jewish merchants to come to Venice it was necessary to provide them with a place in which to live, it was stipulated in that same legislation of 1541 that the College delegate that task to whichever magistracy it wished, with the provision that those Jews were always to remain closed up and guarded as were the Jews of the ghetto nuovo, and all that would be decided by that magistracy would be as binding and valid as if done by the Senate. Accordingly, the Savii recommended that the Jewish merchants be lodged in the ghetto vecchio, subject to the provisions of the Savii approved by the College on July 20,

1541, which the Savii then summarized briefly, reiterating the provision that two guards were to be appointed. Those guards had from time to time been appointed by the Savii to implement the regulations, and by virtue of the legislation of the Senate the Savii always had custody over that ghetto and from time to time added new regulations for the benefit of the Jewish merchants and also enlarged the ghetto when more of them came to the city. When in 1589, the Senate, in accordance with the request of Rodriga, granted those Levantine Jews and also Ponentine Jews the privilege of living in Venice with their families for ten years and in 1598 renewed that privilege for ten more years, it had stipulated that the Savii were to provide the merchants with a place to live and to give them the things necessary for their living, as indeed had been done. Also, the Savii had required that the Minotti build new houses in the ghetto for those merchants when they had requested the addition of other houses outside the ghetto.⁸³ These, the Savii summed up, were the provisions made by the Senate, the College, and the Savii themselves in accordance with the authority granted to them regarding the ghetto of the Levantine and Ponentine merchants.

The Savii continued by claiming that from the legislation of the Senate, the authority granted to the Cattaveri in 1516 and to their magistracy in 1541, 1589, and 1598 seemed clear enough. The legislation of 1516 only gave the Cattaveri authorization to implement the terms set forth in it, and they had no authority over the enclosure of the ghetto nuovo or to make walls, to close all *rive* leading to the canals, or to appoint guards, for the terms of that legislation left those matters to the College. The Savii did not understand how by virtue of that legislation of 1516 which the Cattaveri were merely to implement, the Cattaveri could now claim authority to supervise the ghetto vecchio which then had not yet been in existence. Had the Senate wished in 1541 that the Cattaveri be executors of that legislation and the regulations concerning the custody of that ghetto, it would not have assigned the College to entrust it to another magistracy. And the claim of the Cattaveri that the legislation of 1541 was not valid because it had not been passed by a five-sixths majority (as required for any change in the legislation of 1516) should be rejected, since it did not constitute a revocation of or change in the legislation of 1516 but rather new provisions for a different

group of Jews; indeed, it had been specified in 1516 that the Jews were to go to live in the ghetto nuovo until it would be decided otherwise in accordance with the needs of the times, and the legislation of 1541 constituted such new legislation not requiring a five-sixths majority. Also, it seemed to the Savii that legislation which had been observed continuously for seventy years should not be questioned. Additionally, the Savii rejected the argument of the Cattaveri that the latter should have the custody of the keys and supervision of the ghetto vecchio on the grounds that the Senate legislation of 1541 had stated that the Jews who were to live in the ghetto vecchio were to be locked up and guarded as were those of the ghetto nuovo; rather, the Savii claimed that the Senate had generally meant that the Jewish merchants were not to be free without any custody but were to be locked up with gates and guards as were those of the ghetto nuovo, but not, however, under the Cattaveri, for if so then it would not have assigned the Colle to appoint another magistracy. Since 1541, the Savii had always possessed custody over the ghetto vecchio, and the Cattaveri had never claimed it and even less exercised it, and if at any time they were involved in any matter concerning that ghetto, it had not been by virtue of the legislation of 1516 and 1541 but rather as a result of specific orders of the Heads of the Council of Ten or authorization of the Signoria who, as a special favor, in 1560 allowed the Minotti to rent out some houses that the Levantine Jews did not need to the Tedeschi Jews because the Savii had so advised in one of their reports (see above). Thus, by virtue of the laws of 1541, 1589, and 1598, the Savii always had custody of the ghetto vecchio and from time to time up to the present had appointed the two guards of its two gates, and over the years the merchants had always been under that custody. If sometimes the merchants had been troubled by the Cattaveri or some changes had been made, they had been supported by the Savii, especially in 1565 when the Cattaveri wished at the request of some Jews to appoint three guards in the ghetto vecchio,⁸⁴ for when the Savii found out, they ordered that those guards not involve themselves in anything concerning the custody of that ghetto and the persons of the Jewish merchants, because the keys and custody always belonged to the guards appointed by the Cinque Savii. And if there were some Tedeschi Jews living in the ghetto vecchio, the

Cattaveri did not therefore have custody over it, for they were in that ghetto by grace since the regulations of 1541 expressly prohibited any Jews other than merchants from living in it; therefore the Tedeschi Jews who were permitted to live in the ghetto vecchio could not engage in moneylending or the sale of second-hand goods there. Turning the tables, the Savii pointed out that although some Jewish merchants were living in the ghetto nuovo, they had never therefore claimed custody over that ghetto.

Having rejected the claims of the Cattaveri to jurisdiction over the ghetto vecchio and the merchants, the Savii proceeded to discuss the number of Jewish merchants in Venice. The Cattaveri, they recollected, had claimed that there were only fifty-eight Jewish merchant families, but this was inaccurate since the Cattaveri had only counted those who had been approved by the Savii in accordance with the provisions of the charter; actually, including all the resident Levantine and Ponentine merchants, visiting Levantine merchants (who did not need approval), and those who had asked for the privileges of the charter but had not yet been approved, there were over two hundred. Thus, if one wished to cancel the provisions made by previous Savii to enlarge the ghetto and the new buildings that had been made by order of the Savii, it would be necessary either to send away a great number of merchants or to provide them with other dwellings. The Savii added that when in 1606 the Signoria confirmed a certain injunction of the Cattaveri regarding a building in the ghetto vecchio, they had complained that on the basis of that confirmation the Cattaveri aspired to take the keys from their guards and after the College had heard both sides, it ruled that the keys and custody of the ghetto vecchio belonged to the Savii (see above). Summing up, the Savii questioned whether it was desirable to remove the Jewish merchants from the supervision that they had exercised until then and entrust the merchants to the Cattaveri, who thought that they should be subject to the same regulations as the Tedeschi Jews who were different in rites and occupation. Since the Tedeschi Jews were forbidden from engaging in trade, they did not need to be outside the ghetto before the sounding of the marangona bell in the morning or after the twenty-fourth hour in the evening,⁸⁵ as did the merchants because of the needs of the

lazaretto and to make out documents and take care of similar matters, and it seemed that entrusting the merchants to the Cattaveri would mean that instead of attending to their business, they would be summoned constantly to the Cattaveri. The Savii concluded their report with their customary reiteration of the fact that the merchants had always been dear to the government, and should especially be so at that time since a great part of the trade which remained, which was that with the Morea and Spalato, was in their hands, greatly increasing commerce and the customs, and as was well-known, they were being invited by other rulers on liberal terms.

