

Medieval Bari: A Multiethnic City

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Abstract

Since the Byzantine period, the city of Bari has been presenting a composite population formed by numerous ethnic groups coming from the Mediterranean basin. Enquires have been often and accurately done on the causes of the presence of these ethnic communities and they have been identified in: regional migrations, dominations and invasions, political-economic treaties. Moreover the composition of the different communities and their internal organization such as: Hebrew, inhabitants of Ravello, Venetians and Milanese people have been studied.

Keywords: Medieval Bari, Multiethnic city, Ethnic communities.

1. Introduction

Contemporary cities reproduce problems that many of our cities have already lived in the past: that is the co-presence of various ethnic groups. However the causes that have produced their presence are different; the ancient invasions and foreign dominations have been substituted today by legal or illegal fluid streams of immigrants in many cases provoked by the profound economical differences which today globalization has produced. As a consequence globalization fosters contact with the Other as far as its basic concept is mobility. At the same time globalization is not able to give solutions to the questions concerning the norms and rules to follow and the behaviour to adopt towards the Other, so that this encounter should not become problematic.

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The encounter between the I and the Other may generate conflicts, rejections, aggressive behaviour, for example against the Muslims or rather what they represent for us. In this case “it is not identity as such to act but the actors or better the historical subjects who guided by certain forms and perspectives of more or less strong and exclusive identity, create various strategies towards Alterity” (Remotti, 1996: 99). Anyway these strategies should be diversified and should foresee forms of dialogue and communication.

If today these strategies are still difficult to achieve, I would like to understand what has happened in the distant past when the I encountered the Other. I will take into consideration Medieval Bari.

2. Bari and its quarters

The aim of this contribution is to depict how in the Middle Ages the population of Bari became more and more multiethnic and to try to outline the problems that such coexistence posed.

Drawing on the works of medieval authors, I intend to describe what the city looked like in the Middle Ages and the way it was seen by those who visited it. Amato di Montecassino (1999: 211) so described it: “Bari est les troiz pars en mer” [three parts of Bari jut out into the sea], but apart from its peninsularity another aspect which was widely appreciated and that was noticed by Monk Bernard – between 864 and 866 – was its double city walls, which defended the city from the adjoining countryside.

Its inhabitants lived quietly there, “turribus suis fidentes” [trusting in their own towers]. According to Iorio (1999: 53), such towers “must have characterized not only the residential architecture, but also the defensive architecture of Bari”.

From the XI century onwards the city turned out to be more and more crammed with houses, and when the urban texture became too dense, houses began to stretch upwards (*casella oreatella*). The road network was made up of widenings that were “*streetae et strictulae*” [narrow and narrowest], i.e the city looked the same as now, while the sparse network of gardens scattered here and

there has completely disappeared, leaving no memory whatsoever.

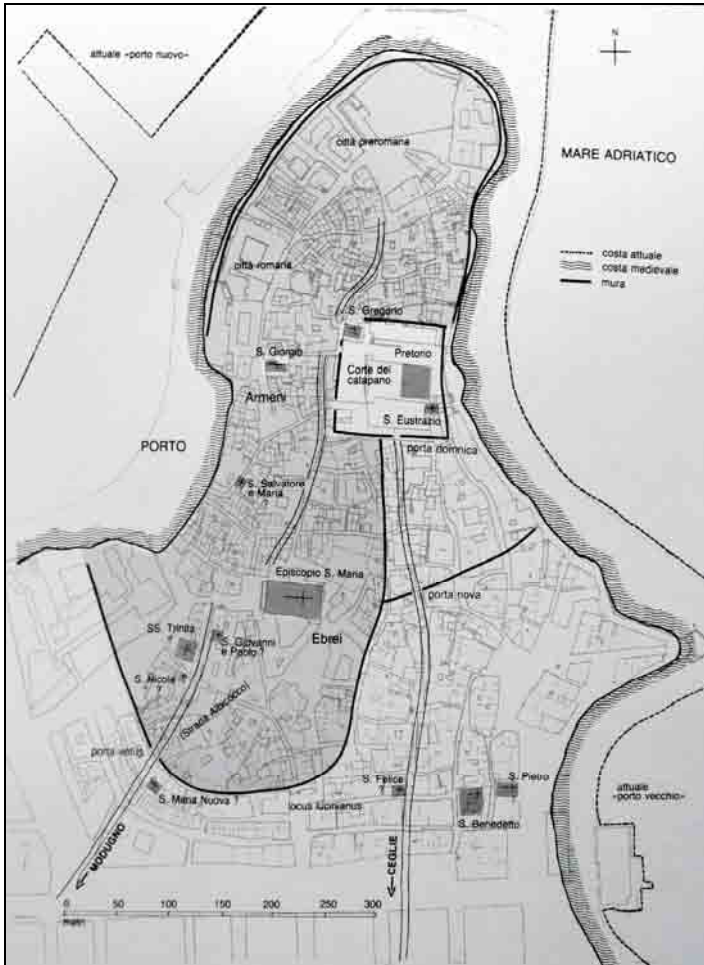
It is worthwhile, though, to outline a brief historical evolution of the population composition of Bari and why and how it became more and more multiethnic.

