

## 5 Market Spaces

To effectively manage their financial transactions with German clients, the banks serving the Curia adopted a nuanced approach, recognizing the distinct commercial significance of key cities such as Nuremberg, Lübeck, Cologne, Mainz, Constance, or Basel rather than treating Germany as a monolithic economic bloc. Each city was evaluated on its individual merits, with a focus on the potential for profit, associated costs, and inherent risks. This strategic assessment guided their decision to either establish their own branch offices in these cities or to forge correspondent relationships with local Italian or German merchants. Consequently, their engagement in each location and their overall business structure were tailored to align with the unique economic attributes of these diverse trading hubs.

### 5.1 Upper Germany

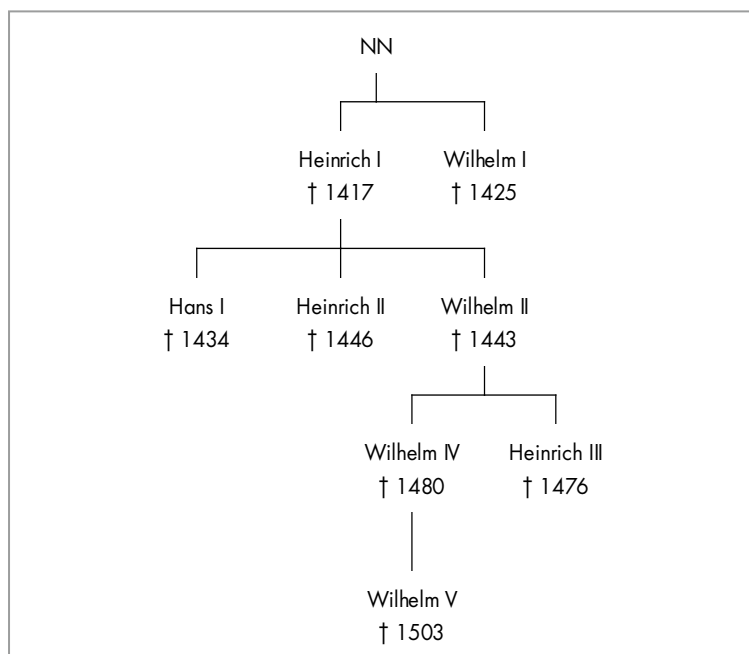
#### 5.1.1 Gozzadini

Gabione di Nanne Gozzadini of Bologna, who headed the Rome office of his family's business network after 1397, followed the Lucchese as depositary of the Apostolic Chamber. In his archival research, Arnold Esch studied this bank closely and published his findings in a series of papers. Among the sources he made available to research, the company agreement, letters, and an instruction sent by Gabione (*ricordo*) to his employees in Rome from the year 1403 are of particular significance.<sup>944</sup> They reveal a strong focus on the development of German payment transactions to the papal court. In comparison to the way the Lucchese organized their German business, the Gozzadini channelled the flow of money above all through Venice, where they had a branch office. Considerations of opening an office in Bruges or of finding a suitable correspondent, however, were never implemented.<sup>945</sup> It is striking that in the few Gozzadini business documents that have survived, Giabone does not even mention a correspondent in either Bruges or London. This is probably because both banking centres appear to have been firmly in the hands of the Alberti, who were evidently disinclined to allow a competitor to enter into business with the Curia.

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<sup>944</sup> Esch (2016), p. 51.

<sup>945</sup> Esch (2016), p. 52 quotes from Bolognese court files Gozzadini's idea of installing a correspondent in Bruges as well.



Family Tree 7 Rummel (simplified)

In the economic area governed by enterprises from Nuremberg, the Gozzadini did not establish branch offices of their own, instead they sought partnerships with the leading German trading companies. In this case, the Rummel company became their most important correspondent. Heinrich I the Rich (c.1340–1417) had received a payout from his brother-in-law Fritz Kress in 1388 and had used these funds to set up a company together with his brother Wilhelm (after 1350–1425, see Family Tree 7).<sup>946</sup> Notwithstanding, the new company continued to cooperate with the Kress in many sectors, among them in the Italian business, which was managed by the Venice-based brothers Hermann and Konrad Kress on behalf of both Nuremberg trading companies.<sup>947</sup>

In Rome, bills of exchange furnished by the Pirckheimers in Nuremberg were also accepted, for they provided the papal depositary with a link to funds from northern Europe, as Johannes Lange still served as the Pirckheimers' representative in Lübeck. In 1401, a case was brought against him concerning a bill of exchange for 20 Lübeck marks, which a cleric from the diocese of Linköping had sent to Prague through him where, however, it was not honoured. In the same year, the Swedish knight Andreas Lung filed a complaint against Lange because his deceased brother had purchased a bill of exchange for 300 marks that was never reimbursed.<sup>948</sup>

<sup>946</sup> Family Tree 7 is based on Schaper (1981).

<sup>947</sup> Stromer (1971), p. 67; Schaper (1981), p. 7; Braunstein (2016), pp. 274–280.

<sup>948</sup> Nordmann (1937), pp. 124–125.

Gabione's instructions to his employees at the Curia-based bank clearly indicate that the Gozzadini imposed strict credit limits. While the two subsidiary companies were allowed to send bills of exchange to Rome *a drittura* without restrictions, Bonifazio Gozzadini in Venice was made to vouch for the bills of exchange taken out by his Nuremberg clients.<sup>949</sup> Although the Rummels and Pirckheimers could make out bills of exchange to Rome, with regard to the branch in Venice this was only possible *per commissionem* with whom they also had to settle accounts.<sup>950</sup> The latter continuously assessed their credibility and liquidity on the Venice market and determined the limit of the bills of exchange permissible written in Germany. For this reason, we have no accounts of Germans in the books of the bankers in Rome, only of their Venetian partners. This partly explains why Esch, in his research on the Vatican sources and in the Gozzadini archives, only came across very few bills of exchange and very little regularity in the financial transactions between Nuremberg and Rome. From this he concluded that, at the time, merchants in Upper Germany were not yet part of the international banking system governed by the Italians.<sup>951</sup> They were tied in with it but were not considered equal partners. However, business in Germany did not meet the bankers' expectations, as various passages in the Gozzadini's family correspondence show, neither in terms of turnover nor profit.<sup>952</sup> But it was not failing success that brought their career in banking to an end, but the Gozzadini's futile political resistance against the pope's rule over their home city of Bologna. Gabione was finally disposed as depository, and, after being tortured, finally executed on 4 February 1404 on orders of the cardinal legate Baldassare Cossa.<sup>953</sup>

### 5.1.2 Medici

#### Early Relations with Merchants from Upper Germany

After his coronation as German-Roman king in 1401, the rule of Rupert of the Palatinate was largely limited to his own territory in the Electoral Palatinate and developed very little impact. Still, he had more ambitious visions and dreamt of being crowned as emperor in Rome, for which, however, he found little support in Germany. Hence, the offer of the Signoria of Florence for him to take military action against the Duke of Milan, Giangaleazzo Visconti, on his military campaign to Italy for f. 200,000 was a more than opportune break. In 1401, Giovanni de' Medici travelled to Venice at the behest of his home city to collect money among resident

949 Esch (1975), pp. 134–139. See Schaper (1981), pp. 3 and 16. Wilhelm I Rummel was often in Venice and probably also completed his apprenticeship there.

950 Esch (1975), p. 134.

951 Esch (1975), pp. 131–132 and 145; Denzel (1991), p. 121.

952 Esch (1975), p. 137; Esch (2016), p. 66.

953 Esch (1966), pp. 353–354; Esch (1975); Esch (2016). See also Tamba (1960–); Holmes (1968), p. 364.

Florentine merchants for this purpose.<sup>954</sup> However, how was this huge sum to be sent to the king in Germany? Giovanni contacted the Nuremberg merchants Rummel, Kress, Stromeier, and Kamerer, whose economic power and technical means he evidently trusted, and told them that he was prepared to collaborate with them.<sup>955</sup> Very probably he negotiated personally with Wilhelm I Rummel, then still engaged in transactions for the Curia with the Gozzadini, as we know that he was residing in La Serenissima from late summer 1401 to April 1402.<sup>956</sup> On 20 November 1401, the Signoria of the Republic of Florence expressly thanked its *Amice Karissime Guilielmo Romer de Nurimbergh* for his services in transferring the money to Rupert (*bonitas et cordialis amicitia*) and asked him for further support with the prospect of generously reciprocating the help on some future occasion.<sup>957</sup> On 23 January 1402, the king confirmed in Mainz that he had received f. 60,000 of the promised sum. However, the processing of further payments proved more than challenging, a fact that cannot be put down to inefficient work techniques or a poorly developed economy in Germany, but rather to the unwillingness on the part of German merchants to grant their king the required loan, as Wolfgang von Stromer has so convincingly shown.<sup>958</sup> Even after the partially failed major financial transaction, the Florentine merchants by no means lost trust in the commercial competence of their Nuremberg counterparts, as the many business deals concluded between them and Giovanni de' Medici in the years that followed show. These would have been unthinkable if the Florentines had not had full confidence in their German partners.

Giovanni de' Medici seems to have developed a particularly lively business relationship with Wilhelm I Rummel – whom Wolfgang von Stromer considers the greatest German merchant-banker of his time – ever since they met personally in Venice.<sup>959</sup> For example, Bishop Albrecht von Bamberg made a payment to the Curia using this channel. The Rummels issued a bill of

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954 ASFi, Diplomatico, Riformagioni atti pubblici, 1401 settembre 13. See Mueller (1992), p. 35. – The Signoria of Florence invited influential Florentine citizens to discuss with them (Consulte e Pratiche) relations with Rupert. The detailed minutes of these consultations are to be found in Conti (1981).

955 Schulte (1900, pp. 343–344) wrote that, during these years, the Strasbour merchants in Nuremberg were unable to purchase bills of exchange on Venice for the purpose of supporting their troops in Italy. Stromer (1971, p. 76) has corrected this perception by showing that the Strasbour merchants were simply not willing to pay the exorbitant fees (*vorwehse*). – Two lawsuits before the Mercanzia in Florence in 1411 and 1413, respectively, bear evidence of the close trade relations between Nuremberg merchants based at the Fondaco dei Tedeschi in Venice and their Florentine counterparts. Konrad Pirckheimer, Ulrich Imhoff, and the Rummels filed complaints against Florentine merchants in the context of wool shipments; for more, see Böninger (2016). – Dated 23 October 1413, we have an acknowledgement of debt made out by Ludovico and Uberto degli Strozzi in Mantua to Wilhelm I and Hans I Rummel of Nuremberg for goods that the Florentines had bought from the Germans. ASFi, Diplomatico, Strozzi di Mantova, 23 ottobre 1413.

956 Schaper (1981), p. 32.

957 ASFi, Signori, Carteggi, Missive I Cancelleria, no. 25, c. 64v: *Nimis enim iuxta cor nostrum erit, si detur occasio, qua possimus gratiosas operas nostras debite gratitudinis operibus aequare.*

958 Stromer (1970a), pp. 205–218; Stromer (1971). Esch (1966), pp. 349–350, writes of a „spektakulären Versagen deutscher Kaufleute“ (‘spectacular failure by German merchants’). – See the travel report in Pitti (1905).

959 Stromer (1971), p. 67

exchange in arrears in Nuremberg on 22 February 1404, which Martin von Lichtenstein then took to Rome.<sup>960</sup> In all likelihood, the payer of his bill of exchange in Rome was Giovanni's bank.<sup>961</sup> Evidently, the Rummels were still able to make out bills to Rome even after the Gozzadini era, but where they were settled remains unclear. They probably had to be cleared by the branch office in Venice, that is *per commissionem*. Whether Giovanni de' Medici's bank at the Curia was their partner in Rome we cannot say with any certainty because there is no evidence of any exchange transactions between the two enterprises up to the ransom paid for the release of Baldassare Cossa (Pope John XXII) in 1419. However, since the two major transactions of 1402 and 1419 involved the Rummels and the Medici, we may assume that money was also transferred between the two companies in the intervening years. This is supported by the fact that the expected increase in Curia payments following the overall victory of the Pisan allegiance did not lead to a stronger presence of the Florentines in this region.<sup>962</sup>

Wolfgang von Stromer also found evidence of links between the two merchant families with regard to Giovanni de' Medici's involvement in the mining industry in Poland between 1404 and 1410,<sup>963</sup> notably in the fact that Piero Picorano, a Venetian based in Cracow, served as local representative of both the Rummel and Medici families.<sup>964</sup>

The two Nuremberg companies Kress and Kamerer-Seiler were also involved in the funding of King Rupert's Italian campaign. The Kamerer-Seiler company obviously overreached itself, for thereafter we see that its operations remained restricted to Cracow in Poland, where it was heavily involved in the mining industry and thus also associated with Giovanni de' Medici. Like the Kresses, they do not figure in the financial transactions between Nuremberg and Italy in the early operative years of the Medici bank.<sup>965</sup>

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960 Göldel (1988), p. 2: *Nürnberg dem Rümel, burger zu Nuremberg für 400 ducaten, die er bezalet zu Rome von unseres herren von Bamberg wegen mit dem wessel briff, den herr Mertein von Lichtenstein mit im gen Rome furt*. On page 3, the author probably wrongly names Martin von Liebenstein as payee.

961 Göldel (1988), p. 4; Schneider (1988b), p. 26; Denzel (1991), pp. 196–197.

962 According to Wolfgang von Stromer, the sanctions known as the Continental Blockade, which King Sigismund tried to enforce against Venice between 1411 and 1433, did not lead to any notable strain, but rather to an intensification of relations between the Rummels and the Medici. Stromer (1995b), p. 154, writes: „Das Zusammenspiel zwischen dem Nürnberger Bankhaus der Rummel mit Picoranus als Verbindungsmann zu Venedig und der Medicibank verdichtete sich zu gesellschaftlichen und landesverräterischen Beziehungen, blieb jedoch bis in die Gegenwart unentdeckt.“ (‘The collaboration between the Rummel's Nuremberg banking house, with Picoranus as their liaison in Venice, and the Medici bank condensed into a close social relationship with almost treasonous qualities but has remained undetected to this day.’) However, no evidence bearing witness of such an intensification of relations between the Rummels and the Medici is to be found. See Schiff (1909); Klein (1955–1956); Stromer (1971), p. 69.

963 Stromer (1970a), pp. 145–154.

964 Braunstein (1964), pp. 227–269; Schaper (1981), pp. 28 and 42; Stromer (1995a), p. 150; Carr-Riegel (2021), pp. 342–365. In the specialist literature, Picorano also features under the name Bicherano.

965 Regarding the Kress, see also Braunstein (1964); Braunstein (1967); Braunstein (2016), pp. 264–273. – Regarding the Kamerer-Seiler, see Rödel (1980–1999); Stromer (1989); Diefenbacher (2000).

In a paper, Arnold Esch writes about a directive to the managers of this branch office, valid from 1406 onwards, telling them ‘[...] principally not to grant loans to German merchants [...]’.<sup>966</sup> Such a restrictive ruling would have made exchange transactions from German cities impossible and thus would have practically ruined the Medici’s financial business in Germany. This is because a bill of wexchange was, almost without exception, at the same time a credit transaction. The quoted sentence is probably based on two passages in Raymond de Roover’s history of the Medici bank in which he analyses how the Venice branch fared businesswise. In the not quite four years of operation up to 30 April 1406, the branch ran up a loss of f. 13,403.<sup>967</sup> De Roover lays the blame for this fiasco at the feet of the responsible agency manager, Neri Tornaquinci, who breached company rules by granting high loans to Poles and southern Germans without asking the *maggiori* for permission beforehand. When these were not redeemed, he allegedly took out loans himself at 8 per cent and manipulated the balance sheets. When the people in Florence realized the severity of the matter, Tornaquinci was dismissed immediately and referred to the Commercial Court (Mercanzia) in Florence where he was found guilty and ordered to pay damages. He was forced to sell his estate in Caraggi, but the proceeds of f. 1,000 had been far from sufficient to compensate his former partners.<sup>968</sup> Based on this negative experience, Giovanni de’ Medici had come to the conclusion not to conduct business with the Germans in Venice in future, not least because German courts were notoriously slow in reaching a decision when it involved debtors. The only exceptions made involved permanent German residents of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi.<sup>969</sup> Thus, in de Roover’s opinion, the only reason for the poor business performance were the unauthorized transactions with clients from the North.

The conclusion that de Roover has Giovanni de’ Medici draw from the 1406 incident would have involved a major strategic decision regarding business relations with Germany. However, de Roover’s interpretation raises some doubts. In the sources referenced by him, there is neither a mention of a ban on loans to German or Polish clients nor any passage containing the statement that the huge loss in the Venice branch was due to business deals with merchants from these regions. In other words, de Roover bases his thesis largely on circumstantial evidence. One of the clues is that Giovanni listed mainly the names of German debtors in his *libro segreto*, adding

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966 Esch (1966), pp. 349–350: “[...] deutschen Kaufleuten grundsätzlich keine Kredite zu gewähren [...]”.

967 Stromer (1971), p. 78. After deducting the profit from the preceding financial years, the loss still amounted to f. 5,356.

968 Roover (1963), pp. 240–241

969 Roover (1963), p. 245: “As pointed out before, dealing with Germans was avoided ever since the discouraging experiences of Neri Tornaquinci; the Medici were cautious and preferred to deal with Florentine merchants whose credit standing they knew or with Venetians who had the reputation of being reliable. To lend to Germans who were not permanent residents in Venice but stayed from time to time at the Casa dei Tedeschi (German House) was too dangerous a game, for one never knew whether they would come back to pay their bills. To pursue debtors in Germany involved great trouble and expense for meagre results, since it was impossible to obtain speedy justice from local courts.”

the remark that these loans were granted *senza nostra volontà*. A further important element of his argument are the documented journeys of Ludovico Baglioni to Germany and Cracow which he undertook together with his travel servant Gottschalk for the purpose of collecting debts for his old company in Venice. Nothing is known about how successful these efforts were; the only thing we have to go by are the travel expenses incurred on the journey; these were entered in the books on 4 July 1419: f. 180.<sup>970</sup>

De Roover bases his argument exclusively on the entries in Giovanni de' Medici's *libro segreto*.<sup>971</sup> Quite a different picture emerges when one also takes into consideration the court files held in the archives of the Mercanzia. We have there, dated 5 August 1409, a report filed by the two arbitrators appointed to examine the Venetian books, Paolo di Piero Gratini and Francesco di messer Alessandro de' Bardi. There it is stated that Tornaquinci had caused the company a loss of almost 180 *lire di grossi venetiani*, due to loans that had not been redeemed:<sup>972</sup>

messer Costantino de Vett della Mangnia	Lire 84	4s. 18 gr. venetiani
messer Cristiano di Salvo della Mangnia	Lire 14	
messer Giovanni Laudono	Lire 4	8s.
Martino Micheli	Lire 6	4s.
Serazzo Trevigiano	Lire 30	9s.
Biagio dal Fino	Lire 40	

Even though the name de Vett suggests a member of the family von Watt, this individual cannot be identified with any certainty, since his first name Konstantin is nowhere to be found in the family's genealogy and is generally not on record.<sup>973</sup> Micheli and Trevigiano, on the other hand, are identifiable as Michiel and Trevisan and thus definitely as Venetians. On 14 January 1410, Tornaquinci was ordered to pay three quarters of the damages on record to the other consociates, a sum of f. 1,269. To be deducted from this sum was the amount that Giovanni de' Medici had already demanded from his confidant in Cracow, the Venetian Piero Picorano

970 ASFi, MAP 153, no. 1, c. 47r; c. 100r: *sono per spese fatte di Lodovicho de' Baglioni quando andò a rischuotere nela Magna*; c. 101v: *Lodovicho di Filippo de' Baglioni per lui e Ghoschalcho quando lo mandammo a Crachovia a rischuotere i danari*. – Roover (1963), p. 455.

971 De Roover cites as his sources: ASFi, MAP 153, no. 1, cc. 14, 22, 28–30, 44, 46–48, 50, 103, 112, and 125.

972 ASFi, Mercanzia 4326, c. 5r, cc. 132r–134r. – In the Florentine sources, the amount is converted into florins. Regarding the rate of exchange, see Molho (1971), p. 172.

973 Even Wolfgang von Stromer, who was probably more familiar with German merchants of the late Middle Ages than any other historian, could not identify this German debtor. Based on the *libro segreto*, he calls them *Ghostante di Vort de la Magna* and *Cristiano di Salina de la Magna*. See Stromer (1971), p. 78. However, the title *messer* suggests that these three men were not merchants, but clerics instead.

(Bichierano). Hence, the charges brought against Tornaquinci merely referred to roughly 9 per cent of the total loss incurred in Venice; moreover, the claimed amount was only partly caused by loans made to German clients. The sale of Tornaquinci's estate had, contrary to de Roover's statements, largely covered the damages claimed.<sup>974</sup> Tornaquinci was not held liable for the lion's share of the loss incurred in Venice, not least because he was not charged for this. The split from Giovanni de' Medici and the subsequent trial before the Mercanzia obviously did not seriously harm his reputation as a businessman. Six letters sent to Francesco di Marco Datini's company in Mallorca reveal that Tornaquinci remained in Venice and was, at least until July 1408, a partner in the company Neri Tornaquinci e Tommaso di Giovanni e co.<sup>975</sup>

Wolfgang von Stromer has convincingly shown that the main damage to the Medici branch in Venice was caused by loans granted to the company run by Kamerer and Seiler, which was operating in Cracow, Poland.<sup>976</sup> This company had invested heavily in mining and had set up an oligopoly for non-ferrous metals in a number of Carpathian countries. The liaison between the Medici and the Germans in Cracow was the above-mentioned Piero Picorano.<sup>977</sup> The loans advanced through this channel were so voluminous that they certainly could not have been approved by Tornaquinci alone. Nor could he have raised the required sums on his own. In 1403, the Kamerer-Seiler bank went bankrupt, leaving the successor companies to compete in an extremely challenging market.<sup>978</sup> In 1405, the market for Hungarian copper and Polish lead experienced severe manipulations resulting in a mining crisis that carried on for years. At the same time, the Bohemian king Sigismund was waging an economic war against Poland and mining enterprises based in Cracow.<sup>979</sup> The close link between the Medici branch in Venice and Cracow would explain why Tornaquinci is documented there from 1410.<sup>980</sup>

One may agree with de Roover and Esch that, under these circumstances, Giovanni de' Medici was no longer prepared to grant loans to German merchants. We have no evidence of this decision in writing but the account books and documented business practice speak for themselves. However, the Venetian problems in 1406 had little to do with bill of exchange transactions and

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974 This final decision, mentioned in the *libro segreto*, ASFi, MAP 153, no. 1, c. 48r is preserved in a transcript: Firenze, Archivio dell'Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore, Libro primo di ser Dino di Cola, II, 1, c. 77. – The fact that, for Giovanni, the matter was largely concluded with this sale of assets is borne out by an entry in the *libro segreto* of 23 March 1423 in which support for Tornaquinci, who appears to have been in dire need in Cracow, is recorded in the amount of f. 36: *per limosina*. ASFi, MAP 153, no. 1, c. 123r. – The members of the Tornaquinci family are listed in the documents under the name of Giachinotti, which they had adopted shortly before these events.

975 The ADP contains six letters and bills of exchange sent to Francesco di Marco Datini's branch office in Mallorca, written between 6 June 1407 and 31 July 1408. ADP, codice 11704, 11705, 123921, 123922, 123923, 123924.

976 Stromer (1971), p. 78. – Giovanni de' Medici's *libro segreto* also names *Churado Sailier* among the people who made repayments. ASFi, MAP 153, no. 1, c. 83r.

977 On Piero Picorano: Ptánsnik (1959), pp. 39–42; Stromer (2006), pp. 97–98; Bettarini (2015), p. 3.

978 Stromer (1971), pp. 76–77.

979 Molenda (1976), p. 165; Stromer (1978c), p. 114; Blanchard (1995), p. 33.

980 Fournier (1893), p. 339; ASFi, MAP 153, no. 1, c. 125.



these were in no way restricted in the years that followed. It would also be hard to understand why Giovanni, who was a banker and silk merchant with no interest in the Venetian spice trade, should maintain a branch in Venice if he was prepared to cede the all-important money transfers to and from Germany, of all things, to competing bankers.

### Rummel and Kress

When, in July 1418, people in Florence realized that Martin V (1417–1431) had decided to return to the Eternal City, Giovanni de' Medici and Niccolò da Uzzano, the leading man in the Florentine oligarchy, came up with a diplomatic operation planned down to the smallest detail that also involved financial transactions with Germany. In the extant sources, the two influential Florentines never speak of the purpose of these activities, but the steps they subsequently undertook paint a clear picture: they sought to persuade Baldassare Cossa, the deposed Pope John XXIII, who was imprisoned in Heidelberg under the control of Count Palatin Louis IV, to step down as anti-pope and recognize Martin V as the legitimate pontiff. This move aimed to restore unity within the Church and reestablish the continued flow of financial resources from Catholic Europe to the Holy See. Additionally, it would ensure that an old Republican ally could retire in peace and dignity. In the early summer of 1418, they instructed Galeotto da Ricasoli to travel to Geneva and negotiate a deal with Martin V, namely by proceeding in such a manner that, in the event of a favourable outcome, it did not look as though this had been the plan of the two initiators alone but the wish of the entire Florentine republic: *che una volta appaia tutto essere passata di volontà et coscienza di Nostri Signori*.<sup>981</sup> Ricasoli travelled to Geneva on several occasions; the results of the negotiations between the pope and him are mentioned for the first time in a record of 30 July 1418.<sup>982</sup> Bartolomeo de' Bardi was tasked with raising and paying the sum of 35,000 ducats (38,500 Rhe. fl.), as demanded by Count Palatine Louis III. Ostensibly, this demand was explained with reference to the costs incurred by Cossa's imprisonment, although everybody was aware it was actually ransom money. Niccolò da Uzzano and Giovanni de' Medici each contributed f. 10,000.<sup>983</sup> However, the sum raised

981 ASFi, MAP 89, no. 43: 'Once everything seems to have passed by the will and consciousness of Our Signori'. – During research for this study in the archives, I came across many documents in connection with this diplomatic operation. I shall not render a detailed description here, as it is not relevant to the issue under discussion. The source material was handed over to Mario Prignano, who has published a new biography about this controversial cleric to mark the 600th anniversary of Baldassare Cossa's death. Prignano (2019).

982 Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna, Manoscritto 52, busta I, n. 14, c. 7: *Viensi lo papa Zohanne essere acedato, e rimane cardinale e costagli fiorini 36.mila fu qui h[i]eri sera Galeocto da Ricasoli che viene da lui ch'è quello l'è facto questo accordo. A dì XXX di luglio.* – *The diary of the papal secretary* Cambio di Alberto Cantelmi is as yet a little recognized source with regard to the first months of the pontificate of Martin V. See Frati (1911).

983 Giovanni de' Medici was extremely disappointed by the reluctance to pay displayed by other Florentine merchants. It confirms the proverb that in good times help is abundant, but lacking in times of need: *in questo*

so far was not enough to meet the postulated demands; at the same time, it is hard to believe that the two men should, if willing, not have been able to provide the necessary funds. But, be that as it may, they somehow succeeded in making Martin V himself contribute 6,000 cameral ducats. Possibly this was also simply a way of committing him to sticking to the arrangement.<sup>984</sup>

While Galeotto da Ricasoli sorted out all the political and juridical aspects of the reconciliation between the old and the new pope on his multiple journeys to the Curia,<sup>985</sup> Bartolomeo de' Bardi dealt with the financial aspects. As partner responsible for the handling of the payments on the German side, he was able to win over the Rummels, with whom Giovanni de' Medici had already collaborated back in 1402 in connection with the Republic of Florence's payment to King Rupert of the Palatinate.<sup>986</sup> On 6 December 1418, Bardi visited Cossa in Heidelberg, where he had him sign a document in which Cossa agreed to repay Giovanni de' Medici the sum required to pay the ransom and all the incurred costs in florins.<sup>987</sup> He then travelled to Venice with his document in order to make arrangements for the transfer of the money. On 19 February 1419, Wilhelm Rummel's representative in La Serenissima, Hermann Reck (*de societate de Rimel de Nuremberga*), made out a bill of exchange for 38,500 Rhe. fl. on his company in Nuremberg. After the order had been carried out, a receipt was to be sent to the Medici in Venice.<sup>988</sup>

In terms of timing, the Florentines did not want Cossa to be released from prison before Martin V had arrived in Florence, where they could keep an eye on him. The idea behind it was to keep anything from happening to Cossa on his journey to the city on the Arno. The Pope arrived in Florence on 27 February 1419. As soon as the news had reached Germany, Bardi and Rummel returned to Heidelberg where, on 16 April 1419, the former authorized Rummel in Latin to service the bill of exchange. The money was to be handed over to the Count Palatine in three instalments as soon as Cossa and his followers had arrived in Basel, that is, beyond the

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*si verifica il proverbio che come nella prosperità se ne truova assai così nelle avversità se ne truova pochi.* ASFi, MAP 89, no. 43.

984 Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna, Manoscritto 52, busta I, n. 14, c. 15: *Papa Martinus solvit VI. milia ducatos, dominus Johannes Coxa XXX. milia.*

985 See ASFi, MAP 89, nos. 6 and 43; 94, no. 180; 100, no. 67. – Crossing the Alps on one of his many journeys, he broke a leg in December: *Per tuto zenaio el nostro Signore serà in queste tere on Fiorenza on Pistogla on Pixa, Galeocto da Ricasuli é andato per deliberare al meglio B. el quale al pié di una montagna s'è schavezado una ganba [...] dio permetta quello che sia per lo meglio.* Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna, Manoscritto 52, busta I, n. 14, c. 31.

986 See above p. 187.

987 ASFi, MAP 105, no. 280. Reproduced in Canestrini (1843), pp. 433–435; Meltzing (1906), p. 100; Holmes (1968), p. 375.

988 ASFi, MAP 96, no. 4: An Italian translation of the bill of exchange originally issued in German by Reck. – Presumably a document issued by Martin V stands in connection with these transactions. See Camerani Marri (1951), p. 32: *1419, marzo 22. Florentie: Martinus V ex confessione Nicolai Piciscelli archiep. Salernitani sciens quod Johannes XXIII, dum in generali concilio constantiensi erat, mitram papalem pretiosam Johanni de Medicis Florentie conservationis causa tradidit, nunc eam repetit, excommunicationem comminans nisi mandatis suis paruerit. – Dat. Florentie.*

ducal territory.<sup>989</sup> After Cossa had been escorted to Basel by knights from the Upper Rhine, he was placed under the authority of Martin V. The pope had nominated Johann V. von Waldow (bishop of Lebus), Johann von Borsitz (the former rector of the University of Heidelberg), Konrad von Soest, and a papal secretary by the name of Jux von Sirck to act as his representatives and sent them to the inn “zur Blume” in Basel.<sup>990</sup>

There they met up with three men from Florence who were there for Cossa’s protection: Bartolomeo de’ Bardi, Galeotto da Ricasoli, and a trusted old confidant of Cossa, Bartolomeo da Montegonzi.<sup>991</sup> Bardi confirmed in writing that, up until then, all agreements had been respected and instructed Rummel’s bank to transfer the first of the three instalments to Louis. Gherardo Bueri was also in Basel at the time, but probably not on an official mission.<sup>992</sup> From there he returned to Lübeck, while Cossa and his six custodians set off across the Alps to Florence. Bartolomeo de’ Bardi regularly wrote travel reports to Giovanni de’ Medici.<sup>993</sup>

In Fellino, the followers of Martin V in the travel group made a dramatic attempt to abduct the deposed pope and escort him to Mantua. This city was under the control of Gianfrancesco I Gonzaga, a loyal supporter of Martin. However, the plan was discovered in time; the guards were given sufficient alcohol in order to incapacitate them and, as soon as Cossa was in Genovese territory, he was safe. After receiving multiple assurances that he would be safe, Cossa travelled on to Florence, where he arrived on 27 June 1419 and made his submission to the pope.<sup>994</sup> The diplomatic operation, so important in ecclesiastical history, had been successful. Likewise, Giovanni seems to have been equally pleased with the way Rummel had handled the financial side of the deal. Evidently, the two merchant houses had collaborated without a hitch. A year later, Bartolomeo de’ Bardi was promoted to head of the Medici branch in Rome, and Hermann Reck – apparently in gratitude for his services – was appointed by Elector Louis as his counsel.<sup>995</sup>

Many transactions of the 1420s bear evidence that Rummel and Medici collaborated regularly and extensively, certainly well beyond what Esch labelled as “middling”.<sup>996</sup> From the year 1421, there are records involving a dispute concerning the Duchy of Geneva which show that the

989 ASFi, MAP 87, no. 47, c. 202. A second transcription is in ASFi, MAP 86, inserto II, c. 112v. – Reproduced in Canestrini (1843), pp. 435–437. See ASFi, MAP 86, no. II, c. 112v.

990 Finke (1903), p. 56. ASFi, MAP filza 96, no. 4.

991 ASFi, Mercanzia 4348, cc. 160r–162v: Montegonzi was, by the way, the man who organized the funeral of Alexander V in Bologna. Later he built a grand palace in Florence, today’s Palazzo Salviati of the European University.

992 ASFi, MAP 5, no. 637, letter by Bartolomeo de’ Bardi to Giovanni de’ Medici of 14 May 1419: *Gherardo rimase a Basilea e penso e’ sarà poi in tutto guarito e che fia ito a Lubicha*. Probably the two Florentine men met by chance in Basel, as Bueri lay sick there.

993 ASFi, MAP 5, nos. 637 and 638.

994 Chronicled descriptions of these events in Bruni (1926), pp. 444–446 and Petriboni / di Borgo Rinaldi (2001), pp. 116–121. Regarding Cossa’s submission to Martin V, see Prignano (2019).

995 Stromer (1970a); Schaper (1981), p. 39.

996 Esch (1966), p. 341. – See also Roover (1971); Schaper (1981); Schneider (1991), p. 137.

Rummels were in contact with the Medici in Geneva.<sup>997</sup> In Giovanni de' Medici's tax return of 1427, *Ghuglelmo e Arigho Rumoli di Norimbergho* were the only German correspondents directly mentioned. They still owed the Medici's Rome branch f. 704 resulting from exchange deals.<sup>998</sup>

In Antonio Salutati's account book of 1429–30, they only figured second among the German correspondents with thirty-one exchanges on Rome, but they transferred by far the largest amount of money from Germany, almost 8,100 ducats (see Table 5).<sup>999</sup> They reached this substantial sum mainly through servitia payments. For the bishop of Eichstätt, Albrecht II of Hohenrechberg, they transferred 3,770 ducats in four exchanges to Rome, where they were disbursed to *Guglielmo de Sutechem*.<sup>1000</sup> For the confirmation of the Bishop of Regensburg, Conrad VII. von Soest, 1,295 ducats went to the coffers of the Curia. Listed among the recipients is also the procurator Johannes Engelhard, who received 210 ducats.<sup>1001</sup> On the other hand, the Rummels only figure once in the role of payer.<sup>1002</sup>

The Kress trading company was founded in 1388 by Fritz Kress the Elder after he split up with the Rummels. After Fritz's death, his son Konrad headed the business until 1430.<sup>1003</sup> The Kresses were already mentioned above in connection with business deals in Lübeck and Cracow, but they only feature as direct correspondents of a Curia-based bank in the depositary's account of 1429–30 (see Table 5).<sup>1004</sup> With regard to that business year, the Nuremberg company only took a distant second place as Medici partners next to the Rummels. It sent ten

997 Stromer (1970a), pp. 198 and 419; Schaper (1981), p. 40. – The suggestion that the founding of a Medici branch in Geneva could somehow be related to the Council of Constance is not confirmed by any facts. In Geneva, the Medici had contact with merchants from Nuremberg and Frankfurt – although the sources mention no names – and traded in cloth from Constance. ASFi, MAP 7, no. 327 (19 May 1452); MAP 138, no. 444 (20 July 1455); MAP 138, no. 445 (29 July 1455); MAP 138, no. 449 (19 February 1456). Published in Bergier (1978), pp. 290–298. – Unfortunately, no accounting records have been preserved, so that we have nothing but short passages in letters to go by. Nor can the mention of travel expenses of a certain Jacopo from Geneva to Bern and Lucerne, which he undertook together with two employees and three horses in 1425, be placed in a larger economic context. ASFi, MAP 101, no. 49 (7 September 1425). Published in Bergier (1978), p. 285.

998 ASFi, Catasto 49, cc. 1162ff.

999 ASFi, MAP 131 A. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 534–549.

1000 ASFi, MAP 131 A, cc. 142r and 144r. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 534–549. – The bishop's servitia payments amounted to 600 ducats. However, in total his confirmation in Rome cost him 5,000 ducats. Bethmann/Waitz (1880), p. 608: *Pro quorum quidem negociorum expeditione, sumptibus et expensis ac concordia camere apostolice atque aliis necessariis ad hec obtinendis ipse venerabilis pater exposuit summam 5000 florenorum seu ducatorum*. – See RG Online, RG IV 00135, <http://rg-online.dhi-roma.it/RG/4/135>, 02.07.2021. Wendehorst (2006), p. 194.

1001 ASFi, MAP 131 A, cc. 128v and 110v. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 534–549. – See RG Online, RG IV 07245, <http://rg-online.dhi-roma.it/RG/4/7245>, 02.07.2021.

1002 ASFi, MAP 131 A, c. 57r. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 534–549.

1003 Nordmann (1933b), p. 10.

1004 See above p. 155. – Giovanni de' Medici noted in his *libro segreto* (ASFi, MAP 153, no. 1, c. 63r) on 20 July 1407 under the *Creditori si asengoronno i nostri di Roma* an unredeemed credit of 4 ducats *per Giovanni Ritero* among similar open accounts of some other Germans. Stromer (1970a), p. 197, assumed that we are dealing with Ulman Stromeir's son-in-law Hans Rieter the Younger, who died before 1408. There is no evidence of any bill of exchange transactions on behalf of Stromeir or Rieter to Rome.

exchanges totalling 1,388 cameral ducats to Rome and was not drawn on by the Medici with bills of exchange. The *beneficarii* with the highest payouts were Johannes Brun from Schwerin (500 ducats)<sup>1005</sup> and Gunter Grube from the bishopric of Mainz (190 ducats).<sup>1006</sup> Regarding the Kresses' links to the eastern part of Europe, we have in this account book a bill of exchange for a man by the name of *m. Michele da Praga* (50 ducats).<sup>1007</sup>

As far as the international payment system is concerned, the Rummels vanished from the scene shortly after the 1429–30 account book of the Medici Bank in Rome was finalized. However, they remained commercially active, as a payment by the Venetian Medici to Niccolò Bernardi for Hans and Heinrich Rummel in Venice in 1436 shows.<sup>1008</sup> However, they suffered a major setback owing to the bankruptcy of Hermann Reck, one of the leading German bankers in the Venice market, in 1431. Reck not only operated as a merchant on his own behalf in Venice, he also served as representative for a number of leading German trading companies (Mendel, Pirckheimer).<sup>1009</sup> In 1418, he was granted power of attorney for the businesses of Marquard Mendel and Lorenz Pirckheimer. His brothers, too, acted as intermediaries between the commercial hubs of Nuremberg and Venice. Konrad Kress was a representative for the Kresses, Marquart served as factor for the Rummels. In 1432, Hermann fled Venice (*ubi ingentia debita contraxit clam inde recessus in patriam*),<sup>1010</sup> leaving behind a mountain of debt of over 25,000 ducats, most of which the Rummels were left to bear.<sup>1011</sup> Since some of this money also involved papal funds, the Curia intervened on behalf of the creditors with the bishop of Bamberg, the duke of Bavaria, and the margrave of Brandenburg, with unknown success.<sup>1012</sup> The last entry in which the Rummels are mentioned in the Medici archives is the tax return for the year 1433. They are listed with a small amount under the *creditori: Jani e Arigho Romoli di Norimbergho: f. 1 24s. 2d.*<sup>1013</sup> Almost at the same time as the Rummels, the Kresses, too, disappeared from the scene of international transactions due to the great difficulties the company ran into around 1430.

Owing to the decline of the Rummels and the Kresses, Nuremberg lost direct connection to any Florentine papal bank for several decades, as borne out by an account book of the Medici in Venice for the financial year of 1436–37, parts of which have been preserved.<sup>1014</sup> It contains

1005 RG Online, RG IV 06629, <http://rg-online.dhi-roma.it/RG/4/6629>, 02.07.2021.

1006 RG Online, RG IV 03894, <http://rg-online.dhi-roma.it/RG/4/3894>, 02.07.2021.

1007 ASFi, 131 A, c. 108r.

1008 ASFi, MAP 134, no. 1, c. 31v. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 550–552.

1009 Schaper (1981), pp. 38 and 46.

1010 Esch (1998), p. 141.

1011 Schaper (1981), p. 46. – Regarding the bankruptcy of Hermann Reck, see below p. 254. – Lorenz Rummel, the son of Wilhelm I, was in the service of the city of Nuremberg during the Council of Basel in 1434. There is no evidence of any business activities for him there. Schaper (1981), p. 21.

1012 Esch (1998), p. 141. – See Stromer (1970a), pp. 197–198 and 456.

1013 ASFi, Catasto 470, c. 544r.

1014 ASFi, MAP 134, no. 1. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 550–552.

entries of exchange transactions involving merchants from Upper Germany. None of these entertained any form of correspondent relationship with the Medici. Instead, they relied as clients on the services of the Florentines in other exchange centres to transfer money to Florentines based in Venice, but they themselves did not issue bills of exchange on Florentine banks. Five transactions were initiated by the Nuremberg trading company Mendel. In Venice, Georg Mendel and Stefan Volkmeier received two payments amounting to a total of 800 ducats which were transferred by Wilhelm Mendel from Bruges through Ubertino de' Bardi. One bill of exchange was sent to them by Francesco Balbi e co. They also purchased bills of exchange in Venice made out on Rome. We know this thanks to an instruction sent from Rome to a certain Nikolaus Wolf, telling him that the money had not been collected. They must have been in possession of a current account because 40 ducats were paid out from this account to the Venetian ser Cristofano Soranzo.<sup>1015</sup> Shortly afterwards, the Mendel company evidently ran into difficulties because, in 1441, Georg and Wilhelm Mendel sold their chamber at the Fondaco to Konrad Imhof.<sup>1016</sup> Three exchanges were sent from Bruges to Venice which the Nuremberg company had Hirschvogel carry out. Karl Hirschvogel (*Charlo Iorisfoghil*) and Ludwig Poltus (*Luigi Poltus*) resided in Flanders, Wilhelm Hirschvogel (*Ghuglelmo Arisfoghel*) in Venice. Lienhard Hirschvogel (*Lionardo Irisfolgheri*) appears in both locations. Ubertino de' Bardi e co. served as the Venice-based Medici's correspondent bank in Bruges for the first two exchanges. The third bill of exchange was written by the manager of the recently established Medici branch, Bernardo Portinari. Together, the three transactions from north to south amounted to a total of 450 ducats.<sup>1017</sup> It is the first time that this source mentions Augsburg merchants being involved in trade with Florentines. On 8 June 1436, Klaus Meuting purchased a bill of exchange on Hans Meuting in Venice from a representative of the Geneva-based Medici company who was staying in Antwerp at the time. Ten days later, a certain Rasi van Sun, who remains unidentifiable, sent a second bill of exchange also amounting to 1,000 ducats to Hans Meuting in La Serenissima. This means that two of the four partners listed in the company charter of 1436 were involved in this deal: *Ich Hanns Meuting der ältere, ich Ulrich Meuting, ich Hanns Meuting der jüngere, ich Claus Grander, den man nennet Meuting, alle drei seine Vettern, ich Conrad Raud und ich Ludwig Horlin, alle Bürger zu Augsburg.*<sup>1018</sup>

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1015 Stromer (1966), p. 13; Braunstein (2016), pp. 258–264.

1016 Stromer (1966), p. 14; Stromer (1976b), p. 137. Stromer has found bills of exchange on the Medici branch in Venice from the years 1425–38 in Marquart Mendel's *Buch der Hantierung* in Nuremberg. Unfortunately, this important source is not yet published and not accessible as it is still kept in a private archive.

1017 ASFi, MAP 134, no. 1, c. 137v. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 550–552. Lienhard Hirschvogel is said to have served as factor for the trading company Behaim in Venice. However, the Hirschvogels obviously conducted the business deals described here in their own name. See Bartels (1966), p. 108.

1018 ASFi, MAP 134, no. 1, c. 70r, 75v. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 550–552. - Strieder (1938), pp. 97–98; Maschke (1965), p. 249; Steiner (1978), p. 37.

The annate payments received by the Curia indicate that the Upper German market continued to be served by the Medici after 1430. Nevertheless, up to the end of the period under study, we have no named correspondent in Nuremberg or any other Upper German city, for that matter, who was in a position to issue bills of exchange directly on Rome. Even the Venetian Filippo Morosini (Morexini), who settled in Nuremberg in 1431 and even acquired citizenship there in 1432, does not appear to have been involved in exchange transactions with the Curia.<sup>1019</sup> He is not mentioned in the papal banks' tax declarations of 1433, nor does he appear in the Medici account book of 1436. Moreover, he does not feature in any of the Florentine records in connection with banking operations with the city on the Pegnitz.

### Paumgartner, Welser, and Ravensburger

Konrad Paumgartner was Konrad Kress' brother-in-law and his principal partner. From 1406 to 1430, their joint company was listed as *Conradten Kressen und Cunraden Paumgartners gesellschaft*.<sup>1020</sup> It seems almost compelling to assume that he took over business from the former Kress company after it had been forced to close due to bankruptcy.<sup>1021</sup> The first time Paumgartner appears in the Medici books was in 1441 when he consigned the Florentine bankers to send bills of exchange from Venice to Bruges and from Geneva to Venice.<sup>1022</sup> However, sound evidence of a collaboration in the money transfer business is not to be found before the end of the 1440s. On 4 August 1449, the collector *Gerardus de Dijk* wrote to the pope from Marienburg (Malbork), informing him that he had succeeded in securing 4,000 marks from the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order from the funds collected for the Greek indulgence and that the money would arrive *in bancho Medicis* at the latest by Christmas.<sup>1023</sup> As Klaus Militzer has shown, this transfer was almost certainly carried out by Tile Spodendorf in Gdańsk via Konrad Paumgartner in Nuremberg to Rome.<sup>1024</sup> Collaboration between these two German merchants is documented again in 1453 and probably still existed at the time the funds from the Turkish indulgence were transferred.<sup>1025</sup> On 26 March 1457, Pope Calixtus III

1019 Stromeier (1970a), pp. 87–88.

1020 Nordmann (1933b), p. 10.

1021 On 11 March 1427, Konrad Paumgartner is named as partner of Hans Waldstromeier. It is therefore doubtful whether his collaboration with the Kresses was without interruptions over this period of time. Staatsarchiv Nürnberg, Briefbuch 7, f. 150v–152v. Note from Peter Geffcken.

1022 ASFi, MAP 134, no. 2, c. 22r; MAP 82, no. 52, c. 191r. – ASFi, Catasto 820, c. 464v: The Catasto of 1457 for Giovanni d'Amerigho Benci mentions a certain *Martino di Piero Bangart di Norimbergho*. Thus, it could not have been a Paumgartner, because Martin Paumgartner was a son of Konrad the Elder.

1023 OBA 10013.

1024 Militzer (1979), p. 253; Schuchard (2000b), pp. 129–130.

1025 OBA 10094. A letter from the Nuremberg council to Cosimo de' Medici in a matter concerning Nikolaus Muffel is from the same year. Staatsarchiv Nürnberg, Rst. Nbg, Briefbücher des Rates, no. 23, p. 120r.

(1455–58) nominated in a deed a cleric from the diocese of Parma, Marino di Fregeno, as the priest responsible for the Crusade against the Turks and also as collector of the funds destined for this purpose from Denmark, Sweden, Norway, the archbishoprics of Lwiw and Magdeburg, as well as from the bishoprics of Bamberg and Münster. He was told to deposit the collected coins with suitable merchants and honourable men.<sup>1026</sup> However, soon suspicions began to grow in Rome whether these instructions were being duly followed, since complaints had recently been raised against Fregeno: *sinistras et malas informationes*. Consequently, Fregeno was told to deposit the specie at the trading company of Konrad Paumgartner in Nuremberg, who would then transfer the funds to Rome. Shortly after his election, Pius II (1458–64) reiterated his order to Fregeno. In April 1459, the Medici in Rome received f. 6,000 by means of two bills of exchange.<sup>1027</sup> Evidently the complaints against the priest proved to be unfounded, and Pius II confirmed Fregeno in his office on 5 July 1459. Once again, the Paumgartners were appointed as the place to deposit the collection.<sup>1028</sup> The Medici papers contain no information as to the payment transfers, but we may assume that Paumgartner issued the exchanges directly on Rome. The fact that he had this direct connection with a Curia-based bank is borne out by a letter from Thomas Pirckheimer in which he advises the dukes of Bavaria, Johann and Sigismund, to purchase the bills of exchange for the payment of the papal bulls from Anton Paumgartner in Nuremberg.<sup>1029</sup> The last payment sent to the Curia by Fregeno through the Paumgartner-Medici connection arrived in Rome on 9 August 1460.<sup>1030</sup> In the years to follow, the coins from the collection were received by Francesco Rucellai in Lübeck and handed over to the Spinelli papal bank.

One can only speculate why the Apostolic Chamber chose to switch to a different bank for transferring the funds collected by Marino di Fregeno. There does not seem to have been a falling out between Paumgartner and the Medici, for there are indications that the two parties collaborated at least until 1462. Thus, a German Curia cleric noted about the two banking houses in 1462: *und schreibet mir Antoni Paumgartner von Nurenberg, der der de Medicis antwort und des Pabst in theutzschen landen depositarius ist*.<sup>1031</sup> On the other hand, the Nurembergers' reputation had begun to suffer after 1460. First, Konrad's son Martin went bankrupt; then, soon afterwards, first signs appeared indicating that Anton was facing financial difficulties; and,

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1026 APD, III, p. 240: *Ceterum, ut pecunie ipse ad nos et cameram apostolicam quam celerius et perveniant, volumus, ut pecunie ipse apud aliquos mercatores seu alios probos viros fide et facultatibus idoneos deponantur.*

1027 Krag (1914), p. 12; Braunstein (2016), pp. 280–283.

1028 Krag (1914), pp. 12–14; Stromer (1970a), p. 199; Møller Jensen (2005), pp. 73–76.

1029 Krag (1914), p. 13.

1030 Esch (1998), p. 326.

1031 Esch (1998), p. 273: '...and writes to me Antoni Paumgartner of Nuremberg, who is the correspondent of the Medicis and the pope's depositary in the German lands.'



finally, Konrad the Elder was forced to limit his involvement considerably due to health issues. By 1466, the Paumgartner business had come to its end.<sup>1032</sup>

It is only in a letter of 1472 from the Medici in Rome to their branch in Venice that there is mention of a correspondent in Germany, but without any mention of the company's name. It simply said: *nostri di Norimbergho*.<sup>1033</sup> The text speaks of five bills of exchange which had been settled for the Nurembergers. As the receipts had to be sent to Venice, we are dealing with transactions *per commissionem*. The Germans made out the bills of exchange directly on Rome, while Venice had the task of reviewing the terms of payment and clearing the transactions. Which Nuremberg trading company was involved here is suggested by a letter that arrived in Venice from Bruges a few days later. In it, the mention is of bills of exchange between Antwerp and Venice *in Bartolommeo Vvelzer e chompagni, o vero in Bartolommeo Vvelzer e fratelli* for 900 ducats.<sup>1034</sup> The connection between the Medici and Bartholomäus (IV) Welser is probably significantly older, as the first record of it dates back to 1465 when the bank of the powerful Salviati company in Bruges recorded a payment between them, but as yet without any reference to Rome.<sup>1035</sup> These three transactions are the only reference to direct deals between the Medici and the Welser company.

Worth mentioning is also an entry in a notebook of the Great Ravensburg Trading Company of March 1475 which includes a memo not to forget to thank Martelli in Rome (probably meaning Carlo) and the Medici.<sup>1036</sup> Possibly, the council of the city of Bern was also referring to the Medici in 1473, when they asked the Ravensburger to see to it that their envoy, Thüring Frickert, who was staying with the pope in Rome at the time, was able to borrow up to 1,000 ducats from their business associates in case he needed money to cover his costs of living.<sup>1037</sup> These are the only clues indicating a cooperation between the Medici and the Ravensburgers to be found in the archives so far.

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1032 Krag (1914), p. 23.

1033 BNCF, Manoscritti II, V, no. 11, c. 136: Letter of 19 August 1472 from the Medici bank in Rome to Cosimo e Lorenzo de' Medici e co. di Venezia.

1034 BNCF, Manoscritti II, V, no. 11, c. 122: Letter of 31 August 1472 from the Medici bank in Bruges to Cosimo e Lorenzo de' Medici e co. di Venezia: *Per tal chagione arete visto di duc. 900 che d'Anversa per fino a di xxv di magio vi traemo in Bartolommeo Vvelzer e chompagni, o vero in Bartolommeo Vvelzer e fratelli, àvvi da Giorgio Everinche, a grs. 54 per duc., che gli arete promessi e al giorno paghati e così fate non 'sendo, e ponete a vostro conto e dattene avixo.*

1035 Archivio della Scuola Superiore Normale di Pisa, Archivio Salviati, no. 24, c. 25. On Bartholomäus Welser, see Geffcken (2002), pp. 87–96 and 135. On Salviati, see Carlomagno (2009).

1036 Schulte (1923), III, p. 20: *Item wenn man gen Florencz schriben werde, das man dem Martell dank siner fürdernuss, so er uns gen Rom ton hat, des glich den Medici mit brieff ferggan.*

1037 Reproduced in Schulte (1900), pp. 194–195.

### 5.1.3 Spinelli

#### Diesbach-Watt Company

In the 1420s, the Bernese merchant Nikolaus von Diesbach founded a trading company and took on Peter and Hug von Watt from St Gallen as his most important partners.<sup>1038</sup> One of their business hubs was Nuremberg, where Peter von Watt set up trade with the east. In European economic history, the Diesbach-Watt company is above all famous as a cloth-trading enterprise, second only to the Great Ravensburg Trading Company. Much less is known about their role in the exchange business which, however, must have been quite substantial. Otherwise, the Medici banker Giovanni d’Amerigho Benci would not have complained in 1433 that Diesbach-Watt was ruining the prices: *quelli di San Ghallo ànno guasto l’arte di merchantia di che si sono impacciati*.<sup>1039</sup>

The representative of the Diesbach-Watt company in Basel was Wernli von Kilchen, who had gained his wealth in the Halbisen company but then parted from them and set up his own business. He and Peter von Watt took advantage of the opportunities that the presence of Florentine banks in Basel offered. As early as 26 June 1433, von Kilchen is mentioned as a debtor for something over 3 Rhe. fl. in the account books of the Medici in Basel.<sup>1040</sup> In September 1436, Giovanni Cherlini (also spelt Carlin), in his role as Peter von Watt’s factor, or von Kilchen’s assistant Bartolomeo redeemed bills of exchange at the Medici branch in Venice for 1,600 ducats, which von Kilchen had purchased from the Medici bank in Basel.<sup>1041</sup> In January 1437, Heinrich Halbisen sent Cherlini 400 ducats through the same channel.<sup>1042</sup> In Venice, von Watt also collaborated with *Churado Zel* (Konrad Ziel from Nuremberg or Konrad Zilli from St Gallen) and with a non-identifiable man called Gianni Torinbergh. Through the Medici network they received something over 1,000 ducats from the company of Jacopo di Pracoman in Geneva.<sup>1043</sup> Regarding these transactions, Wernli von Kilchen and Peter von Watt only figured as clients of the Medici who purchased bills of exchange in Basel and Venice.<sup>1044</sup>

The fact that von Kilchen himself did business with bills of exchange is borne out by an entry in the books of the Council of Basel’s financial administration. It shows that, on 7 June 1436, Dego degli Alberti paid *Wernero de Locase* on behalf of the Church Convention 25 ducats for

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1038 Körner (1991), p. 28.

