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of the Hospital of Santa Maria dei Battuti.
Treviso, 15th-16th Century**

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1. *The hospital as landlord*

This contribution will focus on an aspect of the economy of late medieval hospitals less frequently investigated than other economic dimensions, such as hospitals as credit institutes or savings banks, as recipients of alms and legacies, as merchants of indulgences, as employers of nurses and servants or as consumers of money, goods and commodities¹. Still, it is a fact almost

Note on currencies and measures

All amounts are given in account money, i.e. in *lire* at 20 *soldi*, with one *soldo* at 12 *denari* «piccioli». According to the evidence analysed in the article the change with the gold *ducato* varied between 114 *soldi* (first half of fifteenth century) and 124 *soldi* (first half of sixteenth century) for one *ducato*. – The measures for surface areas used in my sources are the *campo trevigiano* and the smaller units *quarta* and *tavola*, one *campo* being 5.205 square meters. The measures for liquids are the *conzo* (77.98 liters) and the *carro* (10 *conzi*), for grain the *staro* (86.81 liters). See note 29.

Many thanks to Dr. Marielle Sutherland (London) for reading and correcting the English text.

¹ The main tendencies of historical research on medieval Italian hospitals are summarized by Gazzini, *Ospedali nell'Italia medievale*. Here are a few examples of recent publications on hospital economies that are mostly interested in financial aspects or consumption: Piccinni, *Il banco dell'ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala*; Piccinni, Travaini, *Il Libro del Pellegrino*; Stuntz, *Hospitaler*; Rehberg, *Nuntii, questuarii, falsarii*; Meyer, *Altopascio*; Swanson, *Marginal or mainstream?*; Jehanno, «*Sustenter les pauvres malades*»; Bianchi, Demo, *Tra mercanti e mendicanti*. Extracts from hospital account books can be found in the source anthology *Quellen zur europaischen Spitalgeschichte*, e.g. in the contributions by Bianchi, *Health and Welfare Institutions*, documents A/3, B/1; Rippmann, Simon-Muscheid, *Quellen aus dem Basler Heilig-Geist-Spital*, documents 2-7; Krauer, Sonderegger, *Die Quellen des Heiliggeist-Spitals*

too obvious to be emphasized that a premodern hospital – a polyfunctional charitable institution that could rely neither on public subventions (as today's European health systems are supposed to do) nor on a continuously sufficient influx of alms and donations – depended on the estate it leased to tenants: urban houses, gardens and workshops, manors, cottages, smaller pieces of land, perhaps mills and factories in the countryside.

The example considered here is a large urban hospital in Treviso, a city situated some 25 km north of Venice and subject to the *Serenissima* since the fourteenth century; Treviso was thus the first commune of the *Terraferma* to enter the safe harbor of Venetian military and political protection². Santa Maria dei Battuti, by far the largest charitable institution in town and one of the largest hospitals in the entire region, was founded in the second half of the thirteenth century. It was intimately connected to its founder and proprietor: a lay confraternity (or «scuola», a term often used in medieval northern Italy for lay associations with devotional or charitable functions) that owned and managed the hospital until modern times. Since it was a confraternity of flagellants («disciplinati» or «battuti») the hospital was given the name Santa Maria dei Battuti³.

Unlike many other European confraternities ruling a hospital, in Santa Maria dei Battuti the border between the functions and competences of the brethren (and sisters) on the one hand and the hospital on the other hand was blurred. The indistinguishability of the two institutions is also reflected in their archive, where no separation has been drawn (nor would it be possible to do this today) between the documents belonging to the *scuola* and those stemming from the hospital. However, this very entanglement is one of

St. Gallen, documents 7-9. Studies on hospitals as protagonists of agrarian history are much more uncommon: see for Italy a recent overview by Pinto, *Formazione e gestione*; Epstein, *Alle origini della fattoria toscana*; the studies on Treviso quoted below. For a German case, Hensel-Grobe, *Das St.-Nikolaus-Hospital zu Kues*.

² The bibliography on the history of the Venetian State (cf. recently Rando, *Venezia medievale*) is endless, not only from the perspective of the center, Venice, but also from the point of view of the communes in the *Terraferma*. For a general orientation on the fourteenth to sixteenth century see Cozzi, *Politica*, pp. 1-95; Mallett, *Venezia e la politica italiana*. On the political, social and economic integration of the late medieval and early modern *Terraferma* see Ventura, *Nobiltà e popolo*; Varanini, *Proprietà fondiaria e agricoltura*; Lanaro, *At the Centre of the Old World*; Varanini, *La Terraferma veneta*; Knapton, *The Terraferma State*; Demo, *Industry and Production in the Venetian Terraferma*; Knapton, Law, *Marin Sanudo e la Terraferma*; recently the volume *Venice and the Veneto during the Renaissance*.

³ There is a good number of studies on this hospital confraternity: besides older contributions to its earlier history and editions of its statutes (Netto, *Treviso medievale*; Pesce, *La chiesa di Treviso*, I, pp. 103-107, 156-159; II, pp. 383-409), see more recently D'Andrea, *Civic Christianity*, and the 3 vols. published in 2010, especially the 1st vol.: Cagnin, *La Scuola e l'Ospedale*, and D'Andrea, *L'Ospedale di Santa Maria dei Battuti*. The latter (p. 191, and in *Civic Christianity*, p. 20) gives information on the number of persons living in the hospital (96 to 210 between the years 1400 and 1537), whereas Cagnin (p. 99) indicates numbers of beds for the fourteenth century, in 1383 as many as 100 «lettieri» and 189 «letti di tela». Pesce, *La chiesa di Treviso*, I, p. 156, mentions 200 beds in the early fifteenth century. On the foundlings and orphans nursed by the hospital see recently Bianchi, *Adottare*.

the reasons why the archive of Santa Maria dei Battuti, compared with other confraternity archives, is exceptionally rich. It contains not only some 19.000 medieval parchments, including more than 1.000 wills, but also hundreds of administrative registers (account books, deliberations of the *capitolo*, i.e. the board of the hospital, etc.), dozens of notarial registers, statutes, maps, and other material⁴.

It is the combination of these two facts – the wealth of sources offered by the Treviso hospital and the relative scarcity of research on medieval hospitals as actors in the history of agriculture – that has stimulated my curiosity. The aim of this contribution is twofold: firstly, I will present my key source, a register written in the 1560s by an official of the hospital who undertook to reconstruct the history of a certain part of its rural possessions from the early fifteenth century onwards⁵. Secondly, I will try to show how Santa Maria dei Battuti dealt with its lands in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. More concretely, the following questions will be discussed: How did the rural estate develop from the late fourteenth to the middle of the sixteenth century? What can be said about the rents collected from these lands and about the ratio between the rents the tenants owed and the goods or money they really paid⁶? Did contingent factors such as war have any impact on the rents? And how was the exploitation of the land related to the charitable functions of the hospital?

Answering these questions is a prerequisite for identifying the proportion of the income from agriculture within the total budget of the hospital as well as for reconstructing the relations between the tenants and Santa Maria's representatives. In the present state of my research it is too early to respond to these latter questions. In particular, the role of the tenants must be further analyzed. How did they gain access to the land they possessed? Were they really as dependent on their landlord as the sources – written in most cases from the point of view of the hospital – might suggest? There are hints suggesting that at least some of the tenants were able to pursue their own strategies. However, these are aspects that have to be further elaborated in the future⁷.

⁴ The archival fund is preserved in the Archivio di Stato di Treviso (= ASTv), which took it over after World War II. Although bomb attacks in 1944 caused heavy damages, meaning many register series are actually incomplete, fragmentary or totally lost, the size of the fund is still considerable. See the two *Inventari* available in the *Sala di studio* of the ASTv, an older one (1970s) and the new edition (2002) by E. Orlando.

⁵ I am grateful to Dr. Danilo Gasparini (University of Padua) whose monograph on the early modern estate of Santa Maria dei Battuti (Gasparini, *Le terre della pietà*) drew my attention to this manuscript and who also generously helped me during my first steps in the ASTv.

⁶ For a comparison with other cases in the Veneto see Clerici, *Formazione*, and Bianchi, *Ospedali e politiche assistenziali a Vicenza*, pp. 80-91, 129-141. The contribution by Varanini, *Per la storia*, focusses more on social and institutional than economic aspects.

⁷ My research on the lands of Santa Maria dei Battuti has developed in the context of a larger comparative project titled *Busy tenants. Rural land markets north and south of the Alps in late medieval and early modern times*. The project started in December 2013, then directed by the

2. The «Catastico» of the sixteenth century

The sources used for this article are selected lease registers, account books and fiscal documents (to which I will come back later), while the principal source is a paper codex in the archive of Santa Maria dei Battuti⁸. This manuscript, which is written in early modern Italian (Venetian dialect) and is a hybrid of a register of tenants and an inventory of landed property, merits a more elaborate description. In the Venetian administrative tradition, similar registers are called «Catastico», and in this case we probably know the person who wrote it, an officer of the hospital called Hieronimo (or Ieronimo) Marcolin. He acted as land measurer and «cavalcante» (a controller on horseback visiting the hospital's holdings) between 1556 and 1570, the year he died, leaving a widow and young children⁹. The *Catastico*, as I will call the book from now on, is the product of an intense cooperation with another land measurer, Hieronimo's relative (brother, cousin?) Plazito Marcolin, who in the 1560s surveyed dozens of holdings and smaller pieces of land.

The manuscript – restored in recent times but not always easy to read because of damage, especially in the upper margins, due to humidity – consists of 168 paper folios in thirteen gatherings, written with brown and red ink by a single hand (though at different times). Some leaves are blank; the foliation is modern. There is no codicological evidence for losses of single leaves or entire gatherings, a first glance impression confirmed by the content. The book starts with an index (fols. 3r-4r, leaving blank fols. 1-2 and 4v-5v) organized as a list of villages in alphabetical order, from «Archade» to «Villanuova», with indication of the folio numbers¹⁰. The fact that the content of the *Catastico* conforms exactly to what the index announces strengthens the assumption that the manuscript has not suffered losses.

The list of holdings described by Marcolin is certainly long – on the whole 30 villages¹¹ – but it represents a selection, a sample greatly exceeded by the totality of the properties the hospital owned in the province of Treviso and beyond. Since the manuscript is complete we must needs conclude that the

late Markus Cerman and Thomas Ertl, now by the latter alone (*Institut für Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte* at the University of Vienna). I am grateful to both colleagues for their support; I dedicate this article to the memory of Markus Cerman.

⁸ ASTv, *Ospedale*, busta 343 [quoted from now on as «Catastico»].

