From the Mediterranean to the Atlantic

ASPECTS OF AN ECONOMIC SHIFT
(12th-18th Century)

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One of the most important, and so far least known, features of the medieval antecedents of the colonization and economic development of America is the origin and early development of navigation and trade along the Atlantic coasts of Europe. Here we are immediately faced with the crucial problem of the priority given the colonial role of Spain and Portugal. Clearly this is above all a problem of medieval economic history. The history of the two Iberian countries as it appears today in international historical literature too often still gives the impression that sea trade and consequently colonization were suddenly initiated there, virtually spontaneously, at the beginning of the modern period. I have shown I believe, both in general terms and also for a number of particular regions and economic trends, in several studies,[1] that this was not the case for either Spain or Portugal. In the present

1 C. VERLINDEN, *The Rise of Spanish Trade in the Middle Ages*, « Economic History Review », vol. X, 1940, pp. 40-59; *Le problème de l'expansion commerciale portugaise au moyen âge*, « Biblos », vol. XXIII, Coimbra, 1948, pp. 453-467; *La place de la Catalogne dans l'histoire commerciale du monde méditerranéen médiéval*, « Revue des Cours et Conférences », Paris, 1938, pp. 586-606, 737-754); *Deux aspects de l'expansion commerciale du Portugal au moyen âge: Harfleur au XIV^e siècle, Middelbourg au XIV^e et au XV^e*, « Revista Portuguesa de Historia », vol. IV, 1947, pp. 40.

paper I wish to outline first of all some aspects of the Italian influences on the commercial and maritime development of Spain and Portugal, which facilitated and prepared the economic shift from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, without which the colonization of the New World and the creation of an Atlantic economy focussed around the great inland Ocean of the West would have been impossible.

From the beginning of the Crusades and for a long time after, Italy was the only real colonizing country of the Middles Ages. Venice, Pisa, Genoa, and later also Florence, Southern Italy — the Angevins reclaimed their right to the Latin Empire and maintained political interest in the Levant — and Aragonese Sicily which inherited the Catalan duchies of Greece, all these medieval Italian states were involved in the Levant and in the economic and colonial possibilities afforded by the progressive disintegration of the Byzantine Empire. The colonial economy thus created was maintained, throughout the Middles Ages, and even later in the case of Venice.

We know moreover that at the time of Henry the Navigator, Colombus and Vasco da Gama, the Italians, and especially the Genoese, were particularly numerous and influential both in Seville and in Lisbon. Sufficient proof of this is provided in the studies by PERAGALLO,[2] ALMAGIÀ,[3] GRIBAUDI,[4] SAYOUS,[5] GIRARD[6] and

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2 P. PERAGALLO, *Cenni intorno alla colonia italiana in Portogallo nei secoli XIV, XV, XVI*, Genova, 1907.

3 R. ALMAGIÀ, *Commercianti, banchieri ed armatori genovesi a Siviglia nei primi decenni del secolo XVI*, « Rendiconti Accademia dei Lincei », 1935.

4 P. GRIBAUDI, *Navigatori, banchieri e mercanti italiani nei documenti degli archivi notarili di Siviglia*, « Bollettino della Società Geografica Italiana », 1936.

5 A. E. SAYOUS, *Origen de las instituciones economicas en la America española*, « Boletin del Instituto de Investigaciones Historicas », Buenos Aires, 1928; *Le rôle des Génois lors des premiers mouvements réguliers d'affaires entre l'Espagne et le Nouveau Monde, 1505-1520*, Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, Comptes rendus, 1932; *Les débuts du commerce de l'Espagne avec l'Amérique 1503-1518*, « Revue Historique », vol. CLXXIV, 1934; *Partnerships in Trade between Spain and America and also in the Spanish Colonies in the Sixteenth Century*, « Journal of Economic and Business History », vol. I.

6 A. GIRARD, *Les étrangers en Espagne au XVI^e et XVII^e siècles*, « Annales d'histoire économique et sociale », vol. V, 1933.

LOPEZ[7] and more recently by HIPPOLITO SANCHO DE SOPRANIS[8] and by FEDERIGO MELIS in his paper on *Malaga nel sistema economico del XIV e XV secolo* (Malaga in the economic system of the 14th and 15th centuries), based on DATINI material,[9] as well as in the various studies by HEERS.[10] For a later period mention should be made of MELIS', *Il commercio transatlantico di una compagnia fiorentina stabilita a Siviglia a pochi anni dalle imprese di Cortés e Pizarro*[11] ('The transatlantic Trade of a Florentine Company established at Seville a Few Years after the Expeditions of Cortés and Pizarro') and of the recent book, published in 1966, by my American pupil, Miss RUTH PIKE, on *Enterprise and Adventure. The Genoese in Seville and the Opening of the New World.*[12] We may then ask whether on the one hand we already have here more than mere *membre disjecta* and on the other whether the overall historical perspective has always been sufficiently borne in mind. There is a vast unexplored field of study on this subject as we still know little for certain. A number of interesting problems emerge that cannot be studied at a national level only.

What are the essential problems with regard to Italian influence in Iberian colonization?

Firstly, there is the question of the origins of Italian influence. A thorough study should be made of the part played by the Italians in the economic life of medieval Spain and Portugal in order to understand their subsequent action when these countries began to colonize and evolve a colonial economy.

The following is on attempt to do this in outline.[13]

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7 R. LOPEZ, *Il predominio economico dei Genovesi nella monarchia spagnola*, «Giornale storico e letterario della Liguria», 1936.

8 H. SANCHO DE SOPRANIS, *Los genoveses en Cadiz antes de 1600*, Larache 1939; *Los genoveses en la región gaditano-xericiense de 1460 à 1500*, «Hispania», vol. VIII, 1948.

9 «Economia e Storia», vol. III, 1956.

10 J. HEERS, *Le royaume de Grenade et la politique marchande de Gênes en Occident* «Le Moyen Âge», 1957; *Gênes au XV^e siècle, Activité économique et problèmes sociaux*, Paris, 1961, particularly pp. 473-497.

11 «V Congresso de Historia de la Corona de Aragon. Estudios», vol. III, 1954.

12 Cornell University Press, Ithaca (N. Y.).

13 C. VERLINDEN, *Le influenze italiane nella colonizzazione iberica. Uomini e Metodi*, «Nuova Rivista Storica», vol. XXXV, 1952; *De Italiaanse invloeden in de Iberische economie en kolonisatie (XII^e-XVII^e eeuw)*, Mededelingen Kon. Vlaamse Academie voor

The Pisans and the Genoese first arrived in Catalonia in the 12th century. It was they who drew Spain and Portugal into the sphere of extensive international relations. Wherever they went they created centres for long-range sea trade. They might be described as the torch-bearers of economic progress who surrounded the Iberian peninsula, as if it were an immense bonfire which they lit branch by branch from all sides.

In Catalonia a joint expedition against the Muslim Balearic Islands was organized by Pisa and Count Ramón Berenguer III. As compensation for their aid, the Pisans were granted great commercial freedom after September 1113. The expedition failed, but a friendly agreement between Ramón Berenguer IV and Alfonso II of Aragon continued until 1167, when the latter formed an alliance with the Genoese, enemies of the Pisans. Then Catalonia's relations with Pisa deteriorated, but from 1188 the Genoese and the Pisans shared the Catalan market. In the same period the Genoese and the Pisans established relations with the parts of Spain that were still Muslim, and even with Almeria by 1143 at the latest. The Genoese signed a treaty with Alfonso VII of Castile whereby, if they succeeded in conquering several Spanish Mediterranean ports, they would be granted colonies there; they also enjoyed tax privileges throughout Castile.

Genoese relations with Valencia were established after 1149 when they concluded a treaty with the Muslim king of Valencia. They possessed a warehouse there and in nearby Denia. In Giovanni Scriba's famous Genoese *notulario* there are 15 contracts referring to trade with Valencia.[14] Alum, mercury, silks and Játiva paper were exported from this area. The Genoese also handled communications between Mediterranean Spain, Sicily and southern France. The Pisans too were known in Valencia and Denia as a treaty of 1150 shows. By 1161 at the latest, Genoese companies were drawing up contracts with Seville, which was still Muslim; the return cargoes often consisted of oil. From 1166 the Pisans

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Wetenschappen, kl. Letteren, 1951; *Italian Influence in Iberian Colonization*,' « Hispanic American Historical Review », vol. XXXIII, 1953.

[14] M. CHIAUDANO and M. MORESCO, *Il cartulario di Giovanni Scriba*, « Documenti e Studi per la storia del commercio e del diritto commerciale italiano », I-II, Torino, 1935.

possessed a warehouse in Seville and also penetrated to Malaga and Almería. In the Balearic Islands both Pisans and Genoese were present. Here again the published and unpublished notarial deeds merit investigation and above all a more thorough study should be made of the archives of Palma de Mallorca after the Christian conquest.

As regards Atlantic Spain and Portugal, a Genoese named Angerius was already building galleys for Diego Gelmirez, bishop of Compostela, in 1120. Pisan influences were felt almost simultaneously: in 1147 a Pisan was acting as naval engineer and technical expert on sieges during the capture of Lisbon in which crusaders from the North also took part. This illustrates how Portugal looked both towards the North and towards the Mediterranean from the earliest days of its independence. At that time fairs were already being held at Compostela and from the middle of the century the Genoese had also reached Santiago by land. They landed on the Catalan coast and from there they proceeded, partly along the famous French road, to Aragon, Navarre, Castile and León. Italians were always the initiators and among them the Genoese and Pisans always took the lead.

In the 13th century relations became more stable, but so far very little is known of them. Between 1213 and 1230 they were relatively cool between Genoa and Catalonia. However there was evidently a fairly brisk grain trade with Ampurias. In 1231 mention was made of a Genoese warehouse on Majorca, christian since 1229. In 1233 the Pisans had another warehouse at their disposal there. At the same time Luccans also appeared on the island.

In 1282 Sicily became Aragonese and, from 1296, Frederick III proclaimed cereal exports to Catalonia exempt from duty. This trade began to flourish. From the 13th century on, moreover, Spanish documentation becomes more plentiful. The archives of Barcelona Cathedral contain notarial deeds, while the archives in Seville still provide a wealth of information.[15]

[15] A. E. Sayous, *Les méthodes commerciales de Barcelone au XIII^e siècle d'après les archives de sa cathédrale*, « Estudios Universitaris Catalans », vol. XVI, 1932; A. Ballesteros, *Sevilla en el siglo XIII*, Madrid, 1913.

In Castile, the influence of the Genoese became very important from the mid-13th century. As soon as Seville became christian (1248), the Genoese were granted very extensive privileges there. In 1251 Ferdinand III of Castile granted the Genoese an important charter. From that time on they possessed a quarter in Seville with warehouse, bakery, bath-house and chapel, and the taxes to which they were subject were established. They very frequently exported oil. They had consuls, but many of them also became citizens or *vecinos* of Seville. These are the origins of the Charter of the Genoese in Seville which was in force throughout the later middle ages and the early modern period. Many Genoese craftsmen also took up residence in Seville from the 13th century on, and the first Genoese admirals, Ugo Vento and Benedetto Zaccaria, entered the service of Castile at this time.[16]

In the 14th century there were also Italians from Piacenza. In this period the Genoese of Seville began to make loans to the King of Castile, one example being a certain Giovanni di Vivaldo (in 1310). In 1381 Gaspare Cibo, *genoes e cambiador e recabdador del dinero de la carne*, and as early as 1370 a Genoese named Miçer Gaspare often advanced capital to the communal administration of Seville. They must definitely have been one and the same person. The fact that from the 14th century the Genoese were involved in the public finances of Seville prepared them for their task of money-lending, which they carried out at the time of the great geographical discoveries, and enabled them to understand and so influence Castilian economic institutions.

Except for Seville little is known so far of the 14th century but we shall learn much more when FEDERIGO MELIS publishes the second volume of his *Aspetti della vita economica medievale* based on the Datini archives. Relations between Catalonia and Sicily were active, but there seem to have been more Catalans in Sicily than Sicilians in Catalonia. The Catalans owned warehouses in smaller centres like Agrigento, Mazzara, Sciacca and Licata and « *loggie* » in Palermo and Messina. They also had a *ruga* or street

16 R. LOPEZ, *Alfonso el Sabio y el primer almirante genovés de Castilla*, « Cuadernos de Historia de España », vol. XII, Buenos Aires, 1950; *Genova marinara nel duecento. Benedetto Zaccaria.* Messina-Milano, 1933.

in Palermo. And what of the reverse traffic from Italy to Spain? We know that many Florentines visited Valencia from the beginning of the century. It would be useful to know something of their methods, which are of such importance in explaining Italian penetration of Castile, the hinterland of Valencia. The 15th century too is still little known as far as Italian influences in Spain are concerned, with the exception of Genoa at the end of the century, the eve of the great discoveries. The most recent, and best, of the studies on this topic are those by Heers.[17]

Equally little known is the Italian penetration of Portugal in the 13th century. In the 14th and 15th centuries Italian shipping was of outstanding importance to both Portugal and Spain. Venice, Genoa, Florence and the kingdom of Naples commanded regular convoys. Thus, as early as 1310, Lagos became a very busy port on the route taken by the Venetian galleys sailing to Flanders. This is of the greatest importance for those who study the function of this market in Portugal's colonial expansion. To give a further example, in 1447 the Florentine sea consuls established transit stations for the Flanders galleys in many ports of the Iberian peninsula: San Feliù de Guixols, Majorca, Valencia, Jávea, Villajoyosa, Denia, Alicante, Almería, Málaga, Cadiz, Lisbon, La Coruña.[18] This is a point of particular importance as this practice later served as a model for the Portuguese and Spanish convoys sailing to the colonies in the American Indies or in Asia.

Italian influences on Iberian colonization began to be felt in the 14th century, in Portugal first of all. In 1317 the Pessagnos of Genoa appeared as admirals. Lanzarotto Malocello,[19] who discovered the Canaries around 1336, was a Genoese in their service whose family had undertaken joint enterprises with the Pessagnos on behalf of England. Castile, on the other hand, had taken an interest in the Canary Islands before the middle of the

17 See n. 10.

18 A. GRUNZWEIG, *Le fonds du Consulat de la Mer aux Archives de l'Etat à Florence*, « Bulletin de l'Institut historique belge de Rome », 1930, p. 24.

19 C. VERLINDEN, *Lanzarotto Malocello et la découverte portugaise des Canaries*, « Revue belge de Philologie et d'Histoire », vol. XXXVI, 1958; *Les Génois dans la Marine portugaise avant 1385*, « Actas do Congresso de Portugal medievo », vol. III, Braga, 1966.

century, as had Aragon from 1341-43. Grants of land under feudal tenure were promised to those who undertook the organization of voyages and explorations: this was frequent practice in Genoese colonization policy from the beginning. Is this then a result of Italian influences? Only a careful analysis and comparison of the forms of these concessions can provide an answer. Expeditions to the Canaries were made throughout the 14th and 15th centuries. Pedro Fernandez Cabron, who concluded a contract with the Catholic Kings in 1480, was Genoese. On many Portuguese islands in the Atlantic Italians were to be found among the *donatory captains*. The most famous was Perestrello, Columbus' father-in-law and the son of a native of Piacenza, who had settled at Porto Santo in the Madeira archipelago. But Italians were to be found as far away as the Gulf of Guinea.[20] A list of them should be drawn up and the rights they acquired should be studied and compared with those granted in the Italian colonies in the Levant.

How can one explain the part played by Italians in early Spanish and Portuguese colonization? By looking at the place they had gained in the key positions of the peninsula at the beginning of the period of expansion.

As far as Portugal is concerned, the belief that discovery began with Henry the Navigator must be abandoned and attention devoted to discoveries and even colonization dating from the reign of Alphonso IV, that is from the end of the first half of the 14th century. The Genoese in particular, but also other Italians, took part in the whole of this movement. They were present in Lisbon and the Algarve, and in the Canaries with Lanzarotto Malocello, who was a Portuguese vassal for some fifteen years.

When, after 1415, the Portuguese under Henry the Navigator began their new definitive colonial expansion with the conquest of Ceuta and other operations in Morocco, the Italians were pre-

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20 C. VERLINDEN, *Formes féodales et domaniales de la colonisation portugaise dans la zone atlantique aux XIV^e et XV^e siècles et spécialement sous Henri le Navigateur*, « Revista Portuguesa de Historia », vol. X, 1962; *Navigateurs, marchands et colons italiens au service de la découverte et de la colonisation portugaises sous Henri le Navigateur*, « Le Moyen Âge », vol. LXIV, 1958; *Antonio da Noli et la colonisation des Iles du Cap Vert*, « Miscellanea storica ligure », vol. III, 1963.

sent from the very first. Nor could it have been otherwise since they had visited the Moroccan markets since the end of the 12th century. It is necessary to emphasize the continuity of this movement and show its contribution to Portuguese expansion. Whenever the Portuguese came into contact with a Moroccan market they found Italians; for instance at Arzila in 1437 and at Fez in 1438 they found Genoese money-changers. Some Genoese and Venetians lived at Salé and, according to Leo Africanus, had business relations with Flanders. The Genoese were sometimes in the service of Moroccan princes; an example was Franco Doria who worked as military engineer for the king of Fez; others built aqueducts or galleys. Italian techniques were of the greatest importance, everywhere, both in the organization of all kinds public works and in the field of business and finance. At Larache the Genoese held an important position in the fisheries. The Genoese merchants did not only penetrate from the Atlantic ports into the biggest inland markets, they were also to be found in villages in the Atlas Mts. They bought leather and wax in the markets there and sent them to Portugal and Genoa. This took place in northern Morocco, but in the south, which was less civilized and more suitable for colonization, the picture was the same. Here the Genoese scarcely collaborated with the Portuguese, as Portuguese relations with these regions were hostile. The fact that in 1514 the Portuguese of Agadir took prisoner some Genoese merchants of Tarcucu, who were in fact supplying the Moroccans with arms, is proof of this. The same situation arose at Anfa, Safi and Azemmur.[21]

Most Italian trade in Morocco was centred on the Lisbon-Lagos axis on the one side, and Cadiz-Jerez on the other. It was from this same area that the Italians, and especially the Genoese, penetrated along the African coast, either clandestinely, like Michele Pardo of Genoa who was at Arguim in 1514, or else as followers of the Portuguese, like the celebrated Venetian Alvise da Mosto sixty years earlier, who was one of the chief collaborators of Henry the Navigator towards the end of the latter's career; [22] or like the many

[21] R. RICARD, *Contribution à l'étude du commerce génois au Maroc durant la période portugaise (1415-1550)*, in «Etudes sur l'histoire des Portugais au Maroc», Coimbra, 1955.
[22] C. VERLINDEN, *Navigateurs, marchands et colons italiens*, quoted in note 20.

merchants who took part in the colonization of the Canaries,[23] the Azores and Madeira or, from the end of the period of Henry the Navigator on, in that of the Cape Verde Islands which were colonized for three decades by Antonio da Noli, who was a Ligurian, as I have been able to establish in detail in recent studies.[24]

As for Spain, Italian penetration of this kind of « Cape of Good Hope» created by the Iberian peninsula between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic at the end of the 15th century can now be better understood thanks to the studies by Sancho de Sopranis[25] and Heers.[26] From the beginning of the 15th century several members of the high Genoese nobility were at Jerez. They arrived there with their ships and hired them to the King of Castile. In reality, they continued to do what Ugo Vento and Benedetto Zaccaria and, then, the Pessagnos in Portugal and the Boccanegras in Castile had done since the end of the 13th century.

The deeds of a 15th century notary of Jerez, Hernando de Carmona — partly used by Sancho de Sopranis — should be published, for example, because they give information not only about these men but also of their methods. Although the latter are of capital importance, they have unfortunately been neglected by Spanish scholars hitherto. The Spinolas and the di Negros play a role of the utmost importance in this region; the latter held important offices in the Genoese House of St. George. This shows how greatly they were able to influence the subsequent organization of Spain's colonial administration.

All the Genoese of Cadiz, Jerez and Puerto Santa Maria carried on intense commercial activity with Portuguese advance posts in Africa, the Azores, Madeira and the Canaries. But many were merely agents of the di Negros, the Centurionis, the Cibos and the Franchis. These men were enterprising and continually on the move. They differed in this respect from those Genoese who, after the Dorias' rise to power at the beginning of the 16th century,

23 C. VERLINDEN, *Gli Italiani nell'economia delle Canarie all'inizio della colonizzazione spagnola*, « Economia e Storia », 1960.

24 See note 20.

25 See note 8.

26 See note 10.

established themselves at Cadiz and San Lucar in order to trade with the Indies, although they did not generally take part in person. Nevertheless many men or companies, who later traded with the American Indies, gained their first experience in trade with Portuguese and Spanish possessions on the continent and islands of Africa. At Cadiz the Genoese « nation » was founded by Francesco Uso di Mare, brother of the famous African explorer and merchant Antoniotto. The Genoese of Andalusia also brought much Sicilian grain to or through Andalusia. This problem should be studied in Sicily where Trasselli[27] has begun to look into it. At Cadiz the Maruffos equipped ships for the King of Castile during the war of Grenada. In this city the Genoese performed a function of sufficient importance to transform even its physical appearance, as can still be seen today. At Jerez, on the contrary, they never formed a « nation », but for a certain period they almost entirely dominated economic life. A typical Genoese of Jerez was Francesco Adorno, the political and business adviser of the Marquis of Cadiz, a prominent statesman of the time. Adorno was also one of the biggest wine exporters in the region.

Many of the Genoese of Jerez and Cadiz arrived there just as Genoese colonization was declining, owing to Turkish expansion in the Levant. They were attracted by the Iberian penetration of Africa and, hoping to share in it, settled in the Iberian regions from which the colonial expeditions set out and where trade relations were established. From there they were also able to carry on trade with western Europe. When they later went to Seville, it was also with an eye to the colonies: Italian colonization, after the loss of the Levantine colonies, continued somehow through third party agencies.[28]

I have already mentioned relations with Portuguese Morocco, but relations with the Atlantic archipelagos were of greater importance. We still know far too little about this, and although full

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[27] C. TRASSELLI, *Sulla esportazione di cereali dalla Sicilia nel 1407-08*, « Atti dell'*Accademia di Scienze di Palermo*, serie IV, vol. XIV, 1955.

[28] C. VERLINDEN, *Les influences italiennes dans l'économie et dans la colonisation espagnoles à l'époque de Ferdinand le Catholique*, « V Congresso de Historia de la Corona de Aragon. Estudios », vol. III, 1954.

documentation exists it still needs to be fully explored. The two movements must be brought together and this has not so far been done. Documentary material, even when studies are available, is always unilateral. Coordination at an international level is what is needed.

Sugar cane, for example, was imported to Madeira from Sicily according to evidence supplied by an excellent source, Duarte Pacheco Pereira in his *Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis*. Here I shall leave the Italian merchants whom I could follow (and have in fact followed in several works), as far as Spanish America and Portuguese India[29] in order to turn to a product, sugar, that I referred to above; and again Italians play an important part in its history, at least at the beginning.[30]

Historians of colonization have often thought that the medieval colonies in the Levant were only trading centres, serving as ports of call on the routes leading to the inland countries of Africa and Asia. This is true from the commercial point of view, but fails to establish certain aspects, in particular the agricultural and industrial activities of medieval Mediterranean colonization, which heralded the Atlantic colonization of the modern age.

Both these two features characterized sugar cane production in which the Italian republics participated when, after the first crusade, they acquired possessions in Palestine. Sugar cane had been introduced into the Holy Land by the Arabs who acted as agents between the Asiatic East and the Mediterranean world, also bringing paper, the compass and what are known as Arabic numerals. It was during the tortuous marches through Palestine at the time of the first crusade, that the western warriors tasted the sweetness of what a chronicler called « this unsuspected and inestimable gift of heaven, cane sugar ». Palestine had been divided into fiefs after the Conquest, in accordance with the western feudal system. Tyre,

[29] See notes 13 and 28 and also C. VERLINDEN, *La colonie italienne de Lisbonne et le développement de l'économie métropolitaine et coloniale portugaise*, « Studi in onore di Armando Sapori », Milano, 1957; *Le Génois Leonardo Lomellini, homme d'affaires du marquisat de Fernand Cortes au Mexique*, « Jahrbuch für Geschichte von Staat, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Lateinamerikas, vol. IV, 1967.

[30] C. VERLINDEN, *Précédents médiévaux de la colonie en Amérique*, Mexico, 1954, p. 45 ff.; *Le origini della civiltà atlantica*, Roma, 1968, p. 203 ff.

captured in 1123, was the first of these fiefs to produce sugar. A number of villages in this area were conceded to the Venetians who immediately obtained profits from the cane fields and the sugar mills situated there. Land taxes were often paid in sugar and some crusaders were granted the right to send their sugar duty-free to the port of St. John of Acre where it was bought by the exporters, some of whom were also exempted from the payment of duties. The Knights of the Teutonic Order and the Knights Hospitallers owned sugar cane fields near the Palestinian cities of Tripoli and Tiberias. It is therefore hardly surprising that the Assizes of Jerusalem contain a considerable number of regulations concerning sugar.

In the 13th century sugar production increased in Syria and Palestine, especially around Sidon, Tripoli, Galgala and Jericho. The fact that a castle near Mamistra in Palestine was actually called Canamella, which means sugar cane, is a clear proof that it was harvested in its fields. In 1300, when little remained of the colonial economy in Palestine, sugar was still being produced in the domain of Krak near the Dead Sea, as well as at Jericho and Beirut, and exported to Western Europe.[31]

After the fall of the last Christian strongholds and their conquest by the Turks at the end of the 13th century, Syria — the supplier of sugar to Western Europe during the Crusades — ceded this role to Cyprus. This did not mean the disappearance of the sugar industry from Palestine, but sales were thereafter channelled to the Muslim world. An exception was Cyprus, where the French Lusignan dynasty had established a prosperous colonial kingdom. There too, sugar cane cultivation had been introduced by the Arabs who had conquered the island in the 7th century, but it was only in the 14th century, after the collapse of Christian Palestine, that Cyprus became a really important centre of production.

