

Catalan commerce in the late Middle Ages*

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ABSTRACT

This is a summary of the development of Catalan maritime trade (encompassing Catalonia, Mallorca and Valencia) from the 12th to the late 15th century. The local products used for exchanges are studied, including saffron, dried fruit, raisins and figs, coral, wool, glue, tallow and manufactured items like woolen cloth, ceramics from Valencia, crafted hides, glass items, etc. The overseas spheres of trade are studied from the closest, namely Occitania and France, Italy and the Maghreb, to the Mediterranean Levant and the Atlantic territories, including Andalusia, Portugal, England and Flanders.

Keywords: maritime commerce, Middle Ages, Catalonia, Valencia, Mallorca

ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF CATALAN COMMERCE

In this article I shall examine the maritime commercial activities of Catalans abroad. I shall only briefly mention the mercantile activities of foreigners in Catalonia, Valencia and Mallorca, which would complement our overview of mediaeval Catalan commerce, yet would require a book of their own. Furthermore, the commerce in which foreigners engaged in the regions we are examining is almost better known than the activities of Catalans abroad. It should be clarified that the term *Catalan* applied to commerce since the 13th century is meant in the broad sense in which it was used in the Middle Ages; that is, it encompasses Mallorcans and Valencians as well. With the exception of an occasional brief reference, I shall not study land-based commerce abroad since at this point there is little documentation available to enable us to analyse it.

Catalan commercial activity during the early Middle Ages was quite scant due to the difficulty entailed in organising the land after the Islamic occupation and in repopulating it in the midst of constant conflicts with the neighbouring Muslim lands. The urban markets began to spur the inland economy in the 9th and 10th centuries, and starting in the 11th century the earliest fairs started to boost trade both domestically and abroad. In these early centuries, there was apparently a land route which joined Catalonia and Flanders, and perhaps a sea route to Pro-

vence as well, which then continued on overland. Another maritime and perhaps also land route connected Catalonia to Islamic Spain. However, events in the 12th century were paving the way for the major commercial expansion that took place in the 13th century.¹

Maritime mercantile activity abroad is linked to Barcelona, the capital of Catalonia and the only urban centre capable of sustaining an activity of this kind in the first half of the 12th century. Barcelona was also the engine that drove the onset of Catalonia's expansion in the second half of the century and the subsequent consolidation of this expansion in the 13th century.²

When Benjamí de Tudela travelled through Barcelona on his journey to Jerusalem in 1150, he described the city as a small but lovely nucleus, and he recounts that it was frequented by merchants from Greece, Pisa, Genoa, Sicily and Alexandria.³

Commerce with Occitania, Provence and the Tyrrhenian ports, all of them nearby, must have come first because it could be conducted without losing sight of the coast and in small boats. Narbonne, Montpellier, Marseille, Genoa, Pisa and Sicily were visited from the earliest days, as were the nearby Muslim lands. By the second half of the 12th century, Catalans were venturing as far as the eastern Mediterranean.

The growth in middle- and long-distance maritime commerce which characterised the second half of the 12th century stimulated naval construction. The mercantile fleet must have been important by the early decades of the 13th century. This growth explains how James I was able to conduct his expedition to conquer Mallorca in 1229 with a primarily Catalan fleet, something that would have been unimaginable in the first half of the previous

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century, when the Catalans needed the fleets of Pisa or Genoa for their conquests.

The development of Barcelona's navigation and commerce was facilitated by the adoption of protectionist measures, which were not unique back then; other countries were also adopting them. The first was aimed at protecting the fleet against competition from abroad. An order issued by James I in 1227 bans any foreign ship from loading merchandise in Barcelona with an Ultramar (Siria and Palestina), Alexandria or Ceuta, or from loading merchandise in these places with Barcelona as the destination as long as there was a Barcelona ship in the port willing to make the journey and carry the goods.⁴

The territorial expansion towards Mallorca and Valencia activated commerce. The conquest of Mallorca provided security in the nearby seas, and the island served as a base for the merchant fleet: it was close to North Africa and was on the way to Sicily and the Levant. Trade developed quite rapidly in Mallorca, partly because of its location as a crossroads of maritime routes and partly because the island's agricultural output did not ensure a sufficient food supply for its population.⁵

The conquest of the Kingdom of Valencia took much longer; there were uprisings and more years were needed to stabilise this region. Yet the structures of the new Christian society were gradually put into place. Regarding commerce, first there was a war or rapine economy, with the sale of Saracen prisoners as captives. Afterwards the internal Valencian trade routes were organised, along with exchanges with Catalonia and Mallorca, which ensured the development of a single commercial area. The gradual internationalisation of Valencia's trade got underway in the early 14th century.

THE SUPPLY OF SPECIALISED AGRICULTURAL OR MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS: THE KEY TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CATALAN COMMERCE

Catalan commerce managed to overcome two initial handicaps. The first was that the Genovese, Pisans, Venetians and even Occitanians were already entrenched in the most prosperous markets, and the second was the lack of important raw materials or many manufactured goods, which required the Catalans to redistribute products from abroad, leading to lower profit margins. Catalan merchants overcame the first difficulty with dedication and effort; they were no doubt able to take advantage of the gaps left in the markets at certain times by the wars among their competitors, and starting in the 13th century they also had the steadfast support of the monarchy both diplomatically and in terms of trade regulations, with protective measures and provisions that created a favourable institutional and legal framework. They also managed to overcome the second handicap. The merchants analysed each market and tried to introduce the goods that were available, which would thus lead to a rise in the

production of the successful goods, in both the agricultural and artisanal sectors, which were capable of manufacturing products that became widely accepted in the foreign markets.

Initially, the Catalans could offer wheat only after bountiful harvests, along with oil, honey and wine, just like the countries around it. They also offered Muslim captives, the product of the spoils of war during the centuries of expansion (12th and 13th), which turned into a demand for slaves in the 14th century.⁶ In manufacturing, the oldest and most reputed goods were weapons: high-quality swords and knives, and leather worked in the Arab technique, cordovan leathers.⁷ These are the items that the Catalans took to the fairs in Champagne in the 13th century, as we shall see, but locally-manufactured textiles soon began to be exported as well.

From an early date, the manufacture of tallow, the melted fat of ruminants, was developed, along with pitch, a product made using pine resin.⁸ Both were used in the naval industry, so their extraction was banned and a licence was needed to transport them to Christian, but not Muslim, destinations. There is abundant information demonstrating that this was one of the products constantly present in 13th century exports. A specialised and highly prized crop, saffron, began to gain prominence in the same century.⁹

The entry of the Kingdom of Valencia into the Catalan commercial sphere signalled a major boost in agricultural products which became highly successful exports, such as rice, dried figs and raisins, and it reinforced the stocks of nuts, such as almonds, which were also produced in Mallorca and Catalonia and had begun to be exported in the 13th century along with hazelnuts and pine nuts, highly characteristic crops from Catalonia,¹⁰ while wine from Morvedre had been exported since the 14th century. The southern reaches of Valencia contributed dates, which had previously only been available from the Maghreb; scarlet, a highly prized dye for luxury clothing extracted from an insect, the kermes; safflower, also called bastard saffron, whose capitulum or flower receptacle was used to make dyes and whose seeds were used to make an oil used in pharmaceutical products; soda-ash, a product made from burning barilla, which was used to make soap and to manufacture glass.¹¹ Likewise, Valencia provided crops of Oriental species like cumin and anise seed in the 14th century and sugar in the 15th century.¹²

Mallorca, like Catalonia, contributed some wool production, although Menorca wool was more important in terms of quality and began to be exported at the end of the 14th century. This period, too, witnessed the consolidation of the major wool production and distribution centre in the Maestrat region in the Kingdom of Valencia.¹³ In the 15th century, Mallorca also exported a lot of oil. Eivissa island contributed to exporting an essential raw material, the salt from its salt flats. This product was added to the output from the salt flats of Mata, near Guardamar, which came under the ownership of James II in the late

13th century through the annexation of the southern counties of Valencia.¹⁴

The exported goods started to diversify in the 13th century when a number of craft industries began to develop. The textile industry grew sharply in Catalonia at that time, and in the 14th to 15th centuries it began to be engine of economic activity. Mid-quality woollen cloth was produced that was extremely successful as exports, including cloth from Lleida, Perpinyà, Puigcerdà, Banyoles, Berga, Bagà and Barcelona. In this city, the most important textile industry in the 13th century was cotton: fustian, which was soon overtaken by wool in the early 14th century.¹⁵ At the same time, a textile industry was being organised in Mallorca following the Perpinyà model, while in Valencia the 1311 orders on imitations of fine French fabric revealed a working industry which would soon eclipse the importance of fabric from Languedoc. The export of fabric manufactured in Valencia and heading to Castile is documented as early as the first half of the 14th century, in smaller amounts than fabric from Catalonia. However, the output rose through protectionist measures, such as the ban on importing foreign fabric issued in 1342.¹⁶

This industry triggered a huge demand for certain dyeing products, such as woad, which usually came from Occitania and sometimes from Tuscany and Lombardy,¹⁷ and madder, often imported from Flanders. Alum, which was used to set colours and to tan hides, was in high demand in Catalonia and was also re-exported.¹⁸ Barcelona's cotton industry required raw materials which were imported until the 13th century, while the wool industry imported English wool until the 15th century, when Barcelona began trying to manufacture high-quality cloth like its Flemish counterparts.

The Kingdom of Valencia also supplied new goods with Arab roots, such as paper from Xàtiva, which began to decline in the 14th century.¹⁹ Other craft industries which became successful exports were clay and fine ceramic luxury vessels,²⁰ coral,²¹ rope,²² soap²³ and glass objects (which began to be developed in Barcelona particularly in the 15th century),²⁴ weapons such as knives, sheaf knives, daggers and swords,²⁵ as well as leather.²⁶

THE HUBS OF COMMERCE: EVOLUTION OF GROWTH AND CRISIS

The most important hubs of catalan commerce were the capitals of the three Catalan-speaking regions within the Crown of Aragon, namely Barcelona,²⁷ Valencia²⁸ and Mallorca,²⁹ which have been studied extensively. Perpinyà can be included as a hub as well, as it was well-connected via land routes and distributed the wool cloth from Flanders and the Nordic countries in general, yet it also developed an important textile industry of its own. Its maritime commerce took place via the Canet beach and the port of Cotlliure.³⁰ Sant Feliu de Guíxols (which served as

the port of Girona), Tarragona and Tortosa were the other main hubs of maritime commerce. Roses, Torroella de Montgrí, Palamós, Blanes and the entire Maresme as far as Barcelona were highly active in maritime commerce near the end of the 15th century. Inland, the important trading cities were Lleida, Cervera and Vic. In the Kingdom of Valencia, Peníscola, Morvedre, Gandia, Dénia and Alacant were active ports, but just as in Catalonia there were many others that filled out the redistribution network, some of them highly specialised in dried fruit, such as Xàbia. The most important inland hub of commerce was Xàtiva.³¹

After the conquests of Mallorca and Valencia, a hierarchical division of functions developed: Barcelona led the whole and ensured the import-export relationship with faraway ports; Mallorca became a repository of goods from many different places, but especially the Maghreb, where the foreign merchants could gather supplies for their destinations; and Valencia imported manufactured goods, exported agricultural products and specialised in exchanges with Castile, where it redistributed some of the manufactured goods it received.³²

The development of commerce in the 13th to 15th centuries has not been studied in all the periods in all three regions to the same degree. There are commercial areas that have been more thoroughly studied than others; for example, commerce between the Maghreb countries and all three regions is fairly well known. Generally speaking, with the exception of the last few decades of the century, the 14th century has not been thoroughly researched, although there are some sectoral studies. The 15th century is better known in all three regions, but the last third of the century in Catalonia has been somewhat ignored. Yet it is quite clear that in the 14th and 15th centuries, commercial movements geared up in all the regions, and maritime commerce started to develop with the different Atlantic territories.

The debates on the evolution of commerce have focused on the start of the expansion of Valencian trade and the crisis in Catalan trade in the 14th century. Regarding the start of Valencia's commercial expansion, some historians pinpoint it in the first few decades of the 14th century, while others claim that it began late in that same century.³³ There were diverse indications that the first thesis was accurate, but now the studies by Juan Leonardo Soler, either completed or underway, on Valencian commerce in the first half of the 14th century demonstrate this more clearly.³⁴ It is a fact that Valencia took longer than Mallorca to organise its foreign commerce. First it organised agricultural and crafts production, and then it joined the Catalan coastal routes, which ensured redistribution of the agricultural products and manufactured goods in the three maritime regions. Gradually it joined the Catalan network abroad. In the 1270s and 1280s, there is scant information on Valencia's commercial activity in the nearby European markets, including Occitania, Genoa and the Maghreb. This activity began to increase

