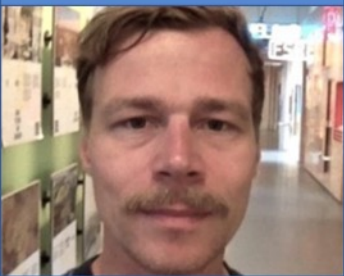




**Port Cities
Between Global Networks
and Local Transformations**

Carola Hein, Tino Mager

Lecture 3: The Maritime Silk Road and the Medieval European Port Cities



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Welcome to Lecture 3 of Port Cities between global networks and local transformations. This lecture focuses on the Maritime Silk Road and the medieval European port cities



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Port Cities Between Global Networks and Local Transformations

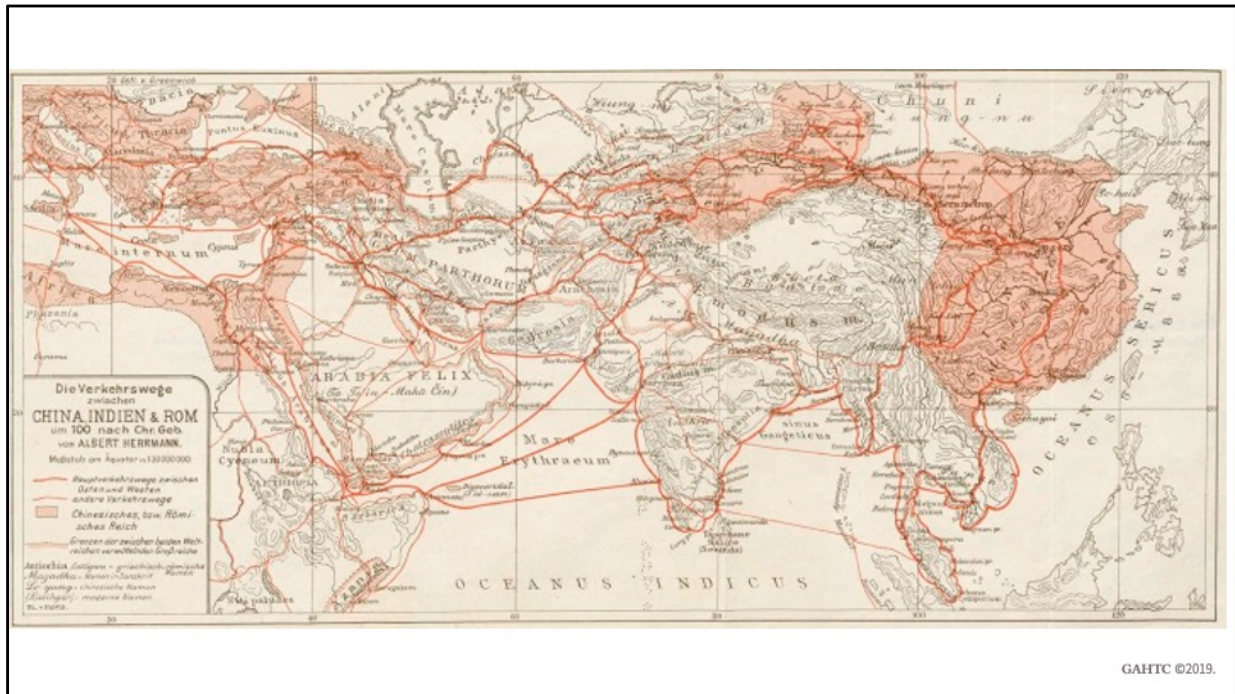
Carola Hein, Tino Mager

Lecture 3: The Maritime Silk Road and the Medieval European Port Cities

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Lecture Abstract:

Sea-based trade networks linked continents. Exchange between Europe and China occurred both via land and sea. Cities such as Venice, Istanbul and Xi'an thrived due to the exchange of goods, with hubs along the African and Indian coasts. This lecture explores the multiple practices that travelled in conjunction with trade.



Trade between China, India and Europe has a millenary tradition and helped shaped numerous cities and especially ones that controlled sea routes or hinterland access. The Silk Road was an important trade route along which mainly silk, to the east wool, gold and silver were traded. It connected Europe, Asia Minor and Eastern Asia. In addition to the Silk Road, there was also a sea route connecting Chinese ports with stopovers in present-day Vietnam, India, Pakistan, Yemen and Egypt with Europe. Constantinople thrived on trade as the city was located between Europe and Asia, and controlling the connection between Black Sea and Mediterranean. Venice and Genova are examples of port cities in the Mediterranean that grew as a result of Silk Road Trade. These cities also held close connections to Hanseatic cities in the North of Europe. Traders in these cities have built close exchange networks creating a cosmopolitan culture. The architecture and urban form in these cities reflects the patterns of migration and maritime exchange. Influences of trade are also evident in the Chinese cities that were at the Eastern end.

Image source:

Herrmann, Albert, Die Verkehrswege zwischen China, Indien und Rom um 100 nach

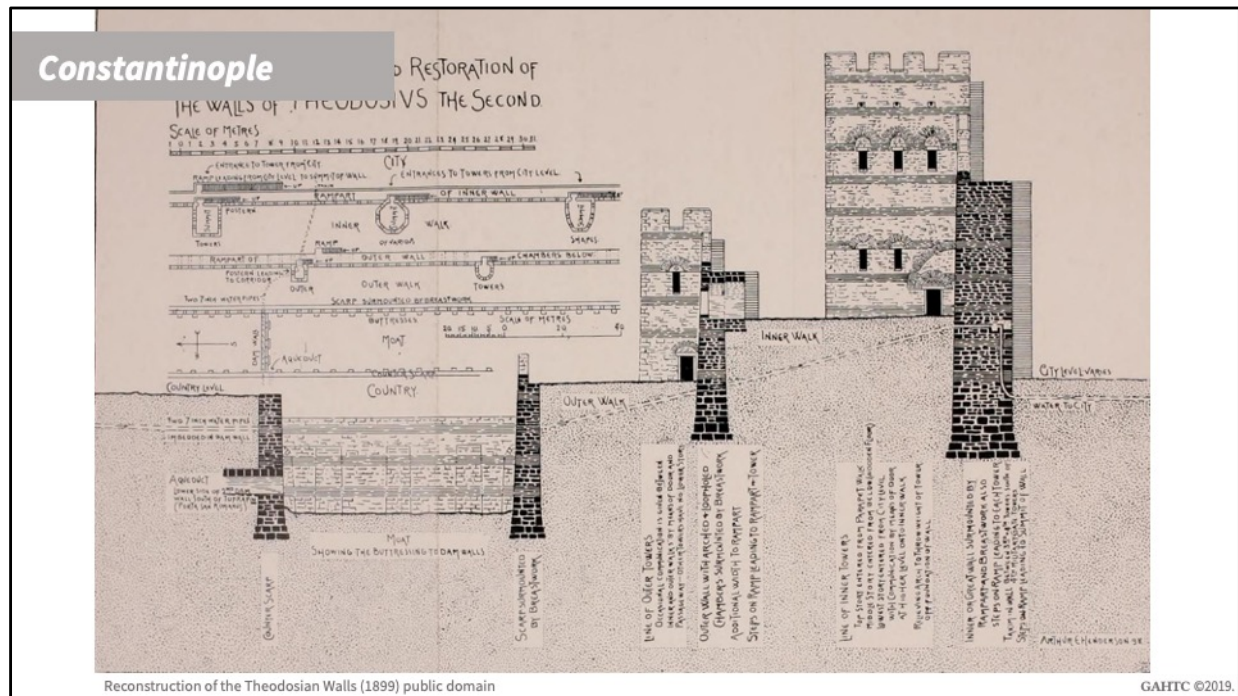
Chr. Geb. : Originalkarte in zweifarbendruck mit erläuterndem text, 1886