⁹ See Gasparini, *Le terre della pietà*, pp. 32 f., for Marcolin's widow and her petition (1570) to the board of the hospital, where she mentions the labor it took him to describe in a «volume» all the possessions lying in his «cercha» (district). The other evidence is *Catastico*, fols. 29r and 29v (1556); fol. 78v (Marcolin mentioned in 1567 as neighbor of a piece of land between Paderno and Ponzano, two villages situated a few km north west of Treviso). *Cavalcante* (in Latin «equitator») in 1565: ASTv, *Ospedale*, busta 362, in a book *in quarto* dated «1565-1583», fols. 8v-9r.

¹⁰ The alphabetical order is not strict but is clearly discernible as the principle of organization. The only exceptions are the village of Marzeline and a supplement to the village of Nervesa, both situated at the end, after Villanuova.

¹¹ Or even more, because sometimes a «chapter» dedicated to a larger village also includes one or more neighboring hamlets.

author had no intention of delivering an exhaustive analysis of all the lands of the hospital. However, even if the geographical horizon is limited, the *Catastico* remains a precious source, as will be shown now.

Every chapter dedicated to a village («villa») and its little district («teritorio») contains descriptions of one or more pieces of land, of a larger holding (a «maso», from the Latin *mansus*) composed of a farmyard with buildings («sedime» or «cortivo») and several coherent or (more often than not) scattered pieces of land («peze de tera»), or even of more *masi*. For every single unit Marcolin tries to gather the following data: how did it come to the hospital (by a will or a donation, by purchase or exchange)? What was its size? What was cultivated there? From when are the tenants of the hospital documented? What kind of rents existed, and how much were the tenants supposed to pay? What was the legal character of their contract? He reconstructs all this information from the first appearance of a parcel in his sources until his own time. The book was written between 1567 and 1569¹², after a preparatory campaign of measuring undertaken mainly by Plazito Marcolin. The work was still going on in 1569, when the most recent contracts were registered; a certain number of lacunas (blank folios where the results of a recent or future survey should have been entered, but in fact were not) suggest that the work might have been interrupted by the author's death¹³.

The holdings included in the *Catastico* are concentrated in the west, north west and south west of Treviso. In the western and north western direction, they cover the area between the city and the Montello, a wooded hill situated about 15 km from Treviso, whose oaks were of vital importance for the *arsenale* of Venice; in the south western direction they extend nearly 20 km along and beyond the rivers Sile and Zero. Only the village of Coste, where Santa Maria owned a piece of woodland with olive trees and another piece of land, was further away, west of the Montello near the little town of Asolo. In order to better grasp the geography of the holdings analyzed by the *Catastico*, they can be related to the fiscal districts of the Venetian province of Treviso. The levy of taxes was centered on the city and on a certain number of districts called «quartieri», «podesterie» and «contee». The commune of Treviso controlled the tax yield of the city and of eight surrounding *quartieri*, whereas the more peripheral *podesterie* and *contee* of the province were permitted to organize their taxpaying autonomously¹⁴. Almost all the villages listed in the *Catastico* are placed in

¹² *Catastico*, fol. 58r: an entry from 1567 is accompanied by the comment «l'ano presente». The latest records of new leasing contracts, concentrated especially (but not exclusively) in the last third of the codex, are from 1569.

¹³ This hypothesis would correspond to the date of the letter written by Hieronimo Marcolin's widow to the hospital, mentioned above, note 9. The widow's remark that he had described the holdings in his «cercha» (district) seems to recall the fact that his competence as *cavalcante* was limited to a certain part of the estate. The districts of the *cavalcanti* are described in a late seventeenth century source, summarized by Pastro, *Le terre dell'Ospedale*, p. 35.

¹⁴ For the late medieval tax system in the province of Treviso see Del Torre, *Il Trevigiano nei secoli XV e XVI*, and more recently Scherman, *Famille*, pp. 21-78 (for the fifteenth century).

the *quartieri* Campagna di sotto (immediately west of Treviso)¹⁵, Campagna di sopra (north west, close to the Montello)¹⁶ and Mestrina di sopra (south west)¹⁷; the only exception is Coste, belonging to the *podesteria* of Asolo. Neither the other five *quartieri* – especially Zosagna di sopra, Zosagna di sotto and Mestrina di sotto between Treviso and Venice, where Santa Maria owned much land – nor the peripheral *podesterie* and *contee* were taken into consideration. It seems that they were out of the area of Marcolin's competences¹⁸.

For a better understanding of how the author of the *Catastico* proceeded we can take the example of the first location recorded, Arcade¹⁹. A survey was accomplished in 1567, but only in the first of two *masi* belonging to this village. The history of the *maso* was drawn back until the beginning of the fifteenth century. Marcolin found the oldest information in a book called «Libro Negro Grando» and recorded the name of the tenant of that time and the rent he paid. Another, slightly more recent book, called «Libro Rosso della scuola», allowed him to follow the tenants through the subsequent years, and in the same way he went through a series of later lease registers named each by a letter of the alphabet or a sign: in the case of Arcade – but the series is always similar or even identical – these were the books A, E, H, L, O, R, S, &, BB, DD, EE, GG, and II. Each of them covered a certain period, between five and nineteen years, until book II which began in 1550 and was still in use when Marcolin was writing his *Catastico*²⁰. At the end he inserted the measurement results and added the data of a new leasing contract, stipulated e.g. for the *maso* in Arcade in 1567, November 4.

The rich local fund of tax registers and individual tax declarations («polizze») produced in different Venetian taxation campaigns («estimi») during the fifteenth and sixteenth century has been studied systematically by a long term research project directed by Danilo Gasparini and financed by the Benetton foundation. This project analyzed the *estimi* in order to reconstruct the landscape and the agrarian history of the Trevigiano in the sixteenth century. I will address the series of publications that emerged from this project as «Studi campagne trevigiane». Besides Del Torre, *Il Trevigiano*, see, e.g., Pitteri, *Mestrina*, Nicoletti, *Le Campagne*, and Pozzan, *Zosagna*.

¹⁵ In the order of the entries in the *Catastico*: Cornain, Merlengo and Postioma, Monigo, Orsenigo, Ponzano, Paderno, Povegliano, Paese, San Palè, Sovernigo, Villa, Villanuova, Marzelle. For the identification of the villages – not all of them still existing today – see the map based on the *Estimi* of the sixteenth century.

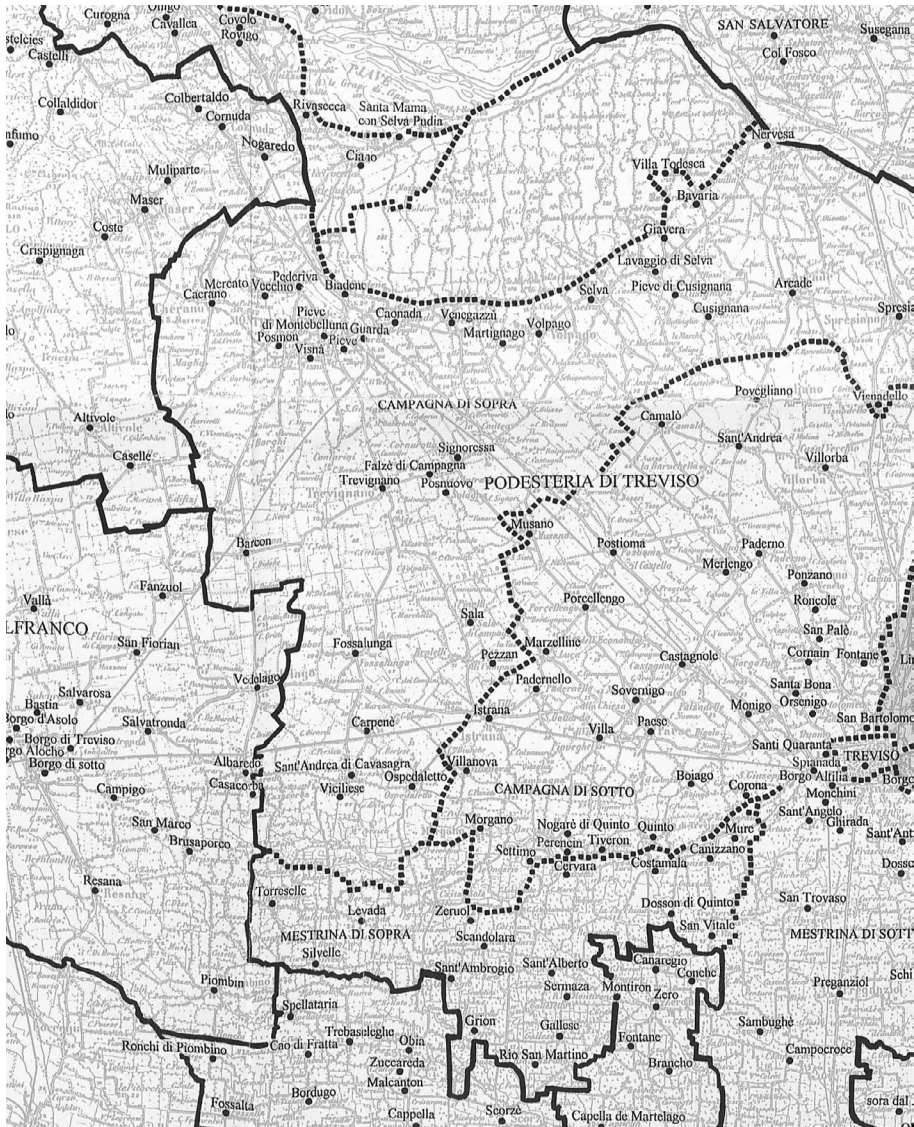
¹⁶ Arcade, Cusignana, Giavera, Nervesa, Pieve di Cusignana, Pezzan, Selva, Sala. There is a small margin of uncertainty in the identification of Pezzan, a toponym existing more than once in the *podesteria* of Treviso.

¹⁷ Cervara, Cornolè, Galese, Levada, Rio San Martino, Sermaza, Scandolaria, Torreselle. Cornolè, though documented in sources of the fourteenth century, has not been identified in the map based on the later *Estimi*; the description in the *Catastico*, however, suggests that this hamlet must have been close to Cervara.

¹⁸ In the seventeenth century a *cavalcante* controlled two *quartieri* (Pastro, *Le terre dell'Ospedale*, p. 35); Marcolin's district was larger, including not only the two Campagne but also the Mestrina di Sopra.

¹⁹ *Catastico*, fols. 6r–9r (first *maso* in Arcade).