Next, the request of the Jewish merchants was submitted to the Cattaveri for their reaction. They responded by relating in a report of November 19, 1609,⁸⁶ that they completely agreed with the report submitted by their predecessors on September 18, 1608, regarding the renewal of the charter of the Jews and for the sake of brevity were submitting a copy of it, while they would react to the fourteen-page report of the Savii when the Senate would take up the matter, which they hoped would be as soon as possible.

This reply of the Cattaveri was passed on to the Savii, who in turn submitted another report on November 24.⁸⁷ It pointed out that the report which the Cattaveri had submitted dealt with a request made by the Jewish merchants in 1608 for the renewal of their charter. This, however, was not the issue at hand, which was the request of the Jewish merchants that the ghetto vecchio and their persons remain under the custody of the Savii as they always had been since the ghetto vecchio had been established in 1541, and therefore the Savii referred to their previous report of November 13. The Savii reiterated that the argument of the previous Cattaveri that the Jews paid scarcely an eighth of the customs duty they had claimed was erroneous, since the Cattaveri had considered only the fifty-eight merchants who were approved and had not included the visiting Levantine merchants who did not require approval or the other merchants who had not yet been approved, and now one was concerned with all the Jews and not just some of them. The recommendation of the Cattaveri that only those merchants who had come since 1598 should be included in the privileges was dismissed as irrelevant to the matter at hand, but, the Savii wrote, should be brought up

when the renewal of the charter would be dealt with, at which time they would state their opinion on that matter. Finally, the Savii pointed out that the desire of the Cattaveri that the merchants be under the jurisdiction of the Savii in mercantile matters only, while in civil and criminal cases they should be subject to the Cattaveri and to the other appropriate bodies, was not relevant, since the merchants had never objected to the provision that their criminal offenses be tried by the appropriate magistracies. Their concern was that the custody of their persons and their ghetto might be removed from the Savii after the long period of almost seventy years, and this was the issue to which the Cattaveri should address themselves.

On November 25, legislation was prepared by the College and then on December 15, 1609, introduced on the Senate floor.⁸⁸ First, it proposed that for the important public considerations of trade and mercantile commerce expressed in the reports of the Savii and in implementation of the Senate legislation of 1516 and 1541, the enclosure of the ghetto vecchio and the custody of its keys should be entrusted to the Cinque Savii, who had exercised it continuously since 1541, so that the usual practice would be followed. Also, since many Tedeschi Jews had moved out of the ghetto nuovo assigned for their residence in 1516 and into the ghetto vecchio intended for the Levantine and Ponentine Jews because of a shortage of housing in the ghetto nuovo, the Cattaveri had appointed some persons at the expense of the Tedeschi Jews to be responsible for the punishment of the transgressions of those Tedeschi Jews living in the ghetto vecchio; however, because those appointees did not actually carry out their task, the Cattaveri were to appoint others to be there personally and do so.⁸⁹ At the same time, the Cattaveri were to think of a way to return those Tedeschi Jews to their ghetto or to separate them from the Levantine Jews and bring their proposals to the Senate, which would decide the matter.⁹⁰ Also, it was proposed that in neither ghetto could the Cattaveri, the Cinque Savii, or any other magistracy, college, or council grant anyone permission to open gates or *rive* in the enclosure of the ghetti or to restrict or extend its walls at the request of individuals rather than in the public interest; anyone wishing to do so was to petition the Senate which would rule on the matter, and anything done otherwise without the permission of the Senate was

to be destroyed and the previous state restored in all respects.⁹¹ The vote was taken and the proposed legislation passed handily but by no means overwhelmingly, 93-36-22.

VI

Thus the jurisdictional dispute between the Cinque Savii and the Cattaveri had apparently been settled,⁹² and the ghetti could be smoothly administered, but the charter of the merchants had not yet been renewed; in fact, the two year period of grace provided for in it was approaching its end. Accordingly, on, or shortly before, February 3, 1610, the Heads of the Jewish merchants again requested its renewal and expressed their great concern over the contributions they were required to make to the loan-banks of the Tedeschi Jews. They considered those contributions to be very unjust, claiming that the Tedeschi Jews had with very great shrewdness obliged them to contribute during the time of their previous charter by means of a certain agreement that expired with the present charter. Additionally, they asserted that those contributions were very unreasonable indeed and were constantly troubling them and without doubt causing many families who would have come to trade in the city to go elsewhere. Therefore the merchants requested that the Cinque Savii be asked to investigate the matter of those contributions and also the renewal of their charter, so that in accordance with the public desire their trade would increase and those merchants currently in Venice would stay and many others come, to the benefit of the customs through the strengthening of Spalato and diversion of trade from other ports.⁹³

The Ducal Councilors complied with this wish and referred the petition of the merchants to the Savii. However, it was not until almost a year later that the Savii issued their report on the matter. Although the delay may have been partially caused by differences among the Savii regarding the nature of the recommendations to make, possibly it also resulted from their preoccupation with a revolutionary proposal to remedy the diminishing role of Venice in the Levant trade primarily by allowing merchants from Western countries to engage in trade between Venice and the Levant without having to reside in the city for

twenty-five years before being eligible to request permission. After lengthy discussions, that proposal was rejected by the Senate because the majority of the Senators was unwilling to modify that key aspect of traditional Venetian protectionist commercial policy in the face of new circumstances.⁹⁴ Thus the Levantine and Ponentine Jews retained their unique position of being able to become instant merchants of Venice.⁹⁵

