

## The Antwerp Joyous Entry of 1549 The Florentine-Genoese conflict as a window on the role of a trading nation in political cultural transfers

Christophe Schellekens<sup>\*</sup>

In 1549, Philip of Spain, son of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, embarked on a tour through his father's empire. It is well known that in the decades beforehand, coincidences of succession, warfare and deliberate efforts to buy support had brought the Low Countries and the larger part of the Italian Peninsula together in an empire with an unprecedented level of integration. Thus far, scholars have concentrated mainly on the transfer of a broad range of cultural knowledge and techniques between these two areas. Yet, apart from Lamal's recent work, research that seeks to trace and understand transfers of political information and culture between the two regions is rare and is dominated by a biographical approach. This is in spite of the flourishing of both research on political culture and on transfer since the 1980s.<sup>1</sup> This article, then, is an attempt to explore the utility and limits of the concepts of cultural transfer and translation in the examination of a sixteenth-century political conflict on ceremonial priority between two Italian communities in the Low Countries.

Amongst the variety of terms defining cultural transfers, exchanges, hybridity and translation, the latter has the metaphorical strength of representing the transfer and accommodation of a cultural object – when reflecting on translation in the strictest sense this object is of linguistic nature – from one culture to another.<sup>2</sup> In this article I show that processes of both translation and transfer, even when they imply transnational transactions, can have considerable limits. They can be of

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<sup>1</sup> N. Lamal, “Le orecchie si piene di Fiandra”. Italian news and histories on the Revolt in the Netherlands (1566-1648), Doctoral dissertation KU Leuven & University of St Andrews, 12 December 2014; H. Cools, ‘Philip of Cleves at Genoa: the Governor who failed’, in: J. Haemers, C. Van Hoorebeeck & H. Wijsman (eds.), *Entre la ville, la noblesse et l'état: Philippe de Clèves (1456-1528). Homme politique et bibliophile*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2007, pp. 101-115; C.R. Steen, *Margaret of Parma: A Life*, Leiden, Brill, 2013; On the political aspect and impact of information exchange, see the seminal study of De Vivo: F. De Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> P. Burke, *Cultural hybridity*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2009, pp. 55-61; P. Burke & R. Po-Chia Hsia (eds.), *Cultural translation in early modern Europe*, Cambridge-New York, Cambridge University Press, 2007.

intracultural rather than intercultural nature; they can remain unaccomplished, or, as far as can be deduced from the archival sources, their 'translation' and concrete use within the political context could be limited. The relevance and applicability of the terms depend, in the case presented below, in their delineation of the diachronic and geographically transregional re-appropriation of historical precedents for specific purposes in new political contexts. This delineation has the aim of defending 'national' identity and culture: national, in this case, not referring to the imperialising nation-state but designating, on the contrary, the cultural coherence of a geographically connected but dispersed community.

This article is a case study of a conflict over rank and priority in the Joyous Entry parade of Charles V and Philip of Spain in Antwerp in 1549. During the preparations for this exceptional event, a conflict regarding precedence in the parade occurred between the Florentine nation and the nation of Genoese merchants in Antwerp. Historians have hitherto studied the printed narrative accounts of this event with particular attention to the way the various authors described the conflict.<sup>3</sup> In these studies, however, no particular attention is paid to the questions on how and why the conflict occurred. In order to understand the nature of the conflict and its significance more fully, it is important to go beyond narrative sources. Unfortunately Antwerp archival sources seem to lack information on the subject. Interpreting this silence in the Antwerp archives is difficult, especially because a substantial number of her sources were destroyed in the Spanish Fury of 1576.<sup>4</sup> The existing Florentine correspondence on the subject has not been investigated. Yet the letters exchanged between the Florentine 'natio' in Antwerp, the Duke and his administration in Florence and the Florentine ambassador at the court of Charles V enable us to understand better how the conflict was fought out in the weeks prior to the actual Entry and how the Florentine argument to win the conflict was constructed. Primary sources produced by the Genoese nation have not been investigated for this article and have not been discussed by other authors that have investigated either the Joyous Entry of 1549 or the Genoese mercantile presence in Antwerp.<sup>5</sup>

As I will demonstrate, from the Florentine perspective, the conflict of 1549 in Antwerp was situated within a longer sequence of quarrels over precedence in processions throughout Europe. These previous disputes were transferred and translated into arguments that could endorse the Florentine case in Antwerp. I present the various geographical and temporal origins of these arguments and the process through which they were transferred and translated. Since the creation of the Florentine Duchy, its rulers, in particular the second Duke, Cosimo I, aspired recognition from other European sovereigns.<sup>6</sup> Cosimo I carefully constructed and reshaped his image as a ruler and had a long lasting dispute on ceremonial

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<sup>3</sup> S. Bussels, *Spectacle, Rhetoric and Power: The Triumphal Entry of Prince Philip of Spain into Antwerp*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2012, pp. 53-59; J.A. Goris, *Étude sur les colonies marchandes méridionales (portugais, espagnols, italiens) à Anvers de 1488 à 1567: contribution à l'histoire des débuts du capitalisme moderne*, Leuven, Librairie universitaire, 1925, pp. 78-79.

<sup>4</sup> On Antwerp archival sources on the Entry, see Bussels, *Spectacle, Rhetoric and Power*, cit., pp. 33-40.

<sup>5</sup> Beck discusses the participation of the Genoese nation in the Joyous Entry but does not elaborate on the quarrel with the Florentine nation: C. Beck, 'La nation genoise à Anvers de 1528 à 1555: étude économique et sociale', Doctoral dissertation, European University Institute, 1982, pp. 201-206.

<sup>6</sup> G. Spini, 'Il Principato dei Medici e il sistema degli stati europei del Cinquecento', in: *Firenze e la Toscana dei Medici nell' Europa del Cinquecento*, Firenze, Olschki, 1983, I, pp. 177-216.

precedence with the Este dynasty of Ferrara.<sup>7</sup> This article focuses on the way the Florentine nation in Antwerp was involved in Florentine efforts to gain precedence in ceremonies and how this was attempted through cultural transfers and translations of arguments for ceremonial precedence in the context of the Habsburg Empire.

The first part of this article sets the scene by introducing the context of the Antwerp Entry, the conflict and its main actors. The second part introduces the conflict by referring to the two main printed sources that discuss the ceremony: the official account of the Antwerp Entry by Cornelius Grapheus, and the description of Philip's travels by Juan Cristobal Calvete de Estrella. The third and main section closely examines the construction of the Florentine argument by looking at the correspondence between the Florentine nation in Antwerp and the government in Florence, in combination with the description of the conflict in the work of Lodovico Guicciardini. His work and his position as an observer of the conflict were different from those of Grapheus and Calvete de Estrella and with this in mind, I will show that as a member of the Florentine nation Guicciardini's narrative is influenced by insider knowledge.

The analysis of the case for precedence developed by the Florentine *natio* and the ducal secretary reveals that cultural transfers between the Low Countries and Italy included the transfer and translation of complex political information and concepts of power relations within cultural events. These processes should be understood in the context of the overarching political entity which was the Habsburg Empire. The Emperor's decisions affected politics in both the Genoese Republic and the Florentine Duchy. The rulers of these two polities therefor tried to gain favours from the Emperor that would benefit them.<sup>8</sup>

#### **1549: Antwerp, the Entry and the merchant community**

The importance of trade for Antwerp was a prominent theme in the Joyous Entry of 1549.<sup>9</sup> At the time of the Entry, Antwerp was one of the most attractive marketplaces for commerce and banking in Europe and possibly beyond.<sup>10</sup> Antwerp's financial market was an important place for the Habsburg monarchy to obtain credit.<sup>11</sup> Although commerce initially was the motor of Antwerp's success and the patrician city government supported an ideology of commerce, merchants were

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<sup>7</sup> H.Th. van Veen, *Cosimo I de' Medici and his self-representation in Florentine art and culture*, Cambridge-New York, Cambridge University Press, 2006; The Medici-Este conflict had started in 1541; for a brief general discussion and references to older monographs on the matter, see A. Contini, 'Aspects of Medicean Diplomacy in the Sixteenth Century', in: D. Frigo (ed.), *Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy: The Structure of Diplomatic Practice, 1450-1800*, Cambridge-New York, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 49-94, in particular p. 79. The conflict ran further for more than a decade at other ceremonial occasions; see G. Ricci, *Il principe e la morte: corpo, cuore, effigie nel Rinascimento*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1998, pp. 69 & 161; also see: T. Osborne, 'The Surrogate War between the Savoy and the Medici: Sovereignty and Precedence in Early Modern Italy', in: *The International History Review*, 29 (2007), pp. 1-21.

<sup>8</sup> A recent insightful analysis of the relation between Florence and the Habsburg empire can be found in N.S. Baker, *The fruit of liberty: political culture in the Florentine Renaissance, 1480-1550*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2013.

<sup>9</sup> Bussels, *Spectacle, Rhetoric and Power*, cit., pp. 96-101. Based on Bussels' analysis, it seems that commerce of goods received more attention than banking, which was another important aspect of Antwerp's success as marketplace.

<sup>10</sup> The classic account of the rise and fall of the Antwerp market remains H. Van der Wee, *The growth of the Antwerp market and the European economy (fourteenth-sixteenth centuries)*, Den Haag, Nijhoff, 1963.

<sup>11</sup> I. Blanchard, *The international economy in the "age of the discoveries", 1470-1570: Antwerp and the English merchants' world*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2009.

seldom directly involved in governing the city and did not acquire membership of the urban magistrate.<sup>12</sup>

The commercial and financial importance of Antwerp was not the main motive behind the Joyous Entry in Antwerp. The actual reason for the Entry was a juridical ceremony for the oaths of loyalty by Emperor Charles V's son Prince Philip on the one hand, and by the representatives of the Antwerp city government on the other.<sup>13</sup> From that *de jure*-perspective, the Entry was primarily an event of local importance. Yet given the commercial and financial role of Antwerp in the Habsburg monarchy, the passage of the Holy Roman Emperor and his future successor also appealed to the numerous merchant communities in Antwerp as a unique opportunity to present themselves. This made the Entry a *de facto* international event.

Antwerp had begun to turn into a truly international city when foreign merchants started to settle in Antwerp at the turn of the fifteenth century. By then, Antwerp was gradually taking over the role from Bruges as a central meeting point for international trade in the Low Countries and North Western Europe. Whereas Bruges was first and foremost a place of encounter between Northern German Hanse merchants and Southern European – mainly Italian – merchant bankers, this was not the case in Antwerp anymore.<sup>14</sup> The three groups of foreign merchants considered as the classic ‘pillars’ of Antwerp’s primacy were the Portuguese, the English and merchants from the South of Germany, while merchants from the Low Countries also contributed strongly to the success of the Antwerp market.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, Italian merchants remained a substantially present subgroup of foreign merchants in Antwerp.<sup>16</sup> Groups of these Italian merchant organized themselves in corporative structures and communities: apart from the Florentine nation, also a Genoese nation and a Lucchese community were present.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> A.M. Kint, ‘The ideology of commerce: Antwerp in the sixteenth century’, in: P. Stabel, B. Blondé & A. Greve (eds.), *International trade in the Low Countries (14th-16th centuries): merchants, organisation, infrastructure*, Leuven, Garant, 2000, pp. 213-222; Bussels, *Spectacle, Rhetoric and Power*, cit., p. 53.

<sup>13</sup> Bussels, *Spectacle, Rhetoric and Power*, cit., pp. 79-81.