²⁰ Only some of these books survive today. Libro & is identical with ASTv, *Ospedale*, busta 252, Libro II with busta 254. The «Libro Rosso della scuola» is busta 365, whereas the «Libro Negro Grando» is lost. For two other examples (Libri O and DD) see below, note 49 ff.



Treviso district, *quartieri* of Campagna di sopra, Campagna di sotto and Mestrina di sopra. The village of Nervesa is 18 km north, Paese 6 km west of the city. Detail from the map published in Pozzan, *Zosagna* (with kind permission of the Fondazione Benetton Studi ricerche).

It should be emphasized that Hieronimo Marcolin's *Catastico* is a wonderful guide to older lease registers partially lost and to the notarial documents where the leasing contracts were written down²¹. Furthermore, it documents not only the modifications and different phases of reorganization undergone by the holdings over the course of time, but also every change in tenants. Thus it allows us to reconstruct the mobility (or stability) of both the land and the tenants of a large charitable institution in fifteenth and sixteenth century Veneto.

3. *The size of the rural properties*

Thanks to existing studies we have a good picture of the extent and geographical distribution of the rural properties of Santa Maria dei Battuti. In particular, inventories and lease registers allow us to reconstruct the development of the patrimony during the fourteenth century²², whereas the fiscal sources concerning the province of Treviso capture the totality of the land owners (persons, churches and other institutions), *ergo* also the hospital, mainly in the sixteenth century²³. As to the former period, Ermanno Orlando has gathered the data from three different phases. In 1330 the hospital controlled 41 units of agricultural production, forming a patrimony of probably about 350 ha (the exact size is not available); houses and workshops lying within the walls of the city are not included here. The wave of donations provoked by the Black Death of 1348 increased the estate by another 31 units, the extent of these being unclear. A more detailed reconstruction is possible for the last quarter of the fourteenth century. Summing up Orlando's results for this latter period, the measured land of the hospital covered 500 ha, situated in the central fiscal districts, in other, more peripheral locations, but also immediately outside the city walls. The land was composed of 99 units of production, with at least 63 *masi* among them, most of which lay in the districts of Campagne (42 units, 24 *masi*), Mestrine (13 units, only *masi*) and Zosagne (12 units, only *masi*). A hypothetical attempt to estimate the unmeasured holdings would increase the total to 972 ha (this conjecture is based on the multiplication of the measured surface area with the ratio between the number of measured and unmeasured units as indicated by Orlando)²⁴.

²¹ Since the ASTv has a very fine fund of notarial documents and the hospital has also preserved some notarial registers, it is possible, at least in a certain number of cases, to detect the original entry of a contract summarized in the *Catastico*. However, this is a research perspective which will not be elaborated in the present article.

²² The pioneering article by Orlando, *Campagne e congiuntura*, has elucidated this topic up until the end of the fourteenth century.

²³ See the «Studi campagne trevigiane», e.g. the monographs mentioned above, note 14. A summary is in Gasparini, *Le terre della piet *, p. 21.

²⁴ All values of surface extents are rounded up or down. See Orlando, *Campagne e congiuntura*, pp. 110, 114, 119 f. The total of 500 ha is not complete because Orlando mentions further

But this was not all. Besides the urban estate, there is another important part of the patrimony that has to be taken in account. The 99 units mentioned above were acquired through ordinary donations or last wills and were normally not charged with complex conditions. Yet other donations, some of them of considerable dimensions, were conceived by the donors as more or less autonomous pious foundations called «*commissarie*». In these cases the hospital functioned as a sort of trustee and beneficiary at the same time, but was “committed” to fulfill several obligations (masses and prayers for the donor, payments to other persons); therefore it is difficult to decide whether a *commissaria* can really be considered an ordinary full property. The patrimony of a *commissaria* was constructed as an administrative unit of its own; its accounts were kept separately (at least for a certain time), its estate could not be alienated, its legal status could not be changed. During the fourteenth century the hospital had received numerous *commissarie*; one of them, left by the merchant Oliviero Forzetta, was exceptionally rich, including not only rural possessions but also a monetary income from Forzetta’s financial investments in Venice²⁵. If we add the rural possessions incorporated in the *commissarie* to the ordinary properties mentioned above, the total would grow by 174 ha (in eighteen *masi* and five *peze*) only from the Forzetta foundation, without taking into account another 26 *masi* and an unknown number of smaller parcels stemming from the other *commissarie* for which we do not have indications of size²⁶. Thus in the year 1400 the total size of the measured land owned by the hospital was 674 ha (adding together the ordinary properties and the *commissaria* Forzetta), but the real extent must have been much larger, reaching perhaps 1400 ha or more.

Thanks to the analyses of the *estimi* we know that by the first half of the sixteenth century the rural properties of Santa Maria dei Battuti had grown further. The surface area has been calculated with the aid of the sources written for the long *estimo* campaign 1542-1561: the holdings situated in six (out of eight) *quartieri* (the two Campagne, two Zosagne and two Mestrine) and four *podesterie* (Noale, Mestre, Motta, Oderzo) – that is, nota bene, not the entire rural estate – cover an area of 2.188 ha. Most of them – 75% of the

pieces of land but without indication of number or size. Note that in 1400 the division of the districts Campagna, etc. into *quartieri* (Campagna di sopra, Campagna di sotto, etc.) was already effective, but Orlando’s numbers refer to the undivided districts.

²⁵ D’Andrea, *Civic Christianity*, p. 17 (repeated in D’Andrea, *L’Ospedale di Santa Maria*, p. 190), emphasizes that the interests due from Forzetta’s deposit in Venice alone covered up to one third of the annual monetary budget of the confraternity. This value, however, is not based on first-hand evidence, but on a comparison between studies on the interests paid by the Venetian *Camera del frumento* on the one hand and the hospital’s income in 1441-1443 as summarized by Pesce, *Vita*, p. 41, on the other hand. On Forzetta’s *commissaria* see also Varanini, *Per la storia*, p. 138 f.

²⁶ Orlando, *Campagne e congiuntura*, p. 120, does not give the number or size of the smaller parcels belonging to the other *commissarie*. Compared with the 165.5 ha of the eighteen *masi* in the Forzetta foundation, the size of the 26 *masi* in other foundations could have been about 239 ha.

total – are situated in the six *quartieri*: 441 in the Campagna di sopra and Campagna di sotto, 567 in the two Zosagne, 636 in the two Mestrine²⁷. At the end of the sixteenth century the allegedly complete surface area of the rural properties, which can be calculated from a lease register, was 3.144 ha²⁸.

My comparison between these numbers and the wealth of data hidden in the *Catastico* will focus on three problems: the first concerns the distinction between ordinary properties and the land belonging to the *commissarie*; the second concerns the extent of the land in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; the third concerns the development of its structure.

Firstly, in the 1560s, when the *Catastico* was edited, the old distinction between the lands organized into a *commissaria* and those which were not had been dropped. It is true that Hieronimo Marcolin notes very often that a holding originated as part of a *commissaria*. However, in contrast to the writers of the older lease registers he does not insist on keeping the two legal forms separate. His principle of organization is the alphabetical order of the villages, and thus he mixes properties stemming from *commissarie* with the rest. Looking closer at the history of many holdings, it soon becomes clear that in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century no *maso* or other parcel was immune from being divided or removed from its original context, and this independent of its provenance or legal status.

Secondly, the data regarding the extent of the holdings as described in the *Catastico* raise many difficulties: since not all holdings were measured in the 1560s, it is necessary, in a certain number of cases, to refer to older estimations or surveys mentioned from time to time. It is not clear how reliable such estimations are, and at any rate there remains a certain number of cases where no indication of size at all is available. Another problem is the continuous reorganization of many holdings, when smaller pieces of land or a farmyard («sedime» or «cortivo») were removed from a *maso* and leased separately, or when a number of pieces were gathered and gradually transformed into a *maso*, etc. Thus all we can do is draw two approximative pictures: one for the end of the fifteenth century, based on the estimated sizes as far as available; and another one for the 1560s, when many holdings analyzed in the *Catastico* were professionally surveyed. In a third step an attempt will be made to construct a more complete scenario for the sixteenth century by supplementing the lacunas left by the surveys of the 1560s with the aid of older size estimations.

²⁷ Gasparini, *Le terre della pietà*, p. 21, summarizes the results of the «Studi campagne trevigiane» (the total «1915 ha» calculated by Gasparini is to be replaced by 2.188 ha). Nicoletti, *Le Campagne*, p. 74, gives a different value – 474 ha – for the estate of the hospital in the two Campagne. Cf. also Pozzan, *Zosagna*, p. 46, and Pitteri, *Mestrina*, p. 59.

²⁸ Pastro, *Le terre dell'Ospedale*, p. 53; the register covers the years 1590-1609 (ASTv, *Ospedale*, busta 256). The difference between the 2.188 ha in 1542 and the 3.144 ha in 1590 corroborates the scepticism expressed by Pezzolo, *La storia agraria veneta*, pp. 90-91, who – with regard to the early modern period – argues for caution in dealing with the apparent certainties of the *estimi*.

The estimated total in the fifteenth century is about 842 ha²⁹, consisting of 37 *masi* and 25 smaller parcels or *sedimi* leased separately (see table 1). Most of the estimations date from the first half of the fifteenth century, but some were formulated in the second half of the century or around 1500³⁰. These 842 ha concern 23 from a total of 30 villages, because for seven villages³¹ no information on size is available for the fifteenth century. Furthermore, for eight of the remaining 23 locations, especially for those where several possessions were accumulated, the data are not complete. This means that another eighteen *masi* and seven smaller pieces of land or farmyards – approximately 300 ha – have to be added to the 842 ha: thus it seems a reasonable if conservative hypothesis that at the end of the fifteenth century, Santa Maria dei Battuti owned more than 1.100 ha of arable land, vineyards, pastures and wood *only* in the area analyzed by Marcolin's *Catastico*.

Table 1 *The size of the rural properties according to estimations proposed by the Catastico (15th - beginning 16th century).*

	Villages with estimations of size	<i>Masi</i> with estimations of size	Other parcels with estimations of size
	23/30	37	25
Total estimated size	842 ha		
	<i>Masi</i> without estimations of size	Other parcels without estimations of size	
	18	7	
Hypothetical total to add	approx. 300 ha		

The result of the surveys undertaken in the 1560s was a little more modest: according to the *Catastico* the total measured surface area was about 629 ha. This value relates to 24 villages, whereas in the remaining six locations no survey was completed³². The measured land consists of 31 *masi* and 5 *peze de*

²⁹ The sources use *campi*, *quarte* and *tavole* (see above, Note on currencies and measures). All values have been changed into hectares and rounded up or down, one *campo* being 5.205 square meters. For all measures (surface areas and volumes) I refer to Cagnin, *Nota metrologica*, and Nicoletti, *Le Campagne*, pp. XVII-XXIV. In three cases – Rio San Martino, Sermaza and San Palè (*Catastico*, fols. 117v; 119v, 122r; 130r) – the *masi* had already been professionally measured in the fifteenth century or around 1500. These cases are included here.