On January 27, 1611, the Savii finally responded regarding the renewal of the charter of the Jewish merchants.⁹⁶ As had occurred on previous occasions, they could not agree, this time on the contributions to the loan-banks, and hence submitted once more both a majority and a minority report. The majority report cited the benefits derived from the trade of the Jewish merchants in Spalato and in Venice, especially for the customs, and deemed it desirable to renew the privileges granted in 1598. However, it suggested two changes. The first was that since the merchants were subject to the Cinque Savii in all law-suits and in the management and custody of their ghetto, they should be under the Savii in all civil matters while criminal cases would remain in the hands of the appropriate magistracies. The second change involved the payments to the loan-banks of the Tedeschi Jews. After having heard also the arguments of the Tedeschi Jews, the report of the majority of the Savii recommended that all those resident Levantine and Ponentine Jewish merchants whom they had approved and whom they were to approve in accordance with the terms of their charter were to be exempted from all levies that the Tedeschi Jews paid except for those related to the loan-banks, to which they were to continue to contribute according to the assessments of their own committee of tax assessors consisting of two Levantine, two Ponentine, and three Tedeschi Jews⁹⁷ as in the past in accordance with their own agreement which had been approved by the government in their last charter. However, the visiting Jewish merchants who had not made any such payments with them were not to be made liable to any payments.

The dissenting Savio, Maffio Michiel, took a position much more favorable to the merchants. He did not deem it either just or in the public interest to subject them to any payments to the loan-banks, and justified this view by citing the events of the past century. He pointed out that the Tedeschi Jews who lived

in the ghetto nuovo since 1516 were under the Cattaveri and only allowed to engage in the sale of second-hand goods. Since the treasury derived no benefit from that activity, those Jews had been required at various times by the Senate to pay specific sums and later — Michiel added somewhat inaccurately — to establish loan-banks for the poor.⁹⁸ In 1541, he continued, perceiving that the greater part of the merchandise coming from Romania which had been diverted from Venice was in the hands of the Levantine Jews, the Senate allowed them to trade freely with exemption from all customs duties and to live in the city for a limited period of time under the jurisdiction of the Savii in a separate ghetto in which only visiting Jewish merchants could live. Over the course of the years these merchants had never made any payments with the Tedeschi Jews but had brought considerable benefit to the customs through their trade. Then the merchants, who were without either a charter or permission to live continuously in the city, illegally began to settle in the ghetto vecchio with their families and the Tedeschi Jews used this situation to induce them gradually to contribute. When in 1589 the Senate granted very extensive privileges to the Levantine and Ponentine Jews allowing them to settle in Venice with their families, no mention of any obligation to contribute to the loan-banks was included in their charter. Nevertheless, the Tedeschi Jews again wanted them to contribute, and as a result in 1590 the Senate ruled that all Jewish merchants who returned to the city after being away for over five years and all those who would come in the future and had never contributed to the loan-banks would be exempt. The next charter, that of 1598, specified that the merchants were to contribute to the loan-banks in accordance with the agreement made between the two groups of Jews, which was to continue for seven years. Now it had expired, and the merchants ought not to be required to make any such payments, as expressly stated in the charter of 1598: they are not liable to other *gravezze* with the Tedeschi Jews. Accordingly, Michiel thought that it was not the desire of the government that the Levantine and Ponentine Jews be liable to any payments with the Tedeschi Jews, and if they themselves had agreed to pay for a limited time, then after that time had elapsed they should not be liable to any such payments, as explicitly stated in that agreement. Those Levantine and Ponentine Jews who had been

legitimately approved by the Savii, and who ought to be reexamined to remove any possible improprieties, were by government order separated by habitation, custody, and supervision, and differed in occupation and customs, and lived apart in conflict and rivalry, with hatred that could be called irreconcilable (*vivono in reste et gare con odij si puo dire irreconciliabile*). Accordingly he did not think that it was in the public interest to subject them to any payments, especially since they had for a long time maintained trade with Constantinople and Spalato, diverting it from the ports of other rulers to the great benefit of the treasury and profit of Venice and especially the guilds of wool and silk, as the Senate knew for it had granted the Jews many privileges both in the customs payments as well as in allowing them to trade on the same basis as the native citizens. Therefore, many Jews in the Low Countries and other places were waiting to hear the decision concerning this charter in order then to come in great numbers to live in Venice and benefit the city and its inhabitants. Should the government wish to add any levies on them as it did on its own citizens and others trading in the city who, in addition to customs payments, were also taxed for the profits resulting from their trade, then this money ought to go to the public treasury and not to the advantage of the Tedeschi Jews who were obliged to pay by the terms of their own charters.⁹⁹

After considering these reports, the College formulated the text of the new charter, which it approved on June 21, 1611, and then eight days later, on June 21, 1611, introduced in the Senate. For the most part, it repeated verbatim the text of the charter of 1598, but with a few changes and additions reflecting the discussions of the intervening years.

A small change was made in the first clause, clearly stipulating who was entitled to enjoy the privileges and thereby eliminating an inadvertent ambiguity. In accordance with a request long previously made by Rodriga immediately after the passing of the second charter in 1598 to assure that the new charter would also cover those merchants who had come after the issuance of the first charter in 1589, the reading of the text in the charter of 1598 that the safe-conduct was to be granted "to any merchant to be able to come" — which had given the Cattaveri their basis for maintaining that those merchants who came

before 1598 were ineligible — was now changed to include any Levantine or Ponentine Jewish merchant “who had come since 1589 and who will come in the future.”¹⁰⁰

The statement, also in the first clause, repeating the provisions of the charter of 1598 that the merchants were to live in the ghetto nuovo, seems strange in the light of the Senate decree of December 15, 1609.¹⁰¹ However, it cannot be dismissed as a slip of the pen for the ghetto vecchio, since no correction is encountered in any document and subsequent charters of the Levantine and Ponentine Jews were to repeat that provision.

The second clause of the charter contained the final decision on the contributions to the loan-banks. Reflecting the recommendations of the Sopraconsoli and the majority of the Cinque Savii, it stated that it was appropriate that all the Levantine and Ponentine Jewish merchants living in Venice under the terms of the charter were to contribute to the expenses of the loan-banks as they had done until then. Only the visiting Levantine merchants and also the Jews of Corfu, in accordance with the terms of their privileges, were to be exempt.

