

Iustitia Mercatoria Project – University of Padua
International workshop

Jurisdictional Places for Commerce **11th-17th centuries**

25-26 September 2025
Venice and Padua



Milano, Piazza dei Mercanti / Fotografia: fabrylomas

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The Iustitia Mercatoria project: merchants, places, spaces and iconographies

The project “**Iustitia Mercatoria. Places, Spaces and Iconographies of Mercantile Justice in Europe (11th-17th Centuries)**” is an interdisciplinary and comparative research program funded by the Italian Ministry of Education and Research (MUR) under the FARE Ricerca in Italia scheme. It aims to define the **idea that merchants had about law and justice through the interpretation of the places, spaces and iconographies of commercial justice.**

Our first international workshop

The first IUSTITIAM workshop *Jurisdictional Places for Commerce (11th -17th centuries)* focuses on the **places where merchants settled disputes and administered mercantile justice.** Indeed, medieval and early modern merchants used a variety of public and private jurisdictions for conflict management. Legal and economic historiographies have examined this practice to understand how merchants used and combined different institutional means to support long-distance transactions, leading to successful research trends like legal pluralism and forum shopping.

Following these narratives, the IUSTITIAM workshop intends to **explore public and private jurisdictions from the innovative perspective of the symbolic value** that the places where merchants administered justice held.

Buildings like the Fondaco dei Tedeschi in Venice, the Loggia della Mercanzia in Genoa, the Consulate of the Sea in Valencia, the town hall of Lüneburg or the Marienkirche in Lübeck are only a few examples of places that were first and foremost symbolic spaces that depicted and communicated a specific message about trade and justice to the community. The same thing happens with the **private spaces** merchants frequently used to settle disputes. Merchants’ own houses, notaries homes, chapels, churches or confraternities were spatial frameworks for arbitration, allegedly the most diffused instrument for conflict management among merchants. In other circumstances traders also resorted to **urban squares and streets** as scenarios for the administration of justice, sometimes requiring the advice of lawyers and magistrates of civil courts to find a fair solution to a problem, when not litigating directly in civil tribunals.

Following **questions** will be addressed:

- Where did merchants administer their justice?
- How did they use public and private places to handle professional conflicts?
- How did the political and social context condition merchant's election of a jurisdictional place?
- How did the public or private nature of the jurisdictional places influence merchants’ institutional choices for conflict settlement?
- What messages did traders intend to communicate through the places chosen for the administration of mercantile justice?
- Was there a typology of conflicts that merchants preferred to discuss in public jurisdictions like courts or merchant guilds?
- What role did public authorities (magistrates, lawyers, notaries) played in the administration of mercantile justice in private places?
- What kind of rituals and symbols were present while merchants administered justice in private places?
- How does the architecture of these public and private places engage and respond to the surrounding urban fabric?
- What constituted their exterior and interior decorative program? Who commissioned it and determined its iconographic content?
- Are there similarities and/or differences among the various places?



Perugia, Palazzo dei Priori, Sala delle Udienze del Nobile Collegio del Cambio/ Fotografia: Eliana Intruglio

Jurisdictional Places for Commerce

11th-17th centuries

Venice and Padua, 25-26 September 2025

Thursday, 25 September

Venice, Deutsches Studienzentrum in Venedig / Centro Tedesco di Studi Veneziani
Palazzo Barbarigo della Terrazza, San Polo, 2765/A, Calle Corner

Within the framework of the Studienkurs Venedig 2025 *Das Meer als Heterotopie. Ist auf dem Meer alles anders?*
directed by Prof. Albrecht Cordes

15:00 Stefania Gialdroni – University of Padua
At the crossroads between the mountains and the sea: Function and meaning of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi in Venice

17:00 Ana Belem Fernández Castro – University of Padua
Between Land and Sea: The Commercial Jurisdiction of the House of Trade of Seville in the Sixteenth Century

Friday, 26 September

University of Padua

Dipartimento di Diritto Privato e Critica del Diritto, Palazzo del Bo, Via VIII febbraio 1848, Sala Vigni

9:30 Stefania Gialdroni – University of Padua
Greeting and introduction

Morning session

Chair: Ana Belem Fernández Castro – University of Padua

10:00 Guido Rossi – University of Edinburgh/University of Palermo
Keynote lecture
I luoghi del diritto nella common law

11:00 Coffee break

11:15 Donatella Calabi – IUAV, Venice
Keynote lecture
Idea di giustizia e uso degli spazi destinati allo scambio nel mercato di Rialto

12:15 Stefania Gialdroni and Valeria Paruzzo – University of Padua
L'atlante di Iustitiam e il caso di Palazzo della Ragione a Padova

13:15 Lunch

Afternoon Session

Chair: Guido Rossi – University of Edinburgh/University of Palermo

14:40 Ana Belem Fernández Castro – University of Padua
Il tribunale della Mercanzia di Firenze

15:00 David De Concilio – University of Padua
Il Palazzo delle Mercanzie di Brescia

15:20 Matteo Moro – University of Padua
La Camera dei Mercanti di Milano e il complesso del Broletto Nuovo

15:40 Bettina Pfothenhauer – University of Padua
La Casa dei mercanti (Domus Mercatorum) a Verona

16:00 Coffee break

16:20 Daniele Tinterri – University of Padua/State Archive of Genoa
La Loggia dei Mercanti a Genova

16:40 Chiara Lo Giudice – University of Verona
Il Palazzo del Magistrato Mercantile di Bolzano e l'Università dei Mercanti di Mantova

17:10 Stefania Gialdroni – University of Padua
Il Collegio del Cambio di Perugia

17:30 Discussion and concluding remarks

Organization: Prof. Stefania Gialdroni, Dr. Ana Belem Fernández Castro, Dr. Valeria Paruzzo
Organized in the framework of the project "Iustitia Mercatoria. Places, Spaces and Iconographies of Mercantile Justice in Europe (11th-17th Centuries)", funded by the Italian Ministry of Education and Research (MUR) under the FARE Ricerca in Italia scheme (Framework per l'Attuazione ed il Rafforzamento delle Eccellenze in Italia), prot. R20XAEXX5X.

Places to **participate** in person are limited. Please register in advance by **22 September 2025** at valeria.paruzzo@unipd.it and anabelem.fernandezcastro@studenti.unipd.it.

Only on Friday 26 September the workshop will also be **broadcast live on Zoom** at the following link: <https://rb.gy/wfmmhp>