³⁰ There are other estimations from later times, until the middle of the sixteenth century, which have not been included here. They concern a *maso* in Nervesa (*Catastico*, fol. 60v: approx. 12.5 *campi* in 1559), a *maso* and a *sedime* in Paese (*Catastico*, fols. 91v, 106v: approx. 30 *campi* in 1531 and 2.5 *campi* in 1548), and a *maso* in Villa (*Catastico*, fol. 157v: approx. 47 *campi* in 1550).

³¹ Cervara, Cornain, Cornolè, Coste, Levada, Paderno, and Pieve di Cusignana.

³² Coste, Marzelline, Pieve di Cusignana, Ponzano, Povegliano, and Villanuova. This means (cf. *supra*, note 31) that for Coste and Pieve di Cusignana there is no indication of sizes at all,

tera, woods or *sedimi* (see table 2a). The ratio between the *masi* and the independent parcels leads to the conclusion that the land measurers preferred to concentrate on the larger holdings. Furthermore, the decrease in the number of *masi* in comparison with the fifteenth century seems to be connected not only to the contingencies of the measuring campaign but also to the fact that in the meantime some of the *masi* have been reassembled in order to form larger units. To the subtotal of 629 ha must be added seventeen *masi* and 23 *peze de tera* or *sedimi* that in the 1560s had not been measured³³. Whereas the total of approx. 1.100 ha proposed before for the fifteenth century is a conjecture based on the probable size of the *masi*, for the middle of the sixteenth century we can try to fill the gap with the values borrowed from older estimations of size. Of course, there remains a margin for doubt due to the inaccuracy of the estimations and to smaller invisible changes the holdings might have undergone between the fifteenth century and the 1560s. However, by supplementing the missing data with the best estimated values³⁴ we obtain a rather realistic hypothesis according to which at least 485 ha should be added to the 629 ha ascertained by surveys (see table 2b). Thus, in the 1560s the total extent of the land the hospital owned in the area covered by the *Catastico* was about 1114 ha, a value very similar to the size conjectured for the end of the fifteenth century.

Table 2a *The size of the land according to surveys documented by the Catastico (1560s).*

	Villages with surveys	<i>Masi</i> with surveys	Other parcels or <i>sedimi</i> with surveys
	24/30	31	5
Total measured size	629 ha		

Table 2b *Hypothetical size of the land (middle of the 16th century) not measured in the 1560s, according to the estimations in the Catastico and conjectures.*

	Villages without surveys, but with estimations	Villages where the size can be conjectured (Pieve di Cus.)	Unmeasured <i>masi</i> , all but one with estimations	Unmeasured other parcels or <i>sedimi</i> , all with estimations
	4	1	17	23
Hypothetical total to add	485 ha			
Total (2a+2b)	1114 ha			

neither from an estimation nor from a survey. However, these lacunas do not seriously disturb my calculations because the holdings in the two villages are not very important. For the *maso* of Pieve di Cusignana (*Catastico*, fol. 82v) it is possible to conjecture (from the amount of wheat tenants had to pay) a size of approx. 22 *campi* in 1555.

³³ Four *masi* and eleven *peze* in the six villages mentioned above, note 32, thirteen *masi* and twelve *peze* or *sedimi* in ten villages (Arcade, Giavera, Merlengo and Postioma, Monigo, Nervesa, Paese, Pezzano, Rio San Martino, Sermaza, Villa) where some, but not all possessions have been surveyed. For one *maso* in Monigo we have neither a survey nor an older estimation.

³⁴ I consider as the «best estimated values» the most recent ones with respect to the surveys of the 1560s.

Thirdly, it is arduous to compare the values emerging from the *Catastico* with our other data. Taking into account only the *quartieri* represented in the *Catastico* – Campagna di sopra, Campagna di sotto and Mestrina di sopra – we must needs conclude that the estate recorded in the fiscal documents of 1542-1561 is smaller than it really was. This becomes clear by comparing the approx. 1.100 ha documented in the *Catastico* with the only approx. 626 ha captured by the communal tax officers³⁵ in the three *quartieri*. If an analogous gap could be demonstrated also for the two Zosagne, where the hospital held a high amount of land, it would be still easier to imagine that the total of 2.188 ha recorded by the *estimo* of 1542 for six *quartieri* and four *podesterie* was far below the real extent. Could it be that such an understatement is characteristic for all tax declarations?

A comparison with the situation in the late fourteenth century is even more doubtful because the data for this earlier phase are not complete. Limiting the investigation to the *quartieri* of the Campagne, it is clear that in the year 1400 the surface area of the holdings was significantly smaller than 150 years later³⁶, when the original approx. 350 ha had grown to at least 850 ha³⁷. However, the number of the *masi* did not increase in the same proportion, the ratio between the late fourteenth and the sixteenth century being 24 to 38³⁸. If the size of the land more than doubled while the number of the units of production grew by only 58% the conclusion is obvious: during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries the hospital enacted a policy of reassessment, concentration or rationalization of the structure of its rural estate. By creating more homogeneous, larger and (in theory) more productive but also better controlled agrarian units (“*poderi*”), it contributed to the process of “*appoderamento*” characteristic of the agriculture of late medieval northern Italy. This was a process already initiated in the fourteenth century, but it became clearly visible and dominant in the course of the fifteenth century³⁹.

³⁵ 626 ha is the sum of 441 ha in the two Campagne and the possessions in the Mestrina di sopra. The value for the latter *quartiere* is hypothetical because Pitteri, *Mestrina*, pp. 58 f., does not itemize the location of the hospital's possessions in the two Mestrine (636 ha in total). He mentions however that from the lands owned by all «enti laici» (hospitals, confraternities, communes, etc.) in the two *quartieri* only a 29% lay in the Mestrina di sopra (cf. the table in Pitteri, *Mestrina*, p. 187), a percentage we may tentatively apply also to the hospital's 636 ha, obtaining some 185 ha for its possessions in the Mestrina di sopra (and 451 ha for the Mestrina di sotto). The 626 ha would increase to 659 ha taking for better the 474 ha in the Campagne proposed by Nicoletti, *Le Campagne* (see *supra*, note 27).

³⁶ Orlando, *Campagne e congiuntura*, p. 119 (cf. *supra*, note 24), counts 24 *masi* and 18 smaller pieces of land (*sedimi*, *peze de tera*, one enclosure) in the Campagne. For 54% of the *masi* an indication of size is available (the total is 177.4 ha), while for the smaller pieces (16.9 ha) the quota of indications of size is higher. Adding some 150 ha for the unmeasured *masi*, the total in the Campagne would be approx. 350 ha.

³⁷ This is what remains for the two Campagne, subtracting from the total of 1.114 ha the holdings belonging to the villages of the Mestrina di sopra (see the list *supra*, note 17).

³⁸ For the number of *masi* in the district of Campagne cf., for the fourteenth century, *supra* note 24. The number 38 in the two Campagne of the sixteenth century is obtained by subtracting from the total of 48 (cf. tables 2a and 2b) the ten *masi* lying in the Mestrina di sopra.

³⁹ Cf. Epstein, *The Peasantries of Italy*, pp. 90-93; Orlando, *Campagne e congiuntura*, p. 136.

4. *The tenants, the account books, the income from the land and its use by the hospital*

It is not possible in this paper to give an overview of the fortunes of the hundreds of tenants and tenant families recorded in the *Catastico*. Nor will an attempt be made to calculate the totality of the rents paid by these tenants at a given time. What I propose here is an analysis of the rents in two selected villages.

The villages serving as examples are Nervesa, between the Montello and the river Piave in the *quartiere* of Campagna di sopra, and Paese in the Campagna di sotto. These examples have been chosen on the basis of two considerations: on the one hand, Saint Mary owned a certain amount of land in both villages (three *masi* in Nervesa, six in Paese, and, moreover, some scattered plots), hence the information available in the *Catastico* is rich; on the other hand, the two localities differ in their ecological and economic character, since Nervesa is close to the hill and distant from Treviso (18 km), while Paese lies in the plain just a few kilometers west of the city. As to the *masi* in Nervesa, one was bought in 1414, another was transferred to the hospital in 1462 from a will, and a third, recorded since 1410, was part of a *commissaria*⁴⁰. The first two were measured in 1565 and 1567 (approx. 24 and approx. 36 *campi*); the third was not, probably because during these years it was the cause of a litigation between competing tenants. Paese is – among all the villages considered in the *Catastico* – the place where Santa Maria dei Battuti had the most holdings⁴¹. The hospital owned six *masi* there (reduced to five when two were unified at the beginning of the sixteenth century) and some *sedimi* leased separately. Together they amounted to more than 200 *campi*, but only one *maso* (the unified one) was measured in 1568. Most of them came from *commissarie*, the remainder from simple testamentary bequests. These were not the only benefits the hospital enjoyed in this village: it also had the right to receive every year a certain amount of wheat and wine drawn from holdings in Paese by the heirs of donors who had once honored the Battuti with similar extra bequests⁴².

The rents the tenants of the three *masi* in Nervesa owed were partly paid in kind (fixed amounts), partly shared crops (very often half of the wine) and partly in money. Since not only the amounts to pay, but also the structure of the rents changed over time, I will present firstly the development of the rents as required by the hospital in three phases: in the middle of the fifteenth century, in the years after 1500 and in the middle of the sixteenth century. In a second step I will compare the demands of the hospital with the rents the tenants actually paid; given the limited availability of lease registers and account books, such a comparison can be undertaken for the years 1461-1467 and 1506-1520.

⁴⁰ *Catastico*, fols. 53v-61r, with a supplement at fol. 164r.

⁴¹ Paese, occupying fols. 83v-109v in the *Catastico*, is by far the longest chapter.

⁴² *Catastico*, fols. 107r-109v. This is the only time Marcolin records an income from these kinds of legacies.

