

# Mediterranean trade in the Pyrenees: Italian merchants in Puigcerdà, 1300-1360

ELIZABETH COMUZZI

University of California, Los Angeles

## **Abstract**

Based on an examination of surviving notarial evidence from the Pyrenean town of Puigcerdà, this article investigates the ties between the inland mountainous regions of the Mediterranean and broader Mediterranean trade networks in the later Middle Ages. It shows that, following the rapid expansion of cloth production in the Catalan Pyrenees during the late thirteenth century, Italian (mainly Tuscan) merchants, some themselves from smaller interior towns, began travelling not only to the major Mediterranean coastal ports but also, through them, into the inner Catalan Pyrenees, where they sold cloth-dyeing materials from at least 1302 on. The commercial activity of these merchants appears to have grown during the first decades of the fourteenth century as cloth production in Puigcerdà continued to grow and persisted at least into the 1360s. Through a comparison between the number of Italian merchants operating in Puigcerdà and those in the smaller Catalan town of Castelló d'Empúries, this article also reveals that the level of access to Mediterranean products and trade in inland mountainous regions was significantly lower than that of the coast. Both towns appear to have been part of one interconnected network that saw some of the same merchants trading in Puigcerdà and in Castelló. This network was likely based in Perpignan, where a high number of the Italian merchants resided. The number of Italian dye-sellers in coastal Castelló far outstripped those in Puigcerdà, suggesting that while the inner Pyrenees were tied to Mediterranean trade, these economic connections were less dense than those in coastal areas, and more limited by local geography.

**Keywords:** woad, cloth dyes, Italians, Mediterranean, merchants, Puigcerdà, Pyrenees, cloth industry.

### Resum

A partir de les evidències notarials que encara existeixen de la pirinenca vila de Puigcerdà, aquest article investiga la connexió entre l'interior de les regions muntanyoses de la Mediterrània i les xarxes comercials mediterrànies més extenses a la fi de l'Edat Mitjana. Es mostra que, seguint la ràpida expansió de la producció de draps als Pirineus catalans durant el final del segle XIII, mercaders italians (la majoria toscans), alguns dels quals provinents de petites ciutats d'interior, van començar a viatjar no només des dels principals ports de la Mediterrània, sinó cap a l'interior del Pirineu català, on venien draps tenyits des de finals de l'any 1302. Sembla que l'activitat comercial d'aquests mercaders es va incrementar durant les primeres dècades del segle XIV, ja que la producció de draps a Puigcerdà va continuar creixent i va persistir fins a finals de la dècada dels anys seixanta del mateix segle. Aquest article, mitjançant una comparació entre el nombre de mercaders italians actius a Puigcerdà i a la petita vila catalana de Castelló d'Empúries, revela que el nivell d'accés dels productors mediterranis en el comerç a l'interior de les regions muntanyoses va ser significativament més baix que el de la costa. Sembla també que les dues viles formen part d'una xarxa interconnectada que va veure alguns dels mateixos mercaders comerciants a Puigcerdà i a Castelló. Probablement, aquesta xarxa tenia la base a Perpinyà, amb un alt nombre d'italians mercaders com a residents. El nombre d'italians venedors de tint a la costanera Castelló va superar de llarg els de Puigcerdà, la qual cosa suggereix que, si bé els Pirineus interiors estaven vinculats al comerç mediterrani, aquestes connexions econòmiques eren menys denses que les de les zones costaneres i més limitades per la geografia local.

**Paraules clau:** Tint, pastell, italians, mediterranis, mercaders, Puigcerdà, Pirineus, indústria de draps.

### Resumen

A partir de las evidencias notariales que se han conservado en la pirenaica villa de Puigcerdà, este artículo investiga la conexión entre el interior de las regiones montañosas del Mediterráneo y las redes comerciales mediterráneas más amplias a finales de la Edad Media. Se muestra que, siguiendo la rápida expansión de la producción de paños en los Pirineos Catalanes durante el final

del siglo XIII, mercaderes italianos (la mayoría toscanos), algunos de ellos provenientes de pequeñas ciudades de interior, comenzaron a viajar no solo desde los principales puertos del Mediterráneo, sino hacia el interior del Pirineo catalán, donde vendían paños teñidos desde finales de 1302. La actividad comercial de estos mercaderes parece que se incrementó durante las primeras décadas del siglo XIV, ya que la producción de paños en Puigcerdà continuó creciendo y persistió hasta finales de la década de los sesenta del mismo siglo. Este artículo, mediante una comparación entre el número de mercaderes italianos activos en Puigcerdà y en la pequeña villa catalana de Castelló d'Empúries, revela que el nivel de acceso de los productores mediterráneos al comercio en el interior de las regiones montañosas fue significativamente más bajo que el de la costa. Ambas villas parece que forman parte de una red interconectada que vio algunos de los mismos mercaderes comerciantes en Puigcerdà y en Castelló. Esta red probablemente estaba basada en Perpiñán, con un alto número de mercaderes italianos residentes. El número de italianos vendedores de tinte en la costera Castelló superaron por mucho a los de Puigcerdà, lo que sugiere que, si bien los Pirineos interiores estaban vinculados al comercio mediterráneo, estas conexiones económicas eran menos densas que las de las zonas costeras y más limitadas por la geografía local.

