
*Regulation and Group-Consciousness in the Later History of London's Italian Merchant Colonies**

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Studies of the character and organization of Italian merchant colonies outside of Italy in the later middle ages appear to reveal two distinctive features. In the first place these colonies, arranged into "nations" under consular jurisdiction, emerge, perhaps not unexpectedly, as closed ethnic and social enclaves independent, to varying degrees, of the host society. Secondly, the overseas communities have been presented as training grounds where young men acquired both the financial resources and also the business and political education which were to be the foundations of their later and Italian careers. In short, the expatriate medieval Italian merchant has been portrayed as both unassimilated and transient.¹

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¹ See, for example, Ugo Tucci, "The Psychology of the Venetian Merchant in the Sixteenth Century", in J.R. HALE (ed.), *Renaissance Venice* (London, 1973), pp. 346-78; *Statuti delle colonie fiorentine all'estero*, ed. G. MASI (Milan, 1941); *Libro della comunità dei mercanti lucchesi in Bruges*, ed. E. LAZZARESCHI (Milan 1947), pp. xv-xxxix; L. MIROT, "La colonie lucquoise à Paris du XIII^e au XV^e siècle, son origine — son

From the later decades of the fifteenth century, against the background of a changing pattern of trading and political relationships, there are some indications that Italian merchants were no longer conforming to the traditional model. In Spain, Ruth Pike has described how a hispanized Genoese community, intermarried with the native nobility, was able during the sixteenth century to take advantage of the economic opportunities presented by the discovery of America.² There are suggestions that Italian merchants in France were showing a similar capacity for adjustment. Richard Goldthwaite, for example, has argued that, as Florentine firms in Lyon came to turn their attentions ever more exclusively to the financial affairs of the French monarchy, many Lyonnais Florentines became absorbed into the French nobility.³ For religious reasons, Geneva became the centre of a Lucchese mercantile community which, gradually, was to cut ties with its native city.⁴ And in England, historians have implicitly testified to a parallel movement with emphasis given to the careers of men like Gherardo Canigiani, Cristoforo Ambruogi and Horatio Palavicino.⁵

In response to the parochial preoccupations, and indeed the

développement — sa décadence", in *Etudes lucquoises* (Paris, 1930), pp. 1-38; S.L. THRUPP, "Aliens in and around London in the Fifteenth Century", in A.E.J. HOLLAENDER and W. KELLAWAY (eds.), *Studies in London History Presented to Philip Edmund Jones* (London, 1969), pp. 251-272.

² R. PIKE, *Enterprise and Adventure: The Genoese in Seville and the Opening of the New World* (New York, 1966).

³ R.A. GOLDTHWAITE, *Private Wealth in Renaissance Florence: A Study of Four Families* (Princeton, 1968), pp. 240-2.

⁴ MICHELE LUZZATI, "La prima generazione dei Burlamacchi a Ginevra", *Actum Luce: Rivista di studi lucchesi*, Anno V, N. 1-2 (1976), pp. 9-34. The Turrettini of Lucca returned symbolically to their native city after 500 years of exile only in 1978; *La Nazione: Cronaca di Lucca*, Wednesday 29 March 1978; *I Turrettini fra Lucca e Ginevra*, ed. GINO ARRIGHI (Lucca, 1978). I wish to thank Dr. Marco Paoli of the Biblioteca Statale di Lucca for sending me the latter reference.

⁵ See C.L. SCOFIELD, *The Life and Reign of Edward IV*, 2 vols. (London, 1923), II, pp. 420-8; A.A. RUDDOCK, *Italian Merchants and Shipping in Southampton, 1270-1600* (Southampton, 1951), pp. 183-5; L. STONE, *An Elizabethan: Sir Horatio Palavicino* (Oxford, 1956).

alleged ignorance of their northern counterparts, Italian scholars have recently tended to reassert the essential Italian base of companies and of individuals operating beyond the Alps. The Pisan historian Michele Luzzati, in a series of excellent biographical articles on the Buonvisi of Lucca written for the *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*,⁶ has stressed the continued rôle of the senior member of a family business enterprise, resident at home as the focus of unity and source of leadership. For Luzzati, only the partial evidence available to foreign historians has permitted the distant branches of a firm to be depicted without roots, and as autonomous of any central organization.

The above survey raises two problems which are clearly distinct, and yet complementary. The first relates to how far the young Italian merchant despatched northward in the sixteenth century remained faithful to the traditional ethos. The second concerns the geographical location of power and patterns of control. The present paper is written in the belief that the treatment of these two issues in conjunction offers some contribution to an understanding of the perennial problem of Italian commercial decline, and is helpful in resolving some of the tensions inherent in past studies of Italian merchant communities in northern Europe. The London communities examined here are clearly atypical in certain respects, but seem to me generally to illustrate trends of wider applicability.

I

Sociologists have produced sophisticated definitions of "assimilation" which require the detection of a large number of subprocesses.⁷ In practice, there is little enough difficulty in extracting from the Italian colonies in Tudor London examples

⁶ *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. xv (Rome, 1972), p. 289 ff.

⁷ See particularly, MILTON M. GORDON, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins* (Oxford, 1964).

of men who conform to the medieval image of the unassimilated and transient merchant. Such a figure was the Lucchese, Giovan Paolo Gigli, who, returning home in the early years of the sixteenth century, built the palace in the Piazza di S. Giusto with the wealth acquired during his English sojourn.⁸ Other clear examples are provided by Lorenzo Pasqualigo, returning to Venice in 1519 as a very wealthy man having completed twenty-two years service in London,⁹ and by Antonio Vivaldi, who, it was claimed, had amassed a fortune of more than £ 20,000 before leaving England in 1535 on the threshold of a conventional career in his native Genoa.¹⁰ Nor is it difficult, in individual cases, to find other examples of Italian merchants with a manifest ambition to achieve local acceptance and permanency. Attention might be drawn here to the well-documented career of Sir Horatio Palavicino. Yet to transform a multitude of biographical details into a meaningful synthesis depends on a model of assimilation which is peculiarly elusive.

Since the process of assimilation is normally associated with a high incidence of inter-marriage, marriage policies appear to offer the most useful index if handled cautiously. Moreover such evidence is readily available for the sixteenth century because of the large number of genealogical manuscripts preserved in Italian libraries, and because of the frequent survival of merchant wills both in England and in Italy.

