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GENOESE TRADE WITH SYRIA IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY

THE economic significance of the medieval Italian cities has received less attention from historians than it has deserved, perhaps because their political and artistic importance has been so striking. But the bonds of medievalism were material as well as spiritual. Life in the later Middle Ages was freer and richer not only because the spiritual bonds were being shattered but because physically men were more comfortable; because the new tastes could the more easily be gratified through the possession of greater material means. In the increasing interchange of commodities throughout the Mediterranean that assisted so much in this transformation of the Middle Ages, Florence, Venice, and Genoa played the dominant rôles. The first two, as centres of medieval civilization and trade, have justifiably received the greatest attention; with them Genoa failed to compete in any but the commercial field. The Genoese have not thought deeply nor built grandly. They never achieved the political coherence of Venice or the solid native industrial foundation of Florentine life. Yet in commercial and colonial exploitation no shore of the Mediterranean escaped Genoese influence, and in a large measure the peoples on its western shores for centuries were dependent on the Genoese merchants for most luxuries and many necessities. To the historian, moreover, Genoa should be particularly interesting, because the preservation of the archival records has been so nearly complete from the twelfth to the sixteenth century that the economic phenomena of the changing world can best be observed there in fine detail.

Perhaps never since the ancient Phoenicians has a people been so exclusively maritime as the Genoese. About them on the east and north, behind them as it were, rose a mountain-wall as an obstacle to landward growth. To the south lay the whole Mediterranean, a field of activity promising the richest rewards, limited only by their own energy and perseverance. The physical situation predestined them to a maritime career. Their restless activity made that sea their own, not indisputably, but upon it no rival could with impunity disregard their will. With admirable restraint they extended their hegemony over Liguria but only within the safest of limits, so that no rival to sea power might arise near by. To the maritime and

mercantile motive all the hard strength of the folk was directed; even the factional rivalries that ravaged the internal life as in no other medieval Italian city, were hushed when the sea power was threatened, when the nerves of the commune, its commerce, were assailed, or when some great maritime enterprise was in prospect.¹ It is not the purpose of this paper to trace this spirit throughout its course but to treat the period in which it first reached self-consciousness, looked into the future, formulated a plan, tried various experiments, with different degrees of success, and at last entered upon its own. The time roughly was the twelfth century, from the beginning of the Crusades to the capture of Constantinople by the men of the Fourth Crusade. The field was the whole Mediterranean, and the great success came in Syria. Within that period the commune was born, tried its strength, and at the close began its greater career.

All the foundations of Genoa's later triumphs were laid in the twelfth century. Once a Roman *municipium*, long under Byzantine rule, reduced by the Lombards in the seventh century to a defenseless village, pillaged again and again by the Saracens in the ninth and tenth, it was not until the eleventh century that the city was free and strong enough, in momentary alliance with Pisa, to attack the Saracens with some success, to dispute with her occasional ally their respective rights in Sardinia and Corsica,² and to look far afield for the realization of her destiny. As early as 1087-1093 the Genoese dreamed of conquests in Africa and Spain,³ but the strife of internal factions, grappling for the control of the government, then just escaping from the feudal domination of the Ligurian margraves, was not stilled until Urban II. gave the summons to the Crusade. The Genoese heard that call which so stirred Christendom and seized upon it as a means toward unity and power. At once they were launched on a career in the Levant that was to make their city the great emporium of the western Mediterranean, a point of exchange between East and West for many centuries.⁴

¹ E. Heyck, *Genua und seine Marine im Zeitalter der Kreuzzüge* (Innsbruck, 1886), pp. 1-4.

² H. J. Sieveking, "Genueser Finanzwesen mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Casa di S. Giorgio", in *Volkswirtschaftliche Abhandlungen der Badischen Hochschulen*, I. 3 (Freiburg i. B., 1898), pp. 1-2; A. Schaube, *Handelsgeschichte der Romanischen Völker des Mittelmeergebiets bis zum Ende der Kreuzzüge* (Munich, 1906), pp. 63-64.

³ *Annales Ianuenses*, in *Fonti per la Storia d'Italia pubblicate dall' Istituto Storico Italiano*, vols. XI., XII. (Rome, 1890), I. 13.

⁴ The belief in a thriving Genoese trade in the Levant previous to the First Crusade, founded almost entirely on fable and forgery, has persisted curiously. See W. Heyd, *Histoire du Commerce du Levant au Moyen-Age* (Leipzig, 1885),

In view of the lack of locally manufactured goods of high value, of the failure to produce sufficient food and materials for home consumption, Genoese trade could only be built upon profits gained from rare products of the Levant, the need of which throughout the West would furnish the economic force necessary to the attainment, first of independence, secondly of economic predominance. To this end the full strength of the people was directed, ignorant as they were of the economic law behind their efforts. To accomplish their object several things were essential. First of all political independence, primarily of the margraves, secondarily of the Empire; this was achieved in 1162. Next, the unquestioned leadership of the Ligurian coast, and control of the passes into Lombardy; this also Barbarossa recognized long after it had been usurped. Thirdly, the acquisition and retention of varied, numerous markets in the West; this necessity was the basic cause of the Pisan wars which have seemed to be the central thread of early Genoese history. That warfare persisted intermittently for nearly two centuries, but it was only a single feature of the general plan, the constant expression of an idea frequently disclosed in other ways. The crushing of Ligurian independence, the shrewd diplomacy that won the markets of southern France and northern Africa, the bold daring that sought a permanent foothold in Moslem Spain by the conquest of Almería and Tortosa, the attempt to erect a Sardinian puppet king, the haunting dream of the mastery of Sicily—all these were but expressions of the attempt to fulfill their economic destiny by securing the western complement to their Levantine prizes, not the futile struggles of unreasonable hatred and political incompetence.

From the religious and romantic impulse with which the Crusades began, the Genoese apparently were so free that to them the Crusaders were merely men to be carried to the East "*certo naulo*", maintained there by Genoese aid, in return for rewards and privileges of deep import.⁵ It would almost seem that to them, as later to the Venetians, the Crusade was a matter of indifference except as it affected their material prosperity. A foothold somewhere in the Levant was absolutely essential to their mercantile life; in Constantinople, despite mighty efforts, they were unsuccessful, outstripped

I. 124; Schaube, *op. cit.*, p. 65; C. R. Beazley, *The Dawn of Modern Geography* (London, 1901), II. 422. The only basis for assuming a Genoese connection with the Levant earlier than the Crusade, is that Caffaro the annalist, a participant in the First Crusade, accepts the possibility of a Genoese ship having gone to Alexandria some time earlier. *Liberatio Orientis*, in *Fonti*, XI. 99.

⁵ Heyck, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

by the Venetians;⁶ in Alexandria their trade prospered periodically as circumstances over which they had little control allowed.⁷ In Syria their foothold was secure, not so assured as to be free from interruptions, caused either by their over-exertion in the West, or by the misfortunes of Christian dominion in Syria, but secure enough to supply the real basis of their growing commerce. By the fall of Constantinople in the Fourth Crusade the Genoese efforts were perforce concentrated in Syria, where a new epoch of commercial prosperity was opened to them. By that time the markets of the West had been acquired, and Genoa had become the leading centre of exchange west of the Adriatic. The era of experiment and transition was ended.

Viewing the century of Genoese effort from 1097 to 1205 as a whole, one may observe several distinct stages through all of which the Levantine trade runs as a dominant motive impelling the young commune to thought and activity, meeting advances and checks contingent upon the successes and failures to which it gave the impulse. The first stage, from 1097 to 1154, is characterized by the exuberance of the first enthusiasm, producing most of the main lines of later development, but closing with five years of serious economic depression, the result of over-exertion. The second stage, 1154 to 1164, is that in which the revived trade with Syria prospered in accordance with the highest expectation and enabled the Genoese to throw their commerce like a great net over all the western sea. Like the earlier period it ended in a catastrophe, owing to a mad effort in Sardinia, which threw the commune into debt, a civil war, and a long struggle with Pisa. From those disorders Genoa had not yet recovered when the Lombard wars stilled all thought of extension abroad, to be followed by the collapse of the Christian power in Syria before the strength of Saladin. With the Third Crusade, into which the Genoese plunged with their full strength, that the source of their commercial prosperity might be regained and rebuilt, began the last stage, characterized by expansive tendencies which clearly foretold the triumphs of the thirteenth century.

While the notarial archives enable us to observe details best in the second and last stages, those of greatest activity, one may say that the first stage, from 1097 to 1154, was formative, a period of political organization at home, of conquest abroad. The period begins, under the stimulus of the First Crusade, with the formation of the commune itself just before 1097—a *compagna* of all the arms-

⁶ Schaube, *op. cit.*, p. 228 ff.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

bearing men, and a body of elective consuls.⁸ In the next thirteen years Genoa sent forth six armed fleets to Syria, varying in size from two to sixty galleys.⁹ More than either Pisa or Venice, Genoa shared in the conquest and occupation of the towns along the Syrian riviera; the colonial and commercial privileges given as rewards were magnificent. Churches, warehouses, dwellings, ovens, gardens, orchards, freedom from dues, shares in the taxes, in every town of importance except Tyre, fell to their lot, with the whole town of Gibilet.¹⁰ All were granted in common to the commune and to the cathedral of San Lorenzo, whose bishop was still one of the powers in Genoa to whom the commune looked for leadership before the world and for protection at home against the remnants of the feudal powers of the margraves. These possessions were not all held permanently, for the crusading powers made promises and broke them easily, yet enough was retained of what was granted in the charters to afford the opportunity for colonial experiments and to furnish a commercial base demanding complementary efforts in the West. For that, the young commune's ambitious leaders were ready, but as events proved not always judiciously restrained.