**Palabras clave:** tinte, hierba pastel, italianos, mediterráneos, mercaderes, Puigcerdà, Pirineos, industria de paños.

Recent scholarship has revealed that the mountainous regions of the Mediterranean were swept up in the industrial and commercial transformations of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.<sup>1</sup> As this article will show, early fourteenth-century economic expansion also saw the increasing penetration of Mediterranean trade networks into less-accessible interior regions, including the inner Pyrenees. Surviving notarial evidence from Puigcerdà, located in the Catalan Pyrenees, makes clear that during the first half of the fourteenth century, Italian mer-

1. See as an example: Catherine VERNA, *L'industrie au village: essai de micro-histoire (Arles-sur-Tech, XI<sup>e</sup> et XV<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris, 2017.

chants (some themselves originally from similarly small towns in Italy) regularly travelled not only to the major Mediterranean coastal ports but also, through them, deep into the Catalan interior.

Puigcerdà was the capital of the medieval county of Cerdanya, and, with a population of at least around 7,500 people in the first quarter of the fourteenth century, was the largest urban center in the Catalan Pyrenees at that time.<sup>2</sup> Notarial registers from Puigcerdà survive dating back to 1260, and Italian merchants are first mentioned in them at least as early as 1302.<sup>3</sup> From then on there is a modest but steady presence of Italian merchants in the surviving notarial records, lasting into the 1360s. Their presence thus persisted through major changes to the local political boundaries, and beyond the beginning of the town's long-lasting contraction and economic decline in the wake of the Black Death. The activity of these Italian merchants shows firstly that they were expanding the scope of their trade into more modest regional markets, selling woad, alum and madder for the dyeing of cloth for the local market.<sup>4</sup> They were likely drawn to the market in Puigcerdà by the

2. See my doctoral dissertation, «Economic and Demographic Change through Notarial Sources: The Example of Puigcerdà 1260-1360», University of California Los Angeles, 2020. Earlier studies on the town suggested a mid-fourteenth-century population of around 5,700-6,500 people: Salvador CLARAMUNT RODRÍGUEZ, «Prosperitat del mon urbà entre 1200 i 1350: patriciat i artesanat», in J. Salvat, ed., *Història de Catalunya*, vol. III, Salvat, Barcelona, 1978, pp. 87-100; and Sebastià BOSOM I ISERN, *Homes i oficis de Puigcerdà al segle XIV: un document inèdit de 1345*, Institut d'Estudis Ceretans, Puigcerdà, 1982, pp. 30-31.

3. This study is the result of an extensive but not exhaustive search through the 385 notarial registers surviving from Puigcerdà from before 1360. I examined registers from the period between 1300 and 1306 thoroughly, along with those from selected years, including June 1309-June 1310, and June 1321-June 1322, to find all references of Italian merchants in those years. I have also compiled a large collection of references to Italian merchants from other years, recorded as I came across them.

4. Woad and madder are plant materials that dye cloth blue and red, respectively. Alum, a colorless compound, was used to affix dyes to cloth. On the medieval trade of these materials see Franco BORLANDI, «Note per la storia della produzione e del commercio di una materia prima: il guado nel Medio Evo», in *Studi in onore di Gino Luzzatto*, vol. II, Milano Guiffirè, Milan, 1950, pp. 297-324; José Miguel GUAL

rapid increase in cloth-production that had occurred there in the late thirteenth century, and Italian trade in the town probably grew rapidly in the earliest decades of the fourteenth century, as cloth production in Cerdanya continued to increase. Secondly, while the activity of these Italian merchants shows that a town high in the Pyrenees (some 120 km from the nearest Mediterranean port) was connected to Mediterranean trade networks, comparison between Puigcerdà and the coastal Catalan town of Castelló d'Empúries suggests that Puigcerdà's connections were both less dense than those of small centers closer to the Catalan coast, and more mediated by the local geography than the mere appearance of Tuscan merchants in these records at first suggests.

Italian merchants probably began trading in Puigcerdà in the earliest years of the fourteenth century.<sup>5</sup> Italian traders were present in Puigcerdà from at least 1302, when Lando Bruno and Johannes de Cimo, both of Arezzo in Tuscany, appeared in four contracts between 25 March and 27 March of that year.<sup>6</sup> These contracts included a sale on credit of

---

LÓPEZ, «El pastel en la España medieval: datos de producción, comercio y consumo de este colorante textil», *Miscelánea medieval murciana*, 10 (1983), pp. 133-65; Christian GUILLERÉ, «Commerce et production du pastel en Catalogne: l'exemple du diocèse de Gérone au xive siècle», *Beiträge zur Waidtagung*, 7 (1995), pp. 99-104; Anthony PINTO, «Les sources notariales, miroir des cycles d'exportation du pastel languedocien en Roussillon et dans le Nord-Est de la Catalogne (xive siècle-premier quart du xve siècle)», *Annales du Midi: revue archéologique, historique et philologique de la France méridionale*, 113, n. 236 (2001), pp. 423-55; and Anthony PINTO, «Woad Production in Catalonia and Roussillon at the End of the Middle Ages», *Dyes in History and Archaeology* 2 (2008), pp. 51-58.

5. This article considers only the trade between Italian merchants and residents of Puigcerdà that would have been conducted in Puigcerdà. It is also possible that residents of Puigcerdà travelled to Perpignan or to other towns closer to the coast to trade with Italian merchants, but I was not able to examine such sources for this project.