<sup>14</sup> The debate on the transition from Bruges to Antwerp and the difference between these centres of trade is vast: see J.A. Van Houtte, ‘Bruges et Anvers, marchés “nationaux” ou “internationaux” du XIVe au XVIe siècle’, in: *Revue du Nord*, 34 (1952), pp. 89-108; B. Blondé, P. Stabel & O. Gelderblom, ‘Foreign merchant communities in Bruges, Antwerp and Amsterdam, c. 1350-1650’, in: S. Turk Christensen & D. Calabi (eds.), *Cultural exchange in early modern Europe: Cities and cultural exchange in Europe, 1400-1700*, Cambridge-New York, Cambridge University Press, 2007, II, pp. 154-174.

<sup>15</sup> J. Puttevils, *Merchants and trading in the sixteenth century: the golden age of Antwerp*, London, Pickering & Chatto, 2015.

<sup>16</sup> The argument that Italians remained an important group is made in R. Doehaerd, *Études anversoises: Documents sur le commerce international à Anvers, 1488-1514. Introduction*. Paris, SEVPEN, 1963, I, pp. 31-39; A general introduction to Italian trading nations abroad: G. Petti Balbi, ‘Le nationes italiane all’estero’, in: F. Franceschi, R.A. Goldthwaite & R.C. Mueller (eds.), *Commercio e cultura mercantile*, Treviso, Fondazione Cassamarca, 2007, pp. 397-423.

<sup>17</sup> Lombards were a fourth community, yet we know very little about that group. The most conspicuously absent Italians were the Venetians: trade with Venice had been largely taken over by merchants from the Low Countries. See: C. Beck, ‘Éléments sociaux et économiques de la vie des marchands génois à Anvers entre 1528 et 1555’, *Revue du Nord*, 64 (1982), pp. 759-784; Beck, ‘La nation génoise à Anvers de 1528 à 1555’, cit.; R. Sabbatini, ‘“Cercar esca”: Mercanti lucchesi ad Anversa nel Cinquecento’, Firenze, Salimbeni, 1985; J.L. Bolton & F. Guidi Bruscoli, ‘When did Antwerp replace Bruges as the commercial and financial centre of north-western Europe? The evidence of the Borromei ledger for 1438’, *Economic History Review*, 61, 2008, pp. 360-379; J. Puttevils, ‘Klein gewin brengt rijkdom in: de Zuid-Nederlandse handelaars in de export naar Italië in de jaren 1540’, *Tijdschrift voor sociale en economische geschiedenis*, 6 (2009), pp. 26-52.

The exact modalities of how and when the Florentine *natio* had moved from Bruges to Antwerp at the beginning of the sixteenth century remain unknown. Yet by the end of the fifteenth century, Florentines had already begun to come to Antwerp for the annual markets and increasingly throughout the year. In 1515, the Florentine and other nations had still participated in the Joyous Entry of the young Charles V in Bruges.<sup>18</sup> This indicates a longer tradition of participation of foreign mercantile communities in important festive occasions during visits of rulers to commercial centres in the Low Countries. After their transfer to Antwerp, the Florentine nation never drafted new statutes but continued to govern itself based on its partially outdated Bruges statutes.<sup>19</sup> The official recognition of the Florentine nation in Antwerp came in 1546, when Emperor Charles V recognized the consular rights of the head of the nation and gave other privileges.<sup>20</sup>

This recognition did not give an impulse to the success of the nation. The perceived decline of the nation in Antwerp and the regionalisation of Florentine trading network stood in strong contrast to the rise of Genoese merchant bankers, which was closely interconnected with the Habsburg monarchy. The Genoese republic provided naval services to the Habsburg Empire and throughout the sixteenth century, Genoese bankers became the primary financiers of the Spanish monarchy.<sup>21</sup> These two trends seem to have caused conflicts between the Florentine and Genoese nations. Recent research suggests that those occurred in regions where Genoese dominance rose.<sup>22</sup>

The nation was organized to a large extent as a community with a high degree of internal discipline, control and boundaries distinguishing Florentine merchants from outsiders. Its regulations were aimed at preserving the reputation of Florentine merchants and at protecting them from duplicitous outsiders. The *natio* was led by a consul and two advisors (*consiglieri*) who all had a mandate for one year and were elected by the enlisted members of the nation.

There are no indications that the Florentine nation and its members were monitored closely by its city of origin before the late 1560s. All the same the position of any mercantile community was affected by political changes in the host- and hometown. In the following sections I will show that the Florentine nation and its participation in the 1549 Joyous Entry were part of and affected by the political and mercantile network of its hometown.<sup>23</sup> I will demonstrate that this network functioned as a repository and as the infrastructure for the transfer and translation of political precedents that had occurred in other political and cultural contexts.

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<sup>18</sup> S. Anglo (ed.), *La tryumphante entrée de Charles prince des Espagnes en Bruges 1515*, Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1970, p. 14.

<sup>19</sup> G. Masi (ed.), *Statuti delle colonie fiorentine all'estero*, Milano, Giuffrè, 1941, pp. 3-33.

<sup>20</sup> C. Laurent, J. Lameere & H. Simont (eds.), *Recueil des ordonnances des Pays-Bas*, Brussel, Commission royale pour la publication des anciennes lois et ordonnances de la Belgique & J. Goemaere, 1910, V, pp. 296-298.

<sup>21</sup> T.A. Kirk, *Genoa and the Sea: Policy and Power in an Early Modern Maritime Republic, 1559-1684*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005; C. Dauverd, *Imperial ambition in the early modern Mediterranean: Genoese merchants and the Spanish Crown*, Cambridge-New York, Cambridge University Press, 2014.

<sup>22</sup> On the competition between Florentine and Genoese merchants in the South of Italy, see Dauverd, *Imperial ambition in the early modern Mediterranean*, cit., pp. 127-131.

<sup>23</sup> An overview of the qualities of and shifts in the Florentine network can be found in R.A. Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009, pp. 37-262.

