

Florentine networks in the Middle East in the early Renaissance

Francisco Apellániz*

By crossing data from Florentine collections with notarial records produced in Egypt and Syria, this article focuses on the Florentine trading networks operating in the eastern Mediterranean during the fifteenth century. It highlights two factors influencing Florence's long-distance trade in the area: political unrest characteristic of Italian Renaissance cities, and the scant interest of the Florentine government in building diplomatic and commercial institutions. Initially woven by exiled merchant-bankers and offshore companies, the network reconfigured towards the middle of the century around a group of entrepreneurs based in Rhodes, who were deeply entrenched in local finance and in business with the Islamic cities. The article provides a more complex view of relations between government institutions and Mediterranean long-distance trade by approaching the rise of the Medici in Florentine politics and their handling of the network.

Keywords: Mediterranean; networks; Florence; institutions; Medici; Renaissance; long-distance trade

Networks have been used as a primary tool in Florentine historiography since the 1960s. This is due, among other factors, to the illicit character of partisan and factional associations in Florence, the absence of status groups such as a nobility, and the limited role played by the family in business and political institutions.¹ They have received a degree of attention similar to that granted to the *Patriciate* in Venetian historiography, or in Genoa to the *alberghi* – the social aggregation modelled on kinship and cohabitation in an urban context. Networks have attracted sociologists, historians and network scientists alike to the field of Florentine history.² For their part, historians of Italian business communities used to think in terms of crystallized forms of organization, such as the consulates or the merchant communities known as *nazioni*, or 'nations', with their corpus of statutes and officials. In spite of the range and size of its overseas companies, the organization of Florence's long-distance trade has traditionally challenged this institutionally-driven narrative of economic history. By the early fifteenth century only two Florentine overseas communities – those of Bruges and Naples – matched the standards of organized merchant nations.³ Perhaps for this reason recent interest in the Florentine economy focuses on the strategies employed by Florentines to reach out to new Mediterranean markets, and on the extent to which this was achieved through collaborative networks and without the involvement of consulates and corporate bodies.⁴ A parallel, although strongly connected, issue here is exile. The 'problem of the exiled merchant' has permitted authors such as Fernand Braudel and Richard A. Goldthwaite to move beyond the study of companies and consulates and to insert a third layer of business organization into their studies of the Renaissance economy, namely that of networks. Braudel has emphasized the way Italian migrants who arrived empty-handed

*Email: francisco.apellaniz@cui.eu

in European cities of commerce could join a 'ready-made network'. This has in turn raised the issue of the ties binding banished merchants to other Florentines.⁵ Unlike the major Italian and western European centres, and despite their appeal as hubs in the spice trade, eastern Mediterranean cities did not host large groups of Florentines, but they did attract intriguing associations of exiles, long-term migrants and individuals fleeing from debt or political vendetta. By shifting the focus to this neglected scenario, and by delving deeper into the circumstances that had an impact on the behaviour of Florentines abroad, this article sheds new light on the way merchants organized their business in spite of a lack of government support. In addition, it gives new insight into the connections between the long-distance trade in the Mediterranean and political and social unrest in Italian cities. Rather than organized communities of successful citizens backed by state policies, this article argues that Florentine involvement in the eastern Mediterranean was the result of networks modelled by political strife and lack of government control, which were able to accommodate heterogeneous social actors. Finally, by monitoring the network's transformation in the long term, the article provides a more complex view of relations between government institutions and trading networks.

The first circumstance influencing the composition of Florentine networks is the lack of government support. Historians are sceptical about the efficacy of Florentine efforts to engage in the markets of Egypt and Syria in the fifteenth century. Starting with the conquest of Pisa in 1406 and with Florence's access to the sea after the purchase of Livorno, this narrative emphasizes a series of major institutional and diplomatic events. Florence established relations with the Hafids of Tunis in 1421, sent diplomats to the Black Sea, and signed the first treaty with the Mamluk sultans of Syria and Egypt in 1422. This narrative highlights the decision of the Commune to launch a state-run system of galley convoys in the Mediterranean, a project built on a Venetian precedent. This scheme was designed to connect Florence, among other cities, with Beirut or Alexandria. However, the galleys arrived irregularly in the region, and only a few trips to Egypt and Syria are documented. The unfulfilled enterprise of the galleys matches the story of diplomatic treaties. The celebrated diplomatic mission to Cairo in 1422 did not fulfil Florentine hopes of imposing the gold Florin, nor did it secure regular trade through the galleys or sponsor a stable merchant community in the Sultanate territories.⁶ Attempts to gain privileges from the Sultan towards the end of the century were not successful, and the consulate seems to have disappeared at some point during the 1470s.⁷ Histories of the Levant trade leave the reader with the impression that the institutions underpinning the activities of the medieval merchant had failed, and that Florentines could not trade because of constant interruptions in bilateral relations.⁸

Today, there is an increased interest in Florence's overseas economy, with historians shifting their focus from economic to organizational issues, such as the ways agreements were enforced and business relations managed long-distance, particularly in the absence of a centralized legal system. Institutional economists have claimed that the size of Florentine companies made it unnecessary to maintain a proper consular network.⁹ This is consistent with the intriguing tendency to conceal Florentine activity under other flags. In the crusader kingdoms, in Cyprus, the Maghreb or in Iberia, Florentines embraced Pisan or Genoese identity and put themselves under the jurisdiction of other consuls.¹⁰ A narrative by Matteo Villani about Florentines in Tunis suggests that where they were not legally entitled to trade under Pisan protection, they did so by fraud, and some Florentines still presented themselves as *florentinus sive pisanus* in Egypt in the 1430s.¹¹ Although at a later stage Florentines rid themselves of foreign surveillance in order to negotiate their own commercial privileges, this was rarely

accompanied by setting up consulates and warehouses, as occurred after the missions to Cairo in 1487, 1489, 1496, 1497 and 1508.¹² The tendency to build institutions was not upheld after the 1420s, and by mid-century the Commune lost interest in maintaining consulates in the eastern Mediterranean other than in Constantinople.¹³ If the Florentine government granted insufficient institutional support to its merchant bankers abroad, the *nazione* was subject to little regulation either. Definitions of Florentine identity used in government decrees remained ambiguous, and commercial privileges were not necessarily extended to the merchants of the newly conquered Tuscan cities. But, despite the fact that the interest of the Florentine government in regulating political belonging by systematizing citizenship, extending safe conduct passes or providing consular protection was very weak, networks of Florentine merchants and bankers still formed in the main hubs of the Middle East and the eastern Mediterranean. This process culminated in the establishment of a powerful, though ignored, group of entrepreneurs in Rhodes. This group was deeply entrenched in local finance and in business with the Arab territories.

The second factor influencing the composition of Florentine networks was domestic factional strife. Political turmoil in Florence generated various waves of exiles that intermingled with the *official* networks. From the early fifteenth century, exiles arriving in Egypt via Venice joined with minor agents working for exiled managers, such as the Alberti.¹⁴ The triumph of the Medici in 1434 aggravated this situation, as it provoked an unprecedented wave of exiles from among the ranks of the business elite. The ‘problem of the exiled merchant’, whereby no Florentine merchant banker could survive banishment without the support of his fellow nationals, became conspicuous in the eastern Mediterranean, where fugitives flocked in large numbers.¹⁵ The chronology of this article corresponds, broadly, to two generations of exiles. The first is associated with the popular government of 1382 and with the reprisals taken against its supporters after its fall. The second relates to the opponents to the Medici party, who were banned after Cosimo’s return in 1434. Together with merchants sentenced to exile, Florentine networks also hosted businessmen fleeing their creditors as a result of bankruptcy or debt. These exiles, we argue, fed into the long-distance trading networks of Florence either as agents of the last clusters of companies, or by establishing new commercial firms abroad.