6. Arxiu Comarcal de la Cerdanya (ACCE), Notarial del districte de Puigcerdà, Reg. 228, f. 68r. Due to the difficulty of discerning the original form of the names of Italian merchants, recorded in Latin by a Catalan speaker, I give the names here in the most-commonly appearing Latin form. In this period in Puigcerdà the year began on 25 March; all dates have been converted into modern dating, with the year beginning on 1 January. I acknowledge that still-earlier references could remain to be

woad, a sale on credit of woad, madder, and alum, and two contracts recording promises related to currency exchange rates. Only Lando was identified as being present in Puigcerdà to conduct these trades. It is not clear that these four documents represent the first time Italian merchants ever travelled to Puigcerdà, but certain differences between these contracts and the others involving Italian merchants from later years do suggest that the presence of these Aretines in Puigcerdà was a relatively new phenomenon. Firstly, the notary takes care to note the hometown of these merchants as «Arezzo in Tuscany» (*Arets in Toscana*), although in later contracts the notaries often omitted the reference to Tuscany and record that merchants are from Arezzo, with no further elaboration as to location. This suggests that in 1302 the Puigcerdanian notaries were less familiar with the location of Arezzo than they would come to be. In addition, both of the two sales on credit are followed by contracts in which Lando Bruno promises to accept the payment at a set exchange rate between the money of Toulouse and that of Barcelona. While sales on credit of dyestuffs would make up the bulk of all the documented business Italian merchants would conduct in Puigcerdà for decades to come, only one of the subsequent sales on credit that I have identified is followed by a similar promise relating to the payment's exchange rate. This suggests that in 1302 there remained some insecurity over how to conduct this type of international commerce, and that it was still fairly new.

Over the next half-century, Italian merchants traded regularly in Puigcerdà. Throughout the period, most of the Italian trade with Puigcerdà was dominated by just one or two merchants at a time: until the second decade of the fourteenth century, the leading Italian was Lando

---

found, but no document involving an Italian merchant survives from between 1300 and March of 1302. It is also possible that the earliest contracts involving Italian merchants in Puigcerdà have not survived. It is notable that the first Tuscan merchants seen conducting business in Puigcerdà came not from the major city of Florence but the much smaller town of Arezzo (itself, like Puigcerdà, not near the coast). This was likely due to Arezzo's location at the center of a region that was already producing woad by the late fourteenth century: BORLANDI, «Il guado», p. 303.

Bruno; afterwards, the Aretine merchant Matheus Brandayla and the Florentine merchant Andreas Manet begin to take over. While references to Matheus Brandayla become less common after the 1320s, Andreas Manet remained the primary Italian trader operating in Puigcerdà into the 1360s. Each of these merchants was probably the representative of a larger mercantile association, likely based in Perpignan, and tasked with either travelling to Puigcerdà regularly or establishing himself there on a more permanent basis. Puigcerdà itself may have served as a satellite base through which to reach even less-accessible markets. A contract from Puigcerdà from 1313, for example, mentions a debt owed to the Aretine Grimaudo Bonaventura by a man from La Seu d'Urgell, a town deeper into the Pyrenees, about a day's journey from Puigcerdà.<sup>7</sup>

Soon after 1302, Aretine merchants came to dominate the trade in dyestuffs in Puigcerdà, at the expense of Occitan merchants. In the earliest years of the fourteenth century, Occitans, mainly from Narbonne and Limoux, sold the same trio of woad, madder, and alum in Puigcerdà. It is unclear, given the limits of the evidence, whether Aretine merchants began moving in as competition in a deliberate attempt to disrupt a trade network already dominated by Occitans, or if both Occitan and Italian merchants began selling cloth-dyes in Puigcerdà at approximately the same time.<sup>8</sup> I have identified twenty-two individual contracts involving the sale of woad, madder or alum by a merchant of Narbonne between June 1301 and June 1302, in comparison to the two sales mentioned above by Italians in the same period.<sup>9</sup>

7. ACCE, Reg. 85, f. 41r.

8. The reference to woad in the customs taxes of the Vall de Querol (just north of Puigcerdà, on the French border) from 1288 certainly suggests that Occitans had been bringing woad to Puigcerdà in the late thirteenth century (perhaps from the Lauregais region near Toulouse, a well-known center of woad production): Miguel GUAL CAMARENA, *Vocabulario del comercio medieval. Colección de aranceles aduaneros de la Corona de Aragón (siglos XIII y XIV)*, Publicaciones de la Excelentísima Diputación Provincial, Tarragona, 1968, pp. 148-150.

9. I use the year from 24 June 1301 to 23 June 1302 because during this period the notarial registers of Puigcerdà began and ended on the feast of St John the Baptist, 24 June.

Italian trade in Catalonia was given an unintentional helping hand by the French king, Philip the Fair, when he outlawed the export of raw materials related to cloth-production in the year 1306.<sup>10</sup> The move was meant to protect the Occitan cloth industry and prevent the Catalans from profiting off the finishing of raw cloth (the stage during which most of the value was added) the way that Florentines had done decades earlier.<sup>11</sup> The enforcement of the ban shows the power of the French state, and the immediate effects of that ban on the dye merchants: in the year June 1309 to June 1310, I could find only one sale of dyestuffs involving an Occitan merchant.<sup>12</sup> Lando Bruno, the Aretine merchant, by contrast, appears in at least 132 individual contracts in that year, 115 of which mention the sale of dyestuffs.<sup>13</sup>

The expansion of Tuscan trade into the Pyrenees tracks closely with the growth of the Catalan cloth industry as a whole. In most of Catalonia, the cloth industry did not begin to take off until around the year 1300, and the Italians arrived soon after. This timing is particularly worth noting since Puigcerdà, a center for the trade of Pyrenean fleeces, had become a locus of both cloth production and finishing since at

10. Anthony Pinto first saw Italian merchants selling woad in the Catalan town of Castelló d'Empúries from the year 1305 onwards, and argued they moved in at the moment when Occitan trade was banned: Anthony PINTO, «Commerce et draperie dans le comté d'Empuries (1260-1497)», doctoral thesis, Université de Savoie, 2002, p. 329. The evidence from Puigcerdà, however, shows that Tuscan merchants had clearly been selling dyestuffs at least a few years earlier.