2.1 The Byzantine Period

Giosuè Musca (1981: 25) describes what Bari looked like in the XI century; in his words, it appeared “a rural-urban complex, spreading in the form of a crescent around the port, which was the heart of city life and constituted its vital bond with the Byzantine East”. This period is characterized by a sensible development of building activities. The city presents a west door (or Porta Vetus) and a Porta Nova on the southern side. Of a certain importance, thanks to the fact that many people went through it, it is the road that from the sea leads towards the interland of the territory, in the direction of Ceglie which in a document of 1036 is called “bia mare matina”. (cdb I, 19, a 1036). The stability of Byzantine rule had had as a consequence the arrival of large numbers of immigrants; the latter came either from the near hinterland, from Byzantium or from countries under Byzantine rule; still others came from Armenia or the Balkans.

This ethnic variety turns out to be even wider if one considers that many other ethnic groups had previously settled down in the city: Jews, Moors, Slavs, Lombards. The presence of all these groups and the thriving trading and building activities (all along the city walls there were towers, *casili*, i.e. medieval houses, and *pagliai*, porches where hay was stacked) turned Bari into a densely populated city: hence the decision to extend its city walls.

To conclude we may affirm using F. Carabellese’ words “that it was not of little relevance for the South (that is Bari and Apulia) the fact that it remained united to the East for many centuries, so that it was in the condition to know all about the social, economical and commercial traffics that took place in the east basin of the Mediterranean Sea” (original edition 1905, 2011: 35) and also he adds “the costal towns were, about 1000, the pioners of the Mediterranean commercial activity and paved the way to



Map 1 – Bari during the Byzantine Period
(drawn from Musca, 1981)

the coming of the new era of the Commons and of the Crusades [...]. Thence it derived this prosperity and citizenships' liberty which became more and more important during the IX and the X centuries, which, in reality, the byzantine dominion disappeared" (Carabellese, 2011: 36).

2.2 The Norman Period

During the Norman period the city of Bari – from the urbanistic point of view – was made up of houses gathered around a *corte* [yard] that was provided also with a well and a “viridarium”, i.e. a small garden with trees (cfr. Musca, 1981: 42). Exactly immediately outside the walls, orchards and vineyards extended and among them a certain number of *hospitales* for travellers were presents.

This urban fervour (see also what is written later) had a sudden stop in 1156, the date when the city and its walls were destroyed by William II and so it was abandoned for over ten years.

Some quarters were named after the most powerful families living in them (for instance: Vicinia de Alfaranitis), whose houses were fortified with multi-floor towers. Churches also were sometimes named after the notable who lived nearby or who had had it built (for example: San Giorgio de Kyri Adralisto).

The numerous travellers who arrived in Bari went along the main public road, that is Ruga Francigena which goes beyond Porta Nava and encounters outside the walls monastery of San Benedetto and then to go on towards Brindisi. From Porta Vetus, on the contrary, near the extra-urban churches of Saint-Simon and Saint Giuda, that were located in Ruga hospitiorum, there starts the road which directs towards Modugno – Bitonto and then it connects with Via Traiana.

Step by step Bari began to attract more and more people both from the near hinterland and from the whole region; immigrants flowed in from Valenzano, Bitonto, Capurso, Bitritto, Grumo, Monopoli, Giovinazzo, Taranto, Gallipoli and Matera. Other, smaller groups of immigrants also came from more distant places, such as Amalfi, Ravello, Rome, Padua, Venice, Tuscany and even from faraway Toulouse, Hungary and Burgundy.

Byzantines were still present, and they made up most of the ranks of the city's notaries. During this periods Bari becomes more complex from a social point of view: veterinaries, ship-owners, builders, goldsmiths, shoemakers, peasants who all constituted the middle class.

In the last decade of the XI century the local economy flourished even more, thanks to the trade routes related to the Crusades and to pilgrimages: Bohemond I, for instance, departed from the city of Bari on board local ships and with a following of 7,000 warriors.