There is no collection among the Florentine archives that can be systematically used as a source of information for the Middle-Eastern enterprises of its citizens. Although the best-known data come from the diplomatic collections, these sources dwell on the official trade of the galleys, consulates and missions conducted by diplomatic agents. The Venetian notaries operating in Alexandria provide new information on the consulate and the galleys (their arrival in 1445 is vividly depicted in the deeds), but also, and especially, they capture decades of individual associations that can be used as a starting point for the present study.¹⁶ When crossing names reported by the Venetian notaries with other Florentine and Mediterranean collections, what emerges is a web of interpersonal relationships, sometimes accompanying institutional history as a *basso continuo*, but most often as its counterpoint. For instance, many merchants identified by Elisa Soldani as operating in Catalonia or the Midi were themselves involved in business in the East, or were connected to the area through agents mentioned in the Venetian casebooks. The resulting picture captures new connections within the ‘international Florentine network’, a term coined by Goldthwaite to describe the group of expatriate merchants and bankers and the multiple ties that bound them together. Although Florentine activities in the Ottoman Empire have received some attention, the networks

targeted in the present article had Arab cities such as Alexandria and Damascus as their ultimate destinations. These cities lay a great distance from Florence. Shipping, trade and intelligence networks linking Florence with the Mamluk Sultanate were based on intermediary hubs that cannot be disentangled from the geography of Florence's Eastern trade. Most of these associations were created along the trade route, in places such as Venice and Rhodes.

Company networks

Together with other Crusaders, Florentines left Arab soil in 1291. The bankruptcies of the 1340s and the Black Death took their toll on most Florentine commercial and banking enterprises in the eastern Mediterranean. The story of the decades that follow is somewhat obscure. Out of the 165 individuals mentioned as present in Alexandria during the 1360s, only three were Florentine, and none can be found in the early 1390s.¹⁷ We know little about Florentine business in the early fifteenth century because most ventures were launched by Florentine companies abroad. Some firms, such as the Datini, Portinari, some branches of the Medici, the Alberti-Soldani of Barcelona and the Tecchini of Perpignan, managed to enter the Levantine trade in this period. The last two companies had previously entrusted their capital to Catalan merchants who travelled to Egypt, although at one point they turned to agents to conduct their business in the area, and even purchased their own ships. The managers of these companies, such as Piero Tecchini, Diamante Alberti and Filipozzo Soldani, either as a result of banishment or for commercial reasons, developed their business in Barcelona and the cities of the French Midi.¹⁸ Benedetto di Filippo Arrighi and Litti Corbizi were agents of the companies that arrived in Alexandria in the early 1400s. They operated for the Tuscan companies of the Datini, Tecchini and Alberti for years, but we lose trace of them after their departure for the Mamluk Sultanate. They are well documented in the Datini correspondence, re-emerging again in the casebooks of the Venetians notaries in Alexandria.¹⁹

The most colourful description of the vicissitudes of these pioneers comes from a lawsuit in Florence in 1404.²⁰ The plaintiff, Giovanni di Bartolo, was an agent for the Alberti-Soldani company of Barcelona. The company managers, eager to improve business with the Mamluk Sultanate, had planned a trip to Alexandria and purchased a new ship for the journey. In order to procure Western merchandise to ship out to the Sultanate, di Bartolo was sent to Majorca and then to Venice. However, when the news of Tamerlane's destruction of Damascus reached the company managers, they changed their minds, and he was redirected to the Maghreb, Fes and Mars al-Kabir where he stayed until 'they sent for him'. After that he was sent several times to Spain and to other locations in North Africa. But a fuller description of a Giovanni di Bartolo Carocci only emerges from an account of his previous, long career as a freelance agent in the Maghreb, as detailed in the Datini letters. He had been operating in the area since at least 1384, when he was taken prisoner by pirates and brought to Tunis.²¹

The first Medici companies also launched commercial ventures in the area. From a declaration of arbitration in 1391, we learn that Francesco di Bicci and Vieri di Cambio shipped a large amount of northern Italian cloth from Venice to the Eastern markets, where they relied on the services of an entire network of Tuscan commercial agents. These included Andrea di Sinibaldo da Prato, the agent of the Portinari on the Damascus-Beirut axis, and Piero Zanobi and Bettino di Bartolo, who covered the Constantinople-Tana trading route.²² The Datini company only had a few connections

with the Black Sea, but when it did operate there, business was conducted through the same proxies employed by the Medici, such as Bettino di Bartolo. The same can be said for Andrea de Sinibaldo, who worked for Vieri while he was (officially) only known as the Damascus agent of the Portinari Bank of Venice.²³ Datini's agent in Damascus, Beltramo Mignanelli, who became a world historian and travelled to the Persian Gulf, also made use of the Venetian notarial services.²⁴ These firms mobilized a remarkable network of Florentine and Tuscan agents, although much of their trade by-passed their natural centre in Florence.²⁵ As the last large merchant-banking houses faded during the early fifteenth century, making way for individual partnerships through resident merchants, exiles gained weight within the Florentine networks. The story of the Mannelli family is the untold account of an exiled family group who managed to turn exile to their favour, and prospered abroad by entering into partnerships with other expatriates and investing their money in trade in the Middle East.

According to the Florentine practice, the Mannellis were forced to choose between renouncing their surname – which would weaken kin solidarity – and exile. In the 1380s, the family was repeatedly sentenced to banishment because of their support for popular government.²⁶ As a result, male members of several branches established themselves in the French Midi and Catalonia. A first branch was constituted by the sons of Arnaldo, who arrived in Egypt after having settled in Barcelona in the early 1400s. A parallel, second branch included the four sons of Niccolò, who, scattered through various western cities early on, settled for the rest of the century in Avignon, where the bulk of the family business was managed.²⁷ A third branch can be located around the figure of Ramondo d'Amaretto Mannelli (1388–1464), who was probably born in exile. Ramondo started as an agent for the Datini Company and was sent to Syria as early as 1408. His business grew and he later founded his own banking and commercial enterprises.²⁸

Francesco and Giovanni di Arnaldo Mannelli first settled in Barcelona during the late 1390s. They quickly realized the opportunities for trade with the Levant, particularly as the city ran regular expeditions to the Middle East fuelled by a dynamic system of *commenda* contracts. Thereafter, they successfully entered the restricted network of the Catalan trade with the Middle East and organized several ventures.²⁹ The Alexandrian records show that they probably stayed in Egypt for extended periods of time. Francesco's presence in Alexandria is recorded on many occasions between 1400 and 1404, and Giovanni's between 1404 and 1406, while their cousins settled in Barcelona and Genoa in the early part of the century. They may have been considered as the reference merchants in the eastern Mediterranean not only for the Florentines in Catalonia, but also for those in the French Midi. Indeed, Francesco, together with a Florentine associate, Roberto Aldobrandini, arranged and managed the investments of Florentines in Montpellier and Avignon.³⁰

With the family's political rehabilitation, the government took advantage of their expertise. Francesco di Arnaldo went on to play a major role in Florentine oriental enterprises. After a long silence, he appears again in the diplomatic mission that induced Florence representatives to sign the 1422 treaty with the Sultan. Francesco re-emerges as an experienced patron in charge of one of the galleys, and was appointed consul in Alexandria shortly afterwards.³¹ He replaced his predecessor, Ugolino Rondinelli, after the latter's death, and remained in charge for no less than ten years. He was only removed as consul when a bilateral crisis flared up. From then on, with an established consulate in Alexandria, the prestige of the Mannelli family grew steadily in Egyptian trade and business.³² Francesco went into business with Mamluk merchants

and officers, sometimes underwriting contracts in Arabic,³³ and gained a reputation as a reliable agent among high-born Florentine investors. He emerges as the mediator with the French merchants in Alexandria, as a witness for their agreements or settling their disputes by mediation.³⁴