In the first half of the fifteenth century, the tenants of the first *maso* in Nervesa paid a “normal” mixture of kinds: every year a certain amount of wheat, 50% of the wine and the so called «onoranze», that is a portfolio of honorary charges consisting, for a *maso*, normally of two cocks, three hens, 25 eggs, two hams and a goose. This custom changed in 1458 when a new group of tenants (the cousins Iacomin and Matteo Busi) took over the *maso* and were asked to pay, instead of the wheat and the *onoranze*, annually fourteen «cara» (carriages = 10.917 litres or nearly eleven m³) of «chazina» (lime or mortar)⁴³, besides the aforementioned 50% of the wine. This considerable amount of building material was owed also by the successors, but in the course of the century the volume increased. In the early sixteenth century (from 1510) the traditional structure of the rent – wheat and wine, but no *onoranze* – was revived. The annual amount of wheat was fixed now at twelve «stara» or «staia», which means about 1042 litres⁴⁴. For a certain amount of time the wheat was substituted by a money rent (60 *lire* annually from 1523), but from 1531 the wheat returned; the amount grew slowly, reaching 15 *stara* in 1565⁴⁵.

The rent due for the second *maso* in Nervesa was a traditional but initially rather differentiated mixture. In the 1460s the tenants had to pay wheat, wine and *onoranze*, but for a while also two *stara* of sorghum, 50% of the fruits and a fixed sum («arcuista») of three *lire* which was dropped in the years following. From 1494 all this was substituted by a fixed money rent of 80 *lire* annually, but in 1501 the *onoranze* were added again. In 1508 the rent was diminished (75 *lire*), but three years later the hospital and its tenants returned to the traditional mixture of wheat, wine and *onoranze*. Starting from a level similar to that before 1494, the amount of wheat to pay rose to twelve *stara* in 1561⁴⁶.

Whereas the first two *masi* in Nervesa were leased for short periods of five or nine years (though several tenants stayed longer), the third, rather small *maso* was already bound to long term contracts called «livello» when the hospital received it. The money rent owed by the tenants was fourteen *lire* annually. Despite the particular legal status of these tenants difficulties must have occurred in the 1430s. The hospital succeeded in imposing short terms of five years, but from 1448 the *maso* was held *de facto* by a few families for a long time. Only as late as 1546 was the hospital able to augment the rent from fourteen to twenty and then to 24 *lire* a year. It seems that this *maso* was a very attractive place to live and work for tenants in the 1550s, because the lease contracts became a matter of legal dispute and the rent continued to rise⁴⁷.

⁴³ For liquids such as wine one *caro* was 779.8 liters, see above, Note on currencies and measures. I employ this value also for lime, but it is not certain that this is correct. All values are rounded up or down.

⁴⁴ One *stara* o *staio* was 86.81 liters, see above, note*.

⁴⁵ *Catastico*, fols. 53v-56r.

⁴⁶ *Catastico*, fols. 56v-58r.

⁴⁷ *Catastico*, fols. 59r-61r, 164r; for the litigation see the entries at fols. 60v and 61r.

It is possible to verify – at least for certain years – the relationship between the rents required by the hospital and the real amounts of kind or money paid or conveyed to the hospital by the tenants. A handful of lease registers survive, where the officers of the hospitals recorded, year for year, the debts and the payments connected to every single holding. These lease registers were at the center of a system of accounting which by the fifteenth century had grown rather complex. Whereas during the earlier fourteenth century the administration of the estate was based on static inventories of properties or on cartularies, from the 1370s onwards the hospital switched to income and expenditure registers. The latter combine a list of outgoings in money and kind – e.g. for wages, consumption by the inmates, alms given to external poor – with a second book dedicated to the revenue, the main – though not only – source of which were the urban and rural properties. But now the notaries recorded not only the rents a house or a parcel *should* have realized, but also the name of the actual tenant and the amount he or she *really* had (or had not) paid⁴⁸.

This latter function proved to be so important that in the beginning of the fifteenth century it generated a new series of lease registers (in modern Italian *registri di affittanze*, in Marcolin's spelling «libri afitazionum»). The first piece preserved covers the years 1421-1427, the next one 1437-1445⁴⁹. They concentrate on the tenants of both urban and rural properties, creating for each of them a current account («partida») divided into an introductory part (description of the holding) and two columns: in the left-hand column («deve dar», must give) the scribes entered the rent the tenant was supposed to pay every year; in the right-hand column («deve haver», must get) appear the amounts in kind or money by which the tenant had honored his or her debts, including the dates of execution and the name of the person who brought the goods or the money. The first three surviving examples of this new type of account book do not yet present a totally uniform character and were certainly preceded and accompanied by other, similar books that today are lost, but were used by Marcolin⁵⁰. They become more homogeneous from the middle of the fifteenth century onwards.

Roughly at the same time the *libri afitazionum* were created, the *sindico generale*, head of the board, established another series of account books, a new form of income and expenditure registers⁵¹. These books define, for every

⁴⁸ Cfr. Orlando, *Campagne e congiuntura*, note 7 and p. 117 f. An example of this (older) type of income and expenditure register is ASTv, *Ospedale*, busta 345 (from 1384).

⁴⁹ ASTv, *Ospedale*, buste 248 and 249. Both have useful indexes of tenants, especially busta 249. The next register in this series, busta 250, focusses on only four villages and covers a longer period, 1449-1505; its last third (from fol. 82) contains the accounts for the *commissaria* founded by Thomasa de la Braga (1449-1511).

⁵⁰ Marcolin's *Libri* A, B, E, H or L, which covered the first half of the fifteenth century until 1460, are not identical with any of the registers in ASTv, *Ospedale*, buste 248-250.

⁵¹ According to the new *Inventario* (see *supra*, note 4), 27 of these registers are available today, beginning from 1437 and ending in 1535: ASTv, *Ospedale*, buste 1-41bis (the numbers are discontinuous), busta 347 (years 1458-1464) and busta 354. The latter is dated 1338-1371 in the older *Inventario*; unfortunately I had no opportunity to check whether its layout can be compared to the later registers.

budget year (June 30 to June 29), numerous items of economic transactions and record the flow of money or goods, within each item, from day to day, giving precise dates and the reasons for each transaction: in the first part of an annual account the more general and important items such as cash money, wheat, oats and wine; afterwards the more specific or less regular items such as expenses for masses, burials, goods purchased, taxes paid, or income from selling wine, pieces of land, etc. One budget year occupies about 100 large folios, even if some of them are left blank. In every double page the left-hand (*verso*) page is reserved for the «deve dar», the right-hand (*recto*) page for the «deve haver»⁵². In the first part, dedicated to the general items, the *sindico* calculated the totals for every page or every month. He then established a balance between the «dar» and the «haver» by transferring possible differences from one side to the other. It is in these first parts of the registers that the revenue of the hospital is concentrated, whereas the more specific items which follow are dedicated mostly to expenses.

Although the *sindico*'s registers document the transactions day by day, they actually were written *ex post*: they are not journals, but rather fair copies produced by one or more notaries after a while. The everyday records – journals or loose papers – copied and reordered in the registers are not preserved before 1499⁵³. However, the production *ex post* did not ensure a logical structure. By contrast, the order in the registers of the fifteenth century, especially in the parts dedicated to specific expenses, is rather chaotic, meaning it is difficult to imagine how the *sindico* and his controllers could have found information they wanted quickly. Until the beginning of the sixteenth century, however, this defect was improved: henceforth the income and expenditure registers are much better organized⁵⁴.

Let us return to the lease registers or *libri afitazionum*, which – as we will see later – represent the backbone of the hospital's accounting in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. In order to give a more realistic picture of the economic functions of the land I have consulted two lease registers quoted also by Marcolin: the Libro O (ranging from 1461 to 1467) and the Libro DD (covering the years 1506-1520)⁵⁵.

⁵² My description is based on the analysis of ASTv, *Ospedale*, buste 4, 16 and 347. Buste 4 and 347 are large volumes in folio, each containing 500 or 600 paper leaves; busta 16 covers only one year (179 fols.). D'Andrea, *Civic Christianity*, *passim*, has screened more than a dozen of these registers, extracting many examples for the hospital's social and religious activities. It should be noted that in the first part, where the general items are considered, the income is recorded on the left-hand side (the *sindico* «deve dar»: meaning he owes what he has collected) and the outgoings on the right-hand side (the *sindico* «deve haver»: meaning he has honored a debt), whereas the opposite order has been chosen for the more specific items.

⁵³ The long series of the *Giornali di cassa* begins in 1499. The first one is ASTv, *Ospedale*, busta 11 (1499-1500), the last ones are from the nineteenth century (see the new *Inventario*, *supra* note 4). I have checked busta 17 (years 1507-1508, 1509).

⁵⁴ An example of a more logical organization is ASTv, *Ospedale*, busta 16 (years 1507-1508).

⁵⁵ ASTv, *Ospedale*, buste 251 and 253, two thick paper codices; not all leaves are in good condition, but mostly acceptable for my purposes. The ancient signatures "O" and "DD" are

The two books allow us not only to verify Hieronimo Marcolin's working methods but also to determine how the income of the hospital was created at the local level. As to Marcolin, the impression is very positive: he worked carefully and correctly; his summaries of the rents required and of the period a tenant appeared as debtor correspond exactly to the entries in the left-hand columns of the lease registers. For Nervesa, on the contrary, the impression for the 1460s is problematic: in the first *maso* the temporary substitution of the traditional kinds with lime proved to be a rather bad idea. We do not know if the area was geologically apt to produce nearly 11.000 litres of lime or mortar every year, but the fact is that between 1461 and 1467 the tenants succeeded only one time, in 1461, in fully meeting their landlord's demand. In the remaining years they were able to carry the wine to the hospital (between thirteen and 40 «conzi»)⁵⁶, but the quantity of lime became increasingly exiguous. After a change of tenants in 1465 the situation grew even worse because the new tenants, a quartet of brothers and cousins, did not deliver any lime at all and were replaced after two years by a new family⁵⁷.

The tenant who took over the second *maso* in 1462 also had serious problems fulfilling the expectations. In the first year he gave only some wine; in the following years his performance improved but never reached the required level. A new family entering in 1466 did no better than their predecessor⁵⁸. The hospital recorded all the debts accumulated by its tenants in the lease registers and in special debt registers («libri dei resti», not preserved). It is nevertheless very unlikely that the officers were successful in securing payment for these debts later on.

In the third *maso*, however, the situation was different. In January 1453 the hospital made a contract with a tenant who seems to have stayed on the *maso* from 1448 by way of an agreement with his predecessor. The rent here was in money, and in the 1460s this tenant was able to pay not only his annual rent of 14 *lire* but also the debts he or his predecessors had accumulated in the years before. He usually did not pay in cash but used to sell wine, plants (grapevine shoots), material for building and other goods to the hospital. In some years the value of these goods exceeded the rent, so that in this case the situation could even have developed in the opposite direction, with the hospital becoming its tenant's debtor⁵⁹ (see table 3 and the diagram showing – but only for the fixed rents – the ratio in percent between amounts paid and amounts demanded).

not recognizable, but the quotations in the *Catastico* guarantee that the identification is correct.