Their operations in the West were varied but coherent. In Syria the Genoese had co-operated with the leaders of the crusaders from southern France. The friendly relations there established were continued in the West. In 1109 an advantageous commercial treaty was arranged with Bertram of St. Gilles, followed by a series of similar agreements which threw open to the Genoese the trade of Narbonne, Marseilles, and Montpellier.¹¹ Armed expeditions were sent to northern Africa; Tunis, Bougie, and Ceuta were opened to Genoese traders.¹² Fifteen years of warfare with Pisa, 1118-1133, were a costly effort, with half of Corsica and the erection of the Genoese archbishopric as the ends achieved.¹³ The subjection of the Riviera from Portovenere to Monaco was carried forward, partly by arms, partly by diplomacy. The margraves and counts of Liguria were forced to join the *compagna*. The mountain passes into Lombardy were secured, and an advantageous commercial treaty with Pavia was signed. An agreement was entered into with Lucca that

⁸ *Annales*, I. 5; Heyck, *op. cit.*, p. 21 ff.; Sieveking, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-21.

⁹ *Annales*, I. 5, 13, 14, 15, 102, 110, 112.

¹⁰ Heyd, *op. cit.*, I. 133 ff.; Schaube, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-129.

¹¹ *Liber Jurium Reipublicae Genuensis (Historiae Patriae Monumenta, VII., Turin, 1854)*, I., nos. 12, 31, 45.

¹² *Annales*, I. 28, 29; Schaube, *op. cit.*, pp. 278, 280.

¹³ M. G. Canale, *Nuova Istoria della Repubblica di Genova* (Florence, 1858), I. 108-117.

the carrying trade between Lucca and the fairs of the North might rest profitably in Genoese hands.¹⁴ The climax to this westward expansion in the search for markets came between 1146 and 1149, in Spain. Valencia was successfully penetrated by Genoese diplomacy, and attacks were made on the Saracen power in the Balearic Islands, but only as a prelude to the expedition which conquered Almeria in 1147 under the leadership of the consuls themselves, and from which the booty was immense. Part of the expedition wintered in Spain, so that with further aid from Genoa and the new ally, the Count of Barcelona, a most disastrously expensive attack upon Tortosa was made.¹⁵ The resources of the commune, long overtaxed, were at last exhausted; for five years it groaned under the burden of enormous debts. The brilliant leaders who had directed a remarkable series of expansive thrusts were driven from office. Over eight thousand lire were borrowed in Piacenza.¹⁶ Incomes, castles, colonies were mortgaged for fractions of their real value.¹⁷ Five years of depression, and of failure on the part of the new consuls, ensued, until some of the former leaders were induced in 1154 to reassume the direction of the government, under popular compulsion, real or inspired, and with the archiepiscopal promise of absolution for their past mismanagement.¹⁸

In the course of the period sketched above a definite commercial policy was being formulated. The Genoese sought to make their city the staple town of the northern half of the western Mediterranean, a *mare clausum* of their own like the Adriatic of the Venetians. Ligurian ships between April and October must depart from and return to Genoa, if engaged in any but the coastal trade.¹⁹ In this way the precious trade with the East, the real basis of all their commerce, was assured to the Genoese alone. Naturally, in the search for markets, exclusive privileges were obtained by treaty as protection against Pisan competition.²⁰ Thus did the directors of Genoese affairs succeed in clearing the way for a western outlet to the products of the eastern trade.

¹⁴ G. Caro, *Die Verfassung Genuas zur Zeit des Podestat* (Strasburg, 1891), pp. 12-14; *Lib. Jur.*, I., nos. 47, 63, 64, 93, 188.

¹⁵ *Annales*, I. 33-36, 79-89; *Lib. Jur.*, I., nos. 124, 152.

¹⁶ *Annales*, I. 37-38; Sieveking, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

¹⁷ "In maxima necessitate communis". *Lib. Jur.*, I., nos. 135, 146, 150, 159, 162, 178, 184, 196, 197, 198, 200.

¹⁸ *Annales*, I. 37-38. For the five years of depression, 1149 to 1153, the chronicler gives no information beyond the names of the consuls.

¹⁹ *Lib. Jur.*, I., no. 187; Caro, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.

²⁰ *Lib. Jur.*, I., nos. 189-192, 298-299, 312, 324.

The ten years 1154-1164 constitute the most prosperous decade commercially and in many ways the most significant politically in the history of Genoa in the twelfth century. The finances were re-organized by the group of men who were gradually restored to power after 1154. Having paid more than 15,000 lire in 1154 to the creditors of the commune, chiefly bankers of Piacenza, by 1160 the consuls had freed the city from debt.²¹ The castles, customs, mint, weights and measures, and other sources of revenue were for the most part redeemed; the consuls pledged themselves solemnly in the *Parlamentum*, or assembly of the people, not to mortgage the revenues again beyond the year of their term of office.²² New agreements were made with the Embriaco family for the administration of the Syrian colonies for twenty-nine years.²³ Barbarossa was so skillfully dealt with by the representatives of the city while the construction of the new wall was hastened, that in 1162 he not only legalized the rights of autonomy and of control over Liguria which the city had usurped, but entered into an agreement with them for the conquest of Sicily²⁴—a tempting project, the collapse of which was shortly to lead the prosperous commune once more to disaster, as in 1149.

It was in this decade that the Genoese reaped richly the first reward of their efforts in Syria and of the opening of the western markets. Six mercantile ventures were sent from Genoa to Syria in as many years,²⁵ with a total investment of over 10,000 lire in money and wares.²⁶ From Genoa the proceeds were shipped to France,

²¹ *Annales*, I. 38, 60; *Lib. Jur.*, I., nos. 195, 202-208.

²² *Annales*, I. 41; *Lib. Jur.*, I., no. 212.

²³ *Lib. Jur.*, I., nos. 196-198.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, nos. 236-238.

²⁵ In 1156, 1157, 1158, 1160, 1161, and 1164. E. H. Byrne, "Commercial Contracts of the Genoese in the Syrian Trade of the Twelfth Century", in *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, XXXI. 132.

²⁶ This amount, 10,075 lire, is the sum of the investments for the Syrian trade given by the acts of the notary Giovanni Scriba, *Historiae Patriae Monumenta*, VI., *Chartarum* II., nos. 240-1513. In making the total, only such amounts were used as are there specified for Syria. It is therefore a minimum, but undoubtedly fairly accurate since the investors were careful to stipulate the destination in most eastern enterprises. It would be futile to attempt to compute the value of this sum in modern terms. For the value and fluctuation of the Genoese lira or *libra*, of 20 uncoined soldi or 240 denarii, see C. Desimoni, "Le Prime Monete d'Argento della Zecca di Genova ed il loro Valore, 1139-1493", in *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria*, XIX. 198. More significant for the purpose of this article is the purchasing power of the lira in the twelfth century, of which some idea is conveyed by the following illustrations. In 1158, the annual interest on 16 lire provided the food and clothing of a young boy for a year. *Chart.* II.,

Spain, the Balearics, Ceuta, Bougie, Tunis, Sicily, Salerno, Naples, Rome, Sardinia, and Corsica.²⁷ The conditions under which this wide-spread commerce was conducted are of high importance in the study of the rise to maturity of a medieval commercial city.

One of the most interesting features of the Levant trade in this decade, as I have elsewhere shown, was that at just this point the controlling interest in it was passing from the hands of the Syrians and Jews who had been the purveyors of eastern goods throughout the West for centuries, into the hands of the Genoese capitalists.²⁸ This same change must have occurred elsewhere in the course of the twelfth century, but it can only be traced in Genoa where the records for the period are fairly complete. It would seem that the small but important colony of easterners domiciled and naturalized in Genoa, familiar with all the intricacies of the trade to which the Genoese were new, continued to act as directors of the exchange after the appearance of the Genoese as traders in the wake of the Crusade, until, by the middle of the century, the Genoese were steadily pushing them aside for their own greater profit. In the decade under review this transition was just completed, and a small group of five Genoese families—della Volta, Burone, Mallone, Usodimare, and Vento, associated with whom were an able and wealthy

no. 777. Two and a half lire furnished the food of an adult man for a year. *Ibid.*, no. 679. The wages of seamen for the voyage to the Levant and return, about nine months, varied from 3½ to 5 lire; the wages of a captain for the same voyage were about 10 lire. *Chart.* II., no. 795; Archivio di Stato di Genova, Atti del Notaio Lanfranco, Registro I., f. 59; Notaio Guglielmo Cassinese, ff. 10 v., 11. It cost 8½ lire to hire three men to call a ship, preparatory to the eastern voyage in one instance; 13 denarii (.034 lire) a day for three men to do the same work, furnishing all the materials, in another. *Chart.* II., no. 795; Not. Lanfr., I. f. 167. The expenses of a factor going to Syria in 1190 were estimated at one-half to one lira a month. Not. Lanfr., I. f. 91 v. The price of Saracen slaves varied from about 3 to 8 lire, according to age and sex. *Chart.* II., nos. 294, 1005, 1051; Not. Lanfr., I. ff. 45 v., 46, 60, etc.; Not. Gugl. Cass., f. 86. Mules ranged in price from 4 to 15 lire. *Chart.* II., no. 772; Not. Lanfr., I. ff. 52 v., 53, 134; Not. Ignoti, f. 112 v. A mule could be hired for the journey from Genoa to Santiago di Compostella and return for 3 lire. Ferretto, *Doc. Gen. di Novi e Valle Scrivia* (Asti, 1909), I., doc. 220. A horse was worth about 12 lire. Not. Lanfr., reg. II., pt. I., f. 6 v. A hundred lire would purchase 1000 goat skins, and 150 lire a galley. Not. Ign., f. 30; Not. Gugl. Cass., f. 177. The man of legal training and of noble birth sent to Syria by the Embriachi in 1200 to manage their concessions in Acre, was given a salary of about 75 lire per annum. Not. Ign., f. 160. These illustrations are interesting when compared with Schaube's estimate in 1906 that the Genoese lira was the equivalent of 20 to 24 Reichsmark. *Handelsgeschichte*, appendix.