1039 ASFi, MAP 88, no. 119.

1040 ASFi, MAP 131 C, c. 19r.

1041 Simonsfeld (1887), II, p. 68; Sieveking (1906), p. 21.

1042 ASFi, MAP 134, no. 1, cc. 89–91. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 550–552. - In all cases, Basel was the taker; Ammann (1928), p. 79; Ehrensperger (1972), p. 283.

1043 ASFi, MAP 134, no. 1, c. 126r. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 550–552. - Kellenbenz (1967b), p. 461.

1044 On Wernli von Kilchen (Kirchen) at the Diesbach-Watt company, see Veronesi (2014), p. 148.

a bill of exchange to Poland valued at 20 ducats.<sup>1045</sup> Since none of the Florentine banks at the Curia had a correspondent in eastern Europe, the Diesbach-Watt company – which had a branch office in Wrocław – was instructed to carry out the transfer.<sup>1046</sup> At the latest by July 1437, Tommaso Spinelli at the Curia began relying on this branch network to do business.<sup>1047</sup> An essential pillar of this partnership was the personal relationship between Spinelli and von Kilchen. They knew each other from Basel, where Spinelli rented rooms at the merchant's house. The Italian certainly had great trust in von Kilchen. After Spinelli had returned to Italy and his successor, Giovanni da Castro, had also been called back south, Lionardo Doffi took over as branch manager in Basel. As the young man was still quite inexperienced in the banking business, da Castro wrote to Spinelli requesting that he ask von Kilchen for support for Doffi: *Hordina a Lionardo lo bisogno e rachomandalo a Varnieri e a cchi altri ti pare e lassali i danari che chredi bisogno, e choxì hordina l'altre choxe, e vièntene, escine di chostà.*<sup>1048</sup> He added that the Basel merchant could also be permitted to issue bills of exchange for members of the Curia up to a limit yet to be determined: *Io ò non so se mai di chostì v'arete a partire, ma se a tale termine viene, insino da hora voglio che tu sia avisato di mio animo, che se ti pare di lasciare chomesioni a Ghuarnieri, ti possa trare in chortigiani insino a cierta somma.*<sup>1049</sup>

The only business deal between Spinelli and the Diesbach-Watt Company on record is mentioned in a letter from Tommaso Spinelli to Giovanni da Castro in Basel dated 29 July 1437.<sup>1050</sup> In it he reports that the Curia had honoured a bill of exchange for 3,000 ducats that had been issued in Nuremberg by Peter von Watt. The recipients of this sum appear to have been some unnamed Polish businessmen who had deposited the sum at a Diesbach-Watt branch office, either in Poznan or in Cracow. He goes on to say that he had sent the receipt to Giovanni Cherlini in Venice a few days before and was now waiting for the latter to deposit the amount at the local Borromei branch office. Evidently, Spinelli had given Peter von Watt an opportunity to issue bills of exchange directly on Borromei at the Curia – a privilege that, before him, the Medici had only granted to the Rummels and the Kresses. Spinelli, however, carefully assessed

1045 Haller (1901), p. 240.

1046 Ammann (1928), pp. 82–85.

1047 YUSA 90, 1701: In the Borromei Bank's balance sheet at the Curia of 16 June 1436, there are only very few entries that have a reference to Germany. The sister bank in Basel had a credit balance of f. 2,745 and a certain *messer Jacopo da Chostanza* had debts of over f. 200. Spinelli also collaborated with Adovardo Giachinotti di Corte and Buonsignore Benzi di Corte. Possibly, these were still open accounts from the time before the foundation of a separate papal bank. – YUSA 90, 1702: In the balance sheet of 15 October 1436, the picture has not changed substantially. The list contains the names of two more German creditors, namely *Tedrigho de Driss della dioca. di Cholognia* and *messer Ermanno de Landerbergho*. – YUSA 90, 1701–1703: The balance sheets of the Basel branch for this year, too, list neither German customers nor correspondents. This means that a strategy for the German market could not have existed at the time.

1048 YUSA 89, 1694b. Published in Weissen (2021), p. 493.

1049 YUSA 89, 1694a. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 489–492.

1050 YUSA 89, 1694a. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 489–492.

the risks of these transactions and also complained about the amount of this exchange, noting that he had only honoured it thanks to his trust in Wernli von Kilchen. It was also not acceptable, he continued, that the two Germans wrote their letters in German because this meant that he had to resort to the help of translators. From now on he wished for everything to be written in Latin. At the time, da Castro appears to have been in the process of negotiating an agreement for further business with the two Germans, but whether such a partnership agreement between the Borromei and the Diesbach Watt company was ever finalized remains unanswered for lack of further sources. In any case, contact between the two companies soon broke off, and, after 1445, the company failed to make any profit for some years, which Martin Körner attributes to disruptions caused by the occurrence of military actions in southern Germany.<sup>1051</sup> Wernli von Kilchen, who must have died before 20 August 1446, appears in no further Italian document.<sup>1052</sup>

### Second Phase of Spinelli's Presence

*Tommaso Spinelli e co. di Corte* resumed commercial relations with Germany from the mid-1450s onwards,<sup>1053</sup> as the increase of transactions with Germans in the accounts indicate. Evidently, Spinelli was trying to offset the losses accrued in business in the Mediterranean where, in Spain, major debtors tended to honour their outstanding debts only after a long delay, or not at all.<sup>1054</sup> When civil war broke out in Aragon in 1462, followed by the war between the Turks and Venice only a year later, the trade network in these regions almost fell apart at the seams, leading to a serious economic crisis. The situation was made even worse when Cosimo de' Medici died in 1464, with the ensuing unpredictability leading to the crash of many trading companies in Florence.<sup>1055</sup>

Fundamental to the organization of Spinelli's German business was that it was conducted almost exclusively through Venice. Only a few transactions with Cologne brought the banking centre of Bruges into play. After he split from the Borromei, the Florentine banker no longer

1051 Körner (1991), p. 28.

1052 Kirch / Nebinger (1967), p. 265. – Stromer (1970a), p. 202: In 1452, the collector Spitzmiri in Poznan handed over 1,090 Hungarian ducats to Kunz Guldenmund, the former employee of the Diesbach-Witt company, for transfer to the Curia. Who was meant to honour the bill of exchange there is not known.

1053 Caferro (1995), p. 744; YUSA 93, 1779. – A document dated 9 December 1458, in which Tommaso made the priest *Ruberto di Iacopo di Alemagna* parish priest in the church of S. Maria in Rignalla in the municipality of Villamagna led to speculations concerning a planned opening of business with German customers. Did he want a German priest for this church with his travelling German clients in mind? ASFi, NA, no. 1396, notaio Baldovino Baldovini (anni 1431–1464), c. 342r (9 dicembre 1458). Already his predecessor was a priest from Germany, ser Georgius domini Cefferini de Alamania de Cilegia (Silesia), whose will of 21 November 1458 has been preserved: ASFi, NA 19379, c. 284r/v. Note from Lorenz Böninger.

1054 Jacks / Caferro (2001), pp. 55–56.

1055 Roover (1963), p. 358; Caferro (1995), p. 745; Jacks / Caferro (2001), p. 252.

had a branch office in La Serenissima, which meant that he had to rely on collaborating with correspondents. His main liaisons for clearing incoming goods and moneys from the North was his brother Niccodemo, who had settled in Venice in the 1430s, and Filippo Inghirami from Prato.<sup>1056</sup> The Venetian Maffeo Franco, an administrator at the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, also frequently called on the two bankers.<sup>1057</sup>

### Nuremberg

In the second half of the fifteenth century, Nuremberg's international significance surpassed that of all other German cities. Evidently, this was also noticed by the Spinelli as the growth of business deals with resident merchants after 1460 show.<sup>1058</sup> Notably, they did not introduce any new and innovative banking operations to the local financial market but simply reintroduced what merchants in Upper Germany had taken for granted under the Medici in return for payment up to the 1430s.<sup>1059</sup>

The first Nuremberg merchant to feature in Lionardo Spinelli's books as a partner was Anton Paumgartner. However, they did not rely on him to conduct business with Prussia as the Medici had done with his father Konrad, but entrusted him with the handling of the servitia payments made by the archbishop of Cologne, Rupert of the Palatinate, via his branch offices in Cologne and Venice.<sup>1060</sup> Unfortunately, Paumgartner went bankrupt shortly after the payment of the last instalment in 1465.<sup>1061</sup> This transaction, albeit very large, is the only evidence we have of a cooperation between the two great merchant companies. However, Spinelli does not appear to have suffered any losses through the collapse of the Paumgartners, as there are no open accounts from this collaboration to be found in his balance sheets.

Hans Müllner was a very experienced man when it came to doing business with Florentine bankers. As early as 26 January 1443, as a factor for Erhart Schürstab, and together with the head of the Medici branch in Geneva, Ruggieri della Casa, he helped to transfer the proceeds from the sale of the County of Basse-Marche amounting to f. 9,974 by way of a bill of exchange for Duke Louis the Younger of Bavaria-Ingolstadt from Geneva to Nuremberg.<sup>1062</sup> In 1460, he arranged for the settlement of the expenses run up by a Nuremberg delegation to the Curia which it had received from the Lucchese banker Galeotto Franciotti. The payment was made through a branch office of the bank Filippo Pini & Andrea Graziani, which was domiciled in

1056 Nicodemus de Spinellis qd Leonardi, Cives Veneciarum, <http://www.civesveneciarum.net/dettaglio.php?id=2580>, versione 56/2017-02-01, 14.05.2021.

1057 Braunstein (1994b), p. 183.

1058 Caferro (1995), p. 744. – On the causes and phases of this economic upswing in the city on the Pegnitz, see Lütge (1967); Rülke (1971); Simon (1974), p. 19; Stromer (1981); Blanchard (1995), p. 18.

1059 See Pölnitz (1940), p. 229; Stromer (1970a), pp. 194–218.

1060 For the details concerning the processing of this servitia payment, see below p. 430.

1061 On the bankruptcy of Anton Paumgartner, see Kohl (1868), p. 140.

1062 Stromer (1970a), p. 200.

Bruges. Müllner is said to have worked for the company as a factor.<sup>1063</sup> Lionardo Spinelli wrote to Müllner in Nuremberg from Venice on 5 February 1465 in response to a query from the German – which has not survived – as to whether Spinelli was interested in working with him in the bills of exchange business. Lionardo Spinelli noted down the significant points in his letter, which he handed over to Müllner’s representative in Venice, Lienhard Hirschvogel,<sup>1064</sup> in his *ricordanze*, which is how we know about the letter’s contents. Among other things, he was ordered to settle the accounts only after the receipt from Rome had been presented to Hirschvogel in Venice. The usance was reckoned to be roughly fifty-three days.<sup>1065</sup> The motive for entering into this relationship was presumably the fact that Pope Paul II had entrusted Müllner with the task of transferring the collectorates of the diocese of Cracow, for which he needed a partner in Rome.<sup>1066</sup> This assignment led to the highest recorded transfer of 500 ducats; possibly the 303 ducats sent from Frankfurt to Rome for Cardinal Francesco Piccolomini on 10 September 1465 were also part of this Polish money.<sup>1067</sup> In any case, it appears that the dealings between Müllner and Spinelli grew rapidly and quickly reached a considerable volume. In the balance sheets of 24 March and 28 March 1466, as well as of 31 March 1467, of *Lionardo Spinelli e compagni di Corte*, an account was kept for the German in which he had f. 496, f. 214, and f. 9 10s., respectively, outstanding on these cut-off dates.<sup>1068</sup> It appears that the six surviving bills of exchange merely represent only a small share of a much larger volume. After 1467, we no longer have any evidence of a cooperation between the two banking houses. Hans Müllner died in 1485.

Apart from Müllner, the two brothers Heinrich and Peter Meichsner from Ptuj acted as Spinelli’s main correspondents in Nuremberg. Most likely Heinrich had been living in the city on the Pegnitz already years before attaining citizenship (14 March 1447) while his brother Peter only moved to the city in 1474. Heinrich was not only an extremely successful and wealthy businessman: he also quickly rose to political prominence and power in the city. There is evidence

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1063 Stromer (1970a), pp. 199–200.

1064 All correspondence between Spinelli and Müllner went through Hirschvogel, whom Müllner refers to several times as *nostro*: YUSA 98, 1852. This is definite evidence for the collaboration between Müllner and Hirschvogel, as already suspected by Schaper (1973), p. 108.

1065 YUSA 93, 1779, c. 85r: *Scrissi detto di a Norinbergho, a Gian Muler e compagni ch'ero contento paghare per lui quella quantità di ducati mi traesse, con patti che per ogni ducati ciento di chamera ch'io paghi in Corte di Roma, mi facci buoni qui in Vinesia ducati 99 di Vinegia di peso, dal di ch'io avessi apresentato la quitanza a Lionardo Irsifolgor a mesi 1 ½ e più di 8 farmi lo mio paghamento, e che prima me n'avisasse qui la lettera del chanbio e a sugiellare dentro con ciera, e si ancora sugiellare la lettera e dare sengni e contrasengni della persona a chui saranno a paghare e che cominciasse a sui posta*. See YUSA 93, 1779, 100 on right and 102 on right. – On Müllner, see Stromer (1970a), pp. 199–200, 384, 430, and 454. On Hirschvogel’s presence in Venice, see Schaper (1973), pp. 110–111.

1066 Stromer (1970a), pp. 200 and 384; Schaper (1973), p. 108; Esch (1998), no. 756.

1067 Esch (2007), p. 396.

1068 YUSA 91, 1738, p. 7; 91, 1739, p. 11; 91, 1742, p. 5. – Klier (1967), pp. 83–101: In detail on Heinrich and Peter Meichsner.

that he was in Venice as early as 1443, and his brother Peter, with whom he owned a trading company, had a permanent factor in Trieste by 1458. Heinrich Meichsner traded in cloth, mainly to Hungary, and attended the Frankfurt trade fairs.<sup>1069</sup> His first bill of exchange to Rome dates from 16 September 1467, but he must have been one of Spinelli's correspondents before that because, on 31 March of that year, he had served as a paying agent for him regarding a loan of f. 39 from the Würzburg cleric Paul Brant.<sup>1070</sup> He issued the last extant bill of exchange on 1 July 1469. On 11 November of the same year, *Righo and Piero Maissener di Norimbergho* were still listed as debtors in Spinelli's books with a sum of f. 181,<sup>1071</sup> but in the subsequent balance sheets only small amounts are to be found. Two entries in Guasparre Spinelli's *ricordanze* hint at the friendly nature of their relationship, for the Florentine banker sent a consignment of silk to Nuremberg in February 1470 as a gift for Heinrich Meichsner's wife.<sup>1072</sup> After Heinrich's death on 21 January 1471, an amount of f. 17 was still outstanding in Spinelli's books.<sup>1073</sup> In September of that year, Niccodemo succeeded in collecting f. 12 of that debt, but they reckoned they would have to write off the remaining amount: *e resto si perdono*.<sup>1074</sup> On 19 January of the following year, the outstanding debt was written off for good: *Perduti f. 5*.<sup>1075</sup> Very likely, Heinrich's son-in-law Heinrich III Rummel took charge of Meichsner's business when he himself was no longer capable due to infirmity.<sup>1076</sup>

Lionardo Spinelli's *ricordanze* contain an entry that raises some puzzling questions. On 31 January 1465, he noted that he had written a letter to *Jachomo Gortimer* of Nuremberg, allowing him to draw bills of exchange on *Lionardo Spinelli e compagni di Corte* in Nuremberg for his company in Rome.<sup>1077</sup> But who was this man *Gortimer*? In Venice in 1478, we have

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1069 Haller von Hallerstein (1967); Klier (1967).

1070 YUSA, 1742, c. 9. The guarantors were Andreas Inderklingen, Georg Hessler, and Alessandro Mosterlan.

1071 YUSA 91, 1744, p. 1.

1072 ASFi, *Aquisti e doni*, no. 460, c. 124r: *Questo dì di febraio 1469 ebbi da Thommaso Spinelli e compagnia settaioi [...] balle [...] del quale montò d'achordo chon Piero Nicholi f. [...] el quale mandai a Nurinbergha per Giovanni Lomel tedesco chon ordine che per mia parte lo donassi a la dona di messer Aricho Maixner*. A similar entry to be found on c. 125v.

1073 YUSA 91, 1747, p. 5. Some time after his death, Meichsner is still mentioned with an active business in the Roman balance sheet on 19 January 1472: *messer Stanzelas Nicholai e messer Lanzilao Alberti a presente a Norimbergo a Maisener: f. 2.14.6*. – In the lengthy Alberti family history published by Passerini (1869–1870), a certain Ladislao, son of Francesco d'Altobianco degli Alberti is mentioned on page 93. However, it is said that he was executed in Florence for reasons unknown on 3 February 1473 at the age of 32.

1074 YUSA 91, 1748, p. 15.

1075 YUSA 91, 1747, p. 17.

1076 Schaper (1981), p. 57, reports that, for this reason, Heinrich Meichsner was no longer elected to the city council to which he had belonged since 1453.

1077 YUSA 93, 1779, c. 85r: *Giovedì, a dì 31 di gennaioio. Scritti detto dì a Jachomo Gortimer di Norimbergho che [...] al trarmi a Roma per lettera di chambio insino alla somma di ducati 2500 di chamera. Son contento dar mi compimento con questo che qui in Vinegia mi proveschia della valuta dal dì li avessi paghati a mesi due, e messo per ongni cento ducati di chamera farmi buoni ducati cento di Vinegia e se questi fussono troppi dissi ero contento rimetella in lui*.

a Jakob Gartner from Nuremberg who appears in connection with Lienhard Hirschvogel and Konrad Marstaller.<sup>1078</sup> In turn, Marstaller features jointly with a *Jacomo Gortimer* in a document belonging to the Florentine Benvenuto Aldobrandi.<sup>1079</sup> Thus, it is reasonable to presume that Jachomo Gortimer and Jakob Gartner were one and the same person.<sup>1080</sup> Since no bills of exchange in his name have been preserved, and he is nowhere to be found in the Roman accounts either, it is doubtful whether Gartner ever made use of the opportunity Spinelli offered him.

We have one single case in which the Spinelli accepted a bill of exchange issued by Konrad Marstaller the Younger. Marstaller made out a bill of exchange for 100 ducats in Nuremberg on 12 November 1467 which was claimed by a certain *Laurencius Pesler*, a *doctor et canonicus Ratisponensis* on 14 December of the same year. Records show that this Nuremberg merchant was actually in Venice from 1465 on; we also know that he died in 1492.<sup>1081</sup>

The long-distance merchant and banker Ludwig Meuting from Augsburg also owned a branch office in Nuremberg, which was run by Hans Kramer.<sup>1082</sup> We still have documents today that attest to his business activities, albeit they probably only cover a fraction of the deals he made with the Spinelli. The seven bills of exchange issued by Kramer are all from the same year. It appears that he was only authorized to deal with small sums of money. Otherwise, it can hardly be explained that one of his customers had two bills of exchange made out on the same day. Another client split his payments by purchasing one *lettera* from Kramer and another from Konrad Marstaller the Younger. It is doubtful that such a procedure gave the *datori* a better rate of exchange or more security if they were using bills of exchange as mere payment orders. Since we can rule out any speculative deal, we may assume that they were used as traveller's cheques. Later, Hans Kramer operated a trading company with the Fuggers from Augsburg.<sup>1083</sup>

After terminating collaboration with the Roman Medici branch, the Rummels waited for almost forty years before once again entering into a business relationship with a Curia-based bank. There is evidence that, as of 9 September 1471, Wilhelm IV and Heinrich III Rummel in Nuremberg honoured bills of exchange issued by the Spinelli. On 19 January 1472, they feature as debtors for a sum of f. 491 6s. in the account books of the Curia bank.<sup>1084</sup> However, it is likely that they had taken over Heinrich Meichsner's successful business already at an earlier date;

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1078 Klier (1967), p. 89; Schaper (1973), p. 68.

1079 YUSA II, no. 161.

1080 Wolfgang von Stromer kindly informed me that he had found Hans Gartner in the *libri di commercio* of Francesco Contarini from the years 1448 to 1455. Here, too, his name is spelt *Gortiner*.

1081 Schaper (1973), pp. 154, 178 and 323.

1082 The trading company with the Fuggers was dissolved on 21 October 1486.

1083 Jansen (1907), p. 48.

1084 YUSA 91, 1748, pp. 5 and 9. We have no bills of exchange from the years during which the Rummels collaborated with the Spinelli.



this would explain why, on 16 September 1467, Heinrich Rummel, in a letter to Duke Louis IX the Rich of Bavaria-Landshut, offered his services to transfer money to Italy with the following words: ‘Wherever you change money in your country for Rome, Venice, or Florence, point them to us and as you write to me, one shall have one guilder per hundred as a bonus.’<sup>1085</sup> In 1471, it is noted in the Spinelli accounts that they had claims against the Rummels amounting to 1,380 ducats, but feared that they would only be able to recover 600 ducats due to a decision taken by a court in Rome.<sup>1086</sup> Shortly afterwards, they protested a bill of exchange made out by the Nuremberg bankers for 772 ducats with which Hinrich Drosedow of Lübeck was trying to settle claims, considering that the Rummels were insolvent.<sup>1087</sup> Christa Schaper’s hypothesis that this bankruptcy had something to do with the crisis of the Medici in Bruges – given that the two companies were in a correspondent relationship – can be clearly refuted on the basis of the records from the Spinelli archives, which, back then, the German historian did not have access to.<sup>1088</sup>

Not the entire amount the Florentines were trying to reclaim in Nuremberg was the result of exchange transactions. A substantial sum emanated from the very close, personal relationship between Guasparre Spinelli and Wilhelm V Rummel, who must have been born around 1454.<sup>1089</sup> Rummel was one of the few Germans who had the privilege of living at the banker’s Florentine palazzo for a longer period of time, on the one hand as a guest and an apprentice who worked for the bank – but not as a servant.<sup>1090</sup> In his *ricordanze*, Guasparre Spinelli noted that he had written to Wilhelm III Rummel in Nuremberg, telling him to reimburse a German upon the request of Luigi Guicciardini up to ten gold ducats against a receipt. The young Wilhelm V in Florence (*che stette qui in chassa*) had vouched for this procedure.<sup>1091</sup> The records of the Mercanzia tell how this sojourn ended. On 14 January 1472, Guasparre Spinelli appeared before court in Florence and demanded that coercive measures be taken against Wilhelm V Rummel, who was also present, as he owed him a substantial sum of money. He stated that Wilhelm had lived in his house for

1085 Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, München, Pfalz-Neuburg, Urkunden Bergwerksgegenstände 6, fol. 13: *Wo Ir bey euch im land wexel erfürt gen Rom, Venedig oder Florentz, weist die an uns und so Ir mir schreibt, sol albey eyner am hundred ain oren bevor haben.* – On the (partial) Duchy of Bavaria-Landshut, a frontrunner in terms of economic policy, see Stauber (1993); Ettelt-Schönewald (1995).

1086 YUSA 92, 1776: *I Rumelli di Norenbergho anno a dare duc. 1380. Io fo chonto che a la più chativa ché ne chaverà duc. 600 perché se hora avvuto la sentenza a Roma che bisognierà paghino duc. 600.*

1087 Nordmann (1933a); Stromer (1970a), p. 199.

1088 Schaper (1981), p. 52.

1089 Lemmel (16.06.2018).

1090 Böninger (2006), p. 264.

1091 ASFi, Aquisti e doni, no. 460, c. 128v: *Richardo chome hoggi questo dì XXVIII di luglio [1470] schrissi a Nurinbergho a Ghuelmo nurinbergho Romel che dovessino paghare ad ogni sua volontà a Nicholò di [Leerstelle] todescho fino a ducati 8 in 10 d’oro e che paghassino quietanza e che ce la mandassi per altrattanta persona auta qui da messer Luigi Ghuiciardini a chui stanza fo paghare detti danari. Fattone Richardo a le Richordanze del bancho chome Ghuelmo che stette qui in chassa mi sobrigha a trarmi d’ogni dano e per ciò si depena.* – Auf c. 129v: *Richardo chome fino a dì XXIII d’aghosto prestai a [A]nbruoxo tedesco da Norinbergho una ghabanela bixa doppia di stima di f. otto e quali mà promesso Ghuelmo Romel farmeli buoni.*

seven years, for which he owed him f. 70. On top of that, the young man had received a total of f. 440 in cash to cover his daily expenses. The plaintiff had also delivered brocade and cloth worth f. 315 to Nuremberg on Wilhelm's instructions. On 11 April 1472, the Mercanzia decided that Wilhelm should not be sent to the *Stinche*, the debtor's prison, probably in order to give him a chance to raise the money at home in Germany.<sup>1092</sup>

The Rummels' outstanding debts did not pose an existential threat to the Spinelli bank, but the claim, which had risen to f. 865 thanks to interest, was certainly considerable.<sup>1093</sup> Immediately after taking over the company management after the death of his uncle Tommaso. Guasparre attempted to collect the money in Germany. This not only involved the moneys owed by Meuting and the Rummels, but also debts of the cleric Leonhard Jamnitzer. Guasparre's first step was to appoint Benvenuto di Daddo Aldobrandi as his procurator.<sup>1094</sup> At the same time, he made use of his good relations with the pope in the hope of putting pressure on the Rummels. On 16 August 1472, Sixtus IV wrote to the city council of Nuremberg and asked them to support the procurators of the merchants Andrea del Bene and Alessandro de' Bardi in their efforts against the Rummels.<sup>1095</sup> Aldobrandi himself went bankrupt two years later, so that the pope's pleas went unheeded, to Spinelli's disappointment. In one last ditch effort, Spinelli appointed *frate Giovanni Menzer* on 6 February 1478 as his procurator to sort out the Rummel affair, however, to no avail.<sup>1096</sup> Finally, the debt was written off in the books, although the legal battle still continued.<sup>1097</sup> On 15 July 1480, Spinelli mobilized prominent public figures to help him gain redress by appointing the bishops of Forlì and Ascoli Piceno as his procurators with the task of inquiring whether it would be possible to retrieve some money from the widows of the Rummels, given that Heinrich III

1092 ASFi, Mercanzia 1472, cc. 224r–225v and cc. 291v–292v; Mercanzia 310, c. 69v. Note from Lorenz Böninger. – After his return to Nuremberg, Wilhelm V Rummel was no longer active in trading. On his funerary hatchment in the Sebaldus Church in Nuremberg is written: *Anno Domini 1500 starb der Erbar Wilhelm Rumel von Lonerstat am Sankt Jeremiastag*. He was survived by a son and four daughters. See Schaper (1981), pp. 96–97.

1093 YUSA 91, 1744, p. 1; 1748, p. 7; YUSA 92, 1753, p. 1; 1754, p. 3; 1755, p. 3; 1756, p. 1; 1758, p. 3; 1760, p. 3; 1761, p. 1; 1766, p. 3; 1768, p. 7; 1769. While the Rummels had to discontinue their business activities, Ludwig Meuting was documented as a merchant in Antwerp as of 1479. See Pölnitz (1953), p. 3.

1094 On Aldobrandi, see below p. 214. The power of attorney in YUSA 55, 1182, c. 32r (27 August 1473): *Procura a Benvenuto per anni quatro. Richardo farà chome questo dì 27 d'aghosto 1473 i'ò costituito e fatto procuratore Benvenuto di Daddo a Norimbergho ché possi rischoutere e piatire sì in nome mio chome in nome della ragione di chorte di Roma. E dura detta procchura per tempo d'anni 4 a venire. E questo dì 27 detto el sopradetto Benvenuto s'è partito di qui per essere a Norimbergho. Il quale promisse d'attendere ai fatti nostri chon diligenza, cioè di ritrarre danari dal Mautino e chosi dagli Rumelli, e chosi di far pruova di ritrarre duchati 180 che sechondo me resto a' vere da Lionardo Jamiczzer.*

1095 Schaper (1981), p. 52. – StAN, Rep. 16, B-Laden, document no. 32. It is not clear from the sources whether Alessandro de' Bardi was still working with the Spinelli at this time. StAN, A 1 Nr. 1472–09–02/2: On 2 September 2 1472, the city of Florence issued an accompanying letter for Ludovico Lancilotti, who was to represent the interests of Florentine merchants in Nuremberg.

1096 YUSA 55a, 1183. He gave him a horse and 15 Rhe. fl. for his journey from Florence to Nuremberg.

1097 YUSA 92, 1769.

and Wilhelm IV had died in 1476 and 1480, respectively.<sup>1098</sup> He was now asking for 988 *ducati di camera*, of which 50 ducats were to cover the costs of this dispute. Additionally, he provided the two high clerics with important information: For one thing, there already existed three court decisions on this matter; for the other, the two accused men had already been excommunicated, and should they be unwilling to pay, the procurators should indeed enforce their excommunication. He also gave them a few letters to take along: one to the city council of Nuremberg, another to the dean of Bamberg, and eight letters of recommendation, five of them addressed to cardinals.<sup>1099</sup> However, this prominent deployment also failed to achieve any results. In a next step, Guasparre Spinelli appointed *messer Giorgio Sineringe, tedesco* (Jörg Kesselring) as his procurator against the Rummels,<sup>1100</sup> and, in the following year, the pope sent another letter to Nuremberg addressing the matter.<sup>1101</sup> Finally, the city council of Nuremberg informed Kesselring that they were unable to seek redress against the sons of the two debtors since they were not subject to the city council. Spinelli turned to the Curia one last time, which again issued an excommunication.<sup>1102</sup> After that we have no more records of this dispute.

Spinelli fared a bit better against another of his debtors, *Lionardo Jamnizer*, who paid back almost 60 ducats on a much larger debt in 1465.<sup>1103</sup> His name appears a second time in Italian documents in 1474 when, instead of the demanded 190 ducats, he paid merely 70. In an attempt to obtain his money, Spinelli had Leonhard Jamnitzer excommunicated but it is not known whether this measure led to the desired result.<sup>1104</sup>

### Augsburg

Hans Meuting the Rich from Augsburg entertained business relations with Florentines in Venice as early as 1436, as the Medici account books show.<sup>1105</sup> Meuting was the head of a string of companies at the time, in which Konrad Guldenmund<sup>1106</sup> and Lorenz Egen<sup>1107</sup> were also involved.

1098 Schaper (1981), p. 106.

1099 YUSA 55a, 1183, c. 91r.

1100 YUSA 55a, 1183, c. 93r.

1101 Papal records relating to these events: StAN, Rep. 16, B-Laden, documents nos. 56 (6 May 1480), 57 (18 August 1480), and 59 (11 June 1482).

1102 StAN, RB 3, f. 198 and 209, 1482. See Schaper (1981), pp. 52–53.

1103 YUSA 93, 1779, c. 34r.

1104 YUSA 55, 1182, c. 43v.

1105 See above p. 199 – Hans's son Ludwig had risen to become the biggest taxpayer in his home city by 1461 and was one of Germany's leading men in high finance. See Kellenbenz (1994), p. 311. – Ludwig's economic power is borne out by the loan he granted Archduke Sigismund of Tyrol in the amount of 35,000 Rhe. fl. in 1456. In return, he received the exclusive purchasing rights on silver in Schwaz and Gossensass. See Steiner (1978), pp. 44–45.

1106 Stromer (1965), pp. 353–354, calls him Kunz Guldenmundel. He was in the service of the Diesbach-Watt company until 1444. In 1458, he was a partner of the Nuremberg merchant Lienhart Reutheimer. Until now it was assumed that he was active in this company until well into the 1470s. He was active in Poznan. So far, we have no references to relations with Meuting or Egen in the literature. He died in 1477/78.

1107 Jansen (1907), p. 173.

He offered Spinelli lucrative links to a range of important trade cities in the North in which he operated branch offices. In the Spinelli archives, there is mention of branches in Cologne, Augsburg, Nuremberg, Cracow, and Poznan. In the years around 1465, Meuting himself resided in Cracow and Poznan. In Augsburg, he had entrusted his factor Jörg Roggenburg with his business, in Cologne it was Nikolaus Perckheimer, and in Nuremberg Hans Kramer worked for him. Bills of exchange were sent to the Spinelli in Rome from all these places. In Rome they kept a joint account for all of Meuting's companies (*Luigi Mantini e chompagni d'Auspurgo*). As for all other Upper German trading partners, the actual clearing of payments was done in Venice, where Meuting himself was often present.<sup>1108</sup> His account at the Spinelli bank in Rome remained active only until around 1472.<sup>1109</sup> Meuting was a very important partner for the Spinelli although, in comparison to Nuremberg, Augsburg still only played a minor role in the field of international transactions.<sup>1110</sup>

We know of the banking business in Rome of Markus Fugger around the year 1470. He is the brother of the famous merchants Ulrich and Georg Fugger. He worked as a scribe at the Apostolic Chancery, and there is evidence that he served as a creditor on different occasions – probably in conjunction with his brothers. *Messer Marcho Fugier* is mentioned in the balance sheet of Spinelli's Rome branch of 5 March 1475 in connection with loans to *messer Lionardo Scandeler* from the diocese of Freising in the value of 200 ducats and to *messer Nicholò Cholein, tedescho*, for 42 ducats. What part Markus Fugger actually played here remains unclear, but we may assume that it involved credit deals.<sup>1111</sup> This was certainly only a sideline, albeit a lucrative one. It is certainly not correct to portray him merely as a manager of “a small branch of his family's business”,<sup>1112</sup> given that he mostly likely established the link between his brother Ulrich in Nuremberg and the Spinelli in Rome, which resulted in a lively business between these two great companies.<sup>1113</sup> Markus Fugger was probably not the only case in which a son of a German merchant family who, as a cameral cleric, helped his relatives do profitable business. The same is probably true of various members of the Pirckheimer family of Nuremberg, who, in their function as members of the Curia, were involved in financial transactions.<sup>1114</sup> In their role as

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1108 YUSA 98, 1868.

1109 YUSA 91, 1744, p. 1; 1748, p. 7.

1110 This hypothesis stands in contradiction to Simon (1974), p. 19.

1111 YUSA 92, 1753. In the Spinelli balance sheet of 10 August 1477, Markus Fugger is mentioned, too: YUSA 92, 1766, p. 10. – For Markus Fugger's financial business at the Curia, see Jansen (1907), pp. 50–51; Favier (1987), p. 204.

1112 Maas (1981), pp. 104 and 120–121.

1113 Stromer (1970a), p. 196 mentions a number of cameral clerics at the end of the 14th century whom he suspects were relatives of associates of large German trading companies.

1114 See Pölnitz (1953), p. 3; Schuchard (1987). – In the Spinelli balance sheet of 31 March 1467, the cleric Hans Pirckheimer (Giovanni Pirckheimer, perhaps also Perckheimer) is listed with a debt of f. 38 6s. 8d. There is no information as to the reason for this entry: YUSA 92, 1766.

money lenders, these clerics granted loans to fellow countrymen and possibly also advanced annates; however, none of them dealt in bills of exchange or stood in connection with a bank in Germany in the role of correspondent.

#### St Gallen

We may assume that Jörg Zilli (*Georvin Zilio*) was related to the well-known Hans Zilli, who was based in Venice. On 10 May 1483, he was officially and rightfully granted a chamber in the Fondaco dei Tedeschi which, nota bene, he had been using together with representatives of the Hirschvogel company ever since 1457.<sup>1115</sup> However, we know of only one bill of exchange for f. 40 that he sent to Rome. Zilli's main business appears to have been the trade in *tele di San Gallo* (cloth) which Lionardo Spinelli purchased from him in large quantities and had sent to Rome.<sup>1116</sup>

The transactions between Spinelli and Jakob Mötteli were definitely more substantial. On 28 September 1464, King Peter of Aragon sent his procurator Alfonso Ianes a bill of exchange for f. 729 2/3, which was to be paid to Tommaso Spinelli in Florence. Should Ianes not be there at the time, Piero di Cosimo de' Medici was to serve the bill of exchange. The king, who was using bills of exchange like a banker to obtain loans in order to cover his costs of war, had received the same amount from Jacobo Carmau (Kamerer?) and Jacobo Meteli (Jacob Mötteli the Rich) in Barcelona.<sup>1117</sup> Evidently, Spinelli was in a business relationship with the two.<sup>1118</sup>

#### Memmingen

Hans Vöhlin the Younger (1423–96) and Erhard Vöhlin the Younger (d. 1484/85) headed a major trading company. Up to now, the mention of the town of Nördlingen in 1469 was the only evidence we had regarding foreign business activities of the two brothers; in Italy, the first records for them were from 1478, the first bill of exchange to Rome from 1488.<sup>1119</sup> A bill of exchange found in the Spinelli archives dated 5 January 1467 shows that Hans Vöhlin already maintained banking relations with Venice towards the end of the 1460s and he himself probably resided there, at least from time to time. The Spinelli probably knew him personally from his stays at the Fondaco, stays which gave them the chance to discuss together the general conditions of possible exchange transactions to Rome. On the other hand, the fact that the document in question was not written in Italian indicates that the two Memmingen merchants were quite new to the business with Florentines, otherwise they would have known that the Italians attached

1115 Simonsfeld (1887), I, no. 557.

1116 See YUSA 93, 1779, cc. 3 left, 8 right, and 49 right.

1117 Jacob Mötteli the Rich (d. 1521) belonged to a branch of the family that had separated from the Great Ravensburg Trading Company in 1452. See Durrer (1893). There is no indication there that Jacob Mötteli himself had resided in Spain.

1118 Peyer (1959), pp. 179–180.

1119 Eirich (1971), pp. 128–131.

great importance to the correct handling of bills of exchange, which included, among other things, the use of Italian.

#### Vienna

Although the Spinelli enjoyed excellent relations with the imperial court in Vienna and had become something like the court's trusted suppliers of silks, they did not maintain a correspondent relationship with any merchants in Vienna. Any purchase in Florence had to be settled in Venice. Leonhard Jamnitzer repaid his debt of 59 ½ ducats to Benedetto Spinelli there in 1464.<sup>1120</sup> Likewise, the imperial envoys were not funded through bills of exchange directly to Rome. Johannes Hinderbach travelled to the Curia in 1464, not least for his own purposes, for he was seeking to succeed Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa as bishop of Bressanone, following the latter's death in August of that year.<sup>1121</sup> The funding of this mission is recorded in Lionardo Spinelli's *ricordanze* – Spinelli was residing in Venice at the time. The first transaction was carried out on 5 December, when the banker in Venice received 120 ducats in cash from Jakob Zettaner, a factor working for the Viennese merchant Simon Putel. Putel had received the instructions from Konrad Hinderbach (*Interpoc*). By means of a *lettera d'avviso*, he had instructed his bank in Rome to pay this sum to the relative of his client in Rome and, if necessary, to grant him a credit of up to 60 ducats.<sup>1122</sup>

#### Benvenuto di Daddo Aldobrandi

Benvenuto di Daddo Aldobrandi, born around 1427, appears for the first time in the role of merchant on 17 July 1450 when he was found guilty by the Mercanzia in Florence for defaulting on f. 20 in connection with the linen trade.<sup>1123</sup> Since, at the time, linen production was centred mostly in central Europe, it is possible that he was engaged in the linen trade with Germany, even at this early point in time. The first records for his involvement in this market date to 1457 in connection with his father's tax returns to the Florentine Catasto of that year.<sup>1124</sup> Among the six *debitori* of his son Benvenuto, he mentions four Germans by name, who owe him more than f. 200: *Luigi tedesco da Usporgho*, *Ghuasparre da Noronbergho*, *Arigo tedesco di deta tera*,

1120 YUSA 93, 1779, cc. 29v und 50v.

1121 Strnad (1997), p. 422.

1122 YUSA 93, 1779, cc. iv, 2v, 79v, 81r, and 87r. – On Simon Putel of Vienna, see Simonsfeld (1887), I, pp. 390, 423, 492, 495, and 513; Braunstein (2016), p. 215. The man referred to as Zettaner in the Italian sources was probably a member of the Zentiner family.

1123 ASFi, Mercanzia 4416, c. 119v.

1124 ASFi, Catasto 802, cc. 290r–293r. – ASFi, Catasto 912, cc. 273r–274r: In the Florentine Catasto of 1469, Daddo di Buto Aldobrandi, then already 70 years old, told the tax authorities that he was a *calzolaio* and had rented a workshop from the Ospedale degli Innocenti. He owned a residence, several farmsteads, assets in the Monte, and a slave woman he had purchased from Giovanni Rucellai in Venice. This meant, he belonged to the Florentine middle class which, for a shoemaker (*calzolaio*), was quite astonishing.

and *Gilio di Franchoforte*. With regard to the man from Augsburg, Ludwig Meuting is a very probable candidate; the other men are not even remotely identifiable. In the list of *creditori*, which is significantly longer, no German name is featured. There is no mention of a stay of his son in Germany, nor does Daddo allude to the existence of a trading company in any form. These facts strongly suggest that Benvenuto Aldobrandi operated a kind of itinerant silk trade between Florence and Nuremberg, and, for this purpose, had entered into a partnership with Alessio di Benedetto Lapaccini in his home city. The legal basis for this collaboration was the so-called *accomenda*, in which Lapaccini provided the capital of f. 225; Aldobrandi presumably did not contribute money to the venture, but his manpower instead. This company with its focus on trade with Germany (*nella Magna [...] et in vestirgli in mercantie*) is on record for the years 1458 to 1461. A second *accomenda* is listed in court records from 1466 onwards. It was established by Aldobrandi together with Jacopo and Piero di Bartolomeo Gualterotti for the purpose of doing business in Nuremberg.<sup>1125</sup>

Benvenuto Aldobrandi's early partnerships with a focus on business in the German market were restricted to the cloth trade and did not involve banking. This changed when he entered into a cooperation with Guasparre Spinelli. By becoming directly involved in Nuremberg, the papal banker and silk manufacturer was probably trying to compensate for the major loss of business with German merchants which he been forced to concede in the years before 1470 when a significant part of international trade was shifted from Geneva to Lyons. Through his partnership with Benvenuto he was able to reactivate these old relationships and, at the same time, benefit from Benvenuto's many years of experience in the Upper German trade. The cloth merchant, in the other hand, hoped to extend his business portfolio by trading in bills of exchange to Rome.

The company *Benvenuto di Daddo Aldobrandi di Norimberga* is mentioned for the first time in the financial statement of the bank of the *Eredi di Tommaso Spinelli di Corte* of 20 July 1473. In the two accounts it was debited with f. 772 and f. 663.<sup>1126</sup> However, the collaboration between Aldobrandi and Spinelli must have existed at the latest since December 1471, for in a document dated 14 February 1471, Johannes Froeschel from Nuremberg confirmed that he had received a total of 254 Rhe. fl. from Heinrich III Rummel in several payments since 18 November of the previous year. He went on to say that Rummel owed this money to a Florentine by the name of Caspar Aldebrant *pro pannis sericeis*.<sup>1127</sup> The author of this document probably erroneously

1125 ASFi, Mercanzia 4440, cc. 233v–234r, and 276r; 4475, cc. 247rv; 1514, cc. 564r–565r, and 577r: *nella Magna nella città di Norimbergho o altrove dove a lui piacesse*. Note from Lorenz Böninger.

1126 YUSA 92, 1754, pp. 7 and 9.

1127 YUSA 632, 8866. This transaction was probably the reason for a letter of 28 February 1472 from the Signoria of Florence to the city council of Nuremberg in which the Signoria interceded on behalf of *Benvenutus Aldobrandus civis noster* (BNCF, ms. Palatino 1103 (= *Copialettere* of the Signoria, 1465–1474), cc. 143v–144r). – This vagueness concerning the naming of people involved here is also a feature in the Florentine sources. In ASFi,

conflated the names of Guasparre Spinelli and Benvenuto Aldobrandi. The mistake suggests that Aldobrandi was acting on behalf of an *accomenda* whose company included the names of both families.

Although there is no explicit mention of an *accomenda* with Aldobrandi in Guasparre Spinelli's *ricordanze*,<sup>1128</sup> their collaboration in connection with servitia payments from Estonia shows how close their ties were. During a stay in Florence, Aldobrandi had a notary issue a deed on 30 July 1473 in which he appointed Niccodemo Spinelli in Venice, and Jakob Gartner and Konrad Marstaller in Nuremberg as his procurators and authorized them to hand over eight papal bulls to the new bishop of Tartu, Johann III Bertkow (*Johannes Berconu*), against a payment of 1,084 cameral florins. According to Conrad Eubel, this bishop had already been accredited by the pope on June 6, after the Spinelli had paid the servitia payments due to the Chamber in Rome.<sup>1129</sup> On 27 August, Aldobrandi left Florence again after having received from Spinelli the power of attorney valid for four years. In his role as procurator, he was to travel to Nuremberg and to ensure that Spinelli's loans to the Meutings, the Rummels, and Leonhard Jamnitzer were repaid:<sup>1130</sup> *de' vostri afari di chuà fate chonto di esere di chuà in pe[r]sona, e chon perfeto amore si governerano, e basti.*<sup>1131</sup>

Next to the name Aldobrandi, the notarial deed of 1473 contains the addendum: *solitus habitare et moram trahere in civitatem Noremberg.*<sup>1132</sup> Whether Aldobrandi really took up residence in Nuremberg and had an official office address there remains doubtful. A Polish cleric, who was ordered to pay back a loan in Nuremberg that he had received from Guasparre Spinelli in Rome, was summoned to the inn "Zum Willden Mann" (*hospitium Hominis Silvestri*), where he was to hand over the money.<sup>1133</sup>

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NA 1753, c. 25v of 10 July 1477, the word is of *Guasparre da Firenze* although Benvenuto is probably meant. A further case was found by Lorenz Böniger in ASFi, NA 16832, cc. 413rv of 22 January 1477 (Florentine year count). In this document, *Bartholomeo Chobolt mercatori in Ulma et Anze Muler mercatori de Norimbergha* is acknowledged payment of 200 Rhe. fl. for silk delivered *a Benvenuto vocato Guaspar de Florentia de consensu et voluntate dicti Guasparris de Spinellis*.

1128 YUSA 55a, 1183.

1129 YUSA II, 161. ASFi, NA 1985, cc. 16rv of 30 July 1473. Note from Lorenz Böniger. – The accounts of the Spinelli of Rome list the bishop of Tartu, who was probably in Nuremberg to settle these payments, with a debt of 1,100 cameral ducats on 20 July 1473: YUSA 92, 1753, p. 9: *Giovanni, vescovo Tarbatensis a presente a Norimbergho [debitore di] f. 1100.* – YUSA 114, 2217. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 519–520. This transaction dragged on until December 1473. Aldobrandi sent the money in cash via Verona to Venice.

1130 YUSA 55a, 1183. Loan agreement of 1462 between Tommaso Spinelli and *dominus Leonardus Iamnizer presbiter de Austria* for 55 ducats in ASFi, NA 16825, c. 248v. Note from Lorenz Böniger.

1131 YUSA 114, 2217. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 519–520.

1132 YUSA II, 161.

1133 ASR, FC I app. 21, 5r. – Note from Arnold Esch. See Esch (1998), p. 369. – Today, the house "Zum Wilden Mann" is located at Weinmarkt 11. See Kohn (1984). There are no references as to any guests who stayed there in the literature. Note from Michael Diefenbacher (Nuremberg).



In Nuremberg, Benvenuto Aldobrandi was supported by his two sons Piero and Giovanni; in a letter of 7 December 1473, it is reported that the two young men took money, merchandise, and horses to Venice via Verona,<sup>1134</sup> among them a dapple-grey (*il rozino portante leardo pomelato*), which was in the hands of the servant Giovanni. Benvenuto Aldobrandi goes on to say that he had obtained from the Spinelli in Venice three colourful drapes (*drapi, tre peze cholorati, di braccia 141 di Firenze*) at a cost of f. 176  $\frac{1}{4}$  larghi. In addition, the transport had cost f. 184  $\frac{1}{4}$  larghi. Still, the business seems to have been profitable, for he asked to be sent further *drapi*, considering that he could sell them at good profit (*chon buono utile*).<sup>1135</sup> With regard to the cloth and silk trade, Spinelli granted Aldobrandi broad support. Not only did he entrust him with the goods for sale in Germany without any advance payment or security, he also urged other Florentine merchants to trust Aldobrandi in the same way as he did. One of these trading partners later wrote that Guasparre had promised him that Benvenuto was highly trustworthy.

However, Aldobrandi not only failed to collect the moneys owed to Spinelli, as tasked, but his own ventures were equally unsuccessful. In fact, his cloth business with German customers bankrupted him in a very short time. As early as December 1474, his debts had risen to f. 1,120. While he was more or less able to balance his account in the trade with bills of exchange to Rome,<sup>1136</sup> his trade in cloths was making heavy losses. He had wares sent to him in Nuremberg from Giovanni di Niccolò Ridolfi, Piero di Bartolomeo Gualterotti, Sandro de' Lotti, and Guasparre Spinelli in order to sell them on in Germany. Some of his important German clients gave him promissory notes for the delivered goods but, in the end, never paid up.

The creditors put a proposal to Aldobrandi, whom they called *cholzolaio*, on how he could repay his debts by means of annual payments, including a pledge by his father and his sons, but Benvenuto Aldobrandi did not take up the offer. Thereupon, the three cloth merchants turned to Spinelli, because he had, after all, vouched for Benvenuto and had thus, as it were, assumed a kind of warranty. The settlement between the Spinelli and Aldobrandi's creditors was finally sealed with a deed set out by the notary ser Antonio da ser Batista on 3 January 1475. In it, Guasparre Spinelli took over all of Aldobrandi's liabilities, while the latter agreed to pledge all his assets to Spinelli.<sup>1137</sup> Aldobrandi handed over to Spinelli the promissory notes of a certain

1134 ASFi, Catasto 912, cc. 273r–274r. In 1469, Benvenuto was 42 years old and married to Pippa (Filippa), who was ten years younger. Together they had eight children. Giovanni was born around 1451, Piero around 1457. – YUSA 114, 2217. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 519–520.

1135 YUSA 114, 2217: *quando Guasparre mi promisse che Benvenuto meriterebbe buon chonto*. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 519–520.

1136 Aldobrandi's debts in the Spinelli balance sheet in Rome: 20 July 1473: f. 772 and f. 663 (YUSA 92, 1754, pp. 7 und 9); 5 March 1474: f. 1 115 (YUSA 92, 1753, p. 3); May 1475: f. 4.18.10 (YUSA 92, 1756, p. 6); 3 October 1475: f. 4 (YUSA 92, 1758, p. 6); 24 March 1476: Aldobrandi is no longer mentioned (YUSA 92, 1756, p. 9).

1137 YUSA 55a, 1183, c. 43r; 30, 688. – In 1475, Aldobrandi confirmed a debt of 1,000 florin to his creditor Piero Gualterotti. ASFi, NA 5970, cc. 76v–77r and 78v–79r. Lorenz Böniger suspects that Aldobrandi fled to

*Arrigo Cheller de Bramante* for f. 500 and from *Anze Braila* of Nuremberg for f. 100.<sup>1138</sup> In addition, the two parties agreed to a series of instalments, with Aldobrandi's residence in Florence serving as security. In 1478, the mortgage definitely passed into the possession of the Spinelli.<sup>1139</sup>

The Catasto of 1480 reveals the full plight of Benvenuto Aldobrandi and his family, owing to the failure of his business in Germany. Probably to avoid poverty, his two sons Giovanni and Piero had become clerics and his two daughters had to do without a dowry. Benvenuto himself went to live on a farm in the countryside, being unable to afford an apartment in Florence.<sup>1140</sup>

After the collapse of Benvenuto Aldobrandi's business and his return to Florence, Guasparre Spinelli decided to carry on in Nuremberg without a further Italian correspondent for his German bills of exchange. Instead, he began cooperating with Ulrich Fugger. Perhaps the decision to enter this new arrangement was prompted by the financial transactions of Ulrich's brother Markus, who had been working at the Apostolic Chancery as a scribe since 1471 and whom Spinelli probably knew personally. Until now, the specialist literature has considered the payment of 706 cameral florins stemming from the Swedish indulgency collection which was carried out by the Fuggers on behalf of Marinus de Fregeno on 30 June 1476 through the Spinelli to be the oldest north-south transaction concluded by the Fuggers.<sup>1141</sup> This can now be amended, since *messer Arigo Fugger* of Nuremberg is already mentioned in the Spinelli accounts of 24 March 1475 with an outstanding debt of 2,000 ducats.<sup>1142</sup> It is safe to say, therefore, that the Fuggers stood in a direct business relationship with the Spinelli as early as 1474. The business relationship between these two merchant companies lasted at least until 1480. On 15 July of this year, Guasparre instructed his procurators responsible for the Rummel case to transfer collected funds to *Righo Fucker e fratelli*.<sup>1143</sup> The last evidence we have is a document dated 28 August in which a certain *Georgium Petri de Ghunzenhausen alias Tressclein* is appointed procurator in the Nuremberg affair. He was told to deposit the monies collected *ad manus Henrici Fuggier et fratrum*. With regard to the years that followed, the sources regarding both companies are extremely poor, making it almost impossible to say anything about the end of

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Bologna in 1477 as Guasparre Spinelli had appointed a procurator there that year in order to collect money from his former partner. See ASFi, NA 1753, c. 25v.

1138 As yet, the two Germans have not been identified. The name Arrigo Cheller brings to mind Heinrich Keller of the Hofmann-Keller company, which existed in Milan around this time.

1139 YUSA 30, 689: Agreement of 29 November 1478 set out by the notary Piero d'Antonio di Piero da Vinci (the father of the famous Leonardo).

1140 ASFi, Catasto 1003, cc. 210r–211r: *Benvenuto di Daddo sopradetto no fo arte ne mestiero niuno ne atto a fare perchè sono rovinatto e debito sopra chapo*. 'Benvenuto di Daddo, aforementioned, does not practise any art or trade nor did he act to do so because he is ruined and over his head in debt.' His father, who stated his age as 88, had also lost all his possessions. See ASFi, Catasto 1003, cc. 278rv.

1141 Schulte (1904), pp. 11–12; Lunt (1934), I, pp. 313–314; Pölnitz (1949), II, pp. 5–6; Pölnitz (1953), p. 1; Stromer (1970a), p. 201.

1142 YUSA 92, 1756.

1143 YUSA 55a, 1183, c. 91r; ASFi, NA 10949, cc. 20v–21r. Note from Lorenz Böninger.

their relationship. Whether the establishment of an independent Fugger branch office in Rome in 1494 had anything to do with the bankruptcy of the Spinelli shortly before that must therefore remain unanswered.

## 5.2 Cologne and Mainz

### 5.2.1 Lucchese and Bolognese Banks

The major Lucchese banks, which bore the papal title of Depositary of the Apostolic Chamber in the last decades of the 14th century, limited their services to non-cash transactions conducted from Bruges and Venice. However, we know of a number of smaller Curia-based banks from Lucca that were involved in the business with bills of exchange from Germany and thus were among the first to disburse bills of exchange *a drittura* from this region at the papal court. The main reason for this was that “[...] the Curia of Urban VI was simply teeming with Germans”,<sup>1144</sup> thus promising profitable business with transactions conducted by German clerics and monasteries. Strategies for the business with Cologne were developed by Pietro Ugolini and Buonaccorso Bocci,<sup>1145</sup> along with Paolo Pagani and Giovanni Cristofani. Cristofani was probably affiliated with the Moriconi.<sup>1146</sup>

Owing to the very meagre sources, it is barely possible, or at least only to a very limited extent, to identify the papal banks’ business partners who served them in Cologne. To make matters worse, the branch offices were usually named after the local factors, not after their owners. Thus, it is often not clear to which branch network a deliverer in an exchange transaction belonged or whether a factor had set up his own business and was working on his own account. The first of eight recorded Lucchese in Cologne is documented around 1379, the last one closed his bank around 1400.<sup>1147</sup> Three of these ventures were branch offices of Lucchese bankers who had their head office either in Bruges or in Italy (Lucca, Rome): Forteguerra Forteguerra, the Cristofani, and the Pagani.<sup>1148</sup> We may assume that these Rhine-based enterprises did not act completely on their own but were dependent on their parent companies in terms of capital but

1144 Esch (1975), p. 144: „[...] es vor allem von Deutschen an der Kurie Urbans VI. nur so wimmelte.“

1145 Esch (1975), pp. 332–350. – In Esch’s comprehensive work on the bankers at the Roman Curia during the Great Schism, Ugolini and Bocci were not yet mentioned, which probably shows that these bankers were not among the really important Lucchese companies. See Esch (1966).