Finally, a new clause was added in order to eliminate various abuses that had arisen and further clearly define who was to enjoy the privileges. It claimed that many Jews born and living in Venice had been exempted fraudulently and in roundabout ways against the provisions of the privileges and laws of the Senate,¹⁰² causing great loss to the customs since only bona-fide merchants who had come since 1589 were eligible to enjoy the exemptions. Therefore the Cinque Savii were to review all the exemptions already granted and should they find any improper, then cancel them. Also, the Savii were to investigate how they had been granted, and to see to it that in the future everything would proceed legally in accordance with the intention of the Senate that all the Jewish merchants, excepting only visiting Levantines, were to contribute to the expenses of the loan-banks of the poor, while those who had come before 1589 were to be held liable to all payments of the Tedeschi Jews. Should the Savii wish to exempt anyone, they were first to consult the laws and then diligently determine whether those whom they wished to exempt possessed the required requisites.

The proposed text was put to the vote and passed, with eighty-four votes in favor and only eight opposed but an unprecedentedly high number of sixty abstentions,¹⁰³ and thus the Levantine and Ponentine Jewish merchants of Venice entered into their third ten-year charter. The proposal to allow them to reside in Venice, first advocated by Rodriga almost forty years previously, had proven to be beneficial and the Jewish merchants were to continue to enjoy their special position down to the end of the Republic.

Notes

1. And indeed quite probably four years previously, in 1573, if not even earlier; see B. Ravid, "A Tale of Three Cities and their *Raison d'état*: Ancona, Venice, Livorno and the Competition for Jewish Merchants in the Sixteenth Century," *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 6:2 (1991-92):138-162, also issued in book form with the same pagination under the title *Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Mediterranean World after 1492*, A.M. Ginio, ed. (London, 1992).
2. Ponentine, parallel to Levantine, from *ponere*, the opposite of *levare*, referring respectively to the setting and the rising of the sun.
3. On the competition between Italian states to attract Jewish merchants, see Ravid, "A Tale of Three Cities."
4. See the legislation of the Great Council of 1552, reiterating previously-enacted long-standing policy, published in English translation in D. Chambers and B. Pullan, eds., *Venice: A Documentary History, 1450-1630* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 276-278.
5. For details on Rodriga's activities until 1589, the events leading up to the charter of 1589, and its economic and religious significance, see B. Ravid, "The First Charter of the Jewish Merchants of Venice, 1589," *AJS Review* 1 (1976):187-222, and Ravid, "A Tale of Three Cities."

On the Tedeschi Jewish moneylenders, see B. Pullan, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 476-578; R. Mueller, "Charitable Institutions, the Jewish Community and Venetian Society," *Studi Veneziani* 14 (1972):37-82, and B. Ravid, "The Socioeconomic Background of the Expulsion and Readmission of the Venetian Jews, 1571-1573," in *Essays in Modern Jewish History: A Tribute to Ben Halpern*, F. Malino and P. Albert, eds. (Rutherford, N.J., 1982), pp. 27-55.

On the ghetto, see B. Ravid, "The Religious, Economic and Social Background and Context of the Ghetti of Venice," in G. Cozzi, ed., *Gli Ebrei e Venezia* (Milan, 1987), pp. 211-259, and B. Ravid, "New Light on the Ghetti of Venice," *Shlomo Simonsohn Jubilee Volume: Studies on the History of the Jews in the Middle Ages and Renaissance Period* (Tel Aviv, 1993), pp. 149-176.

On the yellow head-cover, see B. Ravid, "From Yellow to Red: On the Distinguishing Head-Covering of the Jews of Venice," *Jewish History* 6 (1992):179-210, also issued as B. Walfish, ed., *The Frank Talmage Memorial Volume*, II.

6. On Rodriga and Spalato, see R. Paci, *La Scala di Spalato e il commercio veneziano nei Balcani fra cinque e seicento* (Venice, 1971), esp. pp. 46-60; B. Ravid, "An Autobiographical Memorandum by Daniel Rodriga, *Inventore of the Scala of Spalato*," in A. Toaff and S. Schwarzfuchs, eds., *The Mediterranean and the Jews: Banking, Finance and International Trade* (Ramat Gan, 1989), pp. 189-213, and B. Ravid, "Daniel Rodriga and the First Decade of the Jewish Merchants of Venice," in A. Mirsky, A. Grossman and Y. Kaplan, eds., *Exile and Dispersion: Studies in the History of the Jewish People Presented to Professor Haim Beinart* [Latin alphabet volume] (Jerusalem, 1991), pp. 203-223.
7. For a discussion of the proposed changes and final text adopted, see Ravid, "Daniel Rodriga and the First Decade," pp. 211-221.
8. For a brief discussion of the charters of the Levantine and Ponentine Jewish merchants of Venice, see B. Ravid, "The Last Charter of the Jewish Merchants of Venice, 1711," to appear in the Proceedings of the colloquium "L'expulsion des Juifs d'Espagne (1492) et ses conséquences," Paris, 1992, and in a considerably expanded form elsewhere.
9. On this theme, which deserves further attention, see — in addition to the evidence presented in this article — the grave hostility described in B. Pullan, *The Jews of Europe and the Inquisition of Venice* (Totowa, N.J., 1983), pp. 192-193, 209 (a distinction must always be made between the attitude of Jews toward other Jews of different ethnic — or socioeconomic — backgrounds as opposed to their attitude toward Judaizing New Christians who were not reverting back to Judaism, i.e., crypto-Jews or Marranos), and in somewhat more detail in B. Pullan, "From Private Enterprise to Public Service," in G. Cozzi, ed., *Gli Ebrei e Venezia*, pp. 680-681. Also, when in 1579, Rodriga had requested permission to bring to the city up to fifty families of Jewish merchants, each of whom he asserted would pay over a hundred ducats annually in customs duties, with the same privileges as those already possessed by the visiting Levantine Jewish merchants and resi-

dent Tedeschi Jewish moneylenders, in support he pointed out that the government had granted a charter to the Jewish moneylenders who, he claimed, brought less benefit to the treasury than would these merchants who would be of enormous benefit to the marketplace and of satisfaction to the government; ASV, Senato, mar, filza 91, July 17, 1584. In a similar vein, in 1625 the Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia asserted that the profit derived from the trade of the Levantine and Ponentine Jewish merchants was greater than that derived from the Tedeschi Jews; ASV, Senato, mar, filza 276, September 24, 1625.