Throughout the first half of the sixteenth century the Italian

⁸ CONTE CESARE SARDI, "Dei mecenati lucchesi nel secolo XVI", *Atti della reale accademia lucchese di scienze, lettere ed arti*, XXI (1882), pp. 550-1; B(iblioteca) S(tatale di) L(ucca), MS, 1008, "Descrizione della famiglia de' Gigli da' una fatta da me Martino di Nicolao Gigli il 1618".

⁹ *C(alendar of) S(tate) P(apers)*, Venetian, II, 1294; Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venezia, MSS. It. Cl. VII, no. 17, Collocazione 8306, GIROLAMO ALESSANDRO CAPELLARI, "Il Campidoglio Veneto", III, fo. 190v.

¹⁰ *L(etters and) P(apers, Foreign and Domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII)*, VIII, 1535(5); IX, 175-6; P.R.O. E.C.P. 714(47). This merchant appears to be the Antonio Vivaldi da Montaldo, for whom see Biblioteca Berio, Genova, m.r. VIII, 4. 2, "Repertorio di famiglie liguri", fo. 272v.

mercantile community in London often must have compassed as many as seventy individuals,¹¹ and the Italian presence probably remained surprisingly large throughout the reign of Elizabeth.¹² Accepting such numbers, there can be no doubt that inter-marriage with the local population was rare and uncharacteristic. The Tudor period witnessed a number of celebrated exceptions, for example the Lucchese Antonio Cavallari,¹³ and the Southampton-based Antonio Guidotti.¹⁴ The list can be extended to include the less familiar figures of Giovanni Battista Boroni of Milan,¹⁵ the Florentine Guido Portinari,¹⁶ and perhaps the Venetian Stefano Fesaunt.¹⁷ The overall total is unlikely to have been impressive.

Conclusions drawn from scattered English sources appear to be supported by the Italian evidence. The eighteenth-century Lucchese genealogist Giuseppe Vincenzo Baroni, for example, provides a useful index of Lucchese wills, which are now preserved in the Archivio Notarile Distrettuale, Lucca.¹⁸ And from Baroni's work it emerges that a certain Ludovico di Nicolao Pinitesi, significantly of a Lucchese family of little contemporary importance, returned to Lucca with a wife taken from her native Brabant.¹⁹ But Pinitesi with his alien wife appears quite unique,

¹¹ M.E. BRATCHEL, "Alien Merchant Communities in London, 1500-1550" (University of Cambridge Ph. D. thesis, 1975), pp. 29-40.

¹² In the absence of a systematic survey, consider the number of Lucchese merchants in London around 1600 that can be gleaned from ELIO BERTINI, *Le grandi famiglie dei mercanti lucchesi* (Lucca, 1976).

¹³ RUDDOCK, *op. cit.*, pp. 128, 183; L.P. I I 1123(61), I II 2055(45), 2137(15), III II 1940, IV II 5120, IX 234, XI 1497, XII II 817; P.R.O. E.C.P. 1260 (30-34).

¹⁴ L.P. VIII 878.

¹⁵ P.R.O. H.C.A. 13/8 fos. 105-8.

¹⁶ P.R.O. E.C.P. 423(1).

¹⁷ P.R.O. PROB. 11/25, 3 Hogen, fos. 13v-14v.

¹⁸ B.S.L. MS. 1176, G. VINCENZO BARONI, "Libro dove si contengono molte note di testamenti di persone nobili e più civili della città di Lucca ricavate da varii Protocolli di Notari i più accreditati dal 1520 fino al 1720".

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, fo. 202v; A(rchivio) N(otarile Distrettuale) L(ucca), "Indice Generale de' Testamenti e Codicilli dal 1348 al 1636", I, fos. 56v, 58v, 107r; B.S.L. MS. 1126, G.V.

indeed examples of Lucchese merchants marrying outside of a relatively small group of Lucchese families are hardly more plentiful. Of course, no-one would wish to argue too forcefully about the activities of merchants resident overseas on the evidence of wills drawn up in Italy. But the almost total silence of Italian sources on the issue of inter-marriage in conjunction with the paucity of the English evidence seems significant. The importance of Ludovico Pinitesi is less that, unlike his compatriot Antonio Cavallari,²⁰ in returning to Lucca he doubly flouted conventions, but rather as a warning against simplistically seizing even the limited evidence of English marriages as unambiguous evidence of settlement. It was by no means certain that a wife's cultural background and ties would prevail over those of the husband. Unless supported by further evidence, even the occasional instance of inter-marriage offers very imperfect proof of assimilation.

If there are few cases of Italian merchants marrying English women, a number of alternatives remained open. Marriages might take place within the Italian communities themselves, as undoubtedly occurred in the larger Italian colony in the Low Countries. That in-marriages are not necessarily inconsistent with a qualified pattern of assimilation is well testified to by the modern American experience.²¹ And it is not difficult to see how a small number of unmarried Italian women of the right families may have been present in sixteenth-century London. Perhaps this is the significance of the accusation against "Casuelus Spynell", who found himself in trouble for living in forni-

BARONI, "Notizie genealogiche delle famiglie lucchesi", fos. 136r-149v. Ludovico Pinitesi in fact died in Lyon, no doubt there involved in a new commercial enterprise.

²⁰ There is no mention of the heirs of Antonio (di Rinaldo?) Cavallari in the Lucchese records; B.S.L. MS. 1109, BARONI, "Notizie genealogiche", fos. 488v-496r.

²¹ RUBY JO REEVES KENNEDY, "Single or Triple Melting-Pot? Intermarriage Trends in New Haven, 1870-1940", *American Journal of Sociology*, XLIX (1944), pp. 331-9; "Single or Triple Melting-Pot? Intermarriage in New Haven, 1870-1950", *ibid.*, LVIII (1952), pp. 56-9.

cation with "Maria Savage".²² But the size and nature of the London mercantile communities preclude the possibility of endogamy amongst expatriots on any meaningful scale.

Italian merchants living with their Italian-born wives may have been almost as unusual in Tudor London as locally contracted Italian marriages. This is not to claim that the London communities consisted entirely of resolute bachelors. Some, like Francesco di Francesco Guinigi, might be young men betrothed in Italy but undertaking their training in London before returning to a more settled, and married, life in Lucca.²³ At least one merchant, Vittorio Compagni of Volterra, appears to have delayed until he was more than fifty years old before returning to Lucchese citizenship and a Lucchese bride.²⁴ Others, by contrast, like Lorenzo di Paolo Buonvisi, were released from marriage ties and enabled to pursue a more permanent business career in London by the premature death, in Italy, of their wives.²⁵ And a large number of London's more transitory visitors must have left their wives behind them. The Lucchese records show that

²² London Guildhall MS. 9168/5, London Commissary Court, Act Books, fo. 42v. The entry, on several counts, is clearly too obscure to draw firm conclusions. But Spinola was certainly involved in London in business transactions with a certain Sebastiano Salvago; P.R.O. E.C.P. 571(3). And the case involves fornication rather than adultery.