²⁷ *Chart.* II., *passim*.

²⁸ "Easterners in Genoa", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, XXXVIII, 176-187.

Syrian, Ribaldo di Saraphia, and a Jew, Blancardo, fine types of the Syrian and Jewish merchants of the previous epoch²⁹—practically monopolized the trade with Syria. These families, represented in most cases by a single individual, so dominated the six ventures to Syria in these ten years that aside from their investments and those of the two men mentioned above, less than twenty other persons were able to invest in the trade. Of these only three invested in more than one voyage;³⁰ the others, two of whom were women and one a priest, each invested once.³¹ The sum of these scattered investments was about 2100 lire out of a total of about 10,000 lire, a fair share in appearance, but all of which was invested through the great leaders or their factors in such a manner as to contribute to the profits of the masters of the trade by reducing their operating expenses per lira.

These five families were enabled to assert and to maintain their domination over Genoa's richest trade through a combination of economic and political conditions in Genoa which throw an interesting light on twelfth-century trade.

In the stage of development which Genoa had reached by the middle of the twelfth century, money was not plentiful; dowries, purchases, and even communal loans were still being drawn in terms of articles of trade, principally spices and dye-materials from the Levant.³² These wares could only be obtained from the East by exports of gold and silver. The only classes in Genoa which had a large ready surplus for investment were: first, the landed nobility, who were able to turn their revenues from land into money by sales of their produce, or possessed the right to collect in money as well

²⁹ For the detailed careers of Saraphia and Blancardo, *ibid.*, pp. 181-184.

³⁰ Guglielmo Filardo invested in two voyages, possibly in three, mainly through the Malloni and delle Volte, and at this time he arranged a marriage for his niece with one of the Usodimare family. *Chart.* II., nos. 457, 472, 677, 754, 822. Guglielmo Aradello made two Syrian investments through the delle Volte. *Ibid.*, nos. 424, 664. The third of these investors was Eustachio, an agent and associate of the delle Volte. *Ibid.*, nos. 441, 663, 1104. All three were of the non-noble class, and though long established in Genoa, where they were closely associated with Syrians, Jews, and Greeks, they failed to increase their wealth in this period and cannot be traced after 1164.

³¹ Five were men of the consular nobility, Grillo, Picamiglio, Elia, Nebulone, and di Castello. *Chart.* II., nos. 468, 1110, 1113, 1504. Three were from families of later prominence, Malfiliastro, di Sauro, and Capo di Gallo. *Ibid.*, nos. 484, 487, 673. The others are all obscure, except Stabile, a non-Christian broker and confidential agent for Saraphia, the Syrian. *Ibid.*, nos. 674, 1080, 1082, 1102, 1104, 1106, 1108, 1418.

³² *Chart.* II., *passim*. Especially interesting is the payment to the bankers of Piacenza by the commune in 1154. *Lib. Jur.*, I., no. 202.

as in kind the tolls, duties, and taxes at the harbor, gates, and passes leading to the interior; and secondly, the small merchant class of the previous epoch, mainly Syrians and Jews. The landed classes were constantly increasing their property by purchases, especially in years of economic distress, from the smaller landed proprietors in Genoa and the vicinity.³³ A third class of men was beginning to appear, engaged in a smaller way in the western distribution of the wares from the Genoese market, but they were unable at this time to compete with the great capitalists in the eastern trade. The insignificant industrial class in Genoa apparently did not yet produce a surplus beyond the needs of local consumption, nor were their products such as were demanded in Syria and could be exported in exchange for the precious goods from the sale of which in the West greater wealth could be produced. This economic phenomenon, common throughout southern Europe at the beginning of the Crusades, explains why, in general, participation in the Levant trade was limited to the landed classes.

However, this does not explain how so narrow a group of families, five in number, maintained a grasp on all but twenty per cent. of the bulk of the trade. The explanation for this lies in the peculiarly favorable position occupied by the larger group of families known as Visconti, to which three of the five families above mentioned belonged either by ancient right or by marriage.³⁴ The Visconti were those families, only one of which still bore that name, who were descended from Ido *Viccomes* of the tenth century; the *vicecomites* or *visconti* were formerly the officials of the margraves of Liguria, to whom they owed feudal allegiance in return for the enjoyment of the military and financial rights over the city and over

³³ *Chart. II., passim.*

³⁴ For the Visconti and their privileges, see Desimoni, *Atti della Soc. Lig.*, I, 113, 128 ff.; L. T. Belgrano, *ibid.*, vol. II., pt. I., p. 314, and tab. XIX. ff., in app. to pt. I.; Sieveking, *op. cit.*, pp. 3 ff. The Usodimari were Visconti in origin. Belgrano, tab. XXVI. Two of Ingo della Volta's daughters were married to the heads of the important Visconti families, Spinola and di Castello. *Chart. II.*, no. 349; *Annales*, I. 214. Guglielmo Burone was a brother of Ingo della Volta. Belgrano, tab. XXXIX. The Venti were associated with the *delle Volte* as collectors of the archiepiscopal revenues in the Bisagno valley, and Guglielmo Vento's son was married to the daughter of the head of the Pevere family, one of the most powerful Visconti. Belgrano, "Registrum Curiae Archiepiscopalis Januae", in *Atti della Soc. Lig.*, vol. II., pt. II., pp. 21, 24; *Chart. II.*, no. 364. The daughter of Ugo Mallone was married to a Visconti, di Castello, while Ido Mallone, more active in the Syrian trade, but whose relationship to the head of the family is not clear, was able to invest only as factor for Guglielmo Burone. *Chart. II.*, no. 799. *Ibid.*, nos. 329, 619, 923, 1013, 1115.

Liguria. These feudal rights the Visconti converted into private possessions in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries by alliance of their personal strength with the bishop and the rising communal spirit, of which the crusading expeditions were the first successful expression. The Visconti privileges consisted mainly of the right to collect the taxes and tolls, at the harbor, gates, passes, and at the city markets, important incomes in kind and in money which were hereditary among them. These incomes were apportioned among the Visconti families, on what basis is not clear. It was unquestionably owing to their membership in this privileged class that the Embriaco family had secured the administration of the Syrian colonies and the collection of colonial revenues patterned after those of the Visconti in Genoa itself; whether or not the Embriachi surrendered privileges in Genoa cannot be said.

Thus at both ends of the Syrian trade the Visconti were in a position of great influence and power, economic and political. It would be quite possible for the Visconti to afford special commercial opportunities to their relatives and adherents both in Genoa and in Syria, of such a character as to exclude those commercial rivals whom the Usodimari, delle Volte, etc., desired to shut out; just as the leading Visconti were able to abrogate the rights of certain other Visconti,³⁵ and to utilize the growing strength of the commune for the maintenance of their privileges against the margraves. That some such division of the commercial and financial opportunities had been made is further attested by the fact that the other Visconti refrained generally from engaging in the Syrian trade. Syria was left to the group led in Syria by the Embriachi, in Genoa by the delle Volte. Even the Embriachi did not actively participate in the Syrian trade as investors until toward the close of the twelfth century,³⁶ when their special rights had begun to wane and when the Visconti privileges were being generally attacked. The richest and steadiest source of supply upon which Genoese commercial prosperity was based, the trade with Syria, was in this way limited to a narrow group of feudal families, bent on maintaining their commercial supremacy through political domination in Genoa and in the colonies. The trade with Alexandria, on the other hand, although decreasing in volume as the Syrian trade increased, was open to all able to invest money abroad, for upon it the great families were not able to fasten their hold since they could not control the eastern

³⁵ *Lib. Jur.*, I., no. 239.