1146 Esch (1966), pp. 342–343. – On the connection between Moriconi und Cristofani, see Lazzareschi (1947), p. 41.

1147 Merchants may have also travelled from Bruges to Germany. Jacopo Fava travelled to Aachen in 1377, and Nicolao da Volterra stayed in *la Magnia*. See Lazzareschi (1947), pp. 4 and 195.

1148 Roover (1949), p. 79; Esch (1975); Esch (2003a); Galoppini (2003).

also as far as their relations to the main banking centres were concerned. They were headed by factors who, apart from a salary, probably also received a share of the profits. Due to failing profits and the civil war-like conditions in Lucca, these branch offices were forced to close. Only one company in Cologne managed to survive, albeit for just a few years; it was founded and managed by the former factors Bonagiunta Dardagnini and Paolo Pagani.<sup>1149</sup>

The provenance of the clients of the Luccan bankers in Cologne indicates that their reach extended far beyond the immediate surroundings of the city, with some originating from as far away as Bremen and even Scandinavia. Exchange transactions also ran in the opposite direction, for instance, when Cologne men residing in Rome promised to repay loans in their home city.<sup>1150</sup> It shows that Cologne was immediately involved in the Italian payment system and thus held a special position compared to all the other German cities at that time.<sup>1151</sup> How many bills of exchange between Cologne and Rome were issued and how many florins were actually transferred is almost impossible to estimate, for the evidence regarding the absolute monetary values is far too scanty to make any significant statement. What one can say, however, is that the Germans certainly used bills of exchange, albeit to a lesser extent than, for example, the English.<sup>1152</sup> Under the pontificate of Boniface IX, who was highly dependent on funds from the North, only twelve of the 179 receipts issued at the Curia in connection with servitia payments bear the name of Italian banking houses. Esch calculated that, under this pope, only about 20 per cent of the servitia payments from Germany passed through the hands of Italian bankers, while for England the figure was around 90 per cent.<sup>1153</sup> On the other hand, the significance of Germany as a centre for the trade with bills of exchange increased, not least because there were so many Germans present at the papal court where they had largely replaced the French working at the Curia.<sup>1154</sup> Arnold Esch attributes the fact that the Lucchese bankers dropped out of the business with the Curia and had practically withdrawn from the Rhine area by 1400 – the Pagani and Cristofani even went bankrupt – to ongoing power struggles within the Lucchese elite which also had a detrimental effect on the economy as a whole. In bloody internal conflicts between influential families, political and commercial alliances in Lucca crumbled or were reconfigured, while at the same time, silk production faltered. The silk trade, however, was of fundamental significance to the exchange business in Bruges and Venice.<sup>1155</sup>

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1149 Esch (1975), p. 131. A closer look at the “Libro della comunità dei mercanti lucchesi in Bruges” reveals the names of at least eight Lucchese working in Cologne.

1150 Various records of exchange transactions in Jansen (1904), p. 195; Kuske (1956), p. 21; Esch (1966), p. 342; Esch (1975), pp. 131 and 145.

1151 Stromer (1979), p. 4.

1152 Göller (1924a), pp. 122–125; Esch (1966), p. 336.

1153 Esch (1975), p. 130.

1154 Schuchard (1994), p. 53.

1155 Keussen (1887), p. 88; Roover (1949), p. 84; Esch (1966), pp. 343–344; Holmes (1968), p. 359–364; Esch (1969a), p. 147.

### 5.2.2 Gozzadini

The Gozzadini of Bologna followed the Lucchese as depositaries of the Apostolic Chamber. In Cologne, they opened a branch around 1400, which was managed by their fellow citizen Simone Sassolini.<sup>1156</sup> In the archives of his home city, however, there is no mention of this banker. In 1400, we have a *Sasso Sassolini banchiere*, who was a member of the politically powerful Council of Elders (*Anziani*) in Bologna while, at the same time, Nicola Gozzadini held the office of Gonfaloniere; Arnold Esch believes to have also found him in the records of the state archives in 1401, identifying him as *Saxus de Saxolinis campsor et civis*.<sup>1157</sup> Whether Sasso and Simone were related with each other in some way or another cannot be verified. Otherwise, the Sassolini family left behind no traces in the history of Bologna. As early as 1401, *Symon de Sessolinis, lombardus* became a citizen of Cologne, where he lived at Hohe Straße near Wallraffplatz together with his wife.<sup>1158</sup> Sources, however, also mention relationships with other men and associations with prostitutes. The Gozzadini criticized this disreputable way of life and considered having him replaced in view of the negative effects on business.<sup>1159</sup>

In Mainz, too, the Gozzadini opened a branch office, which was headed by a certain Giovanni.<sup>1160</sup> Unfortunately, we have no surname for this branch manager, but possibly he was also a member of the family. In any case, this man, whom the Gozzadini simply referred to as *Giovanni da Magonza*, seems to have developed considerable commercial activity. It is very likely that the bill of exchange with which Giangaleazzo Visconti, Duke of Milan, planned to pay the personal physician of the Roman-German king Rupert of the Palatinate – allegedly for assassinating the king – passed through his hands.<sup>1161</sup> In 1402, the king, after evading assassination, promised his envoy in Rome that he was planning a *wehsel duen machen zu Colne oder zu Mentze umbe gelte dir zu schicken*, by which he could only have meant the two Gozzadini branches.<sup>1162</sup> Giovanni was probably also the banker in Mainz from whom the city of Frankfurt purchased a bill of exchange to Rome in 1403.<sup>1163</sup>

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1156 Reichert (2003), p. 384.

1157 Ghirardacci (1657), p. 510; Esch (1975), p. 134.

1158 Stehkämper / Müller (1975), p. 48; Militzer (1981), p. 73.

1159 Esch (1975), p. 140.

1160 Here we could be dealing with Giovanni di Galvano of Bologna. See Favier (1966), p. 514. – At least as a hypothesis, it should be pointed out here that the Rummel family was also present in Mainz during these years, represented by a certain Hans. See Schaper (1981), p. 22.

1161 Pitti (1905), p. 121.

1162 Weizsäcker (1882), IV, no. 75: ‘... make exchanges in Cologne or Mainz to send you money’. Esch (1966), p. 342.

1163 Kriegk (1862), p. 533: [...] *als man mit den Lumbarten tedingte von des wessils wegen als gein Rome*. ‘[...] as they negotiated with the Lombards concerning the exchange, as going to Rome’; Neumann (1865), p. 368; Reichert (2003), p. 384.

The collapse of the Gozzadini papal bank in 1404 disrupted financial transactions to and from Rome in the Rhine Valley.<sup>1164</sup> The branch office in Mainz seems to have been closed around the same time, or at least shortly afterwards. The cloth merchant Wolter von dem Dijcke, who operated an export business with his father-in-law Godert von Lysekirchen, tried to take advantage of this vacuum, being in the fortunate situation of having the capacity to balance any bills of exchange through the sale of cloths from Cologne in Bruges. Being a member of the *Münzerhausgenossen* (Society of Coiners), he obviously also commanded the necessary banking knowledge.<sup>1165</sup> Whether this business idea was his own, or whether he was encouraged to do so by his partner bank at the Curia can no longer be ascertained. His first recorded bill of exchange issued to Rome dates from 15 November 1403, shortly after the Gozzadini had gone out of business. The bill had been purchased by the city of Cologne for the envoy Wenemar Vrunst, who was paid the 100 ducats by the bank of Paolo and Lotto Pagani on 22 March of the following year.<sup>1166</sup> It is very likely that a personal relationship also came into play here, considering that Paolo Pagani had lived in Cologne for more than ten years from 1386 on. We also know of a second bill of exchange issued by Wolter von dem Dijcke from undated letters to the Council of Cologne. A pilgrim had purchased a bill of exchange for 24 ducats in Cologne but unfortunately lost it on his journey to Rome, and thus was unable to redeem it. The banker who had issued the bill refused to refund the lost sum. This bill of exchange had probably been issued around the same time as the first exchange bill noted above, so we may assume that it, too, must have been served by Pagani.<sup>1167</sup> The Curia-based bank certainly did not keep the account of its partner in Cologne in Rome, instead it had its bills of exchange cleared by a Lucchese banker in Bruges. Their business relationship with von dem Dijcke must have been short-lived, as the two transactions mentioned are the only ones between the two partners we have on record. However, it is worth noting that this merchant from Cologne was – as far as we can tell – the first German who was able to send bills of exchange straight to a banker at the Curia.

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1164 Esch (1966), pp. 353–354; Esch (1975); Esch (2016). See Tamba (1960–); Holmes (1968), p. 364.

1165 Militzer (1978), pp. 280–282. – We only have a few records of this man who, in the sources is also referred to as *Walter* or *Wouter van dem Dijck*, *van dem Dijk*, *von den Dijcke*, *vom Dijcke*, *vamme Dijkck*. See Eckertz (1855), p. 304; Weizsäcker (1882), II, pp. 425 and 502–503; Kuske (1917–1934), pp. 88, 153, 176 and 270; Irsigler (1971), pp. 397–398.

1166 Historisches Archiv Köln, Hauptkundenarchiv, U 1/7164C. See Kuske (1917–1934), I, no. 446; Kuske (1956), p. 23.

1167 Historisches Archiv Köln, Briefeingänge undatiert, A 324 und 324. These letters contain no information on the banks based at the Curia. Kuske (1908), p. 416, dates this bill of exchange roughly to the year 1410, explaining this by reference to the city council clerk's mid-term in office. Stromer (1979), p. 14, also talks about exchange transactions conducted by the merchant Wolter von den Dijcke with the Gozzadini. However, the evidence for this in the Gozzadini archives in Bologna refers to a loan transaction by the Cologne canon Volmarus de Dyck. See Esch (1975), p. 136.

### 5.2.3 Simone Sassolini

When Cardinal Cossa in his function as papal legate of Bologna crushed the Gozzadini's political and commercial ambitions by force, Simone Sassolini managed not only to survive in Cologne but also to thrive commercially, as the purchase of several properties between 1408 and 1417 suggests.<sup>1168</sup> In 1418, he became a member of the prestigious Merchant Society of Windeck (Gaffel Windeck).<sup>1169</sup> However, for several years we have no evidence of bill of exchange transactions issued by him to the Curia. It is only after the Council of Constance that his name reappears in connection with Curia-based banks. Still, it is very likely that he remained active in this branch of business, too, but simply relied on a different bank *romanam curiam sequentes*. Before 1421, however, there is no document to be found from the Alberti, Ricci, Spini, or Medici that unequivocally points to a correspondent relationship with him.

In his role as a businessman, he only reemerges tangibly on 16 July 1414, when he granted the Hanseatic merchant Sivert Veckinchusen a loan.<sup>1170</sup> He did the same with regard to the city of Cologne: in 1415 he lent the city 30,000 Rhe. fl. and, three years later, a further 150 Rhe. fl.<sup>1171</sup> However, the first loan makes one ponder a little, since it seems impossible that he was able to raise such a sum on his own; this suggests that he must have had a group of well-heeled partners backing him. On the other hand, there is no evidence that the Alberti were collaborating with him during these years. In the year before the above-mentioned loan, the new archbishop of Cologne had to go directly through the Alberti in Bruges to render his servitia payments, as Sassolini was evidently not in a position to serve as his paying agent. Heinrich Sieveking, therefore, tentatively drew the conclusion that Giovanni de' Medici must have been the mysterious donor behind all this, however, without concrete evidence at hand.<sup>1172</sup>

Since the years of the Council of Constance at the latest, the Spini bank maintained some form of business relationship with Simone Sassolini in Cologne. There are no known transactions between the two enterprises, but what we do know is that, after the downfall of the Spini bank in 1421, both the Signoria of Florence and the council of the city of Cologne interceded by letter on behalf of their citizens. In reply to a letter from Germany (which has not been preserved), which demanded *vehementissime* that Spini and his partner del Vigna pay their debts to Sassolini, the authorities in Florence wrote on 10 October 1422 that they were duly following the common legal procedure.<sup>1173</sup> In the following year, the city of Cologne reiterated their demands, and

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1168 Kuske (1956), p. 8.

1169 Kuske (1956), p. 9.

1170 Stieda (1921), pp. 116–117.

1171 Schulte (1900), p. 343; Kuske (1908), pp. 8–9; Kuske (1956), p. 9; Militzer (1981), pp. 73 and 280.

1172 Sieveking (1906), p. 61. See also Kuske (1956), p. 9, who believed Sassolini was the Medici representative in Cologne.

1173 ASFi, Signori. Missive I Cancelleria, 30, cc. 50v–51r.

the Signoria replied in an equally friendly but firm manner.<sup>1174</sup> Whether any money from the bankrupt estate ever flowed back to the city on the Rhine is not on record.<sup>1175</sup>

Vieri Guadagni established contact with Sassolini through the Spini, and, as noted in a notarial deed dated 4 December 1421, claimed to be Simone Sassolini's *procurator*.<sup>1176</sup> This suggests that the two bankers stood in a correspondent relationship, thus allowing direct exchange transactions between the Curia and Cologne. The collaboration was continued in the company Guadagni-Giachinotti-Cambini, whereas power of attorney for dealings with Sassolini was transferred from Vieri Guadagni to Andrea Cambini.<sup>1177</sup> The Catasto declaration issued by Guadagni's heirs in 1427 indicates that the relationship was quite intensive. The Bolognese banker is listed three times among the debtors and creditors. However, none of the individual transactions behind these entries are to be found in the sources. The 59 Rhe. fl. found in the cash holdings of the papal bank are also testimony of relations with Germany.<sup>1178</sup>

With regard to the management of the transactions between the Curia and Sassolini, Filippo di Tommaso degli Alberti played an important part. He was a member of the nuovi branch of the family and proved to be a more successful businessman than his relatives. From around 1400 on, he operated trading companies in Bruges and London. As early as 1413, the Signoria had exempted him from the banishment acts issued against his family, at least partially, and allowed him to conduct business in Florence, provided he aligned himself with a partner from the city.<sup>1179</sup> Bartolomeo di Buonsignore Spinelli met this requirement and took over operational responsibility for the business in Flanders. He was on the best of terms with merchants from the Hanse, as the frequent mention of his name in the account books of Hildebrand Veckinchusen indicates, where he features as *Bortolmeus Spynneyl* and other, similar Germanized name variants.<sup>1180</sup> The partnership ended in 1417, but the two parties remained in a loose business association with each other.<sup>1181</sup> Bartolomeo Spinelli found new silent partners in Gherardo Canigiani and Antonio da Rabatta and focused on the cloth trade.<sup>1182</sup> Filippo di Tommaso continued

1174 Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln, A 9, Briefbücher, 5. Februar 1422 – 15. Januar 1425. – ASFi, Signori. Missive I Cancelleria, 30, cc. 60r, 20 martii 1422 (= 1423).

1175 One may assume that the Spini's dispute with Sassolini was settled before the Mercanzia in Florence. However, the respective volumes of the court archives cannot be traced: ASFi, Mercanzia 1278 and 1279; 4354 to 4356.

1176 ASFi, NA 3372, c. 23r. I thank Lorenz Böninger (Florence) for providing me with a copy of this document.

1177 ASFi, NA 3372, c. 23r, 23 May 1426. See Böninger (2006), p. 22.

1178 ASFi, Catasto 57, cc. 916r, 921v, and 922r (*eredi di Vieri Guadagni*).

1179 Boschetto (2000), pp. 11–12. Filippo (1374–1453) and his family were allowed to return to Florence in 1427, but he declined the offer. He was the wealthiest member of the family at that time, with taxable assets of f. 18,000.

1180 See the index of persons in Lesnikov et al. (2013).

1181 ASFi, Catasto 83, cc. 87r–90r: The Catasto of Filippo di Tommaso for 1427 contains many names that overlap with those in the Spinelli file: Bartolomeo Spinelli, Gherardo Canigiani and his branch in Pisa.

1182 ASFi, Catasto 30, c. 242r: The first contract between the three partners ran from 1 July 1417 to 1422 after which a new company was founded, which was dissolved again in November 1427. After Gherardo's death,



his business without a new partner in a one-man company and handed the day-to-day chores to Giovanni di Bartolomeo Bizzeri. In Germany, he concentrated on the handling of exchange transactions to the banking centre of Bruges; his only correspondent was based in Cologne. The Alberti-Guadagni-Sassolini triangle left its mark on Filippo's tax return of 1427. Namely, among the *creditori*, he lists Sassolini with a debt of f. 200 and several Guadagni accounts, including a *conto corrente* for the substantial sum of f. 2,481 that stands out markedly.<sup>1183</sup>

The first link between the Medici and Simone Sassolini dates from 26 November 1424, when Canon *Gherardus de Bucken* of Minden notarized to repay a debt of 50 Rhe. fl. which he had received in Rome to *Simone de Sassolinis et sotiis* in Cologne. The next day, a certain *Gherardus Cwarte* also pledged to honour his debt amounting to 200 Rhe. fl.<sup>1184</sup> The link with Sassolini can also be traced in Giovanni de' Medici's Catasto of 1427, where two small sums of f. 2 19s. and f. 18 08s. are listed in the name of the Cologne merchant.<sup>1185</sup> In 1429, he sent three bills of exchange to the Curia. Hermann Vryen received 100 ducats.<sup>1186</sup> The *beneficarii* of the other two bills for 360 and 1,100 ducats, respectively, cannot be identified from the entries in the Italian accounts. In the opposite direction, a mounted messenger by the name of *Jannes Frighet* had a traveller's cheque sent to him (see Table 5).<sup>1187</sup> It shows that Sassolini did not conduct business with a papal bank exclusively, he also engaged in exchange transactions with Vieri Guadagni and the Medici in Rome. The small number of Sassolini-Medici transactions suggests that he concluded considerably more deals with Guadagni. At the time, the large majority of payments between Cologne and the Curia were probably channelled through the local Alberti branch, which was then headed by Bartolomeo Biliotti. Up to the last time Sassolini is mentioned in Cologne, in 1432, there are no records pointing to a collaboration with the Medici.<sup>1188</sup>

Doubtlessly, Sassolini not only tried to earn a profit in the money market but also traded in goods, although we have no unequivocal sources to prove this. However, we may assume

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Bernardo had replaced his father. – ASFi, Catasto 430, c. 30v: In the Catasto for 1433, the sons of Gherardo declared that they had lost more money in the company of Spinelli and da Rabatta than the deposited *corpo* and that they had never been informed about the *ghoverno di detta compagnia*.

1183 ASFi, Catasto 296, c. 57v. – Around 1420, Filippo degli Alberti conducted exchange transactions with the Spini; he transferred money to clients at the Council of Constance through the respective branch manager, Carlo Bartoli (see above p. 164). This suggests that there existed a triangle Alberti-Spini-Sassolini; however, we have no direct evidence for this.

1184 ASFi, NA 12519, 26 and 27 November. – Gerardus de Bucken: RG IV 03439, <http://rg-online.dhi-roma.it/RG/4/3439>, 02.07.2021. No further information concerning the other Gerhard could be found.

1185 Roover (1963), p. 209, calls the correspondent in Cologne Simone Colin. See ASFi, Catasto 49, c. 1194v: *Simone Sassolini di Chologna*. – On Simone Sassolini, see Kuske (1908), pp. 8–9; Esch (1974); Kellenbenz (1985), p. 339.

1186 Vryen: RG Online, RG IV 05472, <http://rg-online.dhi-roma.it/RG/4/5472>, 02.07.2021.

1187 See Weissen (2021), p. 541.

1188 Militzer (1981), p. 73.

that he is also the man referred to as *Simon de Colonia*, who exported saffron worth 145 libras from Barcelona in 1428.<sup>1189</sup> At the same time, this is the last reference we have to Sassolini in his role as a merchant. His two properties in Cologne were sold in 1432, probably shortly after he had died. He had run in his own private company without a partner for thirty years. He did not rise to the top echelons of international banking, but certainly remained of regional importance to Cologne.

### 5.2.4 Alberti

#### **Bartolomeo di Domenico e co. di Colonia**

While the Council of Constance was still in session, Ricciardo and Lorenzo degli Alberti were taking steps to gain a foothold in large German cities along the Rhine. For this purpose, they sent Bartolomeo di Domenico Biliotti, born around 1385, to Cologne. As a young lad, Bartolomeo had gone to Bruges to learn about the trading business as an apprentice in the company of Lorenzo di messer Benedetto degli Alberti e co. After finishing his training, he remained with his employer as a *garzone*. Aldighiero di Francesco Biliotti, a distant relative of his who served as managing director for the Alberti in Rome during these years, possibly arranged for him to be employed by this influential company.<sup>1190</sup>

In the files of the Mercanzia, there is a report on the founding history of the Cologne branch and its first director, given to the judges at the court in 1436 by Benedetto di Bernardo degli Alberti. Therein, he stated that they had begun doing business in Cologne in 1418 under the management of Bartolomeo di Domenico Biliotti, who had previously been a minor clerk in Bruges, drawing an annual salary of merely f. 10. Although at the time he had no assets of his own which he could have brought into the company, he was accepted as a partner; he was promised a quarter of the annual profits and, on top of that, the company was named after him: *Bartolomeo di Domenico e co. di Colonia*.

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1189 Bardenhewer (1914), p. 45.

1190 ASFi, Catasto 69, cc. 588 and 492, cc. 181r–182r. Kuske (1908), pp. 9–10; Kellenbenz (1962), p. 72, and Kellenbenz (1985), pp. 339–340. In the older German literature this merchant is often referred to as Bartolomeo Dominici. Indeed, it was not uncommon for members of a Dominici family, presumably from Prato, to have worked for the Alberti. Philippus, Dominicus, and Johannes are mentioned as the Alberti's correspondents in Wrocław between 1360 and 1370, and a Rayner (probably Rinieri) was one of their factors in England in 1365–66. See Holmes (1960–196), p. 193. The fact that the Cologne merchant was also listed under this surname is based on an error that stems from the Florentine way of naming. German historians did not notice that the Florentines very often limited themselves in notarial deeds to stating only their own first name and the patronym. In Latin texts, the genitive form of the second term could easily be misunderstood as a family name. See Kuske (1908), p. 402.

*E dapuoi l'altra si è che nel mille CCCCXVIII decto Bartholomeo non havea niente et stava in Brugia et era più tempo stato per garzone, non havea niente si non che avea solo salario di fiorini e lire X l'anno; dapuyo quigli di Bruggia lo mandarono a Colonia et là fè uno traffico, del quale traffico decto Bartholomeo traeva el quarto.*<sup>1191</sup>

It seems that Benedetto di Alberto got the dates confused, because as early as 3 January 1417, the council of the city of Cologne pledged to repay a loan of 3,000 Rhe. fl. to *discreto viro Bartholomeo Dominici mercatori de Florencia [...] de societate Albertinorum* by the next Christmas day.<sup>1192</sup> The document does not state where the deal was concluded nor where the banker involved was based, but it is highly unlikely that the minor *garzone* Biliotti could have been the contracting party if the deal had gone ahead in Bruges. He was certainly in Cologne on 6 September 1417, because it was then that the Lübeck merchant Hildebrand Veckinchusen recorded in his account book: [...] *do makede ick [in Bruges] ene wesselle myt Fylyppusse Johan to den Alberten huse [...]. Des so sal hey my to Colnne geven by Bartolmeus Domyynyycy [...]*.<sup>1193</sup> There also can be no doubt that the payer in Cologne was Bartolomeo di Domenico Biliotti, to whom the Teutonic Order had pledged to repay a debt of 2,000 Rhe. fl. by January 1418; and it was certainly also he who was meant with *Bartelmeus lombarder* from whom the city of Cologne had taken a loan of 100 Rhe. fl. in the same year.<sup>1194</sup> It was more than fifty years after the last verifiable presence of an Alberti banker in Cologne, namely when, in 1365, one of their factors met up with a papal collector for the handover of a larger sum of money.<sup>1195</sup>

The Alberti branch office in Cologne was not an independent enterprise but an agency of the company in Bruges. It was not endowed with its own capital and its results were consolidated in the balance sheet of the superordinate company in Flanders: *El corpo che a Colongnia e cioè della ragione di Brugia è di una medesima cosa con la ragione di Brugia e quando si salda l'una si salda l'altra si che di quella ragione di Colongnia nulla vi sa a dare*.<sup>1196</sup> The breakdown of the working capital was therefore identical in both banks: Antonio di Ricciardo held two thirds, one third belonged to Benedetto di Bernardo degli Alberti. This means Biliotti did not settle accounts directly with his *maggiori* in Italy, but with the *governatore* in Bruges. The posting of an employee

1191 ASFi, Mercanzia 1322, c. 37r: statement by Benedetto di Bernardo degli Alberti on 7 August 1436.

1192 Kuske (1917–1934), I, p. 201, provides a register according to which the repayment was destined to be made in Frankfurt. In truth, the original document does not mention the place of payment: Köln, Historisches Archiv, Briefbuch 6, Bl. 49v. I wish to thank Klaus Militzer for checking the text. See Irsigler (1971), p. 361; Hirschfelder (1994), pp. 80–81.

1193 Lesnikov et al. (2013), p. 367: '[...] then I made a bill of exchange in Bruges with Fylyppusse Johan (Filippo di Giovanni di ser Rucco) to the Alberten house [...]. For this, he shall give me in Cologne through Bartholomeus Domyynyycy [...].'

1194 Koeppen (1960), p. 453; Militzer (1981), p. 44, no. 6 und p. 275.

1195 See above p. 114.

1196 ASFi, Catasto 1001 / 2, c. 148v. See Boschetto (1998), p. 91.

with no management experience and the subordination to the company in Flanders suggests that the decision to open a branch office in Cologne was not part of a determined move to tap into new markets. Rather, one gets the impression that it was designed as a low-risk attempt to test the market. As to the strategic rationale of this step we have no conclusive sources, but what we do know is that from August 1415 on, Cologne became ever more important as far as the payments of the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order are concerned, as large sums were to be paid to Cologne and Speyer for the attention of the *Deutschmeister* (Master of the Teutonic Order in Germany), who was responsible for the bailiwicks in Germany. Since the Alberti were increasingly at odds with the German merchant who served as the Order's representative in Bruges, it is possible that they were looking for new channels of payment in an attempt to bypass this man.<sup>1197</sup> Conceivably, it also may have had to do with rising tensions between Bruges and the Hanse or disruptions on the trade routes to Bruges.<sup>1198</sup>

Biliotti became a member of the Merchant Society of Windeck (*Gaffel*) as early as 1418 but waited until the death of his mother in 1431 before becoming a Cologne citizen.<sup>1199</sup> It looks as though he gave up all social ties to his city of birth after his mother's death and decided to settle in Germany permanently. Unlike his fellow countryman Gherardo Bueri, who had obtained citizenship in Lübeck, Biliotti's name no longer features in the records of the Florentine Catasto after 1427.<sup>1200</sup> Finally, he bought a house next to the Dominican Monastery for f. 300, which he used as a private residence but not for commercial purposes. More real estate transactions followed later.<sup>1201</sup>

In the Florentine court files, it is reported that the Alberti branch in Cologne had made a profit of 4,000 Rhe. fl. in its first ten years, of which 1,178 Rhe. fl. went to Biliotti.<sup>1202</sup> This means that Cologne was generating more than f. 400 of revenue per year, and its director was earning ten times more than he had previously done in Bruges. This was quite a handsome salary, not to forget that he was also entitled to deduct his expenses and costs of living in Cologne from the profit he made; he also had permission to do business on the side in his own name. In the Catasto of 1427, he, together with his brother Ricco, who lived in Apulia at that time, declared privately invested assets worth f. 700; notably, he was not a donor to the Monte di pietà. This means, there were roughly 2,500 families that were richer than the Biliotti brothers. Bartolomeo Biliotti put his age at forty-two, and his only family member was his seventy-year-old mother in Florence, whom he supported with f. 20 per year.<sup>1203</sup> After the deduction of all his liabilities, there were no taxable

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1197 Koeppen (1960), pp. 351, 370, and 477.

1198 See Koppmann (1870–1893), VI, pp. 376–378; Bruchhäuser (1992), p. 58–59.

1199 Militzer (1980), p. 230; Militzer (1981), p. 44; Reichert (2003), p. 382.

1200 In the Catasto of 1430, his *portata* or that of his mother should be located in register 350, 351, or 352, but they are not to be found there.

1201 Kuske (1956), p. 9.

1202 ASFi, Mercanzia 1322, c. 37r.

1203 ASFi, Catasto 69, c. 588v.

assets left. However, this information has to be read with utmost caution since it only refers to his Florentine estate. Undoubtedly, he was considerably wealthier, but the authorities rarely got to know how much merchants living abroad actually owned in assets.<sup>1204</sup> After all, in 1429, he was able to grant his brother Ricco a loan of f. 400 and bought a house for himself for 300 Rhe. fl. In addition, he conducted exchange transactions worth 600 Rhe. fl. on his own account.<sup>1205</sup>

Over a period of ten years, Biliotti had accrued quite a fortune; this allowed him to enter into a new partnership agreement with Antonio di Ricciardo and Benedetto di Bernardo degli Alberti for the company *Bartolomeo e co. di Cologna* on 1 July 1428. Now he was in a position to invest 1,000 Rhe. fl. personally in the company, thus making him a major shareholder. Although he was granted wide-ranging powers, he remained dependent on the Alberti in Bruges, since the Cologne company remained a branch of *Antonio di Ricciardo degli Alberti e co. di Brugge*.<sup>1206</sup> In turn, Biliotti was made a partner of the business in Flanders.<sup>1207</sup> His share in the profits was raised to one third and, above all, he retained all his privileges (deduction of the costs of living, right to do business on the side, etc.).<sup>1208</sup> The original plan was to have his brother Ricco come to Cologne, too, or so it appears at least, since the Alberti granted to both brothers permission to issue bills of exchange in their own name.<sup>1209</sup> But it seems that Ricco never got as far as Cologne, as can be inferred from an entry in the tax return of Dego degli Alberti from 1433, who had been party to a business partnership (*accomenda*) with Bartolomeo's brother in Apulia. But on the journey from southern Italy to Venice, Ricco's ship sank and he drowned. One can hardly imagine a worse debtor!<sup>1210</sup> After six years, the partnership between Biliotti and the Alberti was dissolved. Whether the decision was taken by the Alberti or by Bartolomeo Biliotti the sources do not reveal. Two years later, Biliotti faced his former *maggiori* in court in Florence as there still existed mutual outstanding claims between him and the Alberti companies in Basel and Rome. As from 1 July 1434, Biliotti was replaced by Antonio d'Antonio de' Rossi as branch manager in Cologne.<sup>1211</sup>

The *governatore* of the Alberti branch in Bruges, Lorenzo di Niccolò di Zanobi Rinieri, was ordered to have his factor Iacomo Guidotti draw up an overview of the profits (Table 10) made in Cologne between 1428 and 1434 from the account books in Bruges. The consul of

1204 See the comments in Caferro (1995) on the *Catasto* of Andrea Banchi, Tommaso Spinelli, and the Medici.

1205 ASFi, Mercanzia 1322, c. 37r.

1206 ASFi, Catasto 32, c. 42v.

1207 ASFi, Mercanzia 1325, c. 263v.

1208 ASFi, Mercanzia 1322, c. 37r; 1323, c. 71r.

1209 ASFi, Mercanzia 1322, c. 37r. – Kuske (1917–1934), II, no. 9; Militzer (1981), p. 44, no. 6.

1210 ASFi, Catasto 32, c. 364v: [...] *Richo tornando di Puglia a Venezia con ritratto de' detti panni, aneghò in mezzo del mare, chome plubicha [sic] bocie e fama si dicie, con tutta la nave e roba. [...] perché più chattivo debitore non potrebbe essere, [...]*.

1211 What he had been doing until he took over the office in Cologne is not known. Kent (1978), p. 160. – The *Catasto* of 1427 features two further men by the name of Antonio de' Rossi. However, Antonio di Biagio (ASFi, Catasto 73, c. 192) and Antonio di Lippo (ASFi, Catasto 67, c. 491) cannot be identical with the Alberti manager, given their age and professional background.

Table 10 Profits transferred to the Alberti from the Cologne branch, 1428–34

Year	lbr.	s.	d.
1428	187	10	3
1429	165	5	9
1430	221	5	9
1431	147	8	9
1432	88	17	1
1433	36	4	12
1434	20	8	1

the Florentine community in Bruges, Marco Spinellini, confirmed the validity of this list.<sup>1212</sup> What is conspicuous here is the sharp decline in profits after 1431, which fell to almost zero in 1434. The mother company in Bruges fared even worse because no profit at all was made there after 1431 despite the transfer of the gains made in Cologne: *per temporalis che sono stati, che asai s'è fatto a mantenere il capitale*.<sup>1213</sup> What these storms referred to in the quotation were can no longer be clearly determined today. However, on the one hand, the forces that had such a negative effect on the course of business were probably problems within the company, leading to its bankruptcy shortly afterwards; on the other hand, one also has to take into account the impact of the Hundred Years' War and the rising political unrest in Burgundy.<sup>1214</sup>

We can, at least partially, reconstruct the economic area worked by Biliotti by studying the sources regarding his exchange transactions. Undoubtedly, by far the largest number of bills of exchange were issued to affiliate companies at the Curia and at the Council of Basel, although we have only very few records to substantiate this. One example comes in the shape of a bill of exchange worth 125 Rhe. fl. of 18 July 1427 for Cherubin Schunghel, *prepositus in Wedmekhusen* in the diocese of Cologne, which was honoured by Tommaso Spinelli, director of the Alberti bank in Rome, on 15 September.<sup>1215</sup> Equally rare is evidence of payments to Venice. The notarial archives of La Serenissima hold a receipt in which *Moises Rappa quondam Jacob ebreus venetus* confirms to have received from Benedetto e Lionardo degli Alberti e co. 2,000 Venetian florins

1212 ASFi, Mercanzia 1323, cc. 70v–72r. – Spinellini was the manager of the branch of Ubertino d'Andrea de' Bardi in Bruges. On the duties and rights of the consul of the Florentine nation in Bruges, see Roover (1948a), pp. 19–23.

1213 ASFi, Catasto 32, cc. 38r–42r and 45v. A similar statement in Dego degli Alberti's Catasto of 1433, see ASFi, Catasto 492, cc. 181r–182r.

1214 A relocation of operations to the Basel branch after 1433 had no influence whatsoever.

1215 YUSA 4975, c. 32v. The client issued a receipt for this. For another example of this payment method in 1428, see Hirsch (1858), p. 237.

which his wife *Mengen Gottscalchi* had deposited in Cologne on 18 May 1424.<sup>1216</sup> In two other acknowledgements of receipt from the same year, the ordering clients and the beneficiaries were again Jewish.<sup>1217</sup> In the records of the Alberti bank in London, there is a bill of exchange to Cologne: *Stefano Valton, cancelliere del cardinale a cambio per Cologna lb 40* along with accounts for other outstanding transactions.<sup>1218</sup> The bank in Cologne also served as a hub for transfers from eastern Europe. In 1419, Nikolaus Bunzlau sent 1,700 Rhe. fl. to the procurator of the Teutonic Order, Peter von Wormditt, through Antonio di Giovanni Ricchi in Wrocław.<sup>1219</sup> A year later, the newly appointed procurator Johann Tiergarten wrote from Florence to the Grand Master that Bartholomeus Dominici had retained 3,000 Rhe. fl. in Cologne after he had heard of the death of the designated payee, Peter von Wormditt.<sup>1220</sup> Biliotti is not known to have had contacts to Lübeck or Scandinavia although he once settled a bill of exchange made out in Bruges on the name of Hildebrand Veckinchusen.<sup>1221</sup> Generally, Biliotti's clients were local and regional merchants and clerics, many of them from the diocese of Liège.<sup>1222</sup> Cologne was mainly used for sending small amounts of money through bills of exchange, while Bruges was responsible for the more substantial transactions.

There can be no doubt that the Alberti branch in Cologne was also involved in the goods trade, although we only have one single source to confirm this line of business. The Catasto of 1433 for Bartolomeo d'Antonio Sernelli, who had a business in Bologna, lists among the *creditori Bartolomeo di Domenico di Chologna* with an amount of f. 38 19d.<sup>1223</sup> Presumably, the amount refers to an outstanding payment due to the merchant in Cologne for a shipment of cloth, as Sernelli was certainly not a banker.

### Antonio de' Rossi e co. di Colognia

After Bartolomeo Biliotti left the management of the Alberti branch in Cologne in 1434, the barely twenty-year-old Antonio d'Antonio de' Rossi took over the position for two years. He was born between 1412 and 1414 as the son of Antonio di Tommaso de' Rossi, who was

1216 ASVe, Cancelleria Inferiore Miscellanea Notai Diversi b 5, f. 70v–71r. Issued on 18 September 1424.

1217 ASVe, Cancelleria Inferiore Miscellanea Notai Diversi b 5, f. 83v–84r: Samuel of Andernach (*Zambuel de Andranoch*) received from *Maier* of Bacharach 90 ducats on 12 September 1424. The same on 2 November 1424 for 1,100 ducats. I wish to thank Caroline Wirtz for the transcription of these records.

1218 ASFi, Mercanzia 271, cc. 173r, 175v, and 181r.

1219 See below p. 248.

1220 Koeppen (1966), no. 12, p. 74; no. 17, p. 79.

1221 Lesnikov (1974), p. 367.

1222 ASFi, NA 12519, 9 March 1424: *Godeschalcus de Cimiterio rector parrochialis ecclesie de Buckenbielsen leodien. Dioc.* Receives from Tommaso Spinelli of *Lionardo de Albertis et Aldigherio a loan of 42 ducats which he has to repay within two months to Bartholomeo Dominici et sotiis in Cologne.*

1223 ASFi, Catasto 470, c. 328r.

banished from Florence in 1434.<sup>1224</sup> We do not know where he spent the years before he took over the job in Cologne. A debt owed by his father to Benedetto degli Alberti e co. in 1427 of f. 70 indicates that the two families maintained business relations well before young Antonio travelled to Cologne.<sup>1225</sup>

In 1436, the Roman Alberti branch sued Antonio Rossi and his predecessor in their role as branch managers for 2,022 ducats before the Mercanzia court in Florence;<sup>1226</sup> the list of creditors suing the London-based sister company (Alessandro Ferrantini e co.), which went bankrupt the same year, includes *Bartholomeo di Domenico e compagni di Colonia per loro disuso*.<sup>1227</sup> Benedetto degli Alberti accused the two former managers of the Cologne branch of tampering with the account books and claimed that Bartolomeo Biliotti was telling *favole et non vere exceptione* about the state of the banks in Cologne and Bruges.<sup>1228</sup> Still, the court decided in favour of the two Cologne-based Florentine men.<sup>1229</sup>

When the parent company went bankrupt, Rossi as well as the managers of the sister company in Basel joined the business network of Bernardo da Uzzano and Francesco Boscoli, but without assuming their name.<sup>1230</sup> The fact that Antonio de' Rossi e co. di Colonia did not survive the bankruptcy of the Curia-based bank Uzzano/Boscoli is an indication that the two bankers were somehow involved in the Cologne enterprise. However, probably we are only dealing with an *accomenda* (a limited partnership), as Boscoli nowhere mentions Cologne among his list of branch offices.<sup>1231</sup> What Rossi gained from this partnership for his exchange transactions were connections to the Curia, to Geneva, and to the Council city, where many men from Cologne were staying. In 1437, he organized the servitia payments for the dean of the cathedral in Cologne, Erich of Hoya, regarding the diocese of Osnabrück; they were then deposited at the Curia by Francesco Boscoli, head of the Rome-based da-Uzzano company.<sup>1232</sup> He was also probably the banker, who, in that same year, transferred 4,500 Rhe. fl. from the offerings collected in the churches of Cologne to Deگو degli Alberti and Antonio Gianfigliuzzi in Basel.<sup>1233</sup>

1224 Kent (1978), p. 160.

1225 ASFi, Catasto 65, c. 34r.

1226 ASFi, Mercanzia 7130, c. 252v.

1227 ASFi, Mercanzia 271, c. 175r.

1228 ASFi, Mercanzia 1322, c. 36v, 7 August 1436.

1229 ASFi, Mercanzia 7130, cc. 251v–255v. See Boschetto (1998), p. 121.

1230 Boschetto (1998), p. 91.

1231 ASFi, Mercanzia 4405, cc. 194v–196v: In 1445, Francesco Boscoli described the network of branches he operated together with Bernardo da Uzzano and Bianco d'Agostino del Bene alongside the Curia-based bank: Barcelona (Bernardo da Uzzano e co.), Geneva (Bardo di Neri e co.), and Basel (Bernardo da Uzzano e Deگو degli Alberti e co.).

1232 Esch (1998), p. 281.

1233 Kuske (1956), p. 9. The account found in the older literature claiming that this transfer was handled by Bartolomeo Biliotti cannot be correct, since the latter and the two Florentines in Basel were fiercely at odds with each other at the time and faced each other in the Florentine courts.



The large majority of records describing Rossi's business activities are to be found in the accounts of Filippo di Vitaliano Borromei in London and Bruges for the year 1438 (Table 11).<sup>1234</sup> In the first transaction, a bill of exchange issued in Cologne had been paid out in London to a certain *messer Uricho abate monasterio Bonimontis in Savoia*. In the other two transactions, a total of 420 Rhe. fl. had been transferred from Bruges to Cologne, specifically to Dionisi d'Alza, who was from Como. All three payments were debited to the account of Lorenzo di Niccolò di Zanobi Rinieri. In all these transactions, Rossi merely figures as a trader in the regional exchange business between London, Bruges, and Cologne. However, the mention of a clerical client from Savoy is an indication of relations within the da Uzzano/Boscoli network to Geneva or to Basel.

Table 11 Antonio de' Rossi in the Borromei accounts, 1438

London	+ MCCCCXXXVIII		
c. 215v: Antonio de' Rossi di Colognia de' avere a di 12 di maggio f. 7.18.8, sono per nobili 23 ½ netti, in messer Uricho abate monasterio Bonimontis in Savoia, a llui di cassa, fo. 202.	f. 7	s. 18	d. 8
c. 216r: Antonio de' Rossi de' avere a di 28 di maggio fiorini 7.18.8 per Lorenzo di Nicolò qui di sotto.	f. 7	s. 18	d. 8
Bruges			
c. 267r: Bernardo do Uzano e Degho degli Alberti e compagni di Baxilea per nostro conto deno avere a di primo di gennaio fiorini 158.16.3 di grossi, f. 26.14.-, sono per altanti ponemo al libro morello di 1437 dovessimo dare a loro, fo. 166. f. 158.16.3	f. 26	s. 14	d. -
c. 318v: Antonio de' Rossi di Chologna, per nostro chonto de' dare a di 12 di septtembre fiorini 66.10, sono per f. 420 a grossi 33 per fiorino ne traemmo in Lorenzo di Nicholò di Zanobi, a lui in credito in questo, fo. 89. f. 420.0.0	f. 66	s. 10	d. -
c. 319r: Antonio de' Rossi e compagni di Chologna per nostro chonto deno avere a di VIII d'aghosto f. 47.10, sono per fiorini 300 di Reno li traemo per nostra lettera in Dionixi Dalza, i quali traemmo al detto per conto de' Beaqui di Milano, a loro in debito in questo indrieto, fo. 197. f. 300.0.0	f. 47	s. 10	d. -
E a di detto f. 17.8.4, sono per f. 120 di Reno li traemmo per nostra lettera nel soprascritto Dionixi, i quali traemmo loro per conto de Ghabrielo d'Aghostino Ruffino, a loro in debito a questo, fo. 7. f. 120.0.0	f. 19	s. -	d. -
Somma in Colognia f. 420 di Reno, Brugia f. 66 s. 10 d. 0			

1234 ABIB, Mastro 7 and 8.

We have evidence of *Antonio de' Rossi e co. di Colonia*'s commercial activities until September 1438 in the form of bills of exchange issued to Filippo Borromei in Bruges and London. In 1439, Rossi went bankrupt together with Bernardo da Uzzano and Francesco Boscoli. Boscoli sued Rossi for large sums of money and had him sent to prison in Bruges.<sup>1235</sup> Rossi remained incarcerated for four years until he was freed, thanks to the efforts of the association of his compatriots working in Bruges and Jacopo de' Bardi, and after his brothers had pledged to pay the creditor the f. 363 owed to him, following the sentences passed by the Podestà and Mercanzia courts against Antonio de' Rossi.<sup>1236</sup> Since they could only raise f. 112 in cash, they were forced to cede their entire property to Boscoli's heirs. In the Catasto of 1446, the Rossi were described as absolute paupers, with nothing but debts: *El mobile che ci resta è solo el debito [...] stiamo in villa tralle zolle pel debito abiano col comune*.<sup>1237</sup> Boscoli died in September 1446. Strangely enough, the Rossi owned a whole range of properties and estates again by 1457.<sup>1238</sup>

### Giovanni da Magonza

In 1420, Hildebrand Veckinchusen wrote that Filippo di Giovanni di ser Rucco of the Alberti antichi had a correspondent in Mainz: [...] *hey my breyve hevet gheven an sin ghezelle to Mensse*.<sup>1239</sup> From this we can deduce that the Florentine banker was collaborating with a merchant in Mainz as his correspondent. That we could be dealing with Giovanni da Magonza, of whom we know that he was Gozzadini's partner at the beginning of the century, is merely a conjecture based on the supplement *van dem lumbarde to Mensse*.<sup>1240</sup> Nor do the Alberti's tax returns for 1427

1235 BNCF, Ms. Panciatichi, 148 (Epistolae reipublicae florentine nomine exaratae), v. Leonardo Bruni, 1435–1444, c. 116r (1438/39): Letter sent by the Signoria to the council of the city of Bruges regarding the apprehension of Rossi on demand of Lorenzo di Niccolò di Zanobi. – In this codex on cc. 197v–198r, 23 febr. 1442 (modern dating 1443), a letter to the council of the city of Cologne regarding a dispute between Rossi and a certain *Johannes Inchemacher*. I wish to thank Franz Irsigler (Cologne) for identifying this man as Johannes Angelmacher of Cologne.

1236 ASFi, Catasto 648 (II), cc. 528r–530r (Num. antica), cc. 533r–535r (Num. mod.) und cc. 614r–615r (Num. antica), cc. 621r–622r (Num. mod.).

1237 ASFi, Catasto 788 / II, cc. 812r–814r: 'The only property we have left is the debt [...] we are in the villa among the clods because of the debt we have with the municipality.' – Jacopo Villani appeared as counterparty, as bankruptcy proceedings were pending against Boscoli at the time.

1238 His household included: *Antonio d'Antonio* (44), *Giovani d'Antonio* (38), *Monna Brigida donna d'Antonio* (25), *Lisabeta figliola d'Antonio* (7), *Alessandra figliola d'Antonio* (6), *Diamante figliola d'Antonio* (5), *Ghabrielo figliolo d'Antonio* (4), *Maria figliola no legitima d'Antonio* (8), *Margherita figliola no legitima di Giovani e della Maria sua fante* (4), *Francescha figliola di Giovanni e della detta Maria* (3). Was Brigida a German woman? In that case, Elizabeth must have been born in Cologne.

1239 Lesnikov et al. (2013), p. 543: "[...] He has given my letters to his companion in Mainz." – Another bill of exchange transaction by Filippo di Giovanni with Veckinchusen to Mainz for 697 ½ Rhe. fl. is dated 14 June 1419. The payer is not named in the source.

1240 See above p. 221.

hold any more clues, since these records list neither the creditors nor the debtors of the Alberti companies. This means that the merchant on the Rhine cannot be identified with any certainty. The absence of additional sources regarding his business activities suggests that the transactions he concluded in connection with Bruges and which very probably led as far as Rome were small in terms of turnover and probably quite short-lived.

### 5.2.5 Giovanni d'Alberto e co.

Evidence of a brief return to the Cologne market by Cosimo de' Medici is to be found in documents from 1441. Headquarters in Florence wrote a letter to Bernardo Portinari, head of the recently established branch office in Bruges, telling him that they were willing to serve bills of exchange of the *vostrì di Colonia* as long as they had a credit balance. Furthermore, that, in the case of written instructions, they would need to be more explicit in order to avoid any misunderstandings. This means that Cosimo was prepared to grant a company the opportunity of issuing bills of exchange *per commissionem* that would then be settled in Flanders. The other Medici branch offices did not keep an account for these clients from Cologne, adhering instead to the guarantees provided by the sister company in Bruges.<sup>1241</sup> The wording *vostrì di Colonia* suggests that the Medici branch in Bruges had established an agency in Cologne, just like the Alberti had done a few decades before. At the same time, they were planning on installing a correspondent in Mainz, as indicated by a letter of 20 May 1441 sent from Bernardo Portinari to the headquarters in Florence. In it, he wrote that he had gathered that they were prepared to allow *Gianni da Magonza* to issue bills of exchange on the Curia's bank for up to 250 ducats, and in return to let him honour exchanges of up to 100 ducats in Mainz.<sup>1242</sup> As far as the office in Cologne is concerned, there is no clear evidence to show that these negotiations ever resulted in exchange transactions.

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1241 ASFi, MAP 82, no. 52, c. 197r: *Voi dite che quando gl'aconci vostri da Colonia ci troveremo danari come voi scrivete e così come cen'abbiamo a ghovernare facieremo quanto traremo da voi, ma da ora per questa vostra siate contento che traendoci i p[...] sino a lire 1000 li sopra di voi così faremo e trovandoci di vostro si traranno loro indietro e r[imettere] per voi come ordinate, e non trovandoci di vostro siate più contenti si paghino e rimetansi per voi e d'altra parte vi si tralghi quello ci venisse a mancare per detta cagione e tutto sopra di voi. Così faciamo. E ci avanza ancora de' detti di Colonia lire 300 e uno [...] di spici ce li domanda per loro e nnoi abiam lettera da loro e non ci dichono che le paghiamo ma bene compre[n]diamo vogl[i]ono gli si diano, ghovernansi nelo scrivere per modo che si potrebbe prendere errore, ricordate loro che ffacino per l'avenire.*

1242 ASFi, MAP 84, no. 91, c. 183v: *Volete se Gian di Magonza vole a cambio per costì a denari 250 glele diamo sopra di voi e rimettere per voi, così faciano bisognandoli e auti noi vi preghamo per l'ultima vi operassi come se per noi fusse in quel debito di Bernardo contraente e conpratore che si truova a Colonia e mandamovi una vi scrise e qui ne sia una all'ordine piaciavi durarvene a ffar anno i nostri per vigore.*

Giovanni da Magonza was part of a transaction in July 1441 in which the Medici in Bruges and Venice as well as the Genovese Raffaello Giustiniani participated.<sup>1243</sup> The identity of the merchants operating in Cologne and Mainz remains unclear. We can rule out, however, that it involved *Giovanni da Magonza* of Bologna – who had conducted exchange transactions with the Gozzadini and the Alberti antichi – since, in 1441, this man must have been at least seventy years old.

On 13 September 1441, Tommaso Spinelli transferred in the name of the Apostolic Chamber 550 Venetian ducats to the papal envoys Juan Carvajal and Nicholas of Cusa in Mainz by means of a bill of exchange.<sup>1244</sup> A note written by Tommaso Spinelli around the year 1441 most probably refers to this transaction: in it he writes that he had granted Pope Eugene IV a loan of f. 2,000 which he had transferred to Germany.<sup>1245</sup> Between 17 August 1438 and 1 October 1446, Spinelli is mentioned twenty-five times in the Chamber's registry in connection with German clients, but how exactly he transferred these sums of money to the Curia, or from there to Germany, is not on record for each individual case.<sup>1246</sup> In his balance sheet for the Borromei in Rome of 14 March 1443, a company by the name of *Giovanni di Alberto e compagni di Cholognia* is listed among the debtors, with a sum of f. 107 7s. 7d.<sup>1247</sup> On 15 July of that same year, he is recorded as the scribe of a settlement concluded in Bruges between Lorenzo di Niccolò di Zanobi on the one hand, and Tommaso Spinelli and Borromeo Borromei on the other.<sup>1248</sup> The last time Giovanni d'Alberto can be traced in the records in connection with Cologne is in a balance sheet of the Borromei-Spinelli bank in Rome in December 1444.<sup>1249</sup>

Help in identifying Giovanni d'Alberto was provided in the Spinelli archives, for it is there that in four documents from the years 1435 to 1445 that a Giovanni d'Alberto di Zanobi *di Firenze* is mentioned as creditor of Lorenzo di Niccolò di Zanobi *abitante a Bruggia*.<sup>1250</sup> This unusual combination of first names is only encountered in connection with the Rinieri family in this period (see Family Tree 8).<sup>1251</sup> A certain Zanobi di Berto Rinieri had two sons named Niccolò and Alberto. Alberto was born around 1355 and was, like his father, listed in the Arte

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1243 ASFi, MAP 134, no. 1, c. 150 left. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 550–552. – ASFi, MAP 134, no. 2, c. 14v: On 18 June, the Medici in Bruges charged 5 soldi to their sister company in Venice for passing on information about a deterioration in the exchange rate.

1244 Esch (1998), p. 280.

1245 YUSA 85, 1615: f. 2M fe *paghare nella Mangnia*.

1246 Esch (1998), pp. 280 and 293–295.

1247 YUSA 90, 1704, p. 1.

1248 YUSA 85, 1576.

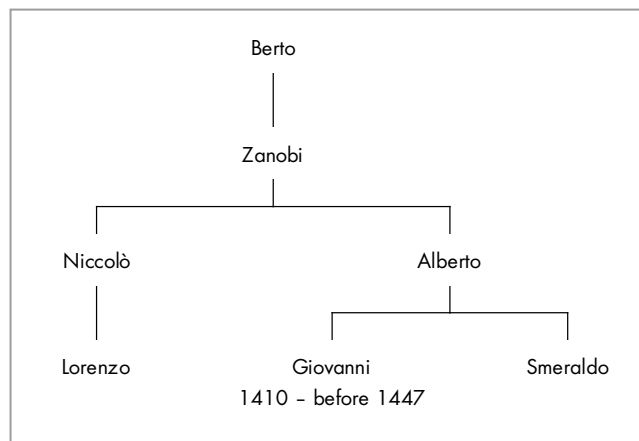
1249 YUSA 90, 1707.

1250 YUSA 292, 5263–64, 1435 November 20; 85, 1576, 1443 July 4; 85, 1577, 1443 July 15; 85, 1578, 1444 December 10; 113, 2180, 1445 May 26. One document refers to Niccolò Rinieri: YUSA 295, 5321–22, 1433.

1251 Preyer (1983), p. 389 noticed that this family, like many others, rarely used their family name in documents.

della lana as a wool merchant.<sup>1252</sup> In terms of business, he was clearly more successful than his brother Niccolò, who was banished from Florence in 1400 for taking part in a conspiracy; he fled to Bruges, where his son Lorenzo finally rose to become branch manager of the local Alberti bank.<sup>1253</sup> Alberto died around 1420, leaving behind to his sons Smeraldo and Giovanni, who both remained unmarried, a considerable estate worth f. 5,837 according to the Catasto of 1427; this put them in 35th place in the taxpayer's list of the S. Croce district.<sup>1254</sup>

During this time the Rinieri worked as silk merchants in England, and Giovanni Benci mentions the *settaiuoli Giovanni di Alberto Rinieri di Pisa*, which was carried on by Filippo Rinieri e Piero Neretti e co. di Pisa.<sup>1255</sup> Lorenzo di Niccolò probably ran into difficulties himself after the bankruptcy of the Alberti.<sup>1256</sup> In the years to follow, he worked for the Venice-based Borromei in Bruges. Giovanni d'Alberto advocated the interests of his cousin before the Mercanzia on 13 June 1436 and was verifiably in Germany.<sup>1257</sup>



Family Tree 8 Rinieri (simplified)

1252 Preyer (1983), pp. 393–395, on the significance of Alberto: “Alberto di Zanobi belonged to a well-established family, with a solid background in the merchant economy of the city, moderate participation in politics, and a pattern of going outside his small lineage to establish connections with important people.”