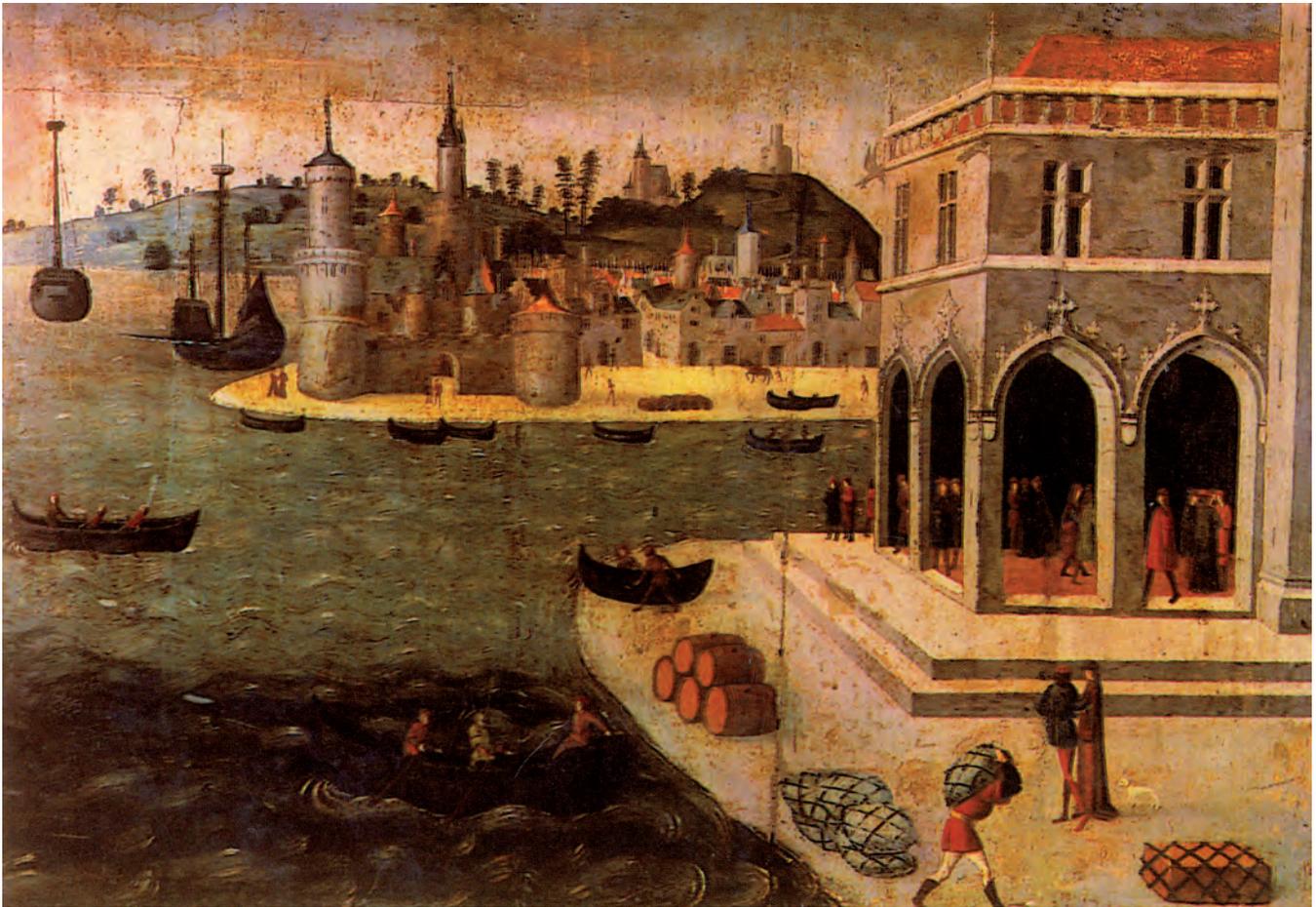


Figure 1. Altarpiece of the exchange of Perpignan. Fragment of the altarpiece of the Trinity (1489) attributed to the Master of Canapost which depicts the exchange of Perpignan. Museu Hyacinthe Rigaud, Perpignan.

gradually in the 14th century. Romestan says that Valencia must have stopped being a colonial economy by around the mid-14th century, although perhaps this shift should be situated some years earlier.

Regarding the 14th century crisis in Catalonia, Jaume Vicens Vives and Pierre Vilar spoke about a Catalan economic crisis that must have begun in the mid-14th century. Claude Carrère reduced this crisis to “difficulties” and pinpointed its start in around 1380. In contrast, Del Treppo did not see a crisis and claimed that growth had continued until the mid-15th century despite the crises caused by wars, and in fact until the Catalan Civil War in 1462-1472.³⁵

During the 14th century there was a demographic crisis caused by the Black Plague, the most lethal epidemic in the Middle Ages which seriously affected Catalonia beginning in the early months of 1348. The plague caused a steep drop in population which some authors have tallied at about 50% and others at 20%.³⁶ However, this does not appear to have affected Catalan commerce abroad except occasionally, and in reality it must have triggered an accumulation of capital in fewer hands within Barcelona’s bourgeoisie.

The damage caused by the wars – the war with Genoa, the almost constant revolt in Sardinia and the war with

Castile – had disastrous effects on the Catalan economy, much more dire than the plague since it ruined public finances and the emptied coffers of the king and the towns. It wrought havoc on the land and the fleet, and it hindered or impeded the regular flow of commerce because of the effects of the war on the fleet.³⁷ The failure of the Olivella-Descaus bank in 1381, a symbol of this crisis, was due to the depletion of the royal treasury, to which it had granted a loan.³⁸ The financial crisis lasted for several years because the recourse to public debt made it possible to pay the donations that the king or the Courts required, yet the accumulation of debt ended up causing serious problems in many towns,³⁹ and even problems involving population loss. This financial crisis, which is clear, is what has given this sense of an overall economic crisis. Trade was not directly affected, although it was indirectly because the lack of resources made it difficult to carry out maritime defence policies and to defend against the proliferation of corsairs and pirates that besieged the merchant fleet.

In the 15th century, the incessant wars waged by Alphonse the Magnanimous also led to problems in trade. Maritime traffic had to be heavily armed because of the large number of enemies, and this boosted costs. The expansion of the Ottoman Empire, with the significant

milestone of the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the end of the Byzantine Empire, caused serious upheaval among merchants, who had to adapt to the new circumstances. They would achieve this towards the end of the century, when Catalan merchants were once again visiting Constantinople.⁴⁰

To the Catalans, the real crisis began as the outcome of the war against their King, John II (1462-1472). The conflict caused extensive destruction to the harvests and goods because the fighting took place on their soil, required heavy financial contributions on both sides to sustain the war and ruined the institutions and the Crown. It also impeded or hindered the transport of goods and thus commerce. Once the war was over, the hatred and vengeance, confiscations of assets and other problems entailed in any civil war created legal insecurity and hindered the immediate recovery of the economy. The currency depreciated, as the gold florin, which had been worth 11 sous in the late 14th century and 13 sous at the start of the 15th century, came to be traded for 16.5 sous, triggering inflation.

Regarding commerce, Manuel Peláez, who has studied Catalonia after the 1462-1472 civil war, states that commerce dropped off considerably, but there is no proof that it was destroyed as Mario Del Treppo claimed. The *pariatge* tax paid on maritime commercial activity because it was required on the goods that entered Catalonia by sea earned its maximum yields in 1450 to 1451: 772,550 pounds. After the war, it yielded 183,333 pounds and in the subsequent years it dropped even further: 180,300 and 175,625 pounds in 1476 and 1477, respectively. These figures prove that the crisis was quite dire, yet it was not quite the end.

It took between ten and fifteen years for the war crisis to come to an end; it lasted only briefly. By the late 15th century, Catalan commerce was highly active once again, especially in the Atlantic. The entire Catalan coastline was more heavily populated, and its ports bustled with activity. The small ports hosted not only coastal traffic but also foreign activity, as we shall see, especially in the Atlantic. Nowhere to be seen is discouragement or a lack of commercial drive or vital impulses to adapt to the large-scale enterprise of oceanic commerce, which Vicens Vives attributed to Catalonia's mercantile sphere in this time, nor does there seem to have been economic stagnation in the late 15th century. To the contrary, the documentation on commerce reveals the Catalans' smooth adaptation to the new business opportunities that had emerged in the Atlantic.⁴¹ The questions regarding the crisis should thus be shifted to later periods.

THE EVOLUTION OF COMMERCE FROM THE SECTORAL PERSPECTIVE

Trade with Occitania and France

Until the 13th century, Catalans bought cloth that was locally manufactured or made in northern France and Flan-

ders, which it partly used to trade with spices from the Mediterranean Levant.⁴² The political ties with Provence in the 12th century and with Montpellier in the 13th facilitated commercial ties.⁴³

When Catalonia began to experience a serious grain deficit in the 13th century, it imported wheat from Languedoc, which was a huge grain producer. However, depending on how the harvests fared, the traffic in grain ran in the opposite direction, and it was exported from Catalonia to Languedoc.⁴⁴ Starting in the last few decades of the 13th century, the Catalan dyers apparently imported woad, colorants used to dye cloth blue, from Languedoc; prior to that they had used indigo, a more expensive Oriental colorant.⁴⁵

Barcelona leather tanners also travelled through Occitania to attend the famous fairs in Champagne, where they sold their cordovan leathers, as did merchants from Vic who took not only cordovan leathers but also sheath knives and razors to France or Flanders. They all purchased prized cloth there.⁴⁶

Valencia joined this commercial route late, at the end of the 13th century, according to the information available today, some of which refers to a 1317 trial on the levies to be paid by the shippers from Calp to Altea, which mentions the export of raisins, figs and other products to Occitanian ports.⁴⁷ During the first third of the 14th century, many merchants from Languedoc were in Valencia, where they sold their cloth and took back scarlet, paper, rice, grain, figs, raisins, carob, honey, pitch, palm baskets, wine, olive and other products. Merchants from Valencia and Xàtiva re-exported this cloth to Castile. However, the Valencians soon took these exchanges into their own hands, as proven by the *comanda* contract and freight headed to Occitanian ports between 1317 and 1336.⁴⁸

The growth in the Catalan textile industry in the 14th century allowed Catalans to move from being importers to exporters. The exported products included Catalan, Valencian or Mallorcan cloth, oil, pine nuts, saffron, raisins and figs (the dried fruit tended to come from Valencia or Mallorca), fava beans, hide, pitch and tallow, soap, mirrors, daggers and chests, rope, basquet and pottery and ceramic, among the products manufactured locally. The redistributed products included spices such as sugar, alum and cotton from the Orient, as the Occitanians were losing ground in the Levant in contrast to Catalonia's surging presence there.⁴⁹

It should be noted that in the 15th century Nice gained more prominence at the Provençal ports when Nice fell under the domain of Savoy, since the traffic that used to go through Genoa heading towards the Piedmont, which was also under Savoy rule, started using the port of Nice.⁵⁰

Trade with Italy

Genoa, Pisa, Lombardy and Venice. The Catalans reached Genoa at the start of the 12th century. This is shown by treaties, such as the one from 1126-1127 which ensures the safety of the respective merchants in the

lands of the other contracting party and the taxes that they had to pay, an unequivocal sign that there was commercial traffic. What is more, the Genoan toll in 1128, codified from a previous situation, mentions the men from Barcelona among the foreign merchants that went there to bring Saracen slaves to sell.⁵¹ Therefore, the first expedition to Mallorca in 1113-1114, the border wars and the privateering against Saracens had already taken Muslim captives to Genoa. The conquests of Mallorca, Valencia and Murcia in the ensuing century would cause more to reach the city, as proven by the sales of Catalan merchants in Genoa in 1239, 1241, 1248 and 1265-1266. For the first time, we can find Catalan merchants in Genoa who are recorded as natives of Mallorca and Valencia.⁵² Another Valencian merchant, Pere Romeu, also went there towards the end of the reign of James I; he was robbed and James I granted him retaliation or *marca* against the Genovese.⁵³

Other goods that were exported to Genoa include prawns from Tortosa, most likely salted, along with pitch, tallow, hemp or esparto grass ropes, sailcloth, wool, salt and wheat, imported from both Catalonia and Península.⁵⁴

In the late 13th century, Mallorca became an important stop on the routes that linked Genoa to North Africa, Muslim Spain and Seville, and when regular traffic began to run to Flanders late in the century, the Genovese ships used Mallorca not only as a stopover but also as a cargo port, where they took on some of the goods to be transported to the Atlantic.⁵⁵

Genoa and Pisa became extremely important trading hubs for Catalans in the second half of the 14th century not only with their own products but also, more importantly, with products from Lombardy and Tuscany, respectively. Catalan and Mallorcan commerce in Genoa in the first half of the 14th century has been studied very little, even though the relations were intense. In contrast, it seems that Valencian merchants did not pay many visits to the capital of Liguria. Naturally, wars harmed commerce. The war of the Crown of Catalonia and Aragon and Mallorca against Genoa in 1331-1336 inflicted serious damage to trade in Mallorca, assessed at 200,000 pounds in the western Mediterranean and 20,000 on the Atlantic coast of the Maghreb in the first year.⁵⁶ Naturally, it also harmed Catalan commerce, but there are no estimates of the amounts. Yet even greater was the damage caused by the war from 1351 to 1360 and the hostility that prevailed between Catalans and Genovese thereafter in the guise of privateering and piracy incidents.

Indeed, a tax imposed on goods taken to or extracted by Catalans in Genoa in 1386, as well as in 1392 to 1393, most certainly to indemnify the victims of the acts of piracy, provides priceless information on imports and exports among the three regions in the Catalan and Genovese economic area. Even though the tax only affected Catalans and more specifically residents of Barcelona, Valencians and Mallorcans also appeared in the accounts with the note that they were tax-exempt. The accounts

from 1386 tell about the arrival of thirteen Catalan cargo ships. It should be noted that regardless of whether the ships came from Barcelona or Valencia, they could just as easily have been carrying goods from Barcelona, Tortosa or Valencia, and there were even lots of goods owned jointly. These figures reveal extremely close ties among the merchant classes of the different Catalan-speaking cities. The records also show the departure of fourteen Catalan cargo ships. The volume of the “*Dricus Catalanorum*” from 1392 to 1393 encompasses a longer period, from the 3rd of February 1392 to the 31st of January 1393, and therefore it contains more journeys: 33 arrivals and 36 departures.

The freight on the ships that entered Genoa was quite similar, mainly wool, hides of all kinds (raw skin, tawed leather, sheepskin, lambs’ wool, etc.) and rice. The ships from Valencia carried more pottery and ceramics, figs, raisins and dates, and scarlet. The other goods included oil, honey, almonds, walnuts, hazelnuts, pine nuts, cheese, salted fish (anchovies, sardines), cumin, dill, prunes, saffron, colocynth; sailing supplies, including tallow, pitch, tar, ropes and sailcloth; and wax, candles, Catalan cloth, coral, dyer’s moss, paper and soap. These volumes do not mention salt from Eivissa or La Mata, which tended to be ships’ sole cargo.⁵⁷ The Genovese also loaded some of these products, especially dried and desiccated fruit and saffron, to take to Flanders when they stopped in Mallorca or Valencian ports.⁵⁸ From Genoa, the Catalans took away fustian and canvas, silk, leather, furs, jewellery and Oriental slaves in the second half of the 14th century. The goods that appear in the records of the “*Dricus*” include brass and iron sheeting, wire, iron beams, tin, gold thread, sewing notions from Milan, thread for stringing pearls, spurs, woad, canvas, tow yarn, hemp thread, doublets, mastic, tartar, gall, alum from Foggia, pepper, cloth in general or cloth from Florence, fabric, oars, anchors, iron hoops, lanterns, trencher dish, paper and slaves. Some products were from Genoa itself, such as canvas and oars, while others came from Milan, like sewing notions, metal items and Lombard woad, since Genoa was Lombardy’s port. Yet others were Oriental. There were even Tuscan products for redistribution.