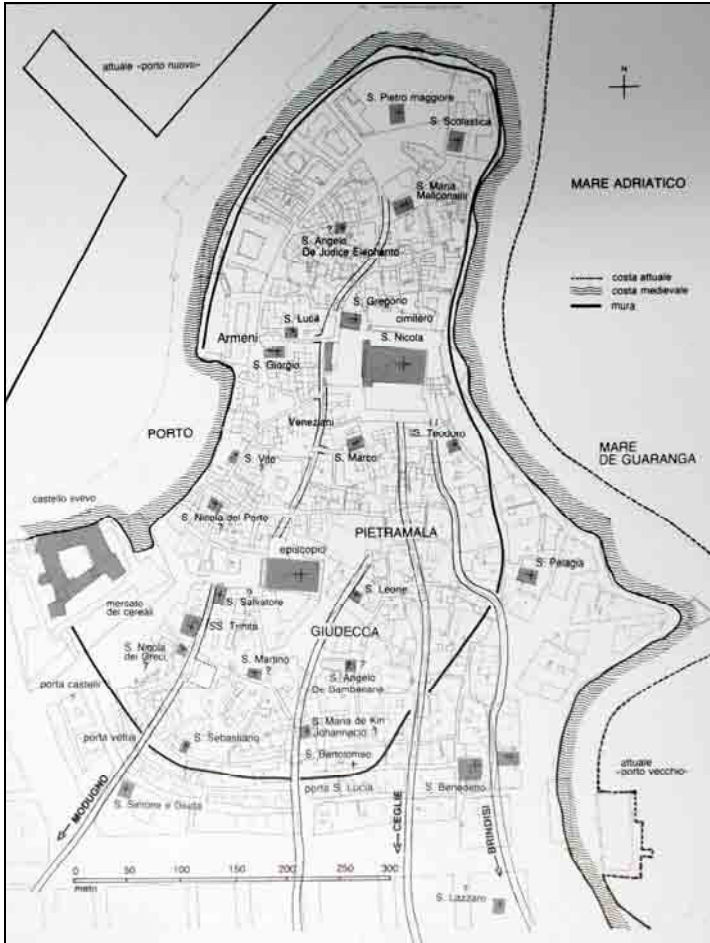
2.3 The Swabian period

In the city of Bari, by the XIII century, quarters had multiplied in number: there were about twenty of them. During this period, as in the previous ones, each quarter gathered round a major religious building from which it took its name, for instance: San Pietro Maggiore, San Gregorio, San Giorgio degli Armeni, San Nicola Maggiore, San Marco, San Teodoro, etc. In other cases, quarters had a vocative name, for example: Vicinia Porta Veteris, near the Castle, which was inhabited mainly by families of Greek origin; Vicinia Pietramala, south of San Marco and San Teodoro; Vicinia Maris de Guaranghe, which was populated by the Verenghi, mercenaries of Oriental origin, and was located close to the church of Santa Pelagia; Vicinia Aquarie, i.e. the watertank quarter, etc.

As maintained Musca (1981: 63), these quarters were not only topographical landmarks: to a certain extent they were also social aggregates, for in the Pietramala quarter there lived mostly judges and notaries. Another such example was the quarter of Sant'Angelo di Bambacara, inhabited mainly by craftsmen and merchants.

Therefore, the city expanded mostly along Ruga Francigena, which was flanked by houses belonging to rich bourgeois families. Moreover, it was the commercial road and all along this street one could find several merchant stands, shops and *logge*.

According to R. Licinio (1993: 129), there were conflicts for the control of this area, as such a location guaranteed that business



Map 3 – Bari during the Swabian Period
(drawn from Musca, 1981)

would be thriving. In this regard, suffice to say that all pilgrims, Crusaders and travellers had to go along the Via Francigena to reach the Basilica and the port.

The port is always the hearth of the commercial activities of the city thanks to Federico II who favoured them as he was interested in the traffics and relations with East. For this reason the Swabian emperor promoted in Bari one of the greatest fairs of the reign.

Bari is the relevant centre of a system of roads, that had the form of a star and which connects it with the North-East coastal towns in the direction of Giovinazzo; actually existed three roads with three different directions towards Bitonto and Naples; towards Carabonara, Gioia del Colle, Taranto; towards Noicattaro- Putignano; and at last along the Sout-east coast towards Brindisi.

Still other quarters were marked by the presence of a specific ethnic group: San Giorgio was home to Armenians, while Venetian families gathered in the area between San Nicola and the Cathedral, i.e. the aforesaid quarter of San Marco dei Veneziani. Obviously, the Giudecca was the quarter were Jews lived.

From all this, the multiethnicity of the population of Bari is self-evident: there were Venetians, Pisans, Romans, Sorrentans, Salernitans, Calabrians, Sicilians, Florentines, Genoans, Ravellans, Amalfitans, and even ethnic groups from more distant countries, such as Frenchmen, Catalans, Kotorans, Splitians, apart from the already settled Byzantines and Armenians.

2.4 The Angevin period

During this period quarters the city extends its urban area consequently the building shape presents some “empty” spaces which become orchards and gardens. Moreover the walls of the city are moved fatherly and so to the more available area corresponds a double number of quarters: a mayor spatial fragmentation gives origin, on the other hand, to a minor social aggregation.

Some quarters were markedly characterized by the craft practised by their inhabitants (for instance the quarter of the rope makers, the quarter of the confectioners, etc.). Migration flows increased: first of all the French, who came in the wake of Charles of Anjou; Florentines, Genoans and Venetians were by then a constant presence and they controlled the Apulian oil, wheat and wool trade. For example, in 1328 Florentine merchants exported an amount of 400 *salme* of wheat and barley. The following year a powerful Florentine family exported from Southern Italy 135 *salme* of cereals, 90% whereof came from Apulia (see Licinio, 1987: 311). Another constant presence in the city were some groups of mercenaries of multifarious origin (Scandinavians and Asians) and also Catalans, Pisans, Greeks, Kotorans...

The inflow from nearby Apulian towns also remained constant: Modugno, Monopoli, Casamassima... This ethnic picture was completed by the Jews who lived in the Giudecca quarter, located between the Cathedral and the Pietramala quarter and where a synagogue would be still in place in 1340. Slavs (*Schianioni*, *Sclavi*, *Schiavi* and *Scavoni*) were also present and were active as labourers, shepherds, servants (see Perillo, 2001: 227).

3. The communities

These short statements lead us to:

- 3.1 find out the reasons of the presence of such communities;
- 3.2 try to analyze their possible social openness.

3.1 “Nevertheless, people did move in the Middle Ages. Maybe not as rapidly as today, but probably with the same feverish restlessness [...] merchants looked for goods to be bought and markets where they could sell them; hunters tracked down their game through woods and moorlands; those clerics who wished to learn became “wandering”; jesters and jugglers wandered around fairs and castles; kings travelled in search for subjects and lands; prelates moved regularly to meet their clergy and believers; heretics fled from inquisitions and stakes; sinners craving for expiation turned into pilgrims; friars went begging;

[...] knights were not really such if they were not errant: their existential adventure was itself about travelling [...]. The Middle Ages are the age of movements, both individual and collective [...] it is even too easy, almost trivial, to remember the migrations of peoples, the invasions, the pilgrimages and the crusades along the routes of need, of weapons, of faith” (Musca, 1993: 17-18).

This picture so masterly outlined by Giosuè Musca provides a vivid idea of the urban reality which had come into being in Bari during the Middle Ages: inflows may have been continuous or episodic, spontaneous or organized, etc. but nevertheless one can outline a typology:

a. Regional immigration

Regional immigration included individuals coming in both from the near hinterland and from the South of the region (from Gallipoli, for instance). As already stated, this inflow had already started in the Byzantine period, thanks to the stability promoted by the government of Constantinople, but not only to that; according to Musca (1986: 69) “such inflows were due to the economic liveliness the city experienced during the Byzantine and the Norman and Swabian period”, for the Normans had inherited an expanding economy. They managed to regulate trade in such a way as to be able to gain as much profit as possible. As a consequence, the Norman government resulted in a turning point from the political, social and economic point of view. Landownership underwent a process of redistribution that ended in the emergence of a feudal hierarchy; however, this land redistribution did not immediately change the productive structures in the techniques and in the contractual forms that characterized Apulian agriculture (see Licinio, 1987: 300-301). The city of Bari, having attracted the commercialization of agricultural produce, succeeded in exercising a strong appeal to social groups of various origin. Therefore, the city expanded and new quarters and hamlets were built (see Licinio, 1987: 313).

The Angevin period witnessed the impoverishment of the rural centres where the agricultural produce destined for commercialization came from. This was one of the causes –

probably the decisive one – of the flight of settlers from the countryside to urban areas or to other rural centres. Therefore, it was hunger that forced these people to move towards the city and go begging for food outside the secular and religious institutions, the monasteries, the churches, the houses of powerful families.

A trace of all this can be found in a 1279 dispatch sent by Charles of Anjou to the *Mastro Massaro* of the County of Bari, whereby it was ordered to distribute “quibusdam hominibus mutilatis, et mendicis, certam frumenti et vini copiam” [a certain quantity of wheat and wine to beggars and disabled men have to be given] (see Licinio, 1987: 54-55).

In conclusion, the inflow that in the Norman and the Swabian period was a sign of an expanding economy, became in the Angevin period a negative phenomenon of flight, refuge and social parasitism.

b. Rule and invasions

It is easy to imagine that, for instance, in the Byzantine court of the Catapan there must have been some Greek families that supported the presence and the power of the rulers. A confirmation of that can be found in V. Massilla’s text *Cronaca delle famiglie nobili di Bari* [Chronicle of Bari’s noble families] (1567), in which the author maintains that in his time there had remained only four of all the Greek families, as the others had moved elsewhere or were extinct. In this long list of noble families there were names of Florentine descent, for instance the De Rossi, who were friends of Frederick II’s, the Marsiglia, who had come from Provence, the Reini family, who had followed Isabel of Aragon from Milan, the Fanelli family from Toulouse, and so on.

Therefore, every ruler brought with him courtiers, officials, militarymen; obviously, the “new ones” would join in those who had been living there for years or centuries.

c. The treaties

Among the causes of the presence of the numerous ethnic groups in the city of Bari a relevant place is occupied by the

political and economic treaties made with different Mediterranean cities. Actually, during the period in which the treaty was valid, a certain number of inhabitants of the economic partner gathered in the other city, giving birth, so, to a community. This is due also to Bari geographical position, almost at the mouth of the Adriatic sea, which rendered it suitable to exchanges most of all in the Adriatic sea or towards East.

During the XI century the relations of friendship with Venice, Cattaro, Spoleto, Costantinopoli and Alessandria were intense. As Massa says (1903:185) “to commerce Bari owes its fluent life and its liberal aspirations [and in fact] commerce was really great under all its aspect: commerce of oil exportation, of other agricultural and manufacturing products, commerce of silk, drugs and slaver importation”. All these kinds of commerce were encouraged and favoured by Costantinopoli, besides Costantinopoli was reached on Bari ships, this is also demonstrated by an imperial “crisobolla” dated 992 in favour of Venetians, which, nevertheless, prohibited to those latter to take Bari merchants and goods. This support lasted also during XII century and favoured the development of Bari marine (See Corsi, 1993: 83).

The presence of different communities presumed commercial agreements and treaties, and the latter derived from the former. For example the first treaty between Bari and the Venetian Republic was signed in 1122 by the Doge Michiel and Grimoaldo Alfaranite for Bari – to this treaty – the so called “isopolitia” – followed others which in the course of time will diminish the privileged position of the city of Bari, until the treaty in 1317 between Charles of Anjone and Venice, thanks to which the republic of Venice acquired monopolistic privileges, and the one signed by Ferdinand of Aragon in 1463 which granted Venice the last possible privileges.

In 1132 Ruggero II signed a treaty which established a status of reciprocal autonomy with the people from Ravello, at the same time he penalized the people from Amalfi.

Federico II, on the contrary, gave treaties and so privileges to the cities of Ragusa and Cattaro between 1188 and 1211. Besides the

bishopric of Cattaro belonged to Bari metropolia territory, this explains why the bishops had his own residence and some houses in Bari. More over the merchants from Cattaro were allowed tax cuts and privileges such as the exemption of the payment of “iura anchoragii et platee” (See Corsi, 1993: 106). All this helped to form a small communities of people from Cattaro. In 1256/59 Manfredi granted privileges to the people from Genoa in all the ports of the Kingdom; their goods were exempted from “the new rights” that is all those introduced by Federico II and subjected to the payment of 1/3 of the “ancient rights” that is from taxes existing at the time of the Normans. In addition they were granted some land to build loggias and warehouses and to establish a consulate which should have jurisdiction on the Genoa colony (See Tateo, 1190: 211).

During the Angevin period privileges to Florentines who were creditors to the crown because the long wars, were granted.

All this allowances made the Bari commerce diminish and languish, as Florentines, Genoese, and Venetians succeeded in monopolizing the commerce of oil, wood, corn. In this way they were able to make their fellow citizens come to Bari, and there founded some communities and to give the city a multiethnic aspect.

d. Consuetudines Barenses

An unusual, I daresay even metaphorical, result of this succession of different rulers can be considered the text of the *Consuetudines Barenses*¹ [Bari's Regulations], mentioned for the first time in 1012 in the *Codice Diplomatico Barese* [Bari Diplomatic Codex]. Thanks to them (Consuetudines), according to Massa (1903: 35) Bari can boast to have given laws to the greatest part of Southern Italy. Moreover they are the evidence of the existence “of one very great commercial activity and [...] a strong tendency towards authority and freedom”.

They are made up of the collections of Customs written down by Andrea and Sparano, two XIII century jurists from Bari; they were collected by Vincenzo Massilla later on, in 1550. These *Consuetudines* already existed and were observed before 1156, when William the Bad partly destroyed the city and the urban

archives, therefore the two jurists reconstructed them drawing on oral tradition and dispersed texts.

The Roman, Byzantine, Lombard and Norman rule have all left their mark on the *Consuetudines*. The two parts that make them up show different aspects: the first one is ascribed to Andrea and is described in classical Latin language, and appears largely inspired by Justinian Law; the second part, ascribed to Sparano, shows a tendency towards specialization and is modelled on the Edict order instead (see Massa, 1903: 25). Their function has varied in time: from Liutprand till Robert the Guiscard they acted as a Convention; in the period between Robert the Guiscard and Frederick II they were considered as Law; the range of their influence was wide, as they regulated – in default of or in addition to regulations – the juridical relationships of most of Apulia until 1809 (see Massa, 1903: 35). The *Consuetudines* are inspired by vulgar Roman Law, in the sense of a substratum partly preceding Roman Law itself; Lombard Law; Byzantine Law, as concerns public law; Frankish Law, that was applied only by noblemen.

According to Besta (1903: 127) “the *Consuetudines Barenses* [...] did not constitute a homogeneous and ordered whole composed by a single mind, they consist of at least three collections and were the work of different authors that elaborated them at different times, Andrea Sparano and, in his opinion, the last part, dedicated to Protomisian Laws, might have been written by a third unknown author.

This third part concerned ships and their extent was due to the importance of navigations for Bari port (see Massa, 1903: 194).

As regards the relevance of Lombard Law within the corpus of the *Consuetudines*, not all the authors agree; for instance, Besta (1903: 179) maintains that “contrary to the prevailing theory that ascribes most of it to the Lombards, there are undebatable and remarkable remnants of Roman and Graeco-Roman norms in it”.

And more, the formula used to end marriage contracts was “secundum legge langobardorum” [according to Lombard Law], was employed by whoever contracted a marriage in this way, even if s/he belonged to another ethnic group. Sometimes where

Roman Law contrasted with Lombard Law they tried to neutralize the efficacy of the latter with special clauses (Besta, 1903: 189).

The reciprocal adaptation since evident most of all between the two law traditions is clear above all in patrimonial relationships between spouses; for example, the consignment of the “mefio” used to be written before witnesses with the formula “iuxta legem langobardorum et more barisorum” [according to Lombard Law and Bari’s Customs] (Cod. Dipl. Bar., I, 51, a. 1167).

This adaptation between all the aforesaid law traditions shows how culture was the result of different influences that sedimented without any sharp rupture, whatever might be the actual importance of a law tradition in comparison to the others: for instance, the “mefio” formula had been adopted even by Jews, that applied Lombard Law to their marriages, so the formula no longer underline the ethnic belonging as it was declared. Therefore, a rooting, a habit.

3.2 The communities

Setting up a community in the cities with which one had commercial relationships was a medieval habit, so people from Bari also had their communities in the cities they traded with: Constantinople, the Greek and Epirus coastal towns, Venice, Genoa and Palermo.

I will try now to analyse the relationship among the different ethnic communities that are present in Bari.

I will describe here in succession and in brief the communities of Ravellesi (inhabitants of Ravello) among whom a certain number of people of Amalfi were present; Venetians, Hebrews, who had been living in Bari since a long time, and lastly Milanese, a community which had formed at the end of the XV century, and so later than the before mentioned first three ones.

3.2.1 The inhabitants of Ravello

Ravellesi are described by T. Massa (1903) as that community which gathered around what today is called the church of Vallisa

and they were present in Bari already before the XII century. Moreover they were working in the commerce of corn, oil, cloth, gold, jewels, spices, art objects imported from Costantinopoli. They were so numerous to have the relevant “Ruga Ravellesium” [Ravellesi’s street], where also their notaries and their rich merchants lived.

They lived by their own “forming a city within a city, so that they had their notaries and judges. Only when their notaries and judges were absent, Ravellesi” contracted or quarrelled at the presence of Bari notaries and judges” (Massa, 1903: 60). These statements are confirmed but with a different perspective by Petroni (1960: 17) “Ravellesi as it happens, live in Bari but they have no judicial discussion or confrontation with our citizens if they have not signed the documents according to the usual tradition; nor any Bari witness, who has not signed, is produced against them”. This shows the apartness which the Ravellesi has imposed on their group as art. 8 of the rubric 3 of the *Consuetudines* states that everyone who comes to live in Bari and here has his residence and his business becomes Bari citizen and so he lives according to our Laws and our Consuetudines. This rule is also reinforced by art. 4 of rubric 3 which states “it is not needed to listen to a foreigner which witnesses against people of Bari, but it must not be considered a foreigner one who permanently lives in Bari”. To conclude Ravellesi were not foreigners, but they behaved as if they were as they gave witness only with written documents and not personally as Bari people did. However there is another possibility which could explain this behaviour in fact according to Massa (1903: 61) “Ravellesi were not in condition of one who is alone in his town among Bari people, they didn’t need to be protected as a Bari citizen, nor could they damage Bari citizens, producing excuses for the judges”. So, once again, they wanted to be strangers but according to Massa (cfr. 1903: 6) their attitude was not illegal or peculiar because there existed a departure 1.7.C.X,39 which might be enlarged so that a person could fix his habitual residence and place of business in a city without having the will to be part of the town. This brings in most cases to the consequence of giving the possibility to whom adopts this choice

to protect his interests even against local people. Thus Ravellesi's behaviour was also legal, but nonetheless it was the consequence of the desire for a strong individuality and defence of their private economic and social privileges against the other communities.²

3.2.2 Hebrews

The community of the Hebrews had their *Giudecca* located between the Cathedral and Pietramala and there they also had their Synagogue.

Originally their condition was that of "entrusted" so they had to pay special taxes to the authorities. This gave them the possibility to practice their religion. They worked in commerce activities, actually they worked with "money, as those people who were liked to the dispositions concerning loans of the canonical rights, but they did not neglect the other branches of commerce" (Massa, 1903: 68), such as silk manufacture and clothes paint jobs. In a certain way they took part to the urban collectivity, as they had businesses with the Christians according to the *Consuetudines*, but they were not obliged to swear for the Christian God. On the other hand among themselves they used the Mosaic Right with the exception of marriages, as in that case they used the Longobard Right. On this case, however, they used notaries and witnesses of their own religion. In the acts signed with the Christians, Hebrews could also sign them according to the *Consuetudines*.

This willingness towards Bari people and this partial acceptance of their customs could derive from the fact that they were present in Apulia before the Diaspora of 70 a.D. (cfr. Lupo, 2007: 5), this is confirmed by what Massa (1903: 188) affirms "as it is written in the Chronicles by Achimaas of Oria, they must not have found themselves bad, so that in the XI century many Hebrews that were sent away from the Spanish peninsula, took refuge in Apulia".

Later, thanks to the accordance of Constance of Altavilla, Hebrews were granted the tutelage of the bishop of Bari. Also in this case, according to Massa (1903: 61), they could not have all the privileges and political rights of Bari inhabitants.

3.2.3 Venetians

Venetians usually had densely populated colonies in the most important cities of the Adriatic coast. They often lived in quarters not far from the sea: in Bari for example they lived in Saint Mark's one, that means nearby their church, and not far away they had their own bakery. According to Zambler-Carabellese (1991: 20-21) in their colony there were nobles, merchants, bankers, common people which included traders, workmen from the arsenal, port labourers, negotiators, crew of sailors waiting their turn to go back to Venice. The chief of the colony was the consul, the power of the consul had been enlarging through time so that in the end in the colonies he substituted the doge. The consul informed him of the state of the colony and also exchanged letters with the Procurators of St Mark. He provided for the cure of the welfare inside the community and decided sometimes alone sometimes with the help of the committee of the Venetian consul who lived there. Moreover the consul took care that the community didn't lose the acquired power, for example in comparison with the Ravellesi's one, and tried to obtain further special conditions for the commerce of his fellow countrymen.

3.2.4 Milanese

Since the times of Ludvic the Moor, some Milanese families had moved to Bari for traffic interests, and their number increased as some nobles³ followed Isabel of Aragon (1508). During the XV and XVI centuries these families formed the House of Milanese Nation in order to protect their commercial interests in Bari (Petroni, 1857-58: 45) not far from St Ambrogio's Church (once St Pelagia) where their noble palaces, such as palace Tanzi, were located.

Their strong individuality is also underlined by V. Massilla (1881: 7) in his "Chronicle of the Noble Families in Bari", which had been written in 1567, he states "many other noble men who live as foreigners notwithstanding they and their ancestors were born in Bari. An example is the noble family of Lampugnani who live as Milanese, even though they have been inhabiting in Bari for more than eighty years but they have always preferred to live as

foreigners without introducing in the government of the city”. This means, as already underlined, when I referred to the other communities, to have not only their own church, but also their judges, their notaries and a certain number of *cambiatores* due to the presence of different mints. This social closeness is not unusual because, for example, there still existed Byzantine families who had been present in the country since previous centuries and which constituted a bureaucratic notary class of a certain cultural prestige (as they frequently studied in Bologna), but who had not been able to integrate at all and so they married with persons of the same ethnic origin (cfr. Musca, 1986: 60).

Of the other numerous communities present in Bari, I will only underline that they gathered near their churches and usually lived at a short distance from them, and so they created their quarters. Armenians were rather numerous in fact they had 5 churches for their religious practices: St Gregorio (still surviving today and located near St Nicolas Basilicata, nowadays dedicated to the Orthodox cult of Romeni and Gypsi), St Giorgio, St Bartolomeo, St Procopio and St Onofrio.

Since the XI century Cypriots frequented St Pelagia Church; when Cypriots went away from Bari this church was named after St Ambrogio.

People from Illyria, Dalmatians and people from Cattaro attended St Luca de Stiris Church, and also the Chapel of St Giorgio and St Biagio present in the Church of St Pelagia.

Byzantines had numerous churches among which it is worth mentioning St Maria Nea, St Procopio of Cesarea (which had been built according to Tubaki, an important authority, in 1020), St Giovanni Battista Evangelista (due to the wish of the Catapano Costantino Opos in 1034), St Pietro Vecchio (due to the Protospataro Sergio in 1048), and so on.

But other churches belonging to the Order of Religious Knights drew presence of Germans near St Maria Teutonicorum (now St Chiara Church) which was under the authority of St Leonardo of Siponto Abbey; and not far away the Church of St Clemente belonged to the Templar order which attracted knights of French origin.

To conclude numerous ethnic communities which even though “closed” as we have seen (i.e. the inhabitants of Ravello, Milanese), were not conflictual with the natives who on their part tolerated them (cfr. Musca, 1981: 50). So a variety of relationships among people, a stratification of ways of thinking and of cultures existed (see Musca, 1981: 51).

3.2.5 Noble families

Now I will make reference to the above mentioned text by Massilla (reprinted in 1881), obviously we are not in Medieval period as the author makes references to the chronicles of the XVI century, but it seems to me that in his considerations one may read the evolution of cohabitational relationships of the different social groups. The author reports the names of the noble families of his time⁴, and the list collects “those families which enjoy the honours of the Nobles, and which are written down in the book of highly regarded nobles” (Massilla, 1881: 7) and the country where they come from. First of all he lists the nine of Greek families which came to Bari during the Byzantine period⁵ even if at Massilla’s time only four of them were still living in Bari. The editor of the 1881 edition, F. Bonazzi, listed other 24 Byzantine families living in Bari during their domination (Catapanato).

The list of Massilla presents other 14 noble families of whom only 4 are defined native (Casamassimi, Taurisani, Charis and Gliri) and all the other had a different origin; this is a proof of the great multiethnicity of Bari society of that period.

The author, in addition, underlines a certain number of marriages between the members of these families and here now I will give some examples: a certain Paolo Carducci married Ippolita Glidi; Francesco Gerondij (a family coming from France) in 1490 married Mita Dottula; Giovanni Alfonso Gerondij married a woman belonging to Mazza family; Remo Gerondij married a member of Tresca family; and later Giovanni Gerondij married a woman of Zurla family.

What meaning may these “open” marriages have after centuries of incommunicability among the different communities? Is it

perhaps that a social openness begins to start or is it a way to safeguard a social and economic status?

However time changes this way of living in closed communities; and Licinio (1993: 137) affirms that “the topographic connotation is now disappearing, and the residential choice begins to reflect new criteria which give more value to the job or the shop than to the ethnic belonging” (i.e. via degli Orefici – Jewellers’ street).

It is Middle Ages which comes to an end and ethnic barriers little by little disappear.

4. Conclusions

Since the Byzantine period, continuous flows of people mostly arriving from the Mediterranean basin, have been enriching with their presence Medieval Bari. The city was lively and active, the streets were animated by sailors, merchants, noblemen, *negotiatores*, each of them spoke their own language. They attended their churches, their bakery, their shops, their warehouses. So as Musca (1881: 51) affirms “a variety of relationships among people, a stratification of way of thinking, which induce – only after many centuries – the present ethnic groups to unite and become only one population which does not any longer remember the different origins of its own family”.

Today the problem of multietnicity and/or of multiculturalism returns once again. The ancient model of individually “closed” ethnicities in a society without conflicts, cannot exist. Today very often we fear the Other as a consequence even the actual integration policies are not very successful. This derives from the adoption of a “false” concept of identity, that is of an inflexible, closed and orthodox identity.

Identity, on the contrary, should be open to forms of communication and dialogue. In Remotti’s opinion (1996: 99) “to come out from identity logic means to be willing to accept the formative and not simply additional and opposite role of Alterity”; this is the suggestion to be accepted and carried out.

Notes

¹ The edition I used is an extract from the appendix of the history of Bari written by Giulio Petroni in 1860.

² “We are here, then, in the presence of the roman principle of territoriality of right” (Massa, 1093: 58).

³ They are kyri Dottula, kyri Effrem (once Hebrew family which then converted), kyri Elia, kyri Gizzinosi (which then mixed with the Chiurlia family), kyri Giannacci, kyri Sergij, kyri Carofigli, kyri Amerosi.

⁴ There is another list “note about the feudal vassals and the nobles fit for armies who lived in Bari in 1282” extracted by the Angevin documents present in San Severino’s Archivio di Stato (dossier 45), but in this case the family name was not written with the provenience.

⁵ As for example the Visconti, Tanzi, Lampugnani, Reina, Maraviglia, Garbinati, Carcheno, Malcolzati, Curci and Calco families.

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