### The Antwerp Entry in official printed accounts: the rank conflict and Florentine participation

The Entry of Charles and Philip was an important festive occasion which was rigorously prepared and directed by Cornelius Grapheus, secretary of the city of Antwerp. He also meticulously managed the afterlife of the events by writing an official account of the Entry which was published in Antwerp in 1550.<sup>24</sup> This account was illustrated by the renowned painter Pieter Coecke van Aelst. A second account of the Antwerp Entry was written by Juan Cristobal Calvete de Estrella, a member of Charles V's entourage, who integrated the text in his larger description of Charles' and Philip's journey through the Habsburg lands.<sup>25</sup> From these two sources we know that the conflict between the Florentine and the Genoese nations had not yet been settled by the time of Charles V's arrival in Antwerp. The Emperor was asked to judge the unsettled dispute and decide which party had the best arguments for precedence. He refused to do so and ordered both nations to withdraw from the parade.

Before turning to the sources that give us most details on the dispute, it is important to briefly investigate how the two most elaborate accounts present and treat the conflict. Calvete de Estrella spends forty folios on the Antwerp Entry, which corresponds to more than 10 percent of his account of Philip's entire journey.<sup>26</sup> His detailed description touches only briefly, however, upon the struggle between the Genoese and the Florentines.<sup>27</sup> He does include a description of the Florentine triumphal arch at the trajectory of the procession and of how the Florentine and Genoese delegations in the procession would have looked like but neither references comparative cases, nor mentions the arguments of the two nations for claiming priority.<sup>28</sup> The Spanish chronicler considered that the decision of Charles V not to settle the conflict in favour of one of the two nations but to expel the two delegations from riding the actual Entry was already more than sufficient as a sanction. In his work, he did clearly did not want to add to that punishment by excluding them from his account as well.<sup>29</sup>

Grapheus presents the Florentine and Genoese participation and even describes it as if their delegations had actually taken part in the Entry.<sup>30</sup> The decision of the Emperor to ban both *nationes* from riding is mentioned, but like Calvete de Estrella, Grapheus does not go into the exact cause of the quarrel, nor does he refer to previous conflicts between the two nations.<sup>31</sup> The Florentine triumphal arch, which was still included on the processional route after the exclusion of the delegation, is

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<sup>24</sup> Cornelius Grapheus & Pieter Coecke van Aelst, *De seer wonderlijcke, schoone, triumphelijcke incompst, van den hooghmogenden prince Philips, prince van Spaignen, Caroli des vijfden, keyserssone. Inde stadt van Antwerpen, anno M.CCCCC.XLIX*. Antwerpen, Gillis van Diest, 1550.

<sup>25</sup> Juan Cristóbal Calvete de Estrella, *El felicissimo viaje d'el... Principe don Phelippe, hijo d'el Emperador don Carlos Quinto Maximo, desde España à... Alemaña, con la descripcion de... Brabante y Flandes*, Antwerpen, Martin Nucio, 1552.

<sup>26</sup> *Ivi*, ff. 220-260.

<sup>27</sup> 'Dexaron de falir Ginovefes y Florentines por la diferencia, que tuieron enel preceder los vnos a los otros, y lo mismo los Portugueses, porque no precedieron a los Ingleses, teniendo ya todos hechos los vellidos muy costosos y ricos'. *Ivi*, f. 255 r.

<sup>28</sup> *Ivi*, ff. 236 v -237 r & 255 v-256 v.

<sup>29</sup> Bussels, *Spectacle, Rhetoric and Power*, cit., p. 55.

<sup>30</sup> Grapheus & Aelst, *De seer wonderlijcke, schoone, triumphelijcke incompst*, cit., ff. C i v & C ii v - C ii v: 'Ende hun incomen soude geweest hebben aldus'. Also discussed in Bussels, *Spectacle, Rhetoric and Power*, cit., p. 54.

<sup>31</sup> Grapheus & Aelst, *De seer wonderlijcke, schoone, triumphelijcke incompst*, cit., f. C i v.

described and illustrated in detail, and Grapheus even lists the number of artists – carpenters, painters and image cutters – who had contributed to the arch.<sup>32</sup>

These two elaborate accounts of the Entry are of limited value to understanding the nature of the quarrel. They mention the dispute, but do not elaborate upon its build-up. There are no indications of any implicit judgment in favour of one of the two nations. As Bussels remarks, Grapheus' narrative is more an official scenario of the event as it *should* have been rather than a post-factum recount of the actual event.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, Calvete de Estrella's choice not to present details of the conflict and to include the would-be Entry of the two Italian nations, is one example of how the Spanish chronicler did not go into incidents that might be considered a stain on the Entry.<sup>34</sup> In order to grasp the quarrel better, we should turn to more detailed sources, all of which have a Florentine background.

### Translating arguments for precedence: Florentine correspondence on the conflict

Before going into the correspondence between the Florentine nation in Antwerp and the home government in Florence, it is necessary to investigate a third, less evident but all the more relevant, printed source. Seventeen years after the event, the Florentine Lodovico Guicciardini completed his famous *Descrittione di tutti i Paesi Bassi* and had it published in Antwerp.<sup>35</sup> Together with his brother Giovan Battista, Lodovico had arrived in the Low Countries in the 1520s to run the Antwerp branch of the Guicciardini firm. Although the Antwerp branch of his family business was unsuccessful, Lodovico remained in the city and started to engage in intellectual activities.<sup>36</sup> However, around the time of the publication of the *Descrittione* in 1567, Guicciardini still played an active role in the Florentine *natio* in Antwerp.<sup>37</sup>

In his elaborate description and discussion of the city of Antwerp, Guicciardini also goes into the Joyous Entry of 1549, presenting it as one of the three most noteworthy events that had taken place in Antwerp in recent history.<sup>38</sup> Guicciardini discusses the leading role of Grapheus in organizing the Entry and its official account, and praises the contributions of Ambrosio Schiappalare to the Genoese arch.<sup>39</sup> However, the disagreements on precedence are discussed and contextualized far more substantially in his account than in those of Grapheus and Calvete de Estrella.