⁵⁶ One *conzo* is 77.98 liters, see above, note*.

⁵⁷ ASTv, *Ospedale*, busta 251, fols. 305r-v, 311r-v. I adopt the conventional foliation with *recto* and *verso* leaves, whereas the scribes of the lease registers preferred a system where every double page of the opened manuscript had a common number on the left and on the right (so that e.g. fols. 311v and 312r are both numbered «312»).

⁵⁸ ASTv, *Ospedale*, busta 251, fol. 137r-v.

⁵⁹ ASTv, *Ospedale*, busta 251, fol. 250v.

Table 3 *The rents owed and paid by the three masi in Nervesa, 1461-1467 (source: see notes 57-59).*

Properties	Types of rent	amounts owed annually	amounts paid (<i>masi</i> I, III: 7 years, <i>maso</i> II: 6 years)
<i>Maso</i> I	«chalzina» (lime)	10.917 l (14 <i>cara</i>)	30.412 l (39 <i>cara</i>)
	Wine	50%	16.610 l (230 <i>conzi</i>)
<i>Maso</i> II (1462-1467)	Wheat	521 l (6 <i>stara</i>)	1.476 l (17 <i>stara</i>)
	Sorghum (only 1462-1465)	174 l (2 <i>stara</i>)	--
	Wine	50%	7.252 l (93 <i>conzi</i>)
	Fruit	50%	--
	<i>Onoranze</i>	Full	Only in part
	Money for « <i>arcuista</i> » (only 1462-1464)	3 <i>lire</i>	--
<i>Maso</i> III	Money	14 <i>lire</i>	113 <i>lire</i>

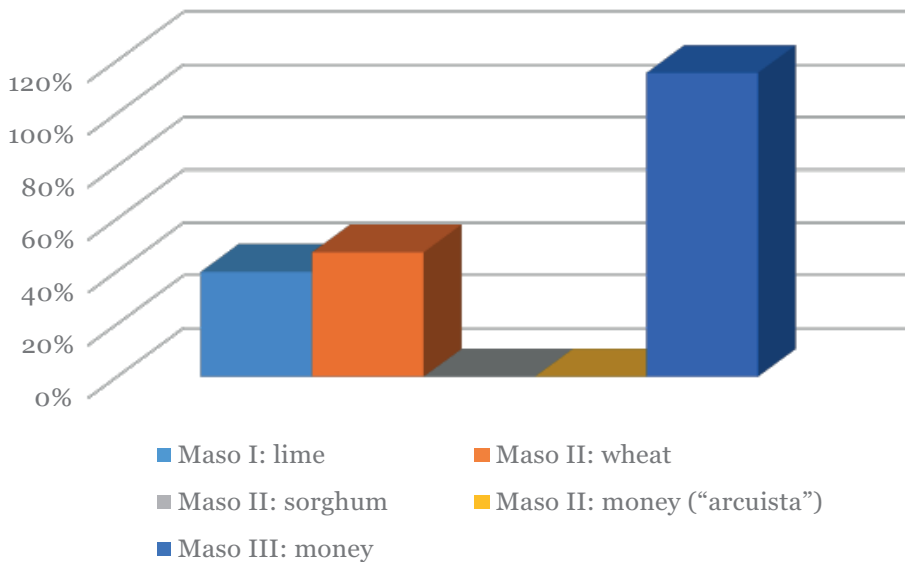


Diagram to table 3: rents paid to rents owed in percent, Nervesa 1461-1467.

It might seem surprising that in the years 1506-1520 the first *maso* in Nervesa did much better than 40 years earlier (see table 4). This is the case even in 1510, 1511 and 1512, when many parts of the *Terraferma* suffered heavily from the war between Venice and the League of Cambrai⁶⁰. The *maso* had been run since 1467 by one family. Between 1506 and 1509 the tenant owed annually 20 *cara* of lime (more than 15 m³); he never paid the whole amount, but always a large part of it, and even in 1510 after the *maso* had been transferred to the tenant's brother, who returned to the combination of wheat and wine, the former tenant insisted on paying back his debts with supplementary carriages of lime. His brother never omitted to convey the entire amount of wheat and wine to the hospital; only in 1511, when the war had damaged the vineyards and hindered the grape harvest, was he unable to deliver any wine, and in 1512 he gave not more than two *conzi*. His successor, who was his nephew, tried to fulfill his obligations, too, paying money or carrying lime when he did not have enough wheat; in the years 1519-1521, however, he had to take credits from the hospital in order to compensate the wheat he could not deliver⁶¹.

The history of the second *maso* in the same years is more varied. Until 1511 the main part of the rent was in money, but the rapidly changing tenants paid only a proportion of the amount or nothing. This time, however, the hospital had bolstered its position by recurring to warrantors, via whom it insisted on securing its compensation. The situation improved from 1512, when the parties returned to the traditional rent in kind, paid more or less correctly by a new tenant⁶². By contrast, the tenant of the third *maso* in Nervesa, for which the rather modest annual rent of 14 *lire* was still required, did not pay for years and, in addition, made fraudulent claims, so that his son, who entered in 1518, was required to pay back the debt accumulated⁶³.

From the six *masi* and four *sedimi* or smaller parcels situated in Paese the hospital should have raised between 1461 and 1467 the annual amounts in kind and money as shown in table 5: 64 *stara* of wheat, five *stara* of spelt or oats, four times the full series and three times a selection of *onoranze*; half of the wine from the six *masi*, one *sedime* and a piece of land, ten *conzi* of wine from another *peza de tera*; 22 *lire* in cash from two *masi* and a *sedime*⁶⁴. Just to give an idea of how much wine could have been collected, we can take as

⁶⁰ A recent analysis of the effects of the war of Cambrai: Varanini, *La Terraferma di fronte alla sconfitta di Agnadello*. For the events cf. the studies mentioned *supra*, note 2.

⁶¹ ASTv, *Ospedale*, busta 253, fols. 283v-284r, 286v-287r.

⁶² ASTv, *Ospedale*, busta 253, fols. 64v-65r. Warrantors are mentioned in the *Catastico*, fol. 57r, for two leases stipulated in 1506 and 1508: «per il qual feze la segurtà et se costituì principal pagador ser Ieronimo da Cornuda» (1508).

⁶³ ASTv, *Ospedale*, busta 253, fols. 242r, 537v. A female relative, who had worked as a wet nurse for the hospital, had asked for (and obtained) a much higher salary than normal. The difference was corrected years later and augmented the debts of the tenant's son.

⁶⁴ ASTv, *Ospedale*, busta 251, fols. 92r, 231v, 291v-292v, 343r-347v, 353r-v, 362v, 363v, 368v-369r. There are a few smaller changes during the period 1461-1467 (e.g. the transformation, in 1467, of a rent in kind for a *sedime* into 20 *lire* cash) which have been neglected here.

Table 4 *The rents owed and paid by the three masi in Nervesa, 1506-1520 (source: see notes 61-63).*

Properties	Types of rent	amounts owed annually	amounts paid (different periods)
Maso I (1506-1509)	«chalzina» (lime)	15.596 l (20 cara)	68.232 l (87.5 cara)
1510-1520	Wheat	1.042 l (12 stara)	11.520 l (132.7 stara)
1510-1520	Wine	50%	23.394 l (300 conzi)
Maso II (1506-1511)	Money	77.5 lire (average)	233 lire (1506-11)
	Onoranze; from 1507 «chalzina»	Full; or 1 caro «chalzina»	--
1512	Wheat	694 l (8 stara)	694 l (8 stara)
1512	Oat	87 l (1 stara)	87 l (1 stara)
1512	Wine	50%	234 l (3 conzi)
1512	Onoranze	Full	Full
1513-1520	Wheat	608 l (7 stara)	4.210 l (48.5 stara)
1513-1520	Wine	50%	2.2614 l (290 conzi)
Maso III (1506-1520)	Money	14 lire	95 lire

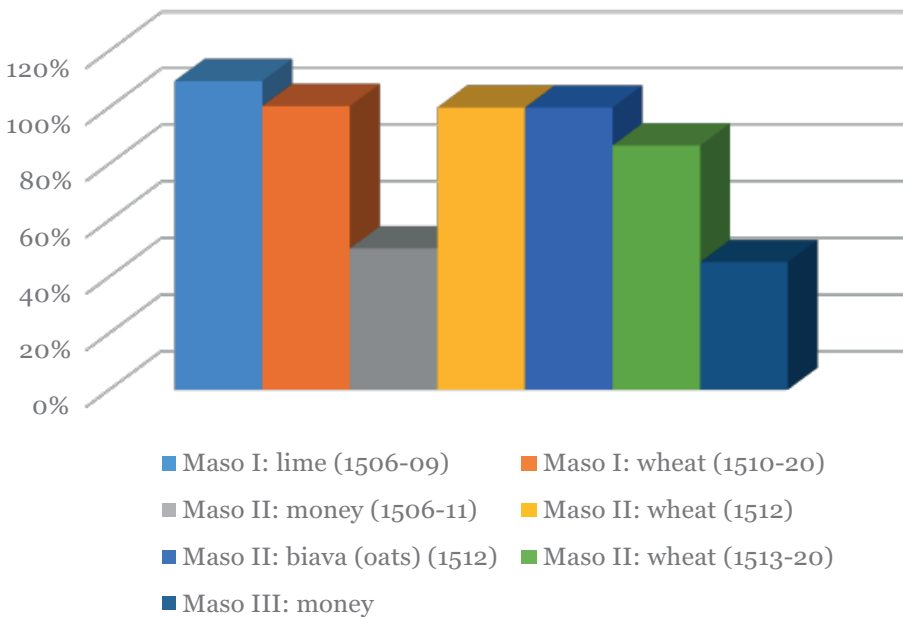


Diagram to table 4: rents paid to rents owed in percent, Nervesa 1506-1520.

examples the largest *maso* (estimated size 50 *campi*), which gave between 48 and 80 *conzi* (3.743 to 6.238 l) a year, and the smallest one (estimated size 25 *campi*), which delivered between eight and 51 *conzi* (624 to 3,977 l); it is interesting to note that the produce was greater when this latter *maso* was divided into two parts and held by two different tenants (1461-1463) than when it returned to one hand (from 1464). To these entries from holdings directly controlled by the hospital must be added the income from the extra bequests already mentioned: nine *stara* of wheat and 50 *conzi* of wine every year⁶⁵. All in all, every year the hospital should have collected in Paese 73 *stara* of wheat, five *stara* of spelt and oats, several cocks, hens, eggs, hams and geese, hundreds of *conzi* of wine and 22 *lire* in cash.