The richest plantations were on the south coast of the island, where the royal domains of Lemva, Pafo, Aschelia and Kuklia were

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31 E. VON LIPPMAN, *Geschichte des Zuckers seit den ältesten Zeiten bis zum Beginn der Rübenzucker Fabrikation*, 2nd ed., Berlin, 1929.

situated; they all produced sugar, like the plantations of the Venetian Cornaro family near Piscopi, the lands belonging to the Bishop of Limassol, the Catalan Ferrer family and the Hospitallers' monastery near Kolossi.[32]

The Cornaros worked their plantations in capitalist fashion. Their agricultural labourers were slaves of Arab or Syrian origin, local serfs or emigrants from the Holy Land. Disputes over the use of water sometimes set the owners at loggerheads and more than once problems of canal-building or maintenance arose. Water-driven mills crushed the cane, but the Cornaros' industrial activity was not confined to the initial processing of the product. Contrary to the practice in the 17th and 18th centuries in America, where the sugar was not refined on the spot but in European specialist factories, Cyprus in the 14th century supplied finished products in the form of sugar loaves or castor sugar. For this purpose the Cornaros used huge copper boilers made in Italy; they invested large sums in the enterprise every year and devoted a special budget to upkeep and administration.

The kings of Cyprus also produced large quantities of sugar which were sent to the Nicosia storehouses where the exporters loaded them onto ships. This sugar was often used to repay royal debts and in the 15th century the king pledged his plantations to private investors, the Venetian State and to the famous State bank of St. George in Genoa.

Like Cyprus, the Venetian colony on Crete produced sugar, but in the Central Mediterranean Sicily was of far greater importance.[33] There too, the sugar cane had been introduced by the Arabs who had dominated the island until the mid-11th century. When, after them, the Normans conquered Sicily, the sugar industry continued to prosper in the Palermo region and in the 12th century the king and the great monastery of Monreale owned sugar mills there. Towards 1200, however, a crisis arose which Frederick II tried to resolve by sending for master sugar manufacturers from the older

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[32] G. Padovan (= Luzzatto), *Capitalismo coloniale nel Trecento*, «Popoli», vol. I, Milano, 1941.

[33] Vaccaro, *Sul richiamo della canna zuccherina in Sicilia*, Palermo, 1825; S. Crinò, *Cenni sulla coltura della canna da zucchero in Sicilia*, «Rivista Geografica italiana», 1923.

production centres in Palestine. This proved a failure however, and in the 14th century sugar cane cultivation dwindled, until in 1449 a new sugar mill was invented which brought back prosperity. Production in the coastal regions increased immediately and the Sicilian refineries grew more numerous than ever.

In the western Mediterranean Muslim Spain also knew sugar cane cultivation. Towards 1300 sugar from Malaga was sold as far away as Bruges, and the great trading company at Ravensburg in southern Germany, which had formerly traded in sugar at Valencia, started producing this commodity towards 1460. This company used the new Sicilian mill, a further proof of the spread of technical knowledge throughout the Mediterranean area. In Portugal sugar cane cultivation began, or began again, in 1404 when the Genoese Giovanni della Palma experimented with it in the Algarve, the country's southermost province.

Production had now passed from the eastern Mediterranean to the Atlantic coasts of the Algarve. Three colonial regions Palestine, Cyprus and Crete had shared in its development and three non-colonial countries Sicily, Spain and Portugal had also taken part in it. These produced less than the former, but all three contributed to the spread of the sugar cane industry through the Atlantic area.

It was once again the Genoese who acted as agents between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic and it was their capital that stimulated production in Madeira, a Portuguese colony, and in the Spanish Canaries.[34] The Genoese had already taken an interest in sugar-cane cultivation in Sicily; the plant and indispensable cultivation techniques had been brought from there to Madeira. Production there had started in 1455, but it was only after 1472, when Madeira sugar was exported directly to Antwerp[35] without first passing through Lisbon, that northern Europe began to absorb increasingly large quantities of this product, and that the island knew real prosperity. In 1480 some 70 vessels were already shuttling

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34 Cf. P. PERAGALLO, *Cenni*, quoted in note 2 and C. VERLINDEN, *Gli Italiani*, quoted in note 23; V. RAU and J. DE MACEDO, *O açucar da Madeira nos fins do seculo XV. Problemas de produção e comercio*, Funchal, 1962.

35 F. DONNET, *Notice historique sur le raffinage à Anvers*, Antwerp, 1892.

full cargoes of sugar, and production which had amounted to 6000 *arrobas* in 1455 rose to 80,000 in 1493. At this time there were 80 master sugar manufacturers in the island, so that there were some 80 different firms. Very soon exports had to be controlled to avoid a drop in prices and in 1498 quotas were fixed for the various ports of destination. This system was suspended however, but demand expanded to such an extent that Madeira supplied the Italian markets and even Constantinople and the Aegean island of Khios, which were close to the old production centres of the Levant that had formerly fed the whole of Christian Europe.

The prosperity of the new Atlantic sugar colonies was due above all to the fact that the Turks, in extending their dominion in the eastern Mediterranean, had caused a general decline in trade and industry there and in particular the complete suppression of sugar exports. This is why sugar cane cultivation expanded in the Portuguese empire, gradually spreading from the Madeira Islands to the Azores, then later to São Tomé in the Gulf of Guinea on the west African coast and lastly to Brazil, while in the Spanish empire it passed from the Canaries to Santo Domingo, Porto Rico, Mexico, Peru and lastly Cuba. Demand in Europe increased faster than production in the colonies, allowing Barbados and Jamaica in the British Antilles and Guadeloupe and Martinique in the French Antilles to achieve a tardy prosperity. Details concerning this will be given further on.[36]

The Genoese were again playing a role of foremost importance when production began in the Spanish Canaries, and the Portuguese Madeira Islands. In 1526 there were at least twelve Italian and Spanish plantations in the Grand Canary, eleven at Tenerife and one at Gomera; the Spanish however owned the majority. Other foreigners were also involved and the powerful German Company of Welser in Augsburg tried at one time to produce sugar on the island of La Palma.