³⁶ Between 1179 and 1200 they are found engaged in exports of cloth and money to Syria for the first time. Not. Ign., ff. 5, 160, 160 v.

end, as in Syria, through the Visconti.³⁷ In Constantinople the Genoese footing was so insecure as to afford no such opportunities.³⁸

Here lies one explanation for the growth of the political factions in Genoa in the twelfth century, factions whose deadly feuds at times of crisis threw the city into terrific disorder. The attempt to apportion a commercial and financial supremacy led to economic rivalry and to the formation of political machines for the purpose of securing control over the consular elections. It would be the aim of all the factions to develop the economic possibilities of the commune to the highest degree and to reap the chief rewards for themselves. The mass of the people would benefit from the general increase in trade, without being allowed to share equally in the most profitable branch, the Syrian trade. In the years 1154-1164 the dominant political faction was led by the man whose Syrian investments were the largest of the period—Ingo della Volta, the head of the family of that name, a man of great wealth and energy, father-in-law to the heads of two leading Visconti families. This group, which may be called the della Volta faction, had led the Spanish expeditions of 1147-1149, was driven from office as the penalty of their failure, and had been restored to consular power after the serious depressions of the years 1149-1154.³⁹ In the ten succeeding years, Ingo della Volta, whose wealth increased enormously through the Syrian trade, built

³⁷ The acts of the notary Giovanni Scriba, *Chart. II.*, disclose nearly a hundred individuals engaged in the Alexandrian trade between 1156 and 1164; most of them are of families of lesser prominence, investing smaller sums, although the great families also participated. The relative importance of the two streams of trade in these years, indicative of the increasing significance of that with Syria, will be seen from the following table, compiled from the acts of Scriba. I have been unable as yet to follow the Alexandrian trade after 1164.

Anno	Syria (lire)	Alexandria (lire)
1156	545	1,871
1157	2,074	1,804
1158	2,394	1,307
1160	1,550	1,395
1161	1,988	1,770
1164	1,524	884
	10,075	9,031

³⁸ The total volume from Scriba's acts is only 2007 lire. The trade ceased completely in 1162 after the Pisan attack upon the Genoese there, except for what Stabile, and Blancardo the Jew's brother, Raimondo Capellano, were able to invest there. *Chart. II.*, nos. 1468, 1469, 1506. Cf. Heyd, *op. cit.*, I. 204; Schaube, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

³⁹ The names of the men holding consular office in 1147-1148 do not again appear in the lists of consuls until 1154, except that of the annalist, Oberto Cancellario. After 1154 they rapidly re-established their power. See the lists of consuls in the *Annales* for each year and in Canale, *op. cit.*, I. 412 ff.

up a machine which dominated the consulship, restored the city to unusual prosperity, sent commercial embassies far and wide, asserted successfully Genoese independence of the Emperor, and in 1163 extended its influence into the ecclesiastical field through the election of Ugo della Volta as archbishop.⁴⁰ The downfall of this faction in 1164 was one of the dramatic events in Genoese twelfth-century history and was brought about, as once before, in 1150, by excessive ambition for commercial expansion, which again strained the economic resources of the commune to the breaking-point and ruined the Levantine trade for many years.

Della Volta was by tradition and experience an expansionist. One of his family on the First Crusade had shared the credit for the Genoese victories in Syria;⁴¹ he himself had been one of the chief participants in the Spanish expeditions.⁴² Between 1154 and 1164 he reached the height of his commercial and political power.⁴³ At the head of the Genoese embassy to Barbarossa in 1162, he negotiated the treaty of alliance with the Emperor for the conquest of Sicily.⁴⁴ To that project his faction sacrificed their richest trade; no voyages to the Levant were made in 1162 or 1163, and all efforts were concentrated on the Sicilian preparations. In 1164, when all was ready, Barbarossa twice postponed a decisive answer to the importunate Genoese.⁴⁵ The della Volta faction was in a precarious position: the Syrian trade had been sacrificed, the new colony in Constantinople had been destroyed by the Pisans in 1162 with great financial losses, a brief war with Pisa had resulted therefrom,⁴⁶ and now the Sicilian dream was fading. Rumbblings of discontent were heard in the city. In despair they grasped wildly at a scheme for the addition of Sardinia to their commercial empire in the attempt to erect there under Genoese tutelage a kingdom from which Pisan trade should be excluded, the Genoese to be masters of the whole island with the crafty Barisone, one of the four judges who ruled the island, as king.⁴⁷ The preliminary plans and bribes were arranged in the camera of the archbishop Ugo della Volta, with Ingo and

⁴⁰ *Annales*, I. 75; Canale, *op. cit.*, I. 411.

⁴¹ *Annales*, I. 118.

⁴² *Ibid.*, I. 35, 80; Canale, *op. cit.*, I. 135.

⁴³ For the della Volta-Spinola control over the consulate, see Canale's consular lists, *op. cit.*, I. 414-415. In 1161, when Ingo's son and son-in-law were consuls, the houses and towers of their opponents were destroyed. *Annales*, I. 61.

⁴⁴ *Annales*, I. 65-66; *Lib. Jur.*, I., no. 238.

⁴⁵ *Annales*, I. 157 ff.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, I. 67 ff.

⁴⁷ Canale, *op. cit.*, I. 168 ff.

another of the family present,⁴⁸ and were continued at the court of the Emperor in Lombardy, where Barisone's agent was seeking the crown of Sardinia. The consuls lent Barisone 4000 marks to pay the Emperor for the crown; to raise this sum they mortgaged the communal revenues and possessions at usurious rates. Barisone borrowed vast sums from individuals in Genoa. The expedition sent to Sardinia was a failure and led to a renewal of the war with Pisa. Barisone, fetched from Sardinia, was placed in the charge of the nobles to whom he was indebted, to linger in Genoa for many years as a hostage, a hopeless debtor and embarrassing guest.⁴⁹

In Genoa the anger at the della Volta faction was profound. They had grown rich in a trade in which all were not allowed to share. They had restored the commune to prosperity after the Spanish troubles for which they had been held responsible, only to involve it in elaborately expensive schemes for the conquest of Sicily and Sardinia, the failure of which had brought commercial ruin and enormous debts. In September, 1164, Marchio della Volta, consul and son of Ingo, was murdered; civil war followed and for five years absorbed all the energy of the commune.⁵⁰ The consuls dared not call the *Parlamentum* lest the people should rise in arms against them; unwilling to convoke the *Consilium*, they contemplated retention of office and of power by force, the erection of a despotism. The della Volta archbishop was at last forced to intervene; elections were held and the della Volta faction was once more overthrown. The *Consilium* decreed that consuls should never hold office longer than one year, and that on leaving office they should rank merely as private citizens. The delle Volte were ruined, their towers and houses seized, and soldiers quartered upon them. With them suffered the Venti, Buroni, Malloni, and others whose wealth had grown on the Syrian trade. Five years of civil war, and war with Pisa prolonged to 1175, nearly destroyed the Levantine commerce.⁵¹ The reconstruction of Genoese prosperity took place under other auspices and under different conditions.

In the decade of their political and commercial supremacy the families of the della Volta faction poured the revenues from their

⁴⁸ Chart. II., no. 1466.

⁴⁹ Canale, *loc. cit.*

⁵⁰ *Annales*, I. 168 ff.

⁵¹ No records of voyages to the Levant have been found in the archives for the years 1165-1178. The *Annales* however, I. 200, 206, 214, 229, state for the years 1166-1169, that despite the civil troubles, "naves laboratum iuverunt". Not until 1177 were peace and prosperity restored and the normal commercial life possible again. *Ibid.*, II. 11-12.

landed possessions and their shares in the feudal privileges into the Syrian trade. The profits from the sales of eastern wares in Genoa and throughout the West were in turn used to increase their investments in Syria and also their landed holdings in Genoa. They became wholesale importers and exporters operating through men of lesser rank and means. Their activities illustrate the early use alike of landed income and of feudal privileges as economic commodities, and disclose the importance of the wholesale trade as a means of making money with money, for most of them were growing richer very fast in these years. An illustration from each of the great families will make these points clear.

Ingo della Volta owned one-eighteenth of the salt monopoly; his meadows, pastures, mills, etc., in Sturla alone in 1157 were valued at 1000 lire. He regularly maintained as his agents in voyages to Syria two associates, Opizo Amico Clerico and Ingo Nocenzio. Possessed of his full confidence, they occasionally transferred portions of his capital to other factors and shipowners. As many as three subordinates were thus employed in 1160 in the distribution of Syrian wares in the West. In the absence of his regular agents abroad, della Volta used other factors going to Syria, though his arrangements with Clerico and Nocenzio were so stable and sufficient for his purposes that he seldom entered into other partnerships. The partnership with Nocenzio originally amounted to 300 lire, just previous to 1156; in 1157, della Volta's share alone was 410 lire, while in 1160 it was 689 lire in a total of 1199 lire, the largest fund of its kind in Genoa. The association with Clerico mounted from 484 lire in 1156 to 753 lire in 1160. In both cases expenses were paid and profits withdrawn at intervals according to the needs or desires of the associates. In 1160 della Volta's foreign investments, all founded on his Syrian interests, amounted to 1562 lire as compared with 623 lire in 1156. Throughout the period he supported his son Marchio, a shipowner with casual Syrian interests, in trade to Alexandria, Byzantium, and Spain, and his own agents were selling eastern wares in Sicily, Provence, and northern Africa. The elder della Volta did not noticeably increase his landed holdings, but utilized his commercial gains for political ends. His son Marchio, on the other hand, bought houses in Genoa in this period worth 379 lire and lent 200 lire in pepper to the commune. The delle Volte retrenched markedly after the negotiation of the treaty with Barbarossa in 1162 for the conquest of Sicily, where their trade had long been important. From this project, as from the ill-fated Sardinian scheme of 1164, they had doubtless expected handsome re-

turns to which their eastern profits were to be momentarily sacrificed. Marchio's murder and his father's downfall put an end for many years to the power of this family whose career in politics and commerce embraced so much of Genoese twelfth-century effort.⁵²