In the 1460s the gap between theory and praxis was surprisingly small. On checking the right-hand columns in the Libro O, we learn that the quota of the wheat deliveries was very high, nearly 100%, whereas spelt and oats were conveyed a little less regularly. A few exceptions apart, the wine was never missing. The fixed amounts of wheat and wine owed by the heirs of former donors were paid with absolute punctuality. Only the *onoranze* were taken less seriously: from time to time the tenants forgot part of them (though the notaries of the hospital did not). However, the only structural problem for the tenants of Paese seems to have been cash money. The fee of one *lira* owed annually in two *masi* was never paid, and the tenants who lived in a *sedime* for 20 *lire* a year did not pay in cash, but substituted the money with handiwork.

The history of the payments between 1506 and 1520 reflects the difficulties, especially in the years of war 1511 and 1512. Due to the process of reorganization five *masi* and three independent *sedimi* remained. What this land was supposed to pay is listed in table 6⁶⁶. As can be seen immediately from this table and the diagram, the quota of the rents actually collected was a little bit lower than in the 1460s. Only two of the *masi* delivered their wheat more or less regularly; the other two *masi* succeeded in doing so often, but not always, and the fifth one was rather unreliable. Every *maso* suffered seriously in 1511 and 1512: in particular, the production of wine stopped entirely in 1511 and recovered only slowly in the years after⁶⁷. In three *masi* the *onoranze* were mostly incomplete, and one of those two, the most problematic one, paid its oats only rarely. The income from the extra bequests had also now become more uncertain. Only one group of heirs paid continuously (besides the years

⁶⁵ ASTv, Ospedale, busta 251, fols. 40r-v, 99v-100v.

⁶⁶ For the rent in money I give a fifteen year (1506-1520) average value because in two of the *sedimi* the value changed. For one *sedime* the hospital also demanded half of the wine and two cocks or flax, but only from 1506 to 1514.

⁶⁷ ASTv, Ospedale, busta 253, fol. 120r, has a note in the lower margin, readable only in part, mentioning the siege of Treviso by French and imperial troops in August 1511. The entries regarding the five *masi* and three *sedimi* are at fols. 119v-120r, 152v, 269v-271r, 303v-304r, 311v, 317v-318r, 327v-329r, 330r, 332r, 334r, 440r, 447r, 461r-v, 480v, 502r, 529r; the extra bequests at fols. 72v-73v, 77v-78r, 80v, 426r, 465r, 491r, 492r.

Table 5 *The rents owed and paid from the lands in Paese, 1461-1467 (source: see notes 64-65).*

Properties	Types of rent	amounts owed annually (on average)	amounts paid (in 7 years)
6 <i>masi</i> , 4 parcels or <i>sedimi</i>	Wheat	5.556 l (64 <i>stara</i>)	38.908 l (448.2 <i>stara</i>)
	Spelt and/or oat	434 l (5 <i>stara</i>)	2.821 l (32.5 <i>stara</i>)
	Wine, shared (from 8 units)	50%	15.790 l (1985 <i>conzi</i>)
	Wine, fixed amount (from 1 unit)	780 l (10 <i>conzi</i>)	4.679 l (60 <i>conzi</i>)
	<i>Onoranze</i> , full	4 x	Mostly paid
	<i>Onoranze</i> in part	3 x	Often paid
	Money (from 3 units)	22 <i>lire</i>	140 <i>lire</i> (mostly in handiwork)
Extra bequests	Wheat	781 l (9 <i>stara</i>)	5.469 l (63 <i>stara</i>)
	Wine	3.899 l (50 <i>conzi</i>)	27.293 l (350 <i>conzi</i>)

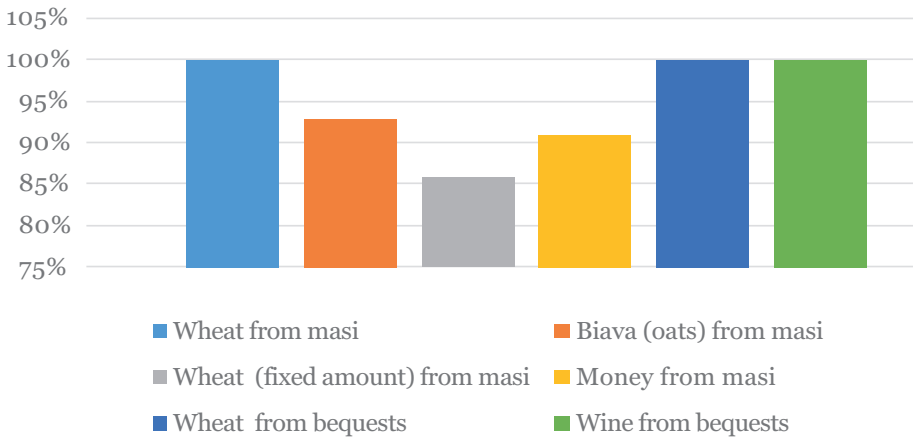


Diagram to table 5: rents paid to rents owed in percent, Paese 1461-1467.

1511-1512), two other heirs less regularly; the remaining two, who had divided one of the legacies, remembered their duties only sporadically. These differences demonstrate that the payment of the rents depended not only on the circumstances or on force majeure, but also on the socio-economic situation, the preferences and perhaps the conscience of the individual tenant. As far as concerns the rents in money, they were paid at least in part, even if the only *maso* owing the fee called «*arcuista*» (one *lira* a year) never paid it. However, the tenants living in one of the two cheaper *sedimi* fulfilled their obligations more or less completely, though not always regularly, whereas the payments from the larger and more expensive *sedime* became reliable only after 1514.

Table 6 *The rents owed and paid from the lands in Paese, 1506-1520 (source: see note 67).*

Properties	Types of rent	amounts owed annually (on average)	amounts paid (in 15 years)	rent in money replaced by wet nurses
5 <i>masi</i> , 3 <i>sedimi</i>	Wheat	6.467 l (74.5 <i>stara</i>)	86.450 l (996 <i>stara</i>)	
	Spelt and/or oat	608 l (7 <i>stara</i>)	5.191 l (60 <i>stara</i>)	
	Wine	50%	278.096 l (3.566 <i>conzi</i>)	
	<i>Onoranze</i> , full	4x	Paid often	
	<i>Onoranze</i> , in part	2x	Paid often in a <i>maso</i> , rarely in a <i>sedime</i>	
	Money		53 <i>lire</i> (average)	619 <i>lire</i>
Extra bequests	Wheat	781 l (9 <i>stara</i>)	9.977 l (115 <i>stara</i>)	
	Wine	3.899 l (50 <i>conzi</i>)	46.086 l (591 <i>conzi</i>)	

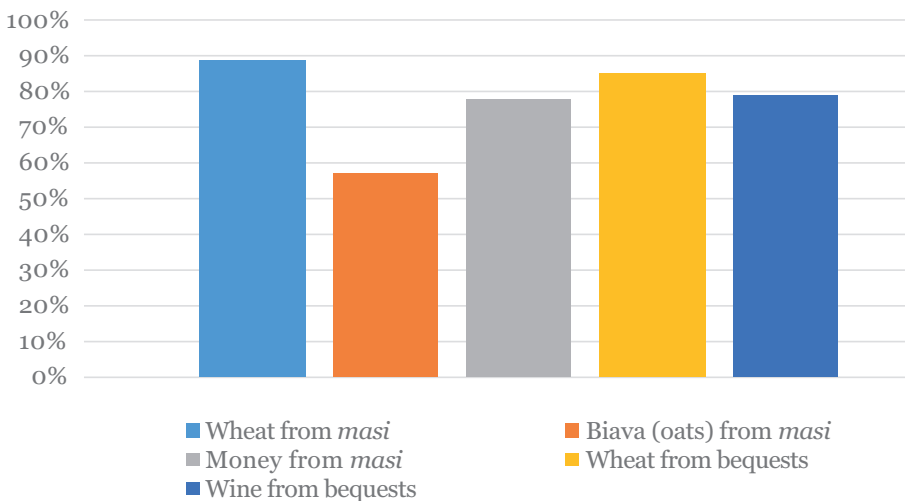


Diagram to table 6: rents paid to rents owed in percent, Paese 1506-1520.

The monetary rents were not always realized in cash: either the tenants replaced the money by selling goods (grapevine shoots) to the hospital or – and more often – they transformed it into work. During these years most of this work was done by the tenants’ wives or other female relatives who were hired as wet nurses for the children living in the hospital⁶⁸. Such information

⁶⁸ Two series of entries in ASTv, *Ospedale*, busta 253, fols. 303v and 330r, right-hand columns, regarding three women, two of them the wives of the tenants of two *sedimi*, the third perhaps a

can be found occasionally in the right-hand columns of the lease registers. There is, however, more systematic evidence for the importance of the cost incurred by the care for children⁶⁹. Reading the right-hand (*recto*) pages of the income and expenditure registers, especially the expenses in cash money and wheat, it is striking to observe that time and again those outgoings were paid to individual women. Normally the scribes do not explain the reason for these payments, but very often they quote other registers where the same payments had been recorded: these other registers are the *Libri mame*⁷⁰, which leads to the conclusion that many women receiving money or wheat must have been wet nurses or foster mothers.

The wheat given to these women was far from being the total amount of wheat “flowing” through the hospital. The income and expenditure registers tell us also how much wheat was consumed annually by the persons living inside the hospital («poveri» and staff). In my sample the minimum was 530 *stara* (in 1441-1442), the maximum 940 *stara* (in 1507-1508)⁷¹, but even these amounts made up only a part of the entire production in normal years. At any rate, all these numbers point to the strong interdependence between the charitable functions and the agriculture of Santa Maria dei Battuti. How important the lands of the hospital turned out to be for the persons who were reduced to asking for its help, becomes immediately clear when we look at the left-hand pages, i.e. the income sides of the income and expenditure registers. Trying to figure out where the revenue in money and wheat actually came from, we learn that the *sindico* and his notaries traced back a large majority

relative. They worked as wet nurses for several years between 1506 and 1520. Cases of similar deals between the hospital and the tenant families in other villages can also be found, cf. *supra*, note 63, and there are some further chance finds: busta 251, fol. 243r, a *maso* in Consejo (south east of Treviso, 1467); fol. 262r, a *livello* in Borgo Santi Quaranta (near Treviso, 1465); busta 253, fol. 60v, a parcel in Ponzano (1512?, 1518); fol. 61r, a *sedime* in Villa (1522); fol. 62r, a *maso* in Fossalta (near Oderzo, 1516); fol. 423v, a house in Treviso (1518). In all these cases a part of the monetary rent is compensated by the wage due to the tenants' female relatives who had worked as wet nurses and are listed in special registers, the «Libri Mame» (literally “books of mothers”, not preserved but mentioned often in the other registers).