Guicciardini begins by indicating that apart from the conflict between the Italians, three other conflicts between merchant communities in Antwerp occurred in

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<sup>32</sup> *Ivi*, ff. G iii v - H ii r & f. O iii r.

<sup>33</sup> Bussels, *Spectacle, Rhetoric and Power*, cit., p. 55.

<sup>34</sup> *Ivi*, 47. Calvete de Estrella also did not discuss an incident of inappropriate behaviour by the crowd at the scene depicting the Mint.

<sup>35</sup> Lodovico Guicciardini, *Descrittione di tutti i paesi bassi, altrimenti detti germania inferiore*, Antwerpen, G. Silvius, 1567.

<sup>36</sup> D. Aristodemo, 'Guicciardini, Lodovico', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (2004) [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/lodovico-guicciardini\\_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/>](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/lodovico-guicciardini_(Dizionario-Biografico)/>) (29 June 2014).

<sup>37</sup> Lodovico was *consigliere* of the nation in 1568, see A. Grunzweig, 'Les papiers du magistrat des consulats aux archives d'état de Florence', in: *Bulletin de l'Institut historique belge de Rome*, 12, 1932, pp. 5-59, there p. 29.

<sup>38</sup> Apart from the Entry, the two other noteworthy events were the siege laid to Antwerp by Maarten van Rossem in 1542 and the riots of 1554: Guicciardini, *Descrittione di tutti i paesi bassi*, cit., pp. 84-88.

<sup>39</sup> *Ivi*, p. 86; Like Guicciardini, Schiappalaria was an unsuccessful Italian merchant who became active as an author in Antwerp, see: K. Bostoen, 'Italian Academies in Antwerp: Schiappalaria and Van der Noot as "Inventors" for the Genoese Community', in: D. S. Chambers & F. Quiviger (eds.), *Italian academies of the sixteenth century*, London, University of London Warburg institute, 1995, pp. 195-204.

the run-up towards the Entry. He states that the Italians as a whole group ‘with good reasons’, upon which he does not elaborate, claimed the primary position among the foreign communities. However, because of the absence of a common Italian ‘head’ and the occupation of a substantial part of Italy by foreigners, this was not granted.<sup>40</sup> Then, Guicciardini briefly sums up the other three disputes on rank between the Danish, the ‘Easterlings’ and the Germans, between the Spanish and the Germans, and between the Portuguese and the English. All these conflicts were either settled before the arrival of the Emperor or decided by the Emperor upon his arrival.

Guicciardini presents the dispute between the Florentines and the Genoese at the end of this discussion, explaining that this was the only one not to be settled in favour of any of the two parties involved. In order to avoid armed conflict between the members of both nations Charles V prohibited both delegations from participating in the Entry and ordered them to return to their homes, even though they were well prepared and ready to ride their horses.<sup>41</sup> Guicciardini adds that the King of France, at that time Henry II, had decided a similar situation in favour of the Florentines the year before in Lyon. According to Guicciardini, this decision had been motivated by the precedence the Florentines held in Rome. The *Descrittione* thus offers more tantalizing clues to the conflict than the two other narrative sources. But it is thanks to the correspondence between the Florentine nation in Antwerp, the government in Florence and the Florentine ambassador at Charles V’s court that we can glean how all these different Florentines were involved in collecting and crafting arguments to gain precedence in Antwerp.

The letters are kept in the State Archives in Florence as part of the ‘Carteggio di Cosimo’ and of the minutes of Cosimo’s outgoing letters.<sup>42</sup> The exchange of these letters discussing the Florentine position started on 3 August 1549. On that day Nicolo Rondinelli, the consul of the Florentine nation in Antwerp, and his two advisors wrote a lengthy letter to the Duke of Florence informing him that within a month a Joyous Entry will be organised in honour of the Prince of Spain.<sup>43</sup> They further explained that the Antwerp government had asked the foreign trading communities to participate in this event.<sup>44</sup> However, the claim of the Genoese nation that it should have precedence over the Florentine nation had become a cause of trouble between the two nations: ‘et intra l’altri di andati in lor compagnia ad incontrarla et riceverla è nata difficulta che la nazione Genovese pretende dover preceder’ alla nostra, et con ogni industria et diligenza si sforza di rimostrare tale

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<sup>40</sup> ‘& prima gli Italiani di voler’ procurar’ di precedere con bonnissime ragioni a tutte le altre nationi, piu volte fra loro strettamente divisarono: ma considerato poi che Italia non ha un’ capo solo, & che essa per le sue discordie, è in buona parte da gli stranieri suggiugata, altra impresa non ne fecero.’ Guicciardini, *Descrittione di tutti i paesi bassi*, cit., p. 86.

<sup>41</sup> ‘accioche fra loro qualche disordine d’arme non seguisse’, *Ibidem*.

<sup>42</sup> I retrieved seven letters on the subject. In chronological order these are: Firenze, Archivio di Stato (hereafter ASF), *Mediceo del Principato (hereafter MdP) 394*, carte (hereafter cc.) 15 r - 16 r: the consul and consiglieri in Antwerp to Cosimo I, 3 August 1549; *MdP 393*, cc. 772 r - 773 r, Niccolò Rondinelli (consul) to Bernardo Antonio de’ Medici (indicated as ‘Vescovo di Forli’), 5 August 1549; *MdP 14*, cc. 200 r-v, Cosimo I to the consul and consiglieri in Antwerp, 20 August 1549; *MdP 14*, c 200 v, Cosimo I to Bernardo Antonio de’ Medici, 20 August 1549; *MdP 14*, c 207 r, Cosimo I to the consul and consiglieri in Antwerp, 20 August 1549; *MdP 393*, cc. 775 r-v, Consul Niccolo Rondinelli to Bernardo Antonio de’ Medici, 31 August 1549; *MdP 393*, c 776 r, Consul Niccolo Rondinelli to Bernardo Antonio de’ Medici, 31 August 1549.