The family involvement in navigation extended down through several generations, not only through the galley system but also in private shipping.³⁵ Francesco continued to ship freight galleys under Florentine protection, whilst his relative Ramondo became the first admiral in the history of the Republic. From an indirect source, we know that Ramondo was held prisoner in the Maghreb.³⁶ Ramondo's son, Piero, also captained galleys, and can be found in Egypt as late as the 1450s.³⁷ However, many aspects of this Mediterranean involvement remain to be explored, such as the family presence in Rhodes, where a Mannelli palace still exists, and the activities of the Mannelli-Tecchini firm of Avignon.³⁸ As late as the 1480s, descendants of the Avignon branch were still founding new trading companies in Constantinople.³⁹

Exile triggered the family diaspora, and many members became citizens or long-residents in Barcelona, Avignon, Montpellier and Valencia. Some branches remained in the French Midi at least until the late fifteenth century and others settled in Naples and later accessed the financial milieu at the papal court. The family story is a prime example of the network's transformation throughout the century. From Ramondo's modest beginnings at the service of Datini, the family fortunes grew substantially through their involvement in the Order of St John. With several members knighted,⁴⁰ Rhodes became the gateway to business with the Curia, and to becoming friends and partners of the Medici. Francesco's son, Guido, achieved the highest social ascent. Often entrusted with diplomatic missions by the Signoria, he brokered a new agreement with the Mamluks in 1481.⁴¹

A government-sponsored network

The rise of the Medici in Florence's political life dramatically changed the configuration of Florentine trade in the region. From 1434 and for the rest of the century, individuals close to the Medici faction were appointed as consuls in Alexandria, galley patrons and captains. Minor Medicis and family friends were dispatched in diplomatic missions to Mamluk and Ottoman lands, while Cosimo had entrenched financial interests in Rhodes from 1452, as banker to the Knights Hospitaller.⁴² Since the return of Cosimo from exile, the Florentine presence in the Levant can no longer be explained as the sum of single-venture enterprises by commercial companies, or of institutional efforts to establish navigation convoys and consulates. Rather, Florence's involvement in the East was increasingly in the hands of a network of entrepreneurs close to the Medici family. When necessary, government institutions such as the *Dieci di Balìa* intervened to support its members by, for example, securing the rescue of debtors or endorsing their appointment as Knights. This interest in Rhodes as a financial and trading hub never meant the setting up of a consulate. A ledger containing instructions issued by the *Dieci di Balìa* suggests that the Alexandrian consulate was suspended for several years prior to 1465, and then definitively in the 1470s. It is clear from these documents that the government concentrated all representation in Constantinople under a single operational consulate 'of the Levant'.⁴³

The core of this powerful Rhodian network comprised bankers and businessmen close to the ruling faction, including the representative of the Medici Bank, Bernardo

Salviati. Exiles, persecuted merchants and venture capitalists/businessmen gathered around this core in a quest for Medici patronage, political rehabilitation or for benefits in the Order. The resulting group, comprising several members of the Mannelli, Peruzzi and Bardi families, as well as newcomers such as the Martini, conducted business together, amassed investments through *accomandita* contracts,⁴⁴ represented the major Florentine banks in the eastern Mediterranean (such as the Spinelli and the Strozzi), organized commercial ventures to the Sultanate, and supported one another in family and probate affairs. We find them acting as witnesses to marriage deeds and paying dowries on behalf of each other, or even designating compatriots as heirs. As financiers, they combined strategic interests both in Cyprus and in Rhodes, ranging from alum to soap and from banking to sugar, all under Florentine control. As a trading network, through partnerships, friendship or family ties, it was connected to Egypt and Syria, as well as to the main Florentine communities in the western Mediterranean. The Signoria handled the interests of the Medici Bank in the area in the same way as state affairs. Diplomatic correspondence announced the arrival of his managers, as in the case of the visit to the island by the general manager, Francesco Sasetti. Government councils sometimes summoned the Knights to help Florentine bankers such as Giovanni Peruzzi and Gentile de Bardi to collect their unpaid credits.⁴⁵

Between the late 1440s and 1460s, the Florentine network cultivated a special relationship with the Order, but also linked Rhodes to the broader community of the Florentine overseas economy. Bernardo Salviati headed an important group of companies legally based in Pisa; he was knighted and granted citizenship and served the Order in financial and military matters.⁴⁶ His partner, Giovanni Peruzzi, was entrusted with a diplomatic mission to the Mamluk Sultan.⁴⁷ These Florentines were related to each other through a dense web of ties and partnerships. For instance, another important node in the network was Gentile de Bardi, the owner of a palace in Rhodes, in partnership with Giovanni Peruzzi, linked socially to Ugo Peruzzi and Bernardo Salviati, and himself involved in the financial matters of the Order as a leaseholder of several important trades.⁴⁸ From Rhodes, he engaged personally in several business trips to the Sultanate and eventually acquired Rhodian citizenship.⁴⁹ Together with his relative Edoardo de Bardi, a merchant-banker of Avignon, he enriched the Florentine connection between Egypt and Provence.⁵⁰

Rhodes was the place where news about the Mamluk and Ottoman territories was gathered and passed on to the Florentines. Men such as Gentile de Bardi played a significant role in circulating information for potential investors in the East. He is quoted as an authoritative source in a business correspondence between Filippo Strozzi and an anonymous informer in the East.⁵¹ Reported by two Egyptian chroniclers, an incident in 1475 was also described in a much more detailed version in a report addressed to Filippo Strozzi. These letters deal with the kidnapping in Alexandria of two prominent merchants, Badr al-Din Ibn Olayba and Ya'qub al-Burulussi.⁵² Florentine Knights such as Matteo Federighi produced sophisticated reports about major events in the Ottoman Empire and the Mamluk Sultanate. Even decades after their departure, information was clearly a capital to be invested in by Federighi and other Florentine expatriates, strengthening their own patronage networks at home. When Federighi believed the information to be especially valuable, the letters were dispatched to Lorenzo de' Medici in person.⁵³ This can be seen in an early account of a battle between the Mamluks and Ottomans at Adana in August 1488, which was accompanied by sketches.⁵⁴ Gossip, business and political information was thus dispatched from Rhodes to Florence by the Florentine Knights, but collected by Muslim merchants or diplomatic envoys.

Moreover, the Knights had their own web of informants operating in Egypt.⁵⁵ These merchant networks complemented the postal service provided by the galleys.⁵⁶ In exchange, Florentine informers solicited the aid of patrons, in the appointment of Florentine acquaintances as Knights, for instance, or for other interests and concerns.

Exiled agents had traditionally taken part in the Medici companies. Giovanni Benci, the manager of the Avignon branch of the Medici Bank, was accompanied by his brother-in-law Verano di Bartolomeo Peruzzi, son of another Peruzzi exiled in 1434. By the same token, Filippo Strozzi, whose life had been marred by his father's banishment and the subsequent ruin, was hired by the Naples branch. While Filippo launched commercial ventures with the Middle East, Verano took an active part in financing the Hospitallers through the Medici Bank. The life of Luigi Peruzzi helps us understand how these bonds were created and interwoven. The son of the prominent anti-Medicean Ridolfo Peruzzi, he was exiled in his youth, spent 'most of his life' abroad and was never allowed to return. He took advantage of his city of exile – the port of Ancona on the Adriatic – to organize business ventures in Greek and Syrian lands.⁵⁷ Evidence of his stay in Rhodes in the late 1440s presents Peruzzi as a collaborator of Salviati and friend of the general manager Francesco Sassetti. The picture was of a Florentine citizen exiled by the Medici regime, but in close contact with those who had put a price on his head.⁵⁸ In one case, Luigi Peruzzi paid the dowry of Gianna, a Russian slave who gave birth to the illegitimate son of Bernardo Salviati, and who was later married off to another man.