11. Guy ROMESTAN, «Draperie roussillonnaise et draperie languedocienne dans la première moitié du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle», in *XLII Congrès de la Fédération historique du Languedoc méditerranéen et du Roussillon*, Fédération historique du Languedoc méditerranéen et du Roussillon, Montpellier, 1970, pp. 31-59. These bans were eventually repealed in 1332.

12. This is a sale on credit of woad from May of 1309, by a merchant of Pamiers. ACCE, Reg. 47, f. 94v.

13. In one of these 132 contracts the name of the Aretine merchant is illegible, but I have assumed that this was also Lando Bruno. The other contracts in which Lando appears are plain debts or transfers of debts.

least the last quarter of the thirteenth century.<sup>14</sup> The town's volume of cloth production may have been expanding even further around 1300-1302, prompting growth in the purchase of dyes. The town produced primarily low- and medium-quality cloth for local distribution; thus, the inhabitants imported woad and madder, the least expensive blue and red dyes available.

Tracing the history of Italian trade through the half-century is complicated, but the early expansion is clear. In the years immediately following 1302, the number of transactions in Puigcerdà that involve Italian merchants grows dramatically. This is likely due to a massive increase in the cloth industry in Puigcerdà in this period. From four in 1302, contracts between Italian merchants and residents of Puigcerdà increased to thirteen between June 1303 and June 1304,<sup>15</sup> and fifteen from June

14. On the growth of the Catalan cloth industry, see: Manuel RIU, «The Woolen Industry in Catalonia in the Later Middle Ages», in N. B. Harte and K. G. Ponting, eds., *Cloth and Clothing in Medieval Europe. Essays in Memory of Professor E. M. Carus-Wilson*, Heinemann, London, 1983, pp. 205-229; Miguel GUAL CAMARINA, «Orígenes y expansión de la industria textil lanera catalana en la edad media», in M. Spallanzani, ed., *Produzione, commercio e consumo dei panna di lana (nei secoli XII-XVIII). Atti della Seconda Settimana di Studio, 1-16 aprile 1970*, Istituto F. Datini, Florence, 1976, pp. 511-23. Stephen Bensch notes that from 1260 to 1300, two thirds of apprentices in Puigcerdà trained in cloth-industry crafts, that the town imported a substantial number of «semi-finished, medium quality white woollens [*sic*] from Narbonne and Montolieu (near Carcassonne)» and that it had both a guild of cloth-finishers and a guild of weavers by 1294: Stephen P. BENSCH, «Apprenticeship, Wages and Guilds at Puigcerdà (1260-1300)», in S. Claramunt Rodríguez, ed., *El Món Urbà a La Corona d'Aragó del 1137 als Decrets de Nova Planta*, vol. I, Universitat de Barcelona, Barcelona, 2003, pp. 210-11. On the importation of unfinished cloth into Puigcerdà, see: Christine RENDU, «Un aperçu de l'économie cerdane à la fin du XIII<sup>ème</sup> siècle. Draps, bétail et cereales sur le marché de Puigcerdà en 1280-1281», *Ceretania: Quaderns d'Estudis Cerdans*, 1 (1991), pp. 85-106.

15. One of these thirteen involves the merchants Bernardus Luti de Pelegrini and Comando de Bonsenyor, both citizens of Arezzo, the others all involve Lando Bruno of Arezzo.

1304 to June 1305.<sup>16</sup> As noted above, by the year of June 1309 to June 1310, Lando Bruno appeared in 132 individual contracts.<sup>17</sup> The vast majority of these contracts were for dyestuffs: twenty-four of twenty-eight in 1303-1305, and 115 of 132 for 1309-1310. Most of Lando's contracts also follow a certain form: a combination of a transfer of a debt with a sale on credit, in which the end customer, purchasing dyed cloth, ends up owing Lando, instead of owing the dyer or cloth-finisher.<sup>18</sup> Not only was Lando's business as the main dye supplier in Puigcerdà thoroughly established, he managed to make himself, rather than the cloth dyers, the financial master of this part of the local cloth trade, frequently even while he was himself absent.<sup>19</sup>

In later years, Italian merchants appear in fewer contracts, even as the overall number of notarial acts recorded in Puigcerdà continued to grow. In the year from June 1321 to June 1322, for example, Italian merchants were mentioned in only seventeen contracts, most of which relate to debts and none of which are direct sales on credit of dyestuffs; but the import of Tuscan dyestuffs into Puigcerdà may still have been increasing. It should be noted that this decrease does not necessarily indicate a decline in the volume of trade. The survival of contracts is

16. These involve the merchants Lando Bruno, Lauso Bruno, and Rayner de Cimo, all of Arezzo. The vast majority of the contracts from both years were sales on credit for cloth-dyeing materials (woad, madder, alum or «colors»); four were transfers of debts.