10. For some comments on the significance of majority and minority reports in providing insight into the range of opinions held on the Jewish question — in contradistinction to considering only the final legislation or course of action adopted — and also some other examples of such disagreements, see B. Ravid, "'Kosher Bread' in Baroque Venice," *Italia* 6 (1987):25-26.
11. For the reconstruction of the history of the areas known as the ghetto vecchio and the ghetto nuovo from their beginnings until their association with the Jews, see the definite presentation of E. Concina, "Parva Jerusalem," in E. Concina, U. Camerino and D. Calabi, eds., *La Città degli Ebrei: Il Ghetto di Venezia: Architettura e Urbanistica* (Venice, 1991), pp. 11-24.
12. For further details, see Ravid, "The Religious, Economic and Social Background," pp. 217-218; text of the legislation on pp. 248-251.
13. See Ravid, "The Religious, Economic and Social Background," pp. 222-224; text of the legislation on pp. 250-252.
14. For the course of events after 1541, see Ravid, "New Light on the Ghetti of Venice."
15. Giacomo and Zuanne Minotto were the sons of Lunardo Minotto, who had been the owner of the houses enclosed in the ghetto vecchio when it had been established in 1541. For further details on the Minotto family, see B. Ravid, "The Minotto Family and an Unapproved Construction Project in the Ghetto Vecchio of Venice, 1608-1609" (forthcoming). Lunardo Minotto received the ghetto vecchio in 1504 as a dowry valued at 2,700 ducats; see Concina, "Parva Jerusalem," p. 18.
16. Since 1423, Jews had not been allowed to own real estate in Venice; after the establishment of the ghetto, they could only rent dwellings in it, but could then improve them and/or sublet them to other Jews; Archivio di Stato di Venezia (henceforth ASV), Ebrei, chronologically ordered.

17. The fear that overcrowding in the ghetto would lead to plague was a recurring concern. In 1550, the Ambassador of Ferrara in Venice, reporting on the expulsion of the Marranos from Venice, related that the main reason was the Venetian fear that the Marranos would cause illness and plague. Subsequently, he wrote that he had heard that the Marranos not only infected the soul of Christians but also their body with pestilence; more specifically, he later elaborated, since three or four families lodged together in a dwelling, there was danger of illness and pestilence; see D. Kaufman, "A Contribution to the History of Venetian Jews," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, old series, 2 (1899-90):303-305, English translation in Chambers and Pullan, *Venice: A Documentary History*, pp. 345-346. Subsequently, in 1555, the Venetian Provveditori alla Sanità, to prevent the alleged practice of Jews to rent out *loghetti* without lavatories or fireplaces to ten or sometimes more persons, which they feared could lead to the city being infected with the plague, issued regulations supervising subletting in the ghetto; see Ravid, "New Light on the Ghetti of Venice."
18. ASV, Inquisitorato alle Arte, b. 102.
19. ASV, Inquisitorato alle Arte, b. 102. On the times of the locking of the ghetto gates, see note 45, below, and on the special Jewish head-covering, Ravid, "From Yellow to Red."
20. ASV, Cattaveri, b. 243, 53v-54r, June 13, 1586, and Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia (henceforth CSM), reg. 137, 174r-175r, July 7, 1586, respectively.
21. "Con l'estessa perho custodia nostra." This claim was, of course, completely false.
22. For its provisions, see Ravid, "New Light on the Ghetti of Venice."
23. Actually, it had been introduced two charters previously, in 1573.
24. For further details, see Ravid, "New Light on the Ghetti of Venice."
25. The clause continued to be retained in subsequent charters and appears as clause 36 in the charter of 1618, published in B. Ravid, *Economics and Toleration in Seventeenth Century Venice* (Jerusalem, 1978), p. 119. However, as I will show in a forthcoming examination of the charters of the Tedeschi Jewish moneylenders of Venice, some other changes were introduced in the new charter of 1586.
26. A prohibition against Jews keeping Christians in their houses as servants, maids or wet-nurses was incorporated into the charter

of 1566 — see clause 32 of the charter of 1624, published in Ravid, *Economics and Toleration*, p. 119 — and constituted, as I hope to elucidate in the future, a constant concern of the Venetian government.

27. ASV, Cattaveri, b. 245, reg. 6, 198v-199r, March 15 and 17, 1597.
28. For some further examples, see below; I will deal with it further in the expanded study mentioned in note 8, above.
29. Presumably, the balconies were on the outer perimeter of the ghetto, for such bars were frequently required by the Venetian authorities to prevent Jews from entering or leaving the ghetto other than through the officially designated gates.
30. ASV, Inquisitorato alle Arte, b. 102. These developments, which may be associated with the construction of some new additional houses in the ghetto vecchio as an alternative to allowing the Jewish merchants who had complained of inadequate space for their families and goods to incorporate some previously existing houses within its enclosure — see ASV, CSM, b. 62, March 29, 1605 and Inquisitorato agli Ebrei, b. 38, 428r-429v; also Ravid, *Economics and Toleration*, pp. 46-47, and B. Ravid, "The Establishment of the Ghetto Nuovissimo of Venice," in H. Beinart, ed., *Jews in Italy: Studies Dedicated to the Memory of Umberto Cassuto* (Jerusalem, 1988), p. 42; also the memorandum of Joseph Ferro, discussed below — require further investigation but are not directly relevant in the present context.
31. ASV, Inquisitorato alle Arte, b. 102. The petitions and memoranda discussed in this article were generally presented to the Signoria; then, usually the Ducal Councilors decided what course of action to follow, usually referring the matter to various appropriate magistracies for written reports, but on occasion either making a ruling themselves or directly introducing the proposal for a decision in the College, which was made up of the Signoria and certain other officials.
32. Details on the transfer of the keys to the ghetto vecchio as a result of the rulings of the Signoria are preserved in ASV, Cattaveri, b. 244, reg. 4, January 18-24, 1605 (m.v.).
33. ASV, Collegio, notatorio, reg. 68, 5r, March 8, 1606.
34. ASV, Collegio, notatorio, filza 178, June 21, 1606.
35. "Habbiano libertà di poter elegger nelle sue congregation li loro officiali, ministri [et] deputati agli officij, negotij et carichi, secondo loro volontà;" from the charter of 1589, published in Ravid, "The First Charter," p. 221, and repeated in subsequent charters.