²³ A.N.L. Testamenti ser Benedetto Franciotti, vol. II, fos. 220r-225r. For the affairs of Francesco Guinigi's London company after his return to Lucca, see A.S.L., Corte dei mercanti, no. 186, Cause civili (1515), fos. 2 ff, 334 ff; no. 187, Cause civili (1517), fos. 26 ff., 97 ff., 170 ff. and *passim*; A.S.L. Notarile, 1519, ser Michele di Giovanni da Momnio, fos. 242r-249v; 1789, ser Lazzaro Franchi, fos. 45r-v, 81 ff.; 1929, ser Giuseppe Piscilla, fos. 91r-92r, 130r-132r.

²⁴ A.S.L. S.M.C. MS. 189, GHERARDO BURLAMACCHI, "Delle famiglie di Lucca", fo. 64v. Burlamacchi wrote c. 1590, and his figures are sometimes suspect. But for general confirmation, see B.S.L. MS. 1110, BARONI, *op. cit.*, fo. 452 ff.; Biblioteca Guarnacci, Volterra, MS. 5888, CURZIO INGHIRAMI, "Alberi di genealogia di famiglie volterranne", fo. 7r; Biblioteca Guarnacci, Archivio Maffei, "Alberi genealogici", no. II, vol. I, pp. 64-5. The Lucchese Archives provide a very full record of Compagni's activities both in London and in Lucca.

²⁵ A.N.L. Testamenti ser Pietro Piscilla, fos. 274r-276v; LUZZATI, *Dizionario biografico*, vol. xv, pp. 335-9.

even senior men who were deeply committed to political affairs at home might absent themselves to spend periods of uncertain length in the colonies.²⁶ The evidence of Italian wills drawn up in England is seldom explicit, but there are strong indications in many instances that the testator has felt the call of death far from home and family.²⁷

Evidence certainly survives from both the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries that a minority of Italian merchants were accompanied in their overseas ventures by their wives.²⁸ The example of Horatio Palavicino, with his alien-born (though non-Italian) wife, shows that such primary relationships might not be prejudicial to aspirations of acceptance into the life of an English country-gentleman. But the surviving biographical details for the London communities indicate otherwise. The fifteenth-century Lucchese merchant, Carlo Gigli, whose family seem to have left their native city for political reasons, might, with Camilla Cagnoli his wife, prefer to retain his northern base even after the restoration of a more agreeable regime at home.²⁹ Other members of the Gigli family returned to Lucca when it became possible to do so, and the example of Antonio Vivaldi, long resident in London for reasons of commercial gain,³⁰ suggests that the small group of merchants resident in London with their

²⁶ A.S.L. Corte dei mercanti, no. 19, Libro di consigli (1520-1538), fos. 90r, 182r-v, 206v, 211v, 222r, 226v.

²⁷ See particularly P.R.O. PROB. 11/17, 5 Fetiplace, fo. 33v; PROB. 11/29, 27 Spert, fos. 209r-v; London Guildhall MS. 9171/6, London Commissary Court, Reg. Wilde (1467-83), fo. 68v; 9171/8, Reg. Harvy (1489-1502), fo. 50r; 9171/10, Reg. Tunstall (1522-39), fos. 60r-v.

²⁸ *Libro della comunità dei mercanti lucchesi*, ed. LAZZARESCHI, p. 141; BERTINI, *Le grandi famiglie*, p. 131; LUZZATI, *La prima generazione dei lucchesi a Ginevra*, pp. 15-16; London Guildhall MS. 9171/5, London Commissary Court, Reg. Sharp (1449-66), fos. 376Av-377r; Lambeth Palace Library, Wills: Stafford, fo. 168v.

²⁹ B.S.L. MS. 1008, "Descrizione della famiglia de' Gigli"; London Guildhall MS. 9171/5, fos. 376Av-377r; GIROLAMO TOMMASI, *Sommario della storia di Lucca* (Florence, 1847), pp. 293-329.

³⁰ L.P. VIII 1158(5), IX 175-6.

families were often as anxious to return to native climes as their unmarried compatriots.

Insofar as marriage patterns offer a guide to assimilation, the message from the London evidence is clear and unambiguous. The Italian merchant colonies in London were essentially communities of bachelor uncles, with a constant infusion of younger men at the beginning of their commercial and political careers. As such, these enclaves were peculiarly distinct from the host society. There are abundant indications that this basic picture remains true for the whole of the sixteenth century, and may be applied indiscriminately to members of all the Italian "nations"

In these circumstances, some Italian merchants in London, and most notably Antonio Buonvisi, found companionship in male friendships generated in the very international world of sixteenth-century scholarship.³¹ Others preferred to associate with other men's wives,³² whilst the lavish bequests to specific women servants which characterize some Italian wills,³³ together with more particular evidence, testify to the fact that English mistresses were rather less exceptional than English wives. There is information concerning a number of illegitimate children born of such unions, and the subsequent history of these children is extraordinarily interesting.

We take two examples. The first is that of Antonio Duodo, the illegitimate son of the Venetian merchant, Nicolò Duodo, and born of an Englishwoman, Margaret Cheveley, in the parish of Hackney.³⁴ Nicolò Duodo seems to have left England soon after 1519, and thereafter Antonio represented his father's business

³¹ R.W. CHAMBERS, *Thomas More* (London, 1942), pp. 195-6, 253, 292, 330, 335, 347; J. McCONICA, *English Humanists and Reformation Politics under Henry VIII and Edward VI* (Oxford, 1965), pp. 271-2; PIERO REBORA, "San Tommaso Moro e l'Italia" in *Civiltà italiana e civiltà inglese* (Florence, 1936), pp. 51-82.

³² L.P. vi 1701; P.R.O. E.C.P. 541(90), 1051(40-3).

³³ See P.R.O. PROB. 11/34, 19 Bucke, fos. 145v-146r.