1253 Preyer (1983), p. 395.

1254 On the Rinieri estate, see Martines (1963), p. 366. In the Prestanze of 1403, Alberto di Zanobi was listed in 34th place in S. Croce, see Martines (1963), p. 353. Martines, however, mistakenly considers these two men to be members of the Alberti family. – Catasto 72, cc. 230ff.: Smeraldo is 30, his brother 16 years of age. Together they own assets worth more than f. 5,000. No holdings in companies are mentioned. In the Catasto, the name Alberti was added in pencil much later (by a historian?).

1255 ASFi, Mercanzia 271, c. 180r. Alessandro Ferrantini received money from the Rinieri in October 1434. – ASFi, Carte Stroziane II, no. 19, c. 20v.

1256 See above p. 136.

1257 ASFi, Mercanzia 4387, 1436 giugno 13. – AOIF 12735, c. 173 left: A certain Giovanni d'Alberto was served in Florence on 9 February 1442 by the bank of Antonio della Casa with a bill of exchange he had received in

Bruges-based Lorenzo di Niccolò initially collaborated with Antonio de' Rossi in Cologne; he received a bill of exchange for f. 420 from him through Filippo Borromei on 12 September 1438.<sup>1258</sup> We may assume that the company Giovanni d'Alberto e co. opened business in Cologne when Antonio de' Rossi went bankrupt in 1439, as this meant that the Rinieri lost their connection to the city on the Rhine. A collaboration with their competitor Bartolomeo Biliotti was out of the question. The few commercial contacts with Cosimo de' Medici and Tommaso Spinelli on record indicate a very short and not very successful activity of this branch of the bank. According to Brenda Preyer, a power of attorney dated 8 January 1444 is Giovanni d'Alberto's last sign of life.<sup>1259</sup>

### 5.2.6 Bartolomeo di Domenico Biliotti e co.

When he noticed that the parent company was in trouble, Bartolomeo Biliotti decided to split off from it and found his own enterprise. It bore the same name as the old partnership with the Alberti, *Bartolomeo di Domenico Biliotti e co.*, which means that for a short time there were two banks in Cologne with the same name. Thanks to the reputation he had acquired in Cologne over the years, it is likely that a large number of old clients followed him to his new company.<sup>1260</sup> The internal history of this company remains much in the dark, as the sources reveal only very little as far as ownership, organizational structure, staff, and profit development are concerned.

Cosimo de' Medici and his branch offices were in contact with Biliotti on several occasions between 1434 and 1438, but the sources are too sketchy to describe him as the successor of the deceased Simone Sassolini in his role as correspondent in Cologne.<sup>1261</sup> His name appears in the Medici account books in 1346 in connection with a stay in Venice,<sup>1262</sup> where he received cash that Giovanni de' Benci of Florence had instructed him to collect on behalf of the Medici branch in Geneva. Biliotti was probably on his way to Germany from Florence where he had been summoned as a witness in series of hearings before the Mercanzia in connection with the

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Basel on 10 January from Deigo degli Alberti. It was to pay for a horse that he had left on the other side of the Alps.

1258 ABIB. Mastro 8, c. 318v.

1259 The last of the two brothers (Smeraldo or Giovanni) died in 1447. ASFi, Conventi soppressi 92, 124, fol. 36v. – Preyer (1983), p. 397 in ASFi, NA 15597, c. 133r. – A Giovanni di Alberto Rinieri di Pisa is mentioned in a *libro segreto* by Amerigo Benci from the years 1459–76: ASFi, Carte Stroziane II, no. 19.

1260 It is doubtful whether he was the banker who, on behalf of the city of Cologne, ordered the payment of 4,600 Rhe. fl. stemming from the offertories to the Council bank of Deigo degli Alberti in 1437, for, at the time, he was involved in a heated dispute with Deigo before the Mercanzia.

1261 See above p. 123.

1262 ASFi, MAP 134, no. 1, c. 115r. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 550–552.

bankruptcy of the Alberti.<sup>1263</sup> In all likelihood, he was the banker through whom, in 1438, the Medici papal bank had sent f. 200 to the papal envoy who had travelled to Frankfurt for the election of Albert II of Hapsburg as Roman King.<sup>1264</sup> In 1439, Cosimo turned over the bill of exchange business with Biliotti to Antonio della Casa, his associate of many years, when della Casa set up his own business that same year.<sup>1265</sup> The preserved account books of the Curia-based bank of della Casa reveal, until 1446, a lively trade in bills of exchange, mainly with small transfer amounts. An exchange for 290 Rhe. fl. was the highest sum in transactions involving Biliotti. His speciality was minor transactions on behalf of clerics and merchants from Cologne and neighbouring bishoprics to the north and west. He was not into large servitia payments and annates, as these probably exceeded the volume of his working capital. His connections with the Medici and Antonio della Casa were certainly no more than mere correspondent relationships. However, his close collaboration with the Bardi in Bruges does not exclude the possibility that the two men had a financial stake in the business in Cologne.

We know of only a few of Biliotti's credit deals with German clients from the archives in Cologne. They show that he invested money in the local life annuity business, which he purchased from Cologne citizens in 1434 and 1438.<sup>1266</sup> On the other hand, we know very little of his involvement in the goods trade. As he traded in Bruges and Venice and occasionally visited his home city, we may assume that he was trying to earn a profit in the North with precious cloths. However, there is no concrete evidence of this in the sources. In the Medici account books for 1435 in Venice there is mention of *oro di Cholongnia chonprato*, but they contain no reference to Biliotti.<sup>1267</sup> The many payments received by Venetian merchants which were then credited to Biliotti's account with Antonio della Casa in Rome are a clue to substantial sales of goods in Venice, as cash or gold bullion would have almost certainly been transferred to Bruges. However, what kinds of goods we are talking about cannot be ascertained from the entries in the accounts.<sup>1268</sup>

By the autumn of 1445, Biliotti's business was in serious trouble; this becomes evident from two bills of exchange with which Antonio della Casa e co. wanted to balance his account, but which were protested and returned. Antonio Partini in Venice and the Bardi in Florence were no longer willing to honour bills of exchange which they should have charged to the account

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1263 Biliotti deposited testimony before the Mercanzia court on 14 and 15 November. See ASFi, Mercanzia 1323, cc. 70v-72r.

1264 Esch (1998), p. 287.

1265 AOIF 12737, c. 199v. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 553–566. – See above p. 171.

1266 Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln, Schrsb. 181, 36b 1; 85, 36b 3.

1267 ASFi, MAP 134, no. 1 (13 October 1436): *A 'Ntonio Chanacci lire sei 2s. di grossi, e per lui gli demmo a Iachopo di Bernabo, portò il detto chontanti, sono per oro di Cholongnia chonprato per lui; posto a libro di mercatantie, a c. 117, sino a di 11.* Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 550–552.

1268 See above p. 418.

of Bartolomeo Biliotti: *no' lo volsono pagare e tornoron con protesto*.<sup>1269</sup> After this incident, the volume of business between della Casa and Biliotti declined markedly, and the last time that a bill of exchange made out by the Florentine merchant in Cologne was honoured in Rome was on 12 April 1446. His account was balanced and closed on 1 May by a bill of exchange at his charge to Jacopo Benzi in Venice in favour of Antonio Partini.<sup>1270</sup> The real source of Biliotti's problems were demands made on him by the Cologne cleric Johannes Cabebe of Verden in 1444. Although several documents concerning this dispute have been preserved, we have too little to go by to clarify what it was all about. It appears to have all started with a deposit of f. 9,500 that was lodged with the Medici in Ferrara in 1438 and is said to have come from the estate of the wealthy curial cleric Hermann Dwerg. Six years later, authorized representatives tried in vain to claim this money from the Medici in Bruges. In the end, claims were directed against Biliotti, who resorted to legal action in his defence.<sup>1271</sup>

Biliotti was murdered in his home next to the Dominican basilica by a fellow Italian. This must have happened before 22 January 1450 because, on this day, the city council of Cologne intervened in matters concerning the management of his estate.<sup>1272</sup> The reeve Joeris Schynk had unlawfully seized Biliotti's estate and had to be forced by the council to hand it over. Johan van der Arcken, Johan van Duyren, Johan van Stralen, and Johannes Bruwer were appointed executors of the will and tasked with paying for the grave and the funeral and settling any outstanding invoices. After a period of one year and one day, the remaining assets were donated to the cause of saving souls.<sup>1273</sup> According to their order, the three authorized representatives handed over to Johann of Scheydam 17 Rhe. fl. which he had paid Biliotti for a bill of exchange to Rome but which he had never redeemed there. Which Curia-based bank was involved here is not clear from the records, so the question whether Biliotti was still doing business with the Curia after he split off from della Casa remains unresolved.<sup>1274</sup> The archives in Florence contain no records regarding the winding-up of Biliotti's company in Cologne or the fate of his will and estate. Nor does it appear that the Signoria or the Mercanzia made inquiries in Cologne regarding his assassination.

But who actually assassinated Biliotti? The archives in Cologne mention no name and there is no reference to any punishment executed. All we have is a very weak chain of clues leading

1269 AOIF 12737, c. 32 left. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 553–566.

1270 AOIF 12737, c. 76 left. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 553–566.

1271 ASFi, Diplomatico, Medici, 1438 dicembre 22 and 1439 marzo 4; Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln, A 17, Briefbücher, 7. Februar 1444 – 31. Dezember 1445, f. 40b, 1444 August 7. See Höhlbaum (1890), p. 11; Kuske (1917–1934), pp. 360–361; Camerani Marri (1951), pp. 52–53; Hirschfelder (1994), p. 81.

1272 Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln, Urkundenkopiar 3, f. 125. – Schulte (1900), p. 304; Kuske (1908), p. 402; Kuske (1917–1934), II, no. 9; Militzer (1981), p. 44; Huiskes (1990), Thursday, 22 January 1450.

1273 Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln, A 2M, Ratsmemorial, 1440–1472, fol. 46.

1274 Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln, B 3, Urkundenkopiar ('Kopiar C'), 15. Jh. (1422–1467), fol. 125. See Knipping (1896), S. 315.



to a certain individual, but not enough to build a case on. According to a document dated 20 August 1447, *Borghognone, filii olim Pieri Amari de Gyanfigliatis de Florentia, incole nostri* once lived in Cologne. In this document, the city confirmed to the Signoria in Florence that a certain Heinrich Gobelin of Dulken was indeed an imperial notary and served as town scribe and had once signed a power of attorney for this Gianfigliuzzi.<sup>1275</sup> According to the Catasto of 1446, Borghognone di Piero Gianfigliuzzi was then thirty years old and without assets. Together with Malpiglio Ciccioni, he seems to have squandered his father's inheritance in business dealings in Sicily, where he was known to have been in 1442.<sup>1276</sup> At the time the tax returns were filed, he no longer lived in Florence, but where he actually had his place of residence was not indicated.<sup>1277</sup> Thus, it could well be that he had already been living in Cologne for some time and worked for Biliotti. Between 1452 and 1461 he is recorded as a merchant in Geneva, where he also gained citizenship.<sup>1278</sup>

### 5.2.7 Abel Kalthoff

The collapse of Bartolomeo Biliotti's bank led to a void in the Florentine payment system in Cologne; Antonio della Casa had lost his correspondent and was not willing to replace him with a new partner in his business structure. Cosimo de' Medici and his branch manager obviously took a different view on the potential profit in Cologne and the necessity of a new connecting link. Their first recorded transaction through their new correspondent in Cologne dates from 20 September 1447. The transaction is mentioned in a letter from Carlo de' Ricci, one of the senior employees at the Curia-based bank, to Abel Kalthoff, a merchant in Cologne.<sup>1279</sup> Kalthoff had lived in Spain in the 1430s where he is recorded as having been the manager of the Spanish branch of the van Stralen-Kalthoff company. At the time, this trading company was ranked as "Cologne's leading business enterprise in southern Europe".<sup>1280</sup> After having been replaced by

1275 Kuske (1917–1934), IV, p. 98, no. 10.

1276 ASFi, Catasto 75, c. 26r. Borghognone was the brother of Amari di Piero, two years younger, who, at the age of 12, was listed as household head in the Catasto. Their mother was 34 years old at the time - Catasto 456, c. 141r; Catasto 619, c. 184r.

1277 ASFi, Catasto 669, cc. 401v–402v: *Borghognone di Piero d'Amari Gianfigliuzzi, il quale si truova fuori di qui, senza alchuno aviamento e per lo passato era stato in Cicilia con Malpiglio Ciccioni e con lui insieme è mal chapitato. Teste: Borghognone, d'età d'anno 30 in circha, senza aviamento chome si dice di sopra.*

1278 Cassandro (1994b), p. 238.

1279 ASFi, MAP 82, no. 179. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 508–511. - The letter is dated 7 February 1448. It is possible that it has gone unnoticed in research until now, because it is listed in the Florentine inventories under the misleading recipient name of "Abel Ralchoff".

1280 Kuske (1908), p. 8; Hoover (1963), pp. 128 and 209; Irsigler (1979); Kellenbenz (1985), p. 339; Hirschfelder (1994), pp. 83 and 487. In 1434, Kalthof was in Valencia personally for the purpose of organizing a direct trade link between Barcelona and London (HUB, VIII, pp. 5 and 14–15). He was in Antwerp several times

a grandson of van Stralen in Spain in 1447, Kalthoff returned to the company headquarters in Cologne and was soon entrusted with managing the connection with the Medici.<sup>1281</sup>

In the cited letter, Ricci reviewed the exchanges issued by Kalthoff in Cologne. In total, he had drawn f. 338 on the Medici bank in Rome, f. 258 of which had been paid out, the remaining f. 80 *si resta a pagare*. The *datori* of these bills of exchange remain unknown; only a few of the beneficiaries are mentioned by name: *Nicholò Seneppe* (f. 27), *Bernardo d'Altoren* (f. 8), *Nicholò di Franch* (f. 8), *Wenero Sichen* (f. 15), *Matteo Uberti* (f. 18), and a procurator by the name of *Piero Conte* (f. 50). The receipts were sent to the Medici in Bruges, who then passed them on to Cologne for Kalthoff to credit the amounts to the Florentine bankers. This means that he was not a correspondent in the strict sense of the term but worked on a commission basis through the Medici in Bruges, with whom he had to settle all the details of the arrangement. Kalthoff was promised that all of his bills of exchange would be served (*pagheremo tutto che quello avete tratto*), even though the Medici did not appear to expect a high turnover in the opposite direction with Cologne: *Siamo cierti che pichola chosa acchadrà trarre*. It may have seemed strange to him that, in the past, he had at times not been allowed to issue bills of exchange (*Avendo levato la chomissione a vvoi, cioè che più non chomettiate*). The reasons for this decision were said to have been the high mortality rates in Rome due to epidemics and an unfavourable development of the exchange rates in Bruges and Venice. The developments meant that they were losing 4 per cent on each of his bills of exchange. He was therefore asked to negotiate new terms in Bruges which could, however, no longer be based on the agreed upon exchange rate of 50 ½ grossi for one ducat (*grossi 50 ½ per uno duchato che paghassimo qui*). Only if both parties were able to avoid making a loss could the friendship endure: *l'amicizzia dura più e chontinovasi lunghamente*. It appears that the two companies were well acquainted with each other since in both places they were familiar with the handwriting of their respective managers: *Voi intendiate bene la mano di Ruberto e di Lionardo, e si intendiamo benissimo la vostra*.<sup>1282</sup> This means that Kalthoff was only to honour *lettere* written by Roberto Martelli, Lionardo Vernacci, and Carlo de' Ricci.<sup>1283</sup> Still, he obviously had little experience in the exchange business because the letter also contained a guideline describing *che modo facciamo le lettere di cambio*, which unfortunately has not survived.

The collaboration between the Medici and Kalthoff lasted for several years. In accounting records of the Medici bank in Florence for 1455, he is the only German correspondent listed: *Abello Chatolfo, Abello Chatolffe compagni, Abello Kaltolffe, Abello Katoff*. Even by then, his collaboration

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(HUB, IX, pp. 5 and 621) and also traded with Italians in Bruges (Kuske (1908), pp. 410 and 416); furthermore, he brokered contacts with Roman bankers.

1281 Hirschfelder (1994), p. 14.

1282 See Weissen (2021), p. 509.

1283 ASFi, MAP 134, no. 3, c. 46v: The Medici, on the other hand, were only to serve bills of exchange written by Kalthoff himself, as recorded in Florence in 1455: *per loro abbiamo a dare compimento, come ci scrissono per loro d'avviso, per mano di Abello Katoff e non d'altro*.

with the Medici was still on a commission basis, as the branch office in Bruges still had to provide a guarantee: *traemo a Chologna per sua lettera per conto di nostri di Bruggia*.<sup>1284</sup> The last time Kalthoff is mentioned by name in connection with the Florentine bankers is a bill of exchange for 15 ducats paid by the Milan branch of the Medici to William of Brielle on 21 April 1459.<sup>1285</sup>

Abel Kalthoff was the first German banker to conduct business with different Florentines at the same time. In 1454, three men from Cologne took out a loan for 55 cameral ducats which they had to pay back either to Francesco Baroncelli in Rome or to Kalthoff in Cologne. The curial clerics Jost Albrant, Albert Krummendiek and Ernst Nathega were prepared to provide the necessary security. However, since the money failed to arrive in Cologne, Albrant was asked to answer for the sum, whereupon he turned to the city of Cologne and asked them to make the payment.<sup>1286</sup> In the Catasto of 1457, *Abello Chaltos di Cholongnia* ranks among the debtors of Francesco Baroncelli & Guglielmo Rucellai e co.

The balance sheets of the curial banks Rinaldo della Luna e co. and Tommaso Spinelli e co.<sup>1287</sup> also refer to Kalthoff as a direct correspondent, as does Niccolò di Piero da Meleto, who operated a bank in Bologna.<sup>1288</sup> It appears that, at times, Kalthoff was the only banker in Germany who had the capacity to act as paying agency for loans with Florentine bankers in Rome. At least this is what a letter of 1456 implies in which an envoy from Rome wrote that he could not obtain the money required for the founding bull of the University of Greifswald neither through Lübeck nor through Nuremberg. This meant he had to fall back on Cologne where the exchange rate was three Rhe. fl. for two ducats. The only viable institution in Cologne for this kind of transaction was Kalthoff's banking house: *non valeo habere pecunias hac ad solvendum in Lubec nec Norinberghe. Oportet capere ergo ad solvendum Colonie pro duobus ducatis tres florenos rinenses*.<sup>1289</sup> In 1458, a deposit of 196 ½ Rhe. fl. was made at his bank for Enea Silvio Piccolomini.<sup>1290</sup>

In Tommaso Spinelli's Roman balance sheet of 5 June 1460, clients from Cologne, including *Abel Chaltoff di Chologna*, are listed once more.<sup>1291</sup> Numerous Germans had taken out small

1284 ASFi, MAP 134, no. 3, cc. 3r, 13v and 46v. Sieveking (1906), pp. 24–25; Roover (1963), pp. 128–129.

1285 ASFi, MAP 134, no. 4; Sieveking (1906), p. 41; Kuske (1908), p. 415. – Esch (2007), p. 379, tells of a cleric from Münster whose bills of exchange, issued in Cologne, were not honoured in Rome in 1463. However, since the banks in Cologne and Rome are not mentioned by name it is difficult to interpret this statement. The assertion that the Medici no longer honoured Kalthoff's bills of exchange because he had died would be pure speculation.

1286 Kuske (1908), p. 416; Kuske (1917–1934), II, nos. 123 and 174; Kuske (1956), p. 23; Hirschfelder (1994), p. 86.

1287 Della Luna: ASFi, Catasto 818, cc. 106r–108v; Spinelli: Catasto 804, cc. 14r–24r; Baroncelli: Catasto 798, cc. 103r–108v and 799, cc. 83r–99v.

1288 ASFi, Catasto 801, c. 1243. Kalthoff had a balance of f. 30.

1289 Esch (1975), p. 136, note 23: 'I am not able to take money for payment in Lübeck nor in Nuremberg. Therefore, it is necessary to take for payment in Cologne three Rhe. fl. for two ducats.'

1290 Löhr (1909), p. 37.

1291 YUSA 90, 1722.

loans in Rome and promised to repay them either in Cologne or in Bruges.<sup>1292</sup> The fact that Spinelli kept a *per nostro conto* for Kalthoff in Rome indicate that the two bankers were in a direct correspondent relationship. The van Stralen-Kalthoff company enjoyed such high repute and credibility in Bruges and Venice that Spinelli must have seen little risk in a direct collaboration. Since Kalthoff's funds remained unchanged at f. 32 in Spinelli's balance sheet for April 1462, and the fact that the Cologne clerics were now asked to settle their debts amounting to merely f. 26 with the da Rabatta banking house in Bruges, one assumes that the collaboration between Spinelli and Kalthoff must have ended some time before.<sup>1293</sup>

Five years later, a partner of the major Cologne company is once again listed in the Spinelli books. They had honoured bills of exchange in Rome that had been purchased by Goswin van Stralen and which were settled through Niccodemo Spinelli in Venice in commission.<sup>1294</sup> From the same banker we have two bills of exchange dated 1467 and 1468, respectively, in which he had sent 30 cameral ducats to a certain Bartholomeus of Luxemburg (*Lutzelenburch*), in both cases on 23 January.<sup>1295</sup> However, these were merely minor transactions that came nowhere close to Kalthoff's turnover in the 1450s.

### 5.2.8 Upper Germans in Cologne

In the latter half of the 1460s, Spinelli collaborated in Cologne with Nikolaus Perckheimer, the factor of the large Augsburg trading company Meuting.<sup>1296</sup> Seventeen of his bills of exchange have been preserved; of the receipts issued in Rome by the recipients we have eighteen. Based on these documents we can reconstruct at least twenty-four transactions. The first bill dates from 3 January 1467 in Germany, the last was issued on 1 April 1469.<sup>1297</sup>

As in the case of the transfers between Biliotti and della Casa, the amounts we are talking about were very small (between nine and a hundred Cameral ducats) and probably stemmed mainly from providing members of the Curia and procurators with funds to cover their daily costs of living. They had nothing to do with the major curial transactions such as servitia payments, annates, and funds gathered by collectors. Instead, the clientele was concentrated in and

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1292 See below p. 427.

1293 YUSA 90, 1729, p. 5. The commitment formula read: *a rendere a Bruggia da Rabatta*.

1294 Balance sheet of Lionardo Spinelli e co. di Corte of 31 March 1467: *Giaosmino da Strolen di Chologna per lettere di cambio. A in mano la quietanza Nichodemo Spinelli e debbe li rischiotere per noi a di 4 di magio prossimo: f. 83*. YUSA 91, 1742, p. 9. – The company had its own permanent factor in Venice from 1450 at the latest: Peter Kuefues. Kuske (1956), pp. 30–31; Braunstein (2016), pp. 247–250.

1295 See [Weissen \(2021\)](#), p. 569.

1296 Perckheimer was from Augsburg, where he is referred to as Pergheimer in the records. He was in no way related to the famous family of merchants, Pirckheimer.

1297 See the list of Spinelli exchanges: [Weissen \(2021\)](#), p. 567.

around Cologne, including neighbouring German bishoprics. Clerics from Liège, who made up a substantial amount of Biliotti's turnover, were not served by Perckheimer. This is actually not astonishing considering that Perckheimer's financial services were aimed at Nuremberg and not at Bruges. This was also Spinelli's perspective who, in Germany, mainly focused on the commercial centre on the river Pegnitz. This meant that all his larger transactions, which could not be handled by Meuting in Cologne, were channelled through Nuremberg. Thus, for example, in 1467, the chancellor of the archbishop of Cologne was obliged to pay for the delivery of silk via the Meichsner in Nuremberg.<sup>1298</sup> In 1471 at the latest, the Spinelli's relations with Cologne came to a standstill when cooperation with Ludwig Meuting's companies came to an end.

In the 1460s, the correspondent of the Medici in Cologne was Konrad Paumgartner from Nuremberg, who had a branch there which was managed by his partner, Hans Menger. It was through this banker that the Cologne arch deacon, Enea Silvio Piccolomini, repeatedly obtained money that was paid out to him in Rome by the Medici.<sup>1299</sup> Menger's name is mentioned in the cameral registry on 23 July 1466 after he had refused to honour a bill of exchange from Piero e Giovanni de' Medici e co. di Corte.<sup>1300</sup> The reason for this behaviour seems quite obvious, because it would have run up against all business logic considering that Menger's parent company had gone bankrupt shortly before. This failed transaction not only spelt the end of the cooperation but of the Medici's direct involvement in Cologne as a whole. In the years to follow they focused their financial business in north-western Europe entirely on Bruges. In 1466, for example, the Curia sent confirmation regarding the additional appointment of Archbishop Heinrich II von Schwarzenburg of Bremen for the diocese of Münster to the manager of the Medici branch in Bruges (*banckier*), Tommaso Portinari. He was told to collect his deed of appointment there directly against payment of 9,038 Rhe. fl.<sup>1301</sup>

## 5.3 Wrocław

### 5.3.1 Antonio di Giovanni de' Ricchi

In 1410, a Florentine merchant took up residence in Wrocław who was often simply referred to in German sources as Antonius der Wale (the Italian). For many years he was listed in the city's record books as *Mitewoner* (resident) until he assumed citizenship in 1419 and acquired

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1298 YUSA 91, 1742, p. 10.

1299 Löhr (1909), p. 37.

1300 Esch (2007), p. 379.

1301 Kuske (1956), pp. 17–18.

properties there.<sup>1302</sup> He not only left his mark on the history of Silesia in his capacity as a merchant, he was probably also the man known as Anthonius Wale, the author of the so-called Silesian *Walensbüchlein*, a text with descriptions of the routes to treasures, veins of gold, and deposits of ore.<sup>1303</sup>

The identification of this merchant's family affiliation was not very easy because, like many of his Florentine contemporaries, he never used his family name but only his first name and the patronymic, and sometimes even his grandfather's name: Antonius di Giovanni di ser Matteo. This has led to some confusion in the specialist literature in his case. He has erroneously been assigned to the family of the Ricci, occasionally even been called a relative of the Medici. Some clarification is provided by Florentine court records, the Catasto levies paid by this family, and the data recorded in the *tratte* where he is listed under his full name: *Antonio di Giovanni di ser Matteo di Paolo Ricchi*.<sup>1304</sup> The linguistic proximity of Ricchi and Ricci, especially in Latin documents, has probably contributed much to this confusion regarding the family name. What has further confused historiography is the fact that one branch of the family adopted the grandfather's name as their family name. The Sermattei appear in the *tratte* from 1430 onwards.<sup>1305</sup> The sons of Giovanni di ser Matteo did not divide their father's estate among themselves but used it indiviso to set up commercial establishments across Europe, including branches in Florence (Bernardo), Venice (Michele), Wrocław (Antonio and Leonardo), Cracow (Guido), and Prague, where they sent Antonio Salutati as the business manager.<sup>1306</sup>

Of great importance to the history of the Ricchi family was their relationship with the Medici. Giovanni de' Medici was, like Antonio di Giovanni, commercially active in Poland, although without becoming a direct competitor because he limited his engagement mainly to Cracow.<sup>1307</sup> Citing from now lost records, Otto Stobbe writes that on 14 March and 10 June 1410, King Wenceslaus had written to Wrocław with the instruction 'that Antonius of Medici from Florence and Stefano da Quarto of Lucca should not be hindered in any way.' It appears that Antonio d'Albizzo de' Medici – a relative of Giovanni – and the man from Lucca did not settle

1302 Wendt (1916), p. 49.

1303 Braunstein (1989); Langosch et al. (2011), p. 618. Here it says that he received citizenship in 1412.

1304 ASFi, Mercanzia 1266, c. 345v. Herlihy, David; Litchfield, R. Burr; Molho, Anthony; Klapisch-Zuber, Christiane: Florentine Renaissance Resources. Online Catasto of 1427. <http://cds.library.brown.edu/projects/catasto/overview.html>, 04.07.2021; Florentine Renaissance Resources, Online Tratte of Office Holders, 1282–1532. Machine readable data file. Edited by David Herlihy, R. Burr Litchfield, Anthony Molho, and Roberto Barducci. (Florentine Renaissance Resources / STG: Brown University, Providence, R. I., 2002.) <http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/tratte/>, 04.07.2021.

1305 Florentine Renaissance Resources, Online Tratte of Office Holders, 1282–1532. Machine readable data file. Edited by David Herlihy, R. Burr Litchfield, Anthony Molho, and Roberto Barducci. (Florentine Renaissance Resources / STG: Brown University, Providence, R. I., 2002.) <http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/tratte/>, 04.07.2021. – On this branch of the family, see Daniels (2021).

1306 The Catasto of 1427 shows that Michele parted ways with his brothers after 1414, for he filed an independent tax return while his brothers remained residents in the same household. ASFi, Catasto 74, c. 216r; 80, c. 567.

1307 See above p. 190.

down in Wrocław in the end, but in Cracow instead.<sup>1308</sup> We even know of several Ricchi brothers who worked for Giovanni de' Medici in various branch offices. The break between the two families occurred during the internal power struggles in the Republic of Florence when the Ricchi became staunch supporters of the oligarchy around Rinaldo degli Albizzi, and thus – like the Ricci and the Alberti – adversaries of the Medici.<sup>1309</sup> Michele de' Ricchi, the head of the Venice branch, hosted Rinaldo degli Albizzi when the latter stayed in La Serenissima in 1424 on his way to Hungary on a diplomatic trip. Clearly Michele belonged to the Florentine elite in Venice, as his signature on a treaty of alliance between his hometown and his city of residence shows.<sup>1310</sup>

Antonio di Giovanni found an important partner in Filippo de' Ricci for exchange transactions between Poland and the Curia.<sup>1311</sup> Around 1410, the bank in Rome began showing interest in the prospering Polish-Bohemian mining regions, an economic boom that attracted merchants from Genoa, Venice, Florence, and Upper Germany.<sup>1312</sup> When, after the Council of Pisa and after Poland and Silesia had joined the Pisan Allegiance, additional business in the form of exchange transactions from these regions to the Curia gathered momentum, Ricci gained access to the market by entering into a partnership on a correspondent basis with Michele di Giovanni di ser Matteo Ricchi in Venice, who opened the door for him to his brothers' branches.<sup>1313</sup>

The first documented transfer from Germany, which was sent to the Curia through Antonio Ricchi in Wrocław to Filippo de' Ricci, is documented for the year 1411.<sup>1314</sup> Contrary to the express wish of Peter von Wormditt, the procurator of the Teutonic Order at the Curia, for payments from Prussia to be conducted through the Alberti branch in Bruges, the Grand Master chose an alternative payment channel.<sup>1315</sup> It is not clear from the sources whether he was merely

1308 Stobbe (1864), p. 350: „[...] dass man den Antonius von Medicis von Florenz und Stephan de Quarto von Lucca im Geldwechsel nicht hindern soll.“ On Giovanni d'Albizzo, see Stromer (1971), p. 79; Stromer (1995a), p. 44; Brucker (2015), p. 338.

1309 Roover (1963), pp. 44–45 and 377; Bettarini (2015), p. 10. This erroneous connection with the Medici family goes back to Stobbe (1864), p. 350, who came across an Anton from Florence in each of two records from 1410. However, certainly Antonio d'Albizzo de' Medici and Antonio di Giovanni di ser Matteo are meant. This false ascription was due to an error in Venetian court records. See Ptánsnik (1910), p. 62.

1310 Bettarini (2015), p. 5.

1311 See above p. 162.

1312 Stromer (1979), p. 10.

1313 ASVe, Cancelleria inferiore, Notai, b. 227, reg. 1412–1417, c. 5r (1412 apr. 8). This Venetian source provides, for the first time, evidence of the collaboration between Ricci and Michele di Giovanni, but the Teutonic Order's bill of exchange sent from Wrocław to the Curia in autumn 1411 indicates that the collaboration goes back further in time. See Schuchard (2009); Bettarini (2015), p. 13. – Neri di Cipriano Tornaquinci appointed Michele as his branch manager in Venice in 1409 and 1410 when he himself shifted his operational base to Cracow. ASVe, Cancelleria inferiore, Notai, b. 226, reg. 1406–1411, cc. 172v (1409 mar. 12) and 235v (1410 lug. 18). – Between 1407 and 1410, Tornaquinci was the partner of Tommaso di Giovanni in Venice, believed to be Tommaso di Giovanni del Palagio. For this, see the sources mentioned here and ADP, codice 11704–5, 123921–4.

1314 In the German sources, Ricchi is also referred to as *Antonius der Wale*. See Borchartd (2006/2007), p. 162.

1315 Militzer (1993), pp. 44–45.

looking for a cheaper way of transferring money to save costs or whether the behaviour of the Alberti forced him to do so. Looking for help, he turned to the Chancellor of the principality of Wrocław, Nikolaus Bunzlau, based on the fact that the latter had already provided valuable assistance to him in raising the necessary funds for mercenary troops shortly before. Through Florentine merchants in Bruges and Prague, he had been able to transfer 12,500 *schock* of Bohemian groats to King Sigismund of Bohemia.<sup>1316</sup> Evidently the Grand Master was highly satisfied with Bunzlau's services or at least felt grateful and obliged to him. He gave him the order to send 2,000 ducats to Rome. Peter von Wormditt signed the receipt for this amount on 20 December 1411, stating that he had received the money from Filippo de' Ricci e co. in Rome.<sup>1317</sup> In the given case, a bill of exchange was served that had been issued by *Sigismundo Poznaw et Anthonio de Johanne commorantibus in Wratislavia on 8 October*. It shows that here Bunzlau was acting as a broker, who advanced the amount specified in the bill of exchange to the Order as a loan. When he presented the receipt issued in Rome on 12 April 1412, he was able to demand from the Grand Master the payment of 2,200 ducats. On 13 November 1412, the money was finally held in readiness for Bunzlau by the Order's representative in Gdańsk.<sup>1318</sup>

Until the opening of the Council of Constance, the Apostolic Chamber registered several payments from Poland served by Adovardo Tornaquinci on behalf of the bank of Filippo de' Ricci. These inflows are also likely to have been based on bills of exchange from Antonio di Giovanni Ricchi. Noteworthy are 1,000 ducats from the collectorate of Poland, Gniezno, and Kulm, which the Curia received on 17 March 1414, not least because Leonardo di Giovanni, a brother of Antonio living in Wrocław, was named as the collector. In his letter of appointment, the Apostolic Chamber expressed its wish for the transaction to be conducted by means of bill of exchange.<sup>1319</sup>

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1316 Fronte di Piero di Fronte, Castellano Castellani: OBA, documents, drawer 24, no. 5 (26.09.1414); OBA, no. 1815; Koeppen (1960), pp. 123–125; Souhr-Könighaus et al. (2014), p. 87; ASFi, Mercanzia 4336, cc. 106v–107r (24 July 1414). – OBA 1934: The Order should have settled its debt in Frankfurt by 30 March 1413, but failed to do so. The king finally received the money from Fronte di Piero di Fronte in Friuli on 17 May. The Florentine had probably purchased this debt from the king for a very much lower price. On the part the Florentine banker played in connection with these payments, see ASFi, Mercanzia 4336, cc. 106v–107r and 109v–110r. Note from Lorenz Böninger. – On Bunzlau's financial transactions, see Stromer (1995b), p. 168.

1317 Koeppen (1960), p. 136.

1318 Beuttel (1999), p. 489, footnote 12 and pp. 534–535; Militzer (2003), p. 14. – On Sigismund Poznaw or, as may be the case, Pozenow, see Stobbe (1864), p. 346.

1319 Ptánsnik (1910), pp. 16–17. In the Wrocław signature books, there is an entry on 12 April 1415 that refers to this collection and the related transactions conducted by Antonio and Leonardo di Giovanni. See Stobbe (1864), p. 353. For these dealings, see Stromer (1970a), p. 143. Theiner (1861), pp. 8–13: *Volumus autem, quod pecunias et alia, que per te premissorum occasione exacta fuerint, per litteras cambii vel alium tutum modum ad Cameram prefatam quantocius destinare procures*. – For reasons unknown, Leonardo was held captive in Poland. The Signoria of Florence thanked the king of Poland in a letter of 5 January 1423 (modern reckoning 1424) for his release. ASFi, Signori. Missive I Cancelleria, 30, 80r, 5 ianuarii 1423. Note from Lorenz Böninger.



The papal bank operated by the Ricci was not the only one with which the Ricchi conducted exchange transactions. On 3 March 1413, Antonio di Giovanni issued a bill of exchange in Wrocław on behalf of *Arrigo Stanpa* (Heinrich Stange?) for f. 70 to be made payable in Rome by Nicola e Vieri di Cambio de' Medici to the apostolic protonotary *Hermannus de Varchi* (Hermann Dwerg). The Curia-based bank was asked to debit the amount to the account of Michele di Giovanni Ricchi in Venice.<sup>1320</sup> Evidently the Ricchi did not have an exclusive banking partner in Rome, so that it remains unclear to whom they had made out the bill of exchange for f. 149 in 1413 which the provost of Gniezno had lost and the value of which he now demanded back from the banker in Wrocław.<sup>1321</sup>

When the Mercanzia opened bankruptcy proceedings against Filippo de' Ricci in 1415, a notary was asked to draw up the balance sheets which, unfortunately, have not been preserved. Thus, the lists of creditors and debtors can no longer be appraised. In a settlement between the debtor and people who had invested money in his company, Michele di Giovanni de' Ricchi is mentioned several times, which probably means that his brother Antonio, in his role as correspondent in Wrocław, was also affected by the bankruptcy.<sup>1322</sup> In financial terms this was probably not as serious as one might think since, as a correspondent, in the North, he was hardly a creditor at the failed Curia-based bank. But it did mean that he had lost his exchange partner at the Curia and at the Council of Constance.

In the Mercanzia files and in connection with the Ricci bankruptcy, Antonio de' Ricchi does not feature as a victim, but as a defendant. On 16 February 1417, Antonio di messer Francesco Salutati da Pescia appeared before court where he made serious allegations against the Ricchi brothers. He claimed that, on 3 August 1412, he had met Michele di Giovanni di ser Matteo in Venice and signed a contract. He was told to go to Prague and there open in the name of all sons of Giovanni a branch office for the purpose of doing business in the trade of goods and bills of exchange. His salary and expense allowance were put down in writing. His superiors were to be Michele in Venice and Antonio in Wrocław.<sup>1323</sup> He went on to say that he had worked in the city on the Moldau River in the name of his employers' company for roughly twenty-eight months. But apart from a quill and an inkwell (*non portando di loro altro che la pena et il calamaio*)

1320 YUSA 4975, c. 60r. Note from Tobias Daniels.

1321 Stobbe (1865), p. 38.

1322 ASFi, Mercanzia 1266, cc. 344rv, 345v, 346r und 374r.

1323 ASFi, Mercanzia 1264, cc. 203r–205v, here c. 203r: *Dinanzi a Voi messeri ufficiali et Corte et a Vostrì et della decta Università suy consiglieri expone et dice Antonio di messer Francesco da Pescia che gli è vera cosa che a dì tre d'agosto 1412 esso Antonio s'aconciò nella città di Vinegia cum Michele di Giovanni di messer Matheo facente allora per se et per gli suoy frategli non divisi ad andare et stare nella Magna in Praga per attendere a cambi et ad altre cose che fossino di bisogno secondo che volessino decto Michele et Antonio suo fratello che stava a Bradislaio nella Magna cum pacti et modi che se contengono in una scripta la quale à decto Antonio di mano del decto Michele sottoscritta, et fra l'altre cose è che alle spese loro doveva decto Antonio andare nella Magna infino che fosse cum Antonio fratello di decto Michele et in quello di che trovasse decto Antonio doveva cominciare il salario di decto Antonio da Pescia.*

he had received nothing from the brothers. On 17 May 1413, he had received 2,220 Hungarian florins from the archbishop of Prague for a bill of exchange, for which a current account had been opened for several clerics at the bank of Filippo de' Ricci e co. in Rome. However, the bank had only paid out f. 1,400 when it went bankrupt. When the archbishop learnt about this, he had him sent to a terrible prison (*tennelo in una salvaticha et aspra prigione*), but Michele and Antonio di Giovanni had not responded to his cries for help from the dungeon. Upon this, his brother messer Leonardo Salutati had given up his chair at the University of Padua and travelled to Florence with Michele di Giovanni de' Ricchi to see Adovardo Tornaquinci. Since no money could be extorted despite all threats, Michele, along with his brothers, agreed to ensure Antonio's release in Prague. However, because they had only been able to raise half of the required f. 600, Antonio had been in danger of dying in prison. Therefore, messer Leonardo had travelled to Constance and pleaded his case with cardinals and other high-ranking personalities for more than a year. In the end, he had been able to secure the demanded amount, whereupon Aldighiero di Francesco Biliotti had sent a letter of warranty to Prague. After fourteen gruelling months he had finally been released. Now he was suing the Ricchi brothers for f. 725 in payment of the remaining debts, travel expenses, and damages. The Mercanzia's verdict of 15 March 1417 is recorded in the appendix to his copy of the manual of Samminiato de' Ricci.<sup>1324</sup> In modern historiography, the plaintiff is known under the name of Antonio di messer Francesco Salutati da Pescia. In 1416, he entered the service of Giovanni de' Medici; later, he became the manager of the Medici branch in Rome (1429–35), and finally the director general of the Medici companies (1435–43).<sup>1325</sup> His brother Leonardo lost his chair at the University of Padua owing to this affair but was then appointed bishop of Fiesole, a position he held from 1450 to 1466.<sup>1326</sup>

An incident recorded in Wrocław indicates that Antonio di Giovanni Ricchi did not have to cease doing business with bills of exchange to the Curia after the bankruptcy of Filippo de' Ricci; instead, he found a new bank to serve his bills of exchange. Evidence for this comes in the form of a document of 1416 in which the resolution of a conflict between him and Canon Paulowski is described. The cleric purchased a bill of exchange issued to Constance, but then did not make the journey. This left the question open what amount he should receive back from the bank.<sup>1327</sup> The name of the correspondent bank on the Lake of Constance remains unresolved, for it is not mentioned anywhere in the document. The Spini account book from Constance shows that the man they worked with in Venice was Alessandro Borromei, but no money from Germany or Poland was ever sent to Constance through him, nor did they conduct any transactions with the Ricchi in Venice or Wrocław. The Medici, too, can be excluded, as

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1324 Ricci (1963), pp. 160–161.

1325 Roover (1963), p. 377; Cecchi (2012).

1326 Raspini (1994).

1327 Stobbe (1865), p. 39.

they would not have entered into a commercial partnership with the Ricchi, their inner-city rivals. One trail points to the Alberti, but evidence to support this hypothesis is very meagre. In 1416, Aldighiero Biliotti, the head of the Alberti bank, gave a guarantee to the archbishop of Prague in Constance for Salutati, who was being kept in prison because of the Ricchi, and which finally led to his release. He would hardly have offered this guarantee if he had not been in a business relationship with Michele and Antonio di Giovanni.

One case of collaboration between the Alberti and the Florentine in Wrocław is to be found in a payment transaction from 1419. Since Nikolaus Bunzlau was unable to purchase a bill of exchange to Venice in Wrocław, probably owing to King Sigismund's embargo against the Lagoon City, he sent 1,700 Rhe. fl. which he owed to the procurator of the Teutonic Order, Peter von Wormditt, by means of a bill of exchange purchased from *Antonio di Matteo* to Cologne to Bartolomeo di Domenico Biliotti, the head of the Alberti branch recently established there. It can almost certainly be assumed that the remitter was Antonio di Giovanni di ser Matteo.<sup>1328</sup> If this connection between Alberti and Ricchi actually did lead to more than a few individual transactions, we may still assume that the relationship was short-lived and did not outlast the Council of Constance. The end of this cooperation also cuts off the Wrocław merchant Nikolaus Bunzlau from all opportunities for financial transfers to the Curia.

With regard to the 1420s, the sources suggest that the Ricchi collaborated with Vieri Guadagni; however, circumstantial evidence is quite weak and should only serve as a working hypothesis for future archival research. The hypothesis assumes that Adovardo Tornaquinci and Niccolò Cambini remained in Constance after the collapse of the Ricci company and established a new bank which they brought into the partnership agreements with Vieri di Vieri Guadagni in 1424.<sup>1329</sup> Starting in October of the same year, we notice a distinct rise in the dealings of this papal bank with Poland. Andrea Cambini pledged on behalf of the Guadagni bank to make payments for clerics from Gniezno and Poznan.<sup>1330</sup> Two years later he deposited money from the Polish collectorate with the Curia.<sup>1331</sup> In the following year, the procurator of the Teutonic Order in Rome was forced to take out a loan of 2,000 ducats. A large part of this was provided by the Alberti, but the Guadagni bank (*Gwadagnis*) also contributed 500 ducats.<sup>1332</sup> In the files relating to these transactions, the name Antonio di Giovanni is not mentioned once.

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1328 Since Biliotti knew that Wormditt had died in Florence on 26 August 1419, he refused to release this money until the rightful recipient was known. He also blocked a further 3,000 Rhe. fl. which were destined for the procurator. In this regard, see also the detailed letter by the notary Ludolph Grove to the Grand Master of 22 January 1420. OBA 3088. See Koeppen (1960), nos. 234, 246, 298; Militzer (1993), pp. 45–46; Militzer (2003), p. 14.

1329 See above p. 162.

1330 RG Online, RG IV 00358, <http://rg-online.dhi-roma.it/RG/4/358>, 02.07.2021.

1331 Prajda (2018), pp. 129–130, footnote 217.

1332 OBA 5225.

In connection with his business deals, Antonio di Giovanni benefitted from a few rich Wrocław citizens. Johannes Bancke became his partner from about 1416 onwards.<sup>1333</sup> He utilized the brokerage services of the Wrocław merchants Nikolaus Bunzlau and David Rosenfeld, who, thanks to their good relations with the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, were able to secure large orders for money transfers to the Curia for him from 1418 onwards.<sup>1334</sup> The embargo that King Sigismund enforced against Venice brought an end to these business relations as the delivery of goods to the city, which were important for the clearing of any bills of exchange, was no longer possible.<sup>1335</sup> Antonio di Giovanni, who, in peaceful times, sent his goods from Wrocław via Linz and Salzburg to Venice was directly affected. When Sigismund became ruler of Bohemia in 1419, it meant that the citizens of Wrocław also became subject to his orders.<sup>1336</sup> On 4 March 1421, Giovanni Bindi of Lucca and a certain Antonio of Pisa denounced Antonio di Giovanni to the city council of Wrocław for having gone on a journey to Venice, where he conducted business with Venetian merchants (*mit den venedigern kaufmanschacz und hantyrunge getreben*).<sup>1337</sup> A month after these accusations had been raised, Sigismund excluded Wrocław from the embargo on Venice; thus, Antonio probably would never have been convicted anyway.

Historians, however, have not been able to locate any sources describing trade transactions between Wrocław and Venice between 1420 and 1431, although the various mentions of Johannes Bancke in the Florentine tax records of 1427 call for a revision of this view.<sup>1338</sup> While the goods trade and financial transactions slumped, Ricchi was heavily involved in the local loan business.<sup>1339</sup> He was only involved in the transfer of large sums to the Curia one last time. When the authorities in Wrocław began investigating the collector of the Council of Basel, Nikolaus Gramis, in 1441, allegedly for discrepancies in his accounting, Antonio di Giovanni was among the witnesses and auditors.<sup>1340</sup>

In 1425, Antonio Ricchi moved to Cracow, where he invested his money in the mining business until his death several decades later. He also maintained close relations with Wrocław and Johannes Bancke from his new place of residence and work. However, these were abruptly ended in 1427 when he encountered serious financial difficulties. This led to years of litigation

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1333 Stobbe (1865), p. 40; Braunstein (2016), pp. 230–234.

1334 See above p.247.

1335 See above p.57.

1336 Myśliwski (2009a), p. 105; Myśliwski points out that all the trade routes from Wrocław to Venice passed through the German Empire and that it was, therefore, of little significance whether Sigismund ruled over Wrocław before 1419 or not.

1337 Stobbe (1866), pp. 344–345.

1338 Stromer (1975), p. 1093; Myśliwski (2009a), p. 105. – ASFi, Catasto 74, c. 217v.

1339 For this, check the sources given in Stobbe (1864); Stobbe (1865); Stobbe (1866); Stobbe (1867).

1340 Schuchard (2009), p. 41.

with Bancke before the courts in Venice and Cracow.<sup>1341</sup> He was even imprisoned for a while but was then able to rehabilitate himself in Wrocław, even to the extent that he sat on the city council in 1439, from which he was expelled again in 1443. After that, his trail goes cold.<sup>1342</sup> His brother Michele, who, for many years, was the rock of his business in Venice, was extradited to Florence after the return of Cosimo de' Medici from exile and publicly hanged in front of the Mercanzia palace on 30 June 1436.<sup>1343</sup>

The Ricchi family's tax returns for the Catasto of 1427 show that Antonio had completely ceased trading in bills of exchange by then. He was still living in Poland, heavily in debt. The primary cause of this dire situation was a loan he had granted to the Polish king. His brother Michele recorded outstanding debts of over 4,400 florins in the books.<sup>1344</sup> The Ricchi also owed debts to their old business partners Johannes Bancke and the heirs of Vieri Guadagni, but these were exclusively incurred through trade in goods. The family was no longer active in international money transactions.<sup>1345</sup>

After the cessation of the bill of exchange business that Antonio di Giovanni had offered, it was no longer possible in Wrocław to issue bills of exchange to a Curia-based bank until the end of the 15th century. Using this financial instrument, merchants from Wrocław and Nuremberg could only transfer money as far as Venice.<sup>1346</sup> In the levies rendered to the officials of the Catasto in 1431, these old structures are no longer evident, while the market strategy reveals a distinctly new approach.<sup>1347</sup> These changes are reflected in the Catasto of Adovardo di Cipriano Giachinotti (quondam Tornaquinci) in 1430, as the Ricchi are mentioned only with small orders while Polish clients no longer figure at all. Johannes Bancke is still listed as a merchant: *Giovanni Bancho di Barsillava sta a Vinegia*. The leading correspondent in Venice is now Giovanni di messer Bartolomeo Panciatichi, who features in the books with a debt of f. 1,642.<sup>1348</sup>

1341 Simonsfeld (1887), pp. 190–197; Ptánsnik (1911), pp. 30–32; Ptánsnik (1959), pp. 80–83; Borchart (2006/2007), p. 162; Bettarini (2015), pp. 7–8.

1342 Braunstein (1989), p. 40.

1343 Bettarini (2015), p. 9.

1344 ASFi, Catasto 38, cc. 701r–703v; 57, cc. 906v–921r; 74, cc. 216v–218r; 361, cc. 360r–365v. See Bettarini (2015), pp. 6–7.

1345 ASFi, Catasto 57, cc. 913r, 914rv, 916rv, 917rv, 919r and 921r (*eredi di Vieri Guadagni*). In c. 919r, the name of Bernardo di Giovanni di ser Matteo is mentioned once. – The many mentions of customers from Portugal are striking. The relations of the Cambini to Portugal have already been researched by Sergio Tognetti, see Tognetti (1999), p. 130.

1346 Stromer (1975); Myśliwski (2009b), p. 619.

1347 Tognetti (1999), pp. 131–137, contains an analysis of the market strategy pursued by the Giachinotti-Cambini company, based on the Catasto of 1431. In 1434, the company was involved in exchange transactions with the bank of Galeazzo Borromei at the Council of Basel. These business dealings are certainly no indication of a market strategy for Germany. See below p. 360.

1348 ASFi, Catasto 369, c. 123r. – ASFi, Catasto 383, c. 64r: The branch in Venice was in operation from 1 December 1428 on and was managed by his sons, for he himself was already past the age of 70. – ASFi, Catasto 53, cc. 332r–343v: According to the tax declaration of 1427, Panciatichi was not yet involved in the banking

In this merchant's Catasto there is no offsetting account for this sum and no reference to bill of exchange transactions to Germany. But he did do business with German merchants in Venice, for the major difficulties experienced by Hermann Reck dragged him down, too, and finally led to his bankruptcy. The underlying reasons for these problems will have to remain unexplained. Regarding this affair, Panciatichi noted – possibly in a sarcastic undertone – that Reck had agreed to pay off his debts over a period of sixteen years, provided he didn't die before.<sup>1349</sup>

### 5.3.2 David Rosenfeld – A Hanseatic Merchant as Competitor of the Florentines in Wrocław?

From 1418 onwards, the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order commissioned the Wrocław-based merchant David Rosenfeld to send money to the Order's procurator at the Curia.<sup>1350</sup> The merchant even offered to transfer money to the Curia up to the amount of f. 10,000 at a rate that was several hundred ducats lower than that offered by competitors. According to Wolfgang von Stromer, Rosenfeld had so advanced as to become a serious competitor of Antonio di Giovanni de' Ricchi with regard to payments to the Curia, and eventually even succeeded in booting out the Italian.<sup>1351</sup> In formulating this hypothesis, von Stromer presupposes that Rosenfeld, as taker, issued bills of exchange that he was able to send as far as Venice, or even directly to the Curia. On the strength of the now known sources, this view needs revising. Rosenfeld, who was born in Thorn, went to Wrocław in 1414 after the Grand Master Heinrich von Plauen had

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business but in the cloth trade instead, but without any connection to Wrocław or Cologne. On the other hand, he did provide information regarding relations to Cracow, *Ser Piero Biccherano di Charchovia*, and Buda, where King Sigismund owed him f. 9,287. However, he had little hope that the debtor would ever fulfil his obligations: *chome sapete lui e chativissimo paghatore*.

1349 ASFi, Catasto 474, c. 881r: By 1433, this Panciatichi company in Venice had closed down. – On Hermann Reck, see above p. 197. – ASFi, Catasto 383, c. 65r: *Messono avanzi i miei di Vinegia a dì 24 di marzo 1429 lire 151 6s. XIId. grossi, per la metà mi toccherebe L. 75 13s. 5d. grossi nonne traemo niente perché in 2 debitori se n'andò più di L. 211 di grossi, che per la mia metà mi toccherebe ad an[n]o L. 105 10s. cio fu Ermanno Recch tedesco in maggiore soma, per resto L. 196 3s. 2d. grossi di Sandro Pesciolino chorriere duchati 150 se ne portò rechava da Vinegia, sicché perché fu più la perdita che gli avanzi, non se ne trasse niente e cchon detto Ermanno s'è fatta chonchordia, paghi in 16 an[n]i paghando hogni ano la rata toccha, che morendo mai se n'arebe un soldo perché di nulla siamo sichuri, sicché per insino a quel dì nulla s'è avanzato ma s'è perduto, hora quando arò i chonti di là di questo an[n]o nuovo, tutto vi darò o più o meno, sia che in questa si dica che in su quella ci aremo a fondare e cchosi vi darò quello resto debitore in proprio di detta chonpagnia a punto. – ASFi, Catasto 474, c. 881: In 1433, the branch office in Venice is described as having closed down long ago: *La chompania di Vinegia nostra è finita più fa*.*

1350 As yet there are only a few short treatises on Rosenfeld, although we find many records referring to him in Wrocław and the Hanseatic region: Koeppen (1960), p. 467; Stromer (1979), p. 22; Hucker (1981); Kopyński (2001).