But what is interesting in Peruzzi's case is the ideological use of 'belonging' that emerges in his quest for patronage. As a patrician merchant-writer, he had a literary correspondence with both Gentile de' Bardi and Francesco Sassetti, in which he discusses exile and provides the reader with some glimpses of his life. Moreover, while in exile, Peruzzi composed two important biographies of Tuscan men of letters, Dante the illustrious Florentine exile, and Petrarca. In the *Epistle to Gentile de' Bardi* (1470), Peruzzi dwells on the political difficulties of both families, setting Florentine 'affinity' as the basis for the friendship between the two men. Peruzzi styles himself as a 'Noble Tuscan who could not bear assimilation' and evokes the strong psychological ties binding Florentines to the lands of Provence and Syria, qualified here as the 'working lands' of expatriates. Nostalgia and travel are evidently the ties that bind, and these were expressed in *belles lettres*. As we shall see, this appeal to high culture as a way of emphasizing Florentine belonging was not unique.⁵⁹

In the Rhodian-Florentine network, exiled and non-exiled members of the same families were embedded in a dense web of ties. Some members of the Peruzzi family, such as Ugo and Giovanni di Rinaldo, were actively involved in the Medici Bank and in the financial affairs of the Knights. Representatives of other exiled branches, including Pierozzo di Antonio and Bindaccio di Bernardo, operated in Damascus in the 1460s, where they were involved in purchasing spices from the Mamluk government. After an initial transfer to Venice, some descendants of exiles became involved in the trade with Egypt. They included the Dini and Arcangeli families, and probably the Davizzis as well.⁶⁰ This branch of the Peruzzi followed this pattern, as Bindaccio's father was initially exiled to Venice by Cosimo. This did not stop subsequent generations from regaining Medici patronage through reintegration in the Rhodian network. A grandson, Bernardo, was knighted, and acted as Lorenzo's agent when seizing the Pazzi conspirators who had fled to Istanbul. He brokered the last negotiations with the Mamluks in 1508.⁶¹

Rhodes was a good place for political exiles, fugitive merchants and other entrepreneurs being sued for debts or even bankruptcy elsewhere. Although the government usually took action against cheating Florentines abroad, outlaws and merchants in trouble made a living linking Rhodes and Alexandria, and almost invariably they appear to have been on good terms with the official members of the network. A well-known financier in Barcelona, Filippo Pierozzi, went bankrupt in 1462. While this alarming news was spreading in business correspondence throughout the Mediterranean, he fled to Alexandria and then to Rhodes, where the Knights granted him safe-conduct. He obtained protection from the Knights as the Order's banker in the Iberian Peninsula, where he collected the money of the Spanish Priorities as correspondent of the Medici Bank.⁶² Bartolomeo de' Medici also settled in Alexandria immediately after being ejected from the Medici Bank in Barcelona for his debts. His situation was further aggravated by his son's involvement in a political plot.⁶³ Similarly, the Della Seta brothers started to do business in Alexandria when they went bankrupt in the late 1440s. They were long-time residents in Barcelona, where their goods were being seized to satisfy their creditors. They secured an important investment in spices in Alexandria in 1447, clearly as a way protect their money.⁶⁴

The Martini brothers appear as a powerful group on the financial scene in Rhodes and Cyprus in the mid-fifteenth century and under the Venetian flag. The family origins have puzzled researchers, as they are not among the patrician ranks that dominated the Venetian economy.⁶⁵ Rather, they belonged to the families that had emigrated from Lucca to Venice in the fourteenth century. They certainly arrived in the domains of the Lusignan after several generations, now naturalized Venetians. Like many skilled immigrants in Venice, they took advantage of Venetian citizenship to engage in overseas trade, which was legally forbidden to non-citizens.⁶⁶ Giovanni and Alvise are documented as being merchants in Damascus in the early 1430s, and the former can be found later in Constantinople in the mid-1430s.⁶⁷ Giovanni operated in the same business milieu as Ugo Peruzzi, whom he may well have known.⁶⁸ Both brothers climbed the ladder of the Knights' chancery as financial brokers, then becoming involved in bigger operations as leaseholders in sugar production. The Martini brothers commercialized and exported sugar produced in the Grand Preceptory entrusted to the Hospitallers in Cyprus. From the early 1440s up to 1453, they advanced as much as 3,000 Ducats to the Order to secure the contract.⁶⁹ Together with Ugo Peruzzi, Girolamo appears as a prominent banker in Rhodes by 1451, financing the activities of the Aragonese galleys in the area to the tune of 2,000 Ducats.⁷⁰ By that time, it is clear that both brothers had entered the elite financial circles associated with the Knights. As Venice's financial influence over the king of Cyprus grew, the Martini became more powerful as the bankers for his neighbours, the Hospitallers. In reaction to this intrusion, Giovanni and Girolamo were expelled from the island in 1453, but they were back in business under their former protector and new Grand Master of the Order, Jacques de Milly, taking up new contracts until at least 1464.⁷¹ It was during these difficult years that the brothers married the daughters of Bernardo Salviati.⁷² This double marriage sealed a powerful alliance around the representative of the Medici Bank, extending over a range of financial activities. Indeed, the Martini-Salviati later expanded their operations into Cyprus by becoming the king's tax farmers, particularly during the 1460s. These activities have been interpreted as a sign of their economic success in Venice and the increasing credit dependence of the Lusignan monarchy on the Venetians. However, by that time Girolamo was already registered with the *Arte della Lana* in Florence, had become a Florentine citizen by marriage, and was also the son-in-law of the Medici agent in the

eastern Mediterranean. As leaseholders of key monopolies, the Martini entered the Medici sphere when Cosimo – as it has been recently pointed out – became the Depositor-General of the Order.⁷³ Curiously enough, Giovanni – and probably his brother too – still operated under the Venetian flag, but the family company had a solid base in both cities. When in 1467 the king decided unilaterally to break the conditions of the Cyprus contract, it was the Venetian government that was called to intervene. Unlike Florence, which had only gained influence in the Rhodian affairs, Venice was the regional hegemonic power and main diplomatic actor on Cyprus. To what extent did the Venetian senators know they were defending Florentine interests?⁷⁴

Most probably, the Martini's Tuscan origins were never forgotten, and were used to build new ties with the Salviati family. When Girolamo Martini settled back in Venice after life as a merchant in the East, he built the famous family chapel in the church of San Giobbe. The chapel was packed with fine artworks in the Florentine Renaissance style. Its vault, decorated by the Della Robbia brothers, was a unique, and unusual, piece of architecture in Venice. Giovanni himself and his descendants, the Martini-Salviati, became patrons of Florentine painters and sculptors. Giovanni commissioned a chapel in the Medici-sponsored church of San Domenico di Fiesole, and the construction of a Florentine palace by Giuliano da Sangallo. Through the enthusiastic display of Florentine Renaissance aesthetics, the brothers were not only evoking their remote Tuscan origins, but also celebrating their successful incorporation into the Florentine network.⁷⁵

The Rhodian trading network

From a commercial viewpoint, the Rhodian network extended beyond the immediate region and dealt with the conduct of trade in Mamluk cities. Florentines worked either through individual ventures launched from the island (a model previously adopted by the Catalans) or through agents settled in the Sultanate with a network of personal contacts and business relations. The fact that Rhodes lay under the Knights' jurisdiction offered several advantages. The Sultan expected that the regular trade along galley routes would contribute to his own revenues, mainly through the purchase of official, Sultanian spices. This issue was discussed by the *Consoli del Mare* when the galleys made an exceptional voyage to Syria in 1464.⁷⁶ Rhodes helped to circumvent such inconveniences, and indeed was consolidated as the favoured commercial harbour for the Florentine Galleys at the expense of Alexandria and Beirut. The Rhodians were generally on bad terms with Venice and gave shelter to pirates and smugglers, thus harming the Venetian trading interests. They also favoured Greeks and Jews, who could not trade freely in the Venetian colonies.⁷⁷ The Master of the Order, moreover, granted safe-conduct to Muslim traders, and the Sultan's spices were available in Rhodes.⁷⁸ Supposedly devoted to combating the Muslims, the Order became increasingly involved as a diplomatic and commercial partner of the Muslim powers in peacetime and, as Matteo Federighi admitted in one of his letters, a good many Turkish merchants trafficked in Rhodes.⁷⁹ Florentine merchants, sometimes Knights, owned ships and launched ventures to the Sultanate. Guido da Palazzo and Matteo Federighi gathered the capital of Florentines who wanted to invest in the spice trade. At da Palazzo's death in 1462, he was responsible for liquidating members of the Medici, Cavalcanti, Neroni, Corbinelli and other families, as a result of a series of ventures that had carried him to Beirut, Damascus and Alexandria. A number of Pisan and Florentine

residents on the island were present at his deathbed.⁸⁰ Finally, private galleys controlled by the Medici operated in the eastern Mediterranean in the early 1470s, stopping off in Rhodes and Alexandria and loading cargo from Muslim merchants. Again, these galleys received protection from the Florentine councils (the Sea Consuls in Pisa) and were granted special loading monopolies usually given by the government to the communal convoys.⁸¹

Since the closure of the big Florentine companies with branches in the East in the fourteenth century, resident agents had been operating at the farthest points of the network. During the period when the Medici acted as Florence's unofficial rulers, the best documented case is that of Mariotto Squarcialupi. Squarcialupi had resided in Alexandria for decades at the head of the consulate, corresponding with the Florentine councils and representing the interests of Florentine entrepreneurs, including those of the Rhodian network. A close examination of his relations with the Medici and his activities as consul reveals the system of personal and informal relations that had become characteristic of Florentine mercantile presence in the eastern Mediterranean.

No one could have survived as the head of the Alexandrian consulate without Medici favour, and it is this relationship with the family that helps explain Mariotto Squarcialupi's extreme longevity as consul. His incumbency dates back to 1434 – the year Cosimo returned from exile – while the final reference to him as a consul is in a letter to Lorenzo de' Medici in 1472.⁸² Perhaps more interesting from a network perspective is the way he wove his web of connections. Two letters mention his brother Antonio as Mariotto's agent in Florence.⁸³ Antonio was a courtier and a musician in the Medici entourage, and took advantage of his position to provide his brother with contacts not only with the Medici but also with private investors. Historians of music have searched for evidence of his artistic talents, but he was a mediocre player, and probably never composed any music of his own.⁸⁴ He was, however, actively involved in networking at the Medici court, as indicated in many letters in the collection of private documents known as the *Mediceo Avanti il Principato*. In 1458, both brothers, the courtier Antonio in Florence and his brother Mariotto in Alexandria, can be seen at work. Antonio established personal contacts with Francesco and Angelo Neroni, who ran an international company and were planning to travel to Alexandria. Mariotto later coordinated the operation with the arrival of Maghrebi merchants in Alexandria.⁸⁵ Antonio's reputation has been built on dubious achievements, such as his correspondence with Guillaume Dufay, or on his owning – but not composing – a valuable music manuscript, the so-called Squarcialupi Codex. In fact, he is known to have been a close adviser to Giovanni de' Medici and to have acted as an informer for the ruling faction,⁸⁶ so Mariotto may have benefitted from Medici patronage through the link with his brother, or the other way around. By the mid-1440s, Mariotto had achieved considerable influence in the Mamluk administration, and was also well connected to the Catalans and the king of Cyprus. In Florence, Antonio was perceived more as a reflection of Medici power than as a respected Renaissance artist. Together with Giotto and Brunelleschi, Antonio's portrait came to represent Music in a series of four portraits displayed in the Duomo of Florence. However, unlike his more illustrious colleagues, when the Medici were expelled from the city, Antonio's portrait was removed from the cathedral.⁸⁷

Moreover, the family history was subjected to some degree of manipulation by both brothers, who seem to have made fraudulent use of the patrician surname Squarcialupi. We know they were of very humble origins, and this may have been a problem when dealing with aristocratic spice-merchants. While Mariotto seems to have used the name from the time of his accession to the consulate, Antonio rarely did so before 1457, and

was never referred to as Squarcialupi by his acquaintances in the Medici entourage. Whilst elite families in the network often made use of their family past to strengthen ties with other Florentines, those with uncertain origins wisely hid their lineage. In any case, Antonio did not consolidate his position in the Medici entourage until the mid-1440s.⁸⁸ Indeed, the precarious nature of the Medici patronage of the two brothers emerged in 1444, when a member of a prominent pro-Medicean family, Baldo Ridolfi, replaced him in office in Alexandria, while other Ridolfis obtained positions in the galley service. Ridolfi, however, lacked the necessary skills and his predecessor's support; he clashed with the Venetian community and was involved in many quarrels. Where the patrician Ridolfi failed, the patronage ties woven by the lower-ranking Squarcialupi brothers succeeded, and Mariotto took charge again shortly afterwards.⁸⁹ He seems to have been dismissed from office some time before 1465, but managed to be reappointed again later.⁹⁰

Mariotto's local knowledge and his ability to create new ties made him a key actor in the Florentine network. As consul, he was not directly involved in trade but could act as a third-party guarantor for others, particularly backing up operations in spices.⁹¹ His commercial influence extended throughout the entire business community of Alexandria. Unlike Baldo Ridolfi, Mariotto Squarcialupi was well connected with Mamluk civil administrators, the other consuls and the Sultan's merchants, the *Khawajas* (powerful entrepreneurs sponsored by the Mamluks). He established lasting business and personal relations with spice traders, such as Fakhr al-Din Abu Bakr al-Tawrizi and his younger associate Hasan Ibn Badr al-Din al-Sharif, originally from Mecca, and with the Iberian Muslim Galip Ripoll, all of them merchants of the Sultan, thus extending the reach of his own network to the Red Sea, Cairo and the Maghreb.⁹² Evidence of relations between Squarcialupi and Ripoll help explain the creation of new and surprising connections. In Egypt, we find Ripoll in Squarcialupi's immediate entourage and this link developed into a permanent friendship. They appear together in many deals, often rendering services to each other.⁹³ The opening of a branch of the Ripoll Company in Florence is sufficiently unusual to cause some speculation. The company was owned by the Muslim Ripoll family from Valencia, and covered several important spots in Iberia and the Maghreb, with agents in locations ranging from Malaga to Tunis. In 1447, the agent, Abrassim Homar, and his attorney, Mahomat Faraig, embarked on the Florentine galleys to set up an agency of the Ripoll Company in Florence. The fact that Squarcialupi was acting as consul of both Florence and Aragon at the time may account for this unexpected commercial decision.⁹⁴ As for his inclusion in the Rhodian network, the Venetian casebooks portray him as acting on behalf of Gentile and Edoardo de Bardi in Alexandria.⁹⁵ Eventually, Squarcialupi married a well-to-do Rhodian widow and was granted benefices by the king of Cyprus.⁹⁶

By manipulating his family history and by making use of family ties to gain political patronage, Squarcialupi rose from humble origins as the son of a butcher to a prominent place in the government-sponsored network. This network was first developed by company staff and exiled merchants, but later incorporated independent agents such as the Salviati, Martini, Bardi and Peruzzi in the framework of the more fragmented late-fifteenth-century business structure. Conversely, as Medici control consolidated in Florentine politics, even exiles and outlaws were willing to cluster around Medici friends in search of patronage and reinstatement.

The shape of personal relations that came to dominate Florentine presence in the eastern Mediterranean involved, as described by Paul McLean, a good deal of cultural work and the constant reshaping of a common identity.⁹⁷ While exiles invoked their

noble origins to regain a place in the network, lower-ranking Florentines simply concealed their dubious family origins. At times Renaissance art and high culture were used for similar purposes. Weak institutional control, moreover, opened the doors for social climbers, parvenus and foreigners keen to build a business career under the safety of Florentine auspices.

Finally, the Rhodian business milieu challenges the assumption that networks mitigated the lack of institutional organization.⁹⁸ In spite of Florence's weak commercial and diplomatic strategy in the area, the network won concrete support when it was in the interests of the Commune and its unofficial rulers, the Medici. In other words, the network was handled *institutionally* by the government, and its previously scattered forces were reconfigured around the financial and commercial interests of the ruling elite. In this way the network helped conduct the business of the Medici companies in ways not easily distinguishable from state business.

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Notes

1. Kent, *Rise of the Medici*, 11–9.
2. For interdisciplinary approaches to the Florentine economy and politics, see Padgett and Ansell, "Robust Action"; Padgett and McLean, "Economic Credit"; and McLean, *Art of the Network*.
3. Goldthwaite, *Economy of Renaissance Florence*, 108–9; Houssaye Michienzi, "La 'nation'."
4. This pattern can be found in Catalonia; see Soldani, *Uomini d'affari*, 19–26; for southern Iberia, see González Arévalo, "Apuntes para una relación," 83–93. See also the remarkable monograph on the Maghreb by Houssaye Michienzi, *Datini, Majorque et le Maghreb*. For the Salviati cluster of companies and its commercial networks, see Lang, "Networks and Merchant Diasporas."
5. Braudel, *Wheels of Commerce*, 167; Goldthwaite, "The Medici Bank"; Heers and Bec, *Exil et civilisation*. More directly related to the present study are the recent works by Alison Brown, "Insiders and Outsiders," and Paula Clarke, "The Identity of the Expatriate."
6. Though the topic goes back to the eighteenth century, major contributions can be found in Mallett, *Florentine Galleys*; Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, 348–54, 494–99, 137–9; Goldthwaite, *Economy of Renaissance Florence*. For a more recent assessment of these policies, see Tognetti, "Firenze, Pisa e il mare."
7. The reinstatement of both the consulate and the *funduq* was included in the diplomatic agenda in the 1480s; see Amari, *I diplomi arabi*, 374–81.
8. Ashtor, "Venetian Supremacy" Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, 348–54, 494–9, 137–9.
9. Greif, "Birth of Impersonal Exchange."
10. Borsari, "L'espansione economica"; Houssaye Michienzi, "La 'nation'."
11. Villani, *Nuova Cronaca*, vol. 1, 7, 53.
12. On Florentine-Mamluk agreements, see Wansbrough, "Mamluk Commercial Treaty"; Wansbrough, "Venice and Florence"; Meli, "Firenze di fronte al mondo islamico."
13. The best general overview of the Florentine presence in Constantinople, with recent bibliography, is provided by Goldthwaite, *Economy of Renaissance Florence*. See also Inalcik and

- Quataert, *Economic and Social History*, 230–55, and the work by Hoshino and Fennell, “Ottoman Markets.”
14. The most representative case of exiled Levantine merchants, the Mannelli, is discussed below, pp. 6–8. A biography of another exile, Clario Arcangeli, is provided in Apellániz, “Venetian Trading Networks,” 172–3. See also below, p. 12 and n. 60. For the companies’ staff, see Soldani, *Uomini d’affari*, 71, 336–7; Hoshino, *I mercanti Fiorentini*, and section below pp. 5–8.
 15. Goldthwaite, “The Medici Bank,” 23.
 16. Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Cancelleria Inferiore, Notai, B. 36, Notary G. Campione (hereafter ASVe, Campione); ASVe, CI, N, B. 185–6, Notary F. Novello (ASVe, Novello), ASV, CI, N, B. 222, Notary A. Vactaciis (ASVe, Vactaciis), ASV, CI, N, B. 229, Notary L. De Valle (ASVe, De Valle), ASV, CI, N, B. 22, Notary V. Bonfantius (ASVe, Bonfantius); ASV, CI, N, B. 211, Notary N. Turiano (ASVe, Turiano), ASV, CI, N, B. 148, Notary P. Pellacan (ASVe, Pellacan), ASV, CI, N, B. 83II, Notary C. Del Fiore (ASVe, Del Fiore). The deeds drawn up by Servodio Peccator are published in Rossi, *Servodio Peccator*. For the Venetian notaries, see Ashtor, *Levant Trade*; Christ, *Trading Conflicts*, 77–9; Apellániz, “Venetian Trading Networks,” 157–79; Doumerc, “Les marchands du Midi.”
 17. This is according to the sixty-four deeds drawn up by the notary G. Campione between 1361 and 1363, and the fifteen provided by V. Bonfantius between January 1393 and September 1394.
 18. On Diamante Alberti, see Houssaye Michienzi, *Datini, Majorque et le Maghreb*; on Filippozzo Soldani, see Soldani, *Uomini d’affari*, 329–41. On Tecchini, see Soldani, “A Firenze mercanti.” A forthcoming monograph by Damien Coulon deals extensively with Piero Tecchini, or Pere Tequi: Coulon, *Grand commerce*. Coulon highlights Tequi’s integration in Catalan society, although for generations the family hired Tuscan agents and was in partnership with Tuscans.
 19. Jacopo Capponi, from Valencia, Giorgio del Nero from Barcelona, Litti Corbizi from Montpellier, and the brothers Piero and Michele Aldobrandini from Catalonia, among others, worked and corresponded for the Datini companies. Benedetto Arrighi sent over 160 letters to Datini up to 1404. These all reappear later in Alexandria. For Arrighi, ASVe, Vactaciis, fol. 116v, 15/06/1406; Capponi, fol. 61v, 11/7/04, fol. 117v, 13/7/1406; Del Nero, fol. 13r, 15/1/1400, 15/1/1404; ASVe, De Valle 4/10/1402; Aldobrandini, ASVe, Vactaciis, fol. 76r, 8/11/1404, fol. 78r, 13/11/1404; Corbizzi, fol. 111r, 9/12/1405, fol. 107v, 14/12/1405. In several letters from Montpellier, Corbizi provides Francesco Datini with information about the trading ventures of Piero Tecchini in Alexandria and Beirut; see Archivio di Stato di Prato (hereinafter ASPo), Datini, Fondaco di Genova, 1373–1409, 1392/07/?–1392/07/24, 1392/06/11–1392/06/21.
 20. The case was heard by Florence’s merchant court; see Archivio di Stato di Firenze (hereafter ASF), Mercanzia 1232, fols 136r–138v, 30/4/1404.
 21. For a previous stage of his career, see Houssaye Michienzi, *Datini, Majorque et le Maghreb*, 323–4.
 22. ASF, Diplomatico, Arte del Cambio, 29/5/1391; on Vieri’s companies, see De Roover, “Antecedents of the Medici Bank.”
 23. Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, 137; ASVe, Novello, fol. 25v, 14/8/1396.
 24. ASVe, Novello, fols 13v–15r, 10/4/1396, Fischel, “Ascensus Barcoch”, Fischel, “New Latin Source”; Mahmoud Helmy, *Tra Siena*.
 25. Jacopo Capponi cooperated with other Florentines such as Giovanni di Tommaso Bartolo and Filippo di Piero for his dealings with Rhodes; see ASVe, Vactaciis, fol. 61v, 11/7/1404; Nanni Dini and Jacopo di Bartolomeo were involved, together with other Tuscans, in trade with the Adriatic (Zadar); see ASVe, Vactaciis, fols 30v–31r, 14/10/1400; fol. 31v, 18/10/1400; fol. 34r, 05/11/1400. Many Florentines, such as Pietro di Altizio (*sic*) di Verrazzano, Piero Aldobrandini, Giorgio del Nero, Benedetto Bellincioni and Berto di Tommaso Buzzeffi, clustered around the prominent figure of Francesco Mannelli in his dealings with the French Midi; see ASVe, Vactaciis, fol. 12v, 13/1/1400; fol. 13r, 15/1/1400; fol. 76r–v, 08/11/1404, 13/11/1404.
 26. On the family’s exile and ban from office, see Terzi articles ‘Mannelli, Amaretto’ and ‘Mannelli, Francesco’, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*. See also Brucker, *Florentine Politics*, 156–7; Brucker, *Civic World*, 79; Passerini, “Note sulla famiglia Mannelli.”

27. Particularly Giovanni di Niccolò and his brother Leonardo, who first moved to Genoa and then settled in Avignon until the mid-fifteenth century. An accurate picture of the exiled branches can be found in Soldani, *Uomini d'affari*, 390–8. Many documents related to the Avignon branches are preserved in ASF, Diplomatico Mannelli.
28. On Ramondo's early commercial venture to Syria, see ASPo, Fondaco di Barcellona, letter of Raimondo Mannelli, Rhodes, 1408/09/29–1409/02/12.
29. Coulon, *Barcelone et le grand commerce*, 542, 575–6.
30. For Montpellier, see Baratier and Reynaud, *Histoire du commerce de Marseille*, vol. 2, 240. Together with other Florentines, such as Tommaso Buzzeffi, both were agents of Filippo Malegonnelle, a Florentine businessman in Avignon heavily involved in trade with Egypt; see ASVe, Vactaciis, fol. 76r, 08/11/1404; ASF, Diplomatico Arte del Cambio, 16/7/1403; Soldani, *Uomini d'affari*, 391.
31. Mallett, *Florentine Galleys*, 153; Saporì, "I primi viaggi"; Heyd, *Histoire du commerce*, vol. 2, 480.
32. In addition to the money raised by Francesco with Tommaso Buzzzeffi in the French Midi, the Tornabuoni family entrusted him with 500 Ducats in 1422; see ASF, Carte Stroziane, serie III, fol. CXXII, c. 48r. As commission agent in Egypt on behalf of other Florentines, see ASVe, Vactaciis, fol. 79v, 13/11/1404.
33. ASVe, Turiano, fol. 19v, 10/2/1434; fol. 36v, 8/2/1435.
34. As an arbitration judge, see ASVe, Vactaciis, fol. 93r, 2/9/1405; fol. 94r, 7/9/1405. As witness for dealings concerning French and other merchants, see ASVe, Vactaciis, fol. 106r, 28/12/1404; fol. 111v, 10/3/1406; fol. 114v, 28/4/1406; ASVe, De Valle 7/1/1403. For Francesco's activities in the 1420s and 1430s, see ASVe, Turiano, fols 37v–38r, 23/10/1427; fol. 47r–v, 18/2/1428; fol. 83r–v, 3/10/1428; fols 40r–42r, 6/12/1427; fol. 47r–v, 18/2/1428; fol. 19v, letter from Francesco Mannelli, already ex-consul, dated 21/2/1434.
35. Francesco di Arnaldo, Leonardo di Niccolo, Agostino di Giovanni, Ramondo d'Amaretto and Benedetto Mannelli were either captains or patrons of the galleys throughout the century; see Mallett, *Florentine Galleys*, 153–76; ASF, Mercanzia 1351, 17/6/1444.
36. A detailed account of Ramondo's commercial and banking activities can be found in Soldani, *Uomini d'affari*, 394–8; a dossier on Ramondo's late activities in Barcelona is on ASF, Mediceo Avanti il Principato (hereafter MAP), fol. 82, n. 73, c. 237–42. For his captivity, see Ageno, "Tre studi quattrocenteschi."
37. For Pietro di Ramondo Mannelli in Egypt, see ASVe, Turiano, 16/8/1455, 28/8/1455.
38. A building known as the house of Giovanni Mannelli is located in today's Plateia Martyron Evreon in Rhodes. I would like to thank Daniel Duran and Maria Elisa Soldani for this information and for providing me with a picture.
39. A booklet recording daily expenses of the sons of Leonardo Mannelli in Constantinople can be found in ASF, Libri di Commercio e Famiglia 5199; see also Spallanzani, *Oriental Rugs*, 22, doc. 93.
40. On Alessandro and Carlo, both Ramondo's sons, see Passerini, "Note sulla famiglia Mannelli," 140–1.
41. Amari, *I diplomati arabi*, 361.
42. Soldani and Duran i Duelt, "Religion, Warfare and Business."
43. A register recording diplomatic correspondence issued by the *Dieci di Balia*, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, Palatino 1103; see, among others, fols 169r, 147r–v.
44. Limited liability partnership contracts. Bernardo Salviati received *accomandite* for 5,000 Ducats from Giovanni di Cosimo and Pierfrancesco di Lorenzo de Medici, and 1,000 Ducats from Niccolo di Piero and Bartolomeo Capponi; ASF, Mercanzia 10831, fol. 26v, 24/5/1452.
45. See below in this section for references.
46. For Salviati in Rhodes, see Tsirpanlis, *Ανεκδοτα έγγραφα*, 1, 676–8, 473–8, 480–2. For an alum contract granted to Salviati, see Archives of the Order of St John, National Library of Malta, Valletta (hereafter AOM), Libri Bullarum 363, fol. 146v, 3/3/1453. His role as agent of the Medici Bank has been brought to light in Soldani and Durán i Duelt, "Religion, Warfare and Business."
47. AOM, Libri Bullarum 73, fols 96–8.
48. The Grand Master gave Giovanni Peruzzi and Gentile de Bardi a four-year contract to deliver soap to Rhodes; see AOM 375, fols 175v–177r (clxxiii b – clxxvi a), 13/5/1465.

49. Gentile is documented in Alexandria several times; see ASVe, Pellacan, 28/9/1445; ASVe, Turiano, 16/08/1455. Gentile and Giovanni di Rinaldo are mentioned as citizens by the same decree; see AOM, 375, fols 175v–177r (clxxiii b – clxxvi a), 13/5/1465.
50. For Edoardo, banker in Avignon, see Guillot, *La chute de Jacques Cœur*, 59–60. For Edoardo's investments in Alexandria, see ASVe, Peccator, 07/10/1448, published in Rossi, *Servodio Peccator*, n. 20, 40–1.
51. For Gentile's role as an informer, see ASF, Carte Stroziane I, filza 369, c. 55, 23/3/1475.
52. ASF, Carte Stroziane I, filza 368, c. 14, n.d., and filza 369, c. 55, 23/3/1475, to Filippo Strozzi. Arabic accounts of the same facts are provided by Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-zuhūr*, vol. 3, 114, 119, and al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw' al-lāmi'*, vol. 2, 246, n. 683; X, 285–6, n. 1120,.
53. On Lorenzo, see ASF, Carte Stroziane I, filza 369, c. 68, 29/7/1482.
54. For the Battle of Adana's account, see ASF, Carte Stroziane I, filza 369, c. 75–6, 15/9/1488, Matteo Federighi to Giovanni di Carlo Federighi.
55. For the Knights' network of informers, see ASF, Carte Stroziane I, filza 369, c. 59.
56. Lists of correspondents to or from Istanbul can be found in ASF, Consoli del Mare, 7, 153r–154v.
57. Biographical glimpses, including mentions to his trips to Damascus, Crete and Cyprus, are provided in his *Epistola a Gentile di Bardi*, Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Acquisti e Doni, n. 401, fols 53v–54r. His stay in Rhodes in 1447 is mentioned by Bernardo Salviati in his *Ricordanze*, ASF, Acquisti e doni, 302/1, 95r. See also Brown, *Insiders and Outsiders*, Appendix; Jacks and Caferro, *The Spinelli of Florence*, 150–6.
58. Salviati and Ugo Peruzzi acted as witnesses of Gentile de Bardi in a dowry agreement; see ASF, Diplomatico Mannelli, n. 365, 24/8/1446; for Peruzzi, see ASF, Acquisti e doni, 302/1, fol. 95r; Giovanni di Rinaldo Peruzzi is mentioned as Gentile de Bardi's heir; see ASF, Carte Stroziane I, 369, n. 65, 13/1/1482, Rhodes, letter from Matteo Federighi to Giovanni di Carlo Federighi. As heir of the Salviati, of whom below, see Apfelstadt, "Andrea Ferrucci's 'Crucifixion'," 810, n. 16. As agents of the Spinelli Bank in Rhodes, see Jacks and Caferro, *The Spinelli of Florence*, 253; for the Strozzi Bank, see Leone, *Mezzogiorno e Mediterraneo*, 139.
59. Biblioteca Laurenziana, Acquisti e Doni, n. 401, fols 71v–74v.
60. Both families were involved in conspiracies and had some members exiled to Venice. A Nanni Dini and a Francesco Davizi are mentioned in Alexandrian notarial deeds; see ASVe, Vactaciis, fols 30v–31r, 14/10/1400, 22/10/1400, though handwriting is uncertain for the latter. See also Corazzini, "Due lettere intercette"; Mueller, "Mercanti e imprenditori fiorentini." For Clario di Angelo Arcangeli, see Apellániz, "Venetian Trading Networks," 172–3.
61. Amari, *I diplomati arabi*, 389, 391.
62. On Pierozzi, the story of his flight is told in a letter by a Florentine Knight; see ASF, Corporazioni Soppresses dal Governo Francese, convento n. 78, fol. 313, c. 243–4, Rhodes, 20/7/1462. For his Rhodian safe-conduct, see AOM 371, fol. 225r (ccxvi a), 10/4/1462. A detailed account of his bankruptcy can be found in Soldani, *Uomini d'affari*, 428–33. Da Palazzo's testament is dated in Pierozzi's home at Rhodes; according to letter from the Florentine Knight P. Borromei to Carlo Guasconi in Florence, they jointly organized a trip from Rhodes to Alexandria; see ASF, Corporazioni Soppresses dal Governo Francese, convento n. 78, fol. 313, c. 243–4, 20/7/1462.
63. On Bartolomeo di Bartolomeo de Medici, see ASVe, Turiano, fol. 11v, 8/9/1434, fol. 53r–53v, 13/5/1435; on his exports of spices via Rhodes and his Pisan associate, Filippo Astay, see ASVe, Turiano, fols 46r–47v, 22/4/1435; Giovanni Albizzi and Francesco di Jacopo Inghirami were witnesses to the deed, fol. 47v, 3/5/1435; fol. 48r, 3/5/1435; fols 48v–49r, 3/5/1435. For his dealings with Muslim merchants, see ASVe, Turiano, fols 51v–52r, 10/5/1435; 52r–52v, 12/5/1435. As Medici Agent in Barcelona, see Soldani, *Uomini d'affari*, 399–403, 408; ASF, MAP, filza XI, n. 245, 21/5/1439, Marseilles.
64. As the sales contract itself suggests; see ASVe, Pellacan, 19/4/1445. For the Della Seta brothers in Barcelona, see Soldani, *Uomini d'affari*, 535–41.
65. Ouerfelli, *Le sucre*, 447.
66. Mueller, *Immigrazione e cittadinanza*; Molà, *La comunità dei lucchesi a Venezia*.
67. Clarke, "Commercial Activities of Giovanni Marcanova," 345.
68. On Constantinople, see Astuti, "Le forme giuridiche," 100, 110. On Badoer's commercial network, see Hocquet, "Le réseau d'affaires"; Balard, "Les hommes d'affaires."