<sup>43</sup> ASF, *MdP 394*, cc. 15 r - 16 r.

<sup>44</sup> ‘havendo li Signori del governo di detta villa richiesta insieme con l’altre natione forestiere la nostra ancora di volere honorianda Sua Altezza’, *MdP 394*, c. 15 r. Abbreviations in the original have been written fully and to some extent spelling is modernized (the use of u/v is adapted to modern Italian standards) for a better reading.

precedentia ad essa appartenersi'.<sup>45</sup> The remainder of the letter details the arguments the Genoese nation has used and the Florentine's counterarguments. Two days later, Rondinelli sent a similar letter to Bernardo Antonio de Medici, Bishop of Forli and Florentine diplomat in the entourage of Charles V.<sup>46</sup> With these two letters, the consul of the Florentine nation in Antwerp informed both the highest authority in his hometown, and the most important Florentine agent close to the Emperor. Directly involving them was apparently considered as the best strategy to gain information that could benefit the case of the nation in Antwerp.

Rondinelli's letters give a good insight into the development of the Florentine arguments to counter claims made by the Genoese *natio*. His two letters elaborate upon the Genoese claim and relate it to the precedence the Genoese claimed to have gained from Charles V in Granada in 1525/6, in accordance with the Genoese precedence at the Roman court under the pontificate of 'Julio', Julius II (1503-1513). Then, 17 years later, at the coronation of Charles V in Bologna in 1530, the Genoese also had precedence.<sup>47</sup> The Genoese case for precedence was thus built on previous concessions given roughly a quarter of a century earlier. Rondinelli and his advisors countered these claims explaining that there had not been any Florentines present in either Granada or Bologna. Moreover, they were critical of the claim of Genoese precedence under Julius II, who was 'of their nation', suggesting that because Julius was born in the Genoese territory of Savona, he was not a neutral arbiter.<sup>48</sup>

Apart from countering the Genoese legitimations for claiming precedence, the Florentine consul also referred to two cases where the Florentine *natio* had gained precedence over the Genoese: at the Roman court in an undated papal procession for Corpus Christi, and in 1548, when they had obtained a confirmation from the French king at his Entry into Lyon.

Ma che possiamo ben noi mostrar', che nella corte Pontificale nel portar' il Baldacchino del Corpus Divino alla processione Papale divine intervengono per grado et per dignità tutte le Nationi che vi si trovano, la nostra Natione doppo la Milanese ha preceduto allo Genovese et la Genovese haver preso il Baldacchino doppo la nostra, come ultimamente nel tempo del presente Pontefice: et frescamente dal Re cristianissimo nella entrata di Lione, que luna et l'altra nation' era punte essere stato dichiarato che la nostra dovesse precedere alla loro.<sup>49</sup>

These two letters from the beginning of August 1549 do not, however, reveal how consul Rondinelli had gathered his information to counter the Genoese precedents and develop a solid argument for Florentine priority. It seems likely that the Entry of the French king to Lyon a year earlier and especially the role the Florentine community played in this context had come to the attention of members of the Florentine nation in Antwerp. Since Lyon was at that time a centre of commerce with an important Florentine mercantile community, the city was well connected to Antwerp and we may assume the nation in Antwerp benefited from that connection.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> ASF, MdP 394, c. 15 r.

<sup>46</sup> ASF, MdP 393, cc. 772-773. On Bernardo, see: B. Vanni, 'Medici, Bernardo de'', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 2009, [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bernardo-de-medici\\_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/>](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bernardo-de-medici_(Dizionario-Biografico)/>) (consulted 25 January 2015).

<sup>47</sup> ASF, MdP 394, c. 15 r. In the letter of the consul to Bernardo Antonio de' Medici this argument is also mentioned: 'etche tra li acti delli Ambasciadori, come ultimamente in Bologna nella coronation di S.M il medesimo era stato confermato', ASF, MdP 393, c. 772 r.

<sup>48</sup> ASF, MdP 393, c. 772 r.

<sup>49</sup> ASF, MdP 394, cc. 15 r-v.

<sup>50</sup> G. Iacono & S.E. Furone, *Les marchands banquiers florentins et l'architecture à Lyon au XVIe siècle*, Paris, Publisud, 1999.

It remains far less clear how Rondinelli had obtained his factual knowledge on the other events he referred to in order to repudiate the Genoese arguments. Nevertheless, his two letters and the answers from Florence provide us with some insight in the Florentine means of promoting their case for precedence, which were further crafted in the weeks to follow.

An important aspect of the quarrel was the demand for written proof that supported the respective claims. This was needed, since both the Antwerp city government (referred to as 'gli signori della villa' by consul Rondinelli) and Maria of Hungary, the governess of the Low Countries, were reviewing the case.<sup>51</sup> Rondinelli mentions in his letter that in front of the *signori*, the Genoese nation delivered an oral testimony about their claims.<sup>52</sup> In reaction to this, the Florentines asked the *signori* for written proof of the Genoese claims.<sup>53</sup> In requesting this proof from the Genoese, the Florentines, for their part, were quick and eager to assemble the necessary documents to support their own case. Rondinelli asked Duke Cosimo I for written proof of any case where Florentines had held precedence over Genoese.<sup>54</sup> Rondinelli had already figured out that the Siennese held precedence over the Genoese, and since Florence held precedence over Sienna, that would be an extra argument in favour of his case. Thus an authentic copy of the document that could prove this claim was requested.<sup>55</sup> Documents that could prove the hostility of Julius II towards Florence and the preference of the Roman master of ceremonies towards the Genoese in the days of Julius II were also requested in order to further discredit the Genoese position.<sup>56</sup>

Unfortunately, the outgoing correspondence of Bernardo Antonio de' Medici has not been kept in the Medici archive, but the surviving minutes of the outgoing correspondence of Cosimo to the Florentine nation in Antwerp and to Bernardo Antonio demonstrate how the case is followed both in Florence and in Rome.<sup>57</sup> In Florence, the public records were searched for any relevant documents for the case. A courier was sent to the Florentine ambassador in Rome to notify him that he needed to find proof of the cases where the Florentine had held precedence over the Genoese at the Papal court. The letter detailed how the ambassador had to obtain such documents with the master of the papal household being urged to check his papers. Any document that was favourable for the Florentine case had to be copied by an authorized notary and the copy was to be returned as quickly as possible.<sup>58</sup> Aside from these instructions to the Florentine ambassador in Rome, Bernardo Antonio de' Medici was also urged to influence the Duke of Alva, a relative of Duke Cosimo I and at that time the *major-domo* of Charles V in his capacity as the King of Spain, to seek for any arguments in favour of the Florentine nation.