³⁴ London Corporation Record Office, Journals of the Common Council, vol. 12, (1518-26), fo. 6.

interests until he also departed the realm.³⁵ The second example is that of Germain Cioll, who was not, as has been claimed, a Spanish merchant left over from the entourage of Philip II,³⁶ but was almost certainly the illegitimate son of the Pisan merchant, Benedetto di Ciolo.³⁷ Germain was baptised in the church of Kentish Town and was there brought up by an English couple until, at the age of three he was transferred, for a period of perhaps eight years to a house in Waltham Cross. His childhood years completed, Germain Cioll was received back into the Italian community, where he long served the Lucchese banker Antonio Buonvisi.³⁸ Cioll, himself, later married the daughter of that long-standing associate of the Italian community, Sir John Gresham the elder. But both he and Antonio Duodo illustrate the tendency of the Italian colonies to draw to themselves even their illegitimate scions, some of whom were to return to Italy where they became second-class members of the family clan. There is no reason to suppose that the examples given above are entirely atypical.³⁹ They offer additional proof of the strength of sentiments of group solidarity which clearly permeated the London communities.

³⁵ L.P. III II 1870, VI 1702; P.R.O. E.C.P. 621(35-7).

³⁶ J.W. BURGON, *The Life and Times of Sir Thomas Gresham, Knt. Founder of the Royal Exchange*, 2 vols. (London, n.d.), I, pp. 419-20; C.W.F. GOSS, *Crosby Hall: A Chapter in the History of London* (London, 1908), p. 61 ff.

³⁷ The information on which this conclusion is based would require an essay of considerable length. The reader is referred to the following: Archivio di Stato, Pisa, Archivio del Comune di Pisa, Divisione C, 40, Anziani: Carte riguardanti affari diversi 1496-1505, 1st folder entitled Anziani: Carte diverse 1496-1505, I; Bishopsgate Foundation & Institute of London MSS. Crosby Hall Deeds, no. 3; P.R.O. E.C.P. 624(45), 766(11).

³⁸ A.S.L. Archivio Buonvisi, part I, no. 64; P.R.O. Inquisitions post mortem, C142/98, no. 35; C142/121, no. 117.

³⁹ For other possible English examples, see A.N.L. Testamenti ser Benedetto Franciotti, vol. II, fos. 220r-225r; P.R.O. PROB. 11/30, 24 Pynnyng, fos. 190r-191r. Examples can certainly be multiplied if we look beyond London to other centres of Italian trade in western Europe, though the pattern of behaviour seems to have differed in the East: TUCCI, *art. cit.*, p. 377, note 87.

II

Familial relationships, in their complexity, present the surest guide to assimilation. Other evidence is too often deceptive. No conclusions, for example, should be drawn from the large number of Italian merchants who became denizens in the Tudor period. The Imperial Ambassador, Eustace Chapuys, was undoubtedly right in 1544 when he dismissed letters of denization as a mere matter of convenience in no way compromising natural allegiances.⁴⁰ They served only to regularize a state of protracted residence. Similarly, the frequent bequests to family and institutions in Italy made by Italian merchants dying in London hardly constitute certain evidence of a sojourner mentality. Modern Irish-Americans might reveal sentimental attachments but in no way endanger their essential American identity by means of similar gifts to political causes in contemporary Ireland. Some indications of attachment, however, are rather more revealing.

Firstly, even merchants resident in London throughout their mercantile careers might continue to possess an extensive landed inheritance in Italy. This is true, for example, of Antonio Buonvisi who, upon the division of his father's property in 1520, received the Camaiore lands,⁴¹ though these were always to be administered by his brothers in Lucca.⁴² Admittedly, landed property in Italy might be counter-balanced by landed investments in England. The Venetian, Stefano Fesaunt, for example,

⁴⁰ P.R.O. Transcripts from Vienna, 31/18/3/2, fo. 8r.

⁴¹ B.S.L. MS. 3380, "Terrilogio ove sono notati li beni stabili che possedere Benedetto Buonvisi"; A.S.L. Estimo 77, fos. 20r, 62r, Estimo 189, part I, fos. 36r-39v, 203r-205v, 403r-405v; Archivio Comunale, Camaiore, Estimo 15, fos. 24r-v; Estimo 17, fos. 2r-v, 195v, 206r-v, 278r-v, 285r-v, 370r-v, 375r-v, 402r-v.

⁴² A.S.L. Archivio Buonvisi, part I, no. 71, "Libro de' renditori di Antonio Buonvisi di grano vino olio"; A.S.L. Notarile, 2069, ser Lorenzo Nicolai, 15 June 1540; 2626, ser Vincenzo Diversi, fos. 862r-863r; 2931, ser Bartolomeo Del Massaio, fos. 725r-726r; 3259, ser Nicolao Ciuffarini (1554), fos. 385v-386v; 3343, ser Giovan Batta Barili, fo. 34r; 3395, ser Nicolao Vanni, fo. 201 ff.; 3401, ser Nicolao Vanni (1561) fos. 143v-145v.

held land in Tottenham and Shoreditch.⁴³ Antonio Vivaldi possessed property within London, and Antonio Buonvisi benefitted from the dissolution of the monasteries.⁴⁴ Admittedly, also, the Italian property could be bequeathed to family or institutions at home by a merchant who had firmly established his home in the north.⁴⁵ But, generally, the fact that some of the most important Italian merchants in sixteenth-century London retained large estates in Italy serves to strengthen the image of men with their roots at home, resident in the commercial colonies for reasons of professional necessity.

Secondly, for most of the sixteenth century Italian merchants in London continued to be organized into "nations" under consular jurisdiction. The Lucchese consulate, presumably because of diminishing numbers, seems to have lapsed by 1521.⁴⁶ However, flickering details survive relating to the later history of the Genoese,⁴⁷ Florentine,⁴⁸ and Venetian nations.⁴⁹ Consular organization is significant partly because it reveals, in a particularly pronounced form, the continuing ideal of self-help and limited autonomy especially in the settlement of commercial disputes.⁵⁰ It is more significant as an indicator of the way in which the Italian communities in London remained anchored to the political unit in Italy. Lazzareschi has demonstrated this for the Lucchese nation in medieval Bruges. That little has changed

⁴³ P.R.O. PROB. 11/25, 3 Hogen, fos. 13v-14v.

⁴⁴ L.P. VII 944, 1671; XVII 881(17); XVIII II 231.

⁴⁵ P.R.O. PROB. 11/25, 3 Hogen, fos. 13v-14v.

⁴⁶ A.S.L. Archivio de' Nobili, Pergamene, 8 July 1484, 28 March 1485, 9 Nov. 1521.