69. Tsirpanlis, *Ανεκδοτα έγγραφα*, 1, 427–8, n. 140, 11/10/1442; 734–5, n. 318, 10/9/1453; see also 53, n. 631–2, 708, 770.
70. Durán i Duelt, *Kastellórizo*, 92.
71. Ouerfelli, *Le sucre*, 111–25. A certain Giovanni Toscani Martini organized a commercial expedition to Cairo and was sent back to Cyprus by the Mamluks; see ASVe, Turiano, 50r–v, 17/9/1455. As leaseholders of the king of Cyprus, see De Mas Latrie, *Histoire de l'Île de Chypre*, vol. 3, 176–8.
72. For the Martini-Salviati alliance, see Apfelstadt, “Andrea Ferrucci’s ‘Crucifixion’,” 809.
73. Soldani and Duran i Duelt, “Religion, Warfare and Business,” 265.
74. Richard, “Une famille de vénitiens blancs,” 96.
75. Apfelstadt, “Andrea Ferrucci’s ‘Crucifixion’.”
76. ASF, Consoli del Mare, 7, 41v, 3/8/1464. For the importance of the official spices sold in Syria, see Apellániz, *Pouvoir et finance*.
77. Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, 234–5, 245, 294, 340–1, 364–5, 386, 391; Apellániz, “Venetian Trading Networks,” 178.
78. For safe-conduct passes granted by the Knights to Muslim merchants and ambassadors, see AOM 370, fol. cliiii b, 16/1/1460; AOM 371, fol. 225r–v (ccxxvii a–b), 17/6/1461; AOM 373, fols 121v–122r, 5/4/1462; AOM 374, fol. 221r–v (ccxxxii a–b), 9/8/1463, fol. 233r, 9/2/1473.
79. ASF, Carte Stroziane I, filza 368, fol. 71, 17/7/1484.
80. For his testament drawn up in Rhodes, see ASF, Diplomatico, Badia Fiorentina, 17/9/1462, and the letter from the Florentine Knight P. Borromei, ASF, Corporazioni Soppresse dal Governo Francese, convento n. 78, fol. 313, cc. 243–4, 20/7/1462.
81. Mallett, *Florentine Galleys*, 98–103.
82. ASVe, Turiano, fol. 19v, 21/2/1434; ASF, MAP, fol. 28, n. 1, 10/1/1472.
83. Antonio is mentioned in the two letters by Mariotto still extant in Florence: ASF, MAP, fol. 28, n.1, 10/1/1472; ASF, Corporazioni Soppresse dal Governo Francese, convento n. 78, fol. 322, c. 45.
84. Haar and Nádas, “Antonio Squarcialupi.”
85. ASF, Corporazioni Soppresse dal Governo Francese, convento n. 78, fol. 322, c. 45.
86. Wilson, “Music and Merchants,” 164.
87. The brothers have not been identified as ‘official’ Squarcialupis; see Klapisch-Zuber, “Des magnats divisés.”
88. Haar and Nádas, “Antonio Squarcialupi,” 156.
89. For Baldo Ridolfi, see ASVe, Pellacan, 7/10/1444, 28/9/1445.
90. Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, *Palatino* 1103, fol. 13r–v, 22/8/1465.
91. Miltitz, *Manuel des consuls*, 146.
92. On the al-Tawrizi family, see Apellániz, “Banquiers, diplomates et pouvoir sultanien.” Squarcialupi settled many disputes for al-Tawrizi; see ASVe, Turiano, fols 51v–52r, 10/5/1435; fol. 52r–v, 12/5/1435; fol. 52v, 20/5/1435; fol. 54r, 13/4/1435. For a short biography of al-Sharif Hasan, see al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-lāmi’*, vol. 3, 518, ASVe, Turiano, 16/08/1455, fols 42r–44r, 09/09/1455, fol. 41r, 09/09/1455, fols 44v–45v, 10/9/1455.
93. ASVe, Peccator, fol. 9r–v, 05/10/1448; ASVe, Turiano, fols 23v–25v, 17/08/1455; fols 38v–39r, 30/08/1455.
94. Guiral-Hadziiosif, *Valence: Port méditerranéen*, 343.
95. ASVe, Peccator, fol. 10r, 7/10/1448.
96. Boustron, *Chronique de l'Île de Chypre*, 419; ASVe, Turiano, 06/02/1449.
97. McLean, *Art of the Network*, 224–31.
98. Houssaye Michienzi, “La ‘nation’,” 93, Soldani, *Uomini d'affari*, 65.

Notes on Contributor

Francisco Apellániz is postdoctoral researcher at the Université Paris 1 (Panthéon-Sorbonne). He received his PhD from the European University Institute, Florence, and has been lecturer at the Université Aix-Marseille I. He is the author of *Pouvoir et Finance en Méditerranée pré-moderne: Le deuxième Etat Mamelouk et le commerce des épices (1389–1517)*, Barcelona, 2009. Among his recent publications in the field of commercial networks figures ‘Venetian Trading Networks in the Medieval Mediterranean’, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* XLIV, 2 (2013), 157–79. He is

currently member ERC-funded Project *Mediterranean Reconfigurations – ConfigMed* (<http://configmed.hypotheses.org>).

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