Trade with Genoa continued with the same intensity during the ensuing years. From Valencia to Genoa alone, Coral Cuadrada has documented fourteen ship journeys through the documentation from the Datini Archive for 1395 to 1398. The volumes of licences taken from banned goods from Barcelona reveal that there were at least 44 journeys to Genoa between 1358 and 1409.⁵⁹

For the 15th century, we have three more records from the “*Dricus Catalanorum*”: one from 1421, which is not very clear in terms of the arrivals and departures of ships, one from 1453 and one from 1454. The record from 1453 shows the arrival of thirteen Catalan ships bearing goods, although this time there is no mention of Mallorcans or Valencians, who did not have to pay taxes. There were fifteen departures from Genoa. In 1454, the ship traffic

dropped off: there were only nine arrivals, while there were five departures from Genoa, at least until late July. The goods exported and imported were similar to those in the 14th century, with a rise in wool and a drop in hides in the exports.⁶⁰ That same year, 1454, Genoa's war with Alphonse the Magnanimous († 1458) resumed, so trade relations were subordinated to war and to the long period of seafaring hostilities that ensued until the treaty of 1478.

Mario Del Treppo stated that the number of journeys between Catalonia and Liguria had dropped by half throughout the course of the century, from 1360 to 1460, although the ships could hold more cargo, but they did not decrease in Valencia. In fact, at that time the Genoese were solely interested in wool and thus stopped going to Barcelona, since they took it onboard in Tortosa, Peníscola, Valencia or Mallorca.⁶¹

Regarding Pisa, James I favoured the Pisans on Mallorca, who had been there since before the conquest (1229), with commercial concessions on the island in 1233, but the clash in Italy among the supporters of the emperor and those of the Pope (1238-1248), whose side James I took, must have impeded commercial relations, which were banned by the Pope in 1244. The city was not pardoned by the Holy See until 1257. Relations normalised with the 1277 treaty between Pisa and Peter the Great. The presence of Catalans in Pisa is scantily documented, but they must have been important enough to merit a consulate of Catalans, an institution created in 1277, the counterpart to the Pisan consulates in the maritime cities of Catalonia and Valencia.⁶²

In the late 14th century, the goods carried by the Catalans to Pisa were similar to those transported to Genoa, including Catalan cloth, wool and lambs' wool, while they imported furs, alum, woollen cloth, paper, glue, sugar, spices, sewing notions, trencher dish, tartar, gold thread and silver from Lucca, taffeta, velvet, cloth from Florence, swords and pieces of armour, iron in yards and wire, gall, woad, alum, glass, jewels and more, the same sewing notions that the Pisans took to Mallorca several decades earlier, according to the "lou dels pisans", which they paid to the island for some time.⁶³

Between 1395 and 1398, Valencia sent ships to Pisa at least twice a year, while by the late 15th century, specifically in 1477, there were journeys from Menorca, Ibiza and Barcelona.⁶⁴

Little is known about Catalan commerce in other Tuscan cities. Much more information is available on the Tuscans and Lombards in Catalonia, who had to grapple with the ban on establishing commerce in Barcelona, which was also extended to Mallorca in 1269. The ones who were already there must have been expelled. More than a century with alternating permissiveness and intransigence ended with a free trade decree, with certain conditions, in 1402.⁶⁵ However, this article shall not examine this subject in detail.

Even though Lombard products reached Genoa, where the Catalans were able to purchase them, Catalan compa-

nies were also set up in Milan, at least in the second half of the 15th century.⁶⁶

Catalan merchants must have reached Venice rather late, in the 14th century, and their numbers surged in the 15th century. The Catalans sent wool and leathers there, along with cloth, coral, rope and sometimes Sicilian wheat. King Alphonse the Magnanimous also traded there, as he often did, to purchase luxury goods. Regarding this area on the Adriatic Sea, we should also consider relations with Dubrovnik, where there was a heavy Catalan presence.⁶⁷

Sicily. Sicily had an unbeatable strategic location at the centre of the Mediterranean and for this reason was a compulsory stopping point on sailing routes between the Levant and the western Mediterranean lands and along the routes headed to the ports of the Adriatic or Tunis and Libya. The island became a repository for goods from both East and West. The ships that plied the Levant route tended to sell part of their cargo in Sicily, both coming and going, and they took on other products. It was a rather populous island with well-to-do social echelons, making it a good client in itself. Sicily was also rich in diverse products appealing enough to be the purpose of a commercial journey.

In the 13th century, the Catalans took oil, saffron, paper, French and Catalan cloth, specifically cloth from Lleida, and slaves to Sicily, where they purchased cotton, cumin and wheat. The intervention of Peter the Great in Sicily after the revolt of the Sicilian Vespers in 1282 may have accentuated the presence of Catalans on the island, who also used it as a base for trading with Tunis, Tripoli and Bugia.⁶⁸

In the 14th and 15th centuries, Catalan cloth gradually gained rising importance in exports to Sicily; other exported products in addition to those mentioned above were furs and leathers, knives and sheaf knives, cross-bows, crafted copper items, combs, dice, glass vessels and, from Valencia, esparto products, especially rope, ceramic and pitch, as well as wood and cloth. Among the products brought back, wheat appeared in ever greater quantities due to the rising grain deficit in Catalonia and Valencia; cotton remained present, and sugar and dyer's moss, fustian and cloth appeared sporadically. The ports most often visited by Catalans were the ones in Palermo, Messina and Syracuse and the wheat shippers. In the 15th century the island joined the Crown of Aragon when Martin the Young died, which only tightened the economic and commercial ties. The Sicilian market was reserved for Catalan cloth through protectionist measures dictated by King Ferdinand the Catholic, although the monarch wanted to control the profits earned by Catalan merchants in Sicily, which aroused vehement protests.⁶⁹

Sardinia. Sardinia also boasted an outstanding strategic location, though not quite as good as Sicily. However, given the Catalans' longstanding clashes with Genoa, which lasted almost two centuries, Sardinia was in a position of power over the enemy. Unlike Sicily, it was a poor island that was not a market for redistribution.



Figure 2. Map of the Catalan consulates and domains in the Crown of Aragon in 1385. The domains of the Crown of Aragon and the sites of the Catalan consulates in the Mediterranean in 1385 are marked in red. Some consulates worked to defend the interests of the local merchants in foreign cities.

Commerce with Sardinia was active before the Catalan conquest of the island, despite the fact that little documentation on it remains.⁷⁰ After the conquest, Catalans exported the silver from the mines of La Vila d'Esglésies in ingots or coins, *alfonsins*, to the Mediterranean Levant, where silver was in great demand, to finance the import of spices until the mid-14th century. The Catalans imported Sardinian wheat, but not regularly because of the long wars with the Giudici of Arborea, as well as pasta (spaghetti), hides and cheese, wild animal hides such as fallow deer, and especially coral, which, after being crafted in Barcelona, was an essential part of the Catalan freight headed to the Levant, a market that absorbed large amounts of it. The Catalans took to Sardinia woollen cloth, sewing notions, oil, rice, saffron, raisins and wine, hemp, glass, Valencian pottery and all sorts of products in small amounts needed for local life.⁷¹

Naples. This city and the ports in the Kingdom of Naples had been frequented by the Catalans since at least the early 14th century; they took wheat, salt, cloth, especially cloths from Perpinyà, and imported wine from Calabria and goods in transit such as slaves and cotton. During the long conquest of the Kingdom of Naples, commercial relations rose considerably, and they surged even more after it: at least three Catalan ships reached Naples every year between 1445 and 1469, not counting the other cities in the kingdom. Naples was added to the Catalan route heading to the Levant, including Palermo, and the Catalans left there products, especially Catalan cloth, which made up 75% of the value of the goods unloaded. With the sale of this cloth they earned money to spend on spices in Alexandria. However, there was no stop in Naples on the way back because there was a rush to reach Barce-

lona, where the distribution of spices was guaranteed. Most of the ship arrivals from Barcelona to the Kingdom of Naples came in the waning years of the reign of Alphonse the Magnanimous, from 1454 to 1458. After that traffic dropped off considerably. Valencia and Mallorca also engaged in intense trade with Naples; the Mallorcans exported Mallorcan cloth, salt from Eivissa, Catalan hazelnuts, Galician or Berber leathers, and, while the Castel Nuovo of Naples was under construction, stone from Mallorca. They imported wheat, linen, hemp, animal fat, wood, wine casks and hoops for casks, sulphur and wine. After the death of Alphonse the Magnanimous in 1458, many Catalans continued operating in the Kingdom of Naples, but maritime relations plummeted during the years of the Catalan Civil War. The ban on importing foreign cloth issued by King Ferdinand of Naples in 1465 as a means of encouraging textile manufacturing caused problems in the exports of Catalan and Mallorcan cloth. In 1473, the Catalans managed to get this provision revoked, but in 1477 a new intervention against protectionist measures was needed.⁷²

Trade with Muslim Spain and the Maghreb

The Muslim lands in Spain and the Maghreb were one of the Catalans' leading destinations abroad since the 12th and 13th centuries for reasons of proximity. During the 12th century, the "mostolafs" who negotiated the rescue of the captive Saracens through a concession from the Count of Barcelona often had a certain monopoly in commercial relations with Muslim Spain and the Maghreb. To the merchants, travelling in the "mostolaf" ships entailed a guarantee of safety, since they enjoyed special guides, as if they were ambassadors.⁷³ Specific commer-

cial journeys are documented in the last few decades of the 12th century and the early decades of the 13th century. Maritime commerce with Muslim Spain and the Maghreb entailed a single economic area for the Catalans.

The import, export and passages taxes, called *lleudes*, are also a testimony of this traffic. The *lleuda* of Barcelona, dated between 1160 and 1180, taxed spices, fine cloth of silk and purple and cotton coming from Muslim Spain and the Orient. It included a personal fee for the merchants who came from Islamic Spain or for those going there from Barcelona. The *lleuda* of Tamarit taxed the goods that were making the route from Andalusia and Barbaria, unless they veered off towards Mallorca, and it included in the list of taxable goods those that were characteristic of that region: cordovan leather, hides, Saracens for ransom, dried fruit, madder, henna, rice, figs and raisins. The *lleuda* of Tortosa taxed the ships that ran between Mallorca and Tortosa; differences in the interpretation of which ships had to pay it, between the merchants and sailors on the one hand and the *lleuda* agents on the other, led to a trial in 1302 in which many merchants and ship captains in Barcelona as well as in Castelló d'Empúries, Palamós, Palafrugell, Tarragona, Tortosa and Valencia testified that they had not paid the *lleuda* on their journeys. There were 237 of these journeys, 211 of which were heading towards Muslim Spain and Barbaria. Some are old, dating from 1242, 1252 and 1257, while others date from 1262 and 1267; the vast majority were from 1272 and later. Bearing in mind that death or absence must have prevented many merchants from testifying, I believe that 211 journeys demonstrates the intensity of the commercial relations with Muslim Spain and the Maghreb.⁷⁴

Mallorca joined this traffic early on with the support of the Holy See. In 1240 and 1241, Pope Gregory IX allowed the island to engage in commerce with the Islamic states both near and far (that is, those in the Mediterranean East) in times of peace; he allowed all kinds of products, including food, but no horses, mules, weapons, iron and wood. The record book of the notary Pere Romeu, dated 1240, includes seventeen *comanda* contract, ten of which indicate their destination: four were heading towards ports in the Maghreb, namely Ceuta, Algiers, Bône (Annaba) and Tunis, and one to Islamic Spain. The other destinations were in Catalonia, Valencia and the islands. Only ten years after the conquest, foreign trade was clearly targeted at the Maghreb.

The licence for ships in 1284 shows a bit more variation. That year, because of the conflict between the Catalans and the Angevins over the Kingdom of Sicily, the king of Mallorca imposed restrictive measures on sailing: ships and seagoing people had to request a licence to depart and had to return by April, when the war campaigns might begin. The ships were not allowed to travel too far afield because the licenses were granted starting in the month of January, so there was a disproportionate number of licences to Barbaria, from Tunis to Alcúdia of Barbaria (Gassassa), because they were the closest. A total of seventy-four licences were granted, but only 33 journeys were

taken to North Africa, one to Almería and eleven to a variety of destinations, including Eivissa, Cotlliure, Valencia, Tortosa, Seville and Genoa. The difference with respect to the total mentioned corresponds to licences for sailors on ships that already had their own.⁷⁵

We have little information on commerce between Christian Valencia and the Maghreb, but we can state that even though it developed later than in Mallorca, the volume was lower than used to be assumed. The most often visited sector, as we shall see, was Ifriqiyah. A trial from 1317 on the taxes to be paid by the shippers from Calp and Altea also provides information on the export of raisins, figs and other products to Barbaria, among other destinations, in the last few decades of the 13th century.⁷⁶

In the 14th century, the coasts of Granada and the Maghreb were often stops within other maritime routes for the Catalans from Catalonia proper where they could take on more goods. The Mallorcans, however, had very strong commercial ties with the Maghreb and with Granada. There they defended their interests through merchants' associations; there were associations in the central Maghreb in Algiers, Mazagran, Mostaganem and Honein, yet also in Moroccan Alcúdia and Granada. Their goal was to secure transport at the best prices when they needed it through joint negotiation of the freight, but in fact they also tried to monopolise trade by particularly shutting out the Italians, who were regarded as their competitors: the Honein league must have been aimed at monopolising wool from the Maghreb.

The different episodes in the war over control of the Strait of Gibraltar had repercussions on commerce with the Maghreb, especially with Morocco, because of incidents with the Moroccans and through the order for the Catalan and Mallorcan merchants to leave Morocco handed down by Peter the Ceremonious and the king of Mallorca. In contrast, during the war of Castile and the Crown of Aragon against Granada in 1309, the Mallorcans secured authorisation to travel to Morocco, although they could not carry supplies to support Granada. The most serious difficulties were caused by Castile, which was against trade with the Islamic countries and unleashed a constant series of incidents against Catalan and Mallorcan ships even though the king of Castile placed Mallorcan merchants and the Muslims and Jews who travelled on their ships and traded with Islamic countries under his safeguard. Generally speaking, even though the relations with the sultanates were not regulated by treaties for many years, which theoretically entailed a state of war, commerce was not interrupted.⁷⁷ However, on the other hand this lack of diplomatic coverage could cause problems in the case of attacks by corsairs.

Oftentimes, the companies from Catalonia, Mallorca or Valencia had commercial agent living in the Maghreb. From there they exported gold, hides, wax, wool (considered low quality), ostrich feathers, ambergris, dates and sometimes wheat from Morocco, especially the Mallorcans, who had a severe wheat shortage and secured sup-

plies from the Maghreb until 1339, when it was banned. The Catalans took there salt from Ibiza, wool and linen fabrics, fustian, wine, metal items, copper, lead, sheaf knives from Vic, pottery, mirrors, oil, figs, hazelnuts, rice, carob, crafted leathers and products to be redistributed such as spices and perfumes. We should not downplay the importance of the ransom of captives within the volume of trade between Catalan lands and the Maghreb.⁷⁸

The Barcelonans considerably withdrew from trade with the Maghreb, with the exception of Tunis, after the 14th century because they were able to secure the products they wanted through Mallorca or Valencia. Generally speaking, this lack of interest in the Maghreb is attributed to the rising importance of trade with the Levant, yet in any event many products from the Maghreb appeared in the quality assessment lists in the Catalan merchandise manual.⁷⁹

While Barcelona's presence in the Maghreb dropped, the Valencians' presence rose. For many years it was believed that trade with the Maghreb had not been an important sector in Valencia's economy, but later this view had to be rectified and it was imperative to admit that it indeed was. However, between 1459 and 1494, trade with the Maghreb began to wane: in 1459, of the total of 102 ships that entered the port of Valencia, only seven came from Barbaria, that is, 4.3%, which dropped further to three ships (0.5%) in 1488. This decrease may have been due to internal divisions in these countries or to the aggressive policy of the Christian states, which shortly thereafter, in 1497, led to the conquest of marketplaces in the Maghreb. Starting in the mid-15th century, Catalans and Valencians began to be displaced in this region by Venetians, Florentines and Genovese.

In the late 15th century, the turbulence in the eastern Mediterranean shifted the circulation of spices towards Barbaria, where the Valencians were provisioned with pepper (perhaps pepper from Guinea) and ginger, shellac, gum Arabic, gall, incense and gum benzoin. There was a steep rise in the traffic of slaves: in 1488 of the total of 485 slaves who entered the port of Valencia, 409 were Muslims and 27 were black, figures that later dropped. The prominence of fraud in the transport of goods banned by the Holy See to the Maghreb has been mentioned; these goods included weapons and sailing supplies such as pitch, as well as other goods banned at a later date, including rice, sulphur and alum.⁸⁰

Commerce with Barbaria remained an important part of Mallorca's economy in the second half of the 15th century. Of the 339 maritime journeys between 1448 and 1480 that we are able to document, 151 went to Barbaria, which accounts for 46.89% of the total, although the documentation is uneven and incomplete. The loads headed to Barbaria accounted for one-third of the total *comanda* contracts still conserved.⁸¹ The orders were partnership agreements for maritime commerce.

The Valencian Moors participated in commerce with the Maghreb and as fellow Muslims received favourable

treatment from the authorities in the Maghreb states. The Christian merchants from their same country complained about this, stating that the Muslim traders were charged lower taxes. In addition to this statement, which might be true, they also levelled more serious accusations, such as that they carried weapons to the Islamic countries, provided information and even earned a percentage of the spoils secured by Berber corsairs. There appears to be no proof of these charges, yet they are signs of the deep-seated mistrust the Christian merchants felt towards their Muslim counterparts.⁸² The Mallorcan and Valencian Jews also took part in trade with the Maghreb.⁸³

Morocco. Catalan vessels crossed the Strait at very remote dates; the chronicler Ibn Idari verifies the presence of Catalans in Salé, on Morocco's Atlantic coast, between 1233 and 1234, and, in fact, gold from Sudan reached Salé via one of the trans-Saharan routes. The documentary proof of journeys to Salé and Safi date from later: 1262 and 1277. Once they passed the Strait, some of these boats also visited Seville, at least after 1272.⁸⁴ Numerous documents show that merchants from Barcelona and Vic had been travelling to Ceuta since 1227 and 1231. The destinations of Ceuta and Moroccan Alcúdia, near Melilla, are often mentioned in the trial of the import tax in Tortosa mentioned above, as well as in several *comanda* contracts.⁸⁵ We also still have *comanda* contracts from Mallorca heading to Ceuta since 1235.⁸⁶

Dufourcq noted the presence of 82 Mallorcans in Morocco between 1310 and 1331 and the presence of Barcelona merchants in Alzir in 1308, in Ceuta in 1309 and in Salé in 1331 to purchase wheat. In Fez, there was a Catalan colony back in that period, and in Nife (Casablanca) the Mallorcans had their own notary and chaplain at certain times. The number of journeys from Mallorca to Morocco gives an idea of the intensity of the traffic: from 1308 to 1331 there were 69 trips to the ports along Morocco's Mediterranean coastline and 56 to its Atlantic coast. Mallorcan captains often repeated these journeys in subsequent years and tended to stop at the ports of Granada. Between 1359 and 1361, there were only five journeys to Moroccan Alcúdia and the Atlantic regions, from which the Mallorcans had virtually withdrawn. However, there was a slight rally between 1385 and 1419, with five journeys to Safi out of a total of 33 to Morocco.

Valencians visited Morocco rarely compared to the central Maghreb. Between 1381 and 1410 there were only 17 transactions in Valencia related to Morocco, while the departure licences for ships between 1405 and 1412 mention two journeys to Morocco, although 30 more must have gone to Moroccan Alcúdia after visiting ports in the kingdom of Granada.⁸⁷

Central Maghreb. Catalans had been frequenting Oran and Honein in the Kingdom of **Tlemcen** since before 1232, along with Togo, Mazagran, Mostaganem, Tenes, Brecht and Cherchell, which were also visited by Mallorcans, who went to Algier as well (1240). This was the region that interested them the most because the trans-Sa-

haran routes that came from Sudan and Ethiopia, Senegal and Mali reached the inland regions of the country, bringing gold, slaves, ivory, ostrich feathers, pepper from Guinea (also called grains of paradise), ambergris and white alum from Sijilmassa.⁸⁸ Some Valencians had already traded with Honein in 1296 through two Mallorcans.⁸⁹

During the 14th century, the Mallorcans clearly predominated in the ports of Algiers, Cherchell, Mazagan, Mostaganem, Tenes, Tlemcen, Brecht, Honein and Togo; between 1310 and 1331, Dufourcq counted 100 merchants from Mallorca, while there were 14 from Valencia, nine from Barcelona, only eight which were dubiously from either Valencia or Barcelona, and a handful of others from Perpinyà and Montblanc. The figures from Valencia were adjusted after recent research in the Valencian archives, which so far indicate 38 freight loads plus one shared load for this area and Tunis and eight *comanda* contracts for this zone in the same period.⁹⁰ Regarding Mallorca, 30 journeys to the central Maghreb have been documented between 1341 and 1342 and 66 between 1359 and 1361, a significant number even though they were difficult years of war with Castile. There was a great deal of activity between 1385 and 1419, with a total of 363 journeys. The central Maghreb was the region preferred by the Mallorcans.⁹¹

Sometimes captains from Barcelona went to Mallorca to top up their cargo for a journey to the Maghreb. This is the case of the company owned by Arnau Espaer and Romeu d'Olzinelles, from which an account book of a journey to Honein in 1339 remains that mentions oil, cloth, figs, hazelnuts, walnuts, wine, clay, tartar, henna, sulphur and tin loaded in Mallorca and unloaded in Honein, where these merchants' agent were posted.⁹²

The central Maghreb was one of the most often visited regions by merchants from Valencia. Between 1381 and 1410, there were 127 transactions in Valencia related to the Kingdom of Tlemcen, many more than with Tunis and Morocco. However, it should be borne in mind that 151 transactions were conducted in the generic location known as Barbaria. The departure licences for armoured vessels from Valencia between 1405 and 1412 noted 19 heading to ports in the Kingdom of Tlemcen, which were joined by nine also travelling there after visiting ports in Granada.⁹³

Eastern Maghreb. In Ifriqiyah, the Catalans and Mallorcans frequented Bona, Bugia and Tunis since 1213-1214. Documents on Catalan sales and freight drafted in Tunis in 1256, 1258 and 1266 are still conserved. Merchants from Vic took fine furs, dressy clothes and woollen cloth there. Some Barcelona merchants, including Jaume Albareda and Guillem de Fontcoberta, lived in Bugia for some time and rent the custom *gabella*, and Jaume Albareda died there. Berenguer de Bonastre lived in Tunis, most likely between 1259 and 1269, with an occasional subsequent journey, as did Arnau de Solsona, a merchant from Lleida. The record book of a Genovese notary who

worked in Tunis in 1289 also conserves documents that involve Genovese and Catalans from Catalonia proper, Valencia and Mallorca.⁹⁴

In 1281 there were merchants in Valencia who were preparing commercial journeys to Tunis. Likewise, some of the Muslim merchants who had remained in Christian Valencia most certainly kept doing business with the Maghreb; this is suggested by the 1270 authorisation of a Valencian Saracen to purchase a ship to take on commercial journeys to Tunis, Bugia and other places with Christian and Muslim partners.⁹⁵

According to Dufourcq, the merchants or skippers associated with Ifriqiyah included 48 Barcelonans between 1310 and 1331, 96 from Mallorca, nine from Tortosa and ten from Valencia, while Cotlliure, Blanes, Tarragona and Gandia also had a few merchants or captains in these ports, in addition to a large number of people with unspecified origins. The figures for Valencia are slightly different if we check Valencian sources: Juan Leonardo Soler has found 20 freight loads headed to the ports of Ifriqiyah and almost nine *comanda* contracts. María Dolores López has documented eight journeys by Mallorcans to the eastern Maghreb between 1341 and 1342, 33 between 1359 and 1361, the difficult years of the war with Castile, and 184 in the years when normality resumed, from 1385 to 1419.⁹⁶

There is a predominance of Mallorcans in this region, although merchants from Barcelona and other places around Catalonia, such as Sant Feliu de Guíxols, continued to visit the Maghreb from the second half of the 14th century until the mid-15th century. According to Claude Carrère, the balance of trade was favourable, and gold coin was secured.⁹⁷ Many companies had commercial agents in Tunis and other cities in the Hafsid state, and Tunis was often a stopover point on the journey to the Mediterranean Levant. Because of the importance of Tunis for Barcelona merchants, the "Libre de conexas de spícies e de drogues e de avissaments de pessos, canes e mesures de diverses terres" (Book of knowledge of spices and drugs and of notices of weights, canes and measures of different lands), a Catalan merchandise manual, spends many pages on the goods imported from and exported to Tunis, on the weights, measures and taxes, even more space than is devoted to Alexandria. Starting in 1350, Barcelona merchants showed a great deal of interest in the zone called Mont de Barca between Tunis and Tripoli, where they apparently purchased slaves.⁹⁸

Valencian merchants also visited Tunis, but not as much as Tlemcen. Between 1381 and 1410 there were 25 transactions in Valencia related to the Kingdom of Tunis. The departure licences for armoured vessels from Valencia included only three licences to travel to Tunis between 1405 and 1412, one of which called for a stop in Mallorca.⁹⁹

After the Catalan Civil War, a small colony of Catalan merchants remained in Tunis under the protection of the treaties signed with this state in 1474 and 1476. Ferdinand the Catholic's conquest of many Maghreb ports in the late

15th and early 16th centuries seemed to give the Catalans a more secure and privileged market than before, but the subsequent Turkish-Berber alliance destroyed this reverie and gave rise to one of the most difficult and insecure periods in Christian Mediterranean society.¹⁰⁰

Muslim Spain. Company documents and *comanda* contracts with Valencia when it was still Muslim in 1230 and 1231, as well as with Murcia, are still conserved.¹⁰¹ Tortosa's "lleuda" litigation, discussed above, also mentions other ports in Islamic Spain, such as Almería, Málaga and Tarifa, which were frequented by Catalans. The aforementioned record book of Mallorcan notary Pere Romeu, dating from 1240, contains a *comanda* contracts for Islamic Spain.

The Kingdom of Granada, which emerged from the fall of the Almohad Empire in 1238, had an extensive maritime front with important ports like Almería and Málaga. These ports were stopping points where the naval traffic between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic began to intensify in the late 13th century. Catalans and Mallorcans traded there from a very early date, even though Castilians tried to prevent this trade and prompted maritime incidents, such as one in 1281. The treaties between Granada and the Crown of Aragon regulated trade relations, especially taxation, so that the Catalans had the same exemptions and privileges as the Genovese.¹⁰² The wars affected commerce; preparation for the crusade against Almería in 1309 led to the imprisonment of merchants from Barcelona and Valencia who were in Almería. In fact, in order to avoid a conflict similar to the one involving the many Mallorcans in the Kingdom of Granada, King James II of Mallorca postponed his participation in the crusade.¹⁰³ The war waged by the Crown of Aragon and Mallorca against Genoa from 1331 to 1336 hindered commerce with Granada, where at least twenty Mallorcan merchants lived in 1334. The Genovese corsairs often used the ports of Granada as their base and refuge, and they wrought havoc on the Catalan and Mallorcan merchants who were headed to either Granada or Morocco.¹⁰⁴ In contrast, in 1359, when the king of Granada declared war against Peter the Ceremonious, the latter decided not to forbid Valencian merchants from trafficking with Granada because the Genovese, Provençals and Plasensians might take over their business, which would be impossible to win back afterwards. Towards the end of the 14th century, many Valencian merchants had commercial agent stationed in Almería or Granada.¹⁰⁵

There is scant information on commercial journeys by Mallorcans to Granada compared to the real number, since the ports of Granada were used as a stopping point on longer journeys, which generally involved Morocco. What is more, Mallorcans were present in the kingdom, although they did not have an influential position close to the royal house, as some Valencia merchants did.¹⁰⁶

Regarding Valencia, between 1381 and 1410 there were 74 transactions related to the Kingdom of Granada. Even

more significant are the 70 departure licences granted to *llenys* (small mediaeval Catalan boats with oars), quarter galleys and armoured vessels between 1405 and 1412 headed to ports in the Kingdom of Granada, which were joined by 30 more that were continuing their journey onward to Moroccan Alcúdia, while another nine planned to continue on to ports in the Kingdom of Tlemcen. Likewise, José Hinojosa has documented the presence of 212 Valencian merchants in Granada in the period between 1401 and 1450, though not in subsequent years; 178 of them were Muslim.¹⁰⁷ Among these merchants were members of the Ripoll and Xipió or Xupió families.¹⁰⁸ Roser Salicrú has noted that the Christian Valencian merchants were the ones who attained the most prominent positions in the Kingdom of Granada, and during certain periods in the 15th century they achieved monopolies, such as the export of silk and the sale of salt, in competition with the Genovese.¹⁰⁹

The Granadan products exported by the Catalans included silk and sugar, as well as leather, wax from the Maghreb and wheat. They took cloth from both Catalonia and abroad to Granada. The Valencians took oil, rice, saffron, honey, Sardinian cheese, hides, cotton and Valencian cloth, among other products.¹¹⁰

Commerce with the Mediterranean Levant

In the 12th and 13th centuries, the area known as the Mediterranean Levant included three zones: the Byzantine Empire, which the Christians called Romania, where at that time Venetians and Genovese began to dominate lands or islands seized from the Empire; the Christian state of Armenia and the crusade states of Palestine and Syria, which were also Christian; and a third zone, Egypt, which was an Islamic state.

The Western merchants, including Catalans, went to these far-off lands to seek spices, a term that encompassed a wide range of products used for seasoning and pharmaceutical products such as pepper, clove, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg and sugar; dyeing agents like indigo and brazil; glue and resins, like incense and lacquer; and textile products like cotton, linen and silk. The spices earned steep profits, so the Catalans made every effort to penetrate this market even though by the time they arrived the Italians were already solidly operating. These products arrived via three main routes: the Silk Route, which ended at the Black Sea, an alternative branch of the Silk Route which reached northern Syria, and the Spice Route, which travelled through southern Asia and the Red Sea and reached both Syria and Egypt.¹¹¹

Spices had been present in Catalan lands since antiquity. They are mentioned in the fees of products subjected to import taxes ("lleudes"), which indicates that they arrived on a regular basis, even though we do not know via which route: perhaps the Barcelona merchants went to seek them directly in the Mediterranean Levant, or perhaps they reached Catalonia via Muslim Spain or Provence. The accounting documents still surviving from the

12th century from both the royal court and the nobility or upper Church hierarchy show a heavy consumption of pepper among these social echelons.¹¹²

The crusade states of Palestine and Armenia. The presence of Barcelona merchants in the city of Tyre, which was one of the Latin states that emerged from the Crusades, is documented in 1187, when they and the Provençals earned a privilege as a reward for helping to defend the city after the Crusader army's defeat to Saladin in Hattin. Marquis Conrad de Montferrat thus granted the communities of citizens from Barcelona and Marseille and the bourgeoisie from Montpellier and Saint Gilles an exemption from all import and export taxes in Tyre and in the entire Kingdom of Jerusalem when it was won back from Saracen hands, and he recognised its autonomous administration under the authority of a viscount for the federation and seven consuls chosen by each community, with their own jurisdiction for the residents except in criminal matters. He also granted them a *fonduc*, an oven and a manor home.¹¹³ This information comes from documentation from outside Catalonia because, in contrast to the later abundance, there are few Catalan documents on the presence of its merchants in the most important commercial areas.

We have hints as to the development of this commerce during the 13th century. Before 1212, a commercial company had taken at least one journey to the crusader kingdoms of Syria and Palestine, while Count Hug II of Empúries, who saw the business opportunities in this region, signed a treaty with Marseille in 1219 to have a merchant ship in this port and passage to take pilgrims to the Holy Land and goods to Alexandria and Syria, which would follow the same procedures as the ships from Marseille. As Lluís Nicolau d'Olwer noted, the port of Barcelona was too far away for the passage of pilgrims.¹¹⁴ Likewise, the 1222 *lleuda* of Mediona (or Barcelona) on import, export and passage tax includes a long list of spices and Oriental products, many more than what appears in the same tax from the 12th century.¹¹⁵ However, the most revealing indicator of the importance of this commerce is the aforementioned protectionist provision issued by James I banning goods heading to "Ultramar" (Siria and Palestine), to Alexandria or Ceuta, from being loaded onto foreign vessels if there was a Barcelona ship willing to take on the cargo.¹¹⁶

We have information on specific commercial operations, even though little documentation remains. Some documents from Vic tell us about trade with Acre, from which cotton, liquorice and cumin were imported in 1231, while the goods from a merchant who had died in Acre were gotten back. In Barcelona, two maritime lending contracts survive for two journeys to St John of Acre in 1240 and 1242, as do *comanda* contracts which reveal that the Catalans transported luxury fabrics from France, cloth from Lleida, almonds, antimony and mercury to the Levant.¹¹⁷ There is also information on journeys from Mallorca in 1247 and 1252.¹¹⁸

In Acre there was a small colony of Barcelona merchants who intervened in the dissensions among the Latins between 1256 and 1258. Pere Marquet had frequented this marketplace before 1253 with the ship he owned with Marimon de Plegamans and Guillem de Llacera. His brother, the admiral Ramon Marquet, sent a ship laden with wheat to the Knights Templar in Acre in 1261, and there is proof that he was in "Ultramar" in 1265. Likewise, Ramon's son, Miquel Marquet, had rented the boom of harbour tax in the port of Acre before 1291.¹¹⁹

Catalans were also present in Little Armenia, in Cilicia, as the captains of the Barcelona-based boat *Santa Llúcia*, which was in the port of Palium, owned by the king of Armenia, in 1273. They chartered it to merchants from Barcelona, who returned with cotton and other goods.¹²⁰

The Crusade in the Holy Land organised by James I in 1269 and 1270 meant heavy ship traffic overseas, first to carry the troops there and later to supply them. Many of them were merchants or captains who already plied this route. Sailing aboard the ship owned by Ramon Marquet, the king returned after a heavy storm at the beginning of the journey, but the others reached Acre.¹²¹

Commerce with the Mamluk sultanate of Egypt. The earliest information on the presence of Catalans in Alexandria comes from Benjamí de Tudela, who says that they were there when he visited the city between 1166 and 1173.¹²² There is no further information until James I sent Bernat Porter there on a diplomatic mission to the sultan in 1256. Apparently he secured commercial franchises for the Catalans at that time. These contacts blossomed later in the 1262 errand to Sultan Baibars, who granted a *fonduc* (storage and merchants' inn) and a consulate to the Catalans. In 1264, the king sent another delegate to get back money, merchandise and goods lost by Catalans in Alexandria.¹²³ In 1274, the crusade required James I to ban trade with the sultan of Alexandria, who years earlier had begun to seize the Palestinian lands belonging to the Crusade kingdoms. Officially there were no journeys to Alexandria for years. Some people did go there, yet they were accused not of this – they could have surely claimed to be unaware of the ban – but of having transported banned goods. The use of an intermediate port did not prevent them from being discovered, even though they were later pardoned for their violations.¹²⁴

In 1276, Peter the Great changed the policy and released the ambassadors of the sultan of Egypt, who had proposed an unheard of treaty: the marriage of Prince Sanç to a daughter of the sultan. In 1281, he moderated the ban on trade with Alexandria, lowering the usual prohibitions on goods that could be used to wage war, which could not be taken to Islamic countries as per old papal dispositions. Through *comanda* contracts of ships heading to Alexandria, there is proof that commercial relations had resumed.¹²⁵

In 1290, Alphonse the Free negotiated a treaty with the Mamluk sultan, which was ultimately signed by his broth-

er and successor, James II, in 1292. However, just when things seemed to be going smoothly, the sultan's conquest of Acre in 1291 prompted a papal ban on travelling to these lands. The prohibition caused serious difficulties in European trade, which needed the spices for seasonings and the pharmacopeia. In Barcelona it was not obeyed immediately because of enmity with the Pope over the issue of Sicily: in 1295 the Catalans were still openly travelling to Alexandria, but that same year the signing of the Treaty of Anagni led to observance of the papal prohibition, since it encompassed not only political issues but also the king's participation in the fines levied by the Holy See against the violators.¹²⁶

After 1295, there are no notary documents on this kind of journey. Trade went underground: the merchants continued to go and tried to conceal their journeys by changing boats or selling part of the cargo at intermediate stops where control was less stringent. If they were discovered, they paid the fine. The fines provide us with a great deal of information on the traffic with Alexandria. They were mainly paid by Catalans from Catalonia proper, as well as Mallorcans and a handful of Valencians.¹²⁷ Many sailors took advantage of the papal prohibition to seize ships with the pretext that they were headed to Alexandria, whereas in reality they were often going to Cyprus.¹²⁸

The Pope's policy to ban trade with the Mamluk sultanate had stages more or less harshly. There were absolutions of the punishments imposed on the violators and extraordinary licences to trade with Alexandria. The licences were granted more and more frequently in around 1330 and became widespread after 1344. The Holy See was forced to somehow regularise trade with Egypt through the payment of licences since it had become necessary to ensure the supply of the European markets. The *Pax Mongolica* had ended and the Asian routes had become unsafe, so spices stopped flowing to the Black Sea ports and virtually the only way to access them was through Egypt and Syria. The Crown of Aragon, which was unwilling to lose the source of income that had come from the payment of fines until then, added its own licence to the papal licence, which began working as a kind of royal monopoly, although the system gradually became less cumbersome. After 1353, the Barcelona merchants secured better fiscal treatment from the Mamluk sultan, which extended to all Catalans. The wars in which the Crown of Aragon participated starting in 1351 made trade with the Levant more complex and also thwarted Peter I of Cyprus' expedition against Alexandria in 1365.¹²⁹

Despite these difficulties, the emergence from underground led to a huge surge in trade with Alexandria and Syria, especially in the last twenty years of the 14th century. The Catalans were quite close to matching the Venetians and Genovese, the two leading commercial powers, although they had no base in the Orient as their counterparts did, with the exception of the duchies of Athens and Neopatria created by the Gran Companyia Catalana a

l'Orient and dependent on Sicily. While 278 Venetian and 262 Genovese ships visited Beirut between 1394 and 1408, 224 Catalan ships travelled there, making Catalonia third in the ranking. In the early years of the 15th century, fifteen ships left Barcelona each year heading toward Alexandria and Beirut, while Perpinyà sent at last one per year and Sant Feliu de Guixols also sent a few.¹³⁰ Trade in the Levant was essential to Barcelona's economy.

The products exported to the Orient included textiles, silver (as long as the mint in Esglésies, in Sardinia, operated), coral starting in the last few decades of the 14th century, tin, honey and oil. The experts concur that this spike in Barcelona's trade with the Orient can be explained by the development of the Catalan cloth industry, which provided goods for exchange at a reasonable price.¹³¹

Mallorcan citizens began to frequent this area starting in the mid-13th century, that is, very early on, given that the island had only been conquered in 1229. During the period when trade with Alexandria was banned and goods from there were considered contraband, between 1302 and 1341 at least eleven Mallorcan ships went to Alexandria, and between 1348 and 1349 some Mallorcans paid the Pope fines for having travelled to Alexandria. After Mallorca rejoined the Crown of Aragon in 1343, more Barcelona and Mallorcan merchants engaged in business with the Orient. From 1400 to 1405, there were a couple of annual journeys to the Levant, although some of the ships may have originated in Barcelona and stopped to top off their cargo in Mallorca. After 1403, however, Mallorca's ruin caused by the heavy flooding that year, with thousands of deaths and major destruction of the city, had negative effects on the island's trading capacity.¹³²

Valencia also had a presence in this trade, although quite a weak one during the 14th century. In 1396, Barcelona and Valencia agreed to arm five galleys, four from Barcelona and one from Valencia, to ensure the safety of the trade with the Levant. Perhaps in 1397, the council of the city of Valencia repeated the experiment of sending a large galley to Beirut to do business with locally-manufactured woollen cloth;¹³³ in 1411 a regular line of merchant galleys received subsidies. It has been said that Valencia failed to replace Barcelona as the hub of the international trade of long-distance sailing routes from northern Europe to the Mediterranean Levant;¹³⁴ however, it likely had no intention of replacing Barcelona.

The fact that Valencia played a minor role in commerce in the Levant is proven by the fact that between 1406 and 1409, when Barcelona wanted to organise a fleet to expel the Basque corsair Pedro de Larraondo from the Mediterranean Levant, where he was attacking Catalans on their most profitable merchant route, it was alone in the enterprise because the other cities did not have as much to lose. The persecution of this corsair by armoured Catalan merchant ships led to a naval battle between them and Genovese ships in the port of Alexandria, which irked the Egyptian authorities. For a period of time, the Cata-

lans encountered difficulties trading with Egypt.¹³⁵ By 1414, the incident was apparently forgotten, although the sultan's capriciousness and his poor treatment of the Consul of the Catalans, Francesc Satria, led Alphonse the Magnanimous to authorise an incursion against Alexandria in 1416.¹³⁶

A treaty signed in 1430 improved relations. Alphonse the Magnanimous secured highly favourable commercial conditions for Catalan merchants in the Mamluk sultanate; however, shortly thereafter, in 1433, a pepper monopoly established by the sultan led to retaliation by King Alphonse. Relations continued to be turbulent throughout the entire reign, which affected the merchants, who often had to pay onerous taxes in retaliation. For this reason and because of Alphonse the Magnanimous' alliance with the Order of the Hospital, part of the trade with the Orient was shifted to Rhodes starting in 1415.¹³⁷ In any event, there were many journeys by Barcelona merchants to Alexandria, and they even continued in the years with serious tensions. The military effort to conquer the Kingdom of Naples, the wars in Italy and the military activities in the Eastern Mediterranean often occupied the merchant fleet, and traffic with the Levant waned. However, between 1442 and 1462 there was an average of five journeys to Alexandria and Rhodes per year.¹³⁸ There is still information about journeys to Alexandria towards the end of the 15th century, yet their infrequency explains why German pilgrim Felix Faber found the Catalans' *fonduc* in Alexandria virtually deserted in 1483.¹³⁹

The Mallorcans continued to travel to Alexandria during the period 1448 to 1480, but rather infrequently. Valencia also sent some ships there throughout the 15th century, and the presence of Valencian merchants in Alexandria is documented in the years 1448 to 1449.¹⁴⁰

The Byzantine Empire and Romania. The Byzantine Empire was a slightly later trade target for the Catalans; it is documented since 1215, and ship *comanda* contracts from Barcelonans to this destination can be found since 1260. In 1282, the ship of Bonany Llor reached Constantinople with several merchants onboard, including Barcelona native Pere Ris, who had been appointed Consul in Constantinople and all of Romania by the Consuls of Merchants of Barcelona, on ship and on land, until the Consul's return journey and replacement by the consul who would arrive later on another ship.¹⁴¹ Merchants from Berga who carried orders of saffron from merchants in Cervera were also present in Constantinople in 1295. It should be noted that at that time, some Catalans had reached Caffa on the Crimean Sea; specifically, ship captain Bartomeu Llorell was there with his ship in 1289.¹⁴²

In 1296, Emperor Andronicus granted commercial franchises to the inhabitants of Barcelona, Aragon, Catalonia, Mallorca, Valencia, Tortosa and other lands ruled by the king of Aragon and Sicily. Mallorcans were present there, as there is proof that the same year a Mallorcan ship was burned in the port of Constantinople by the Venetian

fleet.¹⁴³ In contrast, there is no proof of Valencia in Constantinople in the 13th century.

After the assassination of Roger de Flor (1305) and the war between the *Companya Catalana de l'Orient* and the emperor, the Catalans were unable to go to Constantinople for several years, until 1315. In the mid-14th century we have documentation of intense traffic with Constantinople, and an account book of a commercial journey to this city still remains, the only one that survives in the West for the 14th century.¹⁴⁴ Yet by the second half of the century, it became a secondary line of trade for the Catalans. Nonetheless, at the end of the century one or two ships headed to Constantinople per year, and this pace was kept up during the 15th century.¹⁴⁵

The Constantinople route was more important to the Mallorcans, who not only reached the Black Sea but also ventured even further afield, towards Tartary, Central Asia and China. Between 1340 and 1372, journeys to Constantinople and Romania in general are documented at a rate of three to four ships per year. This commercial relationship continued throughout the 15th century; around ten Mallorcans lived in Constantinople in around 1420.

After the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks, the Catalans and Mallorcans tried to adapt to the difficult circumstances of the expansion of the Ottoman Empire. They continued their exchanges with the eastern Mediterranean, and we can even find some Catalan and Mallorcan commercial journeys to Turkish Constantinople.¹⁴⁶

The Catalans' trade with the Greek islands, especially with Cyprus, was important beginning in the late 13th century. The strict bans on trade which weighed heavily on relations with the Mamluk sultanate for a period of time turned Cyprus into a repository of Oriental spices and goods which reached it along routes that were not affected by the papal prohibitions, such as Little Armenia, which was also frequented by the Catalans. In 1291, the Catalans received preferential fiscal treatment in Cyprus, similar to the traders from Provence, Narbonne and Pisa, but not as favourable as the treatment dispensed to the Genovese and Venetians. A large number of *comanda* contracts heading for Candia (Crete) and Cyprus and reports of ship journeys to these islands remain from 1293 and 1299, while the record books of Genovese notaries in Cyprus reveal the presence of around 40 Catalans from Barcelona and Tarragona on the island, most prominently Bernat Marquet. The presence of Mallorcans on Crete (Candia) is also documented starting in 1295 and 1296. Candia was an essential stopover on the routes to the Mediterranean Levant.

The Catalans' trade with the Greek islands, especially Cyprus, remained intense during the 14th century, as proven by *comanda* contracts and exchange documents and the account books of merchants, some of them published and others not. In the 15th century, there seems to have been a drop in trade.¹⁴⁷ Later on, the island of Rhodes became an essential stopover for Catalans heading abroad

and often replaced the port of Alexandria as the final destination, as discussed above. There is a great deal of information on journeys from Barcelona to Rhodes, and they continued after Constantinople was seized by the Turks. Journeys from Mallorca were also quite common, and there were some from Valencia as well. The islands or territories under Venetian or Genovese domination were also visited by the Catalans, but not as much as the other ports.¹⁴⁸

The products sent to Romania during the 13th century included French textiles, oil, paper, furs (fox, wolf, buckskin, etc.), pieces of armour, saffron and tin, iron and mercury. The goods brought back include spices, pepper, ginger, cinnamon and sometimes wax, silk, alum, mastic and squirrel furs. In the 14th century, additional goods heading to Romania included considerable amounts of Catalan textiles, and mats, most likely from Valencia, along with silver, gold, fish, rice, anise and anise seed, pottery and ceramic, almonds, dates, figs, scarlet, sheet brass and even cork. In the second half of the 14th century and throughout the 15th century, Oriental slaves came to be a prominent part of the cargo transported home, in addition to the goods mentioned above.¹⁴⁹

Commerce with the Atlantic regions

In the late 13th century, the opening and expansion of the direct sailing routes to Andalusia, Portugal, England and Flanders had highly favourable repercussions for Catalan commerce after the passage through the Strait of Gibraltar became safer because of Castile's territorial expansion in Andalusia.¹⁵⁰ After this development, Catalonia, Mallorca and Valencia came to occupy a central position in the sailing and trading lines.

The Iberian Peninsula. The commercial relations with Castile developed across land routes in the entire central area (Castilla la Vieja, Castilla la Nueva and Extremadura) and Murcia, with the import of products such as wool, animals for meat consumption, horses, wood and salted fish, and the export of cloth, spices, oil and products for redistribution, in addition to grain and wine, which circu-

lated both ways, depending on good or bad year.¹⁵¹ The export of Catalan and Valencian textiles (at least since 1338) and the redistribution of French cloth through Valencia and Aragon were very prominent activities. This exchange was favourable to the Catalans and Valencians because they offered goods with more added value. The protectionist measure decreed by the Castilian King Henry III in 1406 banning the import of cloth from the Crown of Aragon, probably to encourage its manufacture in Castile, did not have major repercussions because of the death of the monarch.¹⁵²

Starting in the late 13th century, the maritime routes were used for trade with Atlantic Andalusia, mainly with Seville. The Catalans had commercial franchises, a neighbourhood, an exchange and a consulate in the city since 1282 and 1284. The *lleuda* tax trial of Tortosa indicates journeys to Seville in 1267 and 1272. The Mallorcans also flocked there, taking saffron, pepper and a variety of goods. Some of them took advantage of their base in Seville to travel to the Atlantic coast of Morocco, and there was no dearth of incidents. The presence of Catalans in Andalusia was affected by the wars between the Crown of Aragon and Castile, which often meant a loss in their privileged situation. Valencian merchants also traded with Seville and Cádiz, as proven by the freight contracts found, although they do not indicate a large volume of commercial flows in the first third of the 14th century.¹⁵³

The presence of Catalan and Mallorcan merchants in Seville is well-documented until 1348.¹⁵⁴ In the mid-14th century, the port of Cádiz began to attract more interest among the Catalans and Valencians than the port of Seville, and by the end of the 15th century it had totally replaced it, along with the ports of Sanlúcar de Barrameda and El Puerto de Santa María. In the 14th century, Catalans, Valencians and Mallorcans transported to Andalusia saffron, rice, figs, sheaf knives, coral, spices, wine from Morvedre and Tarragona, pitch and Oriental and Muslim slaves, and they carried away oil, chickpeas, tuna and other salted fish, hides, mercury and sometimes wheat.¹⁵⁵ During the 1340s, Mallorcans often visit the Canary Islands seeking to open profitable new markets; the Catalans took an interest in the Canary Islands as well.¹⁵⁶

Catalans, Valencians and Mallorcans also travelled to Galician ports. For example, there is information about a journey to Galicia undertaken by a Valencian, Tomàs Valentí, in his galley in around 1304. Likewise, for years Galician and Portuguese carriers took vast amounts of fish to the Catalan lands until the first third of the 15th century. In February 1434 (during Lent), seven million units of salted sardines arrived in Barcelona (the amount that arrived in an entire year in Valencia in the late 15th century), along with 12,000 units of dried hake. In the first third of the 15th century, some Valencians went to Galicia to source fish themselves, and so did a merchant from Colliure in 1442, who wanted to transport sardines to Barcelona aboard a Galician ship. In Andalusia, Catalans were also able to stock up on the fish traditionally



Figure 3. Cover of the book of the consulate of the sea, a compilation of Catalan maritime trade laws.

brought by the Galician ships, and there they were also able to buy tuna, which was caught in the Andalusian tunny fishery and taken to Valencia or Barcelona both by both Castilians and by Catalans or Valencians since the last third of the 14th century.¹⁵⁷

In the late 15th century there was an extraordinary rise in commercial relations with the Atlantic ports, specifically with Andalusia, that is, with Atlantic Andalusia, since the Mediterranean was still known as the Kingdom of Granada, with Portugal and with Galicia. What is more, in the late 15th century Andalusia became the platform used by Catalan merchants in their dealings with Flanders or England and the link between the western and eastern routes; it became the merchandise redistribution hub, as we shall see.

The exports from Catalonia to Andalusia mainly included nuts, specifically hazelnuts and almonds, which perhaps were later expedited to Flanders or England. Saffron, manufactured glass items, knives, combs, coral balls and cases were also exported there. The woollen cloth manufactured in Catalonia, which were the base of Catalan trade in the central and eastern Mediterranean, appears only symbolically in these routes. Products from further afield were also sent, including cinnamon, sandalwood and some amount of a dyeing agent: verdigris. Mallorca's trade in this sector was highly limited in the second half of the 15th century; in contrast, Valencia's trade with Andalusia was quite active. It exported woollen textiles, fine Valencian ceramics, wine from Morvedre, weapons, furniture, chests and more.

Andalusia was the main supplier of hides and sumac for the leather tanning industry, one of the oldest in Catalonia. The local production from the Crown of Aragon and the leathers from North Africa, a longstanding supplier, must not have sufficed, so the Catalan artisans and merchants purchased hides in both Galicia and, to a greater extent, in Andalusia, where the amount of livestock had grown considerably because of the vast abundance of uncultivated land used for pastureland. While in 1404 Berber leathers accounted for one-third of the leather imports in Barcelona, by around 1430 that market had disappeared and been replaced by Andalusian leathers, while Mallorca continued to import Berber leathers, which accounted for almost half of the total. The Valencians got their supplies of leathers and sumac from Andalusia.

Salted fish, mainly sardines and anchovies, but also dried fish like hake, conger eel and tuna, was the other major product that the Catalans and Valencians travelled to Andalusia to source. We have already discussed this. In the late 15th century, the exploitation of African fisheries led to an extraordinary rise in the range of fish available, which the Catalans took advantage of both for the domestic supply and to redistribute around the western Mediterranean. The captains of the traditional fishing ports in the Empordà, such as Roses, Sant Feliu de Guíxols and Palamós, travelled to Andalusia or Portugal with their

barrels empty to fill them and transport their contents to the Catalan coast, where they redistributed them around Catalonia and the Balearic Islands, as well as along the coasts of Occitania and Italy, including Agde, Marseille, Genoa and Civitavecchia to supply the populous Rome, Naples and other cities.

The cargo heading from Andalusia to Catalonia and Valencia included other products, such as wheat and barley, which both Catalonia and the city of Valencia lacked, a wheat product called the sea-biscuit, animal fat, lard and sometimes also raisins, oil and wine in small amounts, although the Catalan lands were producers of both products, as well as canary-seed, senna (a medicinal plant), wool, manufactured textile products such as shirts, scarlet, slaves and more.

The products from Andalusia that the Catalans redistributed included Vizcayan iron, oak from Flanders, Irish leathers, Berber leathers (which reappeared in the market late in the century), Berber wax, glue, indigo, gold coin or in bar, which often the same Catalan companies had transported from Salé to El Puerto de Santa María.¹⁵⁸

We must still discuss sugar. The colonisation of Madeira and the Canary Islands determined the cultivation of sugar on these islands, which developed more quickly than in the region of Valencia, where this crop had also begun to be planted. Sugar was a product that had circulated from the eastern Mediterranean to the west for many years, and now the direction of the flows inverted because of the political changes in the East, which disrupted the traditional trade routes, and the new crops in the Atlantic. Some Catalans contributed to these changes, such as Pere Benavent, who in the last decade of the 15th century had a sugar plantation in Tenerife called Los Saucos, although he moved to Andalusia and his son was in municipal charge of *veinticuatro* in Jerez. Rafael Font also did business in the Canary Islands, although he lived in Cádiz, where he was a town councillor, as well as in San Cristóbal de La Laguna in Tenerife. Some Valencians also wanted to enter the sugar business in this region, and in 1503 they set up a sugar-refining company in Cádiz, El Puerto de Santa María or the Canary Islands. The Catalans traded a great deal with the Canary Islands and Madeira using their Andalusian bases. Valencia also imported sugar from the islands despite its local production.¹⁵⁹

Trade with Portugal, as a stopover point to England and Flanders or a destination in itself, should be borne in mind. The transport of fish to Catalonia by Portuguese carriers was one of the most important phenomena in their mutual commercial relationship, but we know that Catalan merchants also frequented Portugal. The accounts of the Mitjavila company indicate that they carried sugar, cloves, lavender and woollen cloth, specifically *cadins* crafted in the English style. Mallorcans took pitch there, at least in 1337; at that time there was one Mallorcan company with a commercial agent in Lisbon. Sometimes they also sent Saracen captives and swords there, but we have little information about the kind of goods

traded. Regarding the goods they took back to Mallorca, we are only aware of salted fish. In addition to Lisbon, other destinations mentioned include Silves, Setúbal and Porto. We have information on the Catalan merchants living in both Lisbon and Porto; in the late 14th century there were commercial agent from the company of Guillem and Nicolau Pujades in Lisbon, for example.¹⁶⁰ The Catalan merchants went to seek wheat in Portugal at times of shortage, such as in 1374, and on other occasions Barcelonans or Valencians had to carry wheat there. Generally speaking, the Catalans, Mallorcans and Valencians were interested in Portuguese fish and leathers, although the Valencians seemed to also purchase cheese and slaves there. Both Catalonia and Valencia sent cloth and wine from Morvedre (modern Sagunt) to Portugal, while the Mallorcans continued to send pitch and salt. In the 15th century, mercantile relations with Portugal rose significantly; the Catalans went there to seek fish and the Valencians took rice, saffron, spices, almonds, jams, sugar, paste, cloth and ceramics there.¹⁶¹

Commerce with England. The Mallorcans began to penetrate the English market at the end of the 13th century. The first Mallorcan documented in London in 1281, Guillem Bona, skippered Genovese ships, and other Mallorcans and Catalans followed him. The clashes between the French and English in the late 13th century made the journey to England and Flanders too risky, but the end of this war in 1303 enabled commerce to resume. Edward I granted the "*Carta mercatoria*", which provided merchants with security, and by 1304 some Mallorcans had already resumed trade with England, although they were attacked and preyed upon by armoured English ships that were still plying the immediate maritime zone. There is also word of the presence of Catalans in Southampton in 1311, carrying almonds, leathers, iron and mercury.