1351 Stromer (1979), pp. 22–23; Hucker (1981), p. 394.

banished him from the Order's territory. His successor, Michael Kuchmeister, reached out to him nevertheless. On 18 February 1418, he sent Witche Morser, Rosenfeld's partner in Gdańsk, to Wrocław with the request to draw 900 Hungarian florins there and transfer them to the commander (*Komtur*) in Nuremberg. After receiving the money, the procurator Wormditt was to be informed in Constance.<sup>1352</sup> On 15 April of the same year, the procurator reported to Marienburg *so byn ich entricht der 900 ungerische gulden, die der koufman van Danczk czu Bresslaw hatte mit den Nurenbergern obergekouft*.<sup>1353</sup> This means that the deliverer mentioned in the bill of exchange must have been Witche Morser, while the taker and payer were men from Nuremberg.

In January 2019, 2,000 ducats were to be sent to Wormditt through either Nuremberg or Leipzig.<sup>1354</sup> However, in the meantime, Sigismund's embargo against Venice had come into force and it appears that this transfer was never carried out. Despite this, Wormditt wrote to Marienburg, telling the people there that Nuremberg merchants were ready, but that they did not want to collaborate with the Order's representative in Bruges, but only with its chief mercantile commissioner (*Grossschäffer*) in Marienburg.<sup>1355</sup> Nevertheless, this transaction seems to have never materialized. The records we have on these transactions mention neither the names of the German merchants nor their partner banks at the Curia. One must assume that the Germans could only transfer this money to a Florentine contact in Bruges or Venice who then was responsible for the onward transfer to its final destination.

When, in 1420, the Grand Master realized how expensive it was to transfer money to Florence via Bruges, he again decided to seek the services of David Rosenfeld (*eyn namhaftigen kouffmanne*) in Wrocław.<sup>1356</sup> Towards the end of June, the money was probably deposited with the Alberti, they being the trusted bankers of the Order's new procurator, Johann Tiergarten: *in des banck ich alles pflege habe, meins ordens geld zu legen*.<sup>1357</sup> This transaction to Florence was followed by an eager exchange of letters between the Grand Master and Rosenfeld. The subject of the correspondence concerned the compensation that the merchant was demanding from the Teutonic Order for the damage caused by the former Grand Master. Rosenfeld turned down the offer of a landed estate because he believed the soil there was not sufficiently fertile. He

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1352 OBA, Order's folios, no. 10. Only preserved in the register of finding aid no. 66. – OBA 2663: On that same day, David Rosenfeld wrote to the Grand Master and offered his service in collecting debts from Nikolaus Bunzlau, Sigismund Pozenow, and Sigismund Syttaw in Wrocław.

1353 OBA, Order's folios, no. 10, cc. 231–232: 'Thus, I have received 900 Hungarian florins that the merchant from Gdańsk had overbought with the Nurembergers in Wrocław.' – Koeppen (1960), p. 476; Militzer (2003), p. 394.

1354 Koeppen (1960), p. 586. This is the only time in the entire period under review that Leipzig is mentioned as a place of exchange.

1355 Koeppen (1960), p. 337.

1356 Koeppen (1966), pp. 87 and 102. OBA 3160.

1357 Koeppen (1966), p. 145. OBA 3203, Florence, 6 July 1420: '... in the bank where I am accustomed, I place all my order's money'.

maintained that he was unwilling to leave Wrocław after finally having found a place to live and, thank God, food (*gottlob narung*). Nor, he claimed, would the offer adequately compensate for the damage caused by the former Grand Master. Instead, he asked for twice 500 schock at an annual interest rate of 10 percent; otherwise he would have to resort to legal action.<sup>1358</sup> At the same time, however, he made the offer to the Order to transfer bills of exchange to the Curia on particularly favourable terms, as long as he was given two months' advance notice. Rosenfeld also approached the procurator and the Grand Master's chaplain in this matter, asking them for their support for his request and offer.<sup>1359</sup>

These sources reveal that Rosenfeld was not a major financier with large capital assets and the capacity to transfer bills of exchange to the Curia of up to 10,000 ducats from his own funds. In 1420, he was simply a merchant looking for a business opening, which he appears to have found in the shape of brokering financial transactions. That is, he was the man who brought an actual *trattorio* and a taker together and made his money by including a fee for his service in his demands. Notably, he actually never received an order from the Grand Master to issue a bill of exchange, but only to cover for it; that is, to have a bill of exchange issued in his name, which is what the Order's representative in Bruges did. In Wrocław, Rosenfeld did not collaborate with any fixed partner bank. Sometimes he purchased a bill from an unnamed Nuremberg man, on other occasions from the Florentine Antonio di Giovanni Ricchi or from the Venetian Francesco Amadi.<sup>1360</sup>

### 5.4 Lübeck

#### 5.4.1 Alberti

At the beginning of the 15th century, the Teutonic Order was the most important German client of the Alberti in Bruges. Since there was no bank in the Order's domain that had the capacity to carry out transfers as far as Rome, it lay in the decision of the Grand Master whether he wished to purchase a bill in Bruges, Wrocław, or Lübeck. In the overwhelming majority of

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1358 OBA 3321 and 3322. In 1419, Rosenfeld had already tried several times to receive a loan from the Grand Master. In October, the cleric was given the advice to stay at Rosenfeld's place in Wrocław when meeting King Sigismund there. OBA 2911 and 3041.

1359 OBA 3299: Letter from the procurator to the Grand Master informing him that Rosenfeld had written to him, asking him for his support. He would like the Grand Master to help him *in seinen geschefften und werben*. The letter to the chaplain: OBA 3611. See Koeppen (1966), pp. 124 and 134–138.

1360 In 1424, a certain *Fricze Poppel* collected f. 100 from Anthony of Florence and David Rosenfeld for Francesco Amadi. See Stromer (1975), p. 1093.



cases, he chose the Western route and settled the payment through the Order's representative in Flanders.<sup>1361</sup> Only rarely did he commission his representative in Gdańsk to find a way via the Eastern route.<sup>1362</sup> Lübeck played no role in his considerations until the 1430s, although the Order also had a representative there.<sup>1363</sup>

An important factor when choosing a banker, and thus automatically the place where the southward-bound bill was issued, was the mode of collaboration between the Order's general procurator based at the Curia and the papal banks. In January 1404, the Teutonic Order in Rome disposed of a deposit of 5,000 ducats at the bank of *Lorenzo e Simone degli Alberti e co. di Corte*. Further 130 ducats were entrusted to the cardinal responsible for the Order's affairs. Where this money had come from can no longer be ascertained. Evidently the Grand Master at Marienburg (Malbork) also deemed this amount to be too high since he feared that it might whet the Pope's appetite for more. He therefore instructed the procurator Peter von Wormditt, who had been appointed shortly before, to transfer 2,000 ducats back to Prussia by means of a bill of exchange. The remaining funds were to be used for his own livelihood (1,000 ducats) and to advance the Order's interests at the Curia in Rome.<sup>1364</sup> At the same time, the Grand Master passed appropriate instructions on to the Alberti.<sup>1365</sup> It shows that, at that time, the procurator was in the comfortable position of holding a current account at one of the major Curia-based banks and, therefore, did not have to worry about money.

After defeat in the Battle of Grunwald (Tannenberg) in 1410 by the forces of the Polish king, the Teutonic Order lost important territories and thus the revenues gained therefrom, leading to a dramatic decline in its financial situation. The Order was no longer able to furnish a deposit at a Curia-based bank, instead it urged its procurator to seek loans, which were then reimbursed with the help of bills of exchange. Unfortunately, however, the Grand Master was often not able to make these payments on time. When Bartolomeo Spinelli of the Alberti nuovi in Bruges had to wait in vain for the timely repayment of a loan of f. 3,100 in connection with the servitia payments of Bishop Heinrich of Samland, he was instructed by his executive partners (*von iren obersten*) not to grant any more loans to the Order.<sup>1366</sup>

Thanks to the substantial archives of the Teutonic Order, the business relations between the Alberti and the Order's procurator Peter von Wormditt are well documented for the years

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1361 Here just one of many transactions mentioned in the reports of the general procurators: On 26 March 1411, Peter von Wormditt asked the Grand Master to authorize a payment to him for 1,000 ducats through his representative in Bruges. Koeppen (1960), p. 128.

1362 See above p. 248.

1363 Sarnowsky (1993), p. 103.

1364 Koeppen (1960), pp. 50–52: [...] *wurde dem pabste das gereite gelt vormelt, do mochte eyne unbequemekeit und eyn bose mittel von komen.* 'If the ready money was reported to the pope, there might arise inconvenience and an evil means.'

1365 OBA 736.

1366 Koeppen (1960), nos. 101 and 127; Beuttel (1999), p. 268.

of the Council of Constance.<sup>1367</sup> They confirm that he had gone from being a depositor to a borrower. In his capacity as director of the Alberti Bank, Aldighiero di Francesco Biliotti did not travel to Constance holding a credit balance of the Order, but with a promissory bill for 3,100 ducats, which was to be called due in Bruges on 30 November 1414. For Biliotti, this way of doing business with the most important customer in the Baltic region was certainly more lucrative, but it also posed a higher risk and greater effort. He now not only made money from the payment transactions between Bruges and the Curia, but also from the interest on debt; on the other hand, actually collecting the debt became much more arduous.

By December, Wormditt had borrowed an additional 4,800 Rhe. fl.<sup>1368</sup> from Biliotti and had to ask him for several more loans until the end of the Council. In the records, a loan for 1,000 Flemish crowns from February 1416 is particularly revealing, not least because Biliotti had to wait until December of that year for repayment, although it had actually been due in May.<sup>1369</sup> Only very rarely was the Grand Master in a position to send money to his representative in Bruges from either Marienburg (Malbork) or Gdańsk on time in order to repay outstanding debts to the Alberti representative, Filippo di Giovanni di ser Rucco. After 1410, the Teutonic Order's revenues in Prussia were so meagre that it had to take out a loan of 8,000 Rhe. fl. from the *Deutschmeister* (Master of the Teutonic Order in Germany) to cover the costs of the Order's delegation to Constance.<sup>1370</sup>

Biliotti was quite accommodating towards Wormditt during the first years of the Council. When he missed a payment deadline, Biliotti was prepared to grant an extension for which he was very well remunerated. Still, their relationship was often overshadowed by payment reminders, dunning letters, and the threat of withdrawing Wormditt's creditworthiness. At the same time, the banker had to acknowledge that the procurator could do little as long as support from Prussia failed to materialize.<sup>1371</sup> In order to address this matter, he sent a monitory letter

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1367 Since Krumboltz (1892), Koeppen (1960), and Militzer (1993) have provided detailed descriptions of the finances of the Teutonic Order during the years of the Council of Constance, the individual financial transactions will not be reiterated here. Beuttel (1999), p. 490, largely omits the period of the Council of Constance in his discussion regarding the funding of the procurator general.

1368 Koeppen (1960), pp. 223–224: *Ich welde in welschen landen bas tußent gulden usbrenge denne alhie hondert.* – The still existing correspondence between the Grand Masters and their procurators is preserved in the Archives of the Teutonic Order in the Geheime Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin and has been published by Hans Koeppen and Kurt Forstreuter as far as the years 1403 to 1436 are concerned. The rather inadequate registers in the finding aids that have been preserved provide the only possibility to at least partially reconstruct their contents. See Kubon (2015).

1369 Koeppen (1960), p. 310. See footnote 12 for a list with all the extant sources regarding this transaction.

1370 Beuttel (1999), p. 518.

1371 In many letters to the Grand Master, Wormditt complains about the unwillingness to pay on the part of Hannes von Geseke, the Bruges representative of the Order's mercantile commissioner in Königsberg (Kaliningrad). That these complaints regarding unreliable management were not entirely unjustified is shown by the man's arrest in 1420. See Bunge / Hilderbrand (1853–1914), V, cols. 695–696.

directly to Grand Master Michael Kuchmeister on 6 September 1416; but this, too, did not trigger the anticipated response. The fact that he remained patient for such a long time was, on the one hand, probably due to the earning prospects of such transactions; on the other, to the trust that had grown over the years between him and his German client. For a long time, Biliotti considered the risk manageable, thus allowing Wormditt to hope for ever more loans although he had little to no warranties to back his reputation. In Bruges, the Alberti considered their representative in Constance too lenient and urged him to take more forceful steps to make Wormditt pay up or else have him excommunicated by the Apostolic Chamber, a step that Biliotti always shied from taking.<sup>1372</sup>

For Wormditt, it was important to be able to rely on Biliotti's generosity. Sending him money from Prussia through channels other than the Alberti branch in Bruges might help to bridge a current financial squeeze but the bank or person making the payment in Constance could not give him credit in the amount he needed. Any financial operation of this kind came across as a threat to his creditworthiness with the Alberti, *mit den ich all myn geschefte gehabt habe, syder ich im hofe gewest bin*.<sup>1373</sup> Accordingly, he reacted quite vehemently when the Grand Master wrote to him in August 1415, telling him that he was presently unable to purchase any bills of exchange through Bruges to Constance. The Order's chief mercantile commissioner (*Grossschäffer*) had instructed merchants in Brzeg to send him f. 2,000.<sup>1374</sup> However, this attempt to bypass Bruges failed, for, on 21 October, the procurator replied in a letter that he had been forced to borrow f. 1,000 from the Alberti since the money had failed to materialize. The Alberti would certainly have been able to carry out the transfer. This connection had always worked in the past; therefore, he could not believe that *wo der romische hoff ist, das man dohin von Flandern nicht wechsel sulde haben. Her sulde nu eyn wechsel ken Frankenfort von Brucke haben. Das glaube ich wol, das hers do hin nicht mochte gehalten. Aber wo der hoff ist, do hin vindet man allwege wechsel. Vyndet mans nicht bey eynem, so vendet mans bey dem ander*.<sup>1375</sup> In a letter to the Grand Master a few days later, he repeated his call to do business with the Alberti: *das gewiste, sich der gesellschaft de Albertis zu bedienen, da sie allerbest bezahlte*.<sup>1376</sup>

The Order's procurator, Peter von Wormditt, joined the travel company that set off from Constance to Rome in 1418 but, at the same time, he uttered his discontent about the frequent

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1372 Koeppen (1960), pp. 351–352.

1373 Koeppen (1960), p. 208: '[...] with whom I have had all my affairs since I have been at court.'

1374 Souhr-Könighaus et al. (2014), p. 157.

1375 OBA 2259. See Koeppen (1960), pp. 267–268: 'Wherever the Roman court is, one should not have exchange from Flanders there. He should now have an exchange at Frankfurt from Bruges. I believe well that he could not have it there. But where the court is, there one always finds exchange. If one does not find it with one, then one finds it with another.' - Esch (1966), p. 338.

1376 Koeppen (1960), pp. 271–272: 'The safest option is to use the services of the Albertis, as they pay the best.'

travels because of the high expenses they caused.<sup>1377</sup> The procurators continued to receive the bulk of their money through the representative of the Order in Bruges. Thus, for instance, Johann Tiergarten confirmed on 15 June 1421 to have been paid 10,000 ducats by Biliotti in Florence.<sup>1378</sup> On 24 December 1425, Arnold of Datteln received a loan from the same banker in the amount of 650 ducats, repayable to the Alberti in Bruges by May of the following year.<sup>1379</sup> The city of Gdańsk also preferred the western route when, in 1424, it instructed their representative Magnus Rudolf in Flanders to purchase a bill of exchange of over 100 ducats in Bruges and have it sent to Gdańsk's procurator in Rome. Furthermore, he was told that he should borrow the money required for this transaction from a shipmaster in Gdańsk who, in turn, would then make out a payment order to Gdańsk's city council. In 1430, the same city informed the Order's procurator Kaspar Wandofen that it would be sending him 50 ducats via Flanders.<sup>1380</sup> The eastern route via Wrocław was chosen only in 1412 and between 1418 and 1420.<sup>1381</sup> Considering the Order's entire financial transactions, the shift appears to have been only a temporary disruption. After this brief interplay involving David Rosenfeld, the Grand Master channelled all the Order's payments exclusively through Flanders.

Again and again, procurators intervened with the Grand Master, telling him that it was imperative to return to the former mode of funding their work and advised to him to set up a current account with a Florentine bank.<sup>1382</sup> In 1428, procurator Johann of Kurland also petitioned for a change of system: *das vor unsern ordens [...] nutcz were, das iiiiiM gulden ober des procurators zurzeit zerunge im hofe ze Rome adir zu Florentz bey kouffleuten zu unsers ordens behuff gelegit wurden [...]*.<sup>1383</sup> As had been practice until 1410, the money would then have been deposited, allowing the procurator to make use of it as time went on. However, no changes

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1377 Koeppen (1960), p. 530: 'Traveling around burdens our purse; departing and then staying put costs us a lot.'

1378 OBA 3458: *Und das czihen hin und her machet uns den buwtel gar spicz; das uffbrechen und wider setzen das kostet gar vil*. Further exchanges to the Curia through the Alberti in Bruges: December 1429 (OBA 5046, 5048), August 1430 (OBA 5444).

1379 Koeppen (1966), p. 504.

1380 Beuttel (1999), p. 524.

1381 See above p. 248.

1382 OBA 3356. See Koeppen (1960), p. 361: [...] *ouch so hot mir der obdochte wechseler gesagt, wie zu pflege in vorzeiten meine vorfarn obir irer jerliche czerunge und andere awsrictunge inr banck legen betten zum weniesten czweytausendr gulden, fon welchen sie dorumme, das sie sy in bewarunge betten, genys entfangen, welchen sie fon mir und ouch uffs letzte fon seligen her Petir nicht gehabt betten [...]*. 'Also, the thoughtful money changer told me, as was the custom in the past, my ancestors used to deposit at least two thousand florins in their bank every year for their annual expenditure and other arrangements, on which they received interest because they had it in safekeeping, which neither I nor, ultimately, the late Sir Peter had received [...].'

1383 OBA 4938. See Koeppen (1966), p. 518: '[...] it would be beneficial for our order [...] that four thousand guilders, over and above the current expenditures of the procurator, be placed with merchants in Rome or Florence for the benefit of our order [...].'

were made, meaning that the procurator still had to take out a loan from the Alberti which then had to be repaid in Bruges.<sup>1384</sup>

When the Alberti ran into financial difficulties, their clients felt it very quickly. The city council of Gdańsk experienced this when it instructed an envoy to purchase a bill of exchange in Bruges for the Order's procurator at the Curia on 23 September 1431. However, since the bill was not honoured until 21 August of the following year, it left the procurator in Rome in a tight spot financially.<sup>1385</sup> The receipt from Rome did not reach Gdańsk until November 1432.<sup>1386</sup> As the Alberti had been so reliable and financially sound for so many decades, the Teutonic Order had never really considered switching to an alternative route through Lübeck or Wrocław permanently. The last bill of exchange to the Curia issued by the Alberti branch in Bruges was in 1434, when the bank was already in serious financial trouble.<sup>1387</sup>

For more than three decades, the Alberti relied on the same business strategy regarding financial transactions with the Baltic region. They went almost exclusively through Flanders, although their network also included a branch office in Venice, at least until 1436.<sup>1388</sup> Their presence in the international banking centre of Bruges allowed them to conduct business not only at low cost but also at low risk which would have made little economic sense in a more offensive strategy towards northern Germany, Prussia, and Scandinavia. Even with the Teutonic Order as their most important client in this region, they saw no cause in changing their strategy or, for instance, sending a correspondent to the area or even establishing branch office there.

While the courts in Florence were in the process of closing down the Alberti companies, there was one more commercial contact between the bankers and the Grand Master. The Teutonic Order had been granted the right of coinage in Prussia by King Frederick II in 1226. The most important mint was located in Thorn. In 1426, the Order leased the right of coinage to the

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1384 Obtaining these loans was at times very difficult and caused the procurators great concern. See, for example, the letter written on 8 February 1422 (OBA 3647) in which Tiergarten writes that he only receives loans against collateral. On 19 November (OBA 5225), he had to split the loan to pay for his annual salary; he had to borrow 1,500 ducats from the Alberti and 500 ducats from the Guadagni bank. The Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, Johann Sobbe of Livonia, on the other hand, had a deposit of 1,500 ducats in 1429. See OBA 5160. – In 1433, a cleric of the Order in Rome, reported that he was unable to find a loan, since the pope had ordered the bankers to lend him all the money available. See OBA 6565. – Regarding the Alberti's reluctance to extend credit, it is probably telling that in the list of debts of the procurator Kaspar Wandofen, who died in 1434 (OBA 6920), the principal creditors were two German Curial clerics: Hermann Dwerger and Thomas Rode. There is no mention of a banker in this list.

1385 Hirsch (1858), pp. 237–238.

1386 Neumann (1863), p. 145.

1387 Militzer (2003), p. 15.

1388 We know of only one single case in which Venice was involved in payment transactions between Rome and Prussia. ASFi, NA 12519, 20 March: Johannes Tiergarten received a loan in Rome from Aldighiero di Francesco of the Lionardo degli Alberti bank for 650 Venetian ducats which had to be repaid to Lionardo degli Alberti in Venice within three months.

cities for a period of ten years. After negotiations between the Grand Master and the cities to extend the lease failed in January 1436, the right of coinage fell back to the Teutonic Order on 22 March 1436. The Order soon faced criticism for its coinage policy from the estates of the realm who suspected a decline in the quality of coinage. As the Grand Master saw no chance of maintaining the current monetary value, he went in search of someone who was prepared to take over the task of minting.<sup>1389</sup> Because at the same time the option of transferring money through the Alberti in Bruges, tried and tested for decades, had lapsed, the Grand Master came up with an ingenious plan of how to solve both problems with the help of a single partner. In the autumn of 1437, he attempted to coax a Florentine banker to open a branch in the Order's territory. At the Council of Basel, his procurator Andreas Pfaffendorff approached the Alberti to ascertain whether they showed any interest or willingness to take on such a task. After Pfaffendorff's departure from Basel, on 29 November 1437, Johann Kasche was the Order's only representative left at the Council. When Kasche was asked by the Alberti bankers about this idea, he had no answer, because he had never been told about the talks that had been going on. Left in the dark, he wrote a letter to the Grand Master, asking him about these negotiations. From this letter we learn that the Italian bankers had been asked whether they would be interested in managing the mint and conduct loan and exchange business as bankers at the same time: [...] *und welde [...] haben eynen guten montzmeister, der die montze fertig halden kunde beide in silber und golde und mit wechsel kunde umegeen und vormochte och in noten den orden tzu vorlegen mit seyner gesellschaft.* The Alberti (*die lombartz von der banck der ander gesellschaft de Albertorum*) now wished to know what commission the Grand Master would be willing to grant them over and above the profit from trade.<sup>1390</sup>

The plan hatched by the Teutonic Order was never realized, but it shows that people in the North were trying to gain closer access to the international payment system dominated by the Italians, and also to seek easier ways of raising credit. What is astonishing here is that the contact between the Teutonic Order and the Alberti occurred at a time when the bank was embroiled in bankruptcy procedures in Florence, a fact that must have been known in Prussia, too. Possibly the Grand Master thought it might be easier to convince the business-experienced bankers of his plan when they were facing serious problems themselves.

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1389 Waschinski (1952), p. 122; Dygo (1987), pp. 51–59 (There is no mention of the Alberti here); Sarnowsky (1993), p. 230.

1390 OBA 7387, 1437 November 29: '[...] and would [...] have a good mint master, who could keep the mints running both in silver and gold, and who could handle exchanges and also, in times of need, advance the order with his company.' – The addition *ander* is not easy to interpret. Very likely, it refers to the fact that, until then, the Order had conducted business with the Alberti in Bruges and Cologne. After they had gone bankrupt, they were doing business with the surviving company of Deگو degli Alberti, who was connected with the Alberti company in Rome but not the one in Bruges. However, possibly their counterpart also refers to the representative of the Alberti nuovi.

### 5.4.2 Pirckheimer, Kress, Veckinchusen

Around 1400, the Pirckheimers, who had their headquarters in Nuremberg, owned a company in Lübeck that was managed by Johannes Lange. He was able to issue bills of exchange straight to the Gozzadini bank in Rome, as we know from the Italians' correspondence.<sup>1391</sup> Who served his exchanges after the Bolognese went out of business is difficult to say. Receipts of the Curia for servitia payments made by the dioceses of Würzburg, Stavanger, and Strängnäs between 1396 and 1402 indicate that the Spini bank was involved in payments from northern Europe.<sup>1392</sup> Since the bishop of Strängnäs was in contact with the Pirckheimers' branch manager in Lübeck as well as the Spini in Rome in the same year,<sup>1393</sup> we may assume that the payments to the Curia went through this channel. Lange had fallen out with the principal owners in Nuremberg in 1404 and had been replaced by Johannes Mosman, also from Nuremberg.<sup>1394</sup> We still have evidence of commercial activities of this company in Lübeck up to 1423, but with Lange's departure the financial ties with the Curia in Rome were severed.<sup>1395</sup>

The Kresses, too – who had been prominent in local trade since 1405 with their *famuli* Ulrich Rephun, and from 1420 with Ulrich Meyer – had no verifiable relations with a Curia-based bank.<sup>1396</sup> In Lübeck, German merchants only offered bills of exchange as far as Bruges. This was probably how the money that the Orlandini transferred to *Gianni di Lubeca* in Barcelona in April 1407 by means of a bill of exchange made its way from Lübeck to Flanders.<sup>1397</sup>

When, in 1405, Bishop Peder Jensen Lodehat of Roskilde assigned Ludovico Baglioni, a merchant from Perugia, who had been trading in Lübeck since the last years of the 14th century, to transfer a large sum of money to the Curia, the transaction was secured by a fiduciary agreement. The three Lübeck citizens Heinrich Westhof, Albert tor Brugge, and Werner Hoop deposited 422 Franconian crowns and 400 Lübeck marks with Hinrich vamme Orte and Sivert Veckinchusen in Lübeck on 30 July. They were told to pay the money to the Italian merchant if he was able to present a receipt from Rome by 28 February 1406; otherwise, they were advised to give the money back to the bishop's three representatives. This deal is the first evidence we have of a business contact between bankers working for the

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1391 See above p. 187.

1392 Esch (1966), pp. 377–378.

1393 Nordmann (1937), p. 125.

1394 Nordmann (1933b), pp. 8–9; Fouquet (1998), p. 195. – The end of Lange's banking activities might also help to explain why the Spini cannot be linked to any moneys from the North after 1404.

1395 Hammel-Kiesow (2000), p. 49; Strack (2010), pp. 25–26.

1396 Nordmann (1933b), pp. 10 and 12; Nordmann (1937), pp. 124–125.

1397 ADP, D, 1145, Bruges-Barcelona, 1407–04–22. The Orlandini had received the money from a certain *Francescho Moraghes* in Bruges. On the Orlandini in Bruges, see Guidi Bruscoli (2012), pp. 20–21.

Curia and the trading company of the Veckinchusens, whose partners also included vamme Orte.<sup>1398</sup>

Regarding the business activities of Hildebrand Veckinchusen, who was based in Bruges, ten account books and over 500 letters from the first two decades of the fifteenth century have been preserved. The documents are impressive evidence of how skilfully and instinctively he and his brother Sivert, who usually worked in Lübeck, used bills of exchange as a means of financing transactions and as a loan instrument between the Hanseatic region and the banking centres of Bruges and Venice. In Bruges, their business partners not only included German merchants, such as Heinrich Rummel (*Hynrich Rumele*) and Arnold Poltus (*Arnt Poltes*), but also Lucchese and Florentine merchants, such as Davino Pagani (*Danyñ Pagayn*), Piero di Biagio Vespucci (*Peter de Vysputse, Peter Spusse, Peter dey Spussen*) and Giovanni Orlandini (*Johany Orlandyn*). They maintained especially close ties with the Alberti nuovi and antichi banks, represented by Bartolomeo Spinelli (*Bortolmeus Spynneyl*) and Filippo di Giovanni di ser Rucco (*Fylypusse Johan to den Alberten huse*) in Bruges and by Alessandro Ferrantini (*Allacksander Ferentin*) in London.<sup>1399</sup>

The Veckinchusen benefitted from their relationship with the Alberti when King Sigismund repaid them a large loan in Constance in 1417. Their representatives sent to the Lake of Constance were looking for an opportunity there to avoid having to transport money in cash and found it thanks to their relations with the Florentines. Aldighiero di Francesco Biliotti brokered for them a loan to the procurator of the Teutonic Order, Wormditt, so that the money could be disbursed to him.<sup>1400</sup> In the same year, Hildebrand Veckinchusen noted in his account books: *[...] do makede ick [in Bruges] ene wesselle myt Fylyppusse Johan to den Alberten huse [...]. Des so sal hey my to Colnne geven by Bartolmeus Domyñnycy [...]*.<sup>1401</sup> This means he had purchased a bill of exchange from the Alberti in Flanders, which was to be repaid in Cologne by their representative Bartolomeo Biliotti. In 1420, he received from Filippo di Giovanni di ser Rucco of the Alberti in Bruges a bill of exchange which was to be served in Mainz: *[...] hey my breyve hevet gheven an sin ghezelle to Mensse*.<sup>1402</sup> Despite the evidently quite close ties between the Alberti in Bruges and Veckinchusen, these remained restricted to business within Germany.

One also finds contacts between Veckinchusen and a number of Italian merchants residing in Germany, none of which have any relation to the Roman Curia. On 16 July 1414, Elisabeth

1398 HUB, V, p. 131. – In the records, this shareholder is also referred to as Hinrich op Orde. See Stieda (1921), p. 23. – For Baglioni, see below p. 269.

1399 For these transactions, see the indexes of persons and subjects in Stieda (1921); Lesnikov (1973); Hammel-Kiesow (1993); Lesnikov et al. (2013). Stieda confuses Bartolomeo Spinelli with the Genovese merchants from the Spinola family who were also resident in Bruges. See Stieda (1921), pp. XXXIII–XXXIV.

1400 Krumbholtz (1892), p. 247; Koepfen (1960), pp. 461–462 and 476. An entry in the books by Hildebrand suggests that he himself was probably in Constance at the time, too. See Lesnikov et al. (2013), p. 373.

1401 Lesnikov et al. (2013), p. 367.

1402 Lesnikov et al. (2013), p. 543. – A further exchange transaction involving Filippo di Giovanni and Veckinchusen to Mainz over 697 ½ Rhe. fl. is dated 14 June 1419. In the source, the payer is not named. Stieda (1921), p. 238.



mentions in a letter to her husband Hildebrand the Bolognese merchant Simone Sassolini in Cologne: *Syvert hyr hatte upgenomen 100 gulden van Symon deym Lumbarde*.<sup>1403</sup> Two years before, Sivert had been given money for two bills of exchange, probably from the same Italian in Cologne.<sup>1404</sup> In a financial statement of 14 August 1419, Hildebrand wrote in Bruges that he had received more than 65 Lübeck marks from *Gherhardus den Lambart*.<sup>1405</sup> This Lombard man can be no other than Gherardo Bueri in Lübeck. What remains unclear is the occasion and how the payment was settled, which must have been made by either Bueri or the Medici.

For a long time, the Veckinchusens did not exploit their many contacts with Italian merchants for the purpose of transferring moneys to the Curia; instead, they limited the use of bills of exchange between Bruges, Lübeck, Venice, Cologne, and Frankfurt for their own business purposes, without offering this service to clients. This restriction ended in 1407, when they established a new company with several partners based in Venice (*venedyesche selscop*), with Peter Karbow as its manager. As none of the company's account books have been preserved, our knowledge concerning the nature of its business is quite fragmentary and restricted to a few details from the correspondence with their office in Bruges. Thus, more or less, only the transactions in Flanders are traceable.<sup>1406</sup>

The focus of the Hanseatic merchants' branch in Venice was on the goods trade, mainly furs, amber, spices, and cloths. Bills of exchange were the other important mainstay. There was regular activity in this field between Karbow in Venice and Veckinchusen in Bruges; also involved were the Venetian Marco Morosini, the Sienese Giovanni Tegliacci, and the as yet unidentified *Marc Remundo* (Marco Aromando?) and *Bartolomeus Vonchenti*.<sup>1407</sup> Undoubtedly more numerous were the money orders that Hans of Mynden sent from Lübeck to Venice, most of which were probably redeemed by travellers and pilgrims in Venice.

However, some of the moneys were also sent on to the Curia in Rome.<sup>1408</sup> According to the sources, the clients included men such as the Lübeck cleric Jakob Crumbeke and Nickolaus von dem Werder who probably needed the money in Rome rather than in Venice.<sup>1409</sup> Regarding bills of exchange to the Curia, Karbow collaborated with a man from Florence about whom he wrote in a letter to Hildebrand Veckinchusen in 1409: *Hirume vraghet na deser selscop heyten de Vitzis van Florense, hedde de er selscop to Bruggen, dat wer et best an en vorwisset, de hebben dus lange unse wessel betalt to Rome unde de sin best unse gadinghe [...]*.<sup>1410</sup> In an account entry, the

1403 Stieda (1921), pp. 116–117.

1404 Stieda (1921), p. 82.

1405 Stieda (1921), p. 243.

1406 Toomaspoeg (2011).

1407 Stieda (1894), p. 84; Stefke (1999).

1408 Stieda (1894), p. 78.

1409 Stieda (1894), p. 170.

1410 Stieda (1921), pp. 24–25: 'Therefore ask for the company called the Vitzis from Florence, who had their company in Bruges, which was the best for an exchange, they have thus long paid our letters of exchange in

banker *Lowys Davansat* is named.<sup>1411</sup> This almost certainly refers to Luigi di Manetto Davanzati, who, since 1402, had factors managing the bank his father had opened in Venice in 1384.<sup>1412</sup> During the period in question here, the company traded under the name of Luigi e Arrigo di Manetto Davanzati e co. until June 1408, and thereafter under Luigi di Manetto Davanzati e co.<sup>1413</sup> In Reinhold Mueller's eyes, this enterprise was the most important exchange bank in Venice in the early fifteenth century. Francesco Datini's archive in the Prato holds a total of sixty-four letters from the banker's correspondence with branch offices: a unique source with regard to exchange transactions during this period.<sup>1414</sup> There are no references to Germany, and all the information concerning the development of exchange rates relates exclusively to Venice, London, Bruges, Paris, Bologna, Lucca, and Genoa. These facts show that the *venedyesche selscop* was not involved in complex exchange transactions and had nothing else to offer than to send letters of credit (*lettera di credito*) via Venice to Bruges, Germany, and other Italian cities.<sup>1415</sup>

As the Davanzati did not have a branch office in Rome, it must have been one of the papal banks that handled the funds sent from Lübeck at the Curia. Considering the close political and commercial ties between the Davanzati and Palla di Nofri degli Strozzi, we have reason to suspect that the partner in Rome involved an anti-Medici bank. Since the Ricci and the Spini were not active in the North during this period, the only people capable of taking on such a task were the Alberti.<sup>1416</sup> In view of the many and close contacts between the Veckinchusens and the Florentine businessmen in Bruges, a connection with this banking family in Rome – even if only indirect – would seem more than plausible. For the years 1420 to 1423, we know from the records that Aldighiero di Francesco Biliotti of the Alberti bank in Rome was Davanzati's correspondent.<sup>1417</sup>

How these bills of exchange were financed is suggested by a letter written by Sivert Veckinchusen to his brother Hildebrand in 1410. In it, he expresses his hope that the merchandise

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Rome and are best suited to our needs [...].'

1411 Lesnikov (1973), p. 352. The Veckinchusens' business records also mention Alwyse de Wantzati, Alwyso de Vantsati (Stieda (1894), pp. 84 and 136) and Lodewych Dafantsat (Lesnikov et al. (2013), p. 182).

1412 The name de Vitzi also suggests the Florentine family Davizi (also Davizzi and Dovizi). Gherardo Davizi was the only member in the family who, in the early 15th century, was involved in trade in Venice. However, he appears to have been fully focused on the Mediterranean area. See Mueller (1997), p. 272.

1413 Chiostrini Mannini (1989), p. 33; Tognetti (2012), p. 19.

1414 Mueller (1997), pp. 270–271: "In the Datini years, the specialized dealer in foreign exchange and in arbitrage was Manetto Davanzati and Company." Almost 500 letters from the correspondence between the Davanzati and Datini have been preserved; according to Mueller they "constitute the best-informed sources of information on exchange and give the largest number of quotations." There is no reference to Germany, Karbow, or the Veckinchusens in Luigi di Manetto's letters.

1415 For example: ADP, busta 930, inserto 8, codice 603096 (8 February 1408).

1416 Guasti (1867), I, p. 280: In 1414, Luigi Davanzati was one of the six receivers appointed by the Mercanzia to manage the collapse of the Ricci company. This would not have been the case, given a close business relationship between the two. Nor was Davanzati listed among the Ricci's creditors.

1417 Tognetti (2009), p. 49.

had reached Venice in one piece and had meanwhile been sold. He goes on to say that the bills of exchange had been paid without loss and that the receipts would be sent to the client as requested.<sup>1418</sup> Whether this money was intended for someone in Venice or whether it was passed on to Rome through Davanzati cannot be ascertained here. With regard to the actual handling of the transaction, this is irrelevant: in both cases the amount to be settled in Venice had to be furnished by the sale of the goods imported from the North.<sup>1419</sup>

For a few years, the transactions through Venice ran smoothly, it seems, because in 1409 the partners even discussed raising the deposited share capital from 11,000 to 20,000 Lübeck marks.<sup>1420</sup> It is probably no coincidence that, almost at the same time, Peter Karbow wrote a letter to Hildebrand in Bruges in which he voiced his suspicion that Ludovico Baglioni would not be able to hold on much longer in Bruges, since his protector, the provost of Lübeck, Nikolaus von dem Werder (also called Nikolaus de Insula) had died. The man from Perugia and the cleric had probably known each other ever since Nikolaus von dem Werder had served as collector in the ecclesiastical provinces of northern Germany. Karbow went on to write that Baglioni would certainly have to move back to Italy in the near future since no one in the city on the Trave would any longer have trust in him.<sup>1421</sup>

The competition in the monetary transactions from Lübeck to Italy appeared to be moving in favour of the Hanseatic merchants, making the establishment of a monopoly in this sector more likely. However, things turned out the opposite way. Luigi Davanzati's bank in Venice ran into serious difficulties after 1410, and, by the following year, the same fate caught up with the *venedyesche selscop*. This led to the arrest of Karbow in Lüneburg shortly afterwards. To what extent the crises in the two companies were linked can no longer be ascertained with certainty, but it is more than likely that the Florentines ran into trouble as the clients in Lübeck began sending them ever more orders for payments to the Curia, but were no longer able to balance their accounts. The goods trade in Venice had led to heavy losses, but at the same time the bitterly needed profits had failed to materialize. The claims on Karbow far exceeded his ability to pay.<sup>1422</sup> For the Veckinchusens, this spelt the end to their exchange business with the Curia

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1418 Stieda (1921), pp. 55–56: *Wy hopen al unse gud sy wol to Venedyen mest komen und solde wol al umme gud werden, woe wy desser wessele quyt wern sunder groten schaden.*

1419 Regarding these transactions, see the indexes of persons and subjects in Stieda (1921); Lesnikov (1973); Hammel-Kiesow (1993); Lesnikov et al. (2013).

1420 Stieda (1921), pp. 23–25; Cordes (1998), p. 254.

1421 Stieda (1921), p. 25: *Lodwykez wert hyr syn edder in Welschelanden, wente nymant wert em mer gheloven to Lubeke nu der proves doet is.* 'Lodwykez will soon be in the Italian lands, since no one will believe him anymore in Lübeck now that the provost is dead'. - Esch (1966), p. 348; Schwarz (2001a), pp. 457–459 and 466–467; Voss hall (2016), pp. 11 and 271. - For more on Karbow, see Fouquet (1998), p. 198.

1422 See Sivert's letter of 13 February 1411 to Hildebrand in Stieda (1921), p. 67. On the problems in the goods trade, see Lesnikov et al. (2013), p. LVII.

through Venice. In the goods trade, they remained active in La Serenissima until around 1418, but only with great difficulty.<sup>1423</sup>

The belief that it was safer to conduct business in Bruges and in the Baltic Sea area, the *guden oiden neringe*, as well as King Sigismund's trade war against Venice, brought an end to the Veckinchusens' activities in Italy.<sup>1424</sup> Their name appears in the Roman records one last time: on 17 January 1430, the Medici bank in Rome entered in the books the payment of a bill of exchange for 40 Rhe. fl. to *m. Gualtieri Romelin* which the German merchant Gherardo Bueri had purchased in Lübeck.<sup>1425</sup> Since the payee was probably Walterus Remlincrode from Tartu, we may assume that the money deposited in Lübeck had originally come from Estonia.<sup>1426</sup> This shows that Veckinchusen may not have been able to issue bills of exchange directly to Rome, but he could serve as a broker for a client and charge him a fee for the purchase of the bill of exchange. The hypothesis one comes across in the literature that 'there is no evidence that Bueri had clients among the Lübeck merchants' needs revising on the basis of this evidence.<sup>1427</sup> This business connection could not have been of great commercial importance; otherwise, we would know of more sources. Nevertheless, it is significant for the assessment of the relations between German and Florentine merchants.

The files of the Apostolic notary ser Gherardo Maffei hold promissory letters relating to Lübeck. An entry of 20 August 1424 containing an agreement between two clerics from the diocese of Tartu raises a number of questions. Therein, Provost Bartholomäus Sauigerne authorized Canon Henningus Bekeman<sup>1428</sup> to have a bill of exchange, issued by the bank of Cosimo e Lorenzo de' Medici e co. in Bruges and amounting to 100 ducats, redeemed from *Heverard Merlinchusen* or *Heverardum Moecinc mercatores in Bruggis*. With some certainty we are able to identify the second merchant named as Everd Moyelyk, a brother-in-law of the Veckinchusens.<sup>1429</sup> However, the first one still poses somewhat of a mystery. If one accepts that the German names were quite foreign to the Italians and that scribes struggled with them, one still might conclude that reference was being made to Moyelyk's father-in-law, in other words, to Sivert Veckinchusen.<sup>1430</sup>

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1423 Kluge (2013); Lorenz-Ridderbecks (2014).

1424 Stieda (1921), p. XXX: "good old trade". - Lesnikov et al. (2013), p. LVIII.

1425 ASFi, MAP 131, c. 176r.

1426 RG Online, RG IV 14458, <http://rg-online.dhi-roma.it/RG/4/14458>, 02.07.2021.

1427 Jahnke (2006), p. 152: "[...] dass [...] Bueri keine nachweisbaren Kunden unter der Lübecker Kaufmannschaft besaß."

1428 RG Online, RG IV 00859, ; RG IV 04058, <http://rg-online.dhi-roma.it/RG/4/4058>, 02.07.2021.

1429 Lesnikov et al. (2013), p. 574.

1430 I wish to thank Rolf Hammel-Kiesow (Lübeck) for his help in identifying these individuals.

### 5.4.3 The Medici-Baglioni Agency in Lübeck

The attempt by the Teutonic Order to process payments through Nikolaus Bunzlau in Wrocław clearly shows that persons and institutions in the area of the Baltic Sea seeking a way to transfer funds to the Curia could no longer rely on the services of the Alberti.<sup>1431</sup> With regard to this region, Giovanni de' Medici quickly recognized the need for a link-up to Curial payments and saw in it a unique commercial opportunity. He considered Lübeck as a business hub with growing potential not least because since the latter half of the fourteenth century large volumes of trade between northern Europe and the South had shifted towards the East, as Rolf Hammel-Kiesow has so convincingly shown.<sup>1432</sup> When, on top of that, all of Scandinavia and large parts of northern Germany joined the ranks of Pope John XXIII, Lübeck became economically highly attractive as a central point of payment for the goods trade via Nuremberg (with a link to Cracow) to Venice as well as for any monetary transactions from the North to the Curia in Rome.<sup>1433</sup> Giovanni de' Medici increasingly received funds through this route, assigned to him by the Apostolic Chamber as security for loans to the pope.<sup>1434</sup>

Giovanni de' Medici must have considered the competitive situation in Lübeck after 1411 as highly advantageous since the prospects of generating substantial revenue and earning good money there seemed promising. At the same time, competition had subsided after the Pirckheimers and the Veckinchusens had withdrawn from the market. Moreover, the Alberti in Bruges appeared not to be following any strategy of becoming directly involved in this region.

In Lübeck, Giovanni de' Medici entered into partnership with Ludovico di Filippo Baglioni (also referred to as Ludowico de Ballionibus).<sup>1435</sup> Baglioni was from one of the leading families in Perugia but had been banished from the city in 1393. Since 1394, he had been residing in Germany, where his job was to look after the transfer of the revenues of the Apostolic Chamber in this region.<sup>1436</sup> He initially worked in the Baltic Sea area together with merchants from Lucca;<sup>1437</sup>

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1431 See p. 259.

1432 Hammel-Kiesow (2000), p. 59.

1433 Esch (2007), pp. 395–396.

1434 APS, II, no. 1003: Remittance of 1,000 ducats regarding the servitia payments of Bishop Peter Mickelsen Kruse of Lund to the benefit of Giovanni de' Medici in 1410. See also APD, II, p. 212, no. 1154. – On 10 March 1413, the papal treasurer instructed the collector in Poland to transfer 500 ducats to the Medici bank to offset the payments made by the bank to Condottiero Paolo Orsini. ASFi, Diplomatico, Medici, 1413 marzo 10. Payments to Orsini by Medici, Ricci, and Spini: ASFi, Diplomatico, Medici, 1413 marzo 24.

1435 North (1991), p. 812.

1436 Esch (1966), pp. 347–348. – On the Baglioni family in exile, see Shaw (2000). However, the author mentions neither Ludovico nor his father Filippo. Giovanni di Filippo also worked as a merchant. See Palermo (1979), p. 135.

1437 Until 1394, he is mentioned alongside Bartolomeo Turchi. See Esch (1966), pp. 345–346; Favier (1966), p. 511. – In 1396, alongside Michele Pagani: APS, II, p. 154, no. 926.

from 1397 on, he seems to have operated alone on behalf of the pope.<sup>1438</sup> In a document issued in Copenhagen on 1 September 1398, he is mentioned for the first time in connection with payments that were to be channelled through Lübeck.<sup>1439</sup> In 1402, he was appointed *scutifero et familiari nostro* by Boniface IX and charged with transferring levies collected in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway.<sup>1440</sup> For the purpose of transferring payments from Scandinavia to the Apostolic Chamber, he had established a one-man business in the city on the mouth of the river Trave. On July 30, 1405, in his role as *nuncius domini Pape*, he had the authorities note in the town records (*Niederstadtbuch*) that he had been assigned by three Lübeck men to transfer 412 couronnes d'or and 40 Lübeck marks to Rome in the name of Bishop Peder Jensen Lodehat of Roskilde; and on 1 June 1406 the Chamber acknowledged to him the receipt of the servitia payments made by Bishop Peter Ingevasti of Västerås.<sup>1441</sup> On 5 October 1406, Innocent VII bestowed on him the lucrative privilege of being responsible for collecting and transferring the papal dues from Germany, Bohemia, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Poland to the Apostolic Chamber.<sup>1442</sup> None of these documents mention a collaboration with a Curia-based bank in any capacity; so that it is not clear whether he processed these payments via bill of exchange transactions or had them transported in cash.

Baglioni had been able to build up a strong position for himself in Lübeck, not least because he enjoyed protection from the Church. His main protector was the provost of Lübeck, Nikolaus von dem Werder.<sup>1443</sup> But we may assume that Baglioni not only enjoyed protection from a single, local prelate, however influential this man may have been, but probably enjoyed patronage all the way up to the pope. These connections to the Curia were almost certainly also buttressed by his partnership with Giovanni de' Medici's papal bank, for he gained in the Florentine banker a powerful advocate at the Curia who could use his influence to secure privileges in connection with the transfer of papal dues and, hence, also a writ of protection regarding his residency in Lübeck. The partnership was certainly also of significance because now he had a more than solvent banker to act as payer for his bills of exchange to Rome.

In the specialized literature to date, Baglioni is described as Giovanni de' Medici's correspondent and as a merchant and banker who ran his own business in Lübeck.<sup>1444</sup> The relationship

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1438 APS, II, S. 156, no. 930. – The Baglioni family had close ties with the Curia. Ludovico's brother Niccolò took part in the Council of Pisa. See Baglioni (1964), p. 52.

1439 Lange / Unger (1849–1976), IV, pp. 505–506. Bruges and Stralsund are mentioned as additional places of payment in this document.

1440 APS, II, p. 179, no. 954 and p. 81, no. 956.

1441 UB Lübeck, V, p. 131, no. 131; APS, II, no. 974.

1442 APD, VII, p. 207, nos. 5618–5620.

1443 See above p. 267. – Esch (1966), p. 348; Schwarz (2001a), pp. 457–459 and 466–467; Vosshall (2016), pp. 11 and 271. – For more on Karbow, see Fouquet (1998), p. 198.

1444 Roover (1963), p. 57. See also Esch (2007), p. 390: “[...] che non avevano mai fondato una filiale a Lubeca [...]”.

between the Medici and Baglioni appears to have gone far beyond the business dealings of two equal partners, as evidenced by their documented business interactions. However, the sources on this collaboration are extremely sparse. We have no letters from him, nor has even a single page from his accounting records been discovered yet. Moreover, no financial from the Medici branches in Venice, Rome, or Florence have come down to us with reference to the years Baglioni spent in Lübeck. The only source – at least from the top level of accounting – that we have that provides insight into the business organization and the success of the companies is Giovanni de' Medici's *libro segreto*. Baglioni is mentioned several times in the book, but there is no indication of any direct, contractually regulated involvement of Giovanni in a branch in Lübeck. We can therefore definitely rule out that *Lodovico Baglioni e co. di Lubecca* served as a branch office of Giovanni de' Medici, or that there was any kind of *accomenda* arrangement, because these two legal statuses would have necessarily entailed entries of profit and loss in the *libro segreto*.

Giovanni de' Medici also employed the legal structure of an agency, as evidenced by his strategy for entering the Venetian market. Rather than establishing an independent branch or forming a partnership to create an *Accomanda*, he directed the company in Rome to set up a sub-branch, supplying it with the necessary personnel and capital. This arrangement led to Venice reporting directly to Rome, ensuring that its profits, losses, or individual transactions were not recorded in the *Libro Segreto*.

Giovanni de' Medici's choice to use the legal structure of an agency rather than a correspondent relationship for his involvement also in Lübeck is evident from the fact that he never treated Baglioni as an equal partner, as would have been the case in a correspondent relationship. The merchant in Lübeck received clear orders or instructions that he had to follow. Five letters written by Medici factors in Florence and sent to Lübeck between 25 April 1413 and December 1415 contain text passages that stand out because one would certainly never have addressed a correspondent in this manner. In one case, Baglioni is seriously reprimanded for granting a loan to a merchant who was planning to deliver horses to the Florentine Pazzi company in Paris.<sup>1445</sup> He was told that he had not acted correctly and that, in future, he should not send horses on such a trip for the sake of safeguarding company funds: *Per cierto voi non fate bene*<sup>1446</sup> *und lui per più salvezza de' danari e per l'avenire non metterai a rimandare più chavagli per le chagioni vi s'è detto*.<sup>1447</sup> If the Florentines had not been involved in Baglioni's company in Lübeck in some way or another, they would not have had the right to make such remarks; moreover, they would not have even been interested in such a horse deal.

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1445 On the Pazzi in Paris, see Arnoux et al. (2005).

1446 ASFi, MAP 97, no. 121. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 477–480.

1447 ASFi, MAP 88, no. 129. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 481–483. - The other letters in MAP: 83, no. 51; 89, no. 269; 97, no. 122.

It appears that the Apostolic Chamber, too, deemed the Medici papal bank responsible for Baglioni's actions. When, in 1418, the Chamber had serious doubts regarding the accounting of papal dues collected in Lübeck, members of the Chamber met up with the Medici banker Bartolomeo de' Bardi on 20 November of the same year and reached an amicable solution *super facto Ludouici de Ballionibus*, in other words, not personally with the banker from Perugia in Lübeck.<sup>1448</sup> Another clue to the existence of a Medici agency in Lübeck comes from the accounting of Baglioni's collection trip to Cracow, to which Giovanni noted on 4 July 1419: *quando lo mandammo* (when we sent him). This does not sound like a request that Baglioni had performed for him, but more like an instruction. This might also be the reason why Baglioni received no fee for this service, merely the reimbursement of his travel expenses.<sup>1449</sup> To what extent Giovanni de' Medici interfered with the way Baglioni ran the business is shown by a letter which was sent from Lübeck in 1424. It was written by Andrea di Benozzo Benozzi, who, like an auditor, asked Baglioni to show him the account books, reported the results of the audit to Florence, and instructed him on how to run the business.<sup>1450</sup> Last but not least, entries in the declaration for the Catasto of 1427 speak a clear language. In the balance sheet of the Medici branch in Venice, Lübeck is referred to as a *ragione* (an associate company), a term that would never have been used in the case of a correspondent.<sup>1451</sup>

It is impossible to name an exact date for the founding of the Medici agency in Lübeck. The review of several different sources clearly suggests the year 1412. On 23 August 1411, John XXIII renewed the privilege authorizing Baglioni exclusively to transfer the papal dues from Germany, Bohemia, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Poland to Rome.<sup>1452</sup> The first time that the names of Baglioni and Medici appear together in a document refers to an account of a meeting held in Verona on 10 September 1411. Participants were Ludovico Baglioni, Giovanni de' Medici, and Benedetto de' Bardi, the manager of the Medici headquarters in Florence. The sole purpose of this meeting seems to have been the settling of accounts: *quando faciesti a Verona chonto con Benedetto*.<sup>1453</sup>

1448 APD, II, pp. 266–267; DN, XVII, p. 922.

1449 ASFi, MAP 153, no. 1, c. 101v. – It is worth pointing out another anomaly in the expense accounts of Baglioni's journey to Cracow. Why is Baglioni's companion *Goschalcho* mentioned specifically in Giovanni de' Medici's *libgro segreto*? He could not have been a simple servant, for in that case his name would probably not have been known in the Florence headquarters. However, as this is the only reference to this man, the assumption that he could have been a local partner remains pure speculation. Reading from the Italianized rendition of his name, we don't even know his real name: Godeschall, Gottschalk?

1450 ASFi, MAP 1, no. 236. It is hard to find out anything about the man Andrea di Benozzo Benozzi. We only know that he was one of the six *consiglieri* at the Mercanzia on 28 June 1408: ASFi, Mercanzia 1244, c. 172v.

1451 ASFi, Catasto 49, c. 1187r: *Jachopo da Mulino et Jacopo Donato per anbra tempo a Natale prosimo atenghono alla ragione di Lubiche*.

1452 APD, II, nos. 1172–1174, 1176–1178.

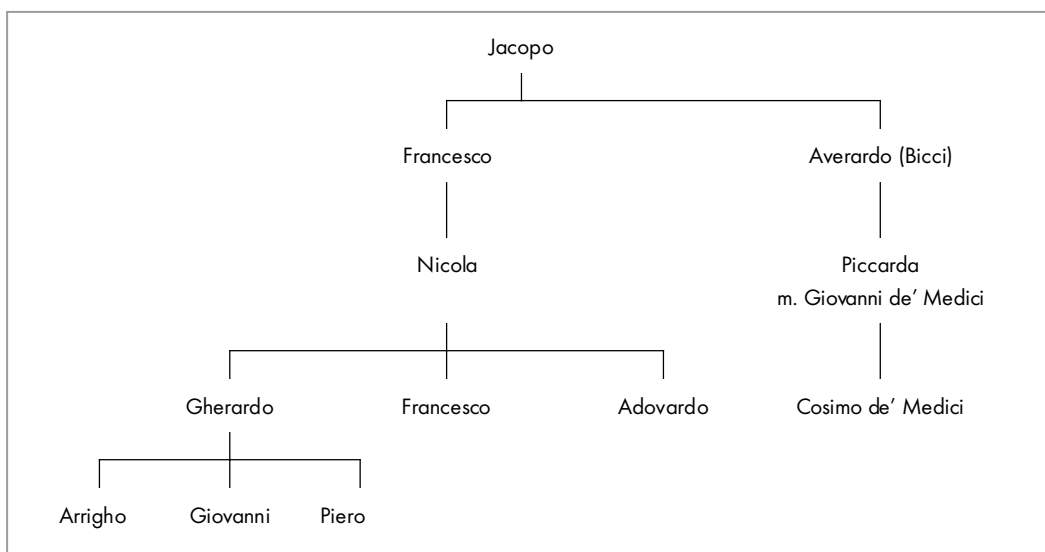
1453 ASFi, MAP 83, cc. 313–314. – In 1410, Giovanni de' Medici transferred the servitia payments owed to the Apostolic Chamber by the bishop of Lund. However, there is no indication that this payment was preceded by a correspondent deal with Baglioni. APS, II, p. 214, no. 1009.



It shows that the two companies had already been doing business together; possibly they took this opportunity to discuss the possibility of expanding their cooperation.

Giovanni de' Medici made Ludovico Baglioni his partner and sent his relative Gherardo Bueri to Lübeck as his associate (*socius*). Baglioni, after whom the agency continued to be named, was probably the principal shareholder, while Gherardo acted as a junior partner, possibly also as a “watchdog” sent by Giovanni. Gherardo, born between 1386 and 1393, was the eldest son of Pippa (Filippa) and Nicola Bueri and operated as a merchant in the local Florentine market (Family Tree 9).<sup>1454</sup> He came from a very prominent family and was related to the Medici. His paternal grandfather was the brother of Averardo Bueri, whose daughter Piccarda married Giovanni d'Averardo de' Medici. This connection made Gherardo a second cousin of Cosimo di Giovanni.<sup>1455</sup>

Gherardo left his hometown as a young man; in 1406 he is listed as an employee at the bank of Giovanni de' Medici in Venice: *per uno anno istette a Vinegia al tempo di Giovanni da*



Family Tree 9 Bueri (simplified)

1454 In the Catasto for 1433, his mother gives his age as 40; in 1446 he himself said he was 60 years old. – The spelling of his father’s name varies in the Florentine records during this period. One finds both Nicola and Niccolò. For Nicola, see e.g. ASFi, MAP 134, no. 1, c. 133r. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 550–552. – For the business activities of Nicola Bueri, see ASFi, Carte del Bene, registro n. 19, c. 56v. Gherardo’s mother Pippa was the daughter of Amaretto Manelli, as we learn from ASFi, Catasto 45, c. 436: Ramondo d’Amaretto Manelli draws up the *portata* for his sister for the Catasto of 1427.

1455 On his family background, see Roover (1963), S. 63.

*Ghaliano*.<sup>1456</sup> He was probably still an apprentice (*garzone*) at this point in time.<sup>1457</sup> In 1410, his younger brother Francesco was in training at the same company.<sup>1458</sup>

The first mention of Gherardo Bueri's presence in Lübeck is in a letter of 25 April 1413, where he is named as the issuer of a bill of exchange: *ed abbiamo auto la copia di quella del cambio perché gli ano paghati ed é di mano di Gherardo*.<sup>1459</sup> The first time he is referred to explicitly as a *socius* of Baglioni is on 1 September 1413.<sup>1460</sup> His joining the Medici-Baglioni company marked a significant expansion of the agency's activities in Lübeck, because it meant that an additional partner would now want a share of the profits. It is unlikely that Giovanni de' Medici sent his relative up north for the sole purpose of acting as a watchdog or Baglioni's helper. What was also of significance was that the branch now also had a true merchant in the figure of Bueri, who knew the Venetian market well.

A further indication that the business relationship had been placed on a new legal footing comes in the form of a letter of 7 December 1414 addressed to Baglioni in which an employee of the Medici headquarters in Florence writes about balancing the previous company: *s'avamo sopra saldare la ragione vecchia da Lubich*.<sup>1461</sup> This could be understood to mean the closing of the accounts of Baglioni's old company. Although the term *ragione* can have different meanings, we may assume here that it means netting out the accounts of the previous business relationship.<sup>1462</sup> What we, on the basis of circumstantial evidence, may glean from these facts is that from 1405 to 1412, the businessman from Perugia had his own private company in Lübeck which was then converted into a Medici agency with him as the head manager; and that, prior to this, the partnership had been founded on a correspondent relationship between Baglioni and the Medici.

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1456 ASFi, MAP 153, no. 1, c. 50.

1457 Roover (1963), p. 63: In 1406, Bueri received a salary of f. 20 in Venice. When he gave up his job, he left the bank in Venice with a debt of f. 61 14s. 5d., which was written off in 1420. See ASFi, MAP 153, no. 1, cc. 49–50. Bueri was probably in Venice no longer than a year, as we may assume from the wording *per uno anno istette a Vinegia al tempo di Giovanni da Ghaliano*. ASFi, MAP 153, no. 1, c. 50. North (1991), p. 812, writes that he gave up his job quite quickly again. – Fouquet (1998), p. 200, identifies Gerhard van Buren, whom Hildebrand Veckinchusen mentions as his business partner in Bruges in 1405, as Gherardo Bueri. However, in my opinion, the similarity of names is not sufficient evidence to conclude that Bueri worked as a trader in Bruges in that year. In the Lübeck records, Bueri is often referred to as *Gerhard de Boeris*, *Gerhard der Wale* or in a similar Latinized or Germanized version of his name. He is never called Gerhard van Buren. See North (1991), p. 812.

1458 Roover (1963), p. 241.

1459 ASFi, MAP 89, no. 269. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 476–477. Erroneously, number 289 was indicated there.

1460 UB Lübeck, V, no. 466, p. 508: Entry in the Lübeck town records (*Niederstadtbuch*) regarding 500 English nobles that Baglioni and Bueri had deposited with the local currency trader Marquart Velthusen, and which were to be transferred to the Apostolic Chamber. Pope John XXIII put a word in for the bankers in Lübeck when they were no longer able to access the funds after the death of Velthusen. On 22 September 1414, the pope confirmed the receipt of the f. 500 that Gherardo Bueri had deposited with Marquart Velthusen. Archiv der Hansestadt Lübeck, Bullae papales 073a.

1461 ASFi, MAP 83, no. 51.

1462 Edler de Roover (1934), pp. 236–237.

It appears that the Medici-Baglioni agency, supported by Gherardo di Nicola Bueri at the behest of Giovanni, began operating in 1412, because the first document showing them as joint actors in payment transactions with the Curia dates from 24 January 1413. In it, the chamberlain instructed Baglioni, who, since 1411, had been endowed with the papal privilege as *perceptor* and *commissarius* for the province of Lübeck and the kingdoms of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway,<sup>1463</sup> to transfer 500 ducats to Ilarione de' Bardi of the Medici bank in Rome.<sup>1464</sup> In addition, Ludovico Baglioni was entrusted with collecting and transferring the indulgencies from Saxony, which were needed to help cover the costs of the Council of Constance. Shortly afterwards, this collection area was substantially expanded by the inclusion of the ecclesiastical provinces of Bremen and Riga, including Kamień and Verden, and the territory of the Teutonic Order in Prussia and Livonia.<sup>1465</sup> The pope was not always prepared to wait for these funds to arrive at the Chamber; instead, he often had the Medici di Corte pay him an advance on future revenues in Lübeck. In such cases, the bankers in Rome would inform their partners in Lübeck that the pope had demanded from them the payment of f. 250, which they were then to recover in Lübeck.<sup>1466</sup>

In relation to the Curia's overall budget, the papal dues from Scandinavia and northern Germany were quite marginal, and – with regard to the banks' total volume of international payments prior to the Council of Constance – barely worthy of a footnote.<sup>1467</sup> Likewise, the servitia payments from this region never reached the huge sums collected from the rich dioceses along the Rhine. Nevertheless, together with the annate payments, they still made up a considerable amount. Hence, between 1405 and 1420, the name Baglioni is found eight times in the Repertorium Germanicum in connection with payments of individual ecclesiastical dignitaries,<sup>1468</sup> but, in all likelihood, these make up only a small part of the financial operations in connection with the Apostolic Chamber. Still, for Baglioni and Bueri, the transfer of funds from northern Europe to the Medici bank at the Curia, and from there to the coffers of the Apostolic Chamber, constituted the most significant part of their business dealings. Even though some of the transactions involved large sums – on one occasion Baglioni transferred dues worth more

1463 APS, II, pp. 218–9, no. 1017; APS, II, p. 231, no. 1188 of 9 August 1413. – APS, II, p. 226, no. 1172. – On 20 January 2013, Johannes Scunemann, a sub-collector for Baglioni, acknowledged the receipt of the Peter's Pence from the diocese of Stavanger: DN, III, p. 444.

1464 ASFi, Diplomatico, Medici, 1413 gennaio 24. – On the same day, the Chamber acknowledged the receipt of 508 ducats which it had received from the Medici in payment of an order for funds from the collector in Poland. ASFi, Diplomatico, Medici, 1413 marzo 24.

1465 Schwarz (2001a), p. 463.

1466 ASFi, MAP 89, no. 269 (25 April 1413): *Ano paghato quegli di Roma alla Chamera f. 250 che dichono il Papa gli à voluti pe' denari dovete costà risquotere*. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 476–477. Erroneously, number 289 was indicated there.

1467 Schuchard (2015), p. 100.

1468 RG Online, RG III 01547, <http://rg-online.dhi-roma.it/RG/3/1547>; RG IV 09117, <http://rg-online.dhi-roma.it/RG/4/9117>, 02.07.2021.

than 1,000 ducats which he had collected in Denmark and Norway<sup>1469</sup> – these operations were far from sufficient to sustain a bank's branch office in Lübeck over several years. Thus, every additional exchange transaction was certainly more than welcome. Today, however, we have very little written evidence of such supplementary deals, because the lack of all accounting records pertaining to such operations is rarely compensated for by other archival holdings.

Letters exchanged between the Medici in Florence and their agency managers in Lübeck provide an account of other bills of exchange that did not involve payments to the Curia's coffers. Only in one single case was a bill of exchange from Rome served in Lübeck; it involved 12 Hungarian florins sent to a certain *Dienchus Navemisis*.<sup>1470</sup> In all other cases, funds travelled in the opposite direction. Clients included pilgrims visiting Saint Peter's Tomb in Rome (*ducati 800 a quegli andavano al sipolcho*), students (*paghato agli studianti scudi 40 e 30*), as well as procurators such as Johannes Voss (50 ducats), Hermann Dweg (f. 293), and *Tederigho Restoleri* (Dietrich Reseler?, 1,900 ducats).<sup>1471</sup> Even though most of the bills of exchange had Lübeck and Rome as their terminal points, the letters in fact point to a much larger business area. Bills of exchange were issued to the Medici in Rome and Venice, to Dino Raponi in Lucca and to Bartolomeo Spinelli, the manager of the bank of Filippo di Tommaso degli Alberti in Bruges, to Domenico e Poldo de' Pazzi in Paris, to a man called Vito in Prague, and to Arrigo Filisini in Bologna.

Although Baglioni and Bueri achieved a considerable turnover with their bills of exchange and evidently had no difficulty in acquiring new customers, the development of the business did not quite meet the expectations of the *maggiori* in Florence, mainly because there was very little countertrade, an essential element for balancing the accounts. The reproaches voiced in the letters from Rome became increasingly harsh. They were told that sending so many bills of exchange meant that they were not doing their work properly in Lübeck; despite this, the people in Rome were willing to be generous for the sake of the Lübeck city council. At the same time, they were seriously admonished not to send any more bills of exchange because they would no longer be served:

*non fate bene che cci chora di nuovo chominciate a trarre assai; e a Roma avete tratte più partite che vi si sono richordate e hora avete tratto f. 1250 e dite per servire e' chonsoli di chostà [...] di che vi si dicie di nuovo che nulla ne traiate in veruno luogo però che s'è schritto a Parigi e a Bologna e a Bruggia e Roma non paghino nulla. Siatene avisati.*<sup>1472</sup>

1469 Lange / Unger (1849–1976), XVII, p. 280; Nordmann (1933b), p. 26.

1470 ASFi, MAP 97, 121.

1471 On Johannes Voss, see Vosshall (2016), p. 706; on Hermann Dweg, see Berbée, Paul A. J. S. (1960–); on Dietrich Reseler, see Schwarz (2001b), p. 257.

1472 ASFi, MAP 97, no. 121. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 477–480.

By December 1414, the debts owed by the two Italians in Lübeck to the Medici in Rome added up to more than 1,600 Lübeck marks. They were told to immediately send money to Bruges or goods to Venice, otherwise they would have to face grave financial consequences: *mandate merchatantie a Vinegia o rimettete a Bruggia e questo vuol essere senza più indugio altrimenti vi chosteranno chari*.<sup>1473</sup> The same concerned the transfer of the papal dues, which made the situation even worse; these were being duly paid to the Curia in Rome, but they were not being balanced by services from the North: *de denari e chonvenuto e paghino alla Chamera per denari avete a risquotere costi, e noi di qua non abbiamo o soldi*.<sup>1474</sup>

In Florence, they decided to set a warning example, so they wrote to Baglioni in Lübeck, telling him that they were returning some of his bills of exchange because they could not be served, and continuing with the warning that they would handle all his future payment orders in this manner, if he didn't change his behaviour and kept on treating them in this manner: *E ci è stato apresentato alchuna vostra lettera di chanbio ove traete denari la quale non abbiamo voluto paghare e torneravi in direto chome vedrete e chosì faremo di quanto ciene verà sicchè oramai ciene traete quanto vi piace*.<sup>1475</sup> However, this measure seems to have had little effect and was soon cancelled, while the problems persisted.

Real trouble befell the Medici-Baglioni agency when two Lübeck canons received the assignment from the Apostolic Chamber to check the accounts of Ludovico Baglioni with regard to the papal dues, because they had serious doubts concerning their accuracy (*que nobis sub dubiis producta sunt*).<sup>1476</sup> Checking the accounts of collectors was nothing out of the ordinary, so it is difficult to see in this a targeted punitive action against the Medici.<sup>1477</sup> More likely, the Chamber was simply trying to make its regained functionality manifest after the Council of Constance. The fact that there were no serious tensions between bankers and the Chamber is evidenced by a loan of f. 1,200 granted to the pope by Matteo Barucci, since 1416 a partner of the papal bank in question, merely five days after receipt of the letter in Lübeck.<sup>1478</sup> The audit report from Lübeck has not been preserved, but on 20 November 1418, Bartolomeo de' Bardi agreed to a ruling in which he promised to transfer the funds received by Baglioni to the Chamber within four months.<sup>1479</sup>

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1473 ASFi, MAP 83, no. 51.

1474 ASFi, MAP 89, no. 269. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 476–477. Erroneously, number 289 was indicated there.

1475 ASFi, MAP 97, no. 122. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 480–481.

1476 APD, II, p. 266; Vosshall (2016), pp. 271–272.

1477 Miltenberger (1894b), pp. 416–417. In his role as collector, Archbishop Eskill od Nidaros had been excommunicated in Sweden for not submitting his records for review. Ludovico Baglioni, as his representative, obtained his absolution from the Chamber on 26 February 1420. For another case of a collector's account being rejected by the Chamber, see Fink (1930/31), p. 187.

1478 Holmes (1968), p. 377.

1479 APD, II, pp. 277–278.

After an agreement had been reached between the Medici and the Curia, any distrust towards Ludovico Baglioni seems to have faded quickly, allowing the bankers in Lübeck and Rome to continue working in the world of Curial finance. Even though not all of Baglioni's transactions explicitly mention the Medici, they certainly were all conducted through this company.<sup>1480</sup> As early as June 1419, the Perugian acknowledged to the archbishop of Riga the receipt of 600 ducats which had to be delivered to the Chamber by St. Martin's Day.<sup>1481</sup> A year later, the collector for Denmark, Sweden, and Norway settled his funds with him in Lübeck in his role as *receptor generalis* for the purpose of transferring them to the Apostolic Chamber.<sup>1482</sup>

In the collections of Scandinavian records, Baglioni is mentioned twenty-nine times between 1395 and 1425; albeit, several of the records refer to the same event.

What is astonishing is that, in the list of records from the same period, there is not a single mention of the Alberti, who had been so dominant in Bruges in the previous years. A similar picture emerges when the transactions involving the northern German and Baltic dioceses are included. Evidently, Giovanni de' Medici's agency in Lübeck had superseded their competitors in the business, the Alberti bank. The Teutonic Order, on the other hand, stuck to their old partners and conducted all their business with the Curia through the Alberti.

#### 5.4.4 The Medici-Baglioni-Bueri Company

In 1422 or 1423, Baglioni and Bueri founded a new company which, in turn, was closely linked with the Medici in Venice, Rome, and Florence. The fact that Giovanni claimed the right to inspect the company's books in Lübeck indicates that Baglioni and Bueri were still not his correspondents, but continued to run an agency with him.<sup>1483</sup> Bartolomeo de' Bardi also seems to have been involved in some form or another. But Medici and Bardi were not *compagni* (partners) in Baglioni and Bueri's business, nor were they limited partners (*accomenda*). They placed money in the company's *corpo* by means of deposits (*depositi*).<sup>1484</sup> Cosimo de' Medici's *libro segreto* of 1429 and 1435 still lists open accounts in the company, although the business had by then long been liquidated again, which we can take as evidence of a direct form of participation.<sup>1485</sup>

1480 See above p. 149.

1481 Böhmer/Teichen (1843–1932), VI, no. 95, p. 139.

1482 RG Online, RG IV 09117, <http://rg-online.dhi-roma.it/RG/4/9117>, 02.07.2021. See Vossball (2016), p. 271.

1483 Bardi's participation is intimated by a passage in a letter from Bueri to Cosimo de' Medici in 1434. Bardi's brothers and heirs were still demanding that Gherardo pay them f. 900 stemming from the liquidated company. Weissen (2003), p. 64: *Voi dite trovate ch'io resto a dare, per ragione vecchia di Lodovicho e mia, fiorini 900, e' quali aparteghono per la loro parte a' frattegli di Bartolomeo de' Bardi.*

1484 Weissen (2003), p. 65: *Questi sono tutti danari di dipositi e che maggior parte tochano a Lodovicho.*

1485 ASFi, MAP 153, no. 2, c. 58r: *1429 – Avanzi scritti in dett a chonti ano di ragione di Gherardo di Bueri di Lubich deono avere a di XXXIII di marzo f. dugento venti per l. XX s. XIII di grossi posto Cosimo e Lorenzo de' Medici*

In Florence, Giovanni de' Medici was by no means satisfied with the way the company in Lübeck was being run, so he sent an auditor or controller to Germany in December 1424 to check on the run of the business and how it had operated in the first two years. We have a long letter written to Giovanni d'Averardo de' Medici by this man, Andrea di Benozzo Benozzi, in which he describes his impressions and the talks he had with Bueri.<sup>1486</sup> Unfortunately, most of the names of persons and places are listed as abbreviations or in coded form, so that not all passages are comprehensible. Still, much of what he wrote is quite revealing: although he had not yet been able to gain a complete overview of all operations and was unable to provide exact figures, Benozzi came to the conclusion that the company had made little profit over the last two financial years: *credo che in questo tempo ella verà avere fatto pocho profitto*. The major problem, Benozzi noted, was the company's inability to maintain a balance in the exchange accounts with their partners in the main banking centres.

The instructions of Giovanni de' Medici that Benozzi presented to the bankers in Lübeck made it quite clear that the men in Florence were not willing to wait any longer for the bills of exchange served on their behalf to be settled. Even at the time, Bueri had already noticed that Giovanni de' Medici had lost faith in his promises to pay. In line with this, Benozzi referred to new protestations on the part of Bueri to send money, and went on to report that if, in the future, the men in Lübeck failed to send either money or merchandise, Giovanni de' Medici should no longer believe a word they said: *E lui m'è detto tuto largho, che ogni volta che lui non rimete per llo tempo cher verà al tempo debito o di chontanti o roba, che allora vole che voi no' gli crediate più*. Bueri even suggested that Benozzi should manage the books in the future: *e che*

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*e compagnia di Vinegia deono dare in questo c. 57 sono per ambra e vai vende[rono] di detti di Lubich a ser Lorenzo Foschari e a ser Nicholo de Gulino e [...] e per noi si contorono detti debitori e [...] di contro i detti di Vinegia --- f. CCXX. -- E di primo febraio 1430 f. quatro cento venti cinque per l. XL di grossi posto i nostri di Vinegia debino dare in questo a c. 57 sono per l. CC di grossi per noi deono a lo sconto per conto di Gherardo Bueri di Lubich per 2 anni per anbra di loro venduta a Jacomo Donato ch'è nel tempo a di X di settembre 1432 --- f. CCCC XXV. -- ASFi, MAP 153, no. 2, c. 79v: Lodovicho di Baglioni e Gherardo Bueri di Lubicha deono dare a di XXX di magio f. mille settanta d[oro] sono per la partita dirinpetto la quale fu scripta per errore e però si ritrae posto i nostri di Vinegia debino avere sulo dirinpetto dove v'erono suti fatti debitori --- f. MLXX s.--. ASFi, MAP 153, no. 2, c. 80r: Lodovicho di Baglioni e Gherardo Bueri deono avere a di 30 di maggio f. mille settanta d[oro] posto i nostri di Vinegia debino dare qui dirinpetto e quali [...] dabano di loro merchatantia insino a di 20 d'aprile 1432 in due partite --- f. MLXX s. --.*

1486 The letter is reproduced in Weissen (2003), pp. 60–63. – In it, Benozzi informs Florence about his talks with a man whom he encodes as *be+*. The names Bueri or Baglioni do not feature in the letter. Since *Lodovicho* is mentioned in one passage, we may assume that *be+* stands for Gherardo Bueri. Baglioni does not seem to have been present in Lübeck. – We find practically no information on Andrea di Benozzo. Apart from this letter, his name only appears in the Catasto of 1427. At the time, he gave his age as 28 and claimed that he lived with his sister Ginevra and her young daughter. He did not declare any assets. There is no mention that he was ever abroad or had any relationship with the Medici. See ASFi, Catasto 78, c. 205v. In 1433, he was living alone and held f. 200 in cash, a set of clothes (*panni per mio vestire*), and nothing else. ASFi, Catasto 470, c. 243r. – Harvard University Library; Baker Library, Medici Letters, no. 77: Benozzi was still in Lübeck on 7 July 1425. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 484–485.



*tuto vadi per le mie mani.* In addition to these remittance problems, Bueri and Baglioni were having difficulties with a few clerical clients from whom large amounts were outstanding. However, with regard to these debtors there was at least some hope, since a travelling cleric had indicated that sufficient pressure on the Curia by threatening excommunication would no doubt help solve the problem.<sup>1487</sup>

#### 5.4.5 Gherardo di Nicola Bueri

Cosimo de' Medici ended his family's financial engagement in the Lübeck agency in 1425,<sup>1488</sup> thus ending the immediate presence of his company in northern Europe. After this date, the name Bueri no longer appears in his *libro segreto*.<sup>1489</sup> When Baglioni died shortly after this split, Bueri continued to operate the trading company in Lübeck under his own name and without the financial involvement of a partner. Seen from a Florentine perspective, it appears that from this moment onward he seems to have lost any legal connection to the Florentine banking business that was regulated by the Arte del Cambio and the Mercanzia. In the Italian sources he is never referred to as *Gherardo Bueri e co. di Lubecca* but only as *Gherardo Bueri di Lubecca*; his tax declaration submitted to the officials of the Catasto never included his balance sheets and there is not a single court case in the Mercanzia files in which he is named as a defendant. In a letter dated 7 July 1425, he made a clear distinction between the two companies: *a' vostri di Vinegia mandamo per chonto vecchio di Lodovicho e mio, e simile ancho per chonto mio nuovo*.<sup>1490</sup> Cosimo advocated for his relative at the Apostolic Chamber, although not entirely altruistically. He certainly worked to have the latter appointed *receptor camere apostolice* for

1487 ASFi, MAP I, no. 236: *Egli è stato qua uno messer Giovanni Mainesti, e lui chon be+ insieme dicie vole aiutare risquotere questi danari di Lodovicho. e dicie avere di chorte di potegli fare schomunichare.* – Johannes Meynesti, archdeacon in Rostock, in APD, III, p. 82, no. 1758, 5 February 1436.

1488 We find different accounts of Baglioni's end in the literature. According to Pauli (1872c), p. 104; Sieveking (1906), pp. 25–29, he can be traced for the last time in 1426, while Hoover (1963), p. 422, claims that he features in the Medici documents until 1433 but without indicating a source reference. This second date was taken over by Esch (1966), p. 348; Fouquet (1998), p. 199. ASFi, Catasto 49, c. 1189v, provides an entry that helps to clear up this question definitively and proves the earlier historians right. In fact, in the list of *creditori* of the Medici branch in Venice of 6 October 1427, *Le Redi di Lodovicho Baglioni* are listed.

1489 The exact date of Baglioni's death is not known. Svenskt Diplomatariums huvudkartotek, no. 21900: His sons Giovanni and Jacopo are in Rome in 1433, where they confirm to the archbishop of Uppsala that they are exempt from all obligations thanks to a payment of 250 Lübeck marks. See Archivio di Stato di Perugia, Comune di Perugia, Pergamene, Originale 568. Bini (1816), p. 416; Muzzarelli (2012), p. 27; Francesco di Ludovico taught law at the University of Perugia. – ASFi, MAP 153, no. 2: *Libro segreto 1420–1435*; ASFi, MAP 153, no. 3: *Libro segreto 1435–1451*.

1490 Harvard University Library; Baker Library, Medici Letters, no. 77: '[...] to your compagnia in Venice we send for the old account of Lodovicho and mine, and similarly also for my new account.' Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 484–485.



Denmark, Sweden, and Norway as well as for the dioceses of Bremen, *Kamień*, Schwerin, Ratzeburg, and Lübeck on 1 February 1426, and arranged for the head of his papal bank to vouch for the correct handling of the papal dues from these areas.

Near the Church of St Aegidien, in the district referred to as an “aristocratic quarter”, although it did not really belong to the city’s poshest residential areas, Bueri bought a large house around 1420 and was appointed one of the chairmen of the church parish several times.<sup>1491</sup> There is evidence that he purchased an additional six properties up until 1437.<sup>1492</sup> Records also tell us that he became a Lübeck citizen in 1428 and married a woman by the name of Tibekke. Carl Wilhelm Pauli believes to have identified Tibekke as the daughter of Mayor Johann Bere, who was in office in 1436. Based on his studies, Gerhard Fouquet merely confirms that she certainly belonged to the city’s patrician class and that she was related to the Brunswick family. In his new hometown, Bueri accepted numerous honourable roles. For example, together with a few other upper-class gentlemen, he acted as guardian for the widow of a city councillor and served as executor of a patrician’s will.<sup>1493</sup> From all this we gain the picture of a successful merchant who, although never a member of the city council and never belonging to the inner circle of the city’s ruling class, was highly respected and well integrated in the city’s social world.<sup>1494</sup>

The Florentine sources paint a rather different picture. On 15 October 1421, the Signoria issued Gherardo a letter for the attention of *egregiis ac magnificis viris dominis proconsulibus et consulibus imperialis civitatis Lubicensis amicis nostris carissimis* which he was to take with him on his journey to northern Germany. The letter was not about commercial issues, it involved his marriage plans: they recommend him as a good candidate and affirm that he is of legitimate birth.<sup>1495</sup> It seems that by then Bueri had already decided to reside in Lübeck for a longer period. Still, he never renounced his Florentine citizenship and, right up to his death, he had to file a tax return when the authorities in Florence demanded that he pay tax on any wealth gained. Up to the Catasto of 1442, this was taken care of by his mother Pippa because of his absence in Lübeck. The information she gave the authorities concerning her family reveal rather difficult financial circumstances. Although she declared in 1427 that she knew only very little about her three sons’ financial situations, she was convinced that Gherardo had married in Lübeck simply to make a living there. She went on to say that she had sent Adovardo to live with Gherardo in Lübeck so that he would not cause her any more expenses. Francesco was living in Split but was unable to earn a living due to his gout.

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1491 Nordmann (1933b), p. 27.

1492 Fouquet (1998), p. 201.

1493 For more on Bueri’s integration, see Fouquet (1998), pp. 203–205; Hammel-Kiesow (2000), p. 59; Vosshall (2016), p. 272.

1494 Fouquet (1998), pp. 204–205.

1495 ASFi, Signori. Missive I Cancelleria, 30, c. 12r.

## 5 Market Spaces

*I sua figl[i]uoli ne sono Gherardo e Adovardo a Lubiche nella Magna gran tempo fa, dove detto Gherardo à tolto moglie per avere di che vivere e ch'ello serva e de gran tempo v'è domiciliato e di suo stato non son[o] punto informata. Adovardo mandai a star con lui per levarmi spesa d'adosso; Francesco é a Spalatro senza inviamiento, malato e infermo de ghotti ed è nicistà fia [e]sonerato.<sup>1496</sup>*

In 1433, Pippa added that her eldest son had bought a house in Lübeck, now also giving the names of her daughter-in-law and grandchildren. In Florence, Tibekke (now thirty-eight years old) was renamed Teodora, and Gherardo's children are given as Arrigo (20), Giovanni (6), and Piero (4).<sup>1497</sup> The eldest son was probably born out of wedlock, while the two younger boys were children from the union with Tibekke. All three boys are referred to as *non reale*, by which Pippa probably meant that they had no right to claim Florentine citizenship. This also explains why they are not listed in the city's *tratte*. Even though many questions remain unanswered, and the fact that tax returns tend to paint a worse financial situation than actually is the case, one gets the impression that, at the time of his marriage between 1423 and 1425, Gherardo was facing financial difficulties and urgently needed the dowry his wife was to bring to the marriage. This also explains why he went against habitual Florentine marriage conventions in two essential respects: normally, a Florentine man would marry a native Florentine woman and one who was at least fifteen years younger than himself.<sup>1498</sup>

As in many other Florentine companies of this era, family ties played a prominent role in Gherardo's business enterprises. In 1427, his youngest brother Adovardo had an account of almost ten ducats with the Medici in Venice;<sup>1499</sup> he is recorded in Lübeck sources for the years 1432 and 1435; and he is mentioned in a letter written by Gherardo to Cosimo de' Medici a year later.<sup>1500</sup> He probably died in 1439, never having married.<sup>1501</sup> Francesco di Nicola, born around 1396, kept the business going in Florence when his brothers were away in Germany. The Bueri brothers also built up their own small trade network. Francesco played an important part as

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1496 ASFi, Catasto 45, c. 436: 'Her sons Gherardo and Adovardo have been in Lübeck in Germany for a long time, where the said Gherardo has taken a wife to have a means of living and that he serves and has been domiciled there for a long time, and I am not at all informed about his state. I sent Adovardo to stay with him to relieve myself of the expense; Francesco is in Split without any assignment, sick and suffering from gout, and he should be exempted from taxes.'

1497 ASFi, Catasto 76, c. 124; 405, c. 404; 495, c. 411; 629, c. 550; 671, c. 883; 672, c. 845.

1498 Fouquet (1998), p. 202, pointed out that it is "ein bemerkenswerter Umstand" ('a remarkable circumstance') that Bueri married a Lübeck woman. With this statement he is referring to Esch (1992), p. 597, who found nothing but endogamous marriages among the Florentines in Lyons. Otherwise, there seem to have been only few unions of Florentines with local women. One case refers to a daughter of Filippo di Tommaso degli Alberti who married Syr Jouffroy Selding in London in 1437. See Holmes (1960–1961), p. 195.

1499 ASFi, Catasto 49, c. 1189v.

1500 UB Lübeck, VII, no. 501, p. 477 and no. 547, p. 518; ASFi, MAP 13, no. 74.

1501 Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana (1960–), XIV, p. 793.

trading partner in Italy for his brothers in the North, but also had his own thriving business on the side. He does not appear to have been active as a banker; the only references we have of him are from the goods trade. His suppliers also included the Medici, who sent him slave girls and *tele* (canvas) from Venice.<sup>1502</sup> He often acted as intermediary, especially when disagreements arose between the Bueri in Lübeck and their customers or partners in Italy.<sup>1503</sup> In 1432 he married Alessandra di Bernardo de' Bonsi della Ruota, who was twenty-one years younger. After his death in June 1445, his widow submitted a tax return of her own to the Catasto.<sup>1504</sup> As we know from many letters, Gherardo cared intensively for his widowed sister-in-law and his brother's children. Especially poignant are his efforts to get the Medici to help him marry off his eldest niece, Nonina. However, it was not until two years after the death of her uncle that Nonina eventually found a man to marry: Turino d'Antonio Baldesi.<sup>1505</sup>

On the basis of the tax returns filed in the Catasto, we are able to say something about the family's assets, although one has to express reservations in regard to Gherardo's tax filings for his family, since he never disclosed his property in Lübeck to the Florentine authorities. Thus, we note a taxable income of f. 368 in 1427; by 1433, this had risen to the considerable sum of f. 2,276. However, the increment did not stem from commercial activities but from the inflow of Francesco's wife's dowry. In 1433, the Bueri's debtors also included Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici, with f. 300. The money came from the estate of their late mother Piccarda de' Medici, because the Bueri were the only male descendants of her father. They later used the money to buy a house in Florence.<sup>1506</sup> An additional f. 486 were due to them from the Venetian branch of the Medici family.<sup>1507</sup> After Francesco's wife left the family unit and the payout of the assets due to her from the dowry, Gherardo's financial situation is described as quite desperate in the Catasto of 1446, with him apparently owning very few assets in either Lübeck or Florence.<sup>1508</sup>

Through the marriage of Francesco with Alessandra de' Bonsi, the Bueri entered into an alliance with another prominent merchant family. The brothers-in-law had made their money in

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1502 ASFi, MAP 134, no. 1, cc. 73v, 111r, and 133r. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 550–552.

1503 See also the letter by Gherardo to Cosimo de' Medici from the year 1439 in ASFi, MAP 12, no. 186. The Francesco mentioned several times in it is certainly Francesco Bueri and not – as Fouquet (1998) suggests – Francesco di Filippo Rucellai, who was only about 14 years old at the time.

1504 Around 1461, her son Nicola was incarcerated for more than two years in the debtor's prison *Le Stinche* in Florence where he nearly died of hunger. It appears that she herself had ordered his imprisonment. See Nicola's letters from prison to Giovanni di Cosimo de' Medici: ASFi, MAP 6, nos. 573 and 728. Catasto of Mona Alessandra: ASFi, Catasto 672, cc. 890r–890v.

1505 BNCF, Carte Passerini, 186.

1506 See Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana (1960–), XIV, p. 792.

1507 ASFi, Catasto 495, cc. 411r–412v.

1508 ASFi, Catasto 671, c. 883v: *Come potete vedere detto Gherardo abita nella Mangnia e à di qua e nipoti debba remediare con poche sustanze e se detto Gherardo si muore nella Mangnia se à nulla di la, si può fare conto sia perduto siché abiate discrezione di questa famigliuola.*

the spice, cloth, and silk trade<sup>1509</sup> and held high offices in Florence.<sup>1510</sup> Like the Bueri, Raffaello and Baldassare backed Cosimo de' Medici in his battle for political supremacy in Florence in the 1430s. The third brother, Niccolò di Bernardo, was banished from the city of Florence on 23 August 1431 for this reason.<sup>1511</sup> In the Catasto of 1433, he claimed to be twenty-five years old, unmarried, and heavily in debt to his two older brothers as well as to the city of Florence.<sup>1512</sup> Gherardo had fetched him to Lübeck and given him work. In a letter of 18 July 1434, he referred to him as *mio famiglio* (employee, servant).<sup>1513</sup> But Bonsi was more than a minor employee. He moved in the same social circles as Bueri, as a letter of March 1436 to Piero di Cosimo de' Medici suggests.<sup>1514</sup> In it, he scathingly comments on the political situation in Florence, about which he seems to have been well informed despite his absence.

Three entries in the books of the Medici branch in Venice from 1436 and 1437 indicate that Bonsi had established his own trading company in Lübeck. The costs listed there refer to expenses that he was charged for transporting goods from Venice to Lübeck (*safferano; fatto di spese a più chose mandate a Lubich a Nicholò Bonsi*) or in the opposite direction (*spese a 4 barili di vai mandati da Lubich i Bonsi*).<sup>1515</sup> It is highly unlikely that the Medici would have used this wording if Bueri had been their partner in these three deals. It is impossible to say how long this enterprise remained in operation, but Niccolò di Bernardo de' Bonsi is listed in Bueri's will of 1445, again as a trade assistant.<sup>1516</sup> The last document in which he is named is from the year 1450: in it, he pledges not to leave Lübeck as long as a bill of exchange in Rome has not been paid for.<sup>1517</sup> Nothing is known about his fate after that.

1509 Vannucci (1993), p. 77. – ASFi, Catasto 495, cc. 411r–412v: In the Bueri's Catasto of 1433, the Bonsi are listed as debtors with a sum of f. 500. This probably concerned the dowry for Francesco's wife. Through this marriage we also have a direct connection of the Bueri to Roberto Martelli, who for many years was in charge of the Medici branch in Rome and also represented them for several years at the Council of Basel. Baldassare Bonsi was married to the latter's sister, Nera Martelli.

1510 ASFi, Catasto 67, cc. 77r–79r: Bernardo (64), Sobila, his wife (-), Raffaello (31), Baldassare (29), Niccolò (19), Sandra (-), Caterina (-). In the Catasto of 1431 (ASFi, Catasto 397, cc. 77v–82r), Bernardo is already deceased: Raffaello (34), Baldassare (32), Niccolò (23), Cilia (wife of Raffaello), Nera (wife of Baldassare), Ciona (daughter of Bald.), Simona (daughter of Raff., born 8 March 1431), Sandra, and Caterina. – Raffaello was a member of the *balia* in 1434, and prior in 1436, see Martelli (1989), p. 91. He died in 1437, leaving behind a *bottega di speciale al mercato vecchio*: ASFi, Catasto 692, cc. 378rv. Baldassare operated a branch in Tunis in 1462 together with Ludovico Masi, see Camerani Marri (1951). He was prior for the Santo Spirito quarter in 1439, 1445, and 1458, and member of the *balia* in 1438 and 1444; in 1446, he was appointed *vicario* in Scarperia, see Martelli (1989), p. 128. He died in 1466: ASFi, Catasto 909, cc. 272r–273r.

1511 ASFi, Capitani di Parte, numeri rossi, 65, cc. 10v–11r. It contains a list of the assets confiscated by the city of Florence.

1512 ASFi, Catasto 490, c. 327r. He owed the revenue office more than f. 52.

1513 ASFi, MAP 13, no. 74.

1514 Weissen (2003), p. 67.

1515 ASFi, MAP 134, no. 1, cc. 69v and 143r. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 550–552.

1516 Fouquet (1998), p. 206.

1517 Pauli (1872c), p. 138; Schuchard (2000b), pp. 81–82.

A further relationship that Bueri entered into was with the family Rucellai. They, too, sent one of their sons, Francesco di Filippo, to northern Germany, where, on 10 August 1445, he is mentioned for the first time in the Lübeck town records (*Niederstadtbuch*) as an employee of Gherardo Bueri. Since he was generously endowed in Bueri's will, written merely fourteen days later, we may assume that he had travelled to Germany quite a while before that.<sup>1518</sup> He remained in Lübeck after his patron's death and succeeded him as manager of the only Florentine bank in northern Europe.<sup>1519</sup>

With regard to Bueri's relations with the Bonsi and Rucellai, it remains open whether he was merely trying to extend his informal business network by taking in the sons of these two influential merchant families or whether he entered into a closer, committed partnership with the two families. The families of Bueri's two Florentine employees also did business together in Florence. This, in 1450, led to Francesco's father Filippo and the famous Giovanni di Paolo Rucellai ensuring that Baldassare di Bernardo Bonsi was sent to the Florentine prison of *Le Stinche* for his debts. Bonsi later had to be ransomed by Cosimo de' Medici.<sup>1520</sup>

For the Catasto of 1427, Giovanni de' Medici drew up balance sheets of his companies in 1427. The liquidated company Baglioni & Bueri still had f. 3,949 outstanding in Rome, and over f. 8,300 in Venice. The only values to counter this were f. 587 in Florence and f. 1,600 in Venice for the sale of amber there. Bueri's new company already had f. 764 outstanding in Rome. Various accounts belonging to other merchants also contained items related to the Lübeck merchants' fur, linen, pepper, and saffron trade.<sup>1521</sup> These figures can be taken as an indicator of a high turnover, but they say nothing about the business's success. In the following year, Cosimo, Gherardo Bueri, Ilarione, and Bartolomeo de' Bardi met for a discussion at the Medici headquarters in Florence. The Lübeck merchants still owed the Medici over f. 1,000, even after crediting in three horses that had been delivered to Italy. With a shipment of amber to Venice, he wanted to pay off further f. 250 of the debt, while the rest would have to wait until peace had been achieved in Denmark. Bueri also asked the Medici for patience, because he himself still had 3,000 Lübeck marks coming his way from the heirs of Ludovico Baglioni.

In 1434, the debt was still outstanding, so Gherardo wrote a letter to Cosimo concerning its settlement.<sup>1522</sup> He strongly contested the claim made by the Bardi, but accepted that he still owed the Medici f. 1,100, with reference to the written agreements that had been made on the occasion of the meeting in the Medici Fondaco in Florence between him, Cosimo, Ilarione,

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1518 Pauli (1872c), p. 116; Fouquet (1998), p. 206.

1519 See below p. 299.

1520 ASFi, Mercanzia 1377, c. 110v.

1521 ASFi, Catasto 49, cc. 1162ff. The fact that Bueri and Baglioni had ended their joint business venture only shortly before is probably also the reason for the error in the Catasto records when the mention is of *Ludovico Bueri*: ASFi, Catasto 49, c. 55v.

1522 Weissen (2003), p. 65.

and Bartolomeo de' Bardi. He went on to comment that f. 100 had been offset against the three horses that Giovanni de' Medici had purchased from him. Moreover, it had been agreed at the time to credit the amber worth between f. 250 and f. 300 that his servant Gostanzo had delivered to Venice against the debt. Cosimo had decided to suspend further claims until Bueri had received money from Baglioni's heirs and was able to pay back his debts in steps: *pagare a pocho a pocho*. He went on to say that he had travelled specially to Venice because of the amber and had – as promised – paid off more than 24 lire di grossi in 1428. Since then, he had been waiting for peace in Denmark. The war had gone on there for seven years, and after a peace treaty had been signed, he had journeyed to Scandinavia on very unsafe routes, only to find as soon as he had arrived that four of his five debtors were out of funds: *E che chi è morto e chi è andato alla malla ora*. He had only been able to redeem f. 100. In view of this, he asked Cosimo to have a little more patience: *mecho abiate un pocho di pazienza*.

The volume of the exchange transactions between Lübeck and the Curia is borne out by an account book that Antonio Salutati kept in Rome for the fiscal year 1428–29 (see Table 5). During the financial year in question, the payout of 65 orders from Lübeck was recorded, but only one bill of exchange was sent in the opposite direction. Clients from Lübeck, usually only referred to as *alamanno*, included the provost, a canon, several clerics, the city council, and a monastery along with the bishop of Schleswig, clerics from Schwerin and Sweden, the cathedral chapter of Riga as well as various procurators at the Curia.<sup>1523</sup> In total, the Medici papal bank paid out 5,176 ducats during this period. On average, five exchange transactions involving clients from Lübeck were processed each month. The mean value of the transactions amounted to almost 80 ducats, the smallest one for a little more than 3 ducats went to a *Hermann Ghanderssem*.

The largest bill of exchange served in Rome for Bueri was the annuity payment made by the procurator of the Teutonic Order, Kaspar Wandofen, amounting to 1,000 ducats. On 24 May 1429, the Order's officer had written to Königsberg (Kaliningrad) in this matter, asking them to send the money through Bruges and not through Lübeck.<sup>1524</sup> However, the bill had already been purchased from Bueri on 30 April and was paid out in Rome on 20 June. Ten days later, Wandofen confirmed the receipt of the money in a letter to the Grand Master but, at the same time, begged him to go through Bruges again in the future. The fact that he voiced his opinion against Lübeck so vehemently, he maintained, was that, despite that there had been no payment problems this time, Bueri was *nicht wohl begloubet* ('not well accredited'),<sup>1525</sup> thus

1523 ASFi, MAP 131 A. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 534–549.

1524 OBA 5093, reproduced in Forstreuter / Koeppen (1973), p. 75: *Ouch so obirkouffti kein gelt mer mit dem czu Lubick, wenne her alhir unbegelobit ist, sunder mit den kein Brugis in Flandern*.

1525 OBA 5116, reproduced in Forstreuter / Koeppen (1973), p. 81: *Hirumme, gnediger liber herre, bethe ich euch mit ganzem fleisse, das ir mir dasselbige jorgelt obir einen haufen undir einiges unvorzorgelich hin kein Brugk geruchet czi bestellen und nicht kein Lubick, wenne der Gerhardus de Boer von Lubick umme ein solche summe geldes alsamp mit seiner geselschafft alhir nicht wohl begloubet ist und sy nicht vollen gelouben alhir czi Rome han,*

indicating that he was aware of the limits of collaboration between Bueri and the Medici. He was afraid that if he presented a bill of exchange from Lübeck, the Medici would refuse to pay him any money and protest it. In such a case, he would have to wait months for the urgently needed ducats. It also appears that the Medici were unwilling to set a credit limit for the Order, backed by future payments through Lübeck. However, the procurator was dependent on such loans as long as the Order was hindered in relying on a current account deposit. Evidently, Cosimo de' Medici had drawn the consequences from the chronic problems his relative in Lübeck had been experiencing. The latter appeared to be unable to transfer to Italy the value of the issued bills of exchange. Even prior to the Council of Constance, Baglioni had been warned that his bills of exchange to the Curia would not be honoured. Ten years later, Benozzi had uttered the same threats to Bueri.<sup>1526</sup> The danger remained, and it seems that Cosimo was now no longer prepared to run the risk as far as bills of exchange from Lübeck were concerned.

Bueri's significance for the Medici's business enterprises increased greatly in the early 1430s, because the collapse of the Alberti meant that they now had broad access to the Baltic Sea market. Upon recommendation of Alderman Buramer, who had already used this channel to send money to Rome, the Gdańsk city council contacted *Gerardo den Walen* in Lübeck in 1432 and henceforth purchased their bills of exchange from him.<sup>1527</sup> In 1438, the Gdańsk mayor, Hinrik Vorrat, described him in correspondence to Bremen as *mynen wert*, that is, as his representative in financial matters.<sup>1528</sup> For Bueri and the Medici, these accomplishments represented an important breakthrough in their northern venture. It meant that, in the years to come, they gained access to a new influential clientele, among others, the Teutonic Order. In 1432, Bueri gained the assignment from the prior of the Knights of St John of Antvortskov on Zealand to transfer 1,120 Rhe. fl. to the Grand Master of the Order in Venice.<sup>1529</sup> In Scandinavia, too, he was able to extend his business volume by, for example, organizing the servitia payment for Archbishop Johannes Laxmann of Lund in 1437.<sup>1530</sup> Clients in the Baltic region now only rarely used the route through Bruges for their payments; in other words, Bueri largely dominated the southbound direct exchange transactions without any obvious competitor.

We not only have an expansion of the market territory, but also a noticeable increase in the demand for bills of exchange due to the financial requirements in connection with the Council of Basel. The struggle between the dignitaries of the Church Assembly and the pope

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*als sy habel solden.* – Entry of the payout by Antonio Salutati: ASFi, MAP 131, c. 134v. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 534–549.

1526 See p. 483.

1527 Hirsch (1858), pp. 237–238; Neumann (1863), p. 146; Pauli (1872c), p. 105; Liebe (1894), p. 278; Fouquet (1998), p. 212.

1528 HUB, VII, 1, no. 331, p. 163.

1529 UB Lübeck, VII, p. 477. Fouquet (1998), p. 213. – On 1 May, the St John Priory deposited 16 Lübeck marks *in cambio apud Gerardum*: UB Lübeck, VIII, pp. 610–611. Pauli (1872c), p. 150.

1530 UB Lübeck, vol. VII, p. 721. Pauli (1872c), p. 136; Weibull (1900–1921), p. 3; Fouquet (1998), p. 212.

did not seem to really have bothered the Medici and Bueri, for they did business with both sides. The Apostolic Chamber had extended Bueri's mandate as receptor in northern Europe on 25 February 1432. This meant that he alone was responsible in this region for the collection, administration, and transfer of the Hussite indulgence ordained by Pope Eugene IV in 1433.<sup>1531</sup> He was given the same tasks and authority in 1444 with regard to the Turkish indulgence.<sup>1532</sup> On behalf of the Council of Basel, he was also responsible for the moneys stemming from the Greek indulgence. In 1440, the collector Giovanni Yncar was instructed to transfer the funds collected in Scandinavia to the Medici associates in Lübeck.<sup>1533</sup> Although not explicitly mentioned by name in the documents, we may assume with certainty that it was Bueri through whom the funds collected by the bishops of Uppsala and Lübeck, as instructed by the Council, were channelled to the Medici in Basel.<sup>1534</sup> In any case, the Basel Medici bank had certainly promised him to see to this.<sup>1535</sup> In 1442, the bank actually confirmed that it had received from Lübeck 324 Rhe. fl. from the Greek indulgence collected in Sweden.<sup>1536</sup>

Supporting the participants at the Council with sufficient financial means certainly triggered further business between the Medici and Bueri, for the Medici branch in Basel, in association with their correspondent in Lübeck was the only bank in Basel with the ability to transfer money, cash free, from the North to the Rhine without having to go through Bruges. The Teutonic Order made extensive use of this opportunity: Johannes of Rewe was one of the Medici's clients in Basel in December 1433, and, in 1439, Johannes of Ast asked the Grand Master to send him his money by means of bills of exchange made out to the Medici.<sup>1537</sup> In 1434, the city of Gdańsk sent money to the procurator Andreas Pfaffendorff through *Gerardo von Walen* and set up a current account in his name at the Medici bank in Basel, with an overdraft limit of 300 Rhe. fl.<sup>1538</sup>

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1531 Schuchard (2000b), p. 79. – Schuchard found no evidence for the renewal due in 1429. – In December 1427, the Chamber instructed the collectors to submit their billings to Bueri.

1532 The chamber also used the funds deposited in Lübeck to pay for the travel expenses of papal nuncios. See Esch (2007), p. 391.

1533 ASFi, MAP 149, no. 18, 7 April 1440.

1534 ASFi, MAP 139, nos. 7 and 41–42.

1535 Weissen (2003), p. 70 (10 September 1440): *E que' di Basilea mi dichono ongni di restano avere più danari dello Choncilio, solectando ch'io provegga gli riabino per le mie mani.*

1536 ASFi, Diplomatico, Medici, 1442 dicembre 11: [...] *de pecuniis habitis et collectis divinis in regno Svesie ex indulgentiis concessis per sacrum consilium Basiliense pro reductione grecorum, vigore unius littere cambii in civitate Lubicense per Gerardum Bueri [...].* – It was not always possible to transfer the indulgences to Basel; in Gdańsk, for example, they were successfully blocked by the pope. See Simson (1909).

1537 ASFi, MAP 131 C, p. 6; OBA 7563, (1 April 1439): *das myr myn tzerung werde in de wessel de Medicis ze Basel.*

1538 Hirsch (1858), pp. 237–238; Neumann (1863), p. 130; Neumann (1865), pp. 380–382; Pauli (1872c), p. 105; Amiet (1876–1877), p. 207; Geering (1886), p. 276; Ehrensperger (1972), pp. 234 and 345; Forstreuter / Koeppen (1973), p. 689; Fouquet (1998), pp. 213–214.



The town of Lüneburg holds old documents that show what part bills of exchange played in covering the expenses of their representatives at the Council of Basel. The orders were paid from the coffers of the local salt master, whose accounts for the years 1434 to 1438 have been preserved. There we find evidence that the services of Gherardo Bueri in Lübeck were gladly used in order to benefit from the advantages of cashless transactions. *Gherardo der Wale* was assigned four times to issue bills of exchange to the Rhine along with four transfers to Bologna.<sup>1539</sup> We find a further Bueri bill of exchange from 1436 in the accounts of the Medici in Venice. In any case, cash was presumably taken by courier to Lübeck because if Bueri had had a partner or broker in Lüneburg his name would have been recorded in the account books.

An account book of the Medici in Venice, kept between 29 January 1436 and 23 March 1437, lists Gherardo Bueri as the only correspondent in Germany besides the Council banks in Basel.<sup>1540</sup> He issued eleven bills of exchange in total, amounting to slightly more than 125 lire in Venice, for which about f. 1,250 had to be paid in Lübeck (Table 12). In the case of ten bills of exchange, the persons purchasing the bills of exchange in the North were identical with the payee. In other words, the individuals concerned had carried the bills on them in the form of traveller's checks. One transaction was connected with Lüneburg, two with Sweden. One bill of exchange for f. 350 was not drawn in one go, but spread over several instalments. Three entries involved a deal between merchants: one German merchant sent f. 100 from northern Germany to his office in Venice; f. 240 were used to settle accounts between Bueri and the Borromei in Bruges and Venice, and, last but not least, this mode of payment was used to purchase silk fabric from the Sernelli in Bologna. All in all, this was a very modest business activity. The Medici branch in Basel processed more than 60 exchange transactions through Venice during the same period.

Venice was and remained the most important clearing station for Bueri's financial transactions with the Medici, but it was rarely their final destination, because bills of exchange to the trade centres of Bruges, Geneva, or Venice were a service that could also be offered by German merchants. In Bruges, Bueri was not involved in the exchange business and conducted only a few transactions in goods. This didn't change when the Medici established a branch office of their own in Flanders, as shown by the Bruges list of correspondents of 1440, where he is not mentioned.<sup>1541</sup> In the fragment of a register of this company of 1441, there are only five accounts with a link to him. Three entries involve merely petty sums which were deposited in cash. In one case it is recorded that a bill of exchange involving the Spinola in Bruges and the Dandolo in Venice was cleared through his account with the Medici in Venice. The fifth and final entry refers to a batch of cloth that had been purchased in his name in Flanders.<sup>1542</sup>

1539 Stadtarchiv Lüneburg, Sodmeisterrechnungen: AB 628, cc. 9v and 55r; AB 629, c. 66r; AB 630, cc. 60v and 61r; AB 631, c. 51r.

1540 ASFi, MAP 134, no. 1. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 550–552.

1541 ASFi, MAP 104, no. 2, pp. 39ff.

1542 ASFi, MAP 134, no. 2, pp. 228 and 237–238.

## 5 Market Spaces

Table 12 Bills of exchange between Gherardo Bueri and Venice, 1436/37

Carta	Issue Entry	Text of entry	L - s - d - q
27r	01.03.1436 11.04.1436	A Gherardo Bueri di Lubich lire sei di grossi, sono per tanti à tratto per loro di chanbio de' di primo di marzo in Piero Dura, per la valuta n'ebono del detto; posto a libro grande, a c. 178	6.00.00.00
27v	24.02.1436 11.04.1436	A Gherardo Bueri di Lubiche lire dieci di grossi, sono per d. C ci trassero per loro lettera di chanbio de' di 24 di febraio in Giovanni Vacho[n]dio a Schedoel, in sua agenzia a Inricho Chiss [Heinrich Kress?], portorono a detti contanti per la valuta n'ebono da ***; posto a libro grande, c. 17	10.00.00.00
39r	09.04.1436 11.05.1436	A Gherardo Bueri di Lubiche lire dodici di grossi, sono per ducati 120 ci trassero per loro lettera di chanbio de' di 9 d'aprile in Ian Achant, e a lui gli pagammo contanti, portò il detto, sono per la valuta n'ebono dal detto, e pigl[i]ammo di contanti; posto a libro grande, a c. 17	12.00.00.00
90v	03.09.1436 03.10.1436	A Gherardo Bueri di Lubich lire sei di grossi, sono per tanti à tratto da Lubich il detto per sua lettera di chanbio de' di 3 di settenbre in Piero Giovanni di Svezia, e a llui gli demmo chontanti, portò il detto, sono per la valuta n'ebono da lui; posto a libro grande, a c. 17	6.00.00.00
94v	14.09.1436 14.10.1436	A Gherardo Bueri di Lubich lire sette s. 4 di grossi, sono per ducati 72 di valuta tratti da Lunuborgho il detto per sua lettera di chanbio de' di 14 di settenbre in Arighus Arig di Svezia, e a llui gli demmo chontanti, portò il detto e prese [?] quitanza; sono per la valuta n'ebbe da Durante Chaiser; posto a libro grande, a c. 17	7.04.00.00
123r	10.11.1436 31.12.1436	A Gherardo Bueri di Lubich lire sei di grossi, e per lui gli demmo a Uanni Aluichin, portò il detto contanti, sono per parte d'una lettera di chanbio de' di 10 di novembre di ducati 153 à tratto da Lubich il detto nel detto lanni; posto a libro grande, a c. 135	6.00.00.00
131r	28.01.1437	A Gherardo Bueri di Lubich lire ventiquattro di grossi, sono per tanti ci trassono per lui da Bruggia i Borromei in messer Antonio Borromei e compagni e a lloro gli demmo chontanti, portò Pertino loro in maggior som[m]a, sono per la valuta chonti con loro; posto a libro grande, a c. 135	24.00.00.00
135r	20.10.1436 15.01.1437	A Gherardo Bueri di Lubich lire nove s. 6 di grossi, sono per resto di ducati 153 ci trasse da Lubich il detto per sua lettera di chanbio de' di 20 di novembre in messer Piero Epslors, studente in Padova o in Giovanni Elmihin suo famig[i]o, e al detto Giovanni gli demmo chontanti, portò il detto, sono per la valuta n'ebono da detto G., posto a libro grande a c. 135	9.06.00.00

Table 12 (continued)

Carta	Issue Entry	Text of entry	L - s - d - q
137v	18.12.1436 21.02.1437	A Gherardo Bueri di Lubich lire tre di grossi, posto messer Giovanni loanni e messer Giovanni Laolt e messer Veraldus lachobi debino avere al quaderno di chas[s]a a c. 70, sono per tanti pagati a loro sino a dì 30 del passato per parte di una lettera di chanbio di ducati 350 fatta a dì 18 di diciembre, ci trasse da Lubiche il detto ne' detti; posto a libro grande, a c. 135	3.00.00.00
139v	02.03.1437	A Gherardo Bueri di Lubich in chonto nostro lire cinque s. 2 d. 2 q. 16 di grossi, sono per tanti ci trassono per lui da Bolognia i Sernelli in Angnolo Ghadi e chonpagni. e a lloro gli demmo chontanti Sandro loro, sono per tanti disono esere chosto peze 12 di tafettà chonprorono per lo detto; posto a libro grande, a c. 189	5.02.02.16
138v	20.01.1437 27.02.1437	A Gherardo Bueri Lubich lire tre s. 4 di grossi, sono per tanti ci trasse da Lubich il detto per sua lettera di chanbio de' di 20 di gennaio in Nicholò Chocho e a llui gli demmo chontanti, sono per la valuta n'ebbe da Luticha Austede; posto a libro grande, a c. 163	3.04.00.00
141r	18.12.1436 09.03.1437	A Gherardo Bueri di Lubich lire una di grossi, sono per parte di ducati 35 trasse da Lubich il detto per sua lettera di chanbio de' di 18 di dicenbre in misser Giovanni loanni e in misser Giovanni Luolt e in misser Veroldus lachobi, e a lloro gli demmo chontanti, portò messer *** detto, per la valuta n'ebbe da detti messer Giovanni [...]; posto a libro grande, a c. 189	1.00.00.00
143v	20.12.1436 16.03.1437	A Gherardo Bueri di Lubiche lire una s. 4 di grossi, sono per tanti ci trasse il detto per sua lettera di chanbio de' di 20 di dicenbre in Anghilbertus Grulbe e a llui gli demmo chontanti, portò il detto, per la valuta n'ebbe dal detto; posto a libro grande, a c. 189	1.04.00.00
143v	18.12.1436 16.03.1437	Al detto lire tre di grossi, sono per parte de' ducati 350 che di Lubiche ci trasse il detto per sua lettera di chanbio de' di 18 di dicenbre in misser Giovanni loanni e in misser Giovanni Laolt e in messer Veraldus lachobi, e a lloro gli demmo chontantim portorono i detti in ducati 30, cioè ducati 10 per uno, per la valuta n'ebbe da detti; posto a libro grande, a c. 189	3.00.00.00
145r	18.12.1436 22.03.1437	A Gherardo Bueri di Lubich lire dieci di grossi, e per lui gli demmo a messer Giovanni lohan, a misser Giovanni Laolt e a misser Veraldus lachobi, portorono i detti chontanti in ducati C d'oro, per parte di ducati 350 trasse da Lubich il detto per sua lettera di chanbio de' di 18 di dicenbre ne' detti, per la valuta n'ebbe da lloro; posto a libro grande, a c. 189	10.00.00.00

The many bills of exchange that Bueri in Lübeck made out on the Medici in Italy did not necessarily result in a large profit for the banks involved in the transactions. A recurrent theme throughout the history of the relations between Bueri and the Medici relates to the problem of him not being able to ship sufficient goods from the North to Venice that could then be sold to settle the sums transferred by means of bills of exchange. In 1440, Cosimo must have once again threatened his relative to no longer serve his bills of exchange or at least only those up to certain amount. This letter no longer exists, but we have Gherardo's answer from northern Germany in which he almost desperately tries to reassure Cosimo. Because of the war in Denmark and a ban in Lübeck he had been unable to ship goods for almost eight months; but now three of his envoys were on their way to Venice with goods worth more than 1,600 ducats. Moreover, he had goods worth more than 2,000 ducats stored in his house that would be ready for shipment in four days. Another consignment was planned for the near future.<sup>1543</sup>

Unlike the Italian merchants in Cologne, Bueri was hardly involved in the local loans business. He had in fact lent Ludeke Osenbrügge, who was married to a sister of his friend Hermann Darsow, six marks, which his brother Adovardo had been able to reclaim from the executors of Osenbrügge's estate. However, this was probably not more than a simple courtesy loan and can hardly be taken as evidence of Bueri's involvement in the small loans business.<sup>1544</sup> Nor is there any mention of loans to cities or princes.

In the goods trade, Gherardo sought the support of local merchants. He entered into a *seltscoppen*, *rekenscoppen*, *weddelecingen*, *in kopenscoppen* agreement with his trade servant Joachim Dickmann before 1441, in which, according to Nordmann, he advanced the man's working capital in the form of a loan.<sup>1545</sup> In the Florentine merchant's view this was probably a kind of *accomenda* in which Dickmann shared in the profits but invested his labour instead of money. According to the Lübeck *Niederstadtbuch*, this open commercial partnership was netted and terminated on 8 December 1446.<sup>1546</sup> We also have records of commercial links with the cloth merchants Hildebrand Hagemann and Hinrik Godesmann along with Bernd Plescow, a sea captain from Reval; however, we do not have any details regarding the legal status and activities of these collaborations.<sup>1547</sup> Southwards, trade went as far as Venice (*twischen Lubeke unde Venedie unde in ander landen*);<sup>1548</sup> in the North and East, Bueri's trading activities covered the entire trading area of the Hanseatic League.

Among the goods that Florentine merchants in Lübeck imported almost exclusively from Venice, spices ranked first – above all saffron and pepper, which were purchased in large

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1543 Weissen (2003), p. 71.

1544 UB Lübeck, VII, no. 547, p. 518; Fouquet (1998), pp. 211–212.

1545 UB Lübeck, VIII, pp. 11 and 386. – Nordmann (1933b), p. 28.

1546 UB Lübeck, VIII, pp. 432 and 643. See Fouquet (1998), pp. 216–217.

1547 UB Lübeck, VII, no. 379, pp. 356–357; VIII, no. 92, p. 113; Fouquet (1998), p. 216.

1548 UB Lübeck, VIII, p. 11.

quantities in the South.<sup>1549</sup> The brothers of Niccolò Bonsi and Gherardo's brother Francesco were also involved in this business. The sources do not reveal what the imported gold thread (*oro filato*) – which, in Florence, was woven into expensive silk fabrics – was used for in Lübeck. In 1441, Bueri commissioned the Medici to purchase tapestries (*arazzi*) in Bruges and send them to Lübeck.<sup>1550</sup> One of them features figures, the other different kinds of vegetables. From the Sernelli in Bologna he bought precious cloths (*taffetà*). There his commercial envoy Hermann Rosenberg also purchased books, not necessarily for resale, but to be used as registries for record keeping in his office in Lübeck.

Among the export goods, furs made up the largest part by far. Huge quantities of furs (*vai*) were loaded into barrels and shipped to Venice. In a letter, Bueri mentions a consignment of twenty thousand squirrel furs, a second shipment contained 12,900 loaded in four barrels, a third included 14,000 furs.<sup>1551</sup> Fouquet suggested that this fur trade was somehow connected with the purchase of a ship.<sup>1552</sup>

The most valuable item listed in the books of Venetian merchants was amber (*ambra*). Bueri was one of three partners who, on 16 April 1424, signed a contract with the Office (guild) of Rosary Makers of Lübeck. The charter was valid for three years and stipulated that the three merchants would receive from each of the city's twelve amber turners eighty pounds of rosaries per annum at a fixed rate to be sold at the fairs in Venice, Nuremberg, Frankfurt, and Cologne.<sup>1553</sup> The Lübeck merchants made a large profit from the sale of raw amber and amber products in Venice.<sup>1554</sup> Compared to fur and amber, the export of tinware and linen cloth was only of minor significance.<sup>1555</sup>

Apart from this kind of bulk ware for the wholesale market, furs of bears, martens, lynxes, stoats (ermine), sables (*vaglono uno tesoro*), and foxes were procured on order from Denmark, Sweden, and Russia. Some of them went directly to the household of the Medici in Florence. An astonishing number of horses sent to the Gonzaga, the lords of the city of Ferrara, and to

1549 ASFi, Catasto 49, c. 1188r: *Adovardo Bueri di Lubiche per pepe et zafferano il quale abiano in casa.*

1550 ASFi, MAP 134, no. 2, p. 238 right: *E di detto [10 January 1441] lire otto s. quattro di grossi sono per chosto di 2 panni d'arazo chonprati da llui [a merchant from Bruges], uno ffighure, d'alle 42, a grossi 30 d'alla, e uno a verdure, d'alle 42, a grossi 17 d'alla, chonperati per Gherardo Bueri di Lubich.*

1551 ASFi, MAP 13, no. 74. – According to the Catasto of Giovanni de' Medici of 1427, three fur sales in Florence were still pending: to *Iacopo Bonbeni, Bartolomeo Bonbeni, and to Giannino nostro garzonetto*. ASFi, Catasto 49, c. 1188r.

1552 UB Lübeck, VII, no. 652, p. 631; Fouquet (1998), pp. 215–216.

1553 UB Lübeck, VI, no. 586, pp. 575–577; Fouquet (1998), p. 216.

1554 ASFi, Giovanni de' Medici, Catasto 49, c. 1188r: *Jachopo da Mulino et Jacopo Donato per anbra tempo a Natale prosimo atenghono alla ragione di Lubiche a 87 LL. 164. 16. 9. 11; Le Rede di Lodovico de Baglioni per l'anbra venduta.* – On Bueri's sale of amber in Venice, see also ASFi, MAP 13, no. 74. – North (1991), pp. 813–814; Pauli (1872b), p. 104; Schildhauer et al. (1977), p. 177.

1555 ASFi, Giovanni de' Medici, Catasto 49, c. 1188r: *Ghugl[i]elmo stagnatore per ragione di bacini atenghono a Gherardo; Pezze sette di tele line aute da Lubiche.*

Cosimo, were not destined for sale. It seems that, in those days, northern-bred horses were considered particularly beautiful and desirable.<sup>1556</sup>

Cosimo also entrusted Bueri with tasks that had nothing to do with trade but appear to have been of personal interest to his powerful Florentine relative, such as the procurement of Latin manuscripts destined for the Medici library. The first time Bueri's name is mentioned in this connection is in a letter from Poggio Bracciolini to Niccolò Niccolini on 8 January 1428. In it, it says that a scholar in Rome had reported seeing a two-volume manuscript containing the ten decades of Titus Livius in the Cistercian monastery of Soroe in the diocese of Roskilde. Niccolini was asked to contact Cosimo and have him write a letter to Bueri in Lübeck telling him to pay the respective monastery a visit.<sup>1557</sup> What became of this specific venture is not known. However, it appears not to have been a one-time event, as we gather from a letter written by Bueri to Cosimo on 29 May 1439. Bueri had borrowed from the Dominicans in Lübeck a Plinius manuscript and deposited f. 100 as security. He had sent the manuscript to Cosimo in Florence, who had probably passed it on to his copyists. Now Bueri in Lübeck was facing major problems because of this matter, since the Dominicans feared that the books might have been lost and were desperate to have them returned. Bueri, for his part, was worried about his deposit and asked Cosimo to hand over the manuscripts to his brother Francesco, who was then to send the manuscripts back to the anxious monks via Venice.<sup>1558</sup> Interestingly, Piero de' Medici's inventory of 1464 lists a Pliny estimated at f. 100, which is probably identical with the manuscript that is now kept in the Biblioteca Laurenziana.<sup>1559</sup>

Gherardo Bueri himself had a close affinity with manuscripts, too. Among the Raccolta Palatina manuscripts in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, listed under number 125, there is a paper book by the title of "Vita della Madonna e di Gesù Cristo" which contains fifty-nine folios. Towards the end is written: *scritto per mano dy Gherardo di nichola Bueri da firenze e chonpiuto questo dy XXIII di diciembre MCCCCXXXII*, followed by German words in red ink, remarkably:

*Dys ist der vrolich dot  
Des dich Immer wesen muot.*<sup>1560</sup>

1556 ASFi, MAP 1, no. 236; f. 13, no. 74.

1557 Gordan (1974), p. 120. See Kent (2000), p. 25.

1558 ASFi, MAP 12, no. 186. – Probably Sieveking (1906), p. 28. He dates it to 29 May 1449 and states as its location: Filza 12, n. 180.

1559 Fouquet (1998), p. 216. Vespasiano da Bisticci also reports on this manuscript deal. See Esch (2000), p. 127; Esch (2007), p. 392; Vosshall (2016), p. 270. – On the Plinius manuscript: Antonazzo (2017), p. 373.

1560 Palermo (1853–1868), I, pp. 240–242; Gentile (1889), p. 114; Bianchi (2003), p. 31: 'This is the joyful death - The courage that must always be in you.'

It shows that Bueri, too, was one of the many Florentine merchants who, besides conducting trade, were engaged in literary activities. Vittore Branca coined the term “mercanti scrittori” for these men.<sup>1561</sup> The above-mentioned book is the only surviving work by Gherardo; to date, it has not received any real scholarly attention.

By 1445, the collaboration between Bueri and the Medici had become very difficult. The letters from Lübeck were no longer addressed directly to Cosimo, but to his son Giovanni. When Giovanni accused Bueri of refusing to meet to discuss the strained relationship, the latter replied with indignance: *E a la parte dove di ch'i' schivo di venire chostà, chon riverenza e' non è vero ch'io ischivo di venire chostà, anzi fo schivo di venire chostà* – ‘Wherever you wish to see me, you will find me!’<sup>1562</sup>

It appears that Cosimo thought very little of the business prospects in northern Europe and advised his relative to close down his branch office and to return to Florence for good: *Chosimo, volendomi in tuto spichare di qui*. Bueri answered that he could do that in three years at the earliest.<sup>1563</sup> Cosimo’s advice was evidently the consequence of the commercial problems the bank in northern Germany was experiencing. Either Bueri had not yet realized the difficult situation he was in at the time, or he was still convinced that he could overcome the problems he was facing. It remains unclear whether there were any more business transactions between the former partners before Bueri died in the summer of 1449. What is on record, however, is that the Medici honoured a bill of exchange made out by Bueri’s former employee, Giovanni Talani. The collaboration between the Medici and Bueri, which had gone on for decades, finally seems to have broken down.

Cosimo stopped doing business with his relative and, from 1447 on, conducted financial and goods transactions exclusively with Bueri’s former associate Giovanni Talani.<sup>1564</sup> Evidence of this new collaboration is a payment of 74 ducats to an otherwise unidentifiable messer Gherardo.<sup>1565</sup>

Although this business relationship was extremely short-lived and left behind very few traces in the records, it must have been a deep humiliation for Bueri and yet another loss of potential earnings. By the end of March 1448, he was no longer optimistic as far as his commercial future was concerned. He wrote to Giovanni di Cosimo, telling him that he would only remain in Lübeck until he had amassed sufficient profit to be able to return to Florence with something to show. In addition, Roberto Martelli, the head of the Medici branch in Rome,

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1561 Branca (1986).

1562 ASFi, MAP 7, no. 309: [...] *dove tu mi vuoi e lì vi mi troverrai*. Weissen (2003), p. 75.

1563 Weissen (2003), p. 75.

1564 See below p. 298. That the reason for the clouding over of the relationship between Bueri and Cosimo was that Bueri also began to collaborate with Ognibene Sagramoso and thus indirectly with the Medici’s enemy Lamberto Lamberteschi is pure speculation, but should be examined as a working hypothesis in further archival research.

1565 ASFi, MAP 6, no. 67.

was to press Nicholas V to renew the collector's privilege that Bueri had been granted earlier on by Martin V and Eugene IV. However, the Roman branch office failed to grant him this wish: *Ruberto che mi facesse avere letera di Chorte, e non lo fè*.<sup>1566</sup>

The scale of Bueri's troubles becomes apparent when one takes a look at his bill of exchange transactions with the Teutonic Order, starting in the spring of 1447. The money was sent to him in Lübeck by the Order's *Pfundmeister* (manager of finances) in Gdańsk, by his brother-in-law Hans Schutze in Tartu, and by an unnamed merchant. His bills of exchange were taken to Rome by couriers on behalf of the Prussians. He soon faced serious difficulties there, because the procurator wrote to Marienburg (Malbork), saying that he had not received all of the documents. In one case, he complained that he had indeed received money for a bill of exchange but the coins he was given were of poor quality, so that he had made a loss. As regards the other bills, the bankers had told him that what he had given them were flawed bills of exchange. On 16 May, the Grand Master wrote a harsh letter to *Gerhardt gutter frundt* ('Gerhardt good friend') in Lübeck demanding the immediate issue of correct bills of exchange and threatening to claim damages otherwise. The letter proved effective: Gherardo apologized, promised to pay for the damage caused, and by 19 July three new bills of exchange were on their way to Rome. It was the last transaction that Bueri conducted for the Grand Master.<sup>1567</sup> In all likelihood, these bills of exchange were not sent to the Medici bank, but to Ognibene Sagramoso, for we know there existed a commercial link between Hans Schutze and the Veronese banker.<sup>1568</sup> Bueri had probably encountered Ognibene Sagramoso at some time previously in Basel, where he often used to stop off on his travels to Florence.<sup>1569</sup>

We still have two wills made out by Gherardo Bueri. The first one was written on 24 September 1445. Since we definitely know that he was in Florence on 5 April of the following year, he possibly wrote the will as part of his preparations for the journey.<sup>1570</sup> In it, he suggests that the balancing of his companies should be done by two of his Florentine compatriots in Lübeck (Bonsi, Rucellai), because they would know how to read and understand the Italian mode of bookkeeping he had used. He also endowed the two men along with his German *knechte*

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1566 ASFi, MAP 6, no. 60: *Giovani, i'ò scritto a tuo padre che lui scriva et chomete a Ruberto che ma fazi avere da lo Papa le bolle de la mia chomissione de la choletoria, chomo io avevo da Papa Martino e da Papa Eugenio, che a me 'porta assai per potermi spaciare de qui e soto onbra di quello schoder da chui debo avere per potermeni venire con qualche substanzia*. He repeated this request in a letter of 30 June 1448, ASFi, MAP 8, no. 53. Weissen (2003), pp. 80–81.

1567 OBA 9315, 9368; Order's folio 16, ff. 535–536, 554, and 601. See Militzer (1993), p. 46; Fouquet (1998), p. 213.

1568 UB Lübeck, VIII, p. 685. Is it a coincidence that precisely in this case there is mention of the paying out of inferior ducats in Rome, which is what Enea Silvio Piccolomini also accuses Sagramoso of? See below p. 372.

1569 Weissen (2003), p. 70.

1570 ASFi, MAP 8, no. 162. Erroneously dated 25 April 1446 in the Inventario of MAP. Referred to by Sieveking (1906) on p. 26. He gives as location Filza 8, no. 151. – Braunstein (1967), pp. 104–105.



(servants) Hinrik Thun, Reynolde, and Jochim in it. Four years later, on 20 March 1449, he drew up a new will in the face of his life-threatening illness (*krank an lyve*).<sup>1571</sup> He died shortly before 1 June 1449.<sup>1572</sup>

Bills of exchange issued by Bueri in the last days before his death were challenged by the drawn-on banks at the Curia; whether this refers to the Medici or Sagramoso cannot be ascertained from the sources. In two cases, we have evidence that the customers demanded back their money from the executors in Lübeck, and that they also received it. A cleric from Dithmarschen demanded to be repaid his 12 ducats; a man from Lübeck claimed back 45 Lübeck marks that he had not received in Padua.<sup>1573</sup>

The council of the city of Lübeck commissioned Bonsi and Rucellai to check Bueri's books and liquidate his business.<sup>1574</sup> Representatives of Bueri's most important business partners began appearing in the city to claim outstanding invoices from his estate. The lawyer Christoph Roder claimed the debts owed by the deceased to *Onny de Bene, en lumbert van Verone, and Merketan, de deme hove to Rome volghet*.<sup>1575</sup> The dispositions drawn up by the executors indicated that Sagramoso and Bueri had entered into a *seltschupp*, meaning they had formed a joint company; however, there are no records as to the company's foundations or workings. The wording *overghekofften gheldes wegghen* suggests that it involved exchange transactions in some form or another. Sagramoso's authorized agent was handed 749 Lübeck marks. Most likely, the sum results from bills of exchange that the Veronese banker had honoured in Rome but which had not yet been balanced. This Florentine-Veronese company also had outstanding debts with six Lübeck merchants, ranging between 4.5 and 53 Lübeck marks and totalling 113 marks. In Prussia, Hans Schutz claimed merchandise debts amounting to 20 Prussian marks, and there were still 118 corals in storage in Lübeck.<sup>1576</sup> The Basel merchant Heinrich Halbisen sent his partner Friedrich Sennheim to Lübeck, where he received from the executors a total of 346 Lübeck marks on 25 July 1450. This debt was likely incurred through the sale of paper and saffron to Northern Germany, two business branches in which Halbisen was heavily involved.<sup>1577</sup>

The principal creditor in this matter was Cosimo de' Medici. He sent the *in jure civili licentiat* Benedetto di Stefano degli Olbizi da Fucecchio of Lucca to northern Germany to negotiate

1571 Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana (1960–), XIV, p. 793; Bueri is said to have written in a letter of 29 January 1449 that he felt he was approaching death. No such letter was found in MAP. There is no mention that he felt close to death in a letter of 29 January 1449.

1572 There is a document dated 1 June 1449 in which Bonsi and Rucellai act alone. UB Lübeck, VIII, no. 615, p. 662.

1573 UB Lübeck, vol. VIII, p. 674, 6 August 1449 and p. 683, 30 September 1449. See Fouquet (1998), pp. 212–213.

1574 North (1991), p. 812.

1575 UB Lübeck, VIII, pp. 684–685: “Onny de Bene, a lombard from Verona, and merchant, who follows the court of Rome.”

1576 UB Lübeck, VIII, no. 643, pp. 684–685; Fouquet (1998), p. 218.

1577 UB Lübeck, VIII, no. 698, pp. 743–744; Fouquet (1998), p. 218.

with the city of Lübeck concerning Bueri's estate.<sup>1578</sup> *Die seltschap, de im hove to Rome wert genomt: de seltschap Cosmi de Medicis* asserted claims against Bueri regarding *schulde, de desulffte Gherardus to Venediie unde in Walsche-lande hafft uthstande unde nagelaten*.<sup>1579</sup> According to an agreement of 8 August 1450, all assets that had not yet been distributed were to be handed over to Olbizi on behalf of the Medici. This is also how Bueri's residence on Aegidienstrasse fell to the Medici. Tibbeke was granted usufruct concerning the estate assigned to her by Bueri; but after her death, these, too, were to go to the Medici.

However, this amicable settlement did not include the claims raised by the heirs of Gherardo's brothers Francesco and Adovardo. Subsequently, a dispute arose over the question of whether the claims of these relatives or those of the Medici bank in Rome to the remaining estate should be satisfied first. The issue was litigated before the court of the Podestà of Florence, which decided in favour of the bankers and awarded them f. 1,612. Cosimo de' Medici appointed as his new procurator the Lübeck cleric Peter Monnik, who then declared before the Lübeck *Niederstadtbuch* on 23 August 1454 that all the Medici's claims had now been satisfied.<sup>1580</sup> Bueri's two wills provided that, after the death of his wife, his remaining assets were to go to the children of his deceased brother Francesco. They probably never saw a single penny.

#### 5.4.6 Giovanni di Bartolino Talani

The first time that Giovanni di Bartolino Talani is mentioned as an employee of Gherardo Bueri dates back to 1441 when he, at the age of twenty-six, and a second *garzone*, stopped off in Basel on the journey to Lübeck. They were hosted there by the people of the local Medici branch.<sup>1581</sup> However, Talani had no intention of remaining an employee for the rest of his life and, at the latest in 1446, he parted ways with Bueri.<sup>1582</sup> On 12 October of the same year, the Signoria of Florence wrote a letter to the council of Lübeck which opened with the usual diplomatic greetings and niceties. It went on to say that they were pleased with the warm welcome and the esteem with which the Florentine merchants had been treated. With the wish to reciprocate

1578 Roover (1963), p. 64.

1579 Pauli (1872c), p. 106: 'The company, which was named in the court at Rome: the company of Cosimo de Medici [...] debts, which the same Gherardus had incurred and left outstanding in Venice and in Italy.' Copy of an entry in Lübeck's *Niederstadtbuch* in Pauli (1872c), pp. 115–117.

1580 ASFi, Podestà 4917; NA 20327, cc. 99v–100v; UB Lübeck, VIII, no. 701, pp. 745–746; IX, no. 196, pp. 198–200. – Pauli (1872c), pp. 105 and 116; Sieveking (1906), p. 29; Roover (1963), p. 64; North (1991), p. 813; Fouquet (1998), p. 219. Note from Lorenz Böninger.

1581 ASFi, Catasto 72, c. 9r; MAP 104, no. 60, c. 60rv. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 497–508.

1582 Archiv der Hansestadt Lübeck, Testamente 1400–1449, 24 August 1445, Boeris (alias Wale): In Gherardo Bueri's will issued on 24 August 1445, his two trade servants Francesco Rucellai and Niccolò Bonsi receive legacies while Talani goes empty-handed. Possibly he had already left Bueri's business by then.

this positive attitude with everything that could be of interest and benefit to the city of Lübeck, they also took the opportunity to recommend to them their citizen Giovanni Talani, the bearer of the letter, and to ask the council to support him in his activities.<sup>1583</sup>

It seems that Bueri was very angry with the new competitor, whom, after all, he had trained himself. In a letter to Giovanni di Cosimo on 20 January 1447, he complained bitterly about Talani for the way the latter had conducted himself in the context of the separation, a conduct he simply could not approve of. He wished Talani and the unnamed German co-founders of the company everything they deserved: *Idio voglia ne chapiti chome merita*. Bueri further intimated that he suspected that Talani had acted with the knowledge and support of the Medici: *e ch'è chon Chosimo e con voi bene d'achordo*, and went on to say that if they knew what Talani had done to him, they would probably abandon him straight away.<sup>1584</sup> A letter written by Talani to Cosimo on 15 March 1449 indicates that Bueri did not get what he wanted, since his relatives were evidently collaborating with his former employee. In addition to bills of exchange, the text also refers to trade in goods.<sup>1585</sup> Shortly after that, Talani shut down his business in Lübeck and returned to Italy. We are not informed about the reasons for his very abrupt departure and the termination of his business presence in Germany.

#### 5.4.7 Francesco di Filippo Rucellai

In mid-15th century, Giovanni di Paolo Rucellai surpassed all his relatives,<sup>1586</sup> leaving behind for posterity many testimonies to his wealth, artistic intellect, and erudition, of which the Rucellai Palace and the chapels Santa Maria Novella and San Pancrazio in Florence as well as his *Zibaldone* are probably the most famous. While Giovanni, together with Mariotto Banchi, operated a banking and trading company in Venice for many years, his kinsman Francesco di Filippo Rucellai, now almost forgotten, lived and worked in Lübeck. Francesco was born on 2 October 1425, the second son to Filippo di Vanni und Mona Tonia. The declaration concerning the family property and relations compiled by his father for the Catasti of 1442<sup>1587</sup> and 1446<sup>1588</sup> reveals an extended, lower middle-class family bearing a tax burden of f. 4 10s. The declaration does not state anywhere that one of the sons was living outside of Florence. The

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1583 ASFi, Missive I Cancelleria 36, lettera 493, cc. 208rv.

1584 ASFi, MAP 8, no. 30. Letter of 28 January 1447: 'May God grant them what they deserve.'

1585 ASFi, MAP 6, no. 67.

1586 In their family history, the Rucellai trace the origin of their lineage back to a German cloth merchant by the name of Alamanno, who is said to have been involved in the Levantine trade and who made a name for himself in Florence by introducing a new method of dyeing. See Ademollo (1845), II, p. 621.

1587 ASFi, Catasto 620, c. 390r.

1588 ASFi, Catasto 671 (I), cc. 335r–338r; Catasto 672, cc. 303r–306v.

family's relationship with Cosimo de' Medici is difficult to pinpoint. Considering the political and social fabric of Florence, one could describe it as being ambivalent, which suggests that there was no commercial collaboration of any kind.<sup>1589</sup>

Francesco is mentioned for the first time in Lübeck's town records (*Niederstadtbuch*) on 10 August 1445 when he, together with Gherardo Bueri and Niccolò Bonsi, declared that they owed the Lübeck mayor, Johann Bere, the sum of 457 marks 12s. in Lübeck currency. In Gherardo Bueri's will, issued merely fourteen days later, he is generously endowed.<sup>1590</sup> These two facts suggest that Francesco had affiliated with his compatriot already some time earlier.

In a letter Bueri wrote to Cosimo de' Medici on 28 January 1447, Francesco is referred to as *garzone*; in this role he would share meals at the family table and travel back and forth between Lübeck and Italy as his commercial envoy.<sup>1591</sup>

Bueri's death did not spell the immediate end to the financial flow between Lübeck and the Curia. On 1 June, Niccolò Bonsi and Francesco di Filippo Rucellai transferred 620 ducats for the bishop of Roskilde<sup>1592</sup> but it is not recorded whether they drew on the Medici, Sagramoso, or Talani. Be that as it may, their creditworthiness in Rome was not adequate; thus, the Danes were probably very happy to receive the pledge from Bonsi nine months later, recorded in the city's records (*Niederstadtbuch*), stating that he would not leave the city until the outstanding amount had been refunded.<sup>1593</sup> The attempt to keep the business running without Bueri was soon abandoned, and they had to reorganize completely.

The new commercial link between Lübeck and Italy can be reconstructed by following the traces left by their former colleague Giovanni Talani in Florentine records after his return to Italy. On 26 June 1451, a notary in Florence drew up a deed for him for a drawn bill of exchange. Heinrich Favat, a scholar at the University of Siena, pledged to refund a loan in Lübeck at the latest in two months by means of a payment of 66 Lübeck marks to Francesco Rucellai.<sup>1594</sup> On 30 January 1453, a cleric from Modena was given a loan of f. 100 by Rucellai for his return journey from Denmark to Italy; he was asked to repay this loan *ad manus Johannis de Talanis merc. Florentin*.<sup>1595</sup>

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1589 According to Passerini (1861), p. 57, Filippo di Vanni was a member of the ruling committee (*balia*), which banished Cosimo from the city in September 1433. After his return, Cosimo is said to have barred him from taking up any important office. On the other hand, Poliziano (1929), p. 56, recounts an anecdote in which Cosimo refers to Filippo – albeit not very charmingly. There Filippo is referred to as *pippo lungo* and described as *uomo inetto e mal fatto*. Accordingly, Cosimo de' Medici is reported to have said: *Non rifatelo sì brutto!*, when a boy was to be christened Filippo.

1590 Pauli (1872c), pp. 115–116; Fouquet (1998), p. 206.

1591 ASFi, MAP 8, no. 30. In the MAP's inventory erroneously dated 30 January 1447: *Se Francesco Ruciellai, figliuolo di Filippo di Nanni, ch'è mio gharzone, è chostà, te ne saprà dire novelle*.

1592 UB Lübeck, vol. VIII, p. 662.

1593 UB Lübeck, vol. VIII, p. 704, 2 February 1450. See Schuchard (2000b), pp. 81–82.

1594 ASFi, NA 10447, cc. 96r and 123r. See Böninger (2006), pp. 23–24.

1595 RG Online, RG VI 00384, <http://rg-online.dhi-roma.it/RG/6/384,02.07.2021>; Esch (1998), p. 301; Schuchard (2000b), pp. 81–82.

In August of that year, Galetto Franciotti from Lucca disbursed two bills of exchange from Rucellai which had been issued in Lübeck on 20 February.<sup>1596</sup> The last piece of evidence refers to a bill of exchange issued by Rucellai for the bishop of Ösel-Wiek on 21 October in which either Rome or Florence is indicated as the place of payment.<sup>1597</sup> These transactions suggest a business triangle: Rucellai in Lübeck, Talani in Florence, and Franciotti in Rome. It appears that Bonsi no longer played a part in this constellation.

This tallies with the fact that there is absolutely no evidence of Talani's presence in the Eternal City during this period, while, at the same time, he was quite active in his hometown. In 1451, he assured the Mercanzia that he would pay the court costs resulting from a dispute with Giovanni di Ciani Signori over a goods deal in Geneva.<sup>1598</sup> On 14 January 1452, the Signoria sent him together with the city's envoys to Ferrara to make preparations for the visit of Frederick III to Florence; he, at the time, was on his coronation tour to Rome. For his expenses and services, most of it probably interpreting, he received f. 70.<sup>1599</sup> In 1454, the bank della Casa in Rome held an account in the name of *Giovanni Talani di Firenze*. In it are listed exchange transactions between the aforementioned and Ludovico degli Strozzi in London.<sup>1600</sup> On 31 July, Talani confirmed that he had received from the Uffiziali del Monte f. 600 for the dowry of Margherita di Giovanni Ugolini.<sup>1601</sup> After 1554, there is no more evidence to show that he was still alive. In his brother Sandro's tax return for 1457, he is listed as deceased.<sup>1602</sup>

In 1456, Francesco Rucellai entered into a correspondent relationship with Tommaso Spinelli's Curia-based bank. This business relationship lasted until his company in Lübeck closed down. Over a period of several years, the two bankers mutually established a monopoly-like control over the exchange transactions between northern Europe and southern centres. Transactions included money transfers to Rome and the settlement of drawn bills of exchange. One of the men to make use of this possibility was Ludolph Robinger in Rome after receiving a loan of 30 ducats from the Spinelli. Heinrich van der Molen in Lüneburg was to repay *marcas 67 et 8 solidos de moneta lubicen* to Girolamo Rucellai or, in his absence, to Hinrik Grymmolt.<sup>1603</sup> Though probably for only a short time, Francesco also maintained a business relationship with

1596 UB Lübeck, IX, no. 151.

1597 UB Lübeck, IX, no. 161. See Pauli (1872c), p. 139.

1598 ASFi, Mercanzia 4418, c. 68r.

1599 ASFi, Camera dell'arme 51, c. 4r; ASFi, Signori, Legazioni e Commissarie, no. 13.

1600 AOIF 12739, c. 45 left and right.

1601 ASFi, Diplomatico normale, Archivio generale, 1454 luglio 31.

1602 ASFi, Catasto 805.

1603 YUSA II, 161c: *Solvate pro questa tercio pro secunda ut prima littera cambii adeorum voluntatem Iheronimo de Ruslays et in absentia Henrico Gremmo, marcas sexagintaseptem et octo solidos de moneta lubien pro valore recepti hic nomine predicti Iheronimi ab heredibus Leonardi de Spenellis et sociis mercatoribus Romanam curiam sequentes in ducatos triginta auri de camera faciate sibi bonum pagamentum bene valete. Datum Rome, die decimanona mensi Iunii Anno Domini MCCCCLXIX. Ludolphus Robinger. [verso] Honorabili viro domino Henrici Van der Molen in Luneorgho, consuli.*

Jacopo e Giovanni della Casa in Rome; but his name appears only once in 1460 in connection with a single transaction of 150 ducats in their completely preserved *libro grande*.<sup>1604</sup>

The first record confirming the correspondent relationship between Rucellai and Spinelli dates from 16 January 1457. It concerns a letter from Rome to Rucellai who, at the time, was staying in Venice.<sup>1605</sup> In it, Tommaso takes stock of the bills of exchange he had honoured for his Lübeck correspondent in Rome and which were then settled in Venice. After the disbursement of six bills of exchange in Rome issued between 30 August and 4 November, and despite a balance of ducati 1,278 16s. 8d. in Venice, the bank in Lübeck still owed its counterpart in Rome more than 2,200 ducats. Added to this were 200 ducats, which had to be paid to Hermann Duker (*Manno Ducher*) within the next few days. He was told to give every single ducat he could lay hands on to Filippo Inghirami in Venice.<sup>1606</sup>

From the several years of very close correspondence between the Spinelli and Rucellai, an unusually large number of written records have been preserved. They clearly show that the difficulties of balancing the accounts between Lübeck and Rome, already known from earlier years, continued. The issue was not easy to solve, as a letter from Tommaso to Lionardo Spinelli on 13 February 1468 suggests. He wrote that Rucellai in Lübeck appeared to have made a mistake in his accounting. He did not have a credit balance of f. 970 as stated, but, on the contrary, a debt of f. 1,700, an astonishingly high imbalance between the accounts in the North and in the South: *che son pure assai al dì oggi*.<sup>1607</sup>

The Spinelli books in Rome list accounts for Rucellai from 1458 to 1472 (Table 13). The last entry probably refers to an older but never concluded deal because the partnership appears to have ended before 1468 when Rucellai withdrew from Lübeck. However, the figures reveal the typical imbalance in the flow of money, as the accounts in which the amounts commissioned in Lübeck were balanced are much larger than those for bills of exchange travelling in the opposite direction. In many years, we have no open bills of exchange from Rome on the day the accounts were balanced.

The Spinelli accounts from Rome reveal that transfers of large sums – such as in the case of the dues collected by Fregeno – were very rare events. Instead, much more often Rucellai issued bills of exchange for small sums intended to cover the costs of living for members of, or visitors to, the Curia or the payment of minor annates. In the opposite direction, we mainly

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1604 AOIF 12742, c. 6 left and right.

1605 YUSA, 89, folder 1689. Transcriptions therein in the appendix in p. 518. It seems very likely that Spinelli used the Florentine calendar here.

1606 Why Maffeo Franco and Niccodemo Spinelli, his other correspondents in Venice, should remain unaware about these payments to Inghirami remains a mystery: *ogni ducato vi trovassi, date a Filippo Inghirami senza dirne chosa nesuna né a Maffio né a Nichodemo*. See Caferro (1996), p. 438. – YUSA 90, 1713, c. 12: In Spinelli's Catasto of that year, Rucellai was among the debtors with a debt of f. 1,233.

1607 YUSA 89, 1689d.

Table 13 Francesco Rucellai's outstanding debts owed to the Spinelli in Rome, 1468–1474

	<b>suo</b>			<b>per noi</b>
	<b>f.</b>	<b>s.</b>	<b>d.</b>	<b>f.</b>
1458, 5 January <sup>i</sup>	1,233	12	3	
1460 <sup>ii</sup>	1,664	7	7	40
1461, 24 August <sup>iii</sup>	2,790	11		96
1461, 28 December <sup>iv</sup>	250	19		
1463, 23 March <sup>v</sup>	1,353	18	2	
1464, 23 March <sup>vi</sup>	422	17		
1464, 30 April <sup>vii</sup>	682			
1465, 24 March <sup>viii</sup>	821	1	8	
1467, 24 March <sup>ix</sup>	303	15		
1468, 31 March <sup>x</sup>	1,248	13	9	
1469, 11 November <sup>xi</sup>	104	14	3	
1469, 24 November <sup>xii</sup>	No entry			
1472, 19 January <sup>xiii</sup>	<i>Perduti</i>	10	8	
1474, 9 August <sup>xiv</sup>	No entry			

i YUSA 90, 1713: Draft for the *portata* of Tommaso Spinelli for the Catasto.

ii YUSA 90, 1722.

iii YUSA 90, 1724.

iv YUSA 90, 1726, p. 8.

v YUSA 90, 1729, p. 9.

vi YUSA 90, 1730, p. 4.

vii YUSA 91, 1730, p. 10.

viii YUSA 91, 1733, p. 7.

ix YUSA 91, 1738, p. 8.

x YUSA 91, 1742, p. 8.

xi YUSA 91, 1744, p. 1.

xii YUSA 91, 1744.

xiii YUSA 91, 1747, p. 6.

xiv YUSA 92, 1753.

have drawn bills of exchange issued as collateral for loans. As early as in the Spinelli balance sheet of 6 January 1458, clerics from Germany, too, are listed among the *debitori*: *Perricus, vicarius tedesco* with f. 44 and *Arigo Offer* with f. 25.<sup>1608</sup> Most of the clients were from Lübeck, Scandinavia or the lands of the Teutonic Order. Mentions of other places of origin (*Arrigho di Giovanni d'Olmo della Magnia; Gisbertto di Brema*)<sup>1609</sup> are quite rare. Rucellai issued bills of exchange not only in Lübeck but also in Venice and Florence when he happened to be there. He personally served a certain Bartholomeus of Poznan in Florence on 9 May 1467 and again in Venice on 7 January 1468.<sup>1610</sup>

Of special interest are Rucellai's thirty bills of exchange, which not only exist as entries in a balance sheet but of which we still hold the original bills and receipts. They are among the more than 500 bills of exchange from the Spinelli bank in Rome which are kept today in the Beinecke Library in New Haven. They were issued between the 25 January 1465 and 31 October 1468; the last one was served in Rome on 19 December 1468. In total something over f. 1,525 were transferred to the Curia through this channel; the largest sum concerns a payment to the bishop of Ösel-Wiek, Jodocus Hogenstein, who was residing in Rome at the time, amounting to f. 558. Two of the *lettere* were only worth something over f. 5, one f. 8. Many of the *datori* were members of Lübeck's political and economic elite.<sup>1611</sup> Rucellai noted as payer the merchant Hermann Sobberhusen, who probably acted as a broker for deals contracted by Florentine businessmen.<sup>1612</sup> Other members of German merchant families (Burchard Trupenicht, Hans Geroldt) received money in Rome. Whether they were there as pilgrims or as merchants can no longer be ascertained.

In the correspondence of the Teutonic Order, Lübeck is mentioned several times as a possible transit point for payments, but without mention of any banker.<sup>1613</sup> Around 1450, Francesco Rucellai, Niccolò Bonsi, and Giovanni Talani would have been potential partners in the city on

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1608 YUSA 90, 1713.

1609 YUSA 91, 1731; 90, 1730.

1610 YUSA 98, 1856 and 1869; 91, 1742, p. 10. – In 1461, the city council of Lübeck elected Godeman van Buren as their moneychanger. At the latest from 1467 on, he kept a ledger noting all deposit, credit, and exchange transactions. This Lübeck bank had no relations whatsoever with the Florentines' international payment system and was therefore in no way a competitor for Rucellai. By 1472, van Buren was in default. His list of creditors bears 98 names. UB Lübeck, X, no. 51 and XI, no. 348; Ebel (1955–1967), I, nos. 149, 653, 679, and 885; Dollinger (1966), pp. 268–271; Sprandel (1975), pp. 46 and 177.

1611 Rolf Hammel-Kiesow (Lübeck) was kind enough to check the list of persons mentioned in these bills of exchange. His finding: the city's political and economic leadership lay in the hands of Hermann Sobberhusen, Hermann Colman, Brandan Hoymann (from Lüneburg), Johannes and Wilhelm Westfal (bishop of Lübeck 150–9); the business elite included men like Heinrich Lange, Karsten Rodewolt, Hans Trupenicht and Johannes Wedegmeier.

1612 In a second marriage, his widow went on to marry the Nuremberg merchant Hans Mulich; note by Rolf Hammel-Kiesow. See Rörig (1931).

1613 Schuchard (1992), pp. 87–88.



the Trave. When Spinelli entered into close collaboration with Rucellai in Lübeck in 1456, the Teutonic Order was no longer a promising customer in their eyes, as its financial resources had diminished even further because of the Thirteen Years' War in Prussia. The bankers who could have organized and conducted the transactions were around, but there was no money to transfer. The last payments from Prussia to the procurator are meticulously documented for the years 1465 and 1467, thanks to the Spinelli archive.<sup>1614</sup> In both cases, the money was given to Francesco di Filippo Rucellai in Lübeck, who then made out a bill of exchange to Lionardo Spinelli e co. di Corte. The *datori*, Hermann Brandis and Ludolf Nagel, were probably clerics from the diocese of Ösel-Wiek or members of the Teutonic Order. The sum amounting to 558 ducats was probably a payment for the running costs of the procurator general, while the smaller one amounting to merely 26 ducats conceivably concerned the transfer of a minor benefice.

The monopoly that the Medici, together with Anton Paumgartner of Nuremberg, controlled regarding the transfer of the funds collected by Marinus de Fregeno in northern Europe was partially disrupted by the collaboration between Spinelli and Rucellai in the early 1460s. At times, these amounts were so large that they could not always be transferred in a non-cash mode by bills of exchange so that they had to be transported through Germany in the form of coins or bullion. In the summer of 1462, one of the wagon trains carrying cash was robbed near Göttingen by men acting on behalf of Duke William of Brunswick and his son Frederick; the nobles wrongly assumed that the caravan was transporting goods from the enemy town of Lüneburg. The incident led to a long-lasting political and legal dispute in the course of which the pope excommunicated the aristocratic robbers.<sup>1615</sup> As late as 6 January 1466, a certain Franciscus (*eyn genant Franciscus*) still had a number of lawsuits pending (*processus unde breve*) against the son of the Duke of Brunswick, Frederick the Younger.<sup>1616</sup> Despite these incidents a total of f. 8,709 reached Rome in several instalments until 1465. The moneys, however, had long since been pawned by the Apostolic Chamber.<sup>1617</sup>

Probably in connection with these disputes, a partner of the bank of Tommaso Spinelli di Corte, Alessandro de' Bardi, travelled to Germany in 1467. Evidence of this visit comes in the shape of a bill of exchange that de' Bardi issued in Halberstadt on 20 September. Deliverer was one Otto of Specke (notarius palatii) and payee Heinrich Gherwen. The 50 cameral florins were served in Rome on 6 November of the same year.

Fregeno was accused time and again of not properly filing his accounts and of arbitrarily extending his catchment area as far as Poland. One of the first acts decreed by Pope Paul II in

<sup>1614</sup> See [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 570–572.

<sup>1615</sup> APS, II, no. 1328. – Krantz (1546), p. 348; Krantz (1574), p. 846; Lange / Unger (1849–1976), p. 1051; Voigt (1968), p. 161.

<sup>1616</sup> UB Lübeck, XI, p. 2, no. 3.

<sup>1617</sup> APS, II, nos. 1301, 1321, 1342, 1348, and 1355. – Voigt (1968), p. 162; Esch (1998), nos. 495–497 and 756; Schuchard (2000b), pp. 81–82; Esch (2007), p. 396.

February 1465 was to send *nuntius* and *cubicularius* Albertus de Gaji of Gniezno to arrest Fregeno and to ensure that the collected funds be handed over to Francesco Rucellai in Lübeck or Hans Müllner in Cracow. The collector received permission to travel to Rome to explain himself, which he apparently did with success: by 1471, he was back in his old function in Scandinavia.<sup>1618</sup>

Francesco Rucellai returned to his home city for good in 1468 and passed on his business to the local merchant Hinrik Grymmolt. Guasparre di Niccodemo Spinelli, now head of his family's business, cancelled his direct relations with the merchants of Lübeck the following year.<sup>1619</sup> Like the Medici a few years before, he began seeking collaboration with businessmen from Nuremberg who had branches in Lübeck and Venice. In mid-fifteenth century, bankers from Upper Germany had reappeared in Lübeck and now, by taking over the businesses of Rucellai and Spinelli, practically dominated the financial transactions between Italy and northern Europe.<sup>1620</sup> Moreover, they also established a bridge between the markets of Scandinavia and eastern central Europe and the exchange markets in the West.<sup>1621</sup>

Guasparre Spinelli's choice fell on a company that had been in the Florentine business before, that is, the Rummels. However, as early as 1472, this decision caused major problems when the Lübeck long-distance merchant Hinrich Drosedow raised charges against the brothers Heinrich III and Wilhelm IV Rummel, claiming that they had not duly executed a whole series of bill of exchange transactions for him. The Lübeck merchant had probably brokered these bills of exchange to customers such as *meister Ludiken Tobinge von Lüneburg*.<sup>1622</sup> The Rummel brothers were forced to acknowledge a debt of 1,074 Rhe. fl. which practically put them out of business. The damage claims also included thirteen bills of exchange which Drosedow had purchased from the Rummel representative in Lübeck, Michel Volkmer, amounting to a total of 722 ducats. Listed as payer were the Spinelli in Rome.<sup>1623</sup>

In addition to the bills of exchange business, Rucellai focused his commercial activities on the trade in expensive silk, as William Caferro has pointed out.<sup>1624</sup> However, we have no documents written by Francesco himself or one of his factors, so we have to rely on notes found in the books of his business partners, who mention considerable turnovers with the merchant in the North. In 1461, the head of the Spinelli silk manufactory, Piero d'Antonio Niccoli, sent

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1618 Møller Jensen (2005), p. 79

1619 However, he maintained a friendship with Francesco Rucellai and made him one of the three godfathers of his son Tommaso in 1472. YUSA 55, 1182, c. 9v.

1620 Nordmann (1937), p. 127.

1621 Stromer (1976b).

1622 Pauli (1872c), p. 140.

1623 Schaper (1981), p. 50. – Nordmann (1933a) provides evidence that the Rummel family carried out financial consignments for the city of Lübeck in 1470. This involved the transfer of large sums of money that Lübeck's syndic Johann Osthusen needed at the imperial courts in Vienna and Prague.

1624 Caferro (1996).

him cloths worth more than f. 314; he was, it seems, the only customer in Germany.<sup>1625</sup> In 1467, he transferred a sum of f. 570 to Florence for the delivery of fabrics.<sup>1626</sup> This collaboration continued in the years that followed and possibly even outlasted Rucellai's presence in northern Germany. In a balance sheet compiled by Niccoli in 1480, Francesco di Filippo Rucellai e co. di Firenze is listed as *debitore* for more than f. 16.<sup>1627</sup>

Certainly, Rucellai traded in many other goods, too, but there is no written evidence to prove this. His partner Hinrik Grymmolt is documented to have been involved in the sale of Prussian fish to Magdeburg. Due to the insufficient quality of his goods, there was a complaint from the Magdeburg city council to the Lübeck authorities.<sup>1628</sup> In 1478, after his partnership with Rucellai had already ended, he sold two loads (thirteen tons each) of virgin honey to Reval.<sup>1629</sup> Such goods were rather untypical for Florentine merchants, since they were restricted to the regional market and not exported to places like Bruges or Venice. Nevertheless, it cannot be ruled out that Rucellai was also involved in the German domestic trade.

Francesco Rucellai never became a Lübeck citizen<sup>1630</sup> and, after his father's death on 29 January 1462, actually began focusing more on his home city of Florence again. In 1464, he married Costanza di Francesco Vettori, who was about sixteen at the time, but who never accompanied him to Lübeck.<sup>1631</sup> In a way, his founding of a family in Florence also signalled his plan to return to Italy definitively. Before departing, he organized his replacement in Lübeck by arranging for his succession in the management of his company. In a letter from Tommaso Spinelli in Rome to his nephew Lionardo in Florence on 13 February 1468, he mentions that Rucellai had been in Florence and that, in the meantime, his representative (*del suo di Lubicche*) had issued bills of exchange in Lübeck.<sup>1632</sup> On 31 October of that year, Francesco was definitely back in Lübeck, for on that day he signed his last bill of exchange on record. In Lübeck he was replaced by his younger brother Girolamo, who had, from 1457 on, received his training with the della Casa in Rome, thanks to a referral by his brother Francesco. In 1459, Girolamo had

1625 YUSA 90, 1725, p. 9.

1626 YUSA 89, 1689. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 518–519.

1627 YUSA 92, 1775, p. 1.

1628 HUB, X, no. 2, 19 January 1471.

1629 HUB, X, no. 704.

1630 A Lübeck source of 1474 refers to him as *Borgers to Florens*. Archiv der Hansestadt Lübeck, *Niederstadtbuch* 1477 vocem *jocunditatis*, f. 146v.

1631 Passerini (1861), p. 57, gives the year of his death as 1462, while Poliziano (1929), p. 56, renders the date as 29 January 1461. Since this date is probably based on the Florentine calendar, the year can be set at 1462.

1632 YUSA, 89, no. 1689 (the letter is dated 1467, but presumably the Florentine calendar was used) here: *A me pare che Francesco Ruciellai abbi 'l torto inteso le partite mi mandi; ma più arebbe el torto se, quando e' mi fe' buoni e 570 fiorini, si trouasse che ttu e pPier Niccoli gli avesse scritto che ti servisse de' danari ch' egli aveva a ddare all' Arte della Seta. Guardate se vo' n' avete lume niuno. E' s' è dato compimento alle lettere che cci sono state presentate del suo di Lubicche, che bbuonamente ci resta a ddare circha di fiorini 1'700 di camera, che son pur assai al di d'oggi, alla nostra possebilità. Tutto si vuole acconciar cho' llui.*

transferred to Lübeck, and, on 19 June 1469, he is mentioned for the first time as the beneficiary of a bill of exchange issued in Rome.<sup>1633</sup> In case of absence, he was replaced by Hinrik Grymmolt, with whom the Rucellai had established a joint trading company by 1471.<sup>1634</sup> It was probably then that the last Florentine merchant left Lübeck.

After his return, Francesco enjoyed great respect and prestige in Florence, as we glean from the fact that in May and June of 1471 he was elected by the Signoria as one of its nine *priori*.<sup>1635</sup> He refrained from removing his assets from the joint family property, as we see from the Catasto for 1480 submitted by his older brother Ubertino jointly for all the sons of Filippo di Vanni. We also learn from this document that Francesco and his wife Costanza never had any children. The only economic activity the brothers engaged in refers to a *bottega d'arte di lana in Sa' Martino, in nome di Francescho di Filippo Rucielai*.<sup>1636</sup>

Francesco died on 21 August 1482, upon which Costanza retired behind the walls of a convent. His brothers completed the construction of the chapel in the church of San Pancrazio – where the famous Giovanni Rucellai also had a chapel installed – which they had begun shortly after their father's death and had consecrated in 1485. It was dedicated to the saints Girolamo and Domenico who were depicted together with the Virgin and Child painted by Filippo Lippi.<sup>1637</sup> It is more than likely that Francesco was also laid to rest there as he, too, is mentioned in the inscription in the chapel: *Filiorum Philippi Vannis de Oricellaris et eorum descendentium. MCCCCLXXXV*. For Francis Kent, the building of this chapel along with the inscription is evidence enough to show that the brothers saw in the unity of the family the foundation of their success and wealth and also wished to remain united in death.<sup>1638</sup>

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1633 ASFi, Catasto 816, c. 149: In the Catasto, Filippo Rucellai merely states that Girolamo was in Rome. The fact that he was working for della Casa becomes evident from YUSA 89, 1696: Tommaso Spinelli wrote to Marco Ricasoli, his manager in Rome, that Francesco Rucellai was coming to Rome. *Credo da voi non si partirà, nonistante uno suo fratello vengha chosti a stare chon chotesti della Chasa*. – AOIF 12742, c. 22 left: *E adì 18 d'agosto [1459] ventidue camera portò questi [Girolamo] per sue spese quando andò a Lubiche per stare con suo fratello*. – YUSA 99, 1889. See below p. 428.

1634 Rolf Hammel-Kiesow was kind enough to go in search of Grymmolt in the archives of the city of Lübeck. He discovered that Grymmolt could be traced back to 1456, when he purchased three houses. In the years to come he went on to buy further properties in the best locations. Nothing else is known about Grymmolt; he probably died in 1492. His son Johannes became Johannes VIII, Bishop of Lübeck in 1510.

1635 Cambi (1785–1786), XX, p. 408.

1636 ASFi, Catasto 1012/II, cc. 364r–368v. – ASFi, Catasto 820, c. 523r: At the latest by 1457, Ubertino Rucellai and Gino di Giuliano Ginori were working in partnership in the cloth trade. In 1487, this *bottega d'arte della lana* of Ubertino Rucellai e co. operated with a working capital of f. 5,000, of which Ginori owned 2/5. The sons of Filippo had become the richest branch of the Rucellai family, especially because the assets of their famous relative, Giovanni, had melted away considerably in the course of the previous ten years. We can no longer determine how big a share Francesco's and Girolamo's activities in Germany contributed to this wealth. Firenze, Archivio Ginori-Lisci, no. 76, c. 241 left. See Dezzi Bardeschi (1966), p. 43.

1637 For this, see Dezzi Bardeschi (1966), pp. 25–26; Doerr Carney (1997).

1638 Kent (1977), pp. 102–103 and 290. – Strocchia (1981), p. 255, suggests that families who were not part of the Medici political network felt compelled to excel in other areas as a means to underline their social status:

## 5.5 Constance

When John XXIII set off from Bologna on 1 October 1414 on his journey to Constance, his entourage is said to have included more than 600 people.<sup>1639</sup> Among them were representatives of the leading banking houses, for these tended to follow their clients everywhere they went as *mercatores romanam curiam sequentes* as the letters of safe conduct issued on 27 September by the Curia for Cosimo di Giovanni de' Medici, Ilarione de' Bardi and Aldighiero di Francesco Biliotti show. In October and November, similar documents were issued for Filippo de' Ricci's representatives.<sup>1640</sup> On 28 October, the pope arrived in Constance with his entourage.<sup>1641</sup>

The Council is said to have been attended by twenty-nine cardinals, thirty-three archbishops, thirty-three patriarchs, more than three hundred bishops and a large number of abbots, theologians, and lawyers.<sup>1642</sup> Like the Apostolic Chamber and the Curia-based bankers, they all expected to be able to conduct their financial business as usual while residing in Constance. On 16 October 1414, a declaration of will was drawn up in which the mayor of Constance and Bailiff Johannes Hagen guaranteed the exercise of secular and ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the members of the Curia and the free exercise of all necessary activities. Above all, the representatives of Constance promised to keep all streets and roads open and safe for the participants at the Council.<sup>1643</sup> De

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“Exclusion from the inner workings of the state through exclusion from the Medici network demanded greater attention to non-political behavior, such as amassing greater wealth, pursuing and patronizing humanist activities, or endowing a parish church. Giovanni Rucellai again comes to mind here; his chapel in S. Pancrazio aimed to affirm the power of his family. Burial display functioned as part of the strategy to breathe life into social reputations that were suffocating through political disfavor.” To what extent this pattern of behaviour also applies to Filippo di Vanni's sons could not be further investigated here.

1639 Partner (1958), pp. 24–26. On 30 October 1413, King Sigismund announced in Lodi that Constance was to be the venue for the Council. One of the many documents sent across entire Christendom on this day is now held in Florence: ASFi, Ricasoli parte antica pergamene, no. 176. – Parts of this chapter dealing with the Florentines at the Council of Constance have already been published in previous works: Weissen (2012); Weissen (2013). – Esch (1972) contains comprehensive information on all the bankers mentioned below. – The activities of the Italian banks at the Council of Basel are treated separately, as this is a special situation due to the existence of two ecclesiastical financial administrations at the same time.

1640 Holmes (1968), p. 373; Brandmüller (1997), I, p. 136, names 27 October as the date of issue and mentions such a *littera passus* also for für Averardo de' Tornaquinci, Niccolò Cambini, and Zocco (he probably means Zocco) de' Ricci. Palermo (2000), p. 370, believes that Francesco Boscoli, too, was in Constance, but without offering any evidence. – The archbishop of Cologne had an outstanding liability of 5,357 ducats towards Aldighiero Biliotti of the Alberti Bank for the servitia payments he owed to the College of Cardinals. The Medici Bank took over the liability as collateral and granted the cardinals *qui disponebant recedere ad concilium* a loan for the outstanding amount; thus, the archbishop now owed the Medici his servitia payments. Finke et al. (1896–1928), II, p. 187; Baumgarten (1907), pp. 196–197.

1641 Finke (1903), p. 12.

1642 Palermo (2000), p. 370. The figures are strongly disputed, as it is impossible to truly list all Council participants. See, for example, the widely differing figures in Riegel (1916).

1643 ASFi, Ricasoli parte antica pergamene, no. 164. This piece of writing is probably a blueprint for a document that no longer exists.

facto, this meant that, for the period of the Council, the strict guild order was suspended, extensive freedom of trade permitted, and all customs duties and levies on foreigners were waived.

The only group to be excluded from these privileges, at least partially, were the moneychangers, as the city on the Lake of Constance levied a tax on all forms of monetary business.<sup>1644</sup> From 6 December 1414 on, the Basel banker Henmann Offenburg consented to pay the city of Constance a levy of 18 Rhe. fl. a month *von des wechself und des pfund zolls*.<sup>1645</sup> On 2 February 1415, the city council reached a similar agreement *mit den frömden wechsellern von wälschen landen* ('with the foreign money-changers from Italy') as far as banking business was concerned (*super cambio [...] et banco habendo*). The three Florentine banks (Spini, Medici, Alberti) were obligated to conduct business faithfully (*dictum bancum honeste prout decet teneat atque regat*), not to bring any unfamiliar coins into circulation, not to manipulate the rates of exchange, and to treat all currencies equally. Eberhard Gothein was probably right when he stated that these provisions were "quite naïve" because they almost certainly made no impression on the hardened Florentine bankers.<sup>1646</sup>

The three banks already operating when the Council opened were joined by the companies of Filippo de' Ricci and Averardo de' Medici in the months to come. These five Florentine banking houses had no competition to fear with regard to monetary transactions with the international clergy although there were many merchants around who were also active in the goods trade and money business. Institutions in Constance such as the Muntprat trading company are recorded as users of bills of exchange and as a drawn bank.<sup>1647</sup> In April 1414, for example, the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order transferred money from Bruges to Constance through a Lombard man (*lumbarden*) which suggests that there existed a connection between a Florentine banker in Flanders and a German businessman in Constance. However, bills of exchange to the Curia were not a service offered by local merchants.<sup>1648</sup> Indeed, the procurator of the Teutonic Order, Peter von Wormditt, explicitly warned against embarking on exchange deals with German merchants, as they were known to operate with too little capital. He went on to say that the Italians always had enough cash at hand to grant a credit, while the Germans, when large sums were involved, always had to assemble a syndicate first.<sup>1649</sup>

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1644 Gothein (1892), p. 484.

1645 Stadtarchiv Konstanz, Ratsprotokoll B I vol. 2 for the years 1414–1419, p. 26.

1646 Stadtarchiv Konstanz, Ratsprotokoll B I vol. 2 for the years 1414–1419, p. 42. – Gothein (1892), pp. 487–488.

1647 Frenken (2008), p. 115.

1648 Luitfried Bettminger and a certain *Churado Scioldino* from Constance, both probably from the Muntprat trading company, were named as beneficiaries of bills of exchange sent by the Orlandini from Bruges to Barcelona in 1400 and 1407. ADP, D, 1145, Bruges-Barcellona, 1400–07–03; ADP, D, 1145, Bruges-Barcellona, 1407–12–03. – Bettminger also features in bills of exchange from Bruges to Venice in 1404. Schulte (1900), pp. 339 and 611. – *Deutschmeister*: OBA 2048.

1649 Koeppen (1960), pp. 271–272: *beczalunge ober eynen buffen ist bey dessen welschen wechsellern gewisser denne bey den dutschen koufftueten; die handeln also ir gelt nicht, das sie es bereit legen haben, s[under si] habens in*

Several Constance businessmen operated as “exchangers in kind”; that is, they focused on exchanging coins of diverse origin.<sup>1650</sup> It is highly likely that some of them were also active in the loan business, as we know for sure that Werner Ehinger was.<sup>1651</sup> The local mercantile class was soon joined by outside businessmen, who moved to Constance in view of the financial opportunities such a large gathering as the Council offered. From Nuremberg we have, for instance, a certain, otherwise unidentifiable, Marcus;<sup>1652</sup> from Basel, Henmann Offenburg<sup>1653</sup> with his representative Peter Gatz; and from Freiburg im Uechtland, a man called Vögelli. These German merchants were not familiar with the practices of the Curia and had no experience in dealing with top echelons of the international clergy.<sup>1654</sup> Elsanne Gilomen sees the Florentines as the bankers of the pope and the Curia and Henmann Offenburg as the financier of the king and his court.<sup>1655</sup>

The Florentine bankers in the entourage of John XXIII did not encounter any fellow countrymen who had travelled from Avignon, as Benedict XIII had already transferred his residence to the castle of Peñíscola in 1411 and did not appear in Constance with his court. Because all the Curia-based banks represented in Constance had their own branch offices or at least correspondent banks in southern France, their presence in Germany was not really required, at least not from a banking point of view. The third pope at the time, Gregory XII, had by then already been largely cut off from the financial flows and was therefore of little to no interest to the bankers. With regard to the number of Curia-based bankers who had travelled to Constance, the contemporary chronicler Ulrich von Richental wrote: *Item es warend och zuo Costentz wechssler, die da allein dem Baupst, den cardinälñ und irem gesind wechsslotend und hinder sy ir guet leitend, von Florentz und andern landen mit iren dienern LXXIII.*<sup>1656</sup> However, this figure seems too high. Assuming that each of these banks employed two to at most five Italians, one ends up with a figure of something around twenty. If you include the domestics, that is, kitchen and household servants along with the messenger boys that accompanied them, then there were probably hardly more than thirty to forty Florentines living in the town. But it was only for about four years that Constance served as a financial exchange centre; as soon

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*koufenschaft.* ‘Payment in lump sum is safer with those Italian money changers than with the German merchants; they do not handle their money in a way that they have it readily available, but they have it invested in commerce.’

1650 Schulte (1900), p. 339.

1651 Miltenberger (1894b), p. 440.

1652 Stromer (1970a), p. 134.

1653 Gilomen-Schenkel (1975), p. 31.

1654 Schulte (1900), p. 338 and II, p. 231.

1655 Gilomen-Schenkel (1975), p. 31.

1656 Richental (1882), p. 182: ‘Also, there were moneychangers in Constance who were exclusively exchanging for the Pope, the cardinals, and their entourage, storing their wealth behind them, with their servants from Florence and other countries numbering 73.’ Lenfant (1730), II, p. 415, speaks of 242 bankers with their employees and 48 moneychangers from Florence.

as the Council was over, all financial transactions from Upper Germany to Italy shifted back to Nuremberg.<sup>1657</sup>

The number of Florentines residing in Constance at the time was increased by the merchants who arrived in the company of King Sigismund.<sup>1658</sup> Ever since the fourteenth century, there had been a small colony of Florentine bankers at the royal Hungarian court; they had settled in Buda and supplied the king and the court with luxury articles. Whenever the king and his leading courtiers went on a journey, they were accompanied by these merchants. Evidently this wealthy and glamorous clientele offered them lucrative business opportunities. In the years that Sigismund not only wore the crown of St Stephan but also that of the Roman king, they accompanied him to Germany on several occasions,<sup>1659</sup> not least to Constance when Sigismund was at the Council. Richental refers to them as *Wechsler on Florentzer, die mit zu dem Hofe gehörten*.<sup>1660</sup> Owing to the fragmentary nature of the sources, we know only little about the type and extent of their business. What seems clear, however, is that during their short stays in Germany they were certainly not involved in the field of payment services but focused on loans and the trade in valuable goods.

Jacopo di Francesco del Bene and Francesco di Giachinotto Boscoli had been *depositari romanae et Apostolice camere* since 1411, a position they held until 30 September 1414. Their mandate was presumably terminated because they were not prepared to go on the long journey to Germany. Pietro Bardella, the head of this office, was never in Constance, otherwise his name would be recorded in the files of the Apostolic Chamber and those of other banks.<sup>1661</sup> The Chamber never had a trustee of its own in Constance; instead, it handled the day-to-day

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1657 Ammann (1949/50); Feger (1964).

1658 Beinhoff (1995); Prajda (2018), p. 75. In the first thirty years of the 15th century, Buda is said to have had at least 12 Florentine trading agencies. See Prajda (2017), p. 38.

1659 See Beinhoff (1995).

1660 Richental (1882), p. 221: ‘Money changers and Florentines, who were part of the court.’ See Friedmann (1912), p. 60. – Altmann (1896–1900), XI, no. 3176ff. published various accounts of the king while he was in Constance. There is no mention of Florentines as lenders. – We also have documents from the imperial diet in Nuremberg in 1431 which mention the temporary presence of Florentines in the city. Note by Lorenz Böninger: ASFi, Notarile Antecosimiano 1876, 8, no. 21. The document was written by Leonardo di Nofri di Baimozi (Giudice de’ Latini) in Nuremberg on 1 February 1431. It is about a conflict over a bale of cloth between Tomaso di Piero Milanesi and Zenobi Panciatichi.

1661 BNCF, Magliabechiano XIX, Codex 81: Account book with the title “Introitus omnium pecuniarum receptarum per reverendum in Christo patrem et dominum A. dei gratia episcopum Senensem sanctissimo domini papae thesaurarium [...] virorem Jacobi del Bene et Francisci Boscholis depositariorum”, which covers the period from 14 March 1413 to 30 September 1414. Probably not aware of this codex, Palermo (2000), p. 361, gives 20 October 1413 as the closing date of this bank. – It is also worth pointing out the account book in ASFi, MAP 87, no. 58, cc. 331v, which probably comes from accounts of Giovanni de’ Medici e co. di Corte and lists the entry of annate payments between 18 January and 28 September 1414; that is, for the same period as in Codex 81. These records show many features that are reminiscent of the depositary’s work. However, it contains no clues that would indicate that the manager of the Medici bank held this position before the start of the Council of Constance. Nor can it be ruled out that more than one depositary was in office at times.



financial business through a more open form of collaboration with the Florentine bankers.<sup>1662</sup> This also extended to the institution of the Council, which lacked autonomy in managing its financial affairs. The only bank mentioned repeatedly in the account book in which Stefano del Buono listed the expenditures of John XXIII under the heading *In Constantia* is that of Giovanni de' Medici.<sup>1663</sup> It assumed many responsibilities in the Council's financial affairs, without, however, officially becoming its trustee, or depositary.

Ilarione de' Bardi accompanied John XXIII when he fled Constance on the night of 20–21 March 1415 in disguise; or at least he followed him later as far as Schaffhausen. There he was paid 174 ducats from the papal coffers on 28 March 1415. At the same time, the escapee told his followers not to travel any farther with him and see to their own safety.<sup>1664</sup> In Constance itself, these days were marred by great uncertainty as to what was to happen next.<sup>1665</sup> Gothein writes that the first thing King Sigismund did the next morning was to ride to see the Florentine bankers: 'For the first time Germany witnessed a spectacle that revealed that the thoroughly organized power of large monetary capital was indispensable to the unity of Christendom, and that therefore even the great were prepared to honour this branch of business more than any other profession.'<sup>1666</sup> Heinrich Finke doubted this kind of appreciation, stating that 'this can hardly be inferred from Richental's account!'<sup>1667</sup> But there is no doubt that Gothein had read the chronicle correctly:

*Und früe mornends, als der tag uff kam, an sant Benedikten tag, do nam unßer herr der künig, hertzog Ludwigen von Haidelberg zü im und rait durch die statt ze Costentz mit sinen prusunern zü allen wechßlern, sy wären Ytaliçi, oder ander [...]. Des wurdent die Wechsler, [...] vast fro und*

1662 With regard to the financial dealings of Pope John XXIII during the duration of the Council, we have two account books in which Stefano di Geri del Buono *litterarum apostolicarum scriptor registrator et conciliarius camere apostolice et cubicularius* and bishop of Volterra recorded the pope's income and expenditures during this period. Prato, Biblioteca Roncioniano, Manoscritti Roncioniani, no. 335 (05.07.1413 – 30.04.1415) and no. 336 (1413–1418). See Guasti (1884); Fink (1971–1972), p. 627.

1663 Prato, Biblioteca Roncioniano, Manoscritti Roncioniani, no. 335, cc. 62v–66v. First mention of *Johannes de Medicis et sotii* on 22 November 1414; last mention of *Iylariono de Bardis* on 28 March 1415 when John XXIII had already fled to Schaffhausen (c. 66r).

1664 Prato, Biblioteca Roncioniano, Manoscritti Roncioniani, no. 335, c. 66r.

1665 Koeppen (1960), p. 234, 13 April 1415 (Constance): The Council was confirmed in Constance despite the fact that the Pope had fled. In the notes to this letter, Koeppen lists many references bearing witness to the pessimistic mood in Constance after the pope's flight.

1666 Gothein (1892), p. 487: "Zum erstenmale erlebte Deutschland das Schauspiel, dass die wohl organisierte Macht des großen Geldkapitals der vereinigten Christenheit unentbehrlich sei, und deshalb auch von den Großen höherer Ehren als andere Berufe des Erwerbslebens gewürdigt werde".

1667 Finke (1903), p. 31: "Das dürfte kaum aus der Richentialschen Schilderung zu entnehmen sein!"

*loptend unßern herrn künig Sigmunden umb söllichs gar vast und sprachend: Wer es in iren landen beschehen, so wärint sy umb ir hab komen. Und also do schlussend sy ir laden wider uff, dann sy hattend vor beschlossen.*<sup>1668</sup>

The reason for the king's hurried visit to the Florentine bankers is addressed by the Order's procurator, Peter von Wormditt, in a letter to the Grand Master. It says that, after the flight of John XXIII, the Florentine bankers had removed all their cash and books from the town and taken them to a place of safety. They remembered what had happened barely two years earlier when King Ladislaus of Naples had invaded and plundered Rome in 1413 and they had lost all their money and books.<sup>1669</sup> However, it would have been impossible to keep the Council in session without a functioning payment and credit system, which is why reassuring the money changers had top priority for Sigismund.

After his arrest, the Council confronted John XXIII with a long list of wrongdoings without granting him a comprehensive right of defence. He was above all criticized for his excessive lifestyle, his greed for money, and the simony this engendered.<sup>1670</sup> Peter von Wormditt summed up the accusations succinctly by claiming that he would have even sold God if there had been any interested buyers (*Et vendidisset deum, si quis voluisset emisse*).<sup>1671</sup> Dietrich of Niem captured the mood against the pope, albeit quite polemically, when he described him as a usurer and Simonist<sup>1672</sup> who had made many deals with banks and who, in fact, had enriched himself just like a banker and had granted actual bankers ecclesiastical rights which they, as laymen, would never have been entitled to.<sup>1673</sup> As a result of their collaboration with the pope, the bankers, too, found themselves in the dock, at least indirectly. A pamphlet dated 8 March 1415 even claimed that the papal letters of appointment were no longer drafted by

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1668 Richental (1882), p. 63: 'And early in the morning, as day broke on Saint Benedict's day, our lord the king took Duke Louis of Heidelberg with him and rode through the city of Constance with his pipers to all the money changers, whether they were Italians or others [...]. The money changers were very happy about this, [...] praised our lord King Sigismund greatly for such actions, saying: had it happened in their lands, they would have lost their possessions. And thus, they reopened their shops, for they had previously been closed.'

1669 Koeppen (1960), p. 268.

1670 On the proceedings that led to the pope's deposition, see Holmes (1968), pp. 262–263; Esch (1971–1972).

1671 Wormditt had critically commented on the pope's financial business as early as June 1414: *und doch die loufe des hofes deßer czit in aller werlt offenbar sint, das deßer bobst kein bischtum noch keyn behalden leben vorgibt, das gelt sey denne vor bezalt*. Quoted after Marschall (1964), p. 297. – For a synopsis of the main charges, see Koeppen (1960), pp. 241–243.

1672 Niem (1697–1742), p. 344.

1673 Many theological issues were discussed at the Council of Constance which were, either directly or indirectly, of great importance to the Florentine bankers. However, there is no evidence to suggest that they ever tried to influence deliberations concerning the practice of usury or the annate payments. Bauer (1965), p. 83; Gilomen (1990).

the Apostolic Chancellery but sent by the bankers instead.<sup>1674</sup> An additional charge, this time aimed directly at the Florentine bankers, stated that they charged the clerics to whom they granted loans for the payment of cameral debts an interest rate of 100 per cent.<sup>1675</sup> One of the men mentioned specifically in the extensive documents is Adovardo Tornaquinci of the Ricci bank for his involvement in a financial transaction with the Order of St John.<sup>1676</sup> According to witnesses, Giovanni de' Medici spent 10,000 ducats in 1402 to secure a cardinal's hat for Baldassare Cossa.<sup>1677</sup> John XXIII was deposed on 29 May 1415, Benedict XIII on 26 July 1417; Gregory XII had abdicated on 4 July 1415.

Despite the critical voices heard during the deliberations concerning the role of the Florentine bankers, no evidence of any ill will towards them is to be found in the sources. There was never any attempt to sue them for supporting Baldassare Cossa's financial (mis)management, to demand compensation, or to invite other bankers to come to Constance. On the contrary, the Cardinal's College even had the generosity, barely a month after Cossa's dismissal, to reimburse Ilarione de' Bardi for f. 71, which he had spent on sending an envoy to Cologne in order to remind the archbishop of his outstanding servitia payments.<sup>1678</sup>

The question whether the arduous journey across the Alps and the long stay in Constance proved profitable for the Florentine bankers must be answered from two different angles. First of all, a Curia-based bank had no other choice but to follow the papal court to the Council, otherwise they risked losing customers as well as their share in the market. Seen from this perspective, the return on these four years would only reveal itself, and then only to a certain extent, after their homecoming to Italy and would not be measurable in florins. For this reason, the financial profit resulting from the transactions made on Lake Constance would have to be put into relation with the development of the financial market which is impossible on the basis of the existing sources. Given that, by 1420, the Medici's and Alberti's market position was even stronger than before the Council opened, this was to a large extent due to the bankruptcy of the Ricci in 1414 and the demise of the Spini six years later. However, the downfall of these two powerful companies was not an immediate result of their business dealings in Constance. The contexts are far too complex and can no longer be reconstructed, so it makes more sense to rely on the tangible figures we have concerning the moneychangers' turnovers and profits in Constance.

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1674 Mansi (1759–1927), XXVIII, Sp. 913–914: *Bulle non expediebantur in cancellaria apostolica, sed in barreo nummulariorum seu usurariorum et mercatorum, maxime Florentinorum.*

1675 Mansi (1759–1927), XXVIII, Sp. 107: *Tum, quia promotus in Curia propter tales angarias cogitur esse passive usurarius, et intra re manus mercatorum, qui pro quingentis mutuatis volunt habere et recuperare mille cum suo interesse.*

1676 Mansi (1759–1927), XXVII, Sp. 664. See also Finke et al. (1896–1928), IV, pp. 854 and 872.

1677 Finke et al. (1896–1928), IV, p. 851; Holmes (1968), p. 363.

1678 Baumgarten (1898), p. 198.

The levy imposed on the moneychangers by the Constance city council was subject to strong fluctuations; this suggests a connection between the amount demanded and the profits made. During the first three months, the Spini, Medici, and Alberti each paid 6  $\frac{2}{3}$  Rhe. fl.; from March 1415 on, each company was charged 10 Rhe. fl. per month.<sup>1679</sup> After a few months, individual rates were agreed upon. From 8 June 1415 on, the Alberti and Spini were asked to pay 6 Rhe. fl. per month, but Giovanni de' Medici paid one florin less.<sup>1680</sup> It remains unclear on what basis the levy was raised and whether the Roman Curia had a say in the matter.<sup>1681</sup> However, there appear to have been disagreements with the moneychangers, because in December 1416 the city council appointed four men to have a word with them.<sup>1682</sup> On 1 August 1417, new levies were agreed upon. From then on, Spini, Alberti, and the two Medici banks had to pay only 4 Rhe. fl. and 13 blaffert.<sup>1683</sup> The case of Henmann Offenburg reveals a similar picture: In December 1414, the levy was still at 18 Rhe. fl. (including pound duty); by November 1416, this had dropped to six Rhe. fl.<sup>1684</sup> and, in March 1417, to five.<sup>1685</sup> In the last entry to the city council records, it says about Offenburg's business success: *er maint daz [er] nit vil gewinnen häbe*.<sup>1686</sup> The levies collected by the city reflect the good economic situation until the flight and deposition of John XXIII and the subsequent decline during the pope-less period. This decline was probably due more to a shortfall in Curial funds than to a drop in the number of participants at the Council. One of the results of this was that, during the pope-less period, the Apostolic Chamber had hardly any income, as the chancellor's deputy noted in a report on 17 March 1417.<sup>1687</sup> In actual fact, the coffers were so empty that the Curia had to take out a loan of 1,000 ducats from the Spini bank to cover the costs of Martin V's coronation. The

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1679 Stadtarchiv Konstanz, Ratsprotokoll B I vol. 2 for the years 1414–1419, p. 28. – Ruppert (1891), pp. 386–387. – Feger (1964), p. 322 speaks of a “special tax”.

1680 Stadtarchiv Konstanz, Ratsprotokoll B I vol. 2 for the years 1414–1419, p. 42. – Schulte (1900), p. 230.

1681 Gilomen-Schenkel (1975), pp. 30–31 suspects a connection between turnover and levy. However, it is difficult to imagine how the Constance authorities would have been able to control this. A simpler parameter would have been the number of staff in a bank. On this, see Frenken (2008), p. 137.

1682 Stadtarchiv Konstanz, Ratsprotokoll B I vol. 2 for the years 1414–1419, p. 93: *Luitfried Munprat, Bumaister, Seckler, Stattschriber mit den wechslern ze redent von des wechslers wegen*.

1683 Schulte (1900), p. 230.

1684 Stadtarchiv Konstanz, Ratsprotokoll B I vol. 2 for the years 1414–1419, p. 69.

1685 Stadtarchiv Konstanz, Ratsprotokoll B I vol. 2 for the years 1414–1419, p. 109.

1686 Stadtarchiv Konstanz, Ratsprotokoll B I vol. 2 for the years 1414–1419, p. 109: ‘He says that he would not make much profit.’

1687 Finke et al. (1896–1928), II, pp. 766–768: *Item est verum, quod de Francia non veniunt recepte camere, ut scitis. De Dalphinatu nichil reoepi, de comitatu Sabaudie nichil preter ducentos florenos, quos habuerunt illi mercatores, qui habent dicta pignora. De partibus inferioribus nichil, de Anglia nichil, de Italia nichil, de Portugalia nichil preter LXXX florenos, de quibus concordavit unus Portugalesis, de Scotia nichil, de Alamannia sunt habite aliquae pecunie a collectoribus et subcollectoribus, que non sufficiunt de multo ad onera, supradicta dictorumque pignorum recuperacionem*.

Constance merchant Werner Ehinger also lent money against pledges which had to be redeemed by the same Florentine company.<sup>1688</sup>

The only earning figures of a Florentine bank dating to the Council years are to be found in the *libro segreto* of Giovanni d'Averardo de' Medici, who recorded the profit he made from his participation in a Curia-based bank. In 1415, he made a profit of f. 5,910; this dropped to f. 2,850 in 1416<sup>1689</sup> and rose again to f. 3,100 in 1417; from 1418 to 1420 he made a total profit of f. 5,978.<sup>1690</sup> These figures, too, show that the first year was by far the most profitable one while, in the subsequent years, profits sank but even then remained at a very high level.

Since none of the bankers expected to be in the Rhine area for any length of time, they didn't buy houses but rented rooms for living as well as for doing business. Bartoli, Biliotti, and Bardi lived very close to each other near St Stephen, the main parish church. It was the religious centre of the town's aristocracy, and the Council held many meetings and religious celebrations there.<sup>1691</sup> When choosing an accommodation, the bankers were not so much interested in living in close proximity to their fellow countrymen – their main interest was in being in the right location for business. They rented rooms from rich Constance citizens. Aldighiero di Francesco Biliotti rented from Hans Stokgrumel, who, during the years in question, is mentioned several times as a member of the city council in its minutes.<sup>1692</sup> The premises he rented were near today's Wessenbergstrasse.<sup>1693</sup> The staff of the Medici bank all lived in the house "Zur Tanne".<sup>1694</sup>

From Carlo Bartoli's expense book, we know quite a bit about the everyday life of this banker and his employees. He paid a rent of eight Rhe. fl. a month to a certain Klara, the widow of the goldsmith Heinrich, for four rooms in the house "Zum Tiergarten".<sup>1695</sup> While the branch manager and a cook had separate rooms, the four servants shared one room. The fourth room was occupied by a ser Guasparre, probably a participant at the Council.<sup>1696</sup> The inventory only lists a few pieces of furniture; the pillows and the bedsheets were described as *non buone* and *tutte triste*. The business premises were initially rented from *Borchardo Chilicher di Gho stanza* (Burkhard Kilcher), who received a total amount of rent of 21 Rhe. fl. for the

1688 Miltenberger (1894b), pp. 393, 401, and 440.

1689 Medici (1400–1420), 97.

1690 Medici (1400–1420), 106.

1691 Maurer (1989), p. 18.

1692 Schulte (1900), p. 231: *Aldigerus, der Wechsler in Stokgrumels hus.* – Stadtarchiv Konstanz, Ratsprotokoll B I vol. 2 for the years 1414–1419, pp. 44, 61, 68, and others.

1693 Schulte (1900), p. 1.

1694 Schulte (1900), p. 338, mentions the "Haus der thonne", which he located close to the leprosarium beyond the town centre.

1695 ASFi, Bartoli 22, cc. 71r, 72v, 77v, and 96r. See Vischer (1955).

1696 ASFi, Bartoli 22, appendix: the two Germans were named as *Chonzo da Cholongnia* and *Ditimaro*; the Italians were Francesco Corsini and Filippo di Deگو. The cook was called Mattia. - ASFi, Bartoli 22, cc. 91r and 92v: The three Germans received a monthly salary of 1 Rhenish florin plus clothing; at Christmas they received a small present, *per mancia*.

period of 1 March to 24 June 1416. The next entry for premises dates from 15 February 1417 and amounts to 30 Rhe. fl., which were paid to a certain *Janni Stochofer* (Johannes Stockhofer?).<sup>1697</sup> Regarding other expenses, the high costs for messengers are striking.<sup>1698</sup> The main provider of victuals was the company of a fellow countryman, Lodovico da Orto e Polo di Monte e co., where they were able to purchase on credit.<sup>1699</sup> The items purchased included medicines, spices, candles, sugar, paper as well as Italian wine and oil which were transported from Geneva to Constance.<sup>1700</sup> Glass bottles and cloths were purchased from other Italians.<sup>1701</sup> It appears that local wine was also highly appreciated; it was bought from *Janni Chepes* in Lindau, *Berlich Sterser da Stein* and *Madonna Chiara Rinvort*. The two Basel merchants *Scriber* and *Mattia* sold them wine from the Alsace.<sup>1702</sup> Other foodstuffs were not settled via the bank and had to be purchased individually. German merchants also provided cloths and other fabrics.<sup>1703</sup> Two entries refer to the purchase of horses, one of which was bought from the archbishop of Esztergom.<sup>1704</sup> From his own funds, Bartoli also purchased a copy of Dante's *Divine Comedy* from Maestro Giovanni da Norcia for 3 Rhe. fl.<sup>1705</sup>

Insight into the social life of the Florentine community is given by the Italian scholar Poggio Bracciolini, who served as *scriptor apostolicus* at the time. In Bracciolini's anecdote, Carlo Bartoli appears in a rather unfavourable light. He is said to have left Constance for three months in order to do business in Avignon. On his return to Lake Constance, he claimed that all Florentines went mad there within six months, upon which Aldighiero di Francesco Biliotti (*homo perfacetus*) commented that Carlo had achieved this in half the time.<sup>1706</sup> Evidence of Bartoli's socializing can also be found in his account books, which feature expenses for meals for passing merchants, scholars, and poets. One of the men he entertained in Constance was the legal scholar Giovanni di Gherardo da Prato.<sup>1707</sup>

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1697 Finke (1903), p. 21: "For a double bed with bedding, clean linen every fortnight, they initially paid 2 guilders per month. Later, the price dropped by a quarter, then by half. Soon it was even cheaper than in normal times."

1698 ASFi, Bartoli 22, cc. 79v, 76r, and 80v.

1699 ASFi, Bartoli 22, c. 85v.

1700 ASFi, Bartoli 22, 2 March 1417.

1701 ASFi, Bartoli 22, c. 84r: Two glass bottles from Bartolomeo Monaldi; c. 86r: cloth from Giovanni Rossi e co. di Firenze.

1702 ASFi, Bartoli 22, cc. 77r, 80r, 84v, 91rv, and 96v. On the wine trade and consumption during the Council in Constance, see Frenken (2008), p. 126.

1703 ASFi, Bartoli 22, c. 77r: The fabric for a horsecloth and various colourful [coloured ??] cloths for Carlo di Gieri were purchased at *Marcho Mestelin ritagliatore*. ASFi, Bartoli 22, c. 85v: purchase of cloth from *Vuciere di Gho stanza*.

1704 ASFi, Bartoli 22, c. 98v.

1705 ASFi, Bartoli 22, c. 93r.

1706 Holmes (1968), p. 374.

1707 ASFi, Bartoli 22, c. 86v, 24 October 1416. Lorenz Böninger and Elisabetta Guerrieri were kind enough to identify this guest. They came to the conclusion that it was not the famous jurist, writer, and humanist but some other lawyer of the same name.

The only occasion on which all Florentines residing in Constance made a joint appearance as a nation and were acknowledged as such involved the celebrations in honour of San Giovanni Battista, the patron saint of Florence. The chronicler Ulrich von Richental offers a detailed description of this event. Moreover, the illustrators of the two surviving manuscripts reporting on the celebrations deemed the event worthy of portraying.<sup>1708</sup> Bartoli also lists the amount he was asked to contribute to the feast in 1416: eight Rhe. fl. which he had to pay into a joint till; in addition, he spent 8s. 10d. on candles.<sup>1709</sup>

## 5.6 Basel

### 5.6.1 Council banks

Deciding to stage a major church Council in Basel forced the Curia-based banks to make a number of difficult decisions. They had already learnt to master many of the challenges of doing business in a German city with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants during the Council of Constance. What made the situation in Basel rather complicated was that Eugene IV and the members of the Apostolic Chamber did not make the journey across the Alps and that, for a considerable period of time, it was not clear whether the assembly would be able to get down to work in the first place.<sup>1710</sup>

The Council opened on 29 July 1431 but met with opposition from the pope from the start; he did not accept its legality until 15 December 1433, that is, more than two years later. In view of these uncertainties and the problem of having to organize the Curial flow of money along two channels in two locations, the Italian bankers showed little interest in offering their services in Basel. However, Heinrich Halbisen or Henmann Offenburg, two Basel merchants and financiers of considerable standing in European terms, were not in a position to replace the Florentine system of payment.<sup>1711</sup> Given this impasse, the participants at the Council began to coax leading Italian trading and financial companies to open up a branch office in Basel.

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1708 Richental (1882), pp. 93–94. For more on this event, see Gothein (1892), p. 488; Beyerle (1904), pp. 20–21; Wacker (2002), pp. 163–164.

1709 ASFi, Bartoli 22, c. 75r.

1710 An anonymous Florentine chronicler in the 15th century commented on this: *Papa Martino sempre differì di andare al Concilio di Basilea, perché secondo per gli antichi si dice mai non ci andò Papa che non ritornassi Cardinale come intervenne ultimamente à Papa Gio: che andò al Concilio di Constanza et poi fu fatto Papa Martino e Papa Eugenio, quale successe à Martino, quale Eugenio se bene non andò fu privato nel Concilio di Basilea e fatto Amadio Duca di Savoia, poi fattosi eremita chiamato Papa Felice, [...]*. ASFi, Manoscritti, no. 755, c. 211r.

1711 Schulte (1900), pp. 388–389 and II, p. 231. Basel's standing in the international trade system is described comprehensively by Ehrensperger (1972).

Thus, for instance, Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini, in his capacity as chairman of the Council, encouraged the Medici bank to send a representative to Basel.<sup>1712</sup>

However, the bankers laid down certain conditions. For one thing, they demanded from the Council that they, just like all the other participants, should come under the special protection of the Council, not least because the expected, extensive movements of valuables demanded increased security. In the writ of escort issued to the members of the Council, King Sigismund had decreed that they would not be subject to the jurisdiction of the city Basel but to the bodies of the Council instead.<sup>1713</sup> However, initially this ruling pertained only to the effective members of the Council, not to the merchants who travelled to Basel during the Council for business reasons. The church elders negotiated this issue between 16 and 27 February 1433,<sup>1714</sup> finally coming up with the wording to be found in the letter of safe conduct of 22 March for Giovanni d'Amerigo Benci. The assurance that he was free to export as much gold, silver, and coins as he liked without hindrance from Basel was certainly of particular importance to him: *etiam si in auro et argento consistant vel in moneta, ad quascumque partes mundi voluerit et voluerint portandi et exportandi quotiens et totiens placuerit*. Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini placed the bankers under his personal protection: *volumus immunitatibus et privilegiis gaudere quibus nostra familia*. The Medici took this wording quite literally, as their instructions to Bernardo Portinari indicate when they tell him to pose as one of the cardinal's servants on his journey along the Rhine to Bruges.<sup>1715</sup> Finally, Benci was also expressly guaranteed that he and his employee would be free to move as they liked.<sup>1716</sup> The documents addressed to other bankers of the Council, which have not survived, probably sounded quite similar.

When the Council of Basel opened, a series of sanctions directed against the Florentines was still in force in the German empire, hindering them in their activities despite the promise of safe conduct. In addition to the still effective threat of the confiscation of goods from the year 1418,<sup>1717</sup> the king approved of further reprisals against Florentine businessmen in 1431, the

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1712 ASFi, Diplomatico, Medici, 1433 marzo 22: *Cum spectabilis vir Iohannes Americi Benci, civis et campsor florentinus, ad nostram instantiam personaliter cum suis sociis rebus et bonis, invenibus et servitoribus ad civitatem Basiliensem et Concilium ibidem existens se transtulerit [...]*.

1713 Wurstisen (1883), pp. 270–271. Compare this with the negotiations of the Diet of Princes and Cities in Basel on 27 July 1432: Kerler et al. (1878–1906), X, pp. 932–939.

1714 Haller (1897), 350, 1433 February 16: *Quia sunt nonnulli mercatores campsores, volentes venire ad concilium, petentes litteras securitatis, placuit quod domini deputati pro gravaminibus provideant*. – Haller (1897), p. 350, 1433 February 21: *Quo ad salvumconductum dandum mercatoribus venientibus ad consilium fuerunt deputati ad videndum de forma et modo dandi huiusmodi salvoconductus, videlicet episcopus Bellicensis, prepositus S. Florini de Confluentia et precentor*. – Haller (1897), p. 358, 1433, February 27: *Deputet quelibet deputacio duos ad videndum materiam mercatorum ad concilium venire volendum [?] pro salvaconductibus eis dandis*.

1715 See below p. 393.

1716 ASFi, Diplomatico, Medici, 1433 marzo 22.

1717 See above p. 58.



background of which Aloys Schulte sees in the economic war against Venice.<sup>1718</sup> On 1 July 1432, King Sigismund exempted the Alberti family from all punitive measures; the reason given for this was that, at the time the repressive measures had been put into force, the Alberti family had been banned from Florence.<sup>1719</sup> As late as 1 November 1432, he did, however, expressly confirm that the repressive commercial measures against the other Florentine bankers were still in force.<sup>1720</sup> It was only on 5 August 1435 that the king declared that the Medici, too, should no longer be accosted.<sup>1721</sup>

Apart from enjoying safe conduct on their journey to Basel, the bankers wished to be exempt from the shackles of the city's strict guild rules, business and tax laws, and jurisdiction. Nobody was planning to establish bank branches on a permanent basis, all they were asking for was to be granted certain privileges as long as the Council was in session. Thus, it probably didn't need much persuasion on the part of the Council's chairman to be granted substantial privileges from the members of the Basel city council. However, the city was not prepared to go as far as totally waiving the existing trade regulations for the entire period of the Council, but at least it was prepared to grant a few select companies a set of clearly defined concessions, at the urging of the Council's leadership. On 7/8 April 1433, following negotiations with the archbishop of Milan, six named persons were exempted from the city's goods tax (*Pfundzoll dem heiligen Concilio zen Eren*; all the others had to go on paying the duty. Apart from two apothecaries, a cloth merchant, and a fur merchant, the group also included two moneychangers (*campores*): *Guilielmi de Guarentis, depositarius concilii und Johannes Bencii Aymerici*.<sup>1722</sup> This means that the beneficiaries were the head of the Basel branch of the Siene-Veronese bank Benzi & Guarienti<sup>1723</sup> and the director of the Medici branch in Geneva, who, at the time, was residing in Basel for the purpose of setting up a countinghouse (accountant's office). The six beneficiaries had to solemnly swear that they would restrict themselves to their actual trade and not do business for others on a commission basis. In case of any legal dispute, the Council's

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1718 Schulte (1900), pp. 519–520. Strangely enough, Heimpel's (1930) detailed study of this trade embargo does not mention Florence at all. See Altmann (1896–1900), no. 9304.

1719 Altmann (1896–1900), no. 9193; Beinhoff (1995), p. 177.

1720 Altmann (1896–1900), no. 9304.

1721 ASFi, Diplomatico, Medici, 1435 agosto 5; Altmann (1896–1900), no. 11149; Beinhoff (1995), pp. 35 and 177.

1722 StaBS, Politisches C2, Concil von Basel, fol. 31v, Instructions to a town servant of 8 April 1433: *Lieber Johannes: miner heren meynung ist, dz du den sechs personen – uff jene site geschriben – sagest, sii mögent ire laden ufftruon und veilhaben. Und nim nizemal kennen phundzoll von inen. Sag inen ouch dabii, dz sii sich keines andern koufmansguot der bie siie oder harkomet underziehent. Nach den andern allen schick und nim dem phundzoll und gib kein zil mee.* The other beneficiaries were obviously selected according to their origin: Conradus Magliochus de Vignona (Apothecarius), Johannes Servionis de Gebennis (Apothecarius), Bartholomeus Famucii de Luca, *mercator pannorum*, and Guilielmus Frement de Parisuis, *pelliparius*. Further demands made by the Council to the city council concerned rental payments and trade.

1723 For more on this bank, see below p. 364.

secular protector was to hear the case instead of a municipal court.<sup>1724</sup> In addition, the foreign merchants were exempt from paying municipal taxes.<sup>1725</sup>

After having clarified the legal framework and granting the privileges, several banking houses opened branch offices in Basel. The extremely good source material on the history of these merchants provides the certainty that this step involved four Italian companies:

- Medici
- Alberti-Gianfigliuzzi, da Uzzano
- Borromei
- Guarienti-Benzi, Sagramoso, Lamberteschi

At the height of the Council in the years from 1434 to 1436, there were probably rarely more than fifteen Florentine merchants conducting trade or financial transactions in Basel at the same time. Even though Basel occasionally might have had as many Florentine businessmen working in the city as in Bruges, all the other Italian merchants stayed away from the city, with few exceptions.<sup>1726</sup> This shows that Basel might have become an important temporary centre of exchange, but it was never a real banking centre. The situation in Basel also reflects the dominance of the Florentine bankers around the Curia. Council banks, on the other hand, should first and foremost be viewed as counterparts to the banks that followed the papal court wherever it went. They were never geared to the local conditions, instead they operated like Italian financial enclaves north of the Alps.<sup>1727</sup>

Apart from exchange transactions that the Italians conducted for members of the Council, we also have to consider the local and regional, inner-German financial market that existed in parallel. The fact that we have two structures next to one another clearly indicates that local bankers were not involved in financial transactions pertaining to the Council. Basel bankers never lent large sums of money to the Council, though they were more generous towards Germans who attended the synod as visitors. Thus, for instance, in 1434, Emperor Sigismund received a loan of 5,150 Rhe. fl. from Henman Haner, Hans Bischof, Eberhart von Hiltalingen, and Peter Hans Wentikon. Heinrich Wiss lent the envoys from Cologne f. 250 so that they could repay an Italian the f. 200 they owed him. Wernlin Freidigman granted a further loan of f. 400 to the emissaries from Cologne.<sup>1728</sup>

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1724 StaBS, Rufbuch, I. 95. – Harms (1907), pp. 114–116; Weber (1947), p. 12. – In the end, the Council itself settled any conflicts between Council participants and the bankers. For instance, on 10 July 1436, it ordered the Medici, under threat of excommunication, to accept Heinrich Trugeleyb as procurator for a certain Johannes Brun and to pay him 50 guilders from a bill of exchange. ASFi, MAP 148, no. 25.

1725 Geering (1886), pp. 279–280.

1726 While combing through the Basel court files in search of men from Florence, Ehrensperger (1972) came across many other Italian laypeople who stayed in Basel during the time of the Council.

1727 On the Florentine colony in Rome, see Esch (1972); Bullard (1976).

1728 Kuske (1917–1934), I, p. 301, no. 869. – Ehrensperger (1972), p. 345.

As tensions between the pope and the supporters of Conciliarism gathered in Basel grew, the Florentine banks gradually began retreating from the city. On 10 March 1438, the head of the Medici branch wrote to Cosimo, informing him that the last Borromei employee had left Basel and that he had heard that “those from Verona” were about to do the same. He went on to say that the people of the da Uzzano Bank would probably not hold out much longer.<sup>1729</sup> When, towards the end of 1442, Felix V – the pope elected by the Council – left Basel and moved to Lausanne, the Florentine bankers had barely any clients left in the city. On 16 May 1443, the Council met for their last solemn assembly.<sup>1730</sup> Cosimo kept his branch open until the summer of 1444; Dego degli Alberti closed his exchange office in the house “Zum Schlüssel” in 1447 and moved to Geneva.<sup>1731</sup> Only the Guarienti-Lamberteschi-Sagramoso bank continued until the Council officially ended in 1448.<sup>1732</sup>

According to Caferro, Spinelli’s clients were mostly supporters of the pope. He mentions the archbishop of Taranto, Giovanni Berardi, who headed the delegation sent by the pope to Basel in December 1433 and, there, argued the pope’s point of view so aggressively that Enea Silvio Piccolomini described him as *intrepido e audace*.<sup>1733</sup> Next, he mentions the bishop of Padua, Piero Donato, whom he reckons to be a member of Berardi’s entourage. Finally, he also lists Piero da Monte, Eugene IV’s prothonotary in Basel, who later became the pope’s envoy in England, as well as the bishop of Portugal, Antonio Martins de Chaves, who was later appointed cardinal by the pope. Caferro considers this composition of the clientele to be the reason why Tommaso Spinelli’s bank in Basel experienced difficulties.<sup>1734</sup> In other words, he believes that the clients were split between the four major Council banks in Basel (that is, Medici, Alberti, Borromei, Guarienti) along political lines. If this hypothesis were true, it means that the opponents of the pope would not show up in the Borromei balance sheets (*tucta la nazione di Francia e gran parte de’ tedeschi e così quelli del duca di Milano*).<sup>1735</sup> Indeed, French names are rarely to be found in these balance sheets, although individuals such as the steward of the archbishop of Lyons do occasionally pop up.<sup>1736</sup> They also include a small number of German and Milanese prelates; at

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1729 ASFi, MAP 11, no. 618: *Questo de’ Bonromei in tutto s’è levato di qui, e quello giovane ci era rimaso per loro, sarà aporatore di questa*. – On 8 May 1438, Alessandro Borromei, the manager of Antonio Borromei’s company in Bruges, visited the Council in Basel, as attested by his signature as a witness to a power of attorney of Vieri de’ Medici for Bernardo Portinari. It is probably safe to say that he was merely travelling through Basel at the time.

1730 Freudenberger (1988), p. 92.

1731 See below p. 334.

1732 ASFi, Diplomatico, Medici, 1443 luglio 12: Cosimo de’ Medici appointed Giuliano Baratti as his procurator in Basel.

1733 Piccolomini (Pius II) (1912).

1734 Caferro (1995), pp. 726–727.

1735 ASFi, MAP 20, no. 55.

1736 YUSA 90, 1703: *mastro Giovanni Liberalis, maestro di casa l’arciveschovo di Lione*. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 528–532.

least the archbishop of Milan is reckoned to Borromei's clients. On the other hand, a significant number of Spaniards are listed as debtors and creditors in these lists. The Medici's balance sheet of 1442 also tells us something about this bank's client base. It lists no Frenchmen or Milanese but does contain the names of a few Germans.<sup>1737</sup> From this we might draw conclude that the French preferably conducted business with the Alberti and Guarienti. At first sight, it appears to show that the political events unfolding during the Council did have an influence on the choice of the bank a prelate wished to conduct business with.

What did have a decisive influence on a bank relationship was the network of correspondents a banker commanded. The Medici had no branch offices of their own in Spain, England, France, and Milan. These were economic areas in which the Borromei, Alberti, and Guarienti were active. The conditions in Basel, therefore, reflect more complex processes in the field of commercial change, with political factors merely playing a secondary role. The distinction between politics and business is also borne out by the cooperation between the Florentine bankers and the Council as an institution. Alberti and Gianfigliuzzi sided with the opponents of the pope and remained loyal to the Council until it ended. But the Medici bank, too, continued to operate in Basel after the assembly had moved to Ferrara and Bologna at the pope's behest. This was done not only in acknowledgment of their remaining customers in Germany: Cosimo's employees also acted for the Council as depositors of indulgencies well into the 1440s.

## Alberti

Benedetto e Antonio degli Alberti e co.

In their prosperous Roman office, the Medici had a large pool of excellently trained banking experts, some of whom they could send to Basel without compromising the efficacy of the company accompanying the pope in any way. The task of the Basel branch office was to continue and complement the work of the Curia-based bank. When Francesco, Antonio and Benedetto degli Alberti decided to establish a branch office in Basel, they were following a different strategy, as suggested by the choice of their branch manager: they appointed their relative Dego di Bernardo degli Alberti<sup>1738</sup> from their branch office in Bruges who, owing to his work in Flanders, had

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1737 See [Weissen \(2021\)](#), p. 497.

1738 Dego was born around 1395 as the son of Bernardo di Jacopo (detto Lepre) degli Alberti and Sandra Ardinghelli (see Family Tree 1 on p. 133). His father was involved in a conspiracy against the oligarchs that ruled Florence. When the revolt failed, he was able to escape but the Signoria condemned him to death *in absentia*. Two of his sisters lost their husbands at the hands of the executioner: Bartolomea was married to Saminiato de' Ricci and Margherita to Antonio de' Medici. From 1400 onwards, Bernardo probably lived in Bruges and London, where he was active in trading. It is unclear what he actually did and for which company he worked. Passerini writes that he ran his own business together with Pacchio di messer Pepo Adimari. Lepre died in Forlì in August 1405 and, it seems, left behind more debts than assets, so that there was not enough to repay his widow

gained considerable experience in working with English clients, traditionally the Alberti's main customers in Bruges. But he had also learnt how to do business in Germany; consequently, he probably had no difficulties in establishing business relations with local German businessmen in the Upper Rhine area. What he was lacking, however, was the experience of doing business with representatives of the Curia. Therefore, he was assigned a partner who knew the wishes and needs of this specific group of customers. This man was Antonio d'Adovardo de' Gianfigliuzzi, who was born around 1411.<sup>1739</sup> As a young man he had gone to Rome and served his apprenticeship at the bank of Benedetto di Bernardo degli Alberti. At that time, his immediate superior was

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her dowry; moreover, his sons renounced their share of the inheritance in 1410, probably for good reason. See Passerini (1869–1870), I, p. 111; Foster Baxendale (1991), p. 727, note 31 and p. 741, note 85. Foster Baxendale (p. 158) reveals that Lepre appeared before the Mercanzia in 1396, ASFi, Mercanzia 4297, f. 418. Benedetto di Filippo Adimari in the *libro segreto* of Giovanni de' Medici: ASFi, MAP 153, no. 1, cc. 23–24. Bernardo's will of 7 August 1405 is in the ASFi, Diplomatico. On 20 August of the same year, a monastery endowed with a bequest confirmed the receipt of the money: ASFi, Diplomatico normale, 1405, agosto 20. – Where Deigo and his siblings spent their years after 1400 is not recorded, but they almost certainly belonged to the group of *rebelli* banned from Florence. His younger brother was an early friend of the famous Leon Battista degli Alberti, Mancini (1967), p. 70: *suo coetaneo, gradito compagno nel cavalcare e in ogni virile destrezza*. Alberti (1844), III, p. 235: Leon referred to him as *tu Nerozzo mio dolcissimo fra gli altri quali amo*. See Foster (1985), p. 28. It is only from the *Catasto* of 1427 that we see that Deigo and Nerozzo were then in Bruges, where they worked for the *compagnia* of Antonio di Ricciardo degli Alberti. See Foster (1985), p. 117; Foster Baxendale (1991), p. 740. The two brothers remained close in the decades to come and, back in their home city, to which they returned after their ban had been lifted, they formed a joint fiscal body for many years. Passerini's assertion that “Deigo visse povero” (“had sunk into poverty”) has to be refuted: around 1430, Deigo and Nerozzo were even able to expand their small property in the neighbourhood of S. Croce in Florence when they added a further sixth to the house in addition to the sixth they already owned. Foster (1985), pp. 64–66, contains an analysis of the property owned by Lepre's descendants. They were definitely less affluent than their rich relatives Benedetto, Antonio, and Francesco but they were certainly not poor. In his tax return of 31 March 1433, he stated that he was 35 and his brother Nerozzo 31 years old. He was not married but had an illegitimate son, Alessandro, who was 5 years old. The only thing known about this son is that he died before 1446. See Passerini (1869–1870), II, pp. 106–112. – Nerozzo had been married to Iacopa d'Antonio Bombeni since 1428 and had two children: Benedetto (9, illegitimate) and Sandra (3, legitimate). See Foster Baxendale (1991), p. 753. In Florence, each of the brothers owned a one-third share in two houses. They themselves lived in one of them. In addition, they had a small property in the countryside. As of 1 July 1428, they were partners in the company Antonio degli Alberti e co. in Bruges with a stake of f. 1,350. Foster (1985), p. 200. ASFi, Catasto 492, cc. 181r–182r and ASFi, Catasto 32, c. 364v. In 1436, Deigo is explicitly referred to as *compagno d'Antonio di Ricciardