
PROBLEMS

Pisa and the Trade Routes to the Near East in the Late Middle Ages

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I

The military successes of the Egyptian Mameluks in the second half of the XIIIth century speeded up a series of changes in the structure of the commercial transit routes to the Levant. After the Egyptian conquests of Tripoli (1289) and Acre (1291) European merchants lost their last outposts on the Syrian coast, and were forced to fall back either to Cyprus or Armenia Minor, especially to Laiazzo,¹ from where they continued the trading activities that formerly had taken place in the Crusader states. Although commercial contacts with Egypt continued, these were on a smaller scale than in the previous century and in the early XIIIth century, and the number of European merchants at Alexandria and Damietta declined.² Repeated Papal prohibitions on trade with the Muslim enemy also contributed to this decline.

For long Egypt had provided the principal trading area for the merchants of the Italian cities, who had drawn great profit from this commerce. For centuries the highly valuable goods of the far East had arrived in the Persian Gulf on the Arab and Jewish ships that plied across the Indian Ocean,³ and from there they were carried either by dhow along the Red Sea or else overland and then down the Nile to the great market places of Alexandria and Damietta.⁴ Here they were

¹ On this a fundamental source is still the work by W. HEYD, *Histoire du commerce du Levant au Moyen-Âge*, Leipzig 1885-86, II, pp. 23 ff.

² Cf. especially R.-H. BAUTIER, *Les relations économiques des Occidentaux avec les pays d'Orient au Moyen Âge: Points de vue et documents*, in AA. VV., *Sociétés et compagnies de commerce en Orient et dans l'Océan Indien*, Actes du VIIIe Colloque international d'histoire maritime (Beirut 1966), Paris 1970, p. 272.

³ On Egyptian trade with the East and north Africa see: *Letters of Medieval Jewish Traders*, ed. by S.D. Goitein, Princeton 1975. On Egyptian trade: S.Y. LABIB, *Handelsgeschichte Ägyptens im Spätmittelalter (1171-1517)*, Wiesbaden 1965.

⁴ On commercial routes between the Indian Ocean and northern Egypt, Heyd, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 378 ff.

purchased by the Italian merchants, together with Egyptian alum and linen fabrics produced by the flourishing textile industry of the Nile delta. They were then sold throughout the markets of the Mediterranean and the European hinterland. In return, the merchants' vessels brought supplies of timber, iron, pitch and slaves; commodities which the Egyptians lacked⁵ and which were in great demand for ship building and the maintenance of their fleets. They were also goods that yielded high profits, and as one Arab ruler in the late XIIth century observed 'pro viliori pretio apud vos inveniuntur, et in terra nostra carius venduntur'.⁶ It was largely on account of these high profits that Pisan and Genoese merchants had for a long time been more numerous in Egypt than elsewhere.⁷ But in the late XIIIth and XIVth centuries this was no longer the case. Trade was declining in the southern Levant, while at the same time expanding in the north and especially with the Byzantine empire.

The change in the orientation of trade with the Near East was not determined by Papal prohibitions alone:⁸ there were other factors which contributed to the same end. Not least of these was the commercial decline of the Byzantine empire.⁹ From the beginning of the XIIIth century first the Venetians and then, after 1261, also the Genoese had succeeded in penetrating deep into the Byzantine economy and in gaining control not only over foreign trade but also over its internal trade.¹⁰ By the start of the XIVth century the capital was supplied with food provisions almost entirely by the Genoese.

Another important development lay in the unification of the central Asian regions between the Middle East and China under the Mongol empire which also influenced the northward shift of trade in the Near East. The Mongols looked on the Europeans as allies in the struggle against the Mameluks, and were prepared to favour their interests,¹¹ which enabled European merchants to penetrate further into Central Asia. At the same time the peace and stability that

⁵ M. LOMBARD, *Arsenaux et bois de marine dans la Méditerranée musulmane VIIe-XIe siècle*, in *Espaces et réseaux du haut moyen-âge*, Paris-La Haye 1972, pp. 160-161; ID., *Études d'économie médiévale*, II, *Les métaux dans l'ancien monde du Ve au XIe siècle*, Paris-La Haye 1974, carte I.

⁶ M. AMARI (ed.), *I diplomati arabi del R. Archivio di Stato di Firenze*, Firenze 1863-67, I, II serie, n. X, p. 264 (January 1177).

⁷ For the Genoese merchants in Egypt, cf: R.S. LOPEZ, *Il problema della bilancia dei pagamenti nel commercio di Levante*, in AA. VV., *Venezia e il Levante fino al sec. XV*, Firenze 1973, p. 443 e M. BALARD, *La Romanie génoise (XIIe-début du XVe siècle)*, Genève 1978, II, pp. 507 ff.

⁸ These were often unknown in the maritime cities, cf: G. ADAM, *De modo saracenos extirpandi*, in *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades, Documents arméniens*, II, Paris 1906, p. 523.

⁹ Cf: R.S. LOPEZ, *Beati monoculi: the Bizantine Economy in the Early Middle Ages*, in *Cultus et cognitio, Festschrift A. Gieysztor*, Warsaw 1976, pp. 341-352.

¹⁰ G.I. BRATIANU, *Recherches sur le commerce génois dans la mer Noire au XIIIe siècle*, Paris 1929.

¹¹ An important source on this W. HEYD, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 64 ff.

followed the Mongol conquests and the creation of a new empire¹² made it possible for the Europeans to trade directly with the Far East. Previously, and until at least the middle of the XIIIth century, Italian merchants had operated from their colonies along the coasts of the Byzantine empire, of Syria and Egypt, where they purchased the prized Oriental goods that were brought there by Asian merchants and sold their own products. In the second half of the XIIIth century we have the first news of Italian merchants operating as well in the interior of Asia, and by the end of the century this became much more common.¹³ Here the Europeans could buy directly the goods which formerly the Arab and Jewish merchants had carried to the Levantine trading colonies.¹⁴ As early as the beginning of the XIVth century merchants described the great "highway" that led from Tana on the Black Sea to distant China as "most secure both by day and by night".¹⁵

II

As markets grew and became more easily accessible, so the wealth of the merchants increased and also their number, and the trading colonies in Cyprus, Armenia, in the Byzantine Empire, along the Black Sea and even in the wealthy cities of Persia began to expand. The merchants of the great maritime cities who had for long been active in the Levant were now joined by newcomers from Provence and Catalonia, but also from the cities of the Mediterranean hinterland like Florence and Piacenza. The expansion of the mercantile community reflected the fact that European exports towards the Far East had increased remarkably. For a very long time, and maybe for the whole XIIth century, European trade with the East had been in deficit,¹⁶ since the exports from the Levant to Europe were numerous (spices, perfumes, silks and oriental fabrics) while imports from Europe were scarce. This structural deficit had been compensated by the Crusaders' plunder, by piracy, by profits on shipping and control of the trade between north Africa and the East.

Yet during the XIIIth century the structure of trade between East and West began to change. This was the period in which the textile industries began to expand in Europe. The cloths of Flanders and the northern Italian cities began to flood into the maritime cities and were then exported towards the East. These

¹² The Mongol Empire quickly split into four Khanates: China, Turkestan, Persia and Kipciak, but they remained on good terms for a long time.