The history of Constantinople/Byzanz/Istanbul is a key example of a port city that thrived through its control of land and sea routes. The Roman Empire had evolved around the Mediterranean sea and its growth was as much based on shipping as on land connection: Constantinople controls land connections from Anatolia into Europe. It overlooks the Bosphorus and controls all ship traffic between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. After the death of Theodosius I in 395 AD, the Roman Empire was divided into an eastern and a western empire. Both empires were ruled by his sons. While the western empire existed only until 476, Constantinople, the capital of the eastern empire, quickly developed into a cosmopolitan city. Its location on the golden horn (right in the picture), its role as capital, military center, and location of natural harbors attracted people and investment, which then translated into an extensive defensive system, large urban interventions and monumental architecture typical of the Roman Empire. There are palace complexes, religious buildings and places for public spectacles. There are also numerous ports protected by breakwaters and walls. In the foreground on the right, you can see a chain that prevented ships from entering the Golden Horn. It was an important contribution to the defense of the town and is now in the Military Museum. Due to its key geopolitical location the city has continuously played a strategic political role until today

Image source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantinople#/media/File:Bizansist_touchup.jpg



Control of the seaways required extensive fortifications. Already Theodosius II had a wall erected, partially still preserved today, which enclosed a city area of 12 km². This wall successfully protected the city until it was conquered by the Ottomans in 1453. The defenses of the city effectively inspired fortifications throughout the region. The fall of Constantinople was a watershed moment in history. It marked the end of the Roman Empire after 1500 years. It also signaled an important military change. The use of cannons and gun powder brought down the defenses. Subsequently, the city became the capital of the Ottoman Empire (Istanbul). The departure of Byzantine scholars from the city and their relocation to the West became a key inspiration for the revival of Greek and Roman traditions and the Renaissance.

Alexander Van Millingen's reconstruction drawing reveals the complex system of multiple layers of protection that made the wall so successful for a millennium.

Image source:

https://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/Αρχείο:Byzantineconstan00vanm_0164.jpg

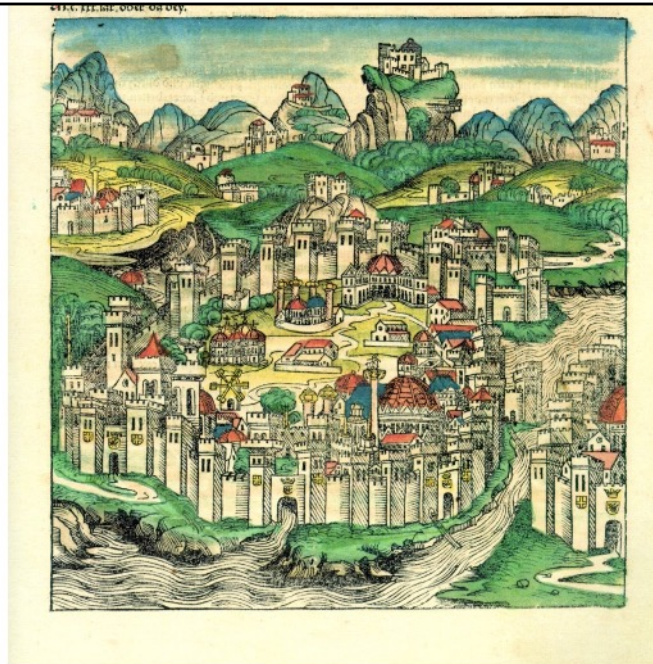


Reconstructed sections today allow a very precise presentation of the Theodosian wall, which is considered one of the most successful and well thought-out fortifications in the history of war technology.

Image source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantinople#/media/File:Walls_of_Constantinople.JPG

Constantinople



Hartmann Schedel: *Weltchronik* (1493) public domain

GAHTC ©2019

Istanbul's depiction in Hartmann Schedel's famous 1493 world chronicle shows the city as a more representative collection of buildings surrounded by massive defensive walls. Minarets and domes crowned by crosses give an idea of the cosmopolitan character of Constantinople. The basilica is a Roman heritage, the windmill a building whose origins lie in Egypt and Persia. They are all evidence of a lively exchange of cultural achievements. Of particular interest, however, is the dome in the foreground on the right, the Hagia Sophia - a unique building.

Image source:

https://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/Βυζαντινή_Κωνσταντινούπολη#/media/File:Schedel_konstantinopel.jpg

Constantinople



Hagia Sophia (2013) CC BY-SA 3.0

GAHTC ©2019.

The Hagia Sophia built in the 6th century is an icon visible from the sea. It is the last of the late antique large churches. It is an innovative structure that has no direct models and its dimensions are without comparison. It is one of the most important buildings in the history of architecture and has the largest dome with only four supports—an iconic structure in a port city that has also long been a capital.

After the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans, the church was converted into a mosque and the four minarets were added. Its basic form quickly developed into an export hit and became a worldwide model for mosque buildings. The role of shipping as a means of transmitting ideas remains to be further explored. (The Hagia Sophia has changed functions numerous times, at times being used for religious purposes and at times as a museum.)

Image source:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hagia_Sophia_Mars_2013.jpg

Constantinople



Melchior Lorck: *Prospect of Constantinople* (1559) public domain

GAHTC ©2019

Melchior Lorck's *Prospect of Constantinople* gives a rather vivid idea of the city in the 16th century. The Beyazıt Mosque (1501-06), with a dome reminiscent of the Hagia Sophia, can be seen prominently from the sea. Numerous sailing ships and countless boats on the Golden Horn, illustrating the visual links between sea and land. Access to the land and the city from the sea is not concentrated only in ports. The ships are not moored at quays but stranded on the banks of the Golden Horn. Behind the boats on the right a load is pulled up the tower and transported into the city.