To further encourage trade, Edward II granted franchises to foreign merchants, including Catalans, in 1312, and in 1326 there was a new charter of safe passage in favour of the foreign merchants precisely at the time of the conflict between England and France, while in 1328 there was a confirmation of the "*Carta mercatoria*" by Edward III in favour of merchants from Aragon, Catalonia and Mallorca: it includes the tax rate that they had to pay to export wool and leathers and to import the products that they carried, including scarlet-dyed cloth, silk, wax and more. These liberties were confirmed by Edward III in 1332, 1337 and 1338. Genoa's alliance with France in 1338 separated it from England, which opened the door for merchants from Catalonia, Valencia and Mallorca, despite the incidents that occurred from time to time.¹⁶²

Trade with England has not been extensively studied, but we do know that starting in 1436, the year when a regular route of merchant galleys with Flanders began, there was a surge in commercial relations with England, since this route included stops in Southampton and London. English wool began to be imported in 1439, which previously had only been purchased to resell in Flanders in or-

der to manufacture quality cloth in Barcelona, an initiative promoted by the city government with the goal of replacing the Flemish imports that the "*Havents a cor*" constitution of the Catalan Courts had prohibited in 1425. Immediately after the Catalan Civil War from 1462 to 1472, Catalan merchants did not seem to frequent England; in contrast, they did towards the end of the 15th century, especially the Viastrosa company, which also sent some ships to Ireland. Regarding Valencia, some journeys to England as well as other operations are documented in the late 15th century, which seem to have been carried out by foreigners.¹⁶³

Commerce with Flanders. During the 13th century, this trade had developed via land routes, especially along the Rhone River. The earliest information on the presence of Catalans in Flanders dates from 1267, and they attended the fairs in Lille and Bruges since at least 1299, the latter being the city where commerce in the Germanic area converged with commerce in the Latinate area. One of the first merchants we can find there is Jaume Vilaseca, who lived in Dordrecht, Holland, between 1299 and 1303 and who also had interests in London.¹⁶⁴ At that time, the war between England and Flanders and afterwards the war between France and England hindered maritime contact, which did not become visible until the early 14th century.

The exchanges between Flanders and Mallorca have been extensively studied: in 1320, the king of Mallorca, Sanç I, sent a royal galley to Flanders to trade, and the following year he organised a convoy of Mallorcan galleys for this journey, similar to the annual fleets sent by the Venetians. There were frequent attacks on Catalan ships by English pirates, such as one in 1325, which tells us about the trade with Flanders of both Catalans and Valencians.¹⁶⁵ The attacks by Genovese pirates on Catalan and Mallorcan ships during the war that the Crown of Catalonia and Aragon and Mallorca waged against Genoa from 1331 to 1336 are also a source of information because they tended to attack them at the coasts off the Kingdom of Granada.¹⁶⁶ There is evidence that some Valencian merchants sent cargo to Flanders in 1332 and 1336, although we do not know what means of transport they used. After the onset of the Hundred Years' War between the English and the French in 1337, Catalan and Mallorcan merchants were the victims of incidents near both Flanders and Castile, since the latter was an ally of France. Flanders recognised King Edward III of England as its king, who provided *laissez passer* to the Catalans and Mallorcans in his new domain.¹⁶⁷

The Catalans present in Bruges set up a mercantile group in 1330 with two consuls and a council made up of all the Catalan merchants living in the city. This group was also a religious confraternity; they drew up bylaws, which were copied into a book, where they also recorded the rules and privileges granted to the Catalan merchants in Flanders.¹⁶⁸ At this time, both the Civader-Sitges company, set up in 1329 and headquartered in Barcelona, Va-

lencia, Mallorca and Flanders, and the Mitjavila company, which operated out of Barcelona, Mallorca and Valencia, were doing business in Flanders. They sent spices, cotton, alum and cheese. The trading from Flanders to Barcelona often took place via land routes. The Catalan merchants received safe-conduct from the Count of Flanders in 1352, and again from the Duke of Burgundy, Lord of Flanders, in 1389, who also granted privileges to the subjects of the king of Aragon, with particular mention of the merchants from Barcelona who transported wine and wool there. Prior to this date, between 1378 and 1379, the Catalan nation must have been powerful enough among the other nations present in Bruges, since it was assigned one-eighth of the debenture that the city asked of foreign merchants. The Catalans living in Bruges in the early years of the 15th century included Miquel de Manresa, Miquel Bruguerola and Pere Satria.¹⁶⁹

In the last third of the 14th century, the Barcelonans and Mallorcans once again suffered from captures by the English corsairs when going to or coming from Flanders as part of the conflict between France and English. They also experienced shipwrecks, with the confiscation of the goods salvaged, and embargoes because of war needs during the conflict between Castile and Portugal, incidents that provide a great deal of information on traffic with Flanders. Even though this information is fragmentary and discontinuous, by counting the incidents along with the trouble-free journeys we can establish that between 1373 and 1388, albeit with information for only five of those years, there were at least eleven journeys to Flanders, nine of which were in Catalan or Mallorcan ships and two in Basque ships.¹⁷⁰

The insecurity of the route to Flanders because of the attacks by English corsairs led the merchants and ship owners from Barcelona and Mallorca to ask John I, in the Courts of Montsó in 1389, to grant the delivery of four armoured galleys, two for Barcelona and two for Mallorca, with privileges from the royal armada in order to guarantee the security of the transport of goods. To ensure that these ships travelled fully loaded, it was prohibited to load any other ship, either local or foreign, three months before the galleys departed from Barcelona or Mallorca and one and a half months before they departed from the port of Sluis, although these bans must have lost force as soon as the galleys were fully loaded. Thus, it was not a protectionist measure, as Del Treppo claims, but a temporary monopolistic measure to avoid the failure of the initiative, since the freight must have been more expensive, just as galley transport was, because of the larger staff required. Of the two galleys assigned to Barcelona, we are only certain that the large one captained by Guillem Pujada travelled to Flanders that year. Journeys of the merchant galley to Flanders are documented in 1390 and 1394, as is one from Mallorca in 1395, but many other journeys by Basque ships transporting Catalan and Valencian goods are documented as well, and Galician and Italian ships were also used on the return journey. In

1397, there were plans to send two galleys laden with spices to Flanders, but we do not know whether they were ultimately dispatched. This would be the last scheduled journey of the merchant galleys for many years. It was a costly undertaking, as mentioned above, and it had competition from the Venetian fleet (*muda*), which regularly stopped in Mallorca, as well as the offer of more convenient passage from the Castilian merchant fleet and the Catalan fleet itself. Only at times of great insecurity was the use of galleys justified. In the period from 1389 to 1399, at least four large Catalan and Mallorcan galleys travelled to Flanders, in addition to eleven vessels and one boat, and eleven more Castilian and two Italian vessels, much more than the average of one ship per year cited by Del Treppo. Ships from Catalonia, Valencia and Mallorca still predominated, although the recourse to foreign merchant marines was still quite prominent, particularly ships from Castile, and Venetian galleys were often used to transport goods from Flanders.¹⁷¹

Merchants from Valencia were present in Flanders in 1334 and took advantage of the system of journeys to this destination that stopped in Mallorca, Barcelona and Valencia, plus they also sent a few ships there directly in 1394. Between June 1395 and March 1398, of the 213 ships that arrived in and departed from the port of Valencia, eight percent were heading to Bruges, a similar percentage to those heading to Genoa.¹⁷²

From the first few years of the 15th century, we have mostly unpublished information on five journeys to or from Flanders between 1401 and 1406, all of it related to incidents.¹⁷³ We should compare the departures of ships from different ports because they often stopped in Mallorca, Barcelona and Valencia. The route to Flanders was one of the most unitary of all the trade in the Catalonia-Valencia-Balearic Islands area as proven by the number of documents already mentioned and especially the rules from the consulate of Catalans in Flanders, which were written towards the end of the 14th century. The consulate regulated its members' right to transport and offered favourable treatment for Catalan ships. Whoever wanted to depart with a laden ship also had to return with a laden ship; the freight had to be made public; and reports had to be filed on the promised goods and the stops until Mallorca, which was considered the end of the line. During the ten days after the freight was published, there was time to make declarations of the goods to be loaded. The Catalan merchants had preference over the merchants from other nations, and no Catalan could load goods onto a foreign ship if there was a Catalan one ready to be loaded, unless the foreign ship was heading directly for Mallorca while the Catalan ship was not. The ship that left Bruges went to Mallorca, where it unloaded part of its goods, and then to Valencia, where it had 15 days to unload and then had to head to Barcelona. Delays in reaching Barcelona were sometimes mentioned owing to the transfer of the freight to one of the many ships that ensured Mallorca's contact with Barcelona.



Figure 4. *La Coca de Mataró*. A 15th century Catalan votive offering which depicts a “coca” (a kind of boat from the time), currently held in the Prins Hendrik Maritime Museum of Rotterdam.

Mallorca and Valencia were the most important platforms on the route to Flanders, the former because it was the repository of African products and the latter because it was the capital of a country with extraordinarily rich agricultural products that were very appealing in Flanders, such as raisins, figs, dates and rice. However, the documentation shows that Barcelona was not left out of the system, because even if the ships did not stop there, the goods were transferred from a coastal boat that was part of a very dense network to a vessel heading northward. What is more, all the Catalan companies had commercial agent in Valencia and Mallorca, where they loaded not only goods that might reach Barcelona but also local goods. The foreign boats that travelled to Flanders, especially those from Genoa and Venice, stopped in Mallorca and Valencia, and often some of the southern ports in Valencia, but they did not tend to stop in Barcelona, although the boats from Florence did. Mallorca was not always the terminus of the line to Flanders, and sometimes it was replaced by Barcelona. The foreign marines were often used on this route, while the Catalan merchant fleet concentrated on other routes, especially in the 15th century.¹⁷⁴

During the 15th century, the ports visited in Flanders expanded to include Middleburg and Antwerp, and mercantile relations experienced a steep rise in some periods: the Barcelonans largely dominated trade with Flanders and England, and from 1428 to 1429 a full 87% of the insured loads on this route belonged to Catalans. In contrast with this predominance in commerce, the involve-

ment of the local merchant fleet in this sector dropped considerably, while, in contrast, the use of the merchant fleets from different Italian cities to transport goods rose considerably, which has always surprised historians.¹⁷⁵ However, it should come as no surprise because the Genoese also often utilised the Castilian fleet for its journeys to Flanders, at least during the 15th century.¹⁷⁶

In the period from 1416 to 1440, 44 journeys to Flanders are recorded for the ten years for which we have information. However, if we compare them with journeys to the Levant, it does not even total half the volume of the latter. The Italian enterprises of Alphonse the Magnanimous shifted Catalan ships away from the Flanders routes, and security problems at sea most likely counselled a new attempt to set up a regular route of merchant galleys to Flanders and the Levant, which was supposed to link these two important commercial poles. This route was agreed to in 1433 and began to operate in 1436, run by the Generalitat de Catalunya following the Venetian model until 1444. During those years, eight round trips were taken, while there were three galley journeys to Flanders in 1436, four in 1438 and two in 1439.

In 1440, the Catalans were subjected to a retaliation *o marca* in Flanders for a piracy affair in the Mediterranean, which meant a levy on the commercial movements from Catalonia or heading there. This seriously thwarted Catalan trade until the tax was abolished in 1450. This must have been the reason why there was a certain contraction in trade between 1441 and 1453, with only 16 journeys to Flanders. Precisely in 1451, King Alphonse the Magnanimous organised a journey to Occident with two of his galleases; just like the lines of galleys that had been attempted earlier, the monarch imposed a monopoly on these galleases a few months prior to and after their departure in order to ensure that the ships travelled fully loaded. The king had no intention of favouring his subjects; rather his aim was to earn money on the freight and with the cargo of Sicilian sugar which he owned for tax or patrimonial reasons and which the galleases transported. The money earned thus had to fund the purchases planned in Flanders, including sumptuous fabrics, quilts, *draps d'Arras* and other luxury goods for his court. It was not the first time he engaged in trade; he had done so on other occasions with the wheat yielded from his inherited lands, selling it to Barbaria, Venice or the Levant as a means of earning income.

The period from 1454 to 1463 witnessed a revival, but not at the same high levels as in 1428 to 1440. Del Treppo counts around 30 journeys to Flanders, including Mallorca. The crisis triggered by the Catalan Civil War was felt more deeply in Flanders than in other areas. From 1465 to 1485, through insurance documents we only have information on a single journey to Flanders, the one in which Florentine galleys were used to transport Catalan goods. According to Del Treppo, this commercial route must have been interrupted and only moderately resumed in around 1490, which is when we have informa-

tion from insurance documents that have been conserved. This rally may have been hindered by the revolt in Bruges against Duke Maximilian of Austria. In 1484, the Duke encouraged foreign merchants to leave the rebel city and move to Antwerp; this was partially successful for a time, until he required it in 1488 and the merchants were unable to return to Bruges until after peace was achieved in 1493. The Catalan merchants then earned major privileges in Bruges, even though they ended up abandoning the city in 1527 to move to Antwerp, which was a better port.