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<sup>51</sup> 'perche la Majesta della Regina d'Ungheria come Governatrice del paese per la istanza prima fatta à sua Majesta cesare per supplica, dalla nostra natione, che ne fusse conservato la precedenza gia in altri luoghi acquistata, ha scritto qui alli prefati del governo della villa che intendino le ragione delle parti, et à lei riferiscano per deliberarli seconda troverra per consiglia', ASF, *MdP* 393, c. 15 r.

<sup>52</sup> 'la nation di Genova ha soto verbalmente allegati le cose sopradette in favor suo, ne ha per ancora prodotto per iscritto alcune delle predette ragioni allegate', ASF, *MdP* 394, c. 15 r.

<sup>53</sup> 'Per ilche habbiamo ultimamente fatto istanza alli predette signori della villa che dinuovo richieggiano li Genovesi à produrre in scritto quelle chiarezze con le quala intendono valersi et' ricusando la che cene diano un Atto et cosi han detto di fare', ASF, *MdP* 393, c. 15 v.

<sup>54</sup> ASF, *MdP* 394, c. 15 v.

<sup>55</sup> ASF, *MdP* 394, c. 16 r.

<sup>56</sup> ASF, *MdP* 394, c. 16 r.

<sup>57</sup> ASF, *MdP* 14, cc. 200 r-v & *MdP* 14, cc. 200 v-201 v.

<sup>58</sup> ASF, *MdP* 14, c. 201 r.

The efforts of the Florentine ambassadors were fruitful. On 20 August, the Duke sent a letter to the heads of the *natio* in Antwerp.<sup>59</sup> The search in the Florentine archives had not resulted in any relevant findings but the previous night a courier had returned from Rome with a *fede*, a trustworthy document delivered by the master of ceremonies of the Holy See. This document confirmed that for years, the Florentine delegation had held precedence over the Genoese delegation in the annual Corpus Christi procession in Rome. In Cosimo's view, this statement, in combination with the argument that the King of France had granted precedence to the Florentine nation in Lyon a year earlier, strengthened the Florentine case considerably.<sup>60</sup> The documents were duly sent to Antwerp where they were presumably well received by the consul.

No further correspondence on the case beyond the 31<sup>st</sup> August can be traced in the archives of the Florentine Duke. This lack of additional correspondence appears to indicate that there was no structural monitoring of the nation by the Florentine government. In his last letter, Cosimo I did not explicitly request any further updates on the matter nor did the *natio* have any routine of continuously reporting on Antwerp affairs to the Duke.<sup>61</sup>

More importantly, the lack of correspondence suggests that the process of crafting the Florentine argument happened *ad hoc* with a strong sense of urgency. The various backgrounds of the arguments for Florentine priority make this clear. The Genoese arguments (priority in Granada and at the coronation of Charles in Bologna) were both strongly linked to the Emperor. The Florentine arguments were not related to the Habsburg sphere but to priority granted by the Pope and the king of France, two rulers who challenged the Emperor on every level. The Florentines considered both cases as valid arguments to counter the older cases of Genoese priority.

In his analysis of the Antwerp Entry, Jochen Becker suggests that the Florentine arch, which was nevertheless a feature of the Entry processional route, contained the rhetoric of a Florentine challenge to the Emperor's superior position.<sup>62</sup> It would, however, be going perhaps too far to interpret the non-Habsburg background of the Florentine arguments for priority in the parade as a similar challenge. The desire to gain priority was too strong to take such a risk. As noted above, in the years before and after the Antwerp Entry, Florentines were involved in several quarrels for precedence in ceremonies. However, the lack of reflections in the correspondence on the different nature and background of the Florentine and Genoese precedents remains revealing. It suggests that the Habsburg political and cultural context was not considered as the only evident framework of reference in which reasons for priority could be found.

Finally, it is important to note that the arguments used by the Florentine nation were judged relevant enough to find their way into Guicciardini's *Descrittione* seventeen years later. For a reader of Guicciardini unfamiliar with the particularities

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<sup>59</sup> ASF, MdP 14, c. 207 r.

<sup>60</sup> ASF, MdP 14, c. 207 r.

<sup>61</sup> Although much more research on this is required, it seems that these observations are in line with a separation between political and economic affairs that Richard Goldthwaite observed for the fifteenth century: R.A. Goldthwaite, 'The Medici Bank and the World of Florentine Capitalism', in: *Past & Present*, 114, 1, 1987, pp. 3-31; Compare to the strong monitoring practices of the Venetian state: De Vivo, *Information and Communication*, cit.

<sup>62</sup> J. Becker, "'Greater than Zeuxis and Apelles': Artists as Arguments in the Antwerp Entry of 1549", in: J. R. Mulryne & E. Goldring (eds.), *Court festivals of the European Renaissance: art, politics, and performance*, Aldershot-Burlington, Ashgate, 2002, pp. 180-184.

of the dispute, the single sentence on the Florentine precedence gained in Lyons in 1548 seems odd. It gives the impression that Guicciardini tried to settle the case in favour of the Florentines, thus implicitly criticising the decision of the Emperor. Through Guicciardini's printed text the arguments for Florentine precedence became accessible to a larger audience. In that way, the *Descrittione* became a publicly accessible repository of knowledge about the handling of the dispute in Antwerp in 1549. Later generations of Florentine, and possibly other foreign, merchants throughout Europe could therefore potentially benefit from this knowledge.<sup>63</sup>

### **Transfer and translations of precedence: a conclusive reflection**

The dispute over rank between the Florentine and Genoese trading nations in Antwerp in 1549 shows that political culture, information and arguments were important matters of transfer between the Low Countries and Italy. The analysis of the correspondence in Florence allows a better understanding of how the gathering of knowledge and information on aspects of political culture occurred and how important it was for the Florentine government to act in such a way.

