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Locating Capitalism: Producing Early Modern Cities and Objects

Prof. Lauren Jacobi

History, Theory and Criticism of Art and Architecture

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Marking the Water: Territoriality, Fortifications and Port Cities in Early Modern Italy

In 1608, the Dutch jurist Hugo de Groot contended in his book *Mare Liberum* that land and sea were two incommensurable entities; the sea was fluid, changeable and lacked plasticity, the land was fixed. The sea was an indeterminable space, without strict boundaries, whereas boundaries on land could be firmly inscribed into the earth. “The question at issue,” De Groot wrote, “is the outer sea, the ocean, that expanse of water which antiquity describes as immense, the infinite, only bounded by the heavens... [it] can neither be seized nor enclosed.”¹ Sparked by the rivalry between the maritime empires of the Spanish and the Portuguese, their incessant circulation of trading ships around the globe, and the treaty of Tordesillas, in which Portugal and Spain divided the oceans, drawing an imaginary line, De Groot ridiculed the basis for the arguments of the Iberian hegemony of the seas; “The [Portuguese] are so far from having [occupied the ocean] that when they divide up the world to the disadvantage of the other nations, they cannot even defend

¹ Hugo de Groot cited in Steinberg 2001: 9. On Hugo de Groot, also known as Grotius, see: M.J. van Ittersum. *Profit and principle. Hugo Grotius, natural rights theories and the rise of Dutch power in the East Indies 1595 - 1651*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006 or Hamilton Vreedman, *Hugo Grotius: The Father of the Modern Science of International Law*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1917. On the ‘fight over the seas’ in the seventeenth-century, see also: Monica Brito Vieira, “Mare Liberum vs. Mare Clausum: Grotius, Freitas, and Selden’s Debate on Dominion over the Seas.” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 64 (2003): 361-377.

their action by showing any boundaries either natural or artificial, but are compelled to fall back upon some imaginary line.”² Therefore, no power could claim legal dominion over the sea, or, in the words of John Locke later in the seventeenth-century, “the Ocean” was the “great and remaining Common of Mankind.”³

The German philosopher Carl Schmitt reflected on the changing conception of the sea in 1942 in *The Land and the Sea* and argued in his study of space in modern history, *The Nomos of the Earth* (1950) that “world history is the history of the wars waged by maritime powers against land or continental powers.”⁴ Yet, occupying the sea belongs to the modern age, he signaled. In ancient and medieval times, the ocean was a *non-space*.⁵ It was not by chance, Schmitt wrote, that all the ancient sea empires developed within or near closed seas, such as the Mediterranean or the Baltic seas. “All pre-global systems were essentially land-based, even if they included sea dominions and thalassocracies.”⁶ While Schmitt’s argument is, of course, refutable when thinking of the Roman Empire claiming the *Mare Nostrum* and, as we will see later on, the division between land or sea-based is less straightforward as Schmitt proposes, De Groot and other legal scholars after him, have concluded that the Romans did claim *imperium* over the Mediterranean Sea, but not *dominium*; Rome regarded the sea as a space within its sphere of influence, yet did not consider it as a

² Hugo de Groot cited in Steinberg 2001: 92.

³ John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*. Peter Laslett, ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988: 289.

⁴ Schmitt 1950: 5.

⁵ If Henri Lefebvre argued that space is a social construct, then the sea is one of those spaces. One could, however, wonder why the sea is so often excluded in scholarship on maritime trade in the early modern period. Fernand Braudel’s account of the Mediterranean can for example, be regarded as a history of the territories surrounding the basin rather than the *mare nostrum* itself. It was the Greek geographer Strabo who more than 2,000 years ago underlined the importance of studying not only the land, but also the sea as a space of society. “We are in a certain sense amphibious,” he wrote, “not exclusively connected with the land, but with the sea as well. The sea and the land in which we dwell furnish theaters for action, limited for limited actions and vast for grander deeds.” More recently, at the beginning of the previous century, Ellen Semple made a similar claim. “Universal history loses half its import, remains an aggregate of parts, fails to yield its significance as a whole,” he warned, “if it does not continually take into account the unifying factor of the seas.... Our school textbooks in geography present a deplorable hiatus, because they fail to make a definitive study of the oceans over which man explores and colonizes and trades.” See Steinberg 2001: 9.

⁶ Schmitt cited in Ruschi 2007: 177.

territory of the state.⁷ In fact, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari offered a similar argument in a *Thousand Plateaus*, using the concepts of the “smooth” and the “striated” to rethink space in terms of nomadic and sedentary forces. While the cosmopolitan city is a striated space, the sea is a smooth space *par excellence* - for reasons already mentioned by De Groot. Yet, these concepts must not be seen as a dichotomous pair; spaces are never fully “smooth” or “striated”. Consequently, in striated spaces one can allocate oneself, using the lines and grids or the infrastructures imposed on the land, while in spaces leaning towards the “smooth” one finds oneself distributed in space, disoriented. The year 1440 - the year the Portuguese discover the nautical charts -constitutes a turning point according to Deleuze and Guattari, however. The increased navigation caused a demand for striation; maps with meridians, parallels, longitudes and latitudes produce the space of the sea as a measurable territory.⁸ Nonetheless, one could argue, although the development of the science of navigation did render the sea into a graspable, tangible space, it aroused a desire to own the sea, rather than the actual possibility to own the sea.

This essay explores how this changing conception of the sea, from a non-space to a desired territorial area described by Schmitt, Deleuze and Guattari, and witnessed by De Groot, is reflected in the place where the sea and the land come together, trade ships load off their cargo, and foreigners gather. In other words, how was the frontier between the land and the sea constituted within a port city in the early modern period? While frontiers between the city and the land were clearly demarcated by crenellated city walls, port cities were porous, opening up to the sea. Fernand Braudel, already noted in his famous *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II* that “All ports, per definition, are the crossroads of land and water.... This is the double face of all the ports.”⁹ Yet, one could argue, porosity is the condition *sine qua non* for port cities, an intrinsic quality for places relying on connectivity, the presence of foreigners and foreign

⁷ Steinberg 2001: 64-67.

⁸ Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 474-500.

⁹ Author's translation. “Tous les ports, par définition, son à la croisée des chemins de terre et déau...Ce double visage est celui de tous les ports.” Braudel 1996: 291 (1), quoted in Orvietana Busch 2001: 256.

goods for its existence.¹⁰ It was Braudel who also demonstrated that the Mediterranean Sea always functioned as a link, rather than a barrier for the people living on the shore. The sea was a liquid asset, the most important source of income.¹¹ Port cities functioned as gateways, fundamental nodes that allowed for intricate exchanges, yet perennially caught in an incongruous position between ‘opening’ and ‘closing’ toward the sea and the surrounding territories.

Genoa is used as a case-study; a city whose geographical location forces the town to interact with the water.¹² Facing the sea surrounded by steep hills, located in a natural bay, Genoa represents the “shape of a theater” as John Evelyn observed in 1644.¹³ Or, as historian Steven Epstein contended: “At the beginning there was the land and the sea, and whatever Genoa was to become, it would owe to its position on the shore at a spot where systems of transport must change.”¹⁴ Less studied than the other Italian maritime empire, Venice, Genoa of the thirteenth-century was a city connected to “virtually every part of the developing European world-economy.”¹⁵ Capturing the northern area of Asia Minor – Constantinople and the Black Sea – while dominating the western Mediterranean, the coast of North Africa, and later on, northwestern Europe from Lubeck to Bruges, Genoa’s economy was based on maritime trade, or put briefly; “Genuensis, ergo mercator”, as they used to say in the Middle Ages. In other words, in a world so oriented towards the sea, the effect of mercantilism undeniably impacted the spatial outlay of the city. Meanwhile, it is tempting to think that despite the geomorphological situation, and political and socio-economic circumstances, port cities such as Genoa share certain a particular identity as part of a littoral society - a society where ideas and goods spread rapidly through the incessant travel over the seas. As Alina Payne recently argued, the cities on the

¹⁰ Driessen 2005: 132.

¹¹ De Groot makes a similar argument in his distinction between land and sea; the sea is an inexhaustible source of income. Steinberg 2001: 91.

¹² On Genoa as maritime empire, see: Epstein 1996, and Kirk 2005.

¹³ John Evelyn cited in Gorse 1997: 325.

¹⁴ Epstein 1996: 9.

¹⁵ Abu-Lughod 1989: 122.

Mediterranean shore have more in common than they do with their respective hinterlands.¹⁶ The sea provides unity, as Braudel already argued, a unity that transcends the regional or national frameworks.

While studies on early modern ports have emphasized how these ports were part of larger networks, examining the flow of people, ideas goods, and thus “cosmopolitan cities”, or using Walter Christaller’s “central place theory” to explore the port city and its hinterland, the physical appearance, the type of the ports themselves has remained nearly unstudied.¹⁷ The scarce information available is generated by maritime archaeologists or local histories, and often lacks descriptions of the port as an urban entity, with distinct architectural features. Yet how did ports like Genoa look like; how has the waterfront, and its fortifications changed over time? What are the spatial consequences of the changing commercial, maritime activities in Genoa during the early modern period? Tracing the development of the “port-system,” this essay contends that the sudden fortification of the waterfront can be regarded as a direct consequence of the mapping of the seas, and, subsequently, the construction of the sea as a distinct territory.

Developing a “Port-System”?

Ports have been thought of in terms of a “system” based on ideas shared under the banner of “General Systems Theory”; a port can be regarded as a “set of things connected, or interdependent, so as to form a complex unity.”¹⁸ Arguably, a port exists as the result of a multitude of components and relations. The trading of goods within a maritime context in the early modern period entailed the existence not only of merchants, but also of shippers and

¹⁶ Payne 2014.

¹⁷ See for example, Solórzano Telechea 2009 or Epstein 1996. Driessen was right to point out that the term cosmopolitan is problematic, and to define entire Mediterranean cities as “cosmopolitan” is reductionist; “The “cosmopolitanism” label mainly applies to certain categories of people, particularly merchants, brokers and seamen who played a key role in pan-Mediterranean and supra-Mediterranean networks.” Driessen 2005: 138. According to “Central Place Theory” port cities develop at a certain moment in time into urban nodes, with a direct economic connection to the hinterland. See: Walter Christaller, *Die Zentralen Orte in Suddentschland*. Jena: Gustaf Fischer, 1933.

¹⁸ Jackson 2007: 22-23.

laborers. It implied the presence of certain port facilities, port-based markets, perhaps spaces to process the imported materials, and areas to build the ships. Moreover, ports were in need of particular physical structures, such as docks, quays, or piers. A map of thirteenth-century Genoa shows the first signs of the translation of maritime activities into architectural forms, and thus the first physical symptoms of the presence of trade within the urban sphere (Fig. 1). The land occupied by early modern Genoa could be found on one side of a natural harbor of the Mediterranean Sea, with a strip of land extending into the water, known as the “Molo,” the dock, which delineated the bay of Genoa. The Molo, partially inhabited in the thirteenth-century probably the location of the earliest maritime traffic. At the end of the Molo, a lighthouse, the *Farro*, constructed around 1130, marked the entrance into the natural harbor. Ennio Poleggi's construction of the city of Genoa in the thirteenth-century indicates the presence of several docks, perpendicular to the shoreline of the other area of the city that faces the sea, called *Ripa*, or simply, harbor. Put briefly, what can be seen here, is how these architectural forms set out to obscure the frontier of the city and the sea by extending its territory within the water. Although the shoreline between the sea and soil might be precise, architecture *marked* the water, using lighthouses and piers, and incorporating the territory of the water by creating harbor spaces.

Yet the development and maturation of these infrastructures within the port raises questions of ownership. Who owned the land of the port, and who was responsible for its layout? Rather than being dominated by princely accounts or the public authority of communal governments - as was the case in the rest of the Italian peninsula - private family groups dominated the city. Gradually, noble families such the family of Doria, Spinola, Grimaldi, or Pallavicino - scattered along the Ligurian coast in fortified castles - settled down in Genoa in the eleventh and twelfth-century.¹⁹ In 1099, the first Genoese commune was formed; the *compagna communis* consisted of six

¹⁹ Arguably, the formation of a larger settlement occupied with maritime activities did not occur until the previous century. Although there is plenty evidence to counter Henri Pirenne's thesis that because of the expansion of the Umayyads in the eighth-century, the trade in the western Mediterranean came to a halt, there is at the same time no reason to

consuls, representing the noble families.²⁰ This particular political constellation had spatial consequences; noble families divided the land of the city into long, small strips of territory (Fig. 2). Each piece of land extended from the harbor front to the fortified city walls. While each family thus received roughly the same share of access to the sea, they were simultaneously responsible for maintaining that part of the city wall assigned to their territory, and therefore together responsible for safeguarding the city.²¹ The Spinola's, Doria's and others feudalized Genoa by creating urban seats within Genoa, building fortified towers and clusters of palaces, surrounded by a neighborhood, the so-called *albergo*.²² "They tried to control important markets, gates and port areas," Diane Owen Hughes contended, "creating commercial districts whose markets they monopolized, whose land and buildings they owned, and whose residents were bound by ties of lineage, consortial alliance or clientage."²³ Yet the names of the dock indicate that the territory of the *alberghi* did not extend to the waterfront; the quays are named after the product the ships unloaded at that specific location, such as "Ponte dei Pesci". At the same time, the markets were located at the shore, and accounts of this period testify that right on the waterfront various shops existed, on the *sottoripa*, "under the harbor." Within this pattern, one anomalies can be found around from the fifteenth-century onwards; the Ponte degli Spinola, in the middle of the *ripa*,

exaggerate the amount of trade happening in this period, as the case of Genoa indicates. It is in the next century, after the sack of Genoa in 934 at the hands of North African Muslims, that a Muslim account of the invasion describes Genoa as a substantial town, owning goods such as linen thread, cloth, and raw silk that were worth taking. While the sack was nothing less than a disaster – sources speak of killing the entire male population and taking off with 1,000 female prisoners – the moment marks a shift in the history of the city and can be seen as a transition into the phase of rapid development of the next two centuries. Genoa had made the leap, using Steven Epstein's words, from "practically nothing to something." Epstein 1996: 9.

²⁰ On the *campagna communis*, see: Bianchi and Poleggi 1980: 33-84; Poleggi and Cevini 1981: 23-38.

²¹ Conversation with David Friedman, 04-29-2014.

²² On these *alberghi* within the city, see: Jacques Heers, *Gênes au XV^e siècle. Activité économique et problème sociaux*. Paris, 1961; Epstein 1996. Also see: Jacques Heers, *Family Clans in the Middle Ages: A Study of Political and Social Structures in Urban Areas*. Amsterdam, New York: North-Holland Publishers, 1977.

²³ Hughes 1975: 6.

signaling that the Spinola's and Doria's did own parts of the waterfront.²⁴ Allegedly, noble families and their *alberghi* not only governed the city and determined the *forma urbis*, some simultaneously managed their own armed ships and a wharf.

During following centuries, while Genoa's maritime trading activities rapidly increased - establishing outposts in Crimea, Constantinople, the Northern coast of Africa, on Corsica and Sardinia, and doing business with the Riviera, Sicily and Champagne - the infrastructure of the port expanded gradually under supervision of the *Capitano del Popolo* of Genoa and the "Salvatori portus et moduli" - the persons in charge of the of taking care of the harbor and its structures.²⁵ Guglielmo da Boccanegra, elected in 1258 as *Capitano del Popolo*, appears to have been particularly involved with enlarging and transforming the port-system, giving orders to extend the docks of the ripa and to construct a *darsena* and an *arsenale* (Fig. 3.) The small *darsena* - an inner harbor space for unloading cargo - was located not on the Molo, but on the other end of the harbor.²⁶ Boccanegra located the *arsenale* next to the *darsena*, yet most ships were built west of Genoa, at San Pier d'Arena.

From this spatial constellation - the division of private and public property of the harbor, and the dissection of the city into different *alberghi* - it is possible to assert that at this point in time, it is perhaps difficult to speak of a distinct "port-system." If property ownership was fragmentary, the same was true for ship ownership. Documents of financial transactions testify that small vessels were owned by various individuals, and consisted of amalgamations of various partners. These partners were, however, not the merchants themselves, or men of high commercial or financial position; in Genoa, men of all ranks of society could own a *loca*, a share in a ship.²⁷ Therefore, the risk, the *risicum*, was equally shared among the many investors. Into how many

²⁴ On the names of the docks, see Bianchi and Pollegi 1980: 182.

²⁵ On Genoa's trading posts in this time, see Epstein 1996: 140-146.

²⁶ In Genoa, the *darsena* was divided into two parts: the one for wine, and the *Darsena delle Galere*, for mercantile ships and war ships. Bianchi and Poleggi 1980: 182.

²⁷ On the sea loan, see: C.B. Hoover, "The Sea Loan in Genoa in the Twelfth Century." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 15 (1926): 495-529.

shares was the ownership divided? Apparently, the number of *loca* was the same as the number of mariners required to sail the vessel. In a lawsuit of 1224 concerning a ship sold in Syria, one of the witnesses testified that he saw “twenty-six mariners and that for each *locum* there was one mariner.” That the dominion of family clans caused a weakened centralized communal authority is seconded by accounts of Niccolò Machiavelli and Francesco Guicciardini, who connected the preeminence of the family clusters to the violence and vendettas that sprawled over Genoa. If Venice was “Venezia la Serenissima” in Petrarch’s terms, Genoa was “la Superba” - grand, but arrogant. “What is special about Genoa, wrote the economic historian Roberto Lopez, “is the extreme weakness of the state in face of private citizens...An almost unanimous historiographical tradition relates this to the extreme individualism of the Genoese, which in the Quattrocento would lose all restraint.”²⁸

Notwithstanding the fragmentary nature of Genoa’s maritime endeavors, the location of the civic structures within the city testifies that Genoa - and, arguably other port cities in the Mediterranean - opened up towards the sea, rather than to its hinterland, or, for that matter, constituting a city center within the city. The Molo housed the Palazzetto dei Conservatori del porto e del molo, seat of the “Salvatori portus et moduli.”²⁹ Boccanegra was responsible for the first seat of the civic government - the Palazzo del Mare - and placed his office in the middle of the *riipa*, symbolizing the rise of public power. In 1407, the Palazzo del Mare was transformed into the Banco or Palazzo di San Giorgio - a private association of banking nobles who financed and collected taxes for the city.³⁰ Not only was the Banco di San Giorgio the most important financial institution of the city, the bank also controlled Genoa’s overseas territories, such as Corsica, taking

²⁸ To illustrate Lopez’s point: between the fourteenth and the early sixteenth-century, noble families revolted eleven times; the *popolo* fourteen times, and seven times together. Eventually, the unstable political situation would lead to foreign invasions by, among others, the duchy of Savoy, Milan and the Fregoso, the French troops.

²⁹ Besides taking care of the harbor, it was also the Salvatori’s task to light the fire at the end of the Molo, to show the entrance to the harbor in the dark – a tradition that existed throughout the Mediterranean from ancient times onwards.

³⁰ On the Banco di San Giorgio, see: Orlando Grasso, *Il Palazzo San Giorgio*. Genova, Sagep Editrice, 1984.

over certain tasks of the Palazzo del Mare. Moreover, the *zecca*, the mint, stood right next to the Palazzo del Mare. In Genoa's rival Venice, the mint was located at exactly the same point in the city.³¹ When entering the *laguna* of Venice, ships had to pass by the sand bars, the *lidi*, separating the Adriatic Sea from the Lagoon. Merchants preferred to enter the city at San Nicolo, however; this gateway led directly to Piazza di San Marco. Upon entering the Bacino di San Marco, the visitors found themselves right in the heart of the Venetian Republic, not only the location of the *zecca*, the financial center, but also of the Ducal palace, home of the doge and the government, and adjacent, the Basilica, the religious center.³² If Braudel asserted that the cities of the Mediterranean had a "visage double", almost Janus-like, early modern Genoa proves the contrary.

Designing the Port

Images of the city of Genoa - just as other port cities such as Venice or Naples - likewise illustrate that the harbor was the true center of the city; without exception, all portraits of the city depict Genoa as seen from the sea, and thus positioning the harbor at the center. *Urban View of Genoa* by Cristoforo de' Grassi, for example, - made in 1597, but a direct copy of a work of 1481 - shows the triumphal entry of the Genoese ships into the city, together with the papal fleets of Sixtus IV della Rovere, and the *Fregoso*, after freeing the southern Italian port city Otranto from Muslim occupation (Fig. 4). Besides portraying the enclosed harbor space of the *darsena* and the *arsenale*, the Banco di San Giorgio occupies a central place in De Grassi's painting. Even more so, De' Grassi's picture captures perfectly how the Molo, and its artificial extension, is an arm that encircles the sea and creates the harbor of Genoa.

De Grassi's depiction exemplifies how the layout of the port is not only the result of the construction of the necessary infrastructure such as the docks, or the building of the seat of the "Salvatori portus et moduli" but is also an object of design in its totality. In *De Architectura*,

³¹ See: Alan Stahl. *Zecca: The Mint in Venice in the Middle Ages*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2000.

³² Van Gelder 2009: 21-22.

Vitruvius situated the port among the “public buildings,” discussed in Book V and even more so, among the public building most representative for the city such as the forum, the basilica, the prison, the curia, the theater, and the baths.³³ Yet, besides his notes on how to construct a cofferdam in the water, Vitruvius remained silent on the specific urban form of ports, except for a specific remark contending that in the case of a natural harbor, the harbor must be distinguished by a colonnade or columns.³⁴ It is around the same time of Vitruvius’ “rediscovery” that architects such as Giovanni di Sangallo, Sebastiano Serlio, Cesare Cesariano, or Antonio Labacco showed an interest in ancient the design of ancient ports and tried to create reconstructions of Civitavecchia, Portus or Ostiense (Fig 5, 6).³⁵ Keeping in mind that all these were artificial ports, and not natural as was the case in Genoa, Sangallo and others generated extreme geometric basins, preferably circles - just as the port of Genoa in Grassi’s imagination, attempting to depict the port of Genoa almost as if it were actually a circle. Sketches of the ideal port, such as Francesco di Giorgio Martini’s designs, or those of Filarete’s Plusiapolis, the port of his paper city Sforzinda, similarly present the port as a geometrical space, closed off by a jetty, and demarcated by two columns (Fig 7,8).³⁶

Likewise, the location of the essential civic structures at the center of the *riipa* is not without referents in the contemporary theoretical conceptions of the harbor. Giorgio di Martini’s visionary drawings situate the most important civic structures at the piazza, which opens up towards the sea at the port. The drawings show the harbor is closed off from the sea by a jetty while the entrance is marked by by two towers - similar to Filarete’s design for Plusiapolis, the port of the ideal city of Sforzinda. Philip’s II *The Laws of the Indies* of 1573 - largely based on Vitruvius’ assertions - embodied the same principles: “The main plaza is to be the starting point for the town; if the town is situated on the sea coast, it should be placed at the landing place of the port, but inland it should

³³ See Vitruvius 1914, book V. See also: Simoncini 1993: 73-75.

³⁴ Vitruvius, 1914: Book V, 162.

³⁵ On ancient harbors, see among others: Blackman 1992 and Rickman 1988.

³⁶ Simoncini 1993: 83-97.

be at the centre of the town.”³⁷ In the case of Genoa, however, the true *piazza* of the city, is the sea itself.

Fortifying the Harbor

Looking again at the thirteenth-century map of Genoa, or De’ Grassi’s *Veduta di Genova*, the images reveal that the twelfth-century city walls halted at the waterfront; the walls constructed a boundary between the city and its hinterland, or in other words, between territory and territory. The port itself, however, remains unfortified, only loosely demarcated by the Molo and the two lighthouses. Nevertheless, the possibility of other means of defense, such as patrolling ships, must not be overlooked; a document dated 1162 notices the incessant patrol of Pisan vessels in front of the river’s mouth leading to Porto Pisano - a harbor plagued by pirate and Genoese ships.³⁸ Moreover, the harbor of Constantinople defended the entrance of the Golden Horn with the (in)famous chain - a device that could be raised and thus blocking the harbor in times of danger. Da Vinci depicting a similar chain in his sketch of ancient Civitavecchia, exemplifies that this method was possibly rather common. These ephemeral ways of defense typify that at this moment in time, the sea itself is a border, albeit an immense spatial zone. On either side of the border, and thus on either side of the sea, the rules were clear, one was within the territorial space of law and thus subjected to the laws, or outside, and considered to be an *outlaw*. The in-between-space itself remains a grey-zone, however.

The idea of a “territory,” as delineated by a strict boundary and ruled over by law emerged in the medieval period, when jurisdiction and territory became inextricably intertwined through the incorporation of Roman law into legal systems across the European continent. The Roman preferred terms such as *finis* - border or limit - to *territorium*.³⁹ From denoting land owned by the ruler, the word came to signify the limit of the ruler’s power. “Since power became exercised over

³⁷ Gasparini, 1992: 24-29

³⁸ *Breve consulum pisanæ civitatis*, cited in Orvietani Busch 2005: 181.

³⁹ See Elden 2013.

territory and as a consequence over the people and the actions within it,” Stuart Elden writes, “territory was both the object of political rule and its extent.”⁴⁰ When territory, border and law become explicitly related entities, various strategies emerge to control the territory and to draw borders. The land is mapped, measured, ordered and divided, and often surrounded by a wall, regulating the flow of people and goods entering and leaving the territory. While the architectural act of building walls is limited, its consequences are significant: the border delineates territory. Although the city wall often constituted a clear demarcation between the inside and the outside, this distinction was often less clear in the case of cities bordering the water.

If porosity was an intrinsic quality of ports, then the sixteenth-century fundamentally altered the character of the port city by eradicating its openness towards the sea. After one member of the Doria clan, Andrea Doria, claimed power and assumed the role of “Augustan founder and restorer of the ‘ancient’ republic” in 1528, he embarked on a series of ambitious urban renewal projects. Doria ordered the construction of the Strada Nuova, eternalized in Peter Paul Rubens’ book, while Boccanegra’s *darsena*, *arsenale* were expanded and porticoes were constructed at the *ripa* to institutionalize the markets on the waterfront.

The projects signified the changing international status of Genoa in Europe; Andrea Doria aligned himself with Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor. This is the age of Genoese finance, when, using the words of Braudel, “the merchant-bankers of Genoa, through their handling of capital and credit [called] the tune of European payments and transactions.”⁴¹ Francisco Quevedo provided another apt description in one of his poems: “Born in the Indies, passing away in Spain, buried in Genoa, Sir Money is a powerful knight.”⁴² The shift of the maritime trade to the “west” and the turn of the city’s wealthiest to banking, and money lending to the Habsburg Empire, altered Genoa’s relation to the sea.

⁴⁰ Elden 2011.

⁴¹ Braudel 157.

⁴² Lopez 1964: 462.

Not only did patterns in ownership change, leaving the business of shipping to the less wealthy, the records of port traffic also indicate that the ratio between the foreign merchants and the Genoese traders changed significantly; the number of foreign vessels frequenting the port rose from 25 percent at the end of the fifteenth-century to an astonishing 70 percent in the middle of the sixteenth-century, most of them arriving from the Low Countries or the Hanseatic Cities.⁴³ Thomas Kirk pointed out that the correlation between ship owning and commerce was tighter among the northern merchants, and the arrival of the vessels thus meant the arrival of foreign traders, leading to a notable decrease of Genoese control over its own traffic.⁴⁴ The situation in Genoa was not exceptional; the same phenomenon could be discerned in the Republic of Venice, and Ragusa. The perceived decline prompted public intervention; the Banco di San Giorgio issued a series of state subsidies for the construction of *navi*.⁴⁵ If before the influx of foreigners could be regulated, and spatially controlled through their obligation to stay in the *fondaco* of Genoa, the presence of foreigners was now unsupervised.⁴⁶ The willingness to intervene in maritime issues, not only indicates the presence of a public government in a way the city had never experienced before, it also shows a gradual development of a coherent maritime policy, and subsequently, a centralized “port system.”

Precisely at this moment of turmoil, the harbor front Genoa decided to fortify its harbor front, building a *mura di mare*. When the military architect of Charles V, Giovanni Maria Olgiati, designed an entire new circuit of city walls, replacing the corner bastions with diamond shaped ones; the architect Galeazzo Alessi from Perugia fortified the Molo and the *ripa* (Fig. 10). According to Giorgio Vasari, who described the project, Alessi not only fortified the existing Molo, but extended it, so that “it spread out in the sea [to create] a good space, it is a beautiful

⁴³ Kirk 2005: 34-35.

⁴⁴ Ibidem.

⁴⁵ Ibidem: 36

⁴⁶ On the Fondaco in Genoa, located on the Molo, see: P. Dollinger “Project d’un Fondaco dei Tedeschi à Gênes et à Milan au xve siècle.” *Byzantinische Forschungen* 12 (1987): 675-688.

door [consisting] of half a circle, adorned with rustic columns.”⁴⁷ Reflecting the designs for the ideal ports, by marking the entrance with columns, Alessi’s intervention even further incorporates a part of the sea by marking the sea with the jetty. More importantly, at the end of the city, and the beginning of the Molo, Alessi constructed a port, an entryway into the city as part of fortification in between two enormous square corner bastions with rusticated stones (Fig. 11). Why is the port directed towards the sea? And, why became the waterfront suddenly a physical border, materialized by a fortification? Although, admittedly, military architecture experienced a phase of rapid transformation because of the introduction of gunpowder artillery, this clarification proves itself insufficient when taking into account that at the same time Naples fortifies its harbor with a bastioned defense system, constructing a new coastline from the fortified Castel dell’Ovo to Chiaia, as well as Venice. Michele SanMicheli, an architect who was assigned by Pope Clement VII to inspect the fortifications of the Papal States, and who designed the fortifications of Bresciano, Verona, and Corfu, constructed an angle bastion on the island of Sant’Andrea in 1543, at the entrance to the Venetian lagoon, again with a port facing the sea (Fig. 12).⁴⁸

If in the early modern period, in the ages of maritime development, the idea of territory and, subsequently, the demarcation of territory arose, followed by the rise in the West of what Immanuel Wallerstein has deemed the “modern world-system”, it is after the development of the nautical charts and the move “westwards”, as chronicled by Hugo de Groot, that the boundary between the land and the sea is solidified. The border is no longer the sea itself, but the line of fortification. The new bastioned defense systems are legal diagrams, a concretization of law materialized by architecture. Moreover, through long-distance armed shipping, floating fortresses, and better ways to conserve food, it became possible to extend the area of oceanic control from the home base and to establish territories in other places. Whether we allocate the rise of “modern capitalism” at this moment or whether we could call this a “world-system” is not only an

⁴⁷ “...allargandosi in mare per buono spazio, fece un bellissimo portone che giae in mezzo circolo, molto adorno di colonne rustiche...” Vasari quoted in Simoncini 1993: 61.

⁴⁸ Deborah Howard, *Architectural History of Venice*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004: 268.

unanswerable question, but also perhaps an impossible inquiry. Wallerstein's analysis of social change and the development of the modern world-system in the sixteenth-century is, of course, an *a posteriori* reading, and adoption of deductive models selecting and arranging data to pinpoint at the rise of capitalism, in his definition - based on the Marxist debate over the transformation of feudalism to capitalism - a system of production of goods for exchange that became hegemonic over parts of the world, transcending political divisions. As Janet Abu-Lughod contended, when exploring these questions "the beginning with a different outcome at a different moment in time will lead to a different account of the sequence and a different set of items to be explained."⁴⁹ Countering Wallerstein's assertions that the world-system was world-wide from the start onwards and originated in sixteenth-century Western Europe, according to Abu-Lughod it is as early as the thirteenth-century that we witness the rise of money and credit and mechanisms for pooling capital and distributing risk - such as the Genoese sea loan - and the upsurge of an international trade economy from northwestern Europe all the way to China, employing merchants and producers connect by a network of worldwide exchange⁵⁰ While no world-system is truly global, it might be more useful to consider the rise of a world-economy as a gradual process, with several sub-systems, which gain and lose importance over time. If so, the sixteenth-century then undeniably observed the shift westwards, and radically altered the system of trade networks, as the arrival of the northern merchants *en masse* in the Genoese harbor testifies. Yet, the sudden demarcation of the waterfront in sixteenth-century port cities across Italy, as well as in the rest of the Mediterranean, the new territories across the Atlantic or Dutch trading posts in the East, does show a changing conception of territory, and the comprehension of the world, both its land and sea, as territories that could be possessed. Although Wallerstein devoted sparse attention to the ports in the Mediterranean, looking at conceptions of space and architectural and urban reactions attested that if the "archipelago of towns" or "world empires" were essentially land-based, with

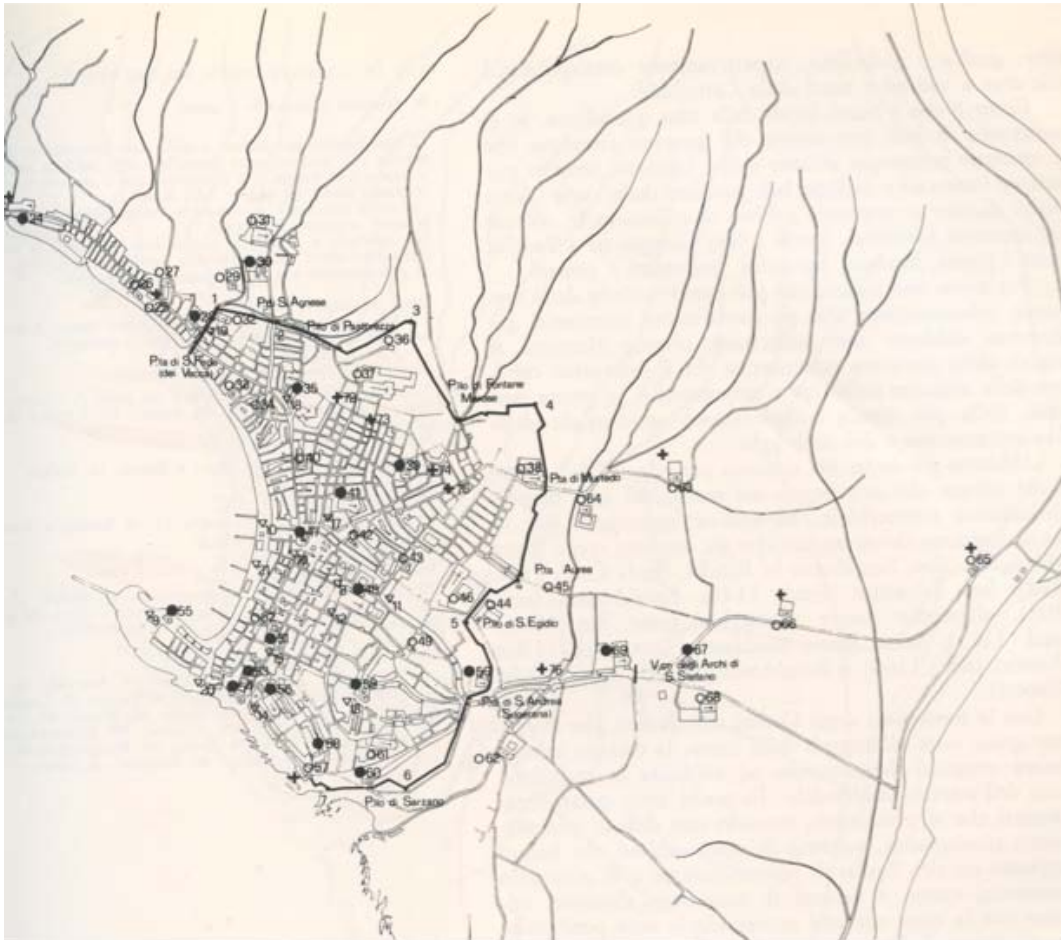
⁴⁹ Abu-Lughod 1989: 12-13

⁵⁰ Ibidem: 3-9.

the mapping of the seas, the art of navigation - a communication of flying bridges, using Raynal's words - the sea became part of the European scramble to secure dominance in the rest of the world.⁵¹

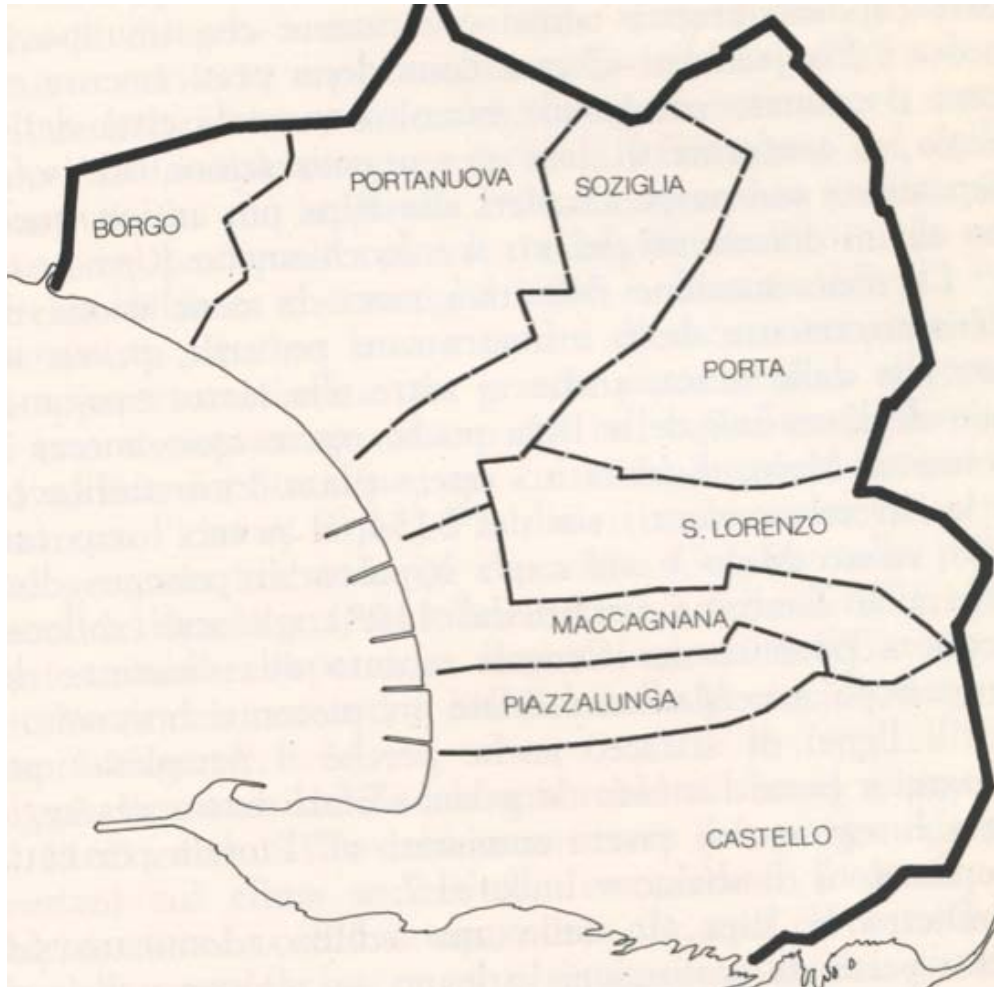
⁵¹ Abbé Raynal, *A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies*. Translation J. Justamond. London, 1777: 503.

Figures



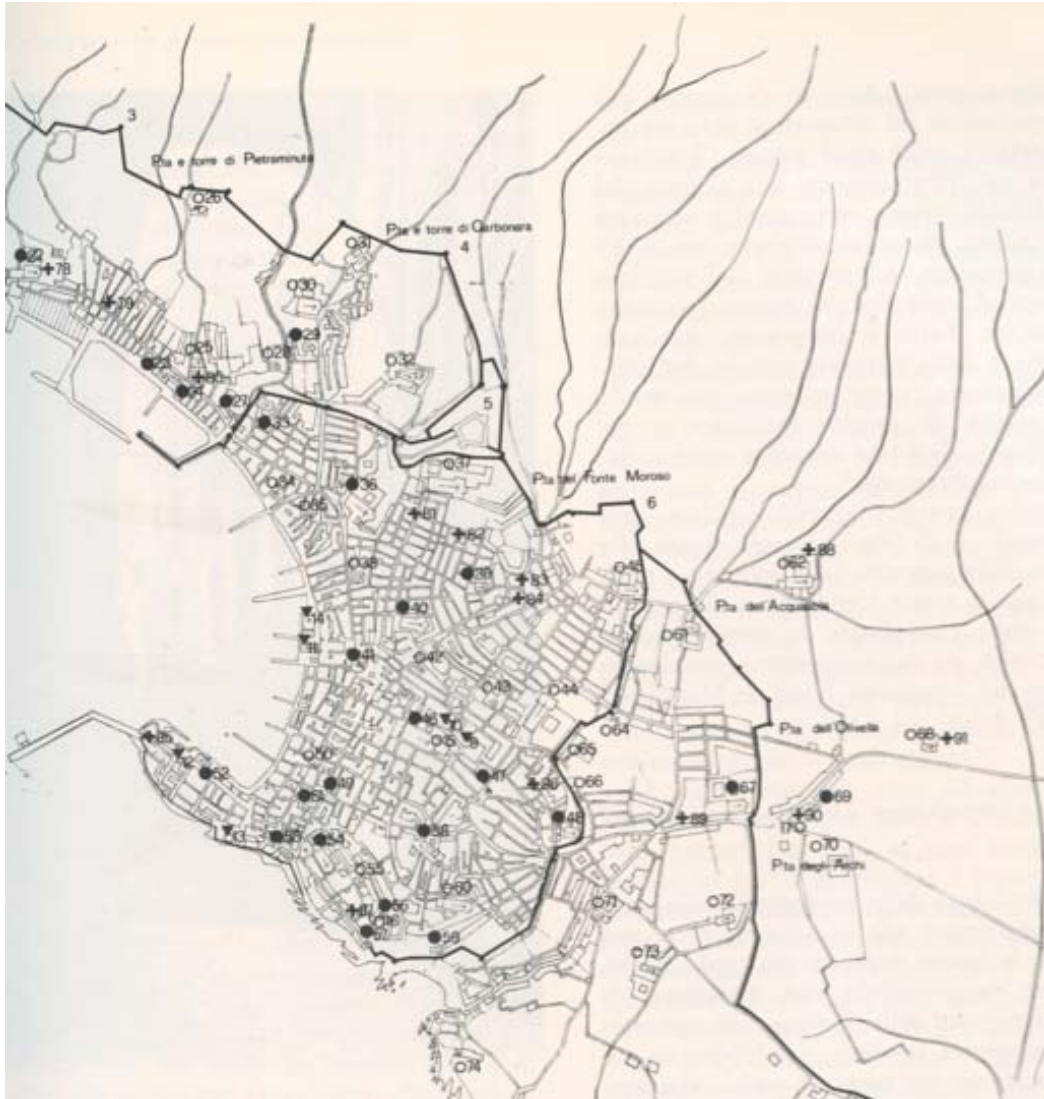
Courtesy of Laterza (Ufficio Diritti esteri). Used with permission.

Fig. 1. Map of thirteenth century Genoa. Poleggi and Cevini 1981: 49. Number nine indicates the Palazzetto dei Conservatori del porto e del molo, number 10 the Palazzo del Mare, and next to it the mint.



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Fig. 2. The territorial redistribution in separate *compagne* in the twelfth-century. Poggi and Cevini 1981: 35.



Courtesy of Laterza (Ufficio Diritti esteri). Used with permission.

Fig. 3. Map of fifteenth-century Genoa. Poggi and Cevini 1981: 67. Note the enlargement of the Molo and the *darsena*.



Fig. 4. Cristoforo de' Grassi, Vedute di Genova, 1597. Copy of a 1481 painting. Genoa, Civico Museo Navale di Pegli.

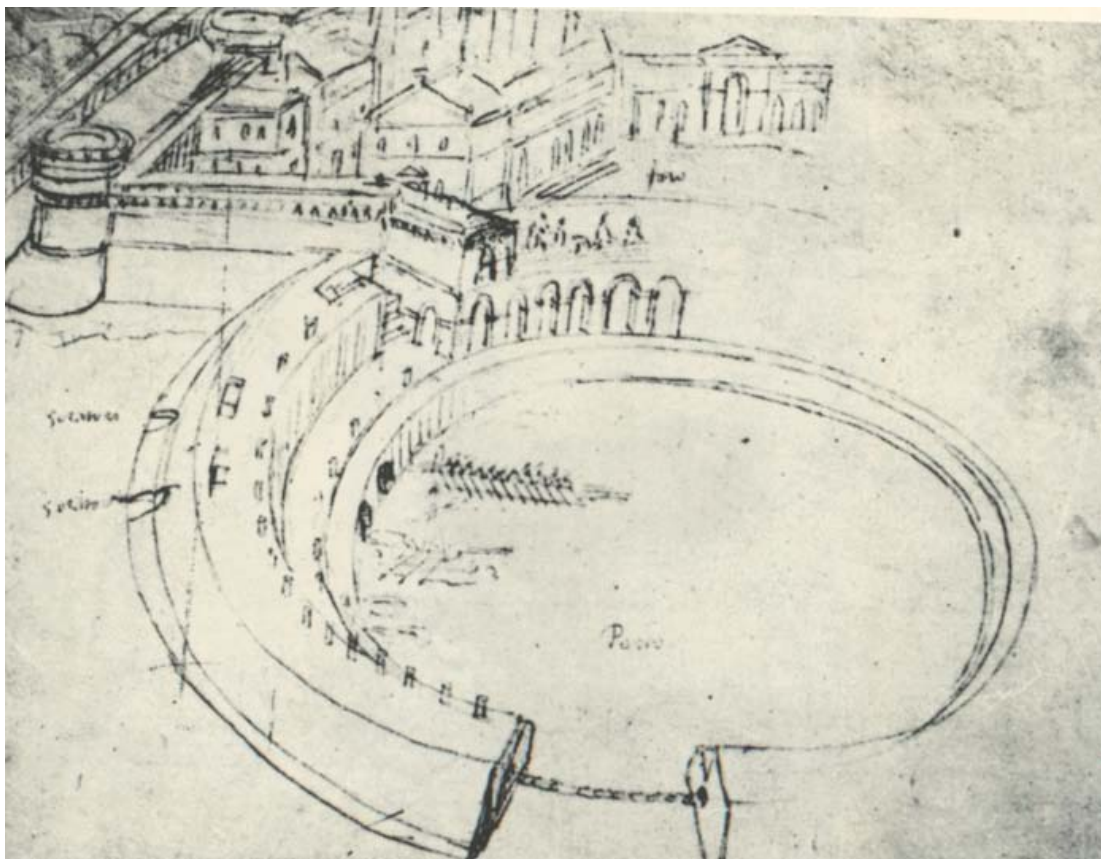


Fig. 5. Antonio da Sangallo il Giovane, sketch of an ancient port. Uffizi, Florence, Dis. Arch. 1302.

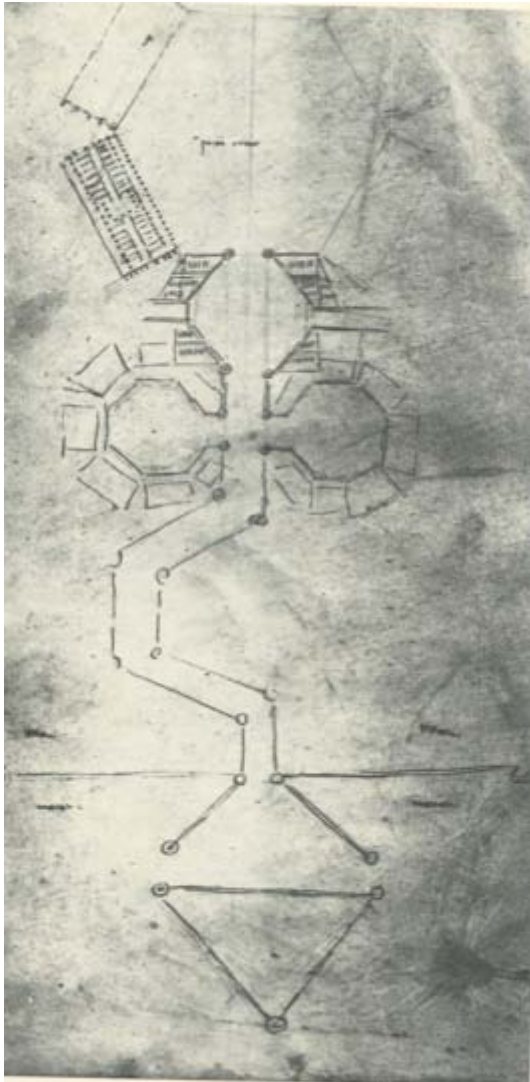


Fig. 6. Giuliano da Sangallo, plan of Porto Ostiense. Codex Barberiniano Latino 4424, II, f. 59.

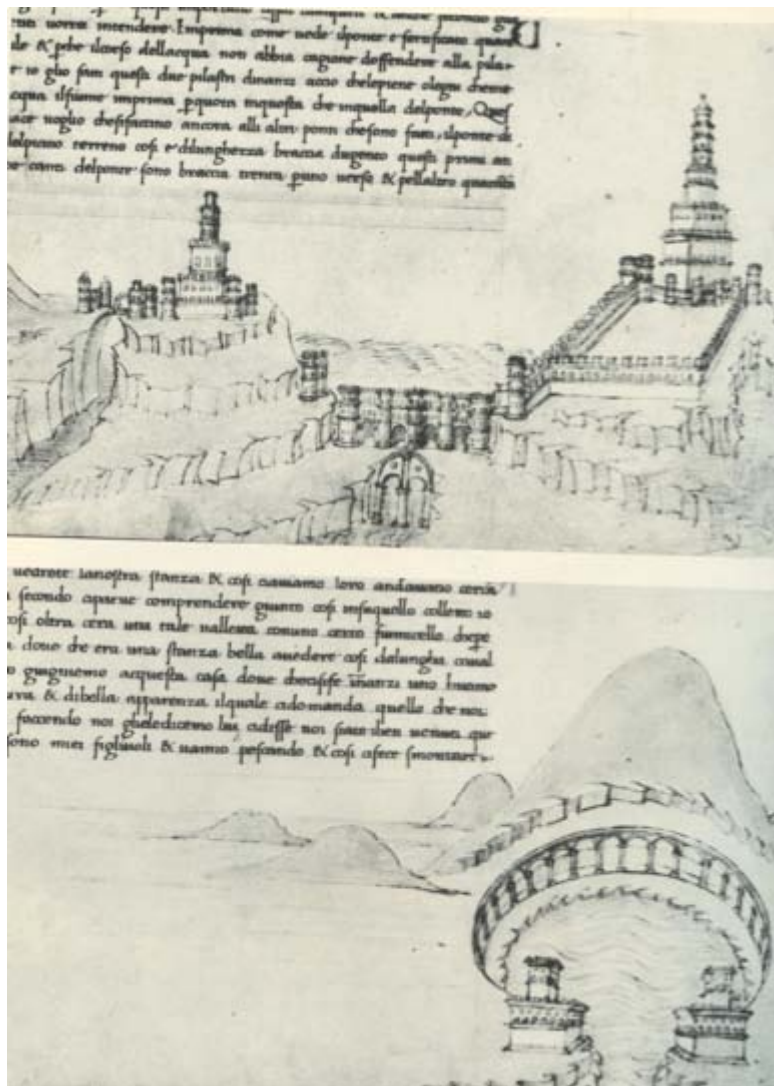


Fig. 8. Filarete, port of Sforzinda. Codex Magliabechiano II.I.140, f 97r.



Fig. 9. A. Giolfi, G. Giudotti, view on the buildings of *sottoripa* and the Spinola dock, separated from the city through the *mura di mare*, 1769. Genoa, Collezione della Cassa di Risparmio di Genova e Imperia.



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Fig. 10. Galeazzo Alessi, Porta del Molo (Porta Siberia), 1551-1553, Genoa.



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Fig. 11. Micheli Sanmicheli, Fortezza di Sant'andrea, 1543, Venice.

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