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David Abulafia

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Southern Italy and the Florentine Economy, 1265-1370

By DAVID ABULAFIA

In 1363, Nicola Acciaiuoli, a Florentine, Grand Seneschal of the Kingdom of Naples, wrote to his compatriot Niccolò Soderini to complain of the shabby treatment afforded by the Florentine republic to a citizen who had risen so high in the favours of the rulers of Naples, and had acquired such great titles and estates. If the Florentines would not so much as welcome Acciaiuoli within the walls of the city, then he would feel free to advise the queen to withdraw her protection from Florentine merchants and property in Naples; the queen might, indeed, just as well extend her privileges to the Genoese:

You know well, Niccolò, the great difficulties faced by my lady the queen, and the dangers she faces by not paying her tribute [to the Holy See]; hence the officials of the treasury have investigated many ways of finding the funds she needs, and the method everyone approved was to impose a tax of two ounces per piece on Florentine cloth brought by sea or by land into this kingdom. And meanwhile it is the Genoese who provide help and offer to bring as many French, Genoese and Milanese cloths into the kingdom as we might need, if it is forbidden for Florentine cloths to enter the kingdom without payment of two ounces per piece; by acting thus they [the treasury officials] want to increase the taxes and to obtain no small sum of money.¹

Nicola Acciaiuoli's letter presents several aspects of the Florentine relationship with Naples. A Florentine is seen treating on behalf of the kingdom with the republic of Florence; a Florentine is seen threatening to transfer his queen's favours to a rival commercial centre, Genoa; and he is, of course, well aware how important is the sale of finished textiles to the economy of his mother city. Above all, he is aware that Florence enjoys a position of clear primacy in the trade of southern Italy, subject as ever to the protection of the rulers of the south. And the Seneschal's threats were not without effect. The Florentine government well knew how to win back Neapolitan favours. Not by a treaty or a trade agreement, but by a personal grant of tax exemption in favour of the Florentine property of Nicola Acciaiuoli himself, did the Signoria secure once again a prime position for Florentine cloths in the markets of Naples.² The intention of this paper is to explore some reasons why Florence was ever able to establish such a position in

¹ "Tu sapi bene, Nicholò, le grandi indulgenzie de madama la regina e lli pericoli nelli quali essa inchorre non pagando lo cienso; onde per li deputati allo ufficio della moneta sono isquisite assai vie delle quali monete si debasse torre, in fra lle quali quelle alla quale si choncordavano tutti era che ongni panno fiorentino dovesse pagare oncie due per peza, lo quale per mare o per terra si duciesse in questo reame: e sono ghenovesi li quali dano modo e se offerano di chonducier tanti panni franceschi, ghenovesi e melanesi nello reame quanto saranno bastevoli, faciendosi intredetto che panno fiorentino non possa entrare nello reame o che non pagli oncie due per peza; e chosi faciendosi volglono agumentare le gabelle e inprontare non picciola somma di moneta." A. Saporì, 'Lettera di Niccolò Acciaiuoli a Niccolò Soderini (1363)', *Studi di storia economica, secoli XIII-XIV-XV*, I (Florence, 1955), p. 148.

² *Ibid.* pp. 149-53.

the south; for there was no lack of rivals—Venetians, Genoese, Sieneese, Pisans—among whom several cities had much older links with southern Italy, and a much older commercial tradition.³ This exploration will be conducted not by direct comparison between Florentines and their rivals, but by looking at internal strengths and weaknesses in the link between Florence and Naples—strengths which reduced southern reliance on Florence's real and potential rivals, weaknesses which created especially close bonds of economic interdependence.⁴

I

Scholars have long been aware that the scale of the relationship between Florence and Naples was unusually great. Yver spoke of "la conquête florentine" in the south, and Davidsohn remarked: "no trading territory had such importance for the city on the Arno as had the lands of the house of Anjou, whether because of the high level of exchanges and profits or because of the political advantage that derived from the economic relationship".⁵ It is, however, necessary to probe a little further here, to see if Florentine objectives in the south of Italy can merely be summarized as profits and politics, or whether more specific needs brought Tuscan merchants to Naples. As will be seen, the form that investment in the south of Italy took often produced slow returns, tying up capital in exercises to win the favour of the rulers of Naples. This raises the question, explicit also in Acciaiuoli's letter, of the benefit the Neapolitan crown hoped to extract from its favours. Were there specific advantages for the kings of Naples in leaning so heavily on Florentine merchant capital, and neglecting or even

³ D. S. H. Abulafia, *The Two Italies: Economic Relations between the Norman Kingdom of Sicily and the Northern Communes* (Cambridge, 1977). For the early thirteenth century there are two useful studies of the political background to economic ties between north and south Italy: H. Chone, *Die Handelsbeziehungen Kaiser Friedrichs II. zu den Seestädten Venedig, Pisa, Genua* (Berlin, 1902); C. Imperiale di Sant'Angelo, *Genova e le sue relazioni con Federico II* (Venice, 1923); cf. J. M. Powell, 'Medieval Monarchy and Trade: the Economic Policy of Emperor Frederick II in Sicily', *Studi medievali*, ser. 3, III (1962), pp. 420-524. The earliest known appearance of Florentine merchants in Sicily is dated 1193: D. S. H. Abulafia, 'Pisan Commercial Colonies and Consulates in Twelfth-century Sicily', *English Historical Review*, xciii (1978), p. 78.

⁴ A direct comparison might in the long term be possible, but there is still little primary or secondary material in print on the economy of Siena, and surprisingly little even on the economy of fourteenth-century Genoa. For Venice, see F. Carabellese, *Carlo d'Angiò nei rapporti politici e commerciali con Venezia e l'Oriente* (Bari, 1911), and the collections of documents by F. Carabellese and A. Zambler, *Le relazioni commerciali fra la Puglia e la repubblica di Venezia dal secolo X al XV*, 2 vols. (Trani, 1897-8); and by N. Nicolini, ed. *Codice diplomatico sui rapporti veneto-napoletani durante il regno di Carlo d'Angiò* (Regesta chartarum Italiae, Rome, 1965). For the fourteenth century, see D. S. H. Abulafia, 'Venice and the Kingdom of Naples in the last years of King Robert the Wise, 1332-1343', *Papers of the British School at Rome*, XLVIII (1980).

⁵ G. Yver, *Le commerce et les marchands dans l'Italie méridionale au XIII^e et au XIV^e siècle* (Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, LXXXVIII, Paris, 1903), p. 289; R. Davidsohn, *Geschichte von Florenz, IV. Die Frühzeit der Florentiner Kultur, II. Teil: Gewerbe, Zünfte, Welthandel und Bankwesen* (Berlin, 1925), p. 409. Both works were based partly upon the Angevin registers kept in the Archivio di Stato, Naples. These were destroyed by the Germans in 1943; fortunately, Davidsohn provided an inventory of over 400 Neapolitan documents relating to Florence: R. Davidsohn, *Forschungen zur Geschichte von Florenz, III. Teil: XIII. und XIV. Jahrhundert. I. Regesten unedirter Urkunden zur Geschichte von Handel, Gewerbe und Zunftwesen; II. Die Schwarzen und die Weissen* (Berlin, 1901). See also the collection by Nicolini cited in the previous note, and that by Terlizzi (below). The advantage of Davidsohn's collection is that it concentrates upon the reigns of Charles II and Robert (1285-1343), when the Peruzzi, Bardi, and Acciaiuoli were exerting their heavy influence. Published volumes in the series *I Registri della Cancelleria angioina* (Naples, 1950-) do not include fourteenth-century material; the series is an attempt to recover all useful references, transcriptions, etc., relating to the lost Angevin registers.

excluding businessmen from other towns in northern Italy? An extreme instance of the contrast between the Florentine position and that of other merchant towns is provided by Marseilles and the ports of Provence. Although the same Angevin dynasty ruled in Naples and Provence, Marseilles received few privileges for trade in southern Italy, and in long-distance trade between Provence and southern Italy was greatly outpaced by Florence. All this with the connivance, indeed encouragement, of the Angevin kings.⁶

The appearance of a major Florentine interest in southern Italy can be dated reasonably precisely, and a significant point emerges at once. Florence appears when the house of Anjou appears; Florence is from the start associated with the attempt by Charles of Anjou and the papacy to displace the heirs of Frederick II. Initially, it is true, the Florentine bankers were not alone in offering war-loans to the Angevins; bankers from Lucca and Siena appear also. For it was only small groups of Florentine Guelfs who were prepared in the earliest days of the Angevin invasion to risk placing money on Charles's plan of conquest.⁷ In 1265 the Florentine company of Ghino Frescobaldi received, in return for its loans, a safe-conduct to trade in Angevin territories; in subsequent years more and more Florentine banks received similar privileges.⁸ The upsurge of loans is clearly related to the sequence of Charles's successes: his defeat of Frederick's son Manfred at Benevento in 1266; his concluding victory over young Conradin at Tagliacozzo in 1268. Most Florentines placed their bets on Charles after rather than before the races. Nor, naturally, did they receive outwardly impressive winnings. The form that agreements with Charles I and his successors took provides an important clue to the success of the Florentines in the south. Florentines were granted the right to trade not *qua* Florentines but *qua* members of the particular firm that had provided loans and now supplicated for favours. The merchants themselves were often required to demonstrate that they were loyal Guelfs; similar demands were made of Sienese and other merchants in the south, demands that became increasingly difficult to satisfy as Siena experienced internal political convulsions and emerged for a short time as an anti-Guelf city.⁹ Thus the Florentines moved forward slowly not just by their own individual efforts, but also into the vacuum left by the withdrawal of Sienese and other rivals. So, too, the once great trading centre of Pisa, through which Florentines had long gained access to the sea, found its merchants proscribed en bloc in 1267; Pisans were traditionally pro-Hohenstaufen, and Charles gave them little opportunity to rethink their policy in the light of his victories.¹⁰ Charles remembered his enemies as well as his friends; and on this point the Florentine had less to fear. Unhindered by any great tradition of southern involvement, Florentines appeared relatively untarnished in Charles's eyes.

⁶ R. Pernoud, *Histoire du commerce de Marseille*, I (Marseilles, 1949), pp. 346-5; E. Baratier, *Histoire du commerce de Marseille*, II (Marseilles, 1951), pp. 24-40. G. Lesage, *Marseille angevine* (Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, CLXVIII, Paris, 1950), pp. 101-2, paints an exaggerated picture of Provençal commercial success in southern Italy; cf. D. S. H. Abulafia, 'Marseilles, Acre and the Mediterranean, 1200-1291', in P. Edbury and D. M. Metcalf, eds., *Coinage in the Latin East*, (British Archaeological Reports, no. S. 77, Oxford, 1980), pp. 19-39.

⁷ E. Jordan, *Les origines de la domination angevine en Italie* (Paris, 1909), pp. 536-58.

⁸ S. Terlizzi, *Documenti delle relazioni tra Carlo I d'Angiò e la Toscana* (Documenti di storia italiana, XII, Florence, 1950), no. 4. For privileges issued to Florentines later in 1265 and in 1266, see nos. 5, 8-15, etc.

⁹ *Ibid.* nos. 1-3.

¹⁰ Yver, *Commerce*, p. 228.

The pre-condition of favour was credit. In the fourteenth century a trio of banks, the Bardi, Peruzzi, and Acciaiuoli, offered most credit and received most favours. General safe-conducts were replaced by more specific concessions, allowing the north Italians privileged access to the commodities that interested them most. In 1294 members of the Bardi, Acciaiuoli, and Mozzi firms received the right to export two and a quarter thousand tons (11,000 *salme*) of wheat from the ports of Apulia, against a loan of 1,000 ounces of gold, and for a further 200 ounces they were entitled to export extra quantities of wheat, barley, and beans.¹¹ A direct loan to the crown thus replaced the payment of tax on these exports and the cost of purchasing a licence to export foodstuffs: a licence that would be withheld from others in time of shortage in the south. The Florentines still had to pay the current price for their wheat in the Apulian markets.

Such grants of export rights became very regular. In the thirty-year period 1290 to 1329 over forty such grants are recorded, mostly in favour of the Bardi, Peruzzi, and Acciaiuoli; it is likely that the evidence is incomplete.¹² With each grant, went also a major loan. Between July 1304 and August 1305, the Peruzzi advanced Charles II 18,210 ounces of gold; a little later they advanced 9,000 ounces to help pay the costs of an invasion of rebel Sicily. They did not pin their hopes on direct repayment, though this could occur: they managed to recover over 11,000 ounces from the crown in repayment of the Sicilian war loan, thus making a 2,000 ounce profit.¹³ Occasional repayment was a sign of royal goodwill, but indirect means were more commonly used, to enable the bankers to recover loans through grants of money-producing offices and rights. Thus control over the fishing port of Castellamare was offered the Bardi as a way of extinguishing royal debts; this was a lucrative possession and appears again in the 1350s as part of the property of another Florentine, Nicola Acciaiuoli.¹⁴ Control of the Neapolitan mint fell into Florentine hands: there are notable analogies here with Florentine activities in England and Ireland.¹⁵ Above all, the banking firms gained direct control over port taxes in the Adriatic provinces of the Kingdom of Naples. In 1308 the Peruzzi were placed in charge of taxation of grain exports from the Abruzzi, a commerce in which they themselves had a large stake.¹⁶ Indeed, Florentine bankers came to accept indirect payment of this type as the general rule, and probably came to prefer it to promises of direct repayment. In the Apulian ports they were not merely their own masters; by grant of the king they had become masters of all who traded.

¹¹ Davidsohn, *Forschungen*, no. 201 (7 May 1294). A further grant permitting the export of 25,000 *salme* was issued later that year: no. 218. Cf. also no. 198, permitting the Bardi alone to export 1,000 *salme*.

¹² C. M. de la Roncière, *Florence: centre économique régionale au XIV^e siècle* (Aix-en-Provence, 1976), II, pp. 565, 571-3, 625.

¹³ Davidsohn, *Forschungen*, no. 506: statement of account between the Peruzzi and the king, dated 8 July 1306; cf. no. 530 (25 Nov. 1307).

¹⁴ Davidsohn, *Forschungen*, no. 338 (18 May 1300). Castellamare was until this grant under the jurisdiction of merchants from Lucca; the transfer to Florentine hands well illustrates the increasing success of Florence itself in supplanting Tuscan rivals at the court of Naples. For Nicola Acciaiuoli's interests in Castellamare, see Archivio Ricasoli-Firidolfi, Florence, fondo Acciaiuoli, perg. 161 (1360, transumpt of document of 1349) and perg. 326 (già 369, 1360). My warmest thanks are due to Baronessa Ricasoli for her willingness to let me see her documents and for her expression of interest.

¹⁵ Davidsohn, *Geschichte*, pp. 413, 415; M. D. O'Sullivan, *Italian Merchant Bankers in Ireland in the Thirteenth Century* (Dublin, 1962).

¹⁶ Davidsohn, *Forschungen*, no. 538 (29 May 1308). During 1308 the Peruzzi gained ever more generous rights in the Abruzzi—lands (nos. 532, 536) and export rights (no. 533, 25,000 *salme*). The grant of control over customs revenues was simply the culmination of this rapid process.

One major reason why the Neapolitan crown turned to the north Italians for credit has been mentioned: war loans. The costs of war itself was rising, not least after the appearance of new fashions in plate armour. From the start of his Italian career Charles I had to be maintained by advances; he and his successors strove to reconquer Sicily after the revolt of the Vespers in 1282; he and his successors tried to acquire lands and titles in Albania and the Morea; the Angevins continued to conduct a vigorous policy in northern Italy as leaders of the Guelf alliance.¹⁷ The Tuscans did not bear all of these costs; but in the early stages they eased repayments to the prime creditor, the pope. They eased, too, the costs of Angevin programmes of church-building and artistic patronage. In 1308 loans secured from the Bardi and Peruzzi were set not merely against items such as ambassadors' expenses, but against the stipend awarded to the great painter Pietro Cavallini, and against a fee for translating some manuscripts from Arabic into Latin.¹⁸ The Angevins were not necessarily wastrels themselves; but it was partly through Florentine loans that they were able to maintain and enhance the prestige of their dynasty, a costly but necessary task.

II

For the Florentines, the loans simply lubricated a more extensive commercial network that was the real source of profits and the real attraction of trade in the south. The outstanding characteristic of this trade is that Florentine exports from southern Italy consisted almost entirely of raw materials. An interesting source, the account book of King Robert's physician Johan Blasi, indicates that a certain amount of linen cloth was exported from the region around Naples, but in other respects industrial exports hardly existed.¹⁹ Naples, Barletta, Manfredonia, Salerno—the great ports of the kingdom—were simply transit centres for exported wheat, oil, and wood. And these exports were increasingly drawn into Florentine hands. In 1283 the Frescobaldi of Florence were given permission to export wheat, if they wished, from Apulia to Venice; and the Venetians came to resent the way in which Apulian grain, grown near their own trade routes, had become mortgaged to citizens of a non-Adriatic town.²⁰ By 1317 the Venetian Senate was requesting action from King Robert himself.²¹ The Neapolitan grants to Florentine merchants indicate by their very regularity how the Florentines had intruded themselves into the carrying-trade in grain in the Mediterranean. They were transporting large quantities in years when Florence itself had only a partial need for imported grain. In other years, such as 1329, when all Italy was stricken with famine, they were permitted to take large amounts of wheat out of ports in

¹⁷ For a general account, E. Léonard, *Les Angevins de Naples* (Paris, 1954). Also G. M. Monti, *La dominazione angioina in Piemonte* (Biblioteca storica subalpina, cxvi, Turin, 1930) for northern Italy; and G. M. Monti, *Nuovi studi angioini* (Trani, 1937) for the Balkans—the latter permeated by Fascist notions. The period of Angevin suzerainty over Genoa (1318-1335) has been ignored; I am myself preparing a study.

¹⁸ A. Cutolo, *Il Regno di Sicilia negli ultimi anni di vita di Carlo II d'Angiò* (Milan, 1924), doc. XXIX, p. 104.

¹⁹ D. Hauck, ed. *Das Kaufmannsbuch des Johan Blasi (1329-1337): Ausgabe mit sprachlichem und wirtschaftsgeschichtlichem Kommentar*, 2 vols. (Dissertation, Saarbrücken, 1965), I, p. 48.

²⁰ Yver, op. cit., pp. 254, 267-70. But the collapse of the Bardi and Peruzzi resulted in a strengthening of Venetian ties with southern Italy, as Joanna I and her successors heaped favours on Venice: Yver, p. 279; D. S. H. Abulafia, 'Genoa and the security of the seas: the mission of Babilano Lomellino in 1350', *Papers of the British School at Rome*, XLV (1977), pp. 272-6.

²¹ G. Giomo, ed. *I Misti del Senato della repubblica veneta (1293-1331)*, (Venice, 1887), p. 11; Abulafia, 'Venice and the Kingdom of Naples', for the problem of why Venetian-Angevin relations deteriorated.

Apulia whose citizens were ready to riot over the food shortages. Our source, the fourteenth-century memoir of a Florentine corn-chandler, remarks that Apulia was a region normally rich enough in grain to avoid famine; indeed, even in 1329 there was sufficient grain, but it was being kept in store by wealthy merchants who intended to trade it for vast sums.²² If these merchants were not Florentines, their clients surely were. How gigantic the quantities placed on the market were is clear from the record of Florentine exports of Apulian grain in 1311: about 45,000 tons, enough to fill fifty of the largest Genoese ships of the fifteenth century.²³

Although wheat was the single item with which the Peruzzi and Bardi were most consistently and conspicuously involved, other south Italian foodstuffs passed through their hands. Just as they ferried wheat to Florence and also to other Italian towns, so too they supplied south Italian oil to Florence, its neighbours, and indeed to the corners of the Mediterranean. The merchants of Dubrovnik bought Apulian oil and wheat not only directly but via Florentine intermediaries, and if need be via Florentine credit advances too.²⁴ The sweet wine of southern Italy, called *vino greco*, was transported by Florentine agents from Naples to Avignon, where it was a favourite of several popes.²⁵ For Florentine bankers, with counters in Naples, Dubrovnik, and Avignon, with advanced instruments of credit and sale, it was entirely appropriate to act as the principal channel of transmission of these items between southern Italy and the rest of the Mediterranean. It would be wrong, however, to ignore other enterprises that had only loose links with the banks, yet brought Florentines to southern Italy to buy large quantities of food. The prime instance of a trade in which the bankers played no real role was the trade in livestock. Florentine cattle merchants in the hills of Apulia and the Abruzzi sent enormous quantities of livestock to Tuscany for slaughter. A legal record of 1336 refers to a merchant who forwarded 50,000 goats and sheep to Florence over a seven-year period, for a total price of 30,000 florins. Important as this trade was before the Black Death, it seems likely that it grew still further after 1350.²⁶ Those primarily involved in this trade were members of the Florentine butchers' and tanners' guilds; clearly the meat and leather obtained from the animals was partly exported from Florence itself. The evidence for the trade in livestock makes it clear that the activities of the Florentine banks, limited as they were in personnel, were accompanied by Florentine penetration into the markets of the south Italian hinterland, and by specialization in a diverse range of goods. What these goods had in common was that they were nearly all unprocessed.

²² G. Pinto, ed. *Il Libro del Biadaio* (Biblioteca storica toscana, XVIII, Florence, 1978), pp. 339-40. This is a source of capital importance, a record of grain prices in early fourteenth-century Florence compiled by a contemporary corn chandler. For south Italian grain in general, see M. de Boüard, 'Problèmes de subsistances dans un état médiéval: le marché et les prix des céréales au royaume angevin di Sicile (1266-1282)', *Annales—Histoire, Économies, Civilisations*, x (1938), pp. 483-501.

²³ As C. M. de la Roncière remarks: *Florence*, IV, pp. 139-40, note 11. Cf. Davidsohn, *Forschungen*, nos. 603, 610, 615.

²⁴ B. Krekić, 'Four Florentine Commercial Companies in Dubrovnik (Ragusa) in the First Half of the Fourteenth Century', in H. Miskimin, D. Herlihy, A. Udovitch, eds. *The Medieval City* (New Haven, 1977), pp. 25-41, especially pp. 30-1. Krekić argues (p. 40) that 'Dubrovnik was not a major operation for the Florentines', and that Apulian grain was important but rarely vital to Ragusan survival. Krekić is certainly right to contrast the middle-rank significance of Dubrovnik with the first-rank significance of Florence itself.

²⁵ Yver, *Commerce*, pp. 105-6.

²⁶ De la Roncière, *Florence*, II, pp. 567-8, 1136, 1208.

A picture of this penetration that confined itself to bankers and merchants would be quite incomplete. The south of Italy was a land of special opportunities; and, as in trade and credit, so in other spheres the Florentines established a clear predominance compared to their Sienese or Genoese rivals. A significant area of success was the acquisition of high, and often salaried, office within the kingdom of Naples. This was a different area of activity to short-term control over revenue-producing departments of state, as a means of repaying loans. A class of professional, permanent administrators of Tuscan origin also emerged. By 1309 a certain Naso de Vicedominis of Florence was justiciar of the Terra d'Otranto, the heel of Italy.²⁷ A member of the Bardi partnership, Bencivegna Buonsustegna, was granted a number of appointments by the crown, principally connected with the transmission of Neapolitan tribute to the papacy in Avignon.²⁸ Here we see a perfect combination of personal favour and professional suitability, since Bencivegna had himself operated in Provence as well as Naples. As there were more modest Florentine businessmen than the bankers, so there were more modest officials than justiciars and chamberlains. An early fourteenth century royal notary has been identified as Florentine because of tell-tale indications of Florentine speech in his documents.²⁹ And for favoured Florentines there were also empty honours and titles in abundance.

Others, such as the Genoese, were less successful. The office of Admiral of the Fleet remained as ever in Genoese hands—who better than a Genoese to command at sea?³⁰ The Genoese family of Grimaldi had an important fief in Calabria in the fourteenth century.³¹ But Florentine acquisition of land in southern Italy was on a grander scale altogether; and Florentines, unlike the Grimaldi, often resided on the lands they were granted. A Florentine court banker, Ildebrandino, was granted a palace in Apulia with permission to live there and to make use of the forest land nearby.³² In this case, land was actually granted in partial repayment of royal debts. In the case of Nicola Acciaiuoli, however, we can observe a concerted attempt to build enormous personal estates. In the 1350s, after internal rebellions and Hungarian invasions, Acciaiuoli was free to acquire large tracts of land confiscated from Neapolitan nobles. He concentrated his efforts on the creation of an extensive demesne around Melfi, and he juggled with the estates of others, exchanging good lands for better.³³ What appear to be generous grants of King Louis and Queen Joanna in favour of their ever-faithful Grand Seneschal read more as generous grants made by the Grand Seneschal in his own favour, with royal compliance.³⁴ Nicola Acciaiuoli

²⁷ Cutolo, *Regno*, doc. xc, p. 184. The justiciar of Terra di Lavoro, Lapo Turdo, was another Tuscan, from Pistoia: Cutolo, docs. xxix, xc, li, liv, lxvi.

²⁸ *Ibid.* doc. xxix, p. 105.

²⁹ Davidsohn, *Geschichte*, p. 427; *Forschungen*, no. 276 (1297).

³⁰ L. R. Ménager, *Ammiratus—'Αμυρᾶς: L'émirat et les origines de l'amirauté (XIe-XIIIe siècles)*, (Paris, 1960), pp. 123-32; Yver, *Commerce*, p. 236.

³¹ Yver, *Commerce*, p. 242; for Genoese fortunes in general, also pp. 236-7. Cf. C. Trasselli, 'Genovesi in Sicilia', *Atti della società ligure di storia patria*, n.s., ix (1969), pp. 155-78.

³² Davidsohn, *Geschichte*, p. 423; cf. *Forschungen*, nos. 532, 536.

³³ The principal account of Nicola Acciaiuoli is that by E. Léonard, *Histoire de Jeanne Ier, reine de Naples, comtesse de Provence*, III (Mémoires et documents historiques publiés par ordre de S.A.S. le Prince Louis II de Monaco), (Monaco-Paris, 1936).

³⁴ Archivio Ricassoli-Firidolfi, fondo Acciaiuoli, perg. 133 (1356): exchange of certain lands for better ones recently confiscated by King Louis and Queen Joanna from rebels; perg. 326 (1360): conferment of the office of Seneschal and of revenues from Melfi and elsewhere; perg. 18 (1399): King Ladislav of Naples confirms to Nicola's heirs the late Seneschal's privileges; also perg. 145 (1355), 151 (1356).

did, however, remember he was a Florentine. He dedicated much of the great wealth he had acquired in Naples and Greece to the construction of the Charterhouse outside Florence which still contains his tomb; thus he finally returned to Tuscany.³⁵

A final group of Florentines active in the south has to be examined, a group well able to sell its excellent products. It has been mentioned that the Angevins made Naples a vigorous centre of artistic and literary patronage. Nicola Acciaiuoli himself played Maecenas to Petrarch, though he was less able to take seriously another Florentine of Naples, Giovanni Boccaccio.³⁶ As members of a community that kept the king in funds, Florentines were certainly welcome at court; indeed, one of the most striking features of court culture in Naples was its strongly Tuscan flavour.³⁷ Here, too, Florence edged ahead of Siena: King Robert the Wise sent for Giotto and commissioned several works from him, all now lost.³⁸ Giotto himself had close links with the Bardi and Peruzzi in Florence—he painted their chapels in Santa Croce—and it is no surprise that he should have been drawn southwards.³⁹ This is not to deny, however, that his fine reputation in his own lifetime and his much-acclaimed artistic innovations also made him an obvious artist to attract to the modish Neapolitan court. He came partly as a Florentine, and partly because the Angevins had a good eye for quality.

III

Some areas of Florentine success have been indicated—in banking, in commerce, in office-holding, in land-getting, in culture too. But it is also necessary to present the Florentine balance-sheet, keeping alive the question what specific advantage or stimulus Florence derived from the south. The first point that must be made is that Florence was well suited to pay for the grain, oil, and livestock it bought in the south. It is abundantly clear that the Florentines paid for these goods by exporting finished cloth to southern Italy. This trade was greatly helped by the fact that southern Italy had no important textile industries of its own. There were some instances of direct exchange of cloth for wheat: from 1348 to 1355 the Cavalcanti of Florence had an agent in Calabria who imported textiles and exported wheat.⁴⁰ A century later the Ragusan writer Benedetto Cotrugli, or Kotruljević, referred to barter of cloth for wheat as quite a common form of exchange in southern Italy and Sicily.⁴¹ The cloths imported to Naples included Florentine woollens, produced entirely within the city from imported

³⁵ For his will, see L. Tanfani, *Nicola Acciaiuoli* (Florence, 1863), Appendix; and Archivio di Stato, Florence, Conventi soppressi, archivio 51 (Certosa di San Lorenzo a Galluzzo), registro 216.

³⁶ E. Léonard, *Boccace et Naples* (Paris, 1944); V. Branca, *Boccaccio: the Man and His Work* (Hassocks, 1976), pp. 134-6—the name of Maecenas is actually invoked by those inviting Boccaccio to return to Naples; E. H. Wilkins, *Life of Petrarch* (Chicago, 1961), pp. 111, 170, 181. Also D. S. H. Abulafia, 'The Reputation of a Norman King in Angevin Naples', *Journal of Medieval History*, v (1979), pp. 135-47.

³⁷ F. Bologna, *I pittori alla corte angioina di Napoli, 1266-1414* (Rome, 1969).

³⁸ B. Cole, *Giotto and Florentine painting, 1280-1375* (New York, 1976), p. 12.

³⁹ E. Borsook, L. Tintori, *Giotto: the Peruzzi Chapel* (New York, 1965); Cole, *Giotto*, pp. 96-120. R. Smith, 'Giotto: Artistic Realism, Political Realism', *Journal of Medieval History*, iv (1978), argues that Giotto's paintings constitute an exposition of a Gueff-Angevin political programme; this is all the more likely since Simone Martini also seems to have incorporated a political message in some of his work—J. Gardner, 'Simone Martini's St Louis of Toulouse', *Reading Medieval Studies*, I (1975), pp. 16-29.

⁴⁰ De la Roncière, op. cit. II, p. 573.

⁴¹ B. Cotrugli, *Della mercatura et del mercante perfetto* (Brescia, 1602), pp. 31-2; on Cotrugli see B. Krekić, *Dubrovnik in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1972), pp. 124-5.

(often English) wool, and Flemish or north French cloths imported into Florence, and sometimes actually finished there. Boccadibue di Biagio, notary to the Bardi in Florence, listed cloth of Ypres among the items sent southwards in 1314.⁴² This was a well-established trade in southern Italy, in which not the Florentines but the Genoese had been the leaders before 1200.⁴³ What was new was that Florence was able to exploit its own position of primacy in southern Italy to export not merely cloths from Flanders or other north Italian towns, but cloths it had produced within its own walls.⁴⁴ As never before in trade with the south, manufacturer and salesman were citizens of a single northern town. Genoa, Venice, even Siena, had no textile industry to compare with that of Florence. And it is worth adding that Florence may have imported a small amount of its wool from southern Italy itself, processing the raw materials of a major customer.⁴⁵

A second consideration was the dependence of Florence on outside food supplies. According to the corn-chandler's memoir of the early fourteenth century, cited earlier, Florence could normally feed itself from its own contado for only five months of the year.⁴⁶ If that is a rough figure for 'normal' years, it must then be remembered that Florence suffered famine frequently in the years before the Black Death: 1323, 1329, 1333, and 1335. Apulian grain had, of course, its rivals: Romagna, across the mountains from Florence, often proved an invaluable reserve, so too Sardinia for poorer quality wheat.⁴⁷ But Apulian grain was slightly higher in price than Tuscan, for it was hard wheat of a type cultivated only rarely near Florence, a type called "grano ciciliano".⁴⁸ Being already about 5 per cent more costly, this grain was not the first purchase in times of shortage when all prices shot up, and Florentines searched lower rather than higher in the scale of grains and pulses for something their pockets could afford. But Apulian grain had the advantage of being regularly available—even, as has been seen, in such years as 1329, when Apulians themselves were starving—and with public subsidies it could be placed on the market at attainable prices. In years of plenty it provided the raw material for pasta, which was already a common element in the north Italian diet. And in years of great plenty Florentines did not neglect the opportunity to buy grain that was surplus to

⁴² Archivio di Stato, Florence, notarile antecosimiano, B. 1950, f. 40 r: 'Pretio duorum pannorum de scarlato de ypri', at £271. 8s. od.

⁴³ Abulafia, *The Two Italies*, pp. 255-64.

⁴⁴ For Florentine textile industries, see A. Doren, *Studien aus der florentiner Wirtschaftsgeschichte, I. Die florentiner Wollentuchindustrie von XIV. bis zum XVI. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1901).

⁴⁵ This is likely at least in the fifteenth century, when pasture was encroaching heavily on arable in southern Italy: C. Klapisch-Zuber and J. Day, 'Villages désertés en Italie', *Villages désertés et histoire économique* (Les hommes et la terre, xi, Paris, 1965), pp. 419-59. Cf. A. Grohmann, *Le fiere del regno di Napoli in età aragonese* (Naples, 1969), pp. 85, 97, 117, 138, 175.

⁴⁶ *Libro del Biadaiole*, p. 317; and Pinto, introduction, p. 73. See also the important studies by G. Pinto, 'Firenze e la carestia del 1346-47: aspetti a problemi delle crisi annonarie alla metà del "300"', *Archivio storico italiano*, cxxx (1972), pp. 3-84; and R. Goldthwaite, 'I prezzi del grano a Firenze dal XIV al XVI secolo', *Quaderni storici*, x (1975), pp. 5-36.

⁴⁷ *Libro del Biadaiole*, pp. 325, 376 (examples of the importation of wheat from Romagna and Sardinia).

⁴⁸ *Grano ciciliano* cannot be assumed to signify only wheat from Sicily (*Cicilia*). The *Libro del Biadaiole* clearly includes Neapolitan wheat under this heading—after all, the Kingdom of Naples was formally described as the *regnum Sicilie*. Local Florentine production of *grano ciciliano* was not very profitable: Pinto, *Libro del Biadaiole*, p. 32, observes that seeds of *grano ciciliano* planted in Tuscany tended to deteriorate and assimilate to *grano comunale*, the standard local product. Davidsohn identified the most expensive Florentine grain of the fourteenth century, *grano calvello*, as wheat from Lucania in the heel of Italy, (specifically from the *terra Calvelli* there). Pinto, *Biadaiole*, p. 32, rightly doubts this, and identifies this wheat as a very soft grain suitable for top-grade bread and cake production. References to the use of *grano calvello* in the manufacture of pasta are hard to explain.

domestic needs and to sell it in Genoa, Venice, Acre or Armenia.⁴⁹ Demand for Apulian grain may have begun to fall, however, in the 1340s, as population declined. In any case the collapse of the Bardi and Peruzzi banks made the purchase of grain by special privilege rather rarer. Internal wars reduced the extent of cultivation in southern Italy, and there was a clear shift to pastoral activity in Apulia. By the 1360s the south Italians were finding it difficult to sell their grain in lands whose population had fallen so drastically, despite its superior quality.

After 1282 Sicily and southern Italy formed separate and very often rival kingdoms, the one allied closely to Ghibelline and White Gueft interests in northern Italy, the other accepted as one of the patrons of the majority Black Gueft interest. Another patron was Florence. The importance of the political alliance between Florence and Naples in the formation of the economic links here described is in many ways obvious. Florentine friendship accounts for the diminution of Sieneſe influence at the Neapolitan court; it helps to explain why the Venetians, aiming at approximate neutrality between the north Italian factions, adopted a more guarded approach to the Angevins, and were rewarded with corporate privileges less generous than those granted to the individual Florentine firms. Not to be underestimated is the ſignificance for Florentine fortunes in the ſouth of the polarization between Angevin Naples and Aragonese Sicily. In the firſt place, even before 1282 the Florentines ſeem to have concentrated their energies in Naples and Apulia rather than in Sicily, gravitating around the royal court and touting for favours at the centre of power. Thus the Angevin loſs of Sicily did not neceſſarily divide their interests greatly.⁵⁰ In the ſecond place, Florence was able to poſe as a major ſupporter of Angevin attempts to reconquer Sicily, advancing large ſums to finance unſucceſſful wars—unſucceſſful for the Angevins, but for the Florentines a means of gaining more conceſſions of tax rights, office-holding and eſtates, in form of repayment. In the third place, ſome potent rivals of Florence ſhifted their own trade more heavily towards Sicily. Ghibelline Genoa bought its grain in two major regions, Sicily and the Black Sea; the coſt was a more moдеſt role in Naples.⁵¹ Piſa too: within a year of the revolt of the Veſpers, Piſan ſhips were exporting ſignificant quantities of Sicilian wheat.⁵² But Florence was not hounded out of Sicily; its merchants had ſimply to act more circumspectly when there. Loans to the Aragonese kings of Sicily by the Peruzzi, Bardi, and Acciaiuoli ensured access to

⁴⁹ Y. Renouard, 'Une expédition de céréales des Pouilles en Arménie par les Bardi pour le compte de Benoît XII', *mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'École française de Rome*, LIII (1936), pp. 287-329; and for the Kingdom of Jerusalem in the late thirteenth century, J. Riley-Smith, *The Feudal Nobility and the Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1174-1277* (1973), p. 64.

⁵⁰ For the effects of the loſs of Sicily on the Angevin crown, ſee de Bouïard, 'Problèmes', pp. 484, 498-501. Sicilian grain reſources were rather greater than Apulian; according to de Bouïard the revolt of the Veſpers wrecked the efficient machinery through which the kings controlled movements of grain within their realm. Under Charles I, a threat of famine in one region of the kingdom could be countered at once by orders to transfer ſurplus corn from well-endowed areas, free of cuſtoms duties. It was Sicily which both ſuffered famine leaſt and poſſeſſed a ſurplus moſt often; the loſt iſland was the pivot of the whole ſystem. However, de Bouïard's explanation is only partial. Another reaſon for the breakdown of this machinery was the generosity of grants of export rights iſſued in favour of north Italian allies—grants which were the ſole reſponſibility of the Angevin kings themſelves.

⁵¹ Abulafia, 'Genoa and the ſecurity of the ſeaſ'; in my planned ſtudy of Genoa under Angevin rule I intend to demonſtrate that commercial interests in Naples were ſtrengthened in the period 1318-1335, while the Ghibelline exiles in Liguria managed to maintain their long-ſtanding links with the Aragonese rulers of Sicily itſelf.

⁵² D. Herlihy, *Piſa in the Early Renaiſſance* (New Haven, 1958), p. 85: an importation of 1,500 *ſalme* from Sicily to Piſa by Angelo Spina.

Sicilian grain as a further reserve for Florentine needs; in 1340 the Acciaiuoli had three resident representatives in Sicily, but nine in the kingdom of Naples.⁵³

A second aspect of the political link between Florence and Naples is the victory of the Black Guelfs at the start of the fourteenth century. Yves Renouard indicated how the commercial interests of the Black Guelfs in Florence were basically "long-distance" interests, founded on relatively recent links with the papal court, France, and of course Naples. The rival White Guelfs can be characterized as exponents of more venerable economic ties within a more restricted region, from Pisa to Bologna—a merchant group less dependent on the formation of close links with the house of Anjou.⁵⁴ Certainly, the ties between the Black Guelf banks and King Robert of Naples were genuinely close. In 1310 Robert visited Florence and took up residence in the Peruzzi palace in the old amphitheatre.⁵⁵

IV

The aim of this paper has been to ascertain the nature and structure of Florentine-Neapolitan ties; I have not tried to indicate the major phases in Florentine expansion in the south, the moments of uncertainty that did occur, or the great blow caused by the collapse of the Bardi and Peruzzi. After 1343 Queen Joanna's finances were in an appalling state, not least because she had less creditors on whom to rely; fortunately Nicola Acciaiuoli had a deep and well-filled pocket. There is no reason to dissent from Armando Saporì's demonstration that royal failure in Naples and England to repay debts to the banks was not a culpable act but the result of a greater shortage of crown funds than could have been predicted, and that the banks themselves were undermined by over-extension and by violent wobbles in Florentine policy within Italy.⁵⁶ But, before the crisis broke in the second half of the thirteenth century, Florence found itself in a potentially very advantageous position. Its textile industry was producing high-grade woollens at a moment when demand for these cloths was booming; neither Siena nor the maritime towns could compete, for none had specialized to the extent that Florence had. Yet the growth of industry was accompanied, it is clear, by large-scale immigration from the countryside near Florence, and the commune faced problems of provisioning on an ever greater scale—added to which, of course, frequent floods and famines made access to a regular source of food still more urgent.⁵⁷ The formation of a close bond with southern Italy much

⁵³ Safe-conducts issued to Florentine merchants in Sicily are discussed by C. Trasselli, 'Nuovi documenti sui Peruzzi, Bardi e Acciaiuoli in Sicilia', *Economia e storia*, III (1956), pp. 188-9. The figures for the Acciaiuoli representatives are drawn from Archivio Ricasoli-Firidolfi, Florence, fondo Acciaiuoli, perg. 756 (già 798); this document has not been published, but a resumé by A. Buchon, *Nouvelles recherches historiques sur la principauté française de Morée et ses hautes baronnies*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1843), I, pp. 46-7, note, was used by R. de Roover, 'The organization of trade', *Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, III. *Economic organization and policies in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1963), p. 86, Table II.

⁵⁴ Y. Renouard, *Les villes d'Italie de la fin du X^e siècle au début du XIV^e siècle*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1969), II, pp. 354-8, 363-4.

⁵⁵ King Robert was in the Peruzzi palace between April and October 1310: A. Saporì, ed. *I Libri di commercio dei Peruzzi*, (Milan, 1934), pp. 407, 476, 477, showing that a new roof was constructed at the time of his arrival, costing the banking firm £450. Cf. S. L. Peruzzi, *Storia del commercio e dei banchieri di Firenze* (Florence, 1868), p. 330; Borsook, *Giotto*, pp. 7, 40. Also see Davidsohn, *Forschungen*, no. 593, issued during Robert's Florentine sojourn.

⁵⁶ A. Saporì, *La crisi delle compagnie mercantili dei Bardi e dei Peruzzi* (Biblioteca storica toscana, III, Florence, 1932). Cf. E. Russell, 'The Societies of the Bardi and the Peruzzi and their Dealings with Edward III', in G. Unwin, ed. *Finance and trade under Edward III* (Manchester, 1918).

⁵⁷ For immigration from the countryside, see J. Plesner, *L'émigration de la campagne à la ville libre de Florence au XIII^e siècle* (Copenhagen, 1934).

lessened the problems of growth for Florence. The south produced grain to top up that five months' supply the Florentines hoped to harvest locally; the south had very little industry and was heavily dependent on outside supplies of textiles.

All Florentines did not manufacture woollens; but all Florentines ate grain. There has been a strong tendency to underestimate the importance of bulk trade in foodstuffs in the Middle Ages. Florence itself achieved remarkable success in assuring its grain supplies as a result of its Angevin alliance; and the alliance brought other primary products such as meat and leather, as well as offering a good market for Florentine industrial goods. Bulk trade in food and other raw materials was not always so satisfactorily managed; thus the Venetians, by remaining neutral, hoped, but failed, to placate Angevins of Naples and Aragonese of Sicily all at once; thus the merchants of Marseilles discovered that their own king, Robert of Naples, preferred to cultivate his Tuscan allies rather than to promote his Provençal subjects. Nevertheless, the capacity of Sicily and southern Italy to produce a regular surplus of food stimulated the appearance of a "dual economy" in Italy; the heavily populated north of Italy channelled many energies into industrial and commercial enterprises, while the thinly populated south drew eagerly on the north for finished products and for expertise. To describe this balance of interests as a contrast between a "developed" north and an "underdeveloped" south would be to employ loaded terms; in the Middle Ages, was it more "underdeveloped" to be lacking in regular famines or to be lacking in large-scale industry? Southern Italy fulfilled both criteria in the years before the plague.⁵⁸

In southern Italy, then, the Florentines had found both a market for the sale of their own goods and a source of supply for the goods they needed; a source too of honours, estates and political alliances. In significant measure, Florence was sustained by the south.⁵⁹

Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge

⁵⁸ The earliest traces of this economic dualism seem to me to be found in the commercial penetration of Sicily and southern Italy by the Genoese during the twelfth century: D. S. H. Abulafia, *The Two Italies*, passim. The financial hold of the Genoese on the Norman rulers was in most respects negligible; and the Genoese sold not their own cloth, but Flemish and Lombard textiles. Florentine penetration in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century was far deeper, since it involved direct control over important departments of royal finance, and employed the sophisticated new business techniques of the Tuscan banks. For the meaning in a historical context of the term "underdevelopment", see the incisive remarks of Sir John Hicks, in *Sviluppo e sottosviluppo in Europa e fuori d'Europa* (Settimana dell'Istituto internazionale di storia economica F. Datini, Prato, 1978, forthcoming publication).

⁵⁹ In a recent thoughtful essay John Pryor has discussed "Angevin attempts to stimulate the economy of the kingdom", such as the foundation of new or enlarged ports (Villanova, Manfredonia); the establishment of new fairs; the opening of new silver mines in Calabria; the provision of ships from the royal fleet to merchants, when not needed in war: J. H. Pryor, 'Foreign Policy and Economic Policy: the Angevins of Sicily and the Economic Decline of Southern Italy, 1266-1343', in L. O. Frappell, ed. *Principalities, Powers and Estates: Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Government and Society* (Adelaide, 1980), pp. 43-55. But heavy local taxation and tight central control brought stagnation rather than stimulus to the economy. Pryor thereby departs from the view that war expenses and a "sell-out" to the Tuscans were the prime causes of economic stagnation; but it needs to be stressed that heavy taxation was necessitated by heavy war expenses; Pryor does not entirely succeed in distinguishing the two. He shows how under King Robert the *census*, or tribute of the Neapolitan kings to the papacy, was paid regularly, and a backlog in payments entirely extinguished; and he sees here a sign of financial strength in the Neapolitan crown. But to repay the backlog meant taking loans from the Tuscans, who had the machinery to transmit funds on the Angevin behalf to the papal court at Avignon. Pryor's approach contributes a novel aspect to the economic and financial problems of the Angevin south, but it does not demonstrate that these problems were necessarily less acute than is argued here.