36. On Jewish judicial self-government, see R. Bonfil, *The Rabbinate in Renaissance Italy* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1979), pp. 135-171, English translation, *Rabbis and Jewish Communities in Renaissance Italy* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 207-269. More specifically on Venice, see B. Ravid, "A Republic Separate from All Other Government" (Hebrew), in A.A. Greenbaum and A. Ivry, eds. *Thought and Action: Essays in Memory of Simon Rawidowicz on the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of his Death* (Haifa, 1983), pp. 53-76, and D. Malkiel, *A Separate Republic: The Mechanics and Dynamics of Venetian Jewish Self-government, 1607-1624* (Jerusalem, 1991), pp. 31-60. I will deal further with the issue of arbitration in the expanded study mentioned in note 8, above.
37. The only ruling of the Cattaveri preserved with this petition in the *filze* is the benign proclamation of April 28, 1606, discussed below.
38. ASV, CSM, reg. 141, 168v-169r, March 14, 1606.
39. On Spalato, see Ravid, "The First Charter," passim; Ravid, "An Autobiographical Memorandum by Daniel Rodriga," and Ravid, "Daniel Rodriga and the First Decade." Some information on the trade of the Jews of Venice with Spalato has been presented in Ravid, *Economics and Toleration*, pp. 66-68, n. 74.
40. On the trade of the Jews of Venice with Constantinople and the Morea, see Ravid, *Economics and Toleration*, pp. 66-68, n. 74 and also pp. 44-46, n. 44.
41. Senate legislation of 1541 referred only to the fact that the greater part of the merchandise coming from upper and lower Romania (i.e., the European part of the former Byzantine empire) was in the hands of the visiting Jewish merchants; see Ravid, "The Religious, Economic and Social Background," pp. 223, 250. Of course, at that time the *scala* of Spalato was not yet in existence.
42. Presumably the undated memorandum of the Cattaveri preserved in ASV, Inquisitorato alle Arte, b. 102 belongs in this place.
43. This probably refers to the arrangements for a gate at Cannaregio, made at the request of some Levantine Jews for their greater security; see ASV, Inquisitorato alle Arte, b. 102, and also the comment of the Cinque Savii on this matter in their report of November 13, 1609, discussed below.
44. ASV, Collegio, notatorio, filza 178, June 21, 1606.
45. That the gates were to be closed at the first hour of the night in the summer and at the second in the winter (presumably a necessary concession since it got dark considerably earlier in winter) had

been enacted in December 1516, modifying the legislation establishing the ghetto in March 1516, which had provided that the gates were to be closed at sunset. However, in 1584 a series of regulations issued by the Cinque Savii included a provision that the gates of the ghetto vecchio were to be locked one hour after sunset (without any different seasonal provisions) and afterward only opened for merchants either arriving from a voyage, or departing on one. For a discussion of the hours of the closing of the ghetto gates, see Ravid, "New Light on the Ghetti of Venice."

46. Usually rendered as quay or wharf, but also steps leading directly from the houses into the canal to facilitate entering and leaving boats; see F. Mutinelli, *Lessico Veneto* (Venice, 1851), s.v. *riva, gradata*.
47. Presumably a reference to Tedeschi Jews who could officially only engage in the sale of second-hand goods (*strazzaria*) and had the responsibility of furnishing the quarters of visiting dignitaries, but nevertheless engaged in maritime trade without authorization until it was finally granted in 1634. I will elaborate on these matters in the future. In the interim, see the documents published in Ravid, *Economics and Toleration*, pp. 105-126.
48. ASV, Collegio, notatorio, reg. 68, 77r-77v, June 21, 1606.
49. It is referred to generally in documents preserved in the Venetian State Archives, which on occasion more specifically assert, without going into any detail, that the financial agreements made between the Jews were to be maintained. See, e.g., the provisions made in the renewal of the charter of the Tedeschi Jews in 1634, published in Ravid, *Economics and Toleration*, p. 126.
50. See Ravid, "The First Charter," p. 199, text on p. 216.
51. See Ravid, "Daniel Rodriga and the First Decade," pp. 205-209.
52. ASV, Senato, terra, reg. 66, 189v-196v and filza 141, January 31, 1596 (m.v.). Only two charters later, in 1607, were the Ponentine Jews added; ASV, Senato, terra, reg. 77, 141v-150r, and filza 184, October 5, 1607.
53. See Ravid, "Daniel Rodriga and the First Decade," p. 213, and Pullan, *Rich and Poor*, p. 567. In 1602, Rodriga had proposed that the Levantine and Ponentine Jews pay a fixed annual sum toward the loan-banks (possibly in order to put an end to the constant negotiations on the matter), but his idea was rejected by the Cinque Savii on the grounds that it was not desirable because of fluctuations in their trade and wealth; the Savii rather thought that the amount of the payments should continue to be determined on the basis of the circumstances; see ASV, CSM, reg. 141, 23v, September 15, 1602.

54. ASV, Collegio, suppliche dentro, 12, 79-83; I owe the reference to G. Cozzi, "Società veneziana, società ebraica," in G. Cozzi, ed., *Gli Ebrei e Venezia*, pp. 350, 371, n. 56.
55. The document initially stated "acciò che non possa pregiudicare li sopra detti mercanti levantini e ponentine," but significantly the words "levantini e" were crossed out.
56. For reasons of space, the following constitutes a summary of the main points of Ferro's presentation without entering into the various historical inaccuracies contained in it.
57. Possibly the Salvatore Belforte referred to in the orders of the Cattaveri of December 1604; see n. 30, above.
58. Actually, apparently at this time the banks were no longer financially profitable and the community granted the individuals who operated them a subvention in the form of additional interest on the sums that they loaned out; see Malkiel, *A Separate Republic*, pp. 128-139.
59. ASV, Senato, terra, filza 199, June 29, 1611; also ASV, CSM, reg. 142, 16r-17r, June 20, 1607.
60. The charter of 1589 did not specifically exempt the merchants from contributing to the loan-banks, but rather did not mention the contributions at all, thereby indicating that the government was not involving itself in the matter at that time.
61. Possibly an allusion to importing in the name of native Venetian Christian merchants for the greater security of the goods, especially from pirates at sea.
62. ASV, Senato, terra, filza 199, June 29, 1611. A recently published document sheds new light on the background to this request. An agreement between the Levantine and Ponentine Jews of April 19, 1606, provided that when it would be time to request a renewal of their charter, the councils of the two groups should meet and select an equal number of persons from each group to negotiate, with the Ponentine Jews contributing three-fifths of the expenses and the Levantine Jews, two-fifths; see D. Carpi, "The *Takkanot* of the Jewish Community of Venice, 1591-1607," in A. Mirsky, A. Grossman and Y. Kaplan, eds., *Exile and Diaspora: Studies in the History of the Jewish People Presented to Professor Haim Beinart on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, Hebrew volume (Jerusalem, 1988), pp. 447, 465-466, reprinted in D. Carpi, *Between Renaissance and Ghetto: Essays on the History of the Jews in Italy in the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries* (Tel Aviv, 1989), pp. 173, 201. Presumably this arrangement reflected the relative wealth of the two groups at that time. Cf. a report of the Cinque Savii of 1636, which related that the Ponentine Jews contributed