It was from the Canaries that Columbus brought sugar cane to

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[36] H. WRIGHT, *The History of the Cane Sugar Industry in the West Indies*, Louisiana Planter, 1919-20.

Haiti or San Domingo, known then as Hispaniola, at the time of his second voyage in 1493. Side by side with the small companies which only employed Indian slave labour others were soon established which used horses or water power for their mills. The growth of production increased the need for slaves on the big plantations and, as the Indians were rapidly dying out, African negroes were brought over in growing numbers. The first technicians came from the Canaries, while the cauldrons were imported from the metropolis at the beginning, but the boilers were soon manufactured on the island itself using the credit granted by the Crown. The Welsers of Augsburg who were always in search of opportunities for colonial speculation, invested capital in both the sugar plantations and the import of slaves.

At Porto Rico the first water-driven mill was built in 1527. The beginning stages were not easy but by 1547 success seemed to have been achieved. Here too the influence of the Canaries is to be noted and in 1569 the Canary authorities were still sending over master-sugar-manufacturers and other technicians.

In Jamaica the first *ingenio* or plantation came into being in 1527. Production developed thanks to Portuguese immigration from the Atlantic archipelagoes, although it never reached any considerable size while the island was held by the Spaniards. In Cuba, where the sugar industry experienced spectacular growth in a comparatively recent period, the beginnings were slow and not promising. Although sugar cane was introduced as early as 1511, production achieved some importance only after 1600 and even then the yield was poor.

On the American continent it was Cortés who brought sugar cane from the Antilles to Mexico in the years immediately following its conquest and he himself owned plantations in the Oaxaca valley. Pizarro introduced it in Peru in 1533, the year after his arrival.

These were the beginnings of sugar production in the Spanish possessions in America. We have seen that in the Portuguese empire it passed from the Madeira Islands to the Azores and to São Tomé in the Gulf of Guinea, where there were some sixty companies in 1554. Sugar cane had been introduced there in 1529

at the same time as in the Cape Verde archipelago from where it passed to Brazil.[37]

When, in the years following 1530, the Portuguese began to concede parts of the Brazilian coast to hereditary captains, the latter alone were able to own mills or water-driven machines for crushing the cane. From 1570, however, there were sixty *engenhos* or plantations between Itamaracá and São Vicente, but none as yet in the region of Rio de Janeiro, while there were twenthy-three in the north of the country around Recife and eighteen around Bahia. Again some Genoese, associates of Antwerp merchants,[38] participated in this development. By 1628 there were two hundred and thirty-five plantations in Brazil, and at that time Portugal supplied sugar to refineries in England, Flanders and Germany. The old production centres in the Mediterranean had completely abandoned their attempts to compete and the Atlantic area had gained complete supremacy. In spite of the continual increase in Brazil's sugar production, Madeira sugar continued to be the most highly favoured throughout the 16th century. It was only in the 17th century, following the steady shift of production towards the west, that Brazilian sugar came to occupy first place. The Azores and São Tomé then ceased to grow cane and Madeira itself lost much of its importance. The slave trade expanded apace with sugar production so that sugar might be called the principal cause of the growth of slavery in the colonies. The big Companies, which used mills and melting cauldrons, employed from 150 to 200 negroes and the number of negroes in the population of Brazil increased.

While this country continued to rank first in production up to the first years of the 18th century, the French and British possessions in the Antilles began to send increasing quantities of sugar to the European market from the 17th century onwards. In 1625 parts of the island of St. Christopher had been occupied by the British and the French almost simultaneously and twenty years later

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37 A. MARCHAND, *From Barter to Slavery. The Economic Relations of Portuguese and Indians in the Settlement of Brazil (1500-1580)*, Baltimore, 1942.

38 A. FURTADO, *Os Schetz da capitania de S. Vicente*, « Publicações do archivo nacional », vol. XIV, Rio de Janeiro, 1914.

the two nations began to sell sugar from this island on the metropolitan markets. Following the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 the British remained the sole masters of the island and it was then that production became really important.

In 1627 the British took possession of the island of Barbados. Like Madeira at the beginning of Portuguese colonization, this island was too wooded to allow important plantations to be established immediately, but in 1646 exportation began. However it was only after 1655, when Dutch immigrants expelled from Brazil after the Portuguese reconquest came to the island, that techniques became fully satisfactory, particularly after the adoption of the *tayche*, a cauldron of Portuguese origin.

In 1656 the Spanish lost Jamaica to the British who introduced, or rather re-introduced, sugar-cane there from Barbados in 1664. By 1675 there were seventy-five mills and towards 1700 sugar became Jamaica's principal export. Production increased throughout the 18th century, as in the British islands of the Lesser Antilles: Nevis, Antigua, St. Vincent, Dominica and Granada.