⁴⁷ L.P. III I 466; P.R.O. E.C.P. 584(41); Archivio di Stato, Genova, *Literarum Archivio Segreto*, 1833, fo. 72; *Atti del notaio Antonio Pastorino*, filza 39, fo. 160.

⁴⁸ *Statuti*, ed. MASI, pp. 165-189; L. EINSTEIN, *The Italian Renaissance in England* (New York, 1902), pp. 194-5; C. ROTH, "England and the last Florentine Republic", *English Historical Review*, XL (1925), pp. 174-95; L.P. IV III 6499, 6774.

⁴⁹ C.S.P. *Venetian*, see particularly IV 884; TUCCI, *art. cit.*, p. 348; Archivio di Stato, Venezia, *Cinque savi alla mercanzia*, reg. 138, fo. 166v.

⁵⁰ For a fuller discussion of these issues, see BRATCHEL, *Alien Merchant Communities*, pp. 312-24.

by the sixteenth century is suggested not only by the intentions expressed in the Florentine statutes of 1513,⁵¹ but by the quiet supervision of affairs from Italy as shown in the records of the Florentine *Tribunali di Mercanzia*.⁵² Again we are confronted with evidence not merely of imperfect structural assimilation but of groups which are, in many senses, a geographical extension of the Italian city-state.

The Italian merchants in London might form some personal and cultural relationships with their English neighbours. They might sometimes act in business with English merchants, and become godfathers to their children. The measure of their separateness lies less in their more natural tendency to live and worship apart, but in a host of suggestive remains. Again and again the Italian merchant appears who is in England "for the time being"; recurrently in wills drawn up for sick men in London there is the plain hope, against present indications, of a proper burial in Italy. Perhaps more revealing still is the will of Francesco di Francesco Guinigi. Guinigi clearly wishes to be buried in the Guinigi chapel in the church of S. Francesco in Lucca; he accepts the possibility of death in London, and of burial alongside his brother Tommaso in the church of the Austin Friars; but wherever he should die, the masses for his soul must be said where they would best be heard — in Lucca.⁵³ It is by means of "qualitative" evidence such as this that the character of the London communities is to be understood. A mentality emerges from cumulative impressions which are not easily reduced to the statistical tables favoured by social historians. Maybe the impressions are a better guide. And they show the sixteenth-century colonies to be as unassimilated and transient as their medieval predecessors. There are exceptional individuals,

⁵¹ MASI, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-189.

⁵² A(rchivio di) S(tato), F(irenze), *Tribunali di mercanzia*, 11316, *Libro di lettere* (1546-8), *passim*.

⁵³ A.N.L. *Testamenti ser Benedetto Franciotti*, vol. II, fos. 220r-225r.

who have received a good deal of attention, but there were exceptions in previous centuries too.

III

The thesis that Italian merchants in Tudor London were more inclined than their predecessors to submerge their identity in their adopted environment betokens an unfamiliarity with the essential English and, especially, Italian sources. More than this, the neglect, by foreign historians, of the wealth of material preserved in Italian archives has resulted, according to Luzzati, in fundamental misconceptions about the whole nature of international Italian business structures. The justice of such strictures is clear. Not only are such standard works as Denucé's study of the Italian presence in Antwerp permeated with errors resulting from an innocence of Italian sources,⁵⁴ but little attempt has been made by more recent scholars to remedy this failing.⁵⁵ Ironically, a fuller knowledge of the kind of evidence upon which future studies of company structure should be based seems, in general, to support the conclusions drawn, albeit from imperfect data, by the northern historians here criticized.

During the early sixteenth century, expanding trade and the financial needs of government, the latter closely connected with Henry VIII's foreign policy, presented new opportunities to Italian companies represented in England. This situation has parallels in past ages. Indeed the rôle of Italian merchants as Crown bankers under the Tudors may be unfavourably compared with that of their precursors in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. The difference lies in the fact that, whereas in the High Middle Ages Italian commercial activity in

⁵⁴ J. DENUCÉ, *Italiaansche Koopmansgeslachten te Antwerpen in de XVIe-XVIIIe Eeuwen* (Mechelen/Amsterdam, 1934).

⁵⁵ For example, R.W. KAEUPER, *Bankers to the Crown: The Riccardi of Lucca and Edward I* (Princeton, 1973); F. BAYARD, "Les Bonvisi, marchands banquiers à Lyon, 1575-1629", *Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, 26 (1971), pp. 1234-69.

England was manifestly an off-shoot of Italian economic expansionism, in the sixteenth century the importance of Italian merchants in northern Europe was based on superior techniques at a time of difficulties and shrinking horizons at home.

Political and economic developments both in Italy and in England combined to increase the relative importance of London companies vis-à-vis their commercial and familial connexions in Italy. The traditional pattern whereby Italian firms were represented in London by salaried employees, and later by junior partners, was transformed in a number of important instances. A man like Antonio Buonvisi, eldest surviving son of the great Lucchese merchant and banker Benedetto, and natural *capostipite* after the death, in rapid succession, of his father and elder brother, made the conscious and rational decision to continue to direct his affairs from London. His cousin, Lorenzo, eldest son of Paolo di Lorenzo Buonvisi, did likewise. It was not unknown for fourteenth-century companies to have their centre outside of Italy,⁵⁶ yet such a move was specially favoured by sixteenth-century realities. I have developed this theme at some length elsewhere.⁵⁷ Details there presented should be modified in the light of continuing research,⁵⁸ and as Ehrenberg's seminal work⁵⁹ becomes ever more suspect as a guide to Italian activity in northern Europe. But the basic thesis is only strengthened with the uncovering of new evidence.

The Buonvisi of Lucca, in the middle decades of the sixteenth century, offer an example *par excellence* of a network of family

⁵⁶ CHRISTINE MEEK, "The Trade and Industry of Lucca in the Fourteenth Century", in T.W. MOODY (ed.), *Historical Studies: Papers read before the Irish Conference of Historians*, vi (Dublin, 2-5 June 1965), p. 55.

⁵⁷ M.E. BRATCHEL, "Italian Merchant Organization and Business Relationships in Early Tudor London", *Journal of European Economic History*, 7 (1978), pp. 5-32.

⁵⁸ More particularly, I am currently preparing for the Italian journal *Actum Luce* a more detailed examination of the Buonvisi commercial connexion with northern Europe.