17. Surviving records suggest that between 1304-1305 and 1309-1310 the overall number of notarial acts recorded in Puigcerdà probably grew slightly, but the number of acts involving an Italian merchant clearly grew at a disproportionately higher rate.

18. In these cases Lando sold dyestuffs on credit to customers (mostly cloth-dyers) in Puigcerdà. Those cloth-dyers then sold dyed cloth to their own customers. Both transactions were recorded in a single contract in which the end customer ended up owing Lando, without the cloth-dyer himself having to accept payment or pay Lando directly. A similar format may have been used in woad sales in Castello d'Empúries, where Pinto was surprised to see woad purchased by people with no connection to the production or sale of cloth, including the inhabitants of small villages. PINTO, «Sources notariales», p. 434.

19. Lando was specifically noted as being absent in at least sixty-six, or 50%, of the 132 contracts in which he is mentioned.

not complete, and certain aspects of those contracts that do survive (notably the lack of contracts in which the Italians sell dyestuffs, otherwise their main commercial activity) suggest that the notaries of Puigcerdà may have begun recording most transactions with Italians in private registers just for these merchants. If this is true, it would indicate that the business undertaken by these merchants had actually increased to become numerous enough to require separate registers. This year also saw at least eight different Italians working in Puigcerdà, possibly indicating an increase in their trade there. Furthermore, by 1321-1322, the activities of the Italian merchants operating in Puigcerdà had expanded beyond selling dyestuffs, with one merchant, Andreas Manet of Florence, appearing in multiple sales on credit purchasing cloth.<sup>20</sup> In general, however, the sale of dyestuffs would remain these merchants' main activity. For example, Andreas Manet appeared in twenty-seven documents in a single notarial register from the year 1339-1340, all but one being sales on credit for some combination of woad, madder or «colors».<sup>21</sup> And he was still engaging in contracts of exactly this type as late as November 1359, and possibly later.<sup>22</sup>

These documents also reveal the mechanisms of Italian commercial penetration of the interior. Many of the Italians probably arrived in the town from a base in the coastal city of Perpignan, the mainland capital of the Crown of Majorca, of which Puigcerdà was also a part.<sup>23</sup> I have

20. ACCE, Reg. 28, ff. 15v and 89v. Several of the transfers of debts from this year also refer to Andreas Manet having purchased cloth on credit.

21. These documents are all found in ACCE, Reg. 447. Andreas's activity at this point looks very similar to that of Lando Bruno several decades earlier. The one contract that was not a sale on credit was a transfer of a debt, and most of the sales on credit relied on the same compounded format transferring the debt of a customer buying dyed cloth to the woad-supplier, Andreas.

22. ACCE, Reg. 560, f. 138r. I did not examine the commercial activity of Italian merchants in any notarial registers after 1359, except to check the books of wills for Andreas Manet's will, as discussed later on.

23. In 1276, the northernmost Catalan counties of Cerdanya, Roussillon, Conflent and Vallespir were ceded, along with Montpellier and the Balearic Islands, to a younger son of James I of Aragon, to form the independent Crown of Majorca.

identified a total of twenty-four Italian merchants mentioned in documents from Puigcerdà up to the year 1364; six of these, including Lando Bruno, the Aretine first-comer, were identified as residents of Perpignan.<sup>24</sup> Having established a business and base of operations in Perpignan, individual merchants could travel to the smaller inland centers in the surrounding region. Most of the Italians operating in Puigcerdà were probably associates of mercantile groups operating out of Perpignan, sent to Puigcerdà from a regional hub near to the coast, rather than directly from Italy.<sup>25</sup>

The evidence from Puigcerdà also reveals the rapid pace of Italian commercial penetration, even into rural markets. By 1321, there are shifts in the origin of the Tuscan merchants coming to Puigcerdà. While all the references to Italian merchants in the first decade of the fourteenth century were to merchants from Arezzo, only three of the eight

---

This kingdom was reincorporated into the Crown of Aragon in 1344. The existence of Tuscan merchants selling dyestuffs in Perpignan has already been noted by Marcel Durliat, although no full analysis of these merchants has been completed: Marcel DURLIAT, *L'art dans le royaume de Majorque; les débuts de l'art gothique en Roussillon, en Cerdagne et aux Baléares*, Privat, Toulouse, 1962, pp. 49-50. Richard Emery did not discuss Italian merchants selling dyestuffs in Perpignan, but he noted the presence of Italians, primarily from Tuscany, in Perpignan in the first two decades of the fourteenth century: Richard W. EMERY, *The Jews of Perpignan in the Thirteenth Century: An Economic Study Based on Notarial Records*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1959, pp. 99-100.

24. One Florentine merchant, Johannes Xochi, was identified as a resident of Narbonne, suggesting this was another base of operations. Pinto notes that this same merchant also engaged in business in Castelló d'Empúries, and that an employee of his (a native of Montepulciano who had previously worked in Narbonne) later moved to Perpignan and eventually to Castelló d'Empúries; see: PINTO, «Sources notariales», p. 428. The French ban on the export of cloth-production materials did not apply to materials coming from Italy.