Image source:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Prospect_of_Constantinople,_Sheet_9,_Melchior_Lorck,_1559.jpg

Constantinople



Galata Tower (1348) BB CY-SA 3.0

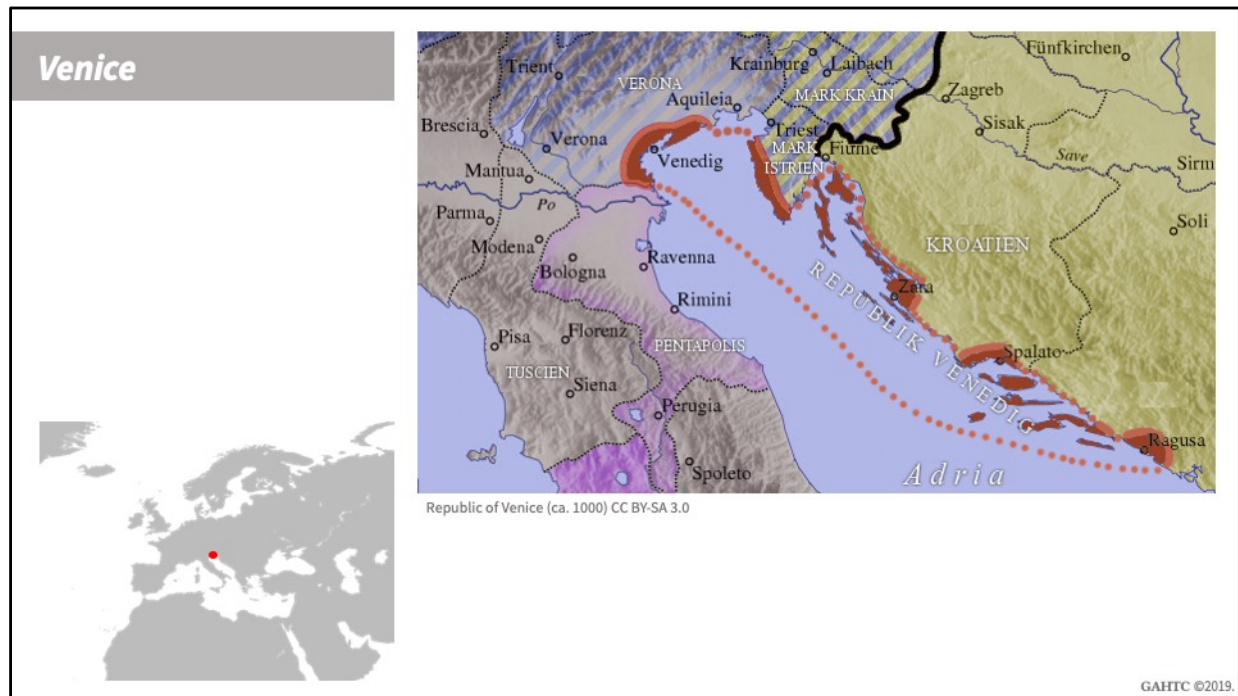
GAHTC ©2019

Directly north of the golden horn, in today's Istanbul district of Galata, was the city of Galata. Galata's most prominent landmark is a tower dating back to the time when the Genoese settled here—another icon visible from the sea. Galata was at that time the largest Italian trading colony, here lived rich Genoese merchants who traded with the Orient. The Galat Tower, built in 1348, was probably part of the city's fortifications and may have served as a lighthouse. During the siege of Constantinople, the Sultan used a road of greased logs to drag his ship over the hill into the Golden Horn, as this was blocked by the chain barrier. As the city fell, Venetian and Genoese traders managed to escape by ship.

Considering the many architectural testimonies of different origins, Constantinople can truly be called a cosmopolitan city. The favorable location between two seas not only stimulated the trade and exchange of goods and ideas, but also provided for the export of architectural influences to the vast Ottoman Empire.

Image source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galata_Tower#/media/File:Galata_Tower_-_Port_of_Karaköy,_2006.jpg



Venice controlled the exchange between China and the West and the city's architecture reflects the wealth that this trade generated. The city was an important maritime and economic power from the 7th century to 1797. It controlled numerous areas outside today's city limits. The wealth resulted from the fact that it was a trans-shipment point between the Byzantine Empire and the Holy Roman Empire, and from the city dweller's innovation in ship building. At the turn of the millennium, under Doge Pietro II Orseolo, the rise of Venice to great power began. Under him, a successful campaign against the Dalmatian (Croatian) pirates was successful, and Venice subsequently developed a supremacy in the eastern Mediterranean.

Image Source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Republic_of_Venice#/media/File:Republik_Venedig.png



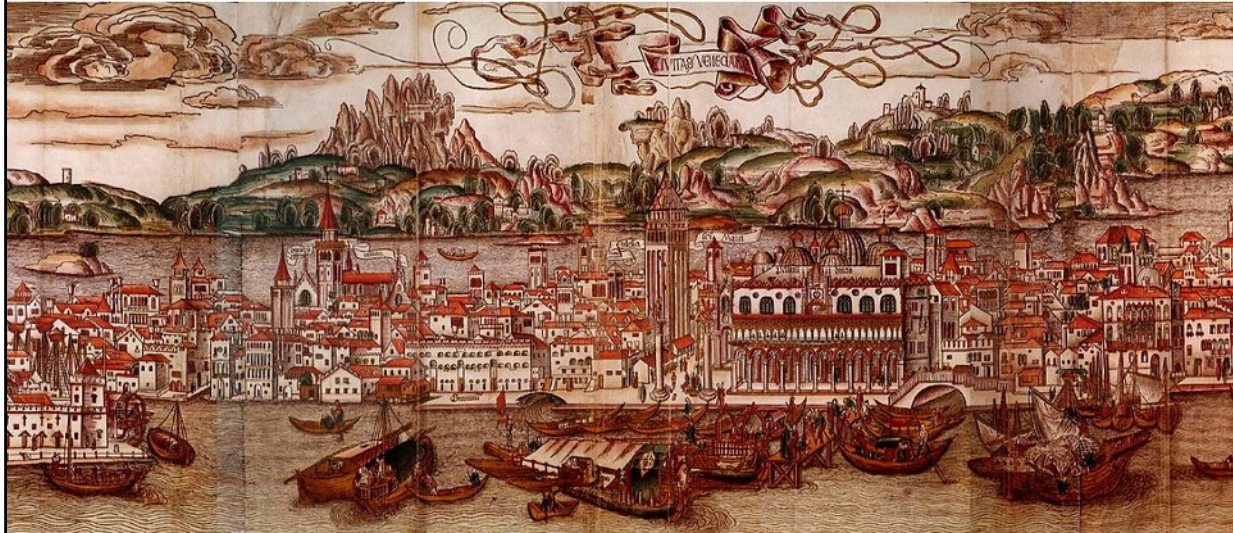
A special feature of the town is its unique location on alluvial land within a lagoon at the northern tip of the Adriatic Sea. The infrastructural network formed by roads and paths in other cities is largely characterised by canals and waterways in Venice. They enabled particularly good transport possibilities within the city and were decisive for a life with water. In addition to various merchant ships (caravels and carracks) there is also a warship, a Venetian galley visible in the image.

Venice has 150 canals, whose draught of 1.85m was continuously maintained until the end of the 18th century. Boats could moor almost anywhere in the city. Many buildings possessed entrances directly to the canal, so the house could be entered directly via the waterway. People from multiple cultures lived and worked in Venice and helped create the city's structure and buildings. The port heritage of Venice is also a unique example of the larger theme of water and culture.

Image source:

https://de.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Venice,_by_Bolognino_Zaltieri,_1565.jpg

Venice



Bernhard von Breydenbach: *Sanctae peregrinationes* (1486) Public Domain

GAHTC ©2019

This city view from 1486 shows typical elements of the port city. In the foreground you can see a wooden quay where ships land. Other ships load their goods directly into smaller boats, which then sail into the canals. Beside the Doge's Palace, the seat of government, bridges and warehouses pay homage to the shipping function of the city. The numerous church towers reflect the maritime wealth of the city.

Image Source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Republic_of_Venice#/media/File:MZK_001_Nr_09_Eine_Ansicht_des_Dogenpalastes_-_Fig._01_Ende_14._Jhdt.jpg

Venice



Fondazio dei Tedeschi (2012) CC BY-SA 4.0

GAHTC ©2019

Venice, as a trading hub was a cosmopolitan center. It provided a home to people from many areas of the world and served as framework for their respective buildings. Foreign merchants from Northern and Central Europe lived in the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, right next to the Rialto Bridge. The main purpose of this trading house was the collection of a customs duty by Venice. A customs duty is a tax that is levied when goods are brought across a customs border. Goods imported or exported were subject to payment of customs duties. The building also housed the traders' own office. Goods were loaded and unloaded through the open arcades to which ships could moor directly.

Image Source:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Fondaco_dei_Tedeschi?uselang=de#/media/File:Fondaco_dei_Tedeschi_2012-05-13.jpg

Venice



Fontego dei Turchi (2011) CC BY-SA 4.0

GAHTC ©2019

Another example of such a trade building is the house of the Ottoman merchants. Numerous dignitaries also stayed in it for visiting purposes. In 1870, the building was restored and given the two corner risalites.

Image Source:

https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fontego_dei_Turchi#/media/File:Fondaco_dei_Turchi.jpg

Venice



Venice Arsenal (1724) public domain

GAHTC ©2019

To protect the Venitian trade interests, a large naval force was essential. Port cities have often been initiators of new technologies or practices. The arsenal, the shipyard and naval base of Venice, occupied a tenth of the city. The construction of this largest pre-industrial European production plant began in the early 12th century. The workers were organised in guilds, were well paid and enjoyed a number of privileges. They were even provided with housing.

Image Source:

https://de.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Venice_arsenale_2_1724.JPG

Venice



Canaletto: Entrance to the Arsenal (1732) public domain

GAHTC ©2019

The entrance to the Arsenal, which hosted the ship-building complex and the armories at the base of Venetian wealth, was flanked by two towers. It itself could be closed with a wooden gate. In the foreground you can see a flap bridge, the halves of which could be pulled up when a larger ship entered.

Image Source:

https://it.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:View_of_the_entrance_to_the_Arsenal_by_Canaletto,_1732.jpg

Venice



Arsenal (2017) CC0

GAHTC ©2019

The arsenal contained ship basins, joiner's workshops, a rope hall, ore and casting huts, and a weapons depot. The production was very efficient. As early as the 14th century, the production process for galleys was rationalised. Their prefabricated components were standardised and kept in stock so that ships could be made ready for use in the shortest possible time. Merchant ships could be converted into warships in the shortest possible time.

Image Source:

<https://pixabay.com/en/venice-arsenal-italy-2857583/>

Venice

What is a Port?

Akkadian Empire



Doge's Palace (15th C) Public Domain

GAHTC ©2019

To guarantee the complex interaction of trade and shipping, the Venitian leadership needed support throughout the region. They required allegiance from many Adriatic cities, which until today are home to Venetian fortresses, Chania on Crete, or Nafplios on the Peloponnese are just two examples. The government also had to establish the urban and architectural elements needed for the control of the city. The construction of waterways, bridges, streets had to facilitate the trade. The architectural highlight of the city was the market square with the church of San Marco and the Doge's Palace. The Doges, the chief magistrates, led the city for some 1000 years. Here both buildings can be seen on a representation of the 15th century. The characteristic arcades, domes and balconies are clearly visible. The Gothic elements of the palace are connected with oriental elements. The architecture of San Marco (background) follows Byzantine models. The Doge's Palace (front right) with its typical arcades is rather imaginatively reproduced. Both buildings are excellent examples of the exchange of ideas and building forms over great distances and notably the sea. The building at the front left cannot be identified precisely, it stands for shops and merchants, which were numerous in the city. These two columns in the foreground are spoils from Tyros, they carry two figures: Saint Theodor was the patron saint of Tyros and later Venice's main saint. On the other column stands St. Mark's Lion, Venice's heraldic animal. It probably comes from Persia, the wings are later additions.

Such structures exemplify the relevance of maritime exchange.

Image Source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Republic_of_Venice#/media/File:MZK_001_Nr_09_Eine_Ansicht_des_Dogenpalastes_-_Fig._01_Ende_14._Jhdt.jpg