⁵⁹ R. EHRENBURG, *Capital and Finance in the Age of the Renaissance: A Study of the Fuggers and their Connections* (London, 1928).

partnerships within which the northern branches occupy a place of paramount importance, and within which enterprise and direction are often clearly the prerogative of the northern representatives. The history of the Buonvisi is only now being painstakingly compiled from sources scattered throughout Italy from Genoa to Lecce, and from material collected from beyond the Alps. From this research, the importance of Antonio Buonvisi, in London, as merchant and banker emerges ever more forcefully. Much remains obscure about the London company after 1510,⁶⁰ but this does not include the overriding authority in London of Antonio himself. Moreover, as Luzzati has shown,⁶¹ Antonio was "principaliter nominatus" of the Lyon company, both during his lifetime and afterwards, for a period of 42 years. And, at least by 1546, the Buonvisi company in the Low Countries was entitled "Antonio Buonvisi, Ludovico Buonvisi, Nicolao Diodati and their company of Antwerp".⁶² By contrast, Antonio's brothers in Lucca, however important politically and as landowners, are shadowy figures in their commercial and financial undertakings. There are scattered references to the bank in Lucca, and to the silk company there. We know something of the business connexions of Martino and Ludovico Buonvisi in Lucca with Naples and Sicily; of their rôle as importers of cheese and grain; of their rôle as distributors of grain in famine years.⁶³ Martino and Ludovico, as merchants, were clearly far

⁶⁰ Particularly helpful in unravelling the earlier affairs of the Buonvisi in England are a series of wills made by Benedetto di Lorenzo: A.N.L. Testamenti ser Benedetto Francjotti, vol. I, fos. 248v-249v, 520v-523v; vol. II, fos. 119r-121r, 212r-213r, 309r-313r, 344r-349v.

⁶¹ M. LUZZATI, "Buonvisi, Antonio", in *Dizionario biografico*, vol. xv, pp. 295-9.

⁶² L.P. XIX I 716(14).

⁶³ P.R.O. H.C.A. 3/2, fo. 262; A.S.L. Notarile, 2064, ser Lorenzo Nicolai, 22 June 1531. A.S.L. Corte dei mercanti, no. 202, Cause civili (1528), fo. 244v ff.; no. 206, fos. 2r ff., 47r ff.; Notarile, 1966, ser Francesco Turrettini, fos. 414r, 423v-431v. A.S.L. Potestà di Lucca, 2117, Curia Civile, fo. 154v; Notarile, 2286, ser Raffaele Saladini, 22 May-7 July 1528; 2340, ser Bartolomeo Barsocchini, 28 May 1528. For more miscellaneous details, see A.S.L. Corte dei mercanti, no. 197, Cause civili (1524), fos. 61v ff., 231v ff.; no. 202, Cause civili (1528), fos. 52r ff., 67v, 112r ff., 240r ff.; no. 206, Cause

more than investors in and agents for the enterprises of their brother Antonio. Martino, himself, was a very wealthy man.⁶⁴ But it is significant that whereas the patrimony of Ludovico Buonvisi in 1549, just before his death, was valued at 31,200 scudi, Luzzati conservatively estimates at 350,000 scudi Antonio's wealth at the time of his own death in 1558.⁶⁵

The northern connexions of the Florentine firm of Frescobaldi remain more obscure. Certainly, Ehrenberg's concept of a firm that suddenly materializes in Bruges in the 1470s is unhelpful.⁶⁶ We know that in 1461 a number of Florentine merchants were giving money *in accomandigia* to Giovanni di Niccolò Frescobaldi in London.⁶⁷ A few years later, Giovanni's brother was receiving similar investments for banking in Florence,⁶⁸ whilst Filippo di Giovanni was one of the *consiglieri* of the Florentine nation in London in 1511.⁶⁹ Meanwhile, Girolamo (di Leonardo?) Frescobaldi appears in London by 1469;⁷⁰ both Girolamo and Piero di Leonardo seem to have been in Lucca in the winter of 1475;⁷¹ and Piero, himself, was resident in London at the beginning of Richard III's reign.⁷² The evidence is fragile,⁷³ but my present inclination is to see the history of the

civili (1530), fos. 126r, 218r ff., 263r ff.; no. 230, Cause civili (1545); fo. 162r ff.; Notarile, 1966, ser Francesco Turretini, fo. 392v. Both Martino and Ludovico played an active, but apparently decreasing, part in the affairs of the Corte dei mercanti in Lucca: A.S.L. Corte dei mercanti, no. 19, Libro di consigli (1520-38), *passim*.

⁶⁴ MEEK, *art. cit.*, p. 40.

⁶⁵ LUZZATI, *art. cit.*, pp. 298, 342.

⁶⁶ EHRENBURG, *op. cit.*, pp. 199-200.

⁶⁷ A.S.F. Tribunali di mercanzia, 10831, Libro di accomandite (1445-1531), fo. 46r.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, fo. 64r.

⁶⁹ MASI, *op. cit.*, pp. 187-8.

⁷⁰ P.R.O. Exchequer K.R., Lay Subsidies, E179/144/67.

⁷¹ A.S.L. Corte dei mercanti, no. 99, Libro de' sensali (1475-82), fos. 12r-v.

⁷² P.R.O. Exchequer K.R., Lay Subsidies, E179/242/25, m. 9v.

⁷³ The above description depends on a number of assumptions regarding identity, which is always perilous. The history of the Buonvisi, for example, must be substantially modified in the light of my recent discovery that there were two men named Nicolao Buonvisi in London at the beginning of the sixteenth century: A.S.L. Notarile, 1789, ser Lazzaro Franchi, fos. 33r-v.

Frescobaldi as closely paralleling that of the Buonvisi. Girolamo, and later Piero, travelled northwards to join a company established by elder relatives. Piero eventually returned to join his brother Stoldo in Florence,⁷⁴ whilst Girolamo remained in northern Europe and became, like Antonio Buonvisi, an important figure in the mercantile and banking world. The picture is not, as Ehrenberg suggested, one of isolation, but rather of the pre-eminence of the northern establishment within a widely scattered nexus of familial ties.

Of course there are exceptions. The importance of Horatio Palavicino in the 1560s stemmed from the control, by his father in Genoa, of the distribution of papal alum. Many companies throughout the sixteenth century continue to be represented in London by factors or junior partners, and increasingly by commission agents. But continuing biographical studies will undoubtedly emphasize not only the obvious importance of the northern centres within the schema of Italian business connexions, but also that, increasingly, affairs came to be directed from the new centres of economic vitality. A man like Antonio Vivaldi might eventually return to land and political office in his native Genoa, but he does so towards the end of his business career, and leaving trusted agents behind him at the real sources of his banking activity.