- 3,781 ducats to the loan-banks, while the Levantines paid 666; see Ravid, *Economics and Toleration*, pp. 80-81, n. 74.
63. See the text published in Ravid, "The First Charter," pp. 221-222.
 64. See Ravid, "Daniel Rodriga and the First Decade," pp. 219-221. A specific incident of alleged harassment by the Cattaveri is preserved in a complaint of the merchants summarized in a report of the Cinque Savii of September 1607. The Levantine and Ponentine Jews had complained of harassment, especially in religious matters, and requested that in the future all such unmerited cases be dealt with by the Savii; specifically, they wanted the government to cancel the sentence issued by the Cattaveri against Samuel Dorado and halt the proceedings against Elia Gaon, in accordance with their privileges. The Savii commenced their report by reiterating that the government had on many occasions induced the Levantine and Ponentine Jews to come to live in Venice for the sake of the important benefits received from their trade, which also redounded to the benefit of the guilds. For those reasons, it had granted the Jews very extensive privileges, and especially provided (in their charter) that they could not be molested by any magistracy of the city for religious reasons. This provision had always been considered by them to be of the greatest importance and ought to be observed, for on its basis they had come to live in Venice. Therefore, the Savii recommended that the request of the Jews be granted, since it was provided for in their privileges and also so as not to make those who intended to come to Venice change their minds. The Cattaveri themselves, the Savii noted, did not dissent from this because of the public benefit. Finally, the Savii concluded that while they did not think that anything could be done regarding the case already decided by the Cattaveri against Samuel Dorado, the other, against Elia Gaon, should be dropped in as far as it pertained to religious matters, while the government should issue the appropriate orders to assure that in the future the Jews would not be harassed, but could remain secure and undisturbed and able to continue their business without being troubled for such reasons; ASV, CSM, reg. 142, 31r-32r, September 19, 1607.
 65. ASV, Senato, terra, filza 193, December 15, 1609; also filza 199, June 29, 1611.
 66. This provision was retained in future charters; see clause 7 of the charter of 1624, published in Ravid, *Economics and Toleration*, p. 110.
 67. Much more far-reaching, sometime prior to May 16, 1591, Rodriga had unsuccessfully proposed that one ten-year charter with two years of grace in case of non-renewal be issued for all

Jews living in Venice, with the exception of visiting Levantine merchants who resided in the city for less than six months; ASV, Senato, terra, filza 122, December 7, 1591; the relevant passage from the petition of Rodriga is available in English translation in Pullan, *Rich and Poor*, p. 569. On the other hand, in 1624 the Tedeschi Jews among other things asked for a ten-year charter on the grounds that it would facilitate appointing the moneylenders. While the Cinque Savii supported their request, the Cattaveri and Sopraconsoli opposed it; indeed the Sopraconsoli even suggested that the five-year period be shortened in order to be able to remedy abuses more easily. In the end, no change was made and the five-year periods were retained for the rest of the century. Finally, in 1738 the two charters were combined into one and the Jews continued to have one charter until the fall of the Venetian republic; see the article mentioned in note 8, above.

68. ASV, Senato, terra, February 25, 1608 (m.v.) (non vidi), mentioned in a report of the Cattaveri of November 15, 1609 in Senato, terra, filza 193, December 15, 1609.
69. ASV, Senato, terra, filza 192, September 25, 1609; also CSM, reg. 142, 150v-151r, September 24, 1609.
70. Presumably a reference to Medicean Livorno and possibly also papal Ancona; see Ravid, "A Tale of Three Cities."
71. Accounts testifying that as heavy rain was falling, the Cattaveri removed the locks from the three gates of the ghetto vecchio — at Cannaregio, at the bridge to the ghetto nuovo and at the *riva*, near that bridge — replaced them, and appointed new guards whom they told to stay in the guardhouse of the guards appointed by the Cinque Savii, the keys to which they had obtained by intimidation, are preserved in ASV, Senato, terra, filza 192, September 25, 1609.
72. Possibly these provisions were necessary because the enclosure of the ghetto had been opened as a result of the start of a proposed major construction project in the ghetto which was cancelled almost immediately because of opposition to the fact that Jews were to live in the upper stories of a building whose first two stories were to contain stores of Christians and dwellings for the Christian storekeepers. Ravid, "The Minotto Family and an Unapproved Construction Project."
73. Thus the first motion failed to carry by one vote, receiving 86 votes out of 173 votes cast.
74. ASV, Senato, terra, filza 193, December 15, 1609.