Second only to della Volta in the importance of his Syrian investments was Baldissonne Usodimare. He was one of della Volta's associates in the Spanish events of 1146-1149, came into political power with his faction as consul in 1154, and participated in all the negotiations with the Emperor in the following years, as in the plans for the conquest of Sicily and Sardinia. His chief interest was in the triangular trade between Genoa, Syria, and Provence. Oberto of Lucca, domiciled in Genoa, was his agent in this trade for many years. Their original partnership of 264 lire amounted to more than 750 lire in 1159-1160, and reached 950 lire in 1164, when more than 700 lire were taken to Syria by Oberto, beyond stocks in Genoa worth 240 lire and profits deducted at intervals through all these years. Not only had Usodimare's wealth greatly increased, but he had enabled a younger man as his agent to acquire means and experience sufficient to raise him to the consulship in 1182.⁵³

The career of an older man in this group of investors, Guglielmo Burone, a brother of della Volta, is interesting. He had been a youthful crusader in 1127, and sixteen years later served in Syria as Genoese legate. A slave-owner, married to a wealthy woman, he was many times consul, and co-operated with Ingo della Volta in the critical negotiations with the Emperor in 1162. His first-hand knowledge of conditions in the Levant was unique among his friends of the della Volta faction. He invested in four out of the six Syrian voyages of the decade 1154-1164, to the amount of 1233 lire, and sent lesser sums to Alexandria and Constantinople. Agents were maintained by him in Syria for two and three years at a time, while others were sent to France, Spain, Bougie, and Ceuta with the proceeds. From the profits he enlarged his holdings in Genoa regularly; in 1158 alone he bought eight houses for 250 lire. He must have suffered from the collapse of the faction in 1164, since he was so closely identified with its interests as to represent it officially in the famous reconciliation of 1170. In the same year, after forty-three years of public life and a singularly active share in the erection

⁵² The important references for Ingo are: *Lib. Jur.*, I., no. 178; *Chart.* II., nos. 304, 424, 530, 955, 958, among many others. For Marchio, *Chart.* II., nos. 563, 661, 1081, 1155, 1325.

⁵³ Important references: *Lib. Jur.*, I., no. 124; *Annales*, I. 37, 49, 71, 157; *Chart.* II., nos. 775, 957, 1189, 1473. Oberto di Lucca was consul in 1182, 1184, 1197. *Annales*, II. 17, 19, 71.

of Genoese power in Syria, he was one of the Genoese chosen to escort the Byzantine ambassador from Terracina to Genoa when it was vainly hoped that the Byzantine trade might be reopened—a last tribute to his knowledge of the Levant.⁵⁴

The active member of the wealthy Vento family, later important international bankers, who held the lease of the Genoese mint, shared in the salt monopoly and in the collection of taxes, was Guglielmo, many times consul and ambassador. His interests were about evenly divided between Syria and Alexandria. In 1156 he sent an agent to Syria with 300 lire; the results of this investment cannot be followed directly, since the agent apparently remained in Syria, possibly acting under the direction of Vento's grandnephew, who represented him in the Levant at this time and to whom he made remittances. As time went on he sent other sums to Syria, and factors to Sardinia, Sicily, Spain, and Africa with exports of cinnamon, pepper, and dye-woods. Year by year he bought land, mills, aqueducts, and houses in Genoa. Regarded by his family connections as financial adviser, his efforts materially increased their importance.⁵⁵

The last of the great families with Syrian connections in this period was the Malloni. In this instance the head of the family, Ansaldo, one of the old leaders of the della Volta faction,⁵⁶ took no active part in the investments in this decade at least. He may well have done so in earlier years, since of all these families the younger Malloni participated most often in the Syrian trade by journeys to the Levant. The Malloni were clearly not possessed of such great means as their friends. They were associated in trade on the one hand with Guglielmo Burone, on the other with Guglielmo Filardo, a man of lower rank than they, but of considerable means and wide knowledge of the Levant, possibly a Syrian or Jew. In both relationships the Malloni contributed the smaller amounts of capital. Ugo, son of Ansaldo Mallone, sent one son, Rubaldo, to Syria and one to Sicily as agents for himself and Filardo in 1157; Rubaldo remained in Syria for two years and soon after his return departed in the same service for two years more.⁵⁷ By the time he was in

⁵⁴ *Lib. Jur.*, I., nos. 20, 95, 124; *Annales*, I. 28, 35, 45, 64, 65, 231, 235; *Chart.* II., nos. 293, 322, 329, 331, 355, 426, 474, 619, 668, 724, 725, 846, 882, 892, 893, 909, 923, 969, 1013, 1115. Testament of Alda, his wife, disposing of many lire, silks, jewels, and a psalter. *Ibid.*, no. 399.

⁵⁵ *Lib. Jur.*, I., nos. 144, 150, 154, 178; *Annales*, I. 32, 36, 46-47, 65; II. 10-11; *Chart.* II., nos. 328, 347, 354, 364, 404, 471, 473, 505, 580, 584, 600, 617, 636, 740, 794, 932, 939, 940, 1085, 1093, 1098, 1102, 1219, 1354, 1355, 1375, 1410, 1436, 1500, 1502.

⁵⁶ *Lib. Jur.*, I., nos. 124, 162, 166. He was eight times consul between 1133 and 1159, and legate to Byzantium in 1164. *Annales*, I. 167.

⁵⁷ *Chart.* II., nos. 457, 486, 792, 822.

Genoa again, the della Volta catastrophe had occurred, so it is impossible to trace his fortunes. Another young member of the family, Ido, in partnership with Burone achieved more evident success. In 1156 he first went to the Levant for Burone, to be absent two years. Soon after his reappearance in Genoa in 1158 he set forth again for a similar period of trading in Syria and northern Africa. With the proceeds of this voyage he went to France in January, 1161, laden with eastern cloth and cinnamon; by August he was once more in Genoa, where a renewed partnership with Burone for a third voyage to Syria and a commission to collect a debt owed to Conrad of Chiavari by the King of Jerusalem, furnished him with the means for his most prosperous venture. In five years his investment in this trade had increased from 134½ to 488 lire, aside from his expenses abroad for the whole period. Then he too is swallowed up in the collapse of 1164 and is heard of no more in the records until the house of his son was destroyed by the commune, and the gold, silver, and jewels therein confiscated, in 1196, in punishment of an attempt to violate the trade laws.⁵⁸

It is evident from what has been said above that none of the great Genoese capitalists, and only occasionally their sons or nephews, went to Syria in a mercantile capacity. For the most part the actual operations were conducted by an interesting class of professional factors or agents, men with first-hand knowledge of the East, its customs and tongues, upon whom the great families were dependent for skill and guidance. Some of these agents were undoubtedly Syrians and Jews; others were foreigners domiciled in Genoa, whose names and associates suggest the existence of a considerable colony of skilled traders, such as had previously furnished the commercial link between East and West.⁵⁹ Some were itinerant peddlers who flit across the scene but once in a decade. Many were Genoese engaged in mastering the details of the trade, acquiring wealth through their associations with the landed capitalists, making frequent trips, and slowly building up a middle class of the pure merchant type. Considerable wealth was acquired by some of these factors in this period. An agent of the della Volta family, Ingo Nocenzio, is a good example. Nocenzio made at least two voyages to Syria, spent several years there, and also directed for della Volta the sale in the West of the imports from Syria. His trade capital increased tenfold in these prosperous years, quite aside from such profits and

⁵⁸ *Chart. II.*, nos. 329, 619, 914, 915, 923, 1013, 1108, 1115; *Annales*, II. 61.

⁵⁹ "Easterners in Genoa", *loc. cit.* Maiomono, Merlo of Lucca, Ugo di Pavia, Suplicio di Verdun, Ogerio Ascherio Aguxino, etc. *Chart. II.*, nos. 1108, 907, 1102, 1499, 441.

expenses as were paid to him in the meantime.⁶⁰ Oberto of Lucca's original investment of 86 lire with Usodimare in ten years increased to more than 300 lire, though he had withdrawn 383 lire in profits.⁶¹ Alvernacio, a skipper and factor in Genoa for short intervals between his Levantine voyages, had 75 lire invested in a ship in 1156. By 1164 he owned a mill in Genoa, land on the water-front, and paid a dowry of 140 lire for his daughter, a handsome *dot* in that age.⁶² The methods by which the Syrian, Ribaldo di Saraphia, built up a capital fund of more than 700 lire in the Syrian trade, through his personal knowledge of Syria and his shrewdness as an administrator of the estates of minors, I have elsewhere described in detail, as also the career of Blancardo the Jew, second only to Ingo della Volta in capital invested abroad.⁶³ Often enough, on the other hand, the factors depart for Syria, are heard of no more in Genoa, but remain in the East as Genoese colonists. It is probable that many of them took this way of earning their passage eastward and enough to begin life there in a congenial field.