If Luzzati had argued only that political office, land and *fidecommessi* in Italy offered the ultimate security to Italian merchant families at a time of economic crisis, then his thesis would be unexceptionable. But his emphasis on Italy as the dynamic centre, "la centrale organizzativa",⁷⁵ appears, at least in the instances here considered, misconceived. Certainly the evidence ill-fits the organization that Luzzati specifically examines. The great period of the Buonvisi bank was when Antonio, in com-

⁷⁴ A.S.F. Tribunale di mercanzia, 10831, Libro di accomandite (1445-1531), fo. 146v; 334, Deliberazioni (1496-7), *passim*.

⁷⁵ LUZZATI, *art. cit.*, pp. 305, 308-9, 311, and *passim*.

pany with a succession of younger relatives, was directing his operations from London, and later from the Low Countries. It is true that later generations of the Buonvisi family returned to Lucca, but they returned to land and to prudent investments in *accomandita*. The decline of Buonvisi involvement in international finance coincided with the return from France of Bernardino di Martino in 1587. Later enterprises ended in the bankruptcy of 1629.

IV

The above conclusions have been drawn largely, though not exclusively, from evidence relating to the fortunes of Italian merchant colonies in sixteenth-century England. The problem arises of how far the behavioural and commercial trends outlined above were a product of peculiarly English conditions. The answer must await the findings of careful local studies, but some wider indications emerge from the material upon which the present paper is based.

The structure of Italian business relationships may be treated briefly. Although Tudor London offered exciting opportunities to the Italian merchant, these were insignificant in comparison with the prospects presented by Antwerp or Lyon.⁷⁶ If it is sometimes possible to speak of the predominance of the London company within a wider framework embracing the Italian establishment, similar and greater openings undoubtedly produced like results elsewhere. Indeed, Girolamo Frescobaldi, after his early career in London, moved to Bruges and later to Antwerp whence he directed his financial empire. And Antonio Buonvisi, himself, for economic, political and religious reasons made the

⁷⁶ J.A. GORIS, *Etudes sur les colonies marchandes méridionales (portugais, espagnols, italiens) à Anvers de 1488 à 1567* (Louvain, 1925); R. GASCON, *Grand commerce et vie urbaine au XVI^e siècle: Lyon et ses marchands*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1971).

move from London to the Low Countries (rather than to Lucca) towards the end of his life.

The question of assimilation is a more complex one. Certainly it would not be difficult to explain how an Italian merchant would find Tudor England a particularly difficult society in which to strike root. London was a less cosmopolitan city than Antwerp, and it is a simple truism that southern Europeans frequently constitute determined ethnic enclaves in modern and essentially Anglo-Saxon communities. From the 1530s there is the central fact of the Reformation. Reformation politics seem to have caused no more than occasional difficulties to Italian merchants resident in England, but this is precisely because they were separate and because they were valued guests. In the enforcement of legislation, the Privy Council drew a very clear distinction between the immigrant community and alien merchants sojourning in the realm.⁷⁷ These factors, together with the assertions of historians working from other centres that by the sixteenth century Italian merchants were rapidly becoming absorbed elsewhere into the host society, might well cause us to regard the English pattern to be distinctive and individualistic.

There are, however, indications to the contrary. These indications arise from two sources, both Lucchese, and must be tested against other Italian models. Firstly, the writings of the sixteenth-century Lucchese patrician Gherardo Burlamacchi⁷⁸ provide a panoramic view of contemporary Lucchese mercantile society. Burlamacchi appears to have been writing in 1590, when in his seventieth year. His interests relate almost exclusively to the sixteenth century, and, though there are a number of errors of detail, in general he appears a reliable guide. From the information processed by Burlamacchi it seems that the image of the London communities, as essentially bachelor societies, tran-

⁷⁷ *L.P.* XIX I 6.

⁷⁸ A.S.L. S.M.C. MS. 189, GHERARDO BURLAMACCHI, "Delle famiglie di Lucca".

sient and unassimilated, might be transposed without hesitation to Lucchese colonies in other commercial centres. This general impression is strengthened by a particular case study of the Buonvisi family and of their business associates, throughout the sixteenth century, in Antwerp, Lyon and elsewhere.

If the Lucchese evidence has a wider relevance, it would appear that in France and the Low Countries, as in England, the attention of historians has been captured by the atypical. If this be so, the explanation of the sojourner mentality should be sought not in the inhospitability of English society and culture, but in the tacitly accepted norms and "canoni non scritti" of the Italian merchant patriciate. Truly, historians, too often, have taken refuge in the convenient vagaries of group characteristics as a regulator of historical processes. But family history is undoubtedly today the most dynamic area of Italian Renaissance scholarship. The continuing importance of family ties and loyalties, the conscious control of marriage and inheritance, need no longer be attested by past rhetoric but can be illustrated from a growing corpus of careful and recent studies.⁷⁹ The London evidence, certainly, and also, in all probability, the northern communities in general, indicate that recent conclusions about Italian families during the Renaissance may be applied even when members of the family are scattered throughout the business centres of Europe.

Of course there are exceptions, but the nature of these exceptions is interesting. In the sixteenth century, a minority of Italian merchants embraced the cause of the Reformation. Their families, after an interval of spirited resistance, do begin to display

⁷⁹ Of particular interest is JAMES C. DAVIS, *A Venetian Family and its Fortune, 1500-1900* (Philadelphia, 1975). See also D.O. HUGHES, "Urban Growth and Family Structure in Medieval Genoa", *Past & Present*, 66 (1975), pp. 3-28; R. BURR LITCHFIELD, "Demographic Characteristics of Florentine Patrician Families, Sixteenth to Nineteenth Centuries", *Journal of Economic History*, xxix (1969), pp. 191-205; F.W. KENT, *Household and Lineage in Renaissance Florence* (Princeton, 1977).

assimilation traits, and to settle permanently in the northern havens of Reform.⁸⁰ In these instances, normal behavioural patterns have clearly been shattered by ideological factors, and by fear of persecution at home. Beyond this, the behaviour of a significant number of Genoese merchants in Iberia may well have been non-conformist.⁸¹ Obvious links, particularly the strong political connexion between Genoa and Spain, may well have produced a rather different situation in this specific arena.