Venice



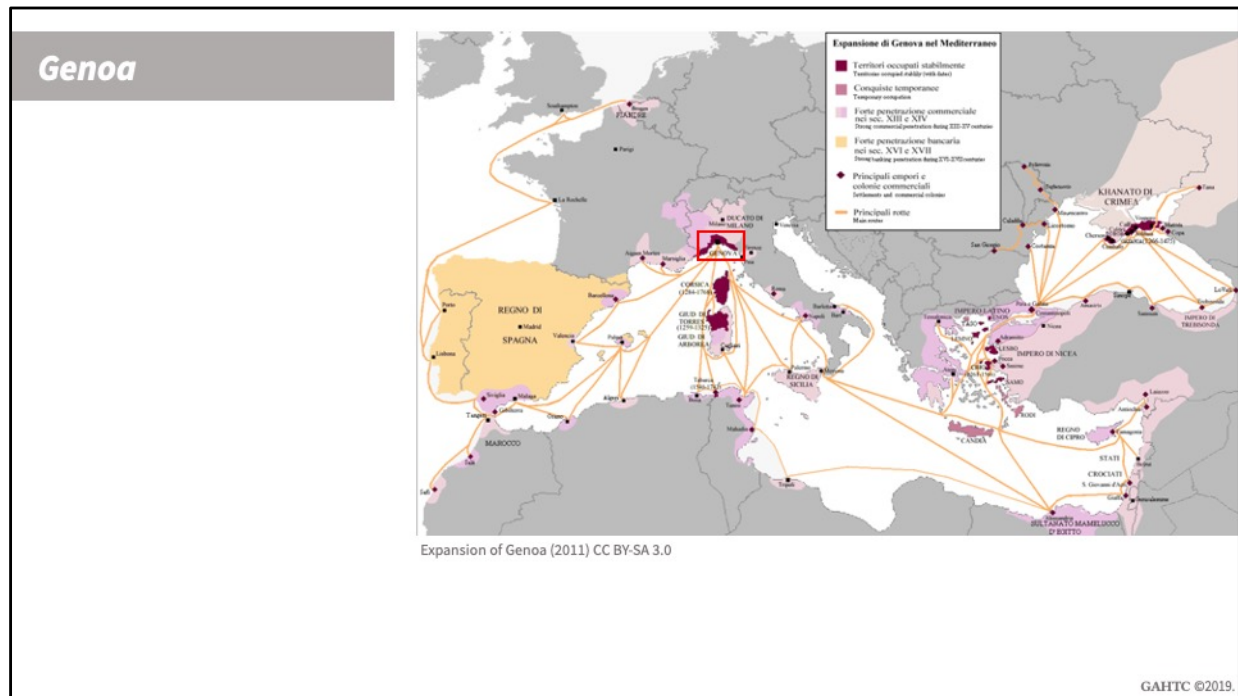
Canaletto: Reception of the French Ambassador in Venice (1726) Public Domain

GAHTC ©2019

Global exchange via shipping is also captured in Canaletto's painting that shows the reception of the French ambassador. The Doge's Palace is situated directly on the waterfront, a sign of the significance of this important institution for the commercial city of Venice. The two columns just mentioned can be seen in the middle of the picture.

Image Source:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Canaletto,_Reception_French_Ambassador_Eremitage_St._Petersburg_02.JPG



Venice also had competitors. Genoa developed into a rival of Venice and also possessed several overseas territories. Like Venice, it lies at the northern end of the Mediterranean Sea, but on the other side of the Italian peninsula, on the Riviera.

Image Source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_Genoa#/media/File:Repubblica_di_Genova.png



This Christoforo de Grassis painting is a copy of a picture from the end of the 15th century. It shows us Genoa from the bird's-eye view and allows us to identify elements of a port city in the past. The bay, which forms a natural harbour, is further protected by a sea wall. Lighthouses can be seen on this wall and on the headland to the left of the picture. The latter still exists today and is still one of the highest in the world, showing the capacity of port cities to lead and to innovate. The harbour has several jetties on which ships lie and shows the extensive Genovese fleet in the sea.

Image Source:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_Genoa#/media/File:Genova_1481_\(copy_1597\).jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_Genoa#/media/File:Genova_1481_(copy_1597).jpg)



The importance of shipping translated into the presence of lighthouses along the coast. The original lighthouse in Genova is an example. It dates from 1128. It was badly damaged in 1506 and subsequently rebuilt. Today it is the third oldest lighthouse in the world. Its operation was guaranteed by a special tax that the ships calling at the port had to pay. Originally fired with wood, the lighthouse was operated from 1326 with olive oil. The tower consists of two orders of square section, built of natural stone from the quarries of Carignano. Each section is topped by a terrace. A masonry staircase allows to reach the top. The height of the lighthouses allowed for them to be visible from a far and connects land to sea in particularly memorable ways.

Image Source:

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Torre_della_Lanterna_\(Genoa\)?uselang=de#/media/File:Lanterna_di_Genova-IMG_2503.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Torre_della_Lanterna_(Genoa)?uselang=de#/media/File:Lanterna_di_Genova-IMG_2503.JPG)

Hanseatic League



Hanseatic League around 1400 (1886) CC BY-SA 3.0

GAHTC ©2019.

Venice and Genova emerged as trading centers in the Mediterranean through their link to Asia. They were also closely connected to the North Sea and the Hanseatic cities. In Northern Europe port towns and cities joined together to form a powerful trade association. It stretched across the North Sea and the Baltic Sea, and also included large inland areas.

The Hanseatic League was founded in the middle of the 12th century as an association of Low German merchants. Their concern was the safety of seafaring and the representation of common economic interests. It developed into an important factor not only in the economic, but also in the political and cultural fields. At the end of the 14th century, the Hanseatic League formed a great Northern European power. A key aspect of the Hanseatic League was trading across the Baltic and North Seas. The member cities had their own defense. The trading network was reflected in family and social exchanges. It also facilitated the exchange of technologies, architectural and urban ideas. Warehouses in all of the participating cities resembled each other, for example, and representatives of other cities and regions had their own buildings in faraway places.

Image source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanseatic_League#/media/File:Ausbreitung_der_Hans

e_um_das_Jahr_1400-Droysens_28.jpg

Lübeck (Hanse)



Foundation of the Hanseatic League (1497) CC BY-SA 3.0

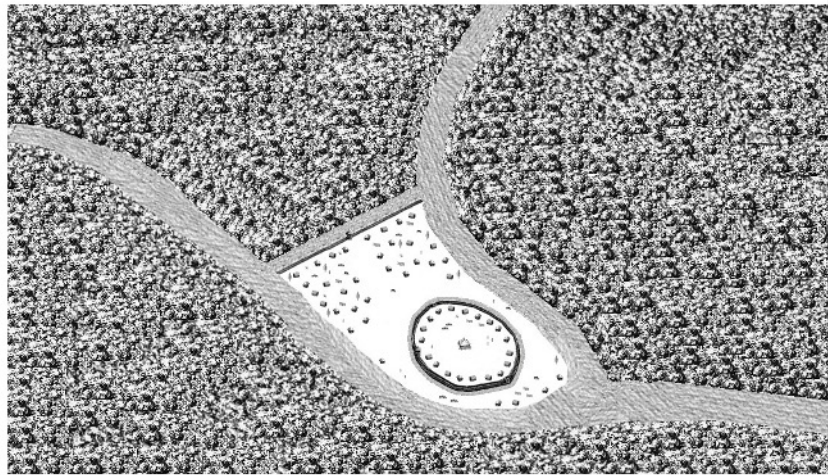
GAHTC ©2019

The Hanseatic League has grown from local structures into a large organization. The illumination shows the foundation of the alliance between Lübeck and Hamburg. It also captures a harbour scene, a typical wooden crane driven by a treadmill unloads a barrel from a ship. The foundation of Lübeck in 1143 plays a decisive role in the development of the Hanseatic League. It was the first German city on the Baltic Sea and thus the starting point of eastern German maritime trade.