Between the collapse of 1164 and the Third Crusade in 1187, the Syrian trade must have suffered severely.⁶⁴ The debts incurred in 1164, the resultant taxation, the war with Pisa, the disturbances created by the strife between the Emperor and the Lombard League—all were made more difficult to meet by the terrible struggle between factions for the control of the government and by the gathering wrath of the wider ranks of the landed and trading classes.⁶⁵ In the course of these troubles it was only with difficulty that control of the Syrian colonies was maintained.⁶⁶ No sooner was financial and political order partially restored than the successes of Saladin wiped out the Genoese colonies in the Christian disasters in Syria.

⁶⁰ *Chart. II.*, nos. 359, 424-425, 790, 805, 955, 963, 1364-1365, 1406, 1412. Sibilia, *née* Nocenzio, in 1156 made a will leaving handsome bequests, and making Saraphia the Syrian her executor instead of her husband, suggesting a possible Syrian origin of the family. *Ibid.*, no. 283. In 1191 Rogerio Nocenzio sent 402 lire to Syria; his widow Mabilia in 1203 was still interested in the trade. *Not. Gugl. Cass.*, ff. 53, 212. With patience and time the careers of dozens of these factors and their families can be followed for generations. The accumulation of a mass of such material will throw valuable light on the social changes of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

⁶¹ See above, note 53.

⁶² *Chart. II.*, nos. 345, 359, 955, 1149, 1398.

⁶³ "Easterners in Genoa", *loc. cit.*

⁶⁴ The archives disclose records of voyages in 1179, 1182, 1184, 1186. *Not. Ign.*, ff. 3, 6, 12, 15, 17, 20, 21; *Not. Lanfr.*, I. ff. 1, 130 ff., 95 ff.

⁶⁵ Canale, *op. cit.*, I. 191 ff.

⁶⁶ Letters of Alexander III. and Urban III. on behalf of the Genoese in Syria. *Lib. Jur.*, I., nos. 320-322, 345-356.

The permanent downfall of the Christian power in Syria would have spelled the ruin of Genoese prosperity. All the force of the Genoese leaders was thrown into the Third Crusade,⁶⁷ and from the rebuilding of the crusaders' states the Genoese profited richly through concessions more liberal than before.⁶⁸ But in these eventful years great changes become visible in Genoa. The absence of the former leaders on the Crusade was utilized by the wider ranks of the nobility to overthrow the consulate in 1190 in favor of a Podestà who should govern in the communal spirit, not in the interest of a faction.⁶⁹ In Syria the new charters to the Genoese were drawn in the name of the commune alone, not in that of the archbishop and commune. Although the Embriachi were allowed to continue as administrators of the Syrian possessions, they were supervised by consuls and *vicecomites* resident in Syria, appointed by the home government.⁷⁰ As early as 1168, foreseeing the possible trend of events after the quasi-revolution of 1164, the Embriachi had solemnly declared the trade of Gibilet, probably of the other colonies, free to all Genoese citizens, and also to all residents of the entire archbishopric.⁷¹ They were ready to meet the demands of the commune that the Syrian trade should be free, if they might be allowed to remain in control of the colonies even under supervision.

In the Podestà the people had a leader in the fight against feudal and commercial privilege. The feudal families, engaged in a desperate struggle to maintain their political grasp, led now by the son-in-law of Ingo della Volta, Fulco di Castello, were forced to sacrifice their trading interests. Except when departing for Syria in the large crusading expeditions, they were henceforth not often able to participate in the Syrian investments.⁷² The great bulk of

⁶⁷ *Annales*, I. 29, 30-31, 32-33, 36.

⁶⁸ Heyd, *op. cit.*, I. 310 ff.; Schaube, *op. cit.*, p. 169 ff.

⁶⁹ *Annales*, I. 33, 36-37; Caro, *Verfassung Genuas*, p. 33 ff.; Heyck, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

⁷⁰ Heyd, *op. cit.*, I. 332-333.

⁷¹ *Lib. Jur.*, I., no. 256.

⁷² The delle Volte invested only three times—in 1186 (amounts illegible), 1191 (23 lire), 1205 (50 lire). Not. Lanfr., I. f. 96; Not. Gugl. Cass., ff. 57, 273 v. Adalesia, widow of Simone Vento, sent 50 lire in 1205. Not. Gugl. Cass., f. 250. Mallone investments, as a half-century previously, carried by younger members, not by other factors, are found in 1190 in amounts indeterminable, while in 1205 four members of the family sent 247 lire, by a fifth. Not. Lanfr., I. f. 93 v.; Not. Gugl. Cass., ff. 258, 267, 270. The di Castelli, so closely identified with the delle Volte, sent amounts varying from 50 to 334 lire. Not. Lanfr., I. f. 95; Not. Gugl. Cass., ff. 55, 212, 224, 269. The Embriachi, for the first time active investors, take or send sums of from 100 to 460 lire. Not. Ign., ff. 3, 160, 160 v., 161; Not. Gugl. Cass., f. 99. A single investment of the Buroni in 1190,

this rich trade passed into the hands of all Genoese with means to invest, regardless of rank or privilege. This significant change, first seen in the Embriaco agreement of 1168, is clearly visible in 1179 in the first voyage on record after the troubles begun in 1164, and is strikingly evident in all the voyages from that time on, particularly after the revolution of 1190. Hundreds of new names appear in the contracts—names of dozens of families of the lesser nobility, of scores of individuals whose status cannot now be fixed, men from the Ligurian riviera, from Lombardy and elsewhere, immigrants to Genoa, the founders of a new industrial life.⁷³ The deep social significance of this opportunity for the increase of wealth among the masses of the people was not fully felt until a half-century later when the masses rose in strength against the aristocracy as a whole.⁷⁴

It is not entirely possible to trace year by year the growth of the trade in the period from 1179 to 1206. Yet some comparisons with the earlier epoch will disclose the important changes. The total volume of the Syrian trade conducted in six voyages between 1156 and 1164 was slightly more than 10,000 lire. In single years of prosperity and peace in the later period, the yearly average for 1156–1164 was frequently surpassed, and in two instances the total for 1156–1164 was nearly reached in a single year: in 1191 the sum of two ventures, spring and fall, was 6900 lire, and for a single venture in 1205 the amount involved was 8000 lire.⁷⁵ In the earlier period four or five factors went to Syria on each voyage, representing barely more than a score of individual investments of the great families. For the autumn voyage of 1191 thirty-seven contracts involving over eighty individuals survive; for the autumn voyage of 1203 there are eighty contracts representing the interests of about two hundred investors. The largest venture of all, in the spring of 1205, is cov-

the amount unknown, completes the list of the old group, with the Usodimari missing. Not. Lanfr., I. f. 58. These figures are not quite complete, since some of the photographs sent me since 1914 are defective; other photographs of documents noted in 1914 have failed to arrive. Moreover, there may be a few documents dated between 1179 and 1205 in the records of other notaries which I have not been able to examine as yet. Even so, the point is clear that the old families had lost their control of the trade.

⁷³ It is impossible here to give any evidence of the sweeping character of this change without citing long lists of names. Only eventual publication of all the Syrian documents can make it clear to readers unfamiliar with Genoese families of the Middle Ages.

⁷⁴ Caro, *Genua und die Mächte am Mittelmeer, 1257–1311* (Halle, 1895), ch. I.

⁷⁵ These are the totals for these years from the acts of Not. Gugl. Cass. They are the minima for reasons given above in note 72. The difficulties there cited forbid an estimate at present of the total volume for the later period.

ered by 132 contracts containing the names of over three hundred participants.⁷⁶ Sixteen voyages are recorded between 1179 and 1205; in 1191 and 1201 voyages took place both in the spring and autumn.⁷⁷ The fleets of three or four ships required for the trade were regularly met on the return voyage, laden as they were with the precious wares upon which Genoese trade for another year must largely depend, by armed galleys sent to convoy them homeward from as far east as Crete.⁷⁸ In the great ventures men and women, the latter in ever-increasing numbers, from every rank in society were interested. Even the sailors about to depart on the Syrian voyage invested therein the half of their wages for the journey, the portion customarily paid them in Genoa before departure.⁷⁹ The revenues of the commune from the returning merchants and their goods were so reckoned upon by the government that, in 1201, 450 lire were borrowed for the equipment of the navy, to be repaid eleven days after the arrival of the fleet from the Levant.⁸⁰ These are some of the evidences of the growing significance of the trade to the Genoese at large, of the economic shift that led to the popular uprisings of the thirteenth century.

In some ways the most striking contrast between the conditions surrounding the trade in the middle and in the last quarter of the century is the greater facility with which it was conducted. The later dates on which the fleets found it necessary to leave Genoa in order to reach Syria in time for the Christmas festivities suggest improvements in ships and navigation.⁸¹ The wider latitude of movement and judgment, especially in loaning money in Syria, allowed the factors by their associates in Genoa, discloses increased trust in the ability of the agents and greater knowledge of the opportunities of the trade. Much earlier than has heretofore been supposed, the Genoese penetrated the rich markets of the interior, Aleppo and Damascus; by 1203 the factors were regularly permitted and directed to send or carry the investments through the Syrian riviera by sea or by land as far as Aleppo and Damascus.⁸² The factors often

⁷⁶ Anno 1191, Not. Gugl. Cass., ff. 35, 36, 37, 46, 47, 48, 52-58; anno 1203, *ibid.*, ff. 195-225; anno 1205, *ibid.*, ff. 242-273.