25. Perpignan was, like Puigcerdà, one of the earliest centers of Catalan cloth production. It also may have been preferred over cities such as Barcelona or Valencia, because these latter cities periodically expelled Italian merchants due to conflicts with locals: Maria Teresa FERRER MALLOL, «Els Italians a terres catalanes (segles XII-XV)», *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 10 (1980), pp. 393-467.

individual merchants referenced in documents from the year June 1321–June 1322 were from Arezzo, while three were from Florence—the city’s closest major neighbor further up the Arno valley—and two were from Città di Castello, the nearest city to the east of Arezzo. By the 1330s, references to Florentine merchants generally seem to far outnumber references to Aretines.<sup>26</sup> Merchants from all three cities were also identified as residents of Perpignan.

Only two merchants appear to have established themselves on a permanent basis in Puigcerdà. One of these, Feu Bransala, identified as a citizen of Arezzo but inhabitant of Puigcerdà, appears in only one of the documents that I have found, from 1322. The second is Andreas Manet, originally of Florence. Andreas Manet was operating in Puigcerdà as a seller of dyestuffs at least by 1320, when he appears as the procurator of a merchant from Città di Castello. As late as 1340 Andreas was still labelled only a merchant of Florence, but at least by 1344 he began to be identified as a merchant of Florence and inhabitant of Puigcerdà.<sup>27</sup> Sometime between 1346 and 1348 he began to be identified merely as «Andreas Manet, merchant of Puigcerdà».<sup>28</sup> By that point he had been working in Puigcerdà for over twenty-five years. The fact that first Feu Bransala and then Andreas Manet established themselves as residents of Puigcerdà could indicate that the town’s level of cloth production and demand for dyestuffs had either remained steady or continued to grow to the point that it made sense to station a permanent representative there.

26. Merchants from Città di Castello, itself a more minor city in the period, and not in Tuscany but in nearby modern-day Umbria, appear in these documents far less often than either Florentines or Aretines.

27. ACCE, Reg. 183, f. 203r.

28. ACCE, Reg. 497, ff. 8v–82r. It is clear that this is the same person. This shift in identification shows how certain identification markers, such as place of origin, could shift over time. It also raises interesting questions about how medieval people were identified: would this change have been one made by Andreas himself, by the notaries, or by other people from Puigcerdà? Does this shift in identification bear any relation to a shift in legal status—possibly indicating that Andreas had become a citizen of Puigcerdà? This is certainly a subject worthy of further investigation.

Andreas Manet seems to have worked in Puigcerdà until the end of his life. He appeared in sales on credit of woad at least as late as 1359 and created a will there in 1364, naming two of his nephews, Anthonius Thedey and Manet Thedey (both likely Florentines), as his executors and universal heirs, and asking to be buried in the cemetery of the Franciscan monastery in Puigcerdà.<sup>29</sup> Despite having worked in Puigcerdà for over forty years and having lived there permanently for at least twenty, his will suggests a lack of connection to the local community. He seems not to have married or had children of his own.<sup>30</sup> He left everything to his nephews except for two items. First was a bequest to the Franciscan monastery of Puigcerdà. Second, and more interestingly, he ordered that a debt of 6,000 sous of Barcelona owed to him by the community of Villefranche-de-Conflent, a small town halfway between Perpignan and Puigcerdà, be given to the Christian poor of that town.<sup>31</sup> Thus, even his will attests to the regional network that carried Tuscans into the interior. Meanwhile, his continued business in the town into the 1360s shows the endurance of the regional trade net-

29. ACCE, Reg. 574, f. 11r. The hometowns of Andreas's nephews are not given, but in other contracts Anthonius Thedey was identified as a merchant of Florence. See: ACCE, Reg. 795, ff. 43v-44r. A sixteenth-century chronicle from Puigcerdà records that the tomb of a Florentine merchant named Manethedei (Manet Thedey) was located close to the entrance to the choir of the church of the Franciscan monastery, complete with a large marble statue of a man dressed as Saint Francis. This suggests that at least this nephew would also live out his days in Puigcerdà. See: Salvador GALCERAN VIGUÉ, *Dietari de la fidelíssima vila de Puigcerda: Transcripció literal del text i comentari original*, Rafael Dalmau, Barcelona, 1977, pp. 30.

30. Curiously, there is one document from March 1340 that refers to Manet as a tonsured cleric («Andreas Maneti clericus tonsuratus de Florencia»), which may explain his unmarried status. In this document he names procurators who are to collect sums owed related to Italian commerce in France, and to make pleas related to clerical privilege before the seneschal of Toulouse. ACCE, Reg. 747, fol. 1r-1v.

31. That Andreas would have a connection to Villefranche-de-Conflent is not surprising, as it was a logical stopping point for anyone travelling between Perpignan and Puigcerdà and mentioned regularly in other contracts involving the Italian merchants who worked in Puigcerdà. It is somewhat unusual that he left the poor of that town a bequest while making no bequests to anyone in Puigcerdà except for the Franciscans.

work that brought Italian merchants into the Pyrenees, despite the shocks of the 1340s.