The Florentine nation and its home government went to great lengths to win the case. The collecting and shaping of the evidence for the Florentine case seems to have been driven more by urgency to find any solid argument than by extensive reflections on the nature and qualities of those arguments. Paradoxically, neither the political context of the city of Antwerp and the Low Countries, nor the overarching Habsburg political context were explicitly taken into consideration in the deliberation on how to gain precedence.

The circumstances of Antwerp as a centre of commerce under Habsburg rule do in particular differ from those of the earlier cases that had taken place in primarily religious (Rome) and non-Habsburg (Lyon) ceremonial contexts. The different conditions of these contexts allow us to consider the process under scrutiny as a one of cultural transfer and translation. Through processes of transfer and translation, earlier cases of Florentine precedence were used in the primarily commercial and Habsburg context of the Antwerp Entry of 1549. The correspondence shows the practical details of collecting relevant information on previous disputes and the transfer of arguments from the government in Florence to the Florentine nation in Antwerp. The actors involved (the members of the nation in Antwerp, the Duke in Florence, the ambassador at the court of Charles V and the Florentine delegation in Rome) were all part of the Florentine network. From a perspective that focuses on infrastructure and actors, the process was primarily intracultural.

By observing how the Florentine argument was crafted in this case, we notice that Florence functioned as a coordinating centre of transfers and translations, or as a storehouse of information coming from outside the region and transferred elsewhere (*i.e.* Antwerp). This is exemplified by the two cases used as arguments for Florentine precedence, which originated outside the Florentine Duchy. The common denominator between Rome, Lyons and Antwerp was that members of the Florentine network were active as diplomats or merchant-bankers in these locations and were involved in a ceremony where they held precedence over the Genoese. Yet, the transfer and translation process was not finished by sending the letter from Florence to the nation in Antwerp. Members of the Florentine nation must have had the intention to translate the two cases to the context of the Antwerp Entry in front of

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<sup>63</sup> The influence of previous sources on Guicciardini has been studied, see several contributions in P. Jodogne (ed.), *Lodovico Guicciardini, 1521-1589: actes du Colloque international des 28, 29 et 30 mars 1990*, Brussel, Ed. de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1991. The intellectual afterlife and especially the use of the *Descrittione* by travellers and (Florentine) merchants has not yet been investigated.

the Antwerp magistrates, the organizers of the Entry, to the governess, and eventually to Charles V. On that last step, the sources remain silent.

Moreover, the temporal framework of these transfers was layered as well. The correspondence through which the argument for Florentine precedence was transferred took place over a period of about one month. But the temporal framework of the arguments was much longer, tracing cases back over decades. Through Guicciardini's *Descrittione*, in particular, the quarrel also became a potential *future* point of reference after the event had taken place.

Despite the fact that most of the transfer process occurred inside the Florentine network, it is important to stress that this was not a purely intracultural Florentine transfer within that network. The process took place because of an event that was not primarily Florentine. Neither were the parties that had to be convinced. Also, the subject of the transfer – the arguments from Lyon and Rome – originated within a non-Florentine context. The intracultural Florentine nature of the infrastructure and the actors involved was thus transcended by the extra cultural qualities of the all the ceremonial occasions mentioned.

These paradoxical qualities of the process under scrutiny complicate a qualification of the process as a cultural transfer or a cultural translation. Translation implies the transfer of cultural objects from one distinctive cultural setting to another. The case presented in this articles fits into that model only to a certain degree. Translation also entails an effort to adapt those objects (*in casu* the arguments for precedence taken from Lyons and Rome) to the particularities of the context on the receiving end of the process (*i.e.* the Antwerp Entry of 1549), However, none of the actors involved in the process of collecting the arguments reflected on that in their letters. Their agency was limited to transferring activities, not to developing strategies to insert the transferred cases into the context of the Antwerp Entry.

### **Keywords**

Florentine trading nation, Antwerp, Joyous Entry, cultural transfer, precedence

**Christophe Schellekens** is a PhD-researcher in history at the European University Institute. His dissertation studies the Florentine and Lucchese merchant communities in sixteenth-century Antwerp, with special attention to their relation with their home regions. Before starting his PhD, he worked at the research group for Early Modern history at the University of Leuven. He holds degrees in history and in Medieval and Renaissance studies from the University of Antwerp and the University of Leuven.

Via Boccaccio 121  
50133 Firenze (Italy)  
christophe.schellekens@eui.eu

## **RIASSUNTO**

### **La felice entrata ad Anversa del 1549**

#### **Il conflitto fiorentino-genovese come una finestra sul ruolo di una nazione commerciale in transfer culturali politici**

In quest'articolo sono esaminati vari documenti a proposito delle iniziative che la nazione italiana ad Anversa e il governo fiorentino presero per ottenere la precedenza sulla nazione genovese nel corteggio della felice entrata di Carlo V ad Anversa, nel 1549. Un'analisi della corrispondenza fiorentina vuole offrire una ricostruzione empirica dell'impegno dimostrato dalla comunità fiorentina a questo riguardo. Benché la rete comunicativa sia di carattere transnazionale e la corrispondenza si basi su esempi del passato avvenuti in diversi contesti culturali, l'analisi svela alcuni aspetti che comprometterebbero un'interpretazione in termini di transfer o di traslazione, poiché lo scambio di informazioni ha luogo principalmente all'interno della comunità fiorentina.