Image source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanseatic_League#/media/File:Stadtrecht_P.Schiffrecht.MHG.ajb.jpg

Lübeck (Hanse)



First Lübeck settlement (2011) CC0

GAHTC ©2019.

The first settlement in the area was Slavic. It was situated at the estuary of the Schwartau into the Trave. Approximately 15 navigable kilometres from the open sea.

Image source:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Burgwall_Alt_Luebeck.jpg

Lübeck (Hanse)

What is a Port?

Akkadian Empire



Lübeck (2006) CC BY-SA 3.0

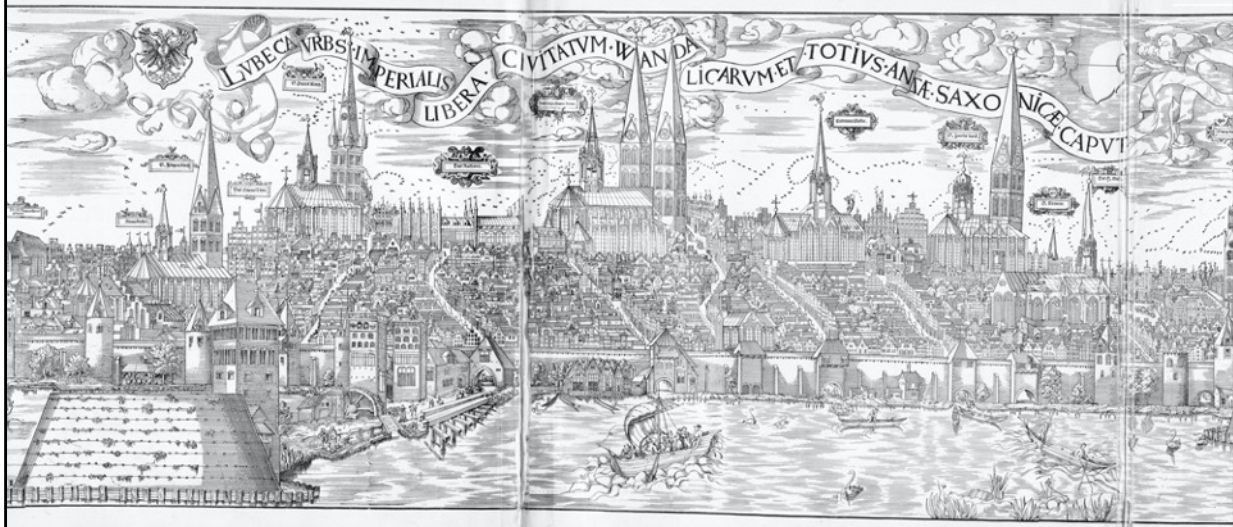
GAHTC ©2019

This situation is still visible in today's city view. In addition to the large city churches, which illustrate the early prosperity of the city, many gabled trading houses are recognizable.

Image source:

https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lübeck#/media/File:Lubeck_panorama.JPG

Lübeck (Hanse)



Elias Diebel: Lübeck (1552) public domain

GAHTC ©2019

On the engraving you can see the fortifications of the town, which also have special gates to let in boats. The boats could thus drive directly to the trading houses. The water-powered mill in the foreground operates a sawmill, large wooden beams are ready to be used for the construction of ships. In many areas around the Baltic Sea natural stone was scarce. Bricks served as construction material, a typical element of many Hanseatic cities. Here the brick gothic has developed.

Image source:

https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lübeck#/media/File:WP_Diebel_Lübeck.jpg

Lübeck (Hanse)



Holstentor (2015) CC BY-SA 3.0

GAHTC ©2019.

An example of this brick Gothic is the Holstentor in Lübeck, originally part of four gates in a row, built between 1464 and 1478.

Image source:

https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holstentor#/media/File:Holstentor_von_der_Petrikirche_-_Zuschnitt.jpg

Lübeck (Hanse)



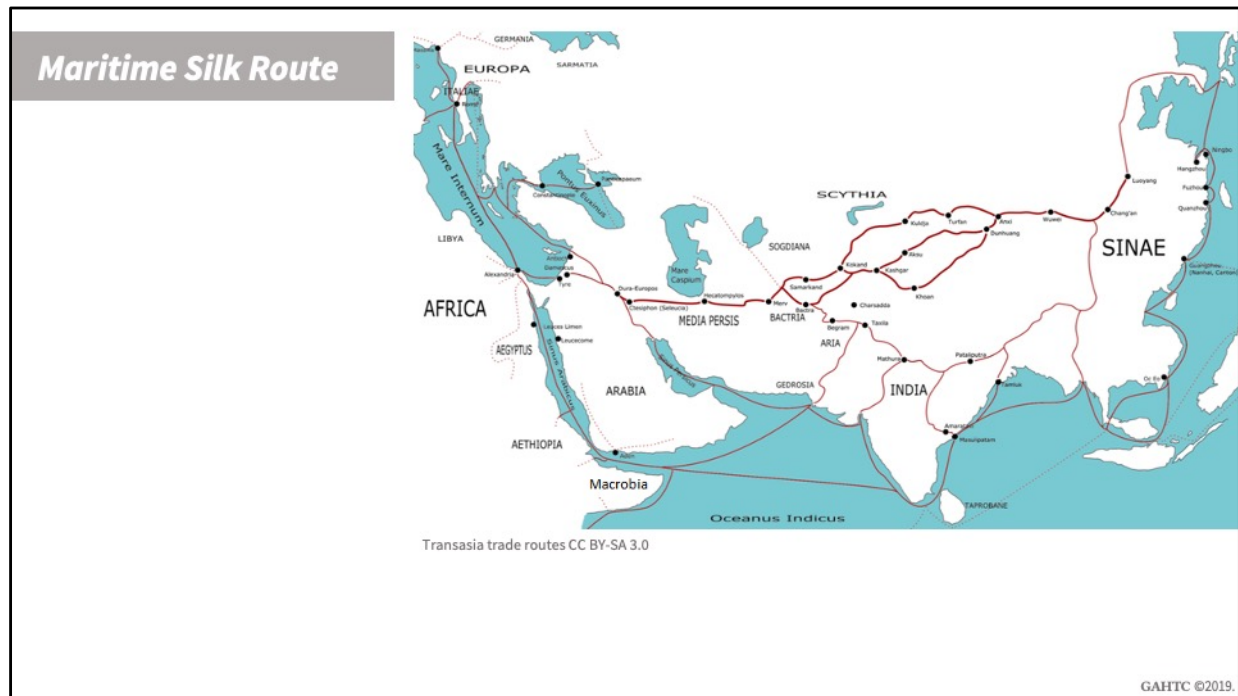
Salzspeicher (2019) CC BY-SA 4.0

GAHTC ©2019

The type of storage structures spread around the entire Baltic Sea region. A loading beam in the gable allowed the individual floors to be loaded directly through the windows. The salt storages were built between 1579 and 1745.