⁷⁷ "Commercial Contracts", p. 132, note 1.

⁷⁸ *Annales*, II. 77, 79, 80, 91, 96.

⁷⁹ "Commercial Contracts", p. 150.

⁸⁰ Not. Ign., f. 192.

⁸¹ The date of departure can always be fixed within a day or two from the notaries' books. "Commercial Contracts", p. 132, note 2.

⁸² For example, Not. Gugl. Cass., ff. 201, 207, 225, 267, etc. Cf. Heyd, *op. cit.*, I. 176-177, and Schaube, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-215, where the dates are placed later in the thirteenth century for the Pisans and Venetians, and no mention made of the Genoese.

spent long periods in the East,⁸³ some permanently as colonists, others long enough to return to Genoa with Syrian appellations.⁸⁴ To these agents, sons, nephews, Orientals, goods and money were consigned, at times in response to orders; from them goods and profits were received in Genoa by consignment without their accompanying the shipment. To them letters were sent from Genoa directing their movements and investments in accordance with the demands of the western markets.⁸⁵ Youths were taken by more experienced men to learn the trade in detail.⁸⁶

The improved conditions of trade and the freer participation therein by the masses of the people, toward the close of the period under discussion, are excellently illustrated by the displacement of the rigid form of partnership known as the *societas maris* by the much more flexible *accommodatio*, as I have elsewhere shown in detail.⁸⁷ Another form of investment, the amplified use of which stands forth as evidence of the expansion of the trade, of its increasing security as a means of using capital for speculative purposes, was the medieval variations of the ancient *foenus nauticum* or sea-loan.⁸⁸ The sea-loan was in fairly common use in the Genoese trade in the West in the middle of the century and in the Alexandrian trade, but in the Syrian trade only five instances are found in the decade 1154-1164.⁸⁹ In the later period it was frequently utilized for many purposes—making remittances to agents in Syria, raising money on goods to be exported and given as security for the loan, on stock owned in vessels, and as a method of securing investment capital beyond the means of the merchant departing for the East.

In the sea-loan the lender assumed the entire risk, since payment was contingent upon the safe arrival of the ship and goods or the

⁸³ "Si autem Iannam non redirem", "si morabor ultramar", are expressions found. Not. Ign., f. 162; Not. Lanfr., I. f. 96. Men rent their property or leave it in charge of a servant, taking their wives with them to Syria. Not. Lanfr., I. f. 136 v.; Not. Gugl. Cass., f. 250 v.

⁸⁴ "Bertramo di Syria", "Giovanni Andrea di Tripoli", "Giovanni di Acri", etc. Not. Ign., ff. 108, 128. "Bonvassallo di Antioch", consul. *Annales*, II. 5.

⁸⁵ Not. Gugl. Cass., ff. 53 v., 56 v., 207. 219 v.; Not. Lanfr., I. f. 96. The factors often stipulated that they be allowed to send to Genoa the profits of their transactions. Not. Lanfr., I. ff. 59, 91 v., 95, etc.

⁸⁶ Not. Gugl. Cass., f. 212; Not. Ign., f. 16 v.

⁸⁷ See my detailed study of the associations, "Commercial Contracts", *loc. cit.*, for analysis and bibliography of the *societas* and *accommodatio*.

⁸⁸ For the sea-loan, see W. Ashburner, *The Rhodian Sea Law* (Oxford, 1909), p. ccxiv ff.; Goldschmidt, *Handbuch des Handelsrechts* (Stuttgart, 1891), p. 345 ff.; Schaube, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

⁸⁹ *Chart.* II., nos. 419, 661, 907, 963, 1450.

greater part thereof at the destination. The usual term set for the payment of the loan was one month after the arrival in Syria. The money was either repaid to the lender, who was often a member of the expedition, or to his agent in Syria, or was invested in goods to be sent or brought to Genoa, or else was retained by the borrower after certification of the sum with interest before a notary in Syria, and used by him in *accommodatio*. The advantages to both parties are apparent: remittances to Syria and sums being carried there for investment drew interest during the voyage; merchandise to be exported could be realized upon in Genoa, or bought on credit to be sold in Syria at a price high enough to cover interest and expenses and to afford a comfortable profit. Shipowners and share-holders in shipping secured what amounted to insurance or bottomry. The rates charged are a direct index to the margin of profit in the Syrian trade. In 1157 and 1160, money was loaned for the Syrian voyage to bring the same rate of interest as of profit obtained on merchandise carried by the factor. In 1158, 33½ per cent. was asked for the round trip (about nine months), and in 1160, 62 per cent. was demanded for the outward voyage alone, but with the use of the money in trade and a share in the profits and interest as an offset to the excessive rate. In the period of greater mobility after 1179, the rates, all for the eastward voyage (about three months), rose noticeably. In 1184, when the recent financial stringency in Genoa was beginning visibly to lessen, the rate stood at 41.2 per cent.⁹⁰ Just after the Third Crusade, when the trade was being rebuilt after several years of cessation, it rose to 50 per cent. for small sums, and to 62½ per cent. for a large loan of 400 lire with inadequate security.⁹¹ In 1200 a single loan is found at 45.7 per cent.; the rate varied from 34, 41, and 43 to 46 per cent. in 1203 and rose in 1205 to 50 per cent.⁹² The sea-loan was forbidden as

⁹⁰ Not. Lanfr., I. ff. 1 v., 139, 141 v., 142.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, ff. 91 v., 93 v.; Not. Gugl. Cass., f. 48 v. The borrower of the 400 lire was able to give as security in ship and cargo only 135 lire. *Ibid.*, f. 37 v.

⁹² Not. Ign., f. 162; Not. Gugl. Cass., ff. 206 v., 207, 218 v., 222 v., 224-225 v., 248 v., 252 v., 255, 261, 265. The loans are made in the uncoined silver lira of Genoa, to be paid in Syria in gold besants often designated as "b. sarracinales", "b. di Acri", "b. di Sulie", all of which were apparently accepted by Genoese traders as of equal value, and were Christian imitations of the Saracen gold besant of the pre-Crusade period. Cf. G. L. Schlumberger, *Numismatique de l'Orient Latin* (Paris, 1882), pp. 130-135, and supplement, pp. 9-11. In this connection it may be noted that Schlumberger, following L. Blanchard, *Le Besant d'Or Sarracinas pendant les Croisades* (Marseille, 1880), places the gold besant of Acre only as early as 1201, whereas reference to it is found as early as 1179 in the notarial documents. Not Ign., f. 3. The interest rates here given are all based on the

usurious by Gregory IX. and continued in practice thereafter despite papal prohibition.⁹³

A review of the articles of commerce in the Syrian trade emphasizes the economic difficulties of the trade in its beginnings and the gradual expansion as these disadvantages were overcome. In the middle of the century (1154-1164) one is forced to conclude, from the few references to merchandise, that the great bulk of the investments carried to Syria was in gold and silver. For gold and silver alone could the precious wares of the East be exchanged by an as yet non-industrial folk trading among a people with whose needs they were unfamiliar, and for whom the West in the twelfth century could have produced few necessities and no luxuries. Even the western Christians in the crusaders' states must have found most of their wants more than satisfied without dependence on Europe.

This conclusion, based on recognized economic conditions, is well supported in the period after 1179, when the more widely differentiated classes of investors and factors drew their contracts with specific reference to the nature of the investment, whether gold or merchandise. In that period large amounts of gold and silver were still sent to Syria. Individuals exported it in sums varying in value from 12 soldi to 100 lire, and Simon de Bulgaro in 1200 carried to Syria 1004 lire 6 soldi, apparently all in gold or silver; of this 700 lire was his own, and the balance was entrusted to him by three female relatives and three male associates.⁹⁴ The form in which the exports were made varied—bullion, rings, cups, thread, chains, or expressed in terms of the gold *tareni* of Sicily and the silver *melgorienses* of southern France.⁹⁵ Aside from the need for gold as a purchasing agent, it was a lucrative form of investment in Syria as loans. The Syrian powers must often have been in need of money; but such loans were not always favorably re-

normal exchange of one lira for two besants found in a document of 1191 where no interest was involved. Not. Gugl. Cass., f. 17 v. Could the normal rate of exchange be found for each year, the interest rates here given might be subject to correction.

⁹³ *Decretal.*, Gregory IX., lib. V., tit. XIX., c. XIX.; Schaube, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

⁹⁴ Not. Gugl. Cass., ff. 118, 272; Not. Ign., f. 162.