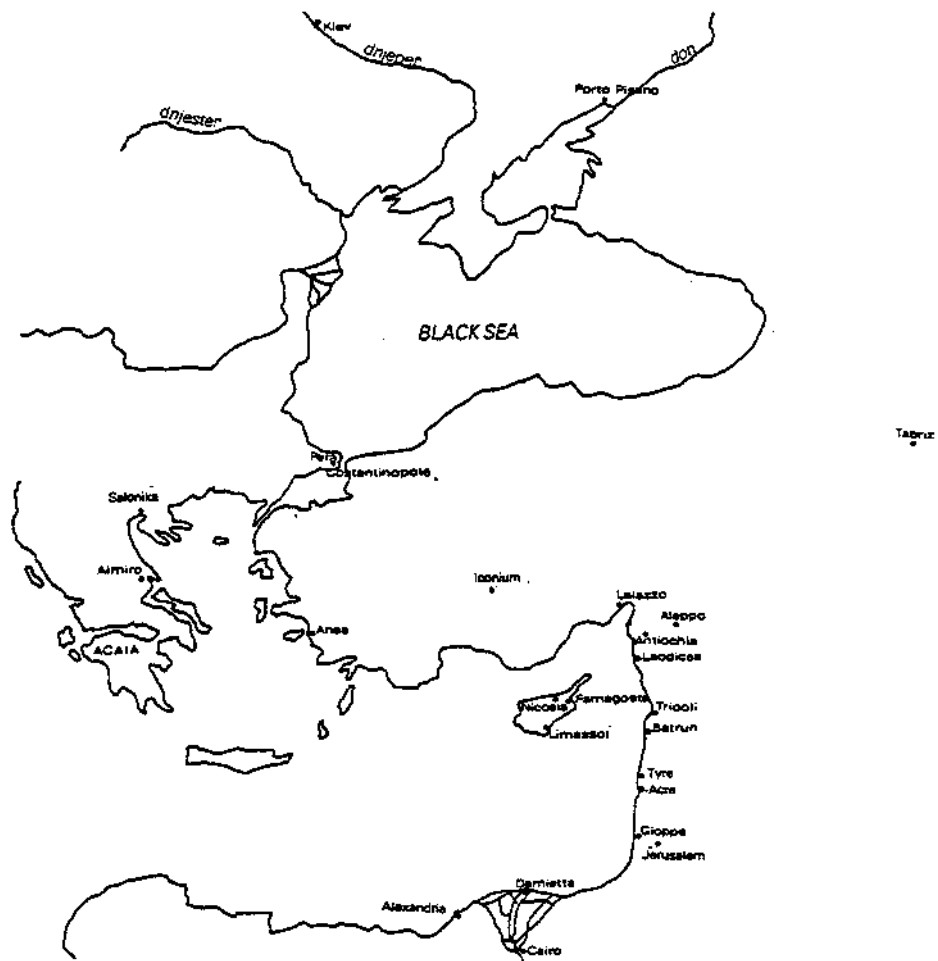
¹³ Cf. R.S. LOPEZ, *Nuove luci sugli Italiani in Estremo Oriente prima di Colombo*, in *Su e giù per la storia di Genova*, Genova 1975, pp. 83-135; and the reservations by R-H. BAUTIER, *op. cit.*, pp. 278 ff.

¹⁴ M. BALARD, *op. cit.*, II, p. 861 (map 72): describes the main routes to the Far East.

¹⁵ F. BALDUCCI PEGOLOTTI, *La pratica della mercatura*, ed. by A. Evans, Cambridge (Mass.) 1936, p. 22: "sicurissimo e di dì e di notte".

¹⁶ On the balance of trade between the West and the East, cf. R.S. LOPEZ, *Il problema della bilancia dei pagamenti*, *cit.*; R-H. BAUTIER, *op. cit.*, pp. 301 ff.; M. BALARD, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 876 ff.

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new products yielded profits that were higher than those obtained from the spice trade.¹⁷ At the end of the XIIth century the textiles that were exported from the European hinterlands towards the East were only a trickle; a century later this had been transformed into a mighty river. The expansion of the Eastern markets was complemented by the appearance of ever more numerous European goods for sale. This meant in turn that the fortunes of the Levant merchants depended ever more closely on their ability to control and dominate the flows of manufactured goods coming from the European hinterlands. The mechanism that lay at the heart of the wealth of the merchants was now the exchange of finished cloths for the raw materials needed to keep the European textile industries moving. The era of Europe's military and naval expansion in the Mediterranean was now giving way to a new age of manufacturing primacy and the emergence of Europe's industrial hegemony over the entire Mediterranean region.

III

In the early XIIIth century the merchants of Pisa were active in all the main markets of the Levant. Their vessels were familiar along the vast coastline stretching from Egypt up to Syria, Armenia and the Byzantine empire. Together with the Venetians and the Genoese, the Pisans held a dominant position in eastern Mediterranean trade. While the Venetians had operated in this region for centuries, the entry of the Genoese and the Pisans dated from the XIIth century. With the aid of commercial privileges granted by the Egyptian rulers, by those of the Crusader states and the Byzantine emperor,¹⁸ they succeeded in ousting the Jewish, Arab and Syrian merchants from the seaborne carrying trade, leaving the latter in control of trade in the interior and across the Indian Ocean. On the Levantine coast the Italians now had no rivals.

By the late XIIth century and in the first decades of the XIIIth century the Pisans were particularly strong in Egypt, both at Damietta and above all at Alexandria. It was in Alexandria that Pisan trade was concentrated and that the most important transactions took place, and this was the seat of the Consuls elected every two years by the *Ordine del Mare* in Pisa.¹⁹ Here the Pisans had also received permission to establish a warehouse (*fondaco*) in 1153,²⁰ but they had already been engaged in trade in Alexandria "ex longo tempore".²¹ By the

¹⁷ R.-H. BAUTIER, *op. cit.*, pp. 298-302.

¹⁸ For the commercial privileges and colonies, cf G. HEYD, *Le colonie commerciali degli Italiani in Oriente nel Medio Evo*, Venezia-Torino 1866-68, I.

¹⁹ On the Pisan colonies in Egypt, see K.-H. ALLMENDINGER, *Die Beziehungen zwischen der Kommune Pisa und Agypten im hohen Mittelalter*, Wiesbaden 1967, in particular pp. 81 ff. A. SCHAUBE, *Das Konsulat des Meeres in Pisa*, Leipzig 1888, p. 157, describes the Pisan Consul in Alexandria and the way they were elected.

²⁰ In M. AMARI, *op. cit.*, I, II, serie, n. II, pp. 241-245. For the date of the treaty see, K. H. ALLMENDINGER, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

²¹ In M. AMARI, *op. cit.*, I, II serie, n. IV, p. 250. In the same year (1151) the Icelandic abbot Nicola Saemundarson, who was travelling from Pisa to the Holy Land saw ships

middle of the century, however, a series of treaties between the Egyptian rulers and Pisa had established the basis for harmonious and protected trade between the Christian and Muslim worlds,²² and later treaties with other European maritime states followed the same model. In comparison with the Pisans and the Venetians, the Genoese later established themselves in the trade with Egypt.²³ The Pisans were also unique amongst the European merchants in that they had also settled a warehouse at Cairo in the XIIth century;²⁴ the merchants of other European cities were not to receive a similar privilege until the XVth century.²⁵

The Pisan merchants also obtained important concessions and protection in the Crusader states and in the Kingdom of Jerusalem during the XIIth century,²⁶ and they established numerous trading colonies with houses, churches and land along the Syrian coast at Tyre, Geoppe, Ascalona, Tripoli, Antioch and in the Kingdom of Jerusalem.²⁷ The lord of Batrun, to the north of Beirut, at the beginning of the XIIIth century was a Pisan named Plebano.²⁸ At the same time the Pisans were present in the interior only at Aleppo.²⁹ During the XIIIth century Acre became the main centre for the Pisans in Syria, and was the seat of the "Consul Acconis et Totius Syriae" and of the "Curia Pisanorum", the most important in all the Crusader lands.³⁰ On the other hand, the Genoese were expelled from Acre in 1222³¹ and again in 1258³² while the

bound for Egypt: A. SCHAUBE, *Storia del commercio dei popoli latini del Mediterraneo sino alla fine delle Crociate*, Torino 1915, p. 184.

²² This is the argument put forward by K-H. ALLMENDINGER, *op. cit.*, pp. 10 ff.

²³ Genoese ships in Egypt are documented from about 1060; A.L. UDOVITCH, *A Tale of two Cities: Commercial Relations between Cairo and Alexandria during the Second Half of the Eleventh Century*, in *The Medieval City*, ed. by H. Miskimin, D. Herlihy, A.L. Udovitch, New Haven and London 1978, p. 150. See R.S. LOPEZ, *Storia delle colonie genovesi nel Mediterraneo*, Bologna 1938, pp. 117-118: on the delayed arrival of the Genoese in Egyptian trade.

²⁴ M. AMARI, *op. cit.*, I, II serie, n. III p. 248.

²⁵ R-H. BAUTIER, *op. cit.*, p. 279.

²⁶ For Pisan privileges in the Crusader States see: A. SCHAUBE, *Storia*, *cit.*, pp. 168 ff. and 208 ff. For the Italians in Syria, cf: J. RILEY-SMITH, *Government in Latin Syria and the Commercial Privileges of Foreign Merchants*, in *Relations between East and West in the Middle Ages*, ed. by D. Baker, Edinburgh 1973, pp. 109-132.

²⁷ G. MÜLLER, *Documenti sulle relazioni delle città toscane coll' Oriente cristiano e coi Turchi fino all'anno MDXXXI*, Firenze 1879. On Pisan property in the Crusader States, *ibid.*, n. XXIII, pp. 26-27.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, n. LIII, pp. 83-84.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, n. L, p. 80: "de corpore Pisani ad pontem ferri, dimidiarum diricturam". The *pontis ferri* was on the Oronte river and led from Antioch to Aleppo.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, n. L, p. 80 e n. LXIV, p. 95.

³¹ *Annali genovesi*, II, Genova 1901, pp. 182-183; G. ROSSI SABATINI, *L'espansione di Pisa nel Mediterraneo fino alla Meloria*, Firenze 1935, p. 27. R.S. LOPEZ, *Risse tra Pisani e Genovesi nella Napoli di Federico II*, in *Su e giù*, *cit.*, p. 220.

³² *Annali genovesi*, IV, Genova 1926, pp. 31-32.

Venetians who were numerous in Byzantium were of secondary importance in the Crusader states.³³

To the north, in Armenia, one of the most important states was the Sultanate of Iconium which lay across the land routes linking Syria to Byzantium, and which in addition was a rich producer of carpets, silks, and alum that offered great attraction to Italian merchants.³⁴ The Venetians had obtained important privileges from the Sultan and had a number of commercial settlements, but in the early XIIIth century the Pisans also made their entry.³⁵

The Pisans had also obtained trading privileges in the Byzantine empire in 1111³⁶ which enabled them to settle in Constantinople, establish harbour facilities, and enjoy the protection of the emperor as well as the freedom to trade and certain reductions in customs duties. The Genoese were not able to obtain similar privileges until 1155,³⁷ and thereafter although the Pisans were less numerous than the Venetians in Constantinople, they outnumbered the Genoese. When shortly after the establishment of the Genoese their warehouse was attacked in 1162 by the Pisans, the latter were estimated to be about a thousand, whereas the Genoese were only 300.³⁸ In the later XIIth century and the early XIIIth century the economic and political influence of the Pisans in Constantinople increased,³⁹ as is evident from repeated successes against their Venetian rivals and the favours they received from the Emperor Alessius III.⁴⁰ But after the Fourth Crusade and the creation of the Latin Empire, the Venetian merchants at Constantinople acquired complete supremacy. The Pisans managed to retain considerable influence and kept on good terms with the Venetians in order to block Genoese expansion.⁴¹ Outside Constantinople, the Pisans also had commercial settlements in Greece at Almiro and Salonika.⁴²

³³ W. HEYD, *Histoire*, cit., I, p. 314.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, I, p. 301.

³⁵ Pisan merchants are mentioned in the 1220 commercial treaty between the Sultan of Iconium and Venice: *Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig mit besonderer Beziehung auf Byzanz und die Levante vom 9. bis zum Ausgang des 15. Jahrhunderts*, hg. G.L.F. TAFEL und G.M. THOMAS, Wien 1856-57, II, pp. 221 ff.

³⁶ G. MÜLLER, *op. cit.*, the privilege of 1111 is in document n. 34 (pp. 40 ff.) in the Greek and Latin texts.

³⁷ G. HEYD, *Le colonie*, cit., I, p. 33; M. BALARD, *op. cit.*, I, p. 31.

³⁸ *Annali genovesi*, I, Genova 1890, pp. 67-68.

³⁹ S. BORSARI, *Il commercio veneziano nell'impero bizantino nel XII secolo*, in "Rivista storica italiana", LXXVI, 1964, pp. 1003 ff.

⁴⁰ *Id.*, *I rapporti tra Pisa e gli stati di Romania nel Duecento*, in "Rivista storica italiana", LXVII, 1955, pp. 84 ff.

⁴¹ G. MÜLLER, *op. cit.*, nn. LIV, LV, LVI, pp. 84 ff.

⁴² B. MARAGONE, *Annales Pisani*, ed., M. Lupo Gentile, Bologna 1930, p. 17; G. MÜLLER, *op. cit.*, n. XVIII, p. 20; n. XLIV, p. 71.

IV

In the early decades of the XIIIth century the Pisans were therefore stronger than the Genoese in a number of Levantine commercial centres, particularly in Egypt and Byzantium. The reason for this lay in the fact that Pisa's maritime expansion had begun earlier than that of the Genoese, and this early start had carried Pisan merchants first to the Tyrrhenian islands of Corsica and Sardinia, then to Sicily and north Africa⁴³ and then in the XIIth century to the markets of the Levant. Pisan ships began to move into the trade that for centuries had been carried by Jewish and Syrian merchants between Syria, north Africa, Egypt, Sicily and southern Italy;⁴⁴ the trade that linked the emporia of the Arab world with the West. The Genoese followed the same path, but later, and as a result at each step had been forced to challenge the Pisans. Where the Pisans were most strongly entrenched — in Sardinia,⁴⁵ in the Maghreb,⁴⁶ in Egypt and in the Bizantine empire — Genoese progress was slow and interrupted and their supremacy slower to develop. Where the Pisan presence was weaker, in southern France, Spain and Marocco, Genoese expansion was more rapid. The rivalry between the two was particularly acute in Provence between 1162 and 1170, but here the Genoese prevailed,⁴⁷ and by gaining commercial supremacy over the Provençal coast the Genoese also acquired privileged access to the rapidly expanding hinterlands of France and Flanders. The similarity between the maritime interests of Pisa and Genoa necessarily led to repeated conflicts and struggles for supremacy. But Genoa's stronger links with the European hinterlands through commercial control of the French and Catalan coasts forced the Pisans to rely more heavily on their commercial activities in the southern and eastern Mediterranean.

V

What type of commercial activities were the Pisan merchants in the Levant engaged in before the changes that took place in the second half of the XIIIth century, and what was the basis of their wealth? The naval convoys that reached the Levantine ports laden with European manufactured goods and returned with cargoes of raw materials, spices and perfumes were a phenomenon of the

⁴³ The early phases of Pisan expansion in the Mediterranean need closer study, see: G. ROSSI SABATINI, *op. cit.*, and A. SCHAUBE, *Storia*, *cit.*, *passim*.

⁴⁴ For information on Arab trade routes before this time see *Letters of Medieval Jewish Traders*, *cit.*

⁴⁵ On the struggles between Pisa and Genoa in Sardinia see A. BOSCOLO, *Introduzione* to F. ARTIZZU (ed.) *Documenti inediti relativi ai rapporti economici tra la Sardegna e Pisa nel Medioevo*, I, Padova 1961.

⁴⁶ Pisan superiority in the Maghreb is demonstrated by R.S. LOPEZ, *I Genovesi in Affrica Occidentale nel Medio evo*, in *Studi sull'economia genovese nel Medio Evo*, Torino 1936, pp. 24, 32; and, for the late XIIIth century (1285) by document V published in ID., *Genova marinara nel Duecento. Benedetto Zaccaria ammiraglio e mercante*, Milano-Messina 1933, pp. 259-267.

⁴⁷ A. SCHAUBE, *Storia*, *cit.*, pp. 675 ss.; ROSSI SABATINI, *op. cit.*, pp. 77 ss.

XIIIth century. Trade of this sort was much more rare in the earlier period when the structure of Mediterranean trade was not vertical in the sense that it did not serve to link the economies of the European heartlands with the eastern Mediterranean and the Orient. In this earlier period it followed a horizontal axis running across the Levantine coasts, down into north Africa and eastwards into the Mediterranean towards southern Italy and Sicily. It was by getting a footing in this horizontal trade circuit that the Italian merchants made their first fortunes, in particular by replacing Byzantine and Egyptian shipping in the Middle East and establishing themselves in the carrying trade between the Levantine ports and the Maghreb.⁴⁸ Mercantile fortunes for a long time were drawn from a mixture of piracy, privateering, and plundering, together with revenues from ship charters in the Levantine ports, from lands and properties in the Crusader states, and bounties from the Byzantine emperor. It was in this period and in these circumstances that Pisa achieved its greatest commercial power, since its early expansion into the southern Mediterranean and the influence that it had established in the main Mediterranean islands left it well placed to break into the existing circuit of trade. Until the middle of the XIIIth century there is very little information on the type of goods that the Pisans traded in the Levant, but using later evidence it is possible to attempt an outline reconstruction. Like other Italian merchants, the Pisans were primarily engaged in importing spices, alum and raw materials from the Levantine ports,⁴⁹ as well as silks from Byzantium.⁵⁰ In Syria — most often at Aleppo — they also bought cotton.⁵¹ These goods were then carried either to Tuscany⁵² or to north Africa⁵³ and Sicily.⁵⁴ The goods that

⁴⁸ See especially R.S. LOPEZ, *Il problema della bilancia dei pagamenti*, cit.; ID., *Les influences orientales et l'éveil économique de l'Occident*, in "Cahiers d'histoire mondiale", I, 1954, pp. 614 ff.

⁴⁹ On alum see M. AMARI, *op. cit.*, I, II serie, nn. VIII, XXV; R. RÖHRICHT (ed.), *Regesta Regni Hierosolimitani (MXCVII-MCCXCI)*, Innsbruck 1893, I, n. 508; and the document of 1251 published by C.F. OTTEN, *Les Pisans en Egypte et à Acre dans la seconde moitié du XIIIe siècle: documents nouveaux*, in "Bollettino storico pisano", LII, 1983, Appendice n. II, pp. 173-174; on spices and raw materials see S. TERLIZZI (a cura di), *Documenti delle relazioni tra Carlo I d'Angiò e la Toscana*, Firenze 1950, nn. 69, 216, 509. For Egyptian exports see S.Y. LABIB, *op. cit.*, pp. 286 ff.

⁵⁰ *Pallia* of Byzantium given by the Emperor to the Pisan Church in G. MÜLLER, *op. cit.*, n. XXXIII, p. 55.

⁵¹ R. DAVIDSOHN, *Forschungen zur Geschichte von Florenz*, II, Berlin 1900, n. 2307 e D. ABULAFIA, *Crocuses and Crusaders: San Gimignano, Pisa and the Kingdom of Jerusalem*, in *Outremer. Studies on the History of the Crusading Kingdom of Jerusalem*, presented to J. Prawer, Jerusalem 1982, p. 235.

⁵² S. TERLIZZI, *op. cit.*, n. 69.

⁵³ S. BENSACI, *Pise et le Maghrib au Moyen Age*, Thèse de IIIe cycle de doctorat d'histoire, Paris 1979 (typewritten), p. 237.

⁵⁴ S. TERLIZZI, *op. cit.*, n. 509. On Sicily's importance as a base for Pisan trade, see: D. ABULAFIA, *Pisan Commercial Colonies and Consulates in twelfth-century Sicily*, in "The English Historical Review", XCIII, 1978, pp. 68-81.

they carried to the Levantine ports on the other hand consisted mainly of timber, iron, weapons and slaves⁵⁵ and in the XIIIth century saffron as well. Egypt was the main purchaser of iron and timber, while Byzantium offered the best market for weapons and armour.⁵⁶ It is virtually impossible to identify where these products came from. Saffron came mainly from the area around San Gimignano in Tuscany and was sold in the Kingdom of Jerusalem and also in Egypt by merchants from San Gimignano and from Pisa.⁵⁷ At least part of the timber, the iron and weapons was produced in the "Pisan territories",⁵⁸ in other words the territory under the control of Pisa which stretched from Civitavecchia in the south almost to La Spezia in the north and included as well the islands of Sardinia, Corsica, Pianosa, Elba, Capraia, Gorgona, Giglio and Montecristo.⁵⁹ The island of Elba was the main producer of iron,⁶⁰ while there was a flourishing sword and weapon-making industry in Pistoia using the ores from Elba.⁶¹ Slaves on the other hand were obtained both from Corsica⁶² and from north Africa.⁶³ The timber needed for the Pisan fleet came from Corsica, from the Garfagnana district above Lucca, and above all from central Tuscany by the Arno river.⁶⁴ Part of this may also have been carried to the Levant, but in view of the distance, the weight and volume it seems unlikely that the quantities could have been great. It seems more likely that the timber exported to the Levant came from southern Italy, from Sicily, from Tunisia and from Asia Minor, which had traditionally been the main source of supply for Egypt⁶⁵ and where there were numerous Pisan colonies. Sicily also provided a range of foodstuffs — olive oil, honey, cheese, wine and wheat.⁶⁶ On the nature of the trade conducted by the Pisans between Acre, Tunis, and Messina,⁶⁷ between

⁵⁵ M. AMARI, *op. cit.*, I, II serie, nn. II, VII, X, XX, XXIV, XXV; G. MÜLLER, *op. cit.*, n. V. In the Xth century Pisa was the main exporter of iron to Egypt; R. SPRANDEL, *Le commerce du fer en Méditerranée orientale au Moyen Age*, in *Sociétés et compagnies*, cit., p. 388.

⁵⁶ S. TERLIZZI, *op. cit.*, nn. 388-392.

⁵⁷ D. ABULAFIA, *Crocuses*, *op. cit.*

⁵⁸ M. AMARI, *op. cit.*, I, II serie, n. XX, p. 281.

⁵⁹ Ad esempio *ibid.*, n. XXVIII, p. 202.

⁶⁰ For the export of iron from Elba to the Muslim world, see M. LOMBARD, *Les métaux*, cit., carte I.

⁶¹ D. HERLIHY, *Pistoia nel Medioevo e nel Rinascimento 1200-1430*, Firenze 1972, pp. 171 ff.

⁶² On Corsican slaves in Pisa, see Archivio di Stato di Pisa (ASP), *Dipl. Olivetani*, 7 april 1152; *Dipl. Coletti*, 12 September 1156; *Dipl. Roncioni*, 1 May 1158.

⁶³ M. AMARI, *op. cit.*, I, II serie, n. XXIX, p. 300.

⁶⁴ For the early 12th century *Liber Maiolicinus de Gestis Pisanorum Illustribus*, ed C. CALISSE, Roma 1904, p. 10. On timber from Tuscany, S. TERLIZZI, *op. cit.*, n. 198 e R. DAVIDSOHN, *op. cit.*, III, Berlin 1901, n. 70.

⁶⁵ A map of timber exports to the Muslim world can be found in, M. LOMBARD, *Arsenaux et bois de marine*, cit., p. 160.

⁶⁶ K-H. ALLMENDINGER, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

⁶⁷ G. MÜLLER, *op. cit.*, n. 71, p. 101.

Acre and Egypt, and in the principal ports of the Levant there is much richer documentation.⁶⁸ Many of the swords and weapons, together with foodstuffs, that the Pisans carried to Byzantium came from southern Italy.⁶⁹

Providing foodstuffs to the Crusader states and to Egypt was another rich source of profit for the Pisans.⁷⁰ This was supplemented by the charges made and privileges granted for carrying crusader troops to the Near East.⁷¹ But no less profitable was piracy and privateering in the Near East.⁷² The boundaries separating commerce, warfare and piracy were very tenuous, and a merchant might easily be at one and the same time soldier, corsair and pirate.⁷³ For a long time the Pisan *Societas Vermiliorum* was simply an organised band of pirates who operated primarily in the Levantine seas,⁷⁴ and the Pisans continued to carry out acts of piracy against not only Muslim⁷⁵ but also Greek,⁷⁶ Genoese and Venetian⁷⁷ shipping while Licia was a real pirates' nest for Pisan sailors.⁷⁸ The evidence for these activities is abundant.

VI

As we have already mentioned, the structure of trade with the Levant began to change in the late XIIIth century and in the early 14th century when, in addition to the coastal ports of the Levant, the new emporia of the Black Sea and the Asian interior began to assume a new importance for Italian merchants, while the overland routes leading towards Persia, India and China became more and more important. The Pisans also adapted to these changes, and like the Genoese began to establish new commercial settlements towards the north and the Black Sea, while at the same time penetrating deeper into the interior of the Asian continent.

When the Egyptian conquests deprived the Pisans of their colonies in the

⁶⁸ A. FERRETTO (ed.), *Codice diplomatico delle relazioni fra la Liguria, la Toscana e la Lunigiana ai tempi di Dante (1265-1321)*, Genova 1901-03, I, p. 358; C.F. OTTEN, *op. cit.*, Appendice nn. X, XV; G. MÜLLER, *op. cit.*, n. LXXI, pp. 103-104.

⁶⁹ S. TERLIZZI, *op. cit.*, nn. 388-392.

⁷⁰ *Recueil des historiens des Croisades. Historiens occidentaux*, II, Paris 1859, p. 75; M. AMARI, *op. cit.*, I, I serie, n. XXIII; S. TERLIZZI, *op. cit.*, n. 826.

⁷¹ G. MÜLLER, *op. cit.*, n. XXXV; *Histoire de Heracles empereur et la conquête de la Terre Sainte d'outremer*, in *Recueil des historiens des Croisades, Historiens occidentaux*, II, Paris 1859, p. 34.

⁷² M.-L. FAVREAU, *Die italienische Levante-Piraterie und die Sicherheit der Seewege nach Syrien im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert*, in "Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte", 65, 1978, ff.

⁷³ An example in D. ABULAFIA, *Crocuses*, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

⁷⁴ G. MÜLLER, *op. cit.*, nn. XXVII, XXVIII; R. RÖHRICHT, *op. cit.*, nn. 674, 675.

⁷⁵ M. AMARI, *op. cit.*, I, II serie, n. II.

⁷⁶ G. MÜLLER, *op. cit.*, n. XLI.

⁷⁷ M.-L. FAVREAU, *Graf Heinrich von Champagne und die Pisaner im Königreich Jerusalem*, in "Bollettino storico pisano", XLVII, 1978, pp. 97-120.

⁷⁸ W. HEYD, *op. cit.*, I, p. 235.

Crusader state, Cyprus became the principal base for the Pisans in the Levantine Sea. The island quickly inherited the wealth that had formerly belonged to Syria, and the trade that had previously been conducted on the neighbouring coast was transferred to the island. Here Italian merchants came to purchase the goods of Asia as well as local sugar, salt, wine and cotton. After the fall of Acre in 1291 the Pisans lost their main commercial base on the Syrian coast, but a new settlement in Cyprus was made possible by privileges granted by Henry II of Lusignan.⁷⁹ The Pisan commercial colony was based at Limassol⁸⁰ which became the headquarters for the *domus pisani communis*, the *Logia Pisanorum* and the Pisan Consuls. But they were also present at Nicosia and Famagosta,⁸¹ although much less strongly represented than the powerful Genoese. The Vernagalli, the Dal Campo, Casalberti del Polta, Benincasa and the Grasso⁸² were amongst the most active Pisan merchants in Cyprus, and they traded with the neighbouring Levantine coasts and possibly also with Egypt.⁸³ They brought Sicilian wheat to the island⁸⁴ and exported Asian goods and sugar.⁸⁵

Further north, the Armenian port of Laiazzo had become an important centre for trade with the Asian interior, and after the Syrian ports had fallen into the hands of the Egyptians in the late XIIIth century its importance grew, since it provided access to the overland routes to the Asian interior — to Tabriz, Baghdad, and Bassora, as well as Samarkand, Kabul, India and China.⁸⁶ At Laiazzo the Pisans were much less strong than the Venetians and the Genoese

⁷⁹ G. MÜLLER, *op. cit.*, n. LXXIII (October 1291).

⁸⁰ Referred to in the Pisan documents as *Nimotio* and *Nimoci*.

⁸¹ C. DESIMONI (ed.), *Actes passés à Famagouste de 1299 à 1301 par devant le notaire génois Lamberto de Sambuceto*, in "Archives de l'Orient Latin", 2, 1884, pp. 10, 30, 38 gg., 52, 74, 86, 103.

⁸² On the Pisans in Cyprus, as well as the documents published by G. MÜLLER, *op. cit.*, n. LXXIV, see: ASP, *Dipl. Olivetani*, 3 September 1293, 2 October 1293; *Dipl. Coletti*, 2 October 1293; R-H. BAUTIER, *op. cit.*, p. 323 (document of 27 August 1294 in which the Pisan merchant Giunta del fu Bono Coltorto pisano appears as a witness); ASP, *Dipl. Olivetani*, 20 September 1295; *Dipl. Roncioni*, 21 May 1296; *Dipl. Olivetani*, 26 August 1296, 27 August 1296; *Dipl. Roncioni*, 22 October 1296; *Dipl. Alliata*, 3 September 1300, 20 October 1310. On the leading Pisan families, see E. CRISTIANI, *Nobiltà e popolo nel comune di Pisa dalle origini del podestariato alla signoria dei Donoratico*, Napoli 1962, pp. 370 gg.

⁸³ Thus is suggested by a document 9 February 1320 (n. 50) published in F. ARTIZZU, *op. cit.*, II, p. 106 in which the merchant Betto Alliata and his sons Gano and Cecco are absolved for having sent prohibited goods "ad partes Saracenorum et cum eisdem Saracenis se et dictos suos filios participasse tam in mictendo ad eos et ad eorum partes quam in reduci faciendo mercantias et quemcumque alia mercimonia". The Alliata also had contacts in Cyprus: see ASP, *Dipl. Alliata*, 3 September 1300, 20 October 1310.

⁸⁴ R. ZENO (ed.), *Documenti per la storia del diritto marittimo nei secoli XIII e XIV*, Torino 1936, n. CLXVII.

⁸⁵ G. MÜLLER, *op. cit.*, n. LXXIV, p. 111.

⁸⁶ As is evident from map 72 published in M. BALARD, *op. cit.*, II, p. 861.

and their privileges in the early XIVth century were similarly more limited.⁸⁷ By 1263, however, a "vicecomes Pisanorum in Armenia Aegean" had been established there⁸⁸ and later there was also a Consul.⁸⁹

On the Aegean Sea there were a number of Pisans at Anea,⁹⁰ as well as near Samos on the coast of Asia Minor⁹¹ and in the Principality of Acaia in Greece.⁹² But in the late XIIIth century and the early XIVth century the Byzantine ports on the Black Sea coast were the most important in the Near East.⁹³ After the treaty of Ninfesus of 1261, the Genoese had become the real controllers of the commercial life of the Empire and their rapid commercial expansion together with the rapid growth of their city was directly related to the massive expansion of trade in the Black Sea. Not only did the Genoese dominate the trade with the East, but they also exercised complete supremacy over the internal trade of the Byzantine empire. Even though the Paleologue rulers were friendly towards them, the Pisans rapidly lost ground to the Genoese⁹⁴ and they had almost vanished from Constantinople and Pera which had become the principal commercial bases of the Genoese by the close of the XIIIth century.⁹⁵

As well as Constantinople and Pera there were also important new commercial centres on the Black Sea. To the north, the most important were the colonies founded by the Genoese on the Crimean peninsula, while in the south Trebizond was the major port and lay at the head of the routes to the Orient. The Black Sea became a meeting point for different civilizations and a major commercial crossroad for different economies. The Europeans dominated the commercial activities and sold large quantities of manufactured goods, especially textiles. The Mongols and the Tartars sent their silks and spices for sale there. Byzantium, on the other hand, constituted the great consumer market of the time and offered huge markets for foodstuffs and textiles. The central European economies also supplied wheat, wax, furs and slaves. European ships, including those of the Pisans, plied busily across this large region. In the account of his journeys, Marco Polo decided not to write of the Black Sea because, as he said: "it would be tiresome to say that which is neither necessary nor useful there

⁸⁷ W. HEYD, *Histoire*, cit., II, p. 86.

⁸⁸ G. ROSSI SABATINI, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁸⁹ C. DESIMONI (ed.), *Actes passés en 1271, 1274 et 1279 à l'Aias et à Beyrouth par devant les notaires génois*, in "Archives de l'Orient latin", 1881.

⁹⁰ ASP, *Ospedali di S. Chiara*, 2064, c. 51v (19 March 1240); G. MÜLLER, *op. cit.*, n. 71, p. 104 (21 November 1284).

⁹¹ Now in Turkee near Kusadasi.

⁹² S. TERLIZZI, *op. cit.*, nn. 575 e 576 (29 June 1273); ASP, *Dipl. Primaziale*, 11 April 1317 (A deed of proxy draws up at Chiarenza in the Principality Acaia by Pipino di Gualando in favour of his son Vanni Gualandi).

⁹³ Su tutto ciò G.I. BRATIANU, *op. cit.*

⁹⁴ S. BORSARI, *I rapporti*, cit., p. 490.

⁹⁵ M. BALARD, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 238 gg.; G.I. BRATIANU (ed.), *Actes des notaires génois de Pera et de Caffa de la fin du XIIIe siècle*, Bucarest 1927, n. CIV. The Pisans had a Consul at Pera in the late XIIIth century.

are now so many who travel to and sail on (the Black Sea) be they Venetians, Genoese, Pisans or others, and who make the voyage often, that everyone knows what is to be found there".⁹⁶

The most important commercial centre on the Black Sea was Caffa which the Genoese had founded on the Crimean peninsula between 1266 and 1270.⁹⁷ This became the centre for Genoese trade with the Slav countries and with the Orient, and the principal axis for the wheat trade from Moldavia, Valachia and Russia, as well as for salt, fish, cheese and slaves.⁹⁸ There were few Pisans at Caffa, but they had established an important commercial post on the Sea of Azov at Porto Pisano, slightly to the south of the Genoese colony at Tana on the mouth of the Don.⁹⁹ Porto Pisano appears on the maps from the early XIVth century¹⁰⁰ and was mentioned by Francesco Balducci Pegolotti in his merchants' manual.¹⁰¹ However it had not existed at the time when the Dominican friar William of Rubruck visited and described the coast of the isthmus from the Crimea to the mouth of the Don in 1253.¹⁰² The settlement must have dated from the last decades of the XIIIth century, at the time when the Genoese were establishing themselves at Caffa and Tana. Very little is known about the trade carried on by the Pisans, but it was probably similar to that of nearby Caffa and Tana and was certainly important in the trade in Caucasian slaves.¹⁰³ For the Pisans, like the Venetians and the Genoese, the Black Sea ports provided a base for extending their influence both in central Europe and into the Asian interior, but there is little evidence on how this was effected. We do know however that Pisans were trading at Kiev in 1247,¹⁰⁴ at Tabriz in Persia in 1289¹⁰⁵ and in the Indian Ocean around 1320.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁶ *Il Milione*, ed. V. Bertolucci Pizzorusso, 209.

⁹⁷ M. BALARD, *op. cit.*, I, p. 117.

⁹⁸ G.I. BRATIANU, *Actes*, cit. On the slave trade, see: C. VERLINDEN, *Traite des esclaves et traitants italiens à Constantinople (XIIIe-XIVe siècles)*, in "Le Moyen Age", LXIX, 1963, pp. 791-804.

⁹⁹ Near Siniawka, close to Taganrog: W. HEYD, *Histoire*, cit., II, p. 167; G.I. BRATIANU, *Recherches*, *op. cit.*, p. 243.

¹⁰⁰ See the maps in M. BALARD, *op. cit.*, planche I p. 175 (atlante Luxoro) and G.I. BRATIANU, *Recherches*, cit., planche II, pp. 118-119.

¹⁰¹ F. BALDUCCI PEGOLOTTI, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

¹⁰² *The Travels of William of Rubruck in Eastern Countries*, ed. W.W. Rockhill, London 1900.

¹⁰³ G.I. BRATIANU, *Recherches*, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

¹⁰⁴ G. DA PIAN DEL CARPINE, *Historia Mongalorum*, in *Sinica Franciscana, seu Itinera et relationes fratrum minorum saeculi XIII et XIV*, ed. Van den Wyngaert, Firenze 1929, p. 129: Nicholaus Pisanus was mentioned together with a Genoese merchant, a Venetian and Jacobus Reverinus of Acre as the leading merchants at Kiev.

¹⁰⁵ J.-B. CHABOT, *Notes sur les relations du roi Argoun avec l'Occident*, in "Revue de l'Orient latin", II, 1894, p. 596.

¹⁰⁶ LUCA WADDINGO, *Annales minorum seu trium Ordinum a S. Francisco institutorum*, VI, Roma 1733, p. 359.

VII

The Pisan merchants had been able to adapt to the new structure of trade in the Near East, but at the same time they were becoming much less serious rivals to the Genoese and the Venetians. It is not easy to date the decline of Pisan trade in the Levant with any precision, but there can be no doubt that as the scale of Genoese trade expanded that of the Pisans was continually declining. This process was evident throughout the XIIIth century, and the weakness of the Pisans became increasingly evident. The most important markets were in the hands of the Genoese and by the end of the XIIIth century they had no competitors on the coasts of the Black Sea, which was where the most important commercial centres lay, where the largest markets were to be found and where the most valuable trade was conducted. In this critical area where Europe and Asia met, the Pisans were weak, although they maintained a stronger position in Egypt. However, while at the end of the XIIth century there had been several hundred and at times even some thousand Pisan merchants in the Levant,¹⁰⁷ by the beginning of the XIVth century they were reduced to a handful of isolated individuals. By then even Porto Pisano on the mouth of the Don was — as far as can be gleaned from the scarce evidence — used by the Venetians who traded in Tartar slaves.¹⁰⁸ At Pera and Caffa there were very few Pisans even in the late XIIIth century,¹⁰⁹ and at Caffa there is no mention of them either in the middle XIVth century¹¹⁰ or later.¹¹¹ At Pera only three are mentioned in the documents dating from 1389-91. There were Florentines at Chios, but not Pisans.¹¹² In the Genoese colonies of Chilia¹¹³ and Licostomo¹¹⁴ on the Black Sea where there was a lively trade in Russian, Circassian and Tartar slaves, in honey, wax and wheat, there is no mention of any Pisans in the period between 1345 and 1360.

The Pisans probably remained active for longer at Constantinople, even though they did not enjoy the privileged position and protection afforded to the Genoese and the Venetians.¹¹⁵ In 1325 the Pisan merchant Beco del fu Ranieri

¹⁰⁷ Accepting Caffaro's estimate of 1000 Pisans in Constantinople in 1162 (*Annali genovesi*, cit., I, p. 67) and considering that there were many Pisans in Egypt and on the Syrian coast.

¹⁰⁸ M. BALARD, *op. cit.*, II, p. 754 (to 1360); W. HEYD, *Histoire*, cit., II, p. 167 (to 1373).

¹⁰⁹ G.I. BRATIANU, *Actes*, cit., M. BALARD (ed.), *Gênes et l'Outre-Mer. I. Les actes de Caffa du notaire Lamberto de Sambuceto 1289-1290*, Paris-La Haye 1973.

¹¹⁰ G. BALBI - S. RAITERI (ed.), *Notai genovesi in Oltremare. Atti rogati a Caffa e Licostomo (sec. XIV)*, Genova-Bordighera 1973.

¹¹¹ M. BALARD, *La Romanie*, cit., I, p. 266 (1386).

¹¹² *Ibid.*, I, p. 267.

¹¹³ G. PISTARINO (ed.), *Notai genovesi in Oltremare. Atti rogati a Chilia da Antonio di Ponzò (1360-61)*, Genova-Bordighera 1971.

¹¹⁴ G. BALBI - S. RAITERI, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁵ F. BALDUCCI PEGOLOTTI, *op. cit.*, p. 41: "Gienovesi e viniziani sono franchi

Sciorta shipped five hundred *moggia* of wheat that had come from the Crimea ('de partibus Gazarie') from Constantinople to Aigues Mortes in Provence,¹¹⁶ but used a ship hired from the Venetian merchant Girolamo Priuli: two other Pisans also signed the notarial deed. Another voyage from Constantinople to Venice on a Pisan ship is also recorded in 1330.¹¹⁷

The Pisan presence in Cyprus also declined after 1320, and although some individuals like Giovanni di Federico Raù continued to trade there and own property these were isolated cases.¹¹⁸ In Egypt, on the other hand, Pisan commercial links survived for longer. There was still a Pisan colony and Consul at Alexandria in 1305.¹¹⁹ Despite the Papal prohibitions and those contained in the *Statuti*¹²⁰ the Pisans continued to export "ferrum laboratum vel non laboratum, aut lignamen laboratum vel non laboratum, aut picem vel catramen, vel arma aliqua, vel canapam sive stuppam" to Egypt.¹²¹ In 1320 one of the leading merchants of Pisa, Betto Alliata, paid for absolution of the sin of exporting, together with his sons Gano and Cecco, goods "ad partes Saracenorum"¹²² prohibited in the recent papal Bulls. But the Genoese still maintained their supremacy in Egyptian trade in the first half of the XIVth century.¹²³ There are however some references to Pisan trade with Egypt in the late XIVth century and in the XVth century.¹²⁴

VIII

The period in which the Pisans lost ground in the Levant to the Genoese, the Venetians and the Catalans was also the period in which textile production in the great manufacturing regions of Flanders, northern France, central and northern Italy was beginning to flow in increasing volume towards the Levant and the Asian interior. The maritime cities increased their wealth and made new fortunes by carrying European textiles across the Mediterranean, and above all towards the Near East. The opportunities provided by Near Eastern and Asian markets thanks to the access provided by the Mediterranean ports enabled the manufacturing centres to multiply and expand. The ground had been prepared by the earlier phase of the European military and naval expansion, which now

entrando e uscendo che non pagano niente. Pisani pagano di tutta la merchatantia che mettono in Ghostantinopoli 2 per centinaio".

¹¹⁶ ASP, *Dipl. Primaziale*, 27 Feb. 1325.

¹¹⁷ R. DAVIDSOHN, *op. cit.*, III, n. 974, p. 193.

¹¹⁸ ASP, *Dipl. Simonelli (provenienza Raù)*, 5 Dec. 1333.

¹¹⁹ F. BONAINI (ed.), *Statuti inediti della città di Pisa dal XII al XIV secolo*, Firenze 1854-70, III, p. 395.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, III, pp. 395, 426, 578.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, I, p. 353.

¹²² F. ARTIZZU, *op. cit.*, II, p. 106.

¹²³ G. ADAM, *op. cit.*, p. 523 ff.

¹²⁴ M. AMARI, *op. cit.*, I, II serie, n. 33 (5 August 1385); E. ASHTOR, *The Venetian Supremacy in Levantine Trade: Monopoly or Pre-Colonialism*, in "Journal of European Economic History", III, 1974, p. 6.

gave way to a new phase of industrial expansion. In the XIIIth century large scale trade became increasingly linked to the trade in textiles: of all the goods that travelled across the Mediterranean these were the most valuable. In comparison the spice trade had become a secondary affair, with not only a more limited scale but also a much lesser value since a sack of Flemish cloths was equivalent in value to between three and five sacks of spices.¹²⁵ In the face of competition from the manufactures of Flanders, and Italy the industries of Egypt, Syria and Persia fell into decay.¹²⁶ In technical terms they were inferior to the European industries, while the controls imposed by the state both in Byzantium and in the Arab countries prevented adaptation in response to the changes taking place in the market.¹²⁷ The wealthy and populous cities of the coast and the interior therefore came to provide rich markets for the European producers, while the exports from the Near East and from Asia of the raw materials needed by the European industries — cotton from Syria, alum, dyes and silks from the Caspian and from China — increased. From that moment the success of a maritime city depended on its ability to establish contacts with the manufacturing centres of the European interior in order to attract and distribute a range of manufactured products.

The massive expansion of Genoa in the XIIIth century was directly related to the trade in European textiles. At that time Genoa became the principal Mediterranean port because it was the principal channel through which the cloths of Flanders, France and Lombardy were marketed. Geography also played its part in this by placing the city at the meeting point of two different trade flows, one descending from Flanders through France¹²⁸ and the other coming from Lombardy.

Flemish cloths had begun to reach Genoa and to be exported across the Mediterranean on Genoese vessels from the first half of the XIIth century,¹²⁹ and in the late XIIth century this flow became more intense.¹³⁰ Flemish and

¹²⁵ R-H. BAUTIER, *op. cit.*, pp. 298-302.

¹²⁶ E. ASHTOR, *Storia economica e sociale del Vicino Oriente nel Medioevo*, Torino 1982, pp. 252 ff.; ID., *Les lainages dans l'Orient médiéval. Emploi, production, commerce*, in *Produzione, commercio e consumo dei panni di lana*, Atti della II settimana F. Datini, Firenze 1976, pp. 673 ff.

¹²⁷ E. ASHTOR, *Storia economica*, *cit.*, pp. 256-257; C. CAHEN, *Quelques mots sur le déclin commercial du monde musulman à la fin du Moyen Age*, in *Les peuples musulmans dans l'histoire médiévale*, Damas 1967, pp. 359-366.

¹²⁸ See H. LAURENT, *Un grand commerce d'exportation. La draperie des Pays-Bas en France et dans les pays méditerranéens (XIIe-XVe siècles)*, Paris 1935.

¹²⁹ H. AMMANN, *Die Anfänge des Aktivhandels und der Tuchzufuhr aus Nordwest-europa nach den Mittelmeergebiet*, in *Studi in onore di A. Saponi*, Milano 1957, I, pp. 273-310.

¹³⁰ R.L. REYNOLDS, *The Market for Northern Textiles in Genoa 1179-1200*, in "Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire", VIII, 1929, pp. 831-851; M. BYRNE, *Genoese Trade with Syria in the twelfth Century*, in "American Historical Review", XXV, 1920, p. 217.

French cloths arrived at Genoa either by land and over the Alps, or else along the Saone and Rhone rivers and then by sea.¹³¹ In the late XIIIth century these were met by the woollen and cotton fabrics of Lombardy which reached Genoa over the Apennine passes.¹³² In 1277 Genoa also established a direct sea route to Flanders,¹³³ and thereafter its commercial contacts with this rapidly expanding manufacturing area became even stronger. Throughout the XIIIth century the quantities of Flemish cloth reaching Genoa steadily grew, while the principal Genoese export to the Near East was Flemish, Brabant and French cloth which had been manufactured in Brussels, Ypres, Poperinghe, Malines, Courtrai, Bruges, Chalons, Beauvais, Louviers and Paris. These were supplemented by the Italian cloths from Como, Milan, Piacenza, and Bergamo, as well as by a growing volume of clothing.¹³⁴

Control over the alum mines of Focea, which long remained the most productive in the whole of Europe, also enabled the Genoese to monopolize the trade in a raw material which was indispensable in textile production.¹³⁵ Exports of Syrian cotton¹³⁶ and the silk of the Caspian region as well as the large quantities obtained from China¹³⁷ also gave the Genoese a strategic role in the trade in raw textile materials as well as in finished products. The power which the Genoese had established in these different manufactured and industrial products enabled them as a result to play a central role in the internal commerce as well as the foreign trade of the Byzantine empire and the whole Levantine area.

Although to a lesser degree than in the case of Genoa, the economies of all the other major Mediterranean ports in the XIIIth century were closely tied to major centres of manufacturing production. This was particularly true of Venice,¹³⁸ which provided the principal centre for the commerce of the textiles of Lombardy and southern Germany, from where they were carried to the markets of the Byzantine Empire and Persia.¹³⁹ Venice also played a key role in supplying the manufacturing industries of the Po Valley with Syrian cotton and

¹³¹ Extremely important are the 3 volumes published by R. DOEHAERD, *Les relations commerciales entre Gènes, la Belgique et l'Outremont d'après les archives notariales génoises aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles*, Bruxelles-Roma 1941.

¹³² XIIIth Century Lombardy gravitated towards Genoa rather than Venice: P. VACCARI, *Da Venezia a Genova. Un capitolo di storia delle relazioni commerciali dell'alto Medio Evo*, in, *Studi in onore di G. Luzzatto*, Milano 1950, I, pp. 88-95.

¹³³ R. DOEHAERD, *op. cit.*, I, p. 224.

¹³⁴ M. BALARD, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 834-839.

¹³⁵ R. LOPEZ, B. Zaccaria, pp. 23-61.

¹³⁶ M.F. MAZZAOUI, *The Italian Cotton Industry in the Later Middle Ages 1100-1600*, Cambridge 1981, pp. 28 ff.

¹³⁷ R.S. LOPEZ, *Nuove luci*, *cit.*, pp. 95 ff.

¹³⁸ G. LUZZATTO, *Storia economica di Venezia dall'XI al XVI secolo*, Venezia 1961, pp. 46-47.

¹³⁹ *Testamento di Pietro Viglioni, veneziano, fatto a Tauris (Persia)*, in "Archivio Veneto", XXVI, 1883, pp. 161 ff.

Egyptian alum. From the early XIVth century Venetian commercial contacts with Flanders, which had previously relied on the overland routes across Germany, were strengthened with the beginning of regular voyages by Venetian galley convoys to Bruges.¹⁴⁰ However, throughout the XIIIth and for most of the XIVth century, Venice's role in the Mediterranean textile trade was less than that of Genoa. It was only in the late XIVth and in the XVth century that Venice took on a central position in the trade in industrial products when it became the principal entrepôt and marketing centre for the wool and cotton fabrics of Lombardy, for Florentine wool and silk, and for the rapidly expanding fustian cloths of southern Germany.¹⁴¹ By the XVth century Venice much more than Genoa was at the head of a convergence of great flows of manufactured goods.

Returning to the late XIIIth century, it would be difficult to over-estimate the importance of the Mediterranean textile trade for the rise of Marseilles and Barcelona, both of which remained for a long time important centres for marketing the products of the Provençal and Catalan textile industries which occurred also in the late XIIIth century.¹⁴²

IX

The principal trade axis that emerged in the late XIIIth century revolved around the trade in manufactured goods which drew northern Europe and the Orient into a single trading system. On the new axis, Pisa held only a secondary position, and was in the course of the XIIIth century increasingly marginalised as the new trade routes took shape. Its control over the major trade routes weakened and was progressively overshadowed by the neighbouring port of Genoa. Excluded from the commercial ties that were developing between the European manufacturing centres and the Levant, Pisa's share in Near Eastern trade also declined and the city was in turn excluded from the great Middle Eastern markets from which Genoa was growing richer day by day. As a result Pisa declined from being a major Mediterranean power to a more limited centre for trade around the Tyrrhenian Sea. Yet although its role in Levantine trade was reduced, its exclusion was by no means total and it continued to trade both in European textiles and in industrial raw materials. Its decline was essentially relative to the expansion of Genoa and Venice.

When in 1281 a Pisan vessel was shipwrecked off Corfu its holds were laden with a precious cargo of 676 cloths.¹⁴³ The cloths came from the great manufacturing areas of the day; 20% were from Flanders and France (mainly from Ypres and Provins); 41% from Lombardy; the remaining 39% from Florence. This

¹⁴⁰ G. LUZZATTO, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

¹⁴¹ As well as *op. cit.*, M.F. MAZZAOUÏ and G. LUZZATTO, see E. ASHTOR, *L'exportation de textiles occidentales dans le Proche Orient musulman au bas Moyen Age (1370-1517)*, in, *Studi in memoria di F. Melis*, II, Napoli 1978, pp. 303-377.

¹⁴² C. CARRERE, *Barcelone et le commerce de l'Orient à la fin du Moyen Age*, in, *Sociétés et compagnies*, *cit.*, pp. 365-369.

alone is sufficient to show that Pisan merchants were active in the new trade in manufactured goods. Yet their activities were limited in scale, and they operated around rather than along the principal trading axes. Pisa did not control the main flows of production, but rather the secondary branches and tributaries. Her merchants, for example, sold Milanese woollen and linen cloth in Sardinia,¹⁴⁴ while French and Elemish cloths were imported to Pisa from Genoa¹⁴⁵ for sale in Florence;¹⁴⁶ at Pisa we find English cloths too;¹⁴⁷ Florentine cloths reached Pisa either via the Arno or overland for sale in southern Italy at the Salerno fairs;¹⁴⁸ Pisa imported alum from Sardinia¹⁴⁹ and from the Near East, as well as wool from the Maghreb¹⁵⁰ and from Majorca¹⁵¹ for resale in Tuscany. In addition, the expansion of manufactures in the Tuscan cities during the XIIIth century served also to stimulate Pisan trade, although on closer inspection it would appear that Pisa's role in this trade was less than might have been expected.¹⁵² Certainly it played a much smaller role in the marketing of manufactured goods than Genoa. There were no links between Pisa and the Tuscan manufacturing centres comparable to those that had been established between Genoa and the industrial centres of Flanders, France and Germany. As a result Pisa's commercial links with the Levant were not comparable with those of Genoa.

Of the Tuscan cities, Lucca had emerged during the XIIIth century as the main centre of silk production but gravitated towards Genoa rather than Pisa. No permanent commercial links were formed with Pisa,¹⁵³ and the silk cloths manufactured in Lucca were sent to Genoa either by way of the little sea port of Motrone or else overland through the Apennine passes. It was also in Genoa that the merchants of Lucca purchased the raw silks from the Caspian, from China, and from southern Italy.

¹⁴³ *I Registri della Cancelleria angioina*, XXV (1280-82), Napoli 1978, n. 170, pp. 35-39.

¹⁴⁴ F. ARTIZZU, *op. cit.*, I, n. 33, p. 47.

¹⁴⁵ R. DAVIDSOHN, *op. cit.*, III, n. 517.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, nn. 39, 70; S. TERLIZZI, *op. cit.*, n. 198.

¹⁴⁷ ASP, *Ospedali di S. Chiara*, 2070, c. 281v (cloths of Stanford).

¹⁴⁸ S. TERLIZZI, *op. cit.*, n. 365; R. DAVIDSOHN, *op. cit.*, III, n. 723.

¹⁴⁹ F. ARTIZZU, *op. cit.*, I, n. 7, p. 11.

¹⁵⁰ M. BENSACI, *op. cit.*, pp. 235 ff.; R.S. LOPEZ, *B. Zaccaria*, *cit.*, Appendice n. V, p. 261.

¹⁵¹ R. DAVIDSOHN, *op. cit.*, III, n. 348.

¹⁵² On the relations between Pisa and the other Tuscan cities, see F. MELIS, *L'economia delle città minori della Toscana*, in *Le zecche minori toscane fino al XIV secolo*, Atti del III Convegno internazionale, Pistoia 1967, pp. 13-40.

¹⁵³ M. CORDERO DI S. QUINTINO, *Cenni intorno al commercio dei Lucchesi coi Genovesi nel XII e XIII secolo*, in "Atti della R. Accademia lucchese", X, 1845; and especially P. RACINE, *Le marché génois de la soie en 1288*, in "Revue des études sud-est européennes", VIII, 1970, pp. 403-417.

Although by the start of the XIVth century Florence had become the leading woollen textile producer in Europe, her products were marketed almost entirely without the assistance of the merchants of Pisa. During the XIIIth and XIVth centuries Florence exported little to the Levant,¹⁵⁴ and when her merchant entrepreneurs wished to export their cloths to the East they sent them over the Apennines to Venice rather than to Pisa.¹⁵⁵ When the Levantine markets became for Florence much more important, as in the following centuries, the Florentine textile products were sent there mainly through Venice.¹⁵⁶ But in the XIIIth and XIVth centuries the principal markets for Florentine cloths were in southern Italy, where Florentine merchants and merchandise travelled either by land¹⁵⁷ or else by sea from Venice.¹⁵⁸ The French and Flemish cloths that came to Florence for final finishing processes arrived by land over the Apennines rather than by sea,¹⁵⁹ while the supplies of raw wool from England and of alum were provided by Genoese merchants.¹⁶⁰

Pisa's share in the new trade flows that originated with the expansion of European manufacturing production in the XIIIth century was therefore relatively weak, and was situated around the margins rather than at the centre of the great commercial axes. Further evidence of this lies in the fact that unlike Genoa and Venice, Pisa never mounted great commercial convoys in the XIIIth century.¹⁶¹ The Genoese "*carovane*" and the Venetian "*mude*" enabled the two cities to maintain continuous and regular contacts with the industrial hinterlands of Europe and the great markets of the Orient. At Pisa this never happened. Even when in the late XIIIth and early XIVth centuries the Pisans opened up seaborne links with Flanders these remained sporadic and irregular,

¹⁵⁴ M. BALARD, *La Romanie*, cit., II, p. 836; H. HOSHINO, *L'arte della lana in Firenze nel basso Medioevo*, Firenze 1980, pp. 65 ff; ID., *La compagnia commerciale dei Pitti in Napoli nel 1341: un commento per la storia dell'arte della lana di Firenze del Trecento*, in *Studi in memoria di F. Melis*, II, cit., p. 228: "generally speaking, Florentine cloth never left the Italian peninsula, and except for the consignment sent to the Levant through Venice, Naples and Pisa, the greater part of Florentine production was consumed in Italy and only very small quantities were sent to Germany".

¹⁵⁵ R. DAVIDSOHN, *op. cit.*, III, nn. 549, 729, 730.

¹⁵⁶ See especially the famous will of Tommaso Mocenigo published in M. SANUTO, *Vite de' Duchi di Venezia*, in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, ed. L.A. Muratori, XXII, milano 1733, col. 954; E. ASHTOR, *L'exportation*, cit., pp. 312 ff.

¹⁵⁷ R. DAVIDSOHN, *op. cit.*, III, nn. 135, 435, 948.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, n. 549.

¹⁵⁹ A. SAPORI, *Il taccamento dei panni franceschi a Firenze nel Trecento*, in *Studi di storia economica*, Firenze 1982, I, p. 254.

¹⁶⁰ M. BALARD, *La Romanie*, cit., II, p. 780; R. DAVIDSOHN, *op. cit.*, III, n. 944; ASP, *Dipl. Alliata*, 29 May 1332-1 April 1333.

¹⁶¹ On this see: G. LUZZATTO, *Navigazione di linea e navigazione libera nelle grandi città marinare del Medio Evo*, in *Studi di storia economica veneziana*, Padova 1954, pp. 53-57. For Venice ID., *Storia economica di Venezia*, cit., p. 45. On Pisan shipping and the absence of convoys see A. SCHAUBE, *Storia*, cit., p. 188.

unlike those of Venice and Genoa.¹⁶² There were also very few Pisan merchants to be found at the Champagne Fairs where the greater part of the Flemish cloths were sold.¹⁶³

X

Genoa's commercial supremacy in the Mediterranean was crowned by two great military victories: against Pisa in 1284 at Melloria and against Venice in 1298 at Curzole. In both cases the losses in both men and money were great, but whereas Pisa never recovered from the defeat, Venice was able to continue to play a leading role in Mediterranean trade over the coming centuries. Historians have often seen the battle of Melloria as a decisive turning point that determined Pisa's decline from a leading Mediterranean power to a more subordinate commercial and political position.¹⁶⁴ In fact, defeat at Melloria occurred after, not before, Pisa had lost the long commercial struggle with Genoa. Of the two cities, the Pisan economy had flourished during the period when economic expansion in Europe had hardly penetrated beyond the coastline into the interior. As a new structure of Mediterranean trade began to take shape, Genoa was much more favoured. Its close ties with the manufacturing hinterlands provided the basis for an economic transformation which enabled it to exploit dynamically and effectively the new opportunities of international trade. Its economic structure was ideally suited to the new realities of Mediterranean trade, and the city's energy and power rapidly expanded. The naval battle at Melloria led to the victory of the more powerful of the two different economic and commercial structures. It produced a true selection between two different organisms. Pisa, whose position on the major markets of the period had already grown dangerously weak, was to find itself thereafter excluded. The loss of the eastern markets was certainly not the only factor that brought about Pisa's decline, but it was one of the most important and symptomatic developments in a process that reduced the city to the level of a localized trading centre in the Tyrrhenian. This was to be the role that the region around Pisa, and then Pisa and Livorno together, was to perform for a long time within the context of the territorial state dominated by the great manufacturing and banking city of Florence.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Pisan ships may have reached Flanders in the late XIIIth century: R. DOEHAERD, *op. cit.*, I, p. 1; on 1322 R. DAVIDSOHN, *op. cit.*, III, n. 770.

¹⁶³ Schaube emphasized Pisa's marginal role in central and northern France: A. SCHAUBE, *Storia*, *cit.*, pp. 412-413 and 437. Pisans were not completely absent from the Champagne Fairs: see R. DAVIDSOHN, *op. cit.*, III, nn. 24, 80; ASP, *Dipl. Olivetani*, 5 October 1273, 4 December 1273; ASP, *Ospedali di S. Chiara*, 2070, c. 183.

¹⁶⁴ This is the interpretation given by virtually all the historians of medieval Pisan economy.

¹⁶⁵ For a more detailed analysis see P. MALANIMA, *La formazione di una regione economica: la Toscana nei secoli XIII-XV*, in "Società e storia", VI, 1983, pp. 229-269.