The French occupied Guadeloupe and Martinique in 1635 sailing from their base at St. Christopher. Techniques of sugar production developed in these islands thanks to the Brazilian methods brought over by the Dutch and the Jews expelled from the Recife region after it was re-conquered by Portugal. Here too the greatest expansion occurred in the 18th century, but even before that the French had increased their possessions in the Caribbean with the addition of an important part of Santo Domingo where they had restored prosperity to the sugar industry, which had been much neglected by the Spanish after 1600. Under French domination, production became considerable and remained so until the great slave revolt in 1791 which resulted in the independence of Haiti.

This revolt was a catastrophe for the island's planters, but it proved of considerable advantage to Jamaica, Brazil and especially Cuba. The latter, a Spanish possession, gained an important place in sugar production only from the mid-18th century; circumstances were favourable then and the island did not fail to take advantage of them. This was not the case for the other Spanish possessions,

but the Danish islands of St. Thomas and St. Croix enjoyed great prosperity for some time.

We now reach the period in which cane sugar, following Napoleon's continental blockade, began to suffer from the competition of beet sugar. The details of sugar production, its location and international market had to be thoroughly modified. It is not my business here to examine these modifications or their effect on prices and consumption. I have only wished to show that the history of cane sugar production provides a particularly striking example of the change from medieval colonial economy in the Mediterranean to the modern colonial economy of the Atlantic area. It was the methods invented in the Mediterranean area in the Middle Ages that allowed the expansion of sugar production throughout the Atlantic world where, in the beginning, both capital and technical personnel very often came from the Mediterranean. In this particular field there is an evident economic continuity, a definite shift toward the west, from the sugar plantations in Palestine in the 12th century to those in Cuba in the 18th century. Here we certainly have a particularly conclusive example of the threads which bound the medieval Mediterranean economy to the Atlantic economy of modern times.

The influence of the Italians in the initial stages of this process, in those connected with the change from medieval Mediterranean economy to modern Atlantic economy, was most important, perhaps even decisive. I have shown this influence in trade during the early middle ages and the beginning of the modern period within Spain and Portugal. I have stressed it with regard to the transfer of the sugar industry from the Mediterranean to America. I shall close with some short financial considerations. When the Italians went into partnership with the Spaniards, they nearly always invested the greater proportion of capital. Without their support trade with the Indies, at the beginning at least, would have slumped, for it was the Italians who gave the first impetus, and who supported and controlled the trade financially. Eventually the Italians — and the Genoese particularly — directed the finances of the whole Spanish monarchy. The Genoese, moreover, made huge profits by

selling to the Spaniards products manufactured in countries where wages were much lower than in Spain, as the effects of massive imports of gold and silver from the New World had not yet been felt there, or only slightly. They also made enormous loans. Towards 1520 they were still acting as secondary bankers to the Crown. But they took a growing interest in public finance, especially after Andrea Doria definitely separated Genoa from France. They then became the principal financial support of the Crown. Through the *asientos* they controlled public revenues and took an important part in the slave trade. They also sold *juros* or public bonds, supervised credit regulation and headed the fiscal administration. In 1507 Agostino Spinola was *recaudador de la renta de los almojarifazgos de Indias.*[39]

It is surprising to find some 10,000 Genoese in Castile towards 1618 out of a total of less than 70,000 foreigners! The importance of their colony in the 16th and 17th centuries would merit a thorough study such as A. Girard suggested in 1933[40] and which has not yet been carried out. But it is clear enough that we can speak of the *Economic predominance of the Genoese in the Spanish monarchy* as R. LOPEZ has done[41] in a short but significant article in which he also maintains that the 16th and the early 17th century were the most brilliant periods in Genoa's economic history. It was then that most of the Genoese palaces were built. Does not the Venetian ambassador Vendramin tell us in 1595 that 24 million ducats of the gold and silver imported from America in 64 years went to the Genoese, while 56 million remained in Spain? It is hardly surprising then that the Genoese merchants were able to build themselves palaces.

In addition, all public finances came under their control. Earl Hamilton has shown the enormous influence of the Italians, and especially the Genoese, in Spanish banking.[42] When a new central

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39 Cf. R. CARANDE, *Carlos V y sus banqueros*, 3 vols, Madrid, 1943-67; H. LAPEYRE, *Simon Ruiz et les asientos de Philippe II*, Paris, 1953.

40 See note 6.

41 See note 7.

42 *Spanish Banking Schemes Before 1700*, « Journal of Political Economy », vol. LVII, 1949.

bank was created in 1627 after other more or less fortunate experiences, the 8 governors were all Genoese. The Spanish documents call them Octavo Centurion, Carlo Trata, Vincencio Esquarçafigo, Luis Espindola, Antonio Balbi, Lelio Imbrea, Pablo Justiniano and Juan Geronimo Espindola. Several of them belonged to families of the nobility whose names are easily recognized. Their methods — like those of other financiers with the same background who took an equally important part in a number of banking transactions throughout the 17th century — seem to be of exclusively Genoese inspiration. But in order to show this clearly, it would be necessary to take a less exclusively Spanish perspective than Hamilton and to make a comparison with the methods pursued in Genoa.

As regards this and the other problems referred to in this outline, I do not think it is possible to reach a conclusion single-handed. Mediterranean influences in the Atlantic economy are part of a vast whole that can only be studied internationally if the results are to be impartial. It is essential to compare the documentation in the various countries involved and not to take the attitude that foreign influences or precedents are implicitly dishonourable, which is still sometimes the case. They are in fact part of a general historical phenomenon.