⁹⁵ For example, Not. Gugl. Cass., ff. 217, 268 v., 271 v., 272, 273, 293 v.; Not. Lanfr., I. f. 143 v. In the great majority of cases the investment is simply stated to be "in auro". The growth of this method of trade in the thirteenth century in Genoa may be inferred from the fact that in 1277 a Genoese merchant who died in Armenia left, with a store of many kinds of cloth, 16 sacks of silver bars weighing 592½ *libre*, bearing a Genoese stamp. Ferretto, *Codice Diplomatico*, II. (Genoa, 1903), p. 178, note 1.

garded by those who did not maintain permanent agents in Syria. The Embriachi authorized their administrator at Acre for the years 1200 to 1202 to loan money to knights or governments as he pleased,⁹⁶ but the average investor often stipulated that his money should be loaned only to merchants on good security, not in usury, nor for the equipment of warships, nor to the crusaders' governments.⁹⁷ Returning pilgrims and crusaders, as well as merchants, must occasionally have had to be financed: one of the largest single loans made in this period was 200 marks of fine silver to Bishop Ralph of Liège in 1191, returning from Syria with a suite made up of his nephew, archdeacon, chaplain, seneschal, butler, and secretary.⁹⁸

One interesting transformation in the trade between 1154 and 1205, is the gradual displacement of gold and silver by cloth as the most important article of export. The position of Genoa at the most northern point of the Tyrrhenian Sea, nearest to Lombardy, Germany, and France, enabled the Genoese to make their city a centre for the distribution of cloth. Familiar with the cloth fairs of southern France from the beginning of their commercial expansion, as with those of Champagne by the third quarter of the century, in the decade 1154-1164 the Genoese were already important agents for the sale of cloth in the West, and had begun to find it a profitable article of commerce in Syria. As early as 1149 the *introitus de canna* was one of the most important revenues of the commune.⁹⁹ Not only did the export of cloth to Syria increase enormously in volume toward the end of the period, but an equally significant change in the diversity of quality, color, and value took place. In the middle of the century the only cloth exported to Syria regularly and in large quantities was the common fustian. A cotton cloth known as *baladinellis*, small quantities of finer sorts as serge, green and scarlet cloth of still higher value, French cloth, and cloth of undescribed quality or color were also sent east.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Not. Ign., f. 160 v.

⁹⁷ The loaning of money by factors to Syrian powers was regarded as dangerous in the middle of the century by some Genoese investors, and difficulties were met in collections. *Chart. II.*, nos. 1106, 1107, 1108. For the period 1179-1205, similar loans are either expressly forbidden (Not. Gugl. Cass., ff. 53, 58, 91, 212), or more often the investment is entrusted "*causa mercandi*", which might be construed as excluding loans. *Ibid.*, ff. 262-266, etc. Cf. Schaube, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

⁹⁸ Not. Gugl. Cass., f. 38.

⁹⁹ *Lib. Jur.*, I, nos. 146, 147, 212. The *canna* was the standard measure of cloth. The development of the Genoese cloth-trade from the notaries' acts would repay careful study. There can be given here only a brief statement of the important phases of it with reference to Syria.

¹⁰⁰ *Chart. II.*, nos. 414, 419, 457, 486, 963, 1504.

When the Syrian markets for western cloth had been developed, not only did fustian of Lombard weave maintain its hold in black, white, and stripes,¹⁰¹ serge in black and blue,¹⁰² *baldinellis* in larger shipments,¹⁰³ but two new and exceedingly important lines of trade in cloth were opened, namely, cloth of English wool, and linen. As early as 1191 an English merchant is found in Genoa selling cloth of Stamford wool; the presence of three English merchants in 1205 in the same trade enables one to assume a profitable connection with England thus early.¹⁰⁴ The Stamford cloth, in white and colors, sometimes dyed after its arrival in Genoa, was exported to Syria in large quantities and, like the more valuable cloths, in pieces, not in bales.¹⁰⁵ The linen in demand in Syria came mainly from France, especially from Rheims, and from Germany; it was shipped in lots worth up to 183½ lire.¹⁰⁶ Beyond these staple cloths, are mentioned great quantities of other sorts, cloth of Liège and Ypres; Corbeil, Mers, Vogue, and Nérès in France; Caparica, near Lishon; Garbo in Africa, Lombard cloth, blue, green, brown, black, and vermilion cloth, or simply *pannis*.¹⁰⁷ The Genoese cloth-trade in the twelfth century, disclosed in the Syrian commerce, is of economic significance in view of the vista opened by glimpses into the records of the thirteenth century, when there developed in Genoa a thriving industry in weaving, dyeing, and finishing, accompanied by a complementary development of Genoa as the wool market for northern Italy.¹⁰⁸

In addition to the staple exports of gold and cloth, the Genoese occasionally exported lead, copper, steel, and nails; helmets, chest-armor, and shields; furs, sometimes in large quantities, coats of lamb, cony, and squirrel; cloaks and mantles of gray or scarlet,

¹⁰¹ Not. Ign., ff. 20, 21, 87 v., 213 v., 219 v.; Not. Gugl. Cass., ff. 212, 256.

¹⁰² Not. Gugl. Cass., ff. 53, 261.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, f. 53; Not. Lanfr., I. f. 96.

¹⁰⁴ Colin, Simon, and Robin of Stamford. Not. Gugl. Cass., ff. 43, 128, 175, 252 v., 255 v. In 1188 Rubeo della Volta was sent to England to arrange for Richard's aid in the Crusade. *Annales*, II. 29. The commercial connection between England and Genoa was apparently the result of the Crusade. It could be traced throughout from the notaries' acts.

¹⁰⁵ For example, Not. Gugl. Cass., ff. 43, 212, 225, 252, 261, 264 v., 265, 272.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, ff. 207, 212, 216 v., 225 v., 261 v., 269.

¹⁰⁷ For example, in addition to the references in the two notes previous, Not. Ign., f. 160 v.; Not. Gugl. Cass., ff. 54, 252 v., 256, 268; Not. Lanfr., I. ff. 91 v., 139.

¹⁰⁸ Pending a satisfactory study of the Genoese wool market, some idea of its importance may be gleaned from the miscellaneous collections of extracts from the acts of the notaries, for reference to which, see "Commercial Contracts", p. 130, note 1.

lined or trimmed with fur; garments, clerical vestments of silk, embroidered in gold and in colors, mostly articles intended for the Genoese colonists in the East. Shares in ships were used as commodities to be sold abroad if good opportunities arose. In addition to this miscellaneous list of wares, hundreds of lire were exported invested in merchandise (*implicatas in mercibus*), impossible to identify but unquestionably of the same general character as the wares specifically mentioned.¹⁰⁹

The wares imported from Syria, as from Alexandria, are those long identified with the Levant trade. In the middle of the century pepper, brazil-wood, alum, and cotton were the staple imports and were used as currency in Genoa by individuals and by the government, evidence of their high value. Next to these in importance came miscellaneous spices—cinnamon, nutmegs, cloves; dye materials aside from the highly prized brazil-wood and alum, such as gall-nuts, saffron, mastic, and indigo; steel blades, of Damascene workmanship no doubt; lacquer, incense, and drugs; silk and cloth of Bagdad; sugar and sugar confections; quantities of unspecified merchandise. All these Levantine wares Genoese merchants distributed throughout the West, in Africa, Spain, southern France, and the fairs of Champagne. The foreigners who frequented Genoa in ever-increasing numbers, Lombards, Arabs, French, Germans, and English, found there a steady supply of eastern goods. The increased use of eastern luxuries in western Europe in the twelfth century, largely owing to Genoese traders, is apparent; the records of the thirteenth century will disclose remarkable advances in this respect.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ *Chart. II.*, nos. 1105, 1457; *Not. Ign.*, ff. 15, 22, 87 v.; *Not. Gugl. Cass.*, ff. 36, 56 v., 222 v., 235–236, 243, 257 v., 266, 272; *Not. Lanfr.*, I. ff. 141 v., 143. The later thirteenth-century records abound in references to armor, cutlery, etc., indicative of the growth of new industries.

¹¹⁰ *Chart. II.*, nos. 335, 501, 508, 597, 644, 652, 734, 988, 1013, 1189, 1312, 1365; *Not. Gugl. Cass.*, ff. 50, 54, 79 v., 233 v., 234, 249, 265. My investigations do not throw a great amount of new light on the imports from Syria in the twelfth century, as given by Heyd and Schaube. An interesting fact is the decreasing number of references to dye-woods at the beginning of the thirteenth century, when the use of native dye-materials, grana, rozia, etc., was increasing as the Genoese dye-industry developed. Here again the notaries' acts are full of rich promise. The lack of many references to silk imports is interesting in view of the enormous imports I have noticed in casual glances into the records of the thirteenth century, when merchants of Lucca and Florence frequented the Genoese markets for silk as for wool. In this same connection a study can and should be made, from the archives, of the Genoese activity in the sale of wares to merchants going to the great fairs.

This review of Genoese commercial expansion in the twelfth century illustrates many of the difficult conditions under which Italian enterprise began to transform European life in the Middle Ages. For the Genoese it was a century of political and economic experiment. They found in Syria a source of wealth that compensated them for their territorial limitations, for their failure to compete successfully with the Venetians in Byzantium, to realize fully their ambitions in Spain, Sardinia, and Sicily. On their Syrian experiences of the twelfth century they were able in the next to submerge Pisa, to grapple on equal terms with Venice, and to found a great commercial empire throughout the Levant. The Syrian enterprises supplied the stimulus and the means through which a young and vigorous folk discovered their opportunities, their strength and weakness. The seizure of control of a rich trade by native capitalists from their Levantine predecessors, the rise and overthrow of feudal privilege, the growth of money economy, the ebb and flow of economic advance despite temporary retardations resulting from efforts beyond the strength of youth, the impulse to an internal industrial development that should if possible keep pace with the maritime trade, the gradual advance in commercial methods, the near approach of credit operations—all are outlined or suggested. It is a chapter in the story of expansion from the stage of village economy to that of international trade, with wide social implications, a chapter duplicated elsewhere in Italy no doubt, but one that can best be traced from Genoese sources.

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