V

Exceptions notwithstanding, the evidence suggests a clear dichotomy of interests. On the one hand, the attractions of northern business centres for the more commercially enterprising are manifest. But if the business interests of sixteenth-century Italians were increasingly focused beyond the Alps, even those who came to direct their affairs from distant centres remained bound fast to Italy by their code of life and through familial loyalties. At least in London, this general point appears valid for members of all the Italian mercantile colonies there represented. Whatever the differences between the mercantile societies of Genoa, Florence, Lucca and Venice, no contrasting patterns emerge in the areas discussed by the present paper.

At the simplest level, this division of interests must have resulted in a series of personal crises at which we can only guess. Antonio Buonvisi, for example, was in London when the death of his father and elder brother, Bernardino, left him as the eldest of four surviving brothers and natural head of the family. With a keen sense of business realities, Antonio determined to remain

⁸⁰ LUZZATI, *Burlamacchi a Ginevra*.

⁸¹ Besides the work of Ruth Pike, cited above, see also VIRGINIA RAU, "Italian Merchants in Portugal in the XVth Century", in *Studi in onore di Armando Sapori*, 2 vols. (Milan, 1957), 1, pp. 715-26.

where he was, leaving his brothers to embark upon the *cursus honorum* and to enjoy the vast landed acquisitions of their father. The decision brought wealth and sacrifices. It determined that Antonio would not marry — which may or may not have coincided with personal inclinations. And, with his younger brothers now firmly entrenched in Lucca, it suggested a life of permanent exile. Of course it is not claimed that conflicts of interest were unique to the sixteenth century. But parallel developments in Italy and in northern Europe tend to institutionalize such conflicts at this time.

Unwilling to assimilate, Italian merchants, at the moment of decision, either go home with their plunder, as did Antonio Vivaldi, or they continue a camp-like existence, however luxurious, in the north, as did Buonvisi himself. In either event, the northern colonies were not self-perpetuating, and the Italian merchants of early Tudor London never acquired the supernatural identity so often attributed to them. The colonies themselves remained dependent on the constant inflow of recruits, and this dried up as the sixteenth century progressed because of a real, if relative, movement in Italy from business enterprise to landed investment which coincides with, and perhaps predates, a period of general economic disruptions and difficulties within the Mediterranean world.

Thus the history of Italian colonies in Tudor London becomes one of progressive decline. Alternative explanations are less convincing. Attention has been drawn to the adoption of a more aggressive policy towards merchant strangers by London merchants in the less prosperous years of the later sixteenth century. Unquestionably this happened, but Italian merchants had survived similar periods of anti-alien sentiment provoked by economic retrenchment in the past. Even more suspect are interpretations based on the view that by 1550 Italian merchants were becoming increasingly dispensable because of the developing business techniques of the native merchant community. In

the world of finance, Sir Thomas Gresham emerges as a lone figure. After his death, in 1579, the English government had to turn again to Italian expertise and experience, which they found in Horatio Palavicino. And it is significant that the one branch of Italian trade that remained firmly in Italian hands throughout most of the sixteenth century was that with the eastern Mediterranean. Many reasons have been proffered,⁸² but among these the superior connexions and organization of the Italians is clearly paramount in explaining why these were able to overcome other difficulties that were common to all traders. A continuing belief in the more sophisticated Italian business techniques has recently been questioned, particularly by German historians. The London experience, and especially the extraordinarily haphazard business arrangements of the north Germans,⁸³ does not lend support to those now preoccupied with northern achievements.

The juxtapositioning of the psychology of sixteenth-century Italian merchants with an examination of contemporary business structure might offer insights into the process of decline as it affected the northern colonies. It also serves to explain the peculiarly ephemeral nature of these communities. Past studies of Italian merchants in Tudor London have emphasized both their importance and their disappearance. In an attempt to resolve the apparent tension, I have drawn attention elsewhere to the concentration on Antwerp of Italian interests, and the handling of English affairs from Antwerp by means of commission merchants.⁸⁴ This must certainly remain an important factor in any explanation of how Italian merchants in England remained of commercial consequence at a time when their numbers were

⁸² See particularly, T.S. WILLAN, "Some Aspects of English Trade with the Levant in the Sixteenth Century", *English Historical Review*, LXX (1955), pp. 399-404; F. BRAUDEL, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, 2 vols. (London, 1972-3), 1, p. 615.

⁸³ BRATCHEL, *Alien Merchant Communities*, pp. 236-48.

⁸⁴ BRATCHEL, *Italian Merchant Organization*, pp. 28-31.

obviously dwindling. But the Antwerp connexion does not adequately account for the transitory importance, on the English scene, of so many Italian companies. The importance must clearly be viewed in terms of the emergence, briefly, of London not as a peripheral business centre but as a dynamic focus (with Bruges/Antwerp) of much Italian activity. The disappearance is not the result of a slow process of assimilation, of which there is little enough evidence. Rather it is a reflection of the fact that, wherever business interests might lie, the leading merchants remained faithful to an Italian patrician mentality. The Italian mercantile republics were no longer able to sustain these communities. The merchants die in exile, or they go home.

The present paper has been concerned with the decline of Italian merchant colonies rather than with the wider problem of what Peter Laven called "positive evasion and gainful retreat" in Italy itself.⁸⁵ But an examination of the former offers some contribution to the wider debate. Firstly, it seems clear that the decline of the merchant colonies in the north was a result rather than a cause of problems at home. Moreover the northern experience throws into doubt the thesis that the Italians were overtaken as others came to learn the mysteries of sophisticated finance. Rather, one should turn to those economic and political developments that gave to the northern and Atlantic colonies their greater relative importance in the sixteenth century. Significantly, Genoese merchants seem to have adapted best to new realities, and did so precisely because, unlike others elsewhere, they were able to identify themselves with Spain. Further, one should turn to the social and economic changes in Italy itself,⁸⁶ which account for far more than the diminishing supply of recruits for the colonies. To bring the argument full circle, Ugo Tucci speaks of a new outlook on the part of the Venetian

⁸⁵ P. LAVEN, *Renaissance Italy, 1464-1534* (London, 1966), p. 89.

⁸⁶ See particularly, B. PULLAN (ed.), *Crisis and Change in the Venetian Economy* (London, 1968).

patriciate which is associated with, but apparently independent of, economic change and decline.⁸⁷ It is to this new outlook that Tucci attributes the disinclination of Venetian nobles in the sixteenth century to serve their commercial apprenticeship in the colonies; perhaps the disinclination is, in part, explained by the knowledge that the colonies now offered less a useful apprenticeship than a business career.

⁸⁷ Tucci, *art. cit.*