⁶⁹ For a careful interpretation of the social and juridical aspects of the hospital's dealing with foundlings and their adoptive parents cf. Bianchi, *Adottare*, who analyzed the notarial registers preserved in ASTv, *Ospedale*, busta 376.

⁷⁰ See ASTv, *Ospedale*, busta 4 (1464-1468, 1441-1442) or busta 16 (1507-1508), in particular the items “denaro” and “fromento” in the first part of every budget year. The *Libro mame* referred to in the 1460s was called “A”, in 1507-1508 the letter was “E” and shortly after “F” (as in the examples from the lease register busta 253, *supra*, note 68). Cf. the document from the *Domus Dei* of Padua edited by Bianchi, *Health and Welfare Institutions*, pp. 230-231.

⁷¹ ASTv, *Ospedale*, buste 4, fol. 335v, and 16, fol. 148v. Pesce, *Vita*, p. 41, mentions a total production of 1.478 *stara* of wheat in 1441-1442 and of 2.276 *stara* in 1442-1443. I doubt that totals such as these are so easy to calculate. Pesce's source is ASTv, *Ospedale*, busta 2, but there are 100 fols. for 1441-1442 also in busta 4. Further, can we be sure that the income from the *commissarie* is exhaustively recorded in the main registers? This amount can be compared, however, with the annual wheat production in Nervesa and Paese (tables 3-6): Nervesa gave 1461-1467 on average only 2.43 *stara* a year (from one *maso*), 18.3 *stara* 1512-1520 (from two *masi*); Paese 1461-1467 on average 73 *stara* a year, 74 *stara* 1506-1520.

of the entries they wrote to the Libri O and DD⁷². This means, firstly, that the lease registers were the nucleus of the accounting system in the fifteenth and sixteenth century, and secondly that a high percentage of the resources essential for the survival of the poor derived from Saint Mary's lands.

5. *Further perspectives: urban hospitals as actors in rural economies*

If we looked at the examples of Nervesa and Paese through the lenses of a medieval manager of the hospital we could lean back and relax: there is no reason to be too pessimistic about the results obtained in these two villages. After all, the returns of rents in kind and money were not so bad, and even the serious military crisis of 1510-1512 had meant fewer disastrous consequences for the local agriculture, in the medium term, than we might have expected.

The first point that should become clear from this *assaggio* drawn from late medieval and early modern accounts is the difficulty that similar texts raise for an appropriate interpretation. Texts like the *Catastico* written probably by the *cavalcante* Hieronimo Marcolin, or the surviving lease registers and income and expenditure registers, fragmentary monuments of a once well functioning but complex administration, normally do not comment on themselves (as narrative texts do); yet the context necessary for their full understanding is often difficult to reconstruct. For example, how can we explain the fact that the *Catastico*, within the area of its interest, records a significantly greater amount of possessions than the contemporary tax documents do? Could the hospital really pass over a part of its lands before the eyes of the communal tax officers? Were there types of land, e.g. woods⁷³, which were not affected by the tax levy? Or did the commune and Venice consider the lands of Saint Mary as partially exempt? The differences between the size of the possessions as indicated in the *estimi* on the one hand, and of those listed in the hospital's registers on the other, call for a careful reading of the fiscal sources, too⁷⁴.

These doubts may justify my efforts to detect the "logic" behind the *Catastico*, efforts leading to an admittedly lengthy analysis of this source. One result is a somewhat clearer picture of the development of the landed property of the hospital during the fifteenth century, a period until now not well explored by historians. It is quite clear that this century was a phase of substantial growth for the properties. If we consider only the three *quartieri* analyzed in the *Catastico*, the surface area augmented from 350 ha at the end

⁷² Cf. the *verso* pages dedicated to the income in money and wheat (first part in every budget year) in ASTv, *Ospedale*, buste 347, 4 and 16 (but also 17). Random samples allow for the conclusion that the payments recorded in the lease registers buste 251 (Libro O) and 253 (Libro DD) were repeated accurately in the income and expenditure registers of the same years.

⁷³ Cf., for an analogous observation in the *estimi* regarding the village of Vidor (in the *quartiere* Di là dal Piave), Nicoletti, *Due villaggi*, p. 55.

⁷⁴ Cf. *supra*, note 28.

of the fourteenth century to at least 850 ha at the beginning of the sixteenth century. If we take into account the whole estate, its size expanded from about 972 ha (or approx. 1.400 ha including the *commissarie*) at the end of the fourteenth century to 2.188 ha in 1542, but in only six *quartieri* and four *podestarie* (a value based on the *estimo* of that year), or even to 3.144 ha in 1590 (a value based on a complete lease register).

The other main point discussed here is the economic organization of the land and the use of the income produced. The basic organizational unit was the *maso*, subject to a process of continuous reassessment (“*appoderamento*”) for which the *Catastico* is an instructive source. Marcolin also provides lots of information, and in plenty of detail, on the cultivation of the land and above all on the people who worked and lived there, the tenants and their families; on their lease contracts, the duration of their presence on a *maso* or a smaller parcel, the rents they were expected to pay. Among all these aspects I have selected, for the purpose of this paper, the latter one, trying to compare the rents owed in theory with the amounts paid in practice and to show, in a second step, in what manner the tenants’ work was related to the charitable functions of the hospital⁷⁵. Since some of the lease registers, which were Marcolin’s main source, are still preserved, such a comparison is possible. It shows that the tenants in Paese, in particular, worked and paid, from the point of view of the hospital, in a satisfactory manner, and that the tenants in Nervesa improved their performance between the 1460s and the early sixteenth century. If we tried to zoom in for a close-up of the single tenants – which I could not do in this article – we would often observe that the payments were delivered the more regularly the longer a tenant family had been staying in a *maso*; by contrast, the hospital had to reckon with losses when a piece of land was taken over by a new tenant. This fits in with the picture drawn for a later period by recent historians: in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the landowners’ and peasants’ aim was to create stability – of income and of persons – rather than to maximize profits. If this can be observed even for private proprietors, then, *a fortiori*, it is true for an economic actor such as a hospital⁷⁶.

A further explication for the variations in the influx of rent payments seems to lie in the socio-economic situation and personal interests of the individual tenants. It is certainly impossible to figure out such biographical information on a large scale, i.e. for hundreds or more of the tenant families. However, the tax declarations (*polizze*) preserved in the archival fund of the *estimi* allow to access at least some of the tenants and to describe more precisely their family and economic faculties⁷⁷. We learn from these sources that

⁷⁵ For other aspects, e.g. the kinds of crops cultivated or the typology of the lease contracts and their change over time, see the monographs of the series “*Studi veneti/ Campagne trevigiane in età moderna*”.

⁷⁶ Pezzolo, *La storia agraria veneta*, pp. 91-92, in his introduction to Pastro, *Le terre dell’Ospedale*.

⁷⁷ See, for a list of the *polizze* and tax registers preserved, the impressive inventory *Gli estimi*

a certain number of tenants were also proprietors of other pieces of land and thus earned only part of their living from their work for the hospital. This is a stimulus to further explore a microcosm much richer in personal strategies and flexible solutions than a source like the *Catastico* would be able to show. A good example of such flexibility are the women related to the (mostly male) tenants, who contributed to their families' income, i.e. to the payment of the rent owed by their husbands, uncles or brothers-in-law, by their activity as wet nurses for the foundlings assisted by the hospital.

Thus, the interaction between the urban sphere of charity, the main focus of a large communal institution like Santa Maria dei Battuti, and the rural sphere was stronger than is often thought⁷⁸. It is, of course, a topos in studies on hospital history that premodern charitable institutions were dependent on their estate (besides the monetary contributions by pious donators). Still, it is less clear how this intense movement of exchange between persons, labor, goods and money worked in practice. The surprisingly flexible convertibility of (male and female) manpower, commodities and cash presupposes a functioning system of markets: markets for commodities as well as factor markets, since the hospital's tenants offered their handiwork, participated in a lease and a land market and had to deal with their debts, i.e. they were also involved in a capital market. It is likely that the tenants serving a large institution like Santa Maria dei Battuti were better off than their colleagues who worked for a local landlord or a Venetian nobleman – not because the hospital was particularly merciful when they could not pay, but because it gave them access to such an “entangled” system of markets. The *Catastico*, the lease registers and accounts of Santa Maria do not offer much information, at least not until the 1560s, about the early modern transformation of the *Terraferma* in a center of textile industry⁷⁹, an activity which apparently did not arouse the hospital managers' interest. However, they are good evidence for better understanding the multilayered relations between an urban institution that owned land for dispensing food to the poor and the rural population engaged to produce that food.

della podesteria di Treviso. For many of the villages mentioned in the *Catastico* the *polizze* of several campaigns of *estimi* are available. See, e.g., for Iacomini Busi mentioned above, before note 43, the *polizze* ASTv, *Estimi*, busta 23 (estimo generale 1434-1435), cartella 3, Nervesa, no. 4; busta 65 (estimo particolare 1458-1461), Nervesa, no. 2; further the register in busta 81 (estimo particolare 1474-1480), cartella 3, Nervesa, fol. 43v. Iacomini, a boy of 10 years in 1434, was aged 32 (!) in 1460; in this year he was head of a household of ten persons, composed of three families: his own (with three children) and his two younger brothers' families. Besides the hospital's *maso* and other parcels leased, he was owner of several *peze de tera*, but also had a debt of more than 500 *lire* with private creditors. By 1474-1480 he had lost many possessions, the value of his patrimony being estimated at only 420 *lire*.

⁷⁸ A large majority of the multifaceted historical research work on hospitals focusses on the urban dimension and on institutional, social, religious or medical aspects. A few examples may suffice here: Albini, *Città e ospedali*; the collected essays in *Ospedali e città*; Le Blévec, *La part du pauvre*; Henderson, *The Renaissance Hospital*; *Hospitäl in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*; the source anthology *Quellen zur europäischen Spitalgeschichte*, with the exception of the contributions by Rippmann, Simon-Muscheid and Krauer, Sonderegger mentioned *supra*, note 1.

⁷⁹ Demo, *Industry and Production*; Demo, Vianello, *Manifatture e commerci*.

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