Between 1485 and 1500, Del Treppo only found five journeys in seven years.¹⁷⁷ This must not have included the journeys to Flanders and England promoted by Catalans from Andalusia and usually insured in Barcelona, which totalled at least ten journeys in nine years, four which reached Andalusia from Flanders with goods owned by Catalans. We have already noted that in the late 15th century Cádiz, Sanlúcar and El Puerto de Santa María served as the base of Catalan trade with England and Ireland and Flanders. Mediterranean products were loaded there, including dried fruit, almonds and hazelnuts, raisins, figs and oil from Mallorca, which they traded to later re-export and added Andalusian products to the Catalan ones and often products from the Maghreb as well, in addition to Oriental goods which the Catalan companies sometimes sent there directly from the eastern Mediterranean. On the return journeys from the north, in the Andalusian ports the goods from the ports of Flanders or England were transferred to the ships that usually plied the Mediterranean routes and did not venture into the Atlantic beyond Andalusia or Portugal, not because they could not but because in this way the freights must have been more economical.¹⁷⁸

Regarding Valencia, between 1433 and 1451 there were 67 insurance contracts on this route, a number which may or may not be identical to the number of journeys and which gives us an approximate average of three journeys per year. In the late 15th century, this traffic had curtailed significantly, with few journeys which only represented a tiny percentage of the port's total number, and with decentralised departures from Xàbia, Dénia and other sites, as well as some departures by the Catalans from El Puerto de Santa María, Madeira, Lisbon, Bordeaux and even Quios. The ships used were primarily Italian or Basque, and Valencian merchants did not participate heavily: it was more the business of the Italians or Flemish living in Valencia, with the exception of the trading of the Muslim converts, who engaged in 32 freight contracts with this destination between 1476 and 1501. José Hinojosa has emphasised the impetus that the heavy demand for dried fruit in Flanders had on speculative agriculture oriented at export and what that meant for the development of towns like Dénia and Alicante, where the Genoese, Florentine or Venetian ships heading to Flanders, as well as the Catalan ships, stopped. In contrast, the Mallorcans had a very minor presence in this field after 1439.¹⁷⁹

The products sent to Flanders included spices imported from the Orient, which were resold at a profit, and saffron, which was the only Catalan agricultural product targeted for export, although we could also add pine nuts and hazelnuts, both of them Catalan specialities, and almonds, which could come from either Catalonia or Valencia. According to the Datini company, almonds could earn a 50% profit in Bruges. The most prized Valencian products included rice, raisins and dried figs, dates, cumin and anise seed, wine and oil, which came from both Catalonia and Valencia or Mallorca, but especially from the latter two, and sugar, which could come from the Orient, Sicily, Valencia or Madeira. Dyeing products included scarlet and safflower, and manufactured goods included weapons, soap, fine Valencian ceramics and Catalan glass items. The Mallorcans also sent calfskin from the Maghreb and gold ingots. Local products were added at the Andalusian ports, including wine, capers, olives, lemons, bull horns, tuna and wax.

From Flanders, Catalans mainly imported the famous fabrics woven in the region, which were used for luxury garments. The import of fabrics from Flanders and Brabant was the main business of the large Catalan companies like Llobera-Junyent, Alba, Manresa, Font and Aguilar. For this reason, there was heavy resistance to the implementation of the "Havents a cor" constitution (parliamentary law) in 1425, which banned these imports since they were considered a significant money drain. This provision apparently triggered a depression in the fabric industry in Courtrai since so much cloth had previously been exported by the Catalans. The ban seems to have been relaxed in 1433, when a regular line of galleys connecting Alexandria and Flanders was suggested, because the imports that might arrive in each galley were valued at 100,000 pounds, 50,000 of which must have been the price of the fine fabrics, while the remaining 50,000 corresponded to sundry other fabrics, along with copper, tin, madder, pins, barrels with crosswoven threads and oak wood. Historians believe that the balance of trade with Flanders showed deficits for the Catalans, since the imports exceeded the value of the exports.¹⁸⁰

We have tracked the construction of Catalonia's commercial network from its origins in the time of the Counts in the 12th century to the late 15th century, as well as the efforts of the merchants who managed to enter markets both near and far, facing the dangers entailed in the journeys back then. We have stressed the fact that Catalonia had no important raw materials, but its merchants gradually figured out how to source agricultural or manufactured products that might be successful in different markets, and their demand stimulated production. They were also skilled at redistributing goods. The territorial expansion with the conquests of Mallorca and Valencia strengthened the Catalan commercial network once these regions were repopulated. Mallorca joined it first in the mid-13th century, and then Valencia with some degree of regularity in the 14th century. The formation of a mer-

chant fleet ran parallel to this expansion in trade, although in the 15th century the merchants often had to transport their goods on other fleets. The long-distance fleet with considerable tonnage at a reasonably quick speed was complemented by a host of smaller boats and shallows, which comprised a dense network of coastal vessels aimed at ensuring the transport and redistribution of goods among all three territories within the Catalan area. As a whole, it was an important fleet; this is how Federigo Melis described it through the opinions of contemporary Italian merchants.¹⁸¹ We have tracked the expansion of Catalan trade from the 13th century until the mid-15th century, when the Catalan commercial network was one of the three or four most important in the Mediterranean despite the crises prompted by the wars, especially the war of 1462 to 1472, from which Catalonia had recovered by the last decade of that century. Finally, we have tracked the evolution in the different commercial areas by analysing the presence of Catalan, Mallorcan and Valencian merchants in each area, and the differing prominence of each group in these areas, as well as their complementarity, by combing through the literature specialising in each aspect. This is a synthesis that has never before been undertaken and one which I hope is useful.

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- [123] Pau CATEURA BENNÀSSER. "Mundos mediterráneos...", p. 94; Maria Teresa FERRER I MALLOL. "Els mallorquins a la Mediterrània oriental...", p. 44; Faustino D. GAZULLA. *Jaime I y los estados musulmanes*. Speeches delivered at the Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona. Barcelona 1919, p. 70, n. 148; Damien COULON. "La Corona de Aragón y los mercados lejanos mediterráneos (siglos XII-XV)". In: *La Corona de Aragón en el centro de su historia 1208-1458. Aspectos económicos y sociales*. Edited by Ángel Sesma Muñoz. Government of Aragón. Department of Education, Culture and Sports, Zaragoza 2009, p. 286; Eduard GONZÁLEZ HURTEBISE. "Recull de documents inédits del rey en Jaume I". In: *Congrés d'Història de la Corona d'Aragó*. Vol. II. Barcelona 1913, doc. 67 and 74.
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- [132] Pau CATEURA BENNÀSSER. "Mundos mediterráneos...", pp. 85-101; Maria Teresa FERRER I MALLOL. "Els mallorquins a la Mediterrània oriental..."; Maria Teresa FERRER I MALLOL. "Les dissensions pel govern de Mallorca (1401-1404). Una intervenció pacificadora de Barcelona". *Randa*, no. 65 (2010) (*Miscel·lània Gabriel Llopart*, vol. 5), pp. 73-94, specifically pp. 86-89. <<http://hdl.handle.net/10261/33392>>.
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- [137] Damien COULON. *Barcelone et le grand commerce d'Orient...*, pp. 9 and 54-59; Damien COULON. "Un tournant dans les relations catalano-aragonaises...", pp. 1058-1059 and 1061-1063; Damien COULON. "La Corona de Aragón y los mercados lejanos...", p. 304.
- [138] Damien COULON. *Barcelone et le grand commerce d'Orient...*, pp. 9 and 54-59; Damien COULON. "Un tournant dans les relations catalano-aragonaises...", pp. 1058-1059 and 1061-1064, which warns about the unreliability of the information provided by the *dret de Drassanes* (Arsenal tax), which contains repetitions and was used by both Claude Carrère and Del Treppo: the frequency of journeys was unlikely as high as it appears in the lists of these two authors; Damien COULON. "La Corona de Aragón y los mercados lejanos...", pp. 304-305; Claude CARRÈRE. *Barcelona...*, pp. 349-358; Mario DEL TREPPO. *I mercanti catalani...*, pp. 612-633. In the eastern Mediterranean, Alphonse the Magnanimous seized a small island near Rhodes, Castellroig (Kastellórizo), from which he waged campaigns of corsairs. Daniel DURAN I DUELT, *Kastellóri-*
- zo, una isla griega bajo dominio de Alfonso el Magnánimo (1450-1458)*. Colección documental. CSIC. Institución Milá y Fontanals, Barcelona 2003.
- [139] Manuel J. PELÁEZ. *Catalunya després de la guerra civil...*, p. 171; Mario DEL TREPPO. *I mercanti catalani...*, pp. 636-637; Damien COULON. "La Corona de Aragón y los mercados lejanos...", p. 306.
- [140] Onofre VAQUER. "Comerç i capital mercantil...", pp. 162 and 167; Damien COULON. "La Corona de Aragón y los mercados lejanos...", p. 305.
- [141] Josep Maria MADURELL I MARIMON and Arcadi GARCIA I SANZ. *Comandas...*, doc. 11, 16, 44-45, 47-48, 51 and 69; Maria Teresa FERRER I MALLOL. "Sobre els orígens del Consolat de Mar de Barcelona el 1279 i sobre els cònsols d'ultramar a bord de vaixells. Un exemple de 1281". *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, no. 23 (1993), pp. 141-150. <<http://hdl.handle.net/10261/24691>>; this appointment had already been mentioned in Arcadi GARCIA I SANZ and Maria Teresa FERRER I MALLOL. *Assegurances i canvis marítims...*, vol. II, p. 322, note. Cf. also on the same appointment: Stephen BENSCH. "Early Catalan Contacts with Byzantium". In: *Iberia and the Mediterranean World of the Middle Ages. Studies in Honour of R. I. Burns*, S. J. Edited by Paul E. Chevedden, Donald J. Kagay and Paul G. Padilla. Vol. I. Brill, Leiden-New York-Cologne 1995-1996, pp. 56-158. Bensch erroneously interprets it as a permanent consul.
- [142] Daniel DURAN I DUELT. "Evidències documentals de la participació ceriverina en el comerç amb Romania a les darreries del segle XIII". *Miscel·lània Cerverina*, no. 15 (2002), pp. 31-38; Michel BALARD. *Gènes et l'Outre-mer*. Vol. I. *Les actes de Caffa du notaire Lamberto di Sambuceto 1289-1290*. Mouton, Paris 1973, doc. 333; Daniel DURAN I DUELT, "Els catalans i els mallorquins a la mar Negra i a Tartària". In: *Els catalans a la Mediterrània oriental...* Edited by Maria Teresa Ferrer i Mallol. Institut d'Estudis Catalans, Barcelona 2003, pp. 191-220, specifically p. 193. Another Catalan also appears in Caffa the same year as a witness.
- [143] Cf. the emperor's concession in Antoni de CAPMANY DE MONTPALAU. *Memorias...*, vol. II, doc. 45, p. 69; Daniel DURAN I DUELT. "Els mallorquins a la Romania (segles XIII-XVI)". In: *XXVI Jornades d'Estudis Històrics Locals. El Regne de Mallorca...*, pp. 241-255, specifically p. 243.
- [144] Antoni RUBIÓ I LLUCH. *Diplomatari de l'Orient Català (1301-1409)*. Institut d'Estudis Catalans, Barcelona 1947. Reissue supervised by Maria Teresa Ferrer i Mallol. Institut d'Estudis Catalans, Barcelona 2001, doc. 115; Ernest MARCOS. "Els catalans i l'imperi bizantí". In: *Els catalans a la Mediterrània oriental...*, pp. 17-78, specifically p. 61; Daniel DURAN I DUELT. *Manual del viatge fet per Berenguer Benet a Romania, 1341-1342. Estudi i edició*. CSIC. Institució Milà i Fontanals, Barcelona 2002.
- [145] Claude CARRÈRE. *Barcelona...*, vol. II, pp. 348-349; Mario DEL TREPPO. *I mercanti catalani...*, pp. 608-613; Daniel DURAN I DUELT. "Tension et équilibre dans les petites communautés d'occidentaux à Constantinople: L'exemple

- des Catalans au xv^e siècle”. In: *Migrations et diaspores méditerranéennes (x^e-xv^e siècles)*. Actes du Colloque de Conques (October 1999), Publications de la Sorbonne, Paris 2002, pp. 97-103; Daniel DURAN I DUELT. “Els catalans i els mallorquins...”; Daniel DURAN I DUELT. “El comercio entre España y Bizancio en los siglos XIII al XV”. In: *Bizancio y la Península Ibérica. De la antigüedad tardía a la Edad Moderna*. Edited by Inmaculada Pérez Martín and Pedro Bádenas de la Peña. CSIC, Madrid 2004, pp. 323-347.
- [146] Daniel DURAN I DUELT. “Els mallorquins a la Romania...”, pp. 241, 243-245 and 249; Manuel J. PELÁEZ. *Catalunya després de la guerra civil...*, p. 162; Maria Teresa FERRER I MALLOL. “El comerç català a Andalusia...”, pp. 302 and 319-320. Cf. insurance for Constantinople dating from 1496 in AHPB (Arxiu Històric de Protocols de Barcelona), Pere Triter, Llibre 6 d’assegurances, f. 90r and f. 127v-128r.
- [147] Catherine OTTEN-FROUX. “Chypre...”, pp. 131-135; Josep Maria MADURELL I MARIMON and Arcadi GARCIA I SANZ. *Comandas...*, doc. 99; Arcadi GARCIA I SANZ and Maria Teresa FERRER I MALLOL. *Assegurances...*, doc. 52; Josep Maria MADURELL I MARIMON. “Contabilidad de una compañía mercantil trescentista...”; Josep PLANA I BORRÀS. “The accounts of Joan Benet’s trading venture from Barcelona to Famagusta: 1343”. *Epeteris* (Nicosia), no. XIX (1992), pp. 105-168; Víctor HURTADO. *Llibre de deutes, trameses i rebudes de Jaume de Mitjavila i companyia (1345-1378)*. CSIC. Institució Milà i Fontanals, Barcelona 2005. Cf. also Damien COULON. “La Corona de Aragón y los mercados...”, p. 293; Anthony LUTTRELL. “Notes on Cyprus and Aragon: 1306-1386”. *Epeteris tou Kentrou Epistemonikon Ereunon (EKEE)* (Nicosia), no. 18 (1991), pp. 129-136; Laura BALLETO. “Presenze catalane nell’isola di Cipro al tempo di Giacomo d’Aragona”. *Medioevo. Saggi e Rassegne* (Càller), no. 20 (1995), pp. 39-59.
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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Maria Teresa Ferrer has been research professor at the Institució Milà i Fontanals of Barcelona (CSIC) and director of the magazine "Anuario de Estudios Medievales" until 2010. She is a member emeritus of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans. She has studied the 14th century Catalan-Aragon Crown: trade, privateering and piracy, but also international political relations. Now she is director of a project to the IEC for the publication and study of the international treaties of Catalonia and after of Crown of Aragon. She has also handled the defense organization and the Valencian frontier with Islam and the Islamic minority of the Crown of Aragon. She also studied some institutions, like the medieval *Generalitat* (executive commission elected by the *Corts*).