75. On the construction of additional housing in the ghetto vecchio after it was assigned to the Jews in 1541, see Ravid, "New Light on the Ghetti of Venice," and note 30, above.
76. The word *senatori* in the text is presumably a slip of the pen.
77. ASV, Senato, terra, filza 193, December 15, 1609; also CSM, reg. 142, 154v-159r, November 13, 1609.
78. For a detailed reconstruction of the course of events prior to 1516, which cannot be presented here, see B. Ravid, "The Legal Status of the Jews in Venice to 1509," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, 54 (1987):169-202.
79. The word *vecchio* found in the copy of the *risposta* of the Savii in ASV, CSM, reg. 142, 155r, November 13, 1609 is an erroneous addition not found in the original in Senato, terra, filza 193, December 15, 1609.
80. See Ravid, "The Legal Status," pp. 189-190.
81. In reality, the prohibition was lifted in 1524 at the latest, rather than in 1541; see Ravid, "A Tale of Three Cities."
82. However, the permission for the Levantine Jewish merchants to stay in Venice was curtailed from two years to one in 1549; see Ravid, "The First Charter," p. 191, and Ravid, "New Light on the Ghetti of Venice."
83. Probably a reference to developments alluded to in note 30, above; see also the above-discussed report of Joshua Ferro, and more generally, Ravid "New Light on the Ghetti of Venice."
84. See note 43, above.
85. I.e., sunset, not midnight as sometimes erroneously asserted.
86. ASV, Senato, terra, filza 193, December 15, 1609.
87. ASV, Senato, terra, filza 193, December 15, 1609; also CSM, reg. 142, 161r-162r, November 24, 1609.
88. ASV, Senato, terra, reg. 79, 146r-146v, and filza 193, December 15, 1609.
89. In the following September, two individuals submitted a request to the Cattaveri. Relating that on December 15, 1609, the Senate had authorized the Cattaveri to appoint two custodians who continuously would see to it that the Levantine (sic; presumably a slip of the pen) Jews not commit any fraud, they asked to be given that position. The Cattaveri approved the request, reiterating that their salary was to be paid by the Tedeschi Jews and stipulating that in order that they would be more diligent and faithful in carrying out their task, they were to be confirmed every six months; ASV, Cattaveri, b. 2, 6r-6v, September 13, 1610.

Then on August 26, 1611, the Cattaveri ordered the Heads of the Tedeschi Jews (Isaac Luzzatto, Caliman Calimani, Moise Naso, Lazaro Padovan, and Guglielmo del Medico) to assign the guards of the ghetto vecchio (probably the two new persons selected in 1610, and not the previously existing guards) their small hut, or otherwise the Cattaveri would have one made at the expense of the Jews; ASV, Cattaveri, b. 247, reg. 8, 288v, August 26, 1611. One of the two individuals selected in 1610 served until his death shortly before September 1, 1626, when the Cattaveri appointed an "overseer (*soprastante*) of the gates of the ghetto" in his place in accordance with the legislation of 1609; ASV, Compilazione delle Leggi, Ebrei, September 1, 1626. Presumably this new position did not affect the status of the "regular" guards who were in charge of opening and closing the ghetto gates at the stipulated hours. The appointment of a similar "overseer" to be with the guards of the gate of the ghetto nuovissimo is mentioned in a document of the Cattaveri of January 1635; ASV, Compilazione delle Leggi, Ebrei, January 16, 1634 (m.v.). Possibly this was the first such appointee, since the legislation establishing the ghetto nuovissimo was only enacted in March 1633; see Ravid, "The Establishment of the Ghetto Nuovissimo," p. 49.

90. Apparently nothing was ever done regarding this matter.
91. For some further details, see Ravid, "New Light on the Ghetti of Venice."
92. However, the conflict emerged again during the discussion over the charters of 1625 and 1636, and on other occasions; the latest reference I have encountered to date is in a report of the Cinque Savii of 1684. I plan to deal with this further in the expanded study mentioned in note 8, above.
93. ASV, Senato, terra, filza 199, June 29, 1611.
94. ASV, Senato, mar, filza 187, August 6, 1610; see S. Romanin, *Storia Documentata di Venezia*, 10 vols. (Venice, 1853-1861), 7:530-533; H. F. Brown, "The Commercial and Fiscal Policy of the Venetian Republic," in his *Studies in Venetian History*, 2 vols. (London, 1907), 1:358-359; G. Cozzi, *Il Doge Nicolo Contarini: ricerche sul patriziato veneziano agli inizi del seicento* (Venice-Rome, 1958), pp. 18-20, 139-147; D. Sella, *Commerci e industrie a Venezia nel secolo XVII* (Venice-Rome, 1961), pp. 38-40, and G. Cozzi, "Società veneziana, società ebraica," pp. 352-354. I will deal with this and cases of Western Christian merchants citing the permission granted to Jewish merchants to trade with the Levant as precedent for their own attempts to secure such privileges in a forthcoming article.

95. Eventually, in 1634, individual Tedeschi Jews were given permission to petition the Cinque Savii alla Mercanzia for the privilege to engage in the Levant trade; see Ravid, *Economics and Toleration*, pp. 37-38 and 126, and note 47, above. I am dealing more extensively with that development in a forthcoming article.
96. ASV, Senato, terra, filza 199, June 29, 1611; also CSM, reg. 143, 19r-23r, January 27, 1610 (m.v.).
97. For further details on the tax-assessing committee within the Jewish community around this time, see Malkiel, *A Separate Republic*, especially pp. 61-91 passim, with a chart on p. 63 which corroborates the membership figures of the committee as given by the Savii.
98. Actually, initially some individuals were given a charter authorizing them to engage in moneylending in return for annual payments to the treasury, while others paid for the privilege of engaging in the sale of second-hand goods; eventually, the two activities came together as the charters were granted to the Tedeschi Jews as a corporate body both requiring them to engage in moneylending and permitting them to trade in second-hand goods, while from 1573 on the requirement to make annual payment was dropped from the charters because of the low interest rates authorized; see Pullan, *Rich and Poor*, pp. 476-540; Mueller, "Charitable Institutions," p. 82; Ravid, "The Socioeconomic Background of the Expulsion."
99. A similar idea was expressed in a report of the Savii of 1636, in response to the question as to whether additional payments should be required of the merchants; see the extended study mentioned in note 8, above.
100. With typical Venetian conservatism, this wording was retained into the eighteenth century.
101. For further details on this issue, see Ravid, "Daniel Rodriga and the First Decade," pp. 206-209, 219-221.
102. I.e., presumably both allowed to pay customs duties at the lower rate established for Venetian subjects and also excused from contributions to the loan-banks.
103. It is unclear why the number of abstentions was so high. By way of comparison, the charter of 1589 had been approved by the vote of 110-11-13 and that of 1598, 94-6-16; in the future, the charter of 1625 would be approved 132-3-16, and that of 1636, 82-4-8. Since both the Cinque Savii and the Cattaveri favored the renewal of the charter, presumably the opposition was not to the charter itself but rather to certain of its provisions, but since no major

innovations were made and the next charter of 1625, approved by an overwhelming margin, repeated all of its terms, it is hard to determine what the problematic aspect was.