Image source:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/poly-image/7478722776/>



The Silk Road also led to important development in cities along the way: Yemen, India, China. First Arab, and later European influences spread Eastwards with the Silk Road. Today much of this development is headed in the opposite direction.

Image source:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Transasia_trade_routes_1stC_CE_gr2.png



The Yemeni city of Aden was an important station on the maritime Silk Road between India and Egypt. It was already mentioned in the 8th century BC as an important trading port and, after a decline in the early Middle Ages, was largely able to maintain its importance. After the opening of the Suez Canal, it moved further into the centre of important trade lines. The representation of Braun and Hogenberg shows the characteristic crater under which the city is built. In addition to some Islamic elements in the architecture, the strong fortification and the sheltered location in the bay are particularly striking. As we have already seen in other examples, the harbour consists rather of a shallow shore that offered easy access to the sea. Here ships are built and goods are transshipped, which are transported by smaller boats to and from the merchant ships, which lie in the deeper water and partly protected behind defensive walls.

Image source:

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hogenberg.Aden.jpg>

Maritime Silk Route



Hoi An, Vietnam (2012) CC BY-SA 2.0

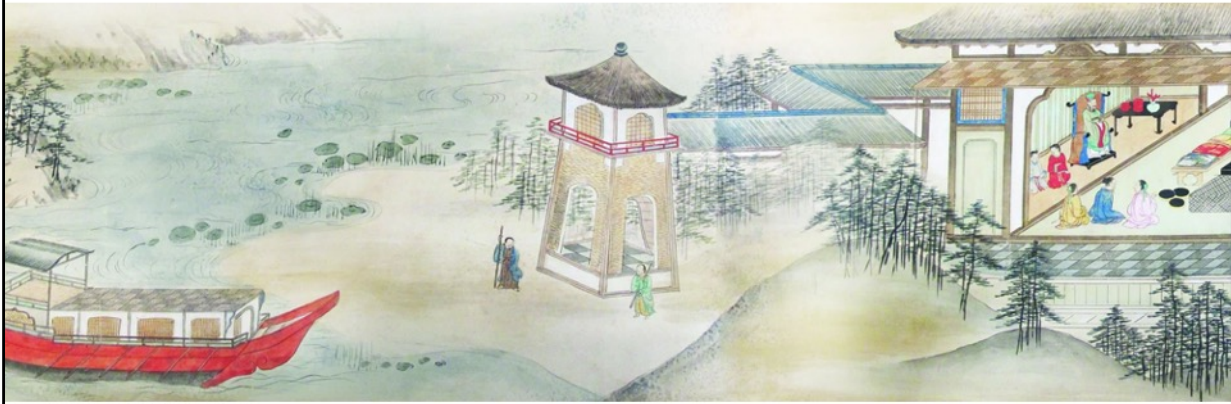
GAHTC ©2019

The Vietnamese town of Hoi An was an first important station on the maritime Silk Road. The port was also an important port of call for Japanese ships. Later, in the 17th century, the English East India Company, the Dutch Vereinigde Oostindische Compagnie and the French Compagnie des Indes Orientales also settled here. Hoi An retained its importance until the port was dispatched. At the end of the 19th century, the port was hardly used any more and the importance of the most important regional port city fell to Đà Nẵng . The decline of the importance of Hoi An, however, was responsible for the preservation of the historic townscape, as the areas close to the port were not modernised as a result.

Image source:

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:HOI_AN_VIETNAM_JAN_2012_\(7057058591\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:HOI_AN_VIETNAM_JAN_2012_(7057058591).jpg)

Maritime Silk Route



Hoi An, Vietnam (~1650) Public domain

GAHTC ©2019

Historical illustrations, such as here from the 17th century, show some details of earlier times. The watchtower, which can be seen in numerous illustrations, and the fortification wall behind it are striking. In addition, the unpaved banks and the noble lives of higher-ranking merchants and regional rulers can be seen.

Image source:

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hoi_An_the_ky_17_\(2\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hoi_An_the_ky_17_(2).jpg)

Maritime Silk Route



Hoi An, Vietnam (2008) CC BY-SA 2.0

GAHTC ©2019

Today's Hoi An is a fascinating mixture of different architectural influences. Different cultures have left behind buildings that are rather untypical for Vietnam: Besides traditional Vietnamese buildings there are Chinese houses as well as European influenced buildings. Hoi An conveys the compact size of port cities of earlier centuries and at the same time, through its architecture, the already existing global orientation of trade and culture.

Image source:

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vietnam,_Hoi_AN_\(8841367707\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vietnam,_Hoi_AN_(8841367707).jpg)

Maritime Silk Route



Japanese Bridge in Hoi An, Vietnam (2009) CC BY 2.0

GAHTC ©2019

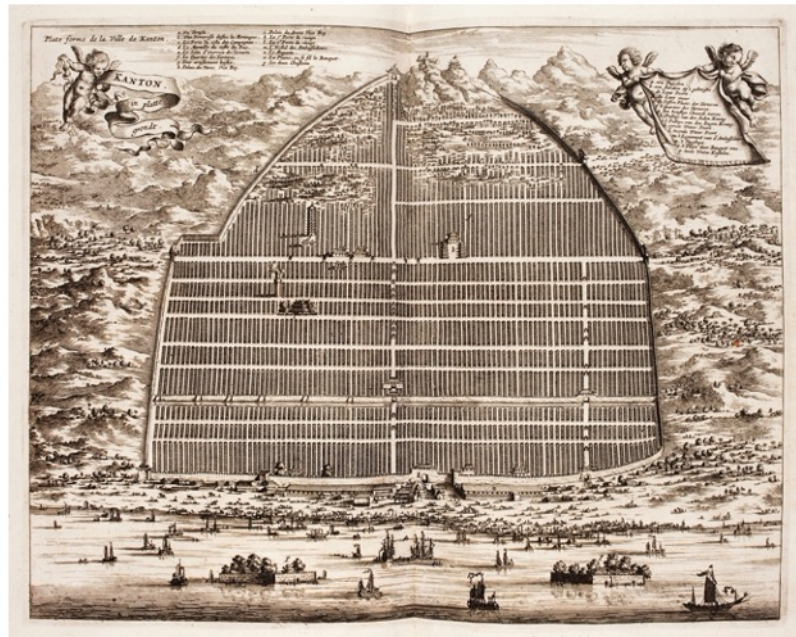
A special example of architectural influences from outside Hoi An is the Japanese bridge.