Although Manet's business in the town did continue into the 1360s, it is likely that in general, Tuscan woad imports into Puigcerdà had begun to decline before this time, probably in the mid-1340s. While Puigcerdà would remain a major center of cloth production throughout the mid-fourteenth century, the town entered a centuries-long period of economic contraction and decline in the 1340s, following its reincorporation into the Crown of Aragon in 1344 and the Black Death in 1348. Tuscan imports of woad into Catalonia also suffered in this period due to internal political problems in Tuscany, as well as increasing competition from Occitan merchants after Philip VI of France lifted the French export bans in 1332.<sup>32</sup>

The presence of Tuscan merchants trading in Puigcerdà, so far from the coast, and over a period of more than fifty years, is clear evidence that Mediterranean trade extended far deeper into inland regions than has often been assumed. But a comparison between the number of Italians living and operating in Puigcerdà and those in the much smaller coastal town of Castelló d'Empúries suggests that the level of access to Mediterranean products and trade inland was significantly lower than that on the coast. Castelló d'Empúries was the capital of the semi-independent Catalan county of Empúries, a region along the Mediterranean, to the south of Perpignan. Castelló was probably significantly smaller than Puigcerdà in the early fourteenth century, with a likely population of approximately 2,000-2,500 people around the year 1300.<sup>33</sup>

32. PINTO, «Sources notariales», pp. 440-442. Pinto notes that in the late fourteenth century, imports of Italian woad into Catalonia would be overtaken by Lombards, who operated more frequently out of Barcelona and Valencia than Perpignan, and that the import of Occitan woad, from both Languedoc and the Lauregais region near Toulouse would grow considerably. On the repeal of these bans, see ROMESTAN, «Draperie», pp. 43.

33. Albert COMPTE, *Castelló d'Empúries: el centre històric Empuriabrava-Aiguamolls de l'Empordà*, Ajuntament de Castelló d'Empúries, Castelló d'Empúries, 1995, 31-32; Stephen P. BENSCH, «A Baronial Aljama: The Jews of Empúries in the Thirteenth Century», *Jewish History*, 22, n. 1/2 (2008), pp. 19-51; 35. Pinto has claimed the

Yet many more Italian merchants were operating in early fourteenth-century Castelló than were operating in Puigcerdà during the same period. In his study of the development of the cloth industry in Castelló, Anthony Pinto identified at least seventy-three individual Italian (primarily Tuscan) merchants living or trading there between the years 1318 and 1340 alone.<sup>34</sup> At least nine of these merchants were also identified as residents of Castelló d'Empúries, suggesting they had established themselves there more permanently. These figures present a sharp contrast with the twenty-four Italians mentioned in contracts from Puigcerdà during the much longer period between 1302 and 1364, as well as the relatively small number—only two—who became residents of Puigcerdà. The list of merchants working in Castelló also includes merchants from more Italian towns (all still from the sub-Apennine valleys in eastern Tuscany): at least five from Arezzo; nineteen from Florence; six from Città di Castello; thirty-four from Montepulciano; two from Cortona, and one from Siena; whereas I have found no merchants identified as being from any of those latter three locations in the registers of Puigcerdà.<sup>35</sup>

Both Puigcerdà and Castelló d'Empúries were clearly part of one inter-connected trade network centered on Perpignan. Just as in Puigcerdà, the Italian merchants operating in Castelló were primarily involved in importing the raw materials (above all, woad) needed to dye cloth.<sup>36</sup> In both towns, a sizeable percentage of the Italian merchants trading there were identified as residents of Perpignan; this was the case for twenty-one of the seventy-three merchants (28.7%) mentioned in Castelló and six of the twenty-four merchants (25%) mentioned in Puigcerdà. Even more significantly, some of the same merchants worked in

---

population was higher, and likely at least 6,500 before the plague, at which point it would still have been smaller than Puigcerdà: PINTO, «Woad Production», p. 51.

34. PINTO, «Commerce et draperie», pp. 844-847. Pinto identified seventy-four merchants, but two of them (Cem Dinado and Seni Nado) are probably actually one merchant named Seni Dinado (who also worked in Puigcerdà).

35. Six were identified by Pinto merely as «Tuscan» or «Italian».

36. PINTO, «Commerce et draperie», p. 329.

both Castelló and Puigcerdà. Pere Degano of Città di Castello, Seni Dinado of Florence, Johannes Xochi of Florence and Tadeo Brunaxini of Florence all appear in documents in both places, suggesting that these towns were connected within one broader network.<sup>37</sup> In other cases I can identify merchants working in Puigcerdà with the same surnames as those working in Castelló, and who were likely members of one family.<sup>38</sup> Clearly both Castelló and Puigcerdà were satellites centers of a main trading hub in Perpignan, visited by members of the same mercantile associations.

A comparison of the lists of Italian merchants working in the two towns nonetheless reveals some key differences. Firstly, while merchants from Arezzo were dominant in Puigcerdà early on, only five of the seventy-three Italian merchants that Pinto identified in Castelló were from Arezzo. This could indicate that Aretine merchants intentionally blazed the trade route to Puigcerdà and not that to Castelló, although given that Aretine merchants were the most dominant in Puigcerdà in the earliest decades of the fourteenth century it could also indicate that Aretine trade in Catalonia had declined before Pinto's survey began in 1318.<sup>39</sup> Far more significantly, the main difference between the two is scale: Castelló was about a third the size of Puigcerdà in the early four-

37. In addition, the Angelo Fenutxo of Arezzo I identified in Puigcerdà may be the same as the Angelo Flomutxo of Arezzo that Pinto identified in Castelló. Tadeo Brunaxini, who worked in both places eventually settled permanently in Castelló. A private register of his business there survives: Christian GUILLERÉ, «Le registre particulier d'un marchand montepulciano installé à Castelló d'Empúries, Taddeo Brunacini (1336-1340)», *Annales du Midi: Revue de la France Méridionale*, 113, n. 236 (2001), pp. 509-549.

38. For example, the Matheus Brandayla of Arezzo who traded in Puigcerdà was probably a relative of the Garfolino Brandayla and Pere de Brandalia of Arezzo that Pinto identified in Castelló, and the Feu Bransala of Arezzo who I identified in Puigcerdà may have been a relative of the Giovanni Branzala of Arezzo that Pinto found in Castelló.

39. Arezzo would not be dominated by Florence until 1384: Robert BLACK, *Studio e scuola in Arezzo durante il Medioevo e il Rinascimento: i documenti d'archivio fino al 1530*, Accademia Petrarca di lettere, arti e scienze, Arezzo, 1996.

teenth century, but had perhaps three times as many Italians. Even given the difficulties of sources and population estimates, coastal Castelló's connections to Mediterranean trade seem to have outstripped those of interior Puigcerdà by an order of magnitude.<sup>40</sup> Finally, Puigcerdà was not only a larger town than Castelló; it was much more a center of cloth production. While the cloth industry of Castelló had been growing steadily since the final decade of the thirteenth century, it was far less dominant than in Puigcerdà.<sup>41</sup> But Castelló is also only slightly inland from the coast and lies close to the main road linking Barcelona to the centers of Languedoc. For a merchant stationed in Perpignan, Castelló was about a day's journey away and conveniently located about halfway to Girona, another day's travel to the south.<sup>42</sup> Puigcerdà, by contrast, was at least two days from Perpignan, and not along the easiest or most direct route to any other major city.

Italian merchants travelled deep into the Pyrenees to sell woad, madder, alum and other dye materials from at least as early as 1302 and at least as late as the 1360s. On the local level, this shows us that the cloth industry of Puigcerdà, and the cloth market in Cerdanya were sufficiently well developed by the earliest years of the fourteenth century to have a steady demand for mid-level imported dyes, that they were likely expanding in the early fourteenth century, and that this was a market that the Tuscans thought worth penetrating. They had, in fact, begun trading in northern Catalonia several years before the Occitan trade was inhibited by the French king's ban on the export of raw cloth-production materials. Though the king helped ensure a Tuscan

40. My search for Italians was not exhaustive, but I have examined enough of the notarial registers from medieval Puigcerdà that a total of twenty-four is unlikely to be off by more than handful of merchants.

41. PINTO, «Commerce et draperie», pp. 844-847.

42. Guilleré notes that some Tuscan woad-traders also appeared in Girona, but in smaller numbers than in Castelló. GUILLERÉ, «Commerce et production», p. 100. One further potential reason for the high density of Italians in Castelló is the autonomy of the county of Empúries. Tuscans may have felt more secure there than in the Crown of Aragon, where Italian merchants were occasionally expelled. On these expulsions, see FERRER MALLOL, «Els Italians», pp. 396-397.

takeover of the market, his actions were not needed to bring Italian attention to this non-luxury regional cloth market. This shows how buoyant the early fourteenth-century economy was: local production of modest-quality cloth for regional consumption was now knit into the larger inter-regional economy, bringing colors to mountain dwellers, and their money to Italians. The activities of the Italian traders operating in Puigcerdà reveal not only that fourteenth-century Mediterranean trade networks extended deep into inland regions, but also how they did so. Italians travelled to Puigcerdà not directly from their homelands in Italy, but primarily from Perpignan, where various merchants had settled permanently and set up bases for their mercantile associations. Operating from a main base in that major coastal city, these associations could then send members into the surrounding hinterland to conduct trade, or to live, thereby creating outer nodes all within one regional network. Through this process, hard-to-access inland regions like the inner Pyrenees could be brought into the wider Mediterranean world. This economic development created denser webs of connection between places like the inner Pyrenees and Italy that were sturdy enough to persist beyond the crises of the 1340s and the subsequent economic contraction.

*Appendix: Italians mentioned in documents from Puigcerdà 1300-1364*

Grimaudo Bonaventura of Arezzo  
Comando de Bonsenyor of Arezzo  
Matheus Brandayla of Arezzo, inhabitant of Perpignan  
Feu Bransala of Arezzo, inhabitant of Puigcerdà  
Lando Bruno of Arezzo, inhabitant of Perpignan  
Lauso Bruno of Arezzo  
Johannes de Cimo of Arezzo  
Rayner de Cimo of Arezzo  
Angelo Fenutxo of Arezzo  
Griffo Homodei of Arezzo, inhabitant of Perpignan  
Bernardus Luti de Pelegrini of Arezzo

Laurencius Atoniani of Florence  
Tedeus Brunaxini of Florence, inhabitant of Perpignan  
Seni Dinado of Florence, inhabitant of Perpignan  
Pauli Gaudani of Florence  
Philippus Lapi of Florence (nephew of Andreas Manet)  
Andreas Manet of Florence, later inhabitant of Puigcerdà  
Bernardus Phei of Florence  
Miniachus Rogerius of Florence  
Anthonius Thedey of Florence (nephew of Andreas Manet)  
Manet Thedey, probably of Florence (nephew of Andreas Manet)  
Johannes Xochi of Florence, inhabitant of Narbonne

Hugo Degano/de Aga of Città di Castello, inhabitant of Perpignan<sup>43</sup>  
Petro Degano of Città di Castello

43. It is likely, though not certain, that Hugo Degano of Città di Castello and Hugo de Aga of Città di Castello were the same person.