The bridge from the early 17th century, which connected the Japanese with the Chinese quarter, is certainly the most famous building of Hoi An. At that time, Japanese merchants were trying to modernize Hoi An and built streets, pagodas, and residential buildings. The bridge also served as a temple, hence its enormous width. It is an impressive testimony to various architectural traditions of East Asia. It is also an important example of inter-Asian maritime exchange..

Image source:

<https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:RTW2009-1834HoiAn.jpg>

Maritime Silk Route



Johan Nieuhof: Kanton (1665) public domain

GAHTC ©2019

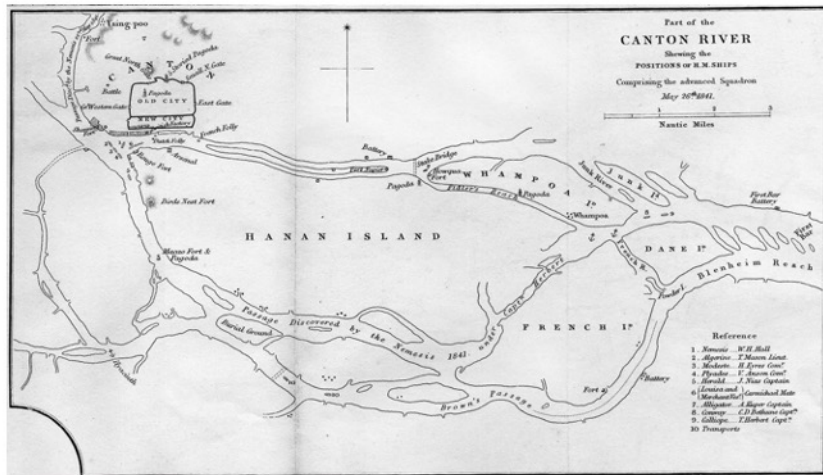
Cosmopolitan exchange and maritime trade also left its imprint on cities in China. Nieuhof's imaginative map of Canton (Guangzhou) was created while the Europeans were still forbidden to enter the walled city. It reflects the reports based ideas of the Chinese city at that time. Here, too, we see a fortified city that lies on a flat shore accessible for ships.

From 1757 to 1842, Guangzhou was the only commercial port in China where foreigners had the right to trade. A similar situation existed in Japan, where it was the port on the island Dejima, which, however, was only allowed to be called by Dutch ships.

Image source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guangzhou#/media/File:Nieuhof-Ambassade-vers-la-Chine-1665_0744-2.tif

Maritime Silk Route



Guangzhou and the Canton river (1841) public domain

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Aggressive colonization from notably European nations led, for example, to the creation of treaty ports in China. Coming from the sea, foreign powers forced China and Japan to open their ports and cities to international trade. Often the foreign forces would reshape the waterfront areas close to the sea, creating an iconic seafront, that would appeal to the foreign citizens. Local architectures generally occupied the urban areas further away from the water. For example, the Chinese city of Guangzhou (Canton) situated on the Pearl River has been shaped by foreign influences. In 1685, the British East India Company set up the first “factory” (foreign traders’ residences and business offices) in Guangzhou. Over time, other nations-- French, Dutch, American-- established trade relations in the city establishing the “13 factories” (*shisan hang* or *shisan yiguan*) on the waterfront. The Thirteen Factories, a neighborhood of stores and warehouses for Western trade were erected between 1757 and 1842. Their role in trade diminished after the forced opening of the Chinese port following the First Opium War (1839–42) and the opening of treaty ports. The factories were destroyed multiple times through fire and during the Opium Wars. On the map from the 19th century you can see that the foreign trading posts are located between the shore and the city.

The city was the starting point of the maritime Silk Road.

Image source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guangzhou#/media/File:Canton_River,_26_May_1841.jpg

Maritime Silk Route



Sunqua: *Foreign Factories, Canton* (1852) public domain

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A later picture by the Chinese painter Sunqua gives a more detailed idea of the port and its foreign trading posts. The waterfront is home to European-style architecture for trading houses and consulates. It serves as a kind of “business card” for the crew of ships that arrive from far away. Only a few blocks behind the European inspired waterfront, the local population lived in traditional houses.

Image source:

https://es.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archivo:Foreign_factory_site.jpg

Asia



William Daniel's picture of the factories in Canton gives an impression of the diversity of Chinese sailing ships. The hull and the shape of the sails differ from European and American ships of that time. However, the architecture of the factories is European and the flags show the presence of foreign nations. It can be seen that many smaller boats are used to load goods and transport them between warehouses and ships.

Image source:

https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:View_of_Canton_factories_2.jpg

Maritime Silk Route



Quanzhou: Qingjing Mosque (2012) CC BY-SA 3.0

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Foreigners have long left an imprint on many other Asian cities. Traders and sailors also led the exchange of ideas and practices, including religious ones. The Qingjing Mosque in Quanzhou is a special architectural testimony to the worldwide networking that characterized port cities centuries ago. Arab traders built it in 1009 and today it is one of the oldest Islamic buildings in China. Their location far away from Islamic areas illustrates the presence of Islamic traders and seafarers from more western areas. The mosque shows that the Silk Road was not only used to exchange goods, but also to spread culture and religion.

The entrance gate made of greenish granite, which also serves as a minaret, leads into the prayer room. The original minaret, built during the Ming Dynasty in the form of a five-storey pagoda, collapsed during an earthquake and was not rebuilt. The prayer room was also destroyed by the earthquake and only the walls are preserved.

Image source:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Qingjing_Mosque?uselang=de#/media/File:Qingjing_Mosque_-_entry_-_DSCF8665.JPG

Maritime Silk Route



Quanzhou: Qingjing Mosque (2012) CC BY-SA 3.0

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The view into the destroyed prayer hall shows a rather atypical building for the Chinese coast. Mosques are an exception in this area. It is a relic of globalization that has been taking place for many centuries - even if it has taken on a different form today. Elsewhere comparable phenomena can be found, such as Islamic roof constructions in South American churches. They have reached the New World via Spain, which was influenced by Islam for several centuries.

These examples show that ports facilitate the transfer of goods and people and that their impact of these flows reaches from the port to the city and the hinterland, creating a port cityscape, composed of diverse structures.

Image source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qingjing_Mosque#/media/File:Qingjing_Mosque_-_old_prayer_area_-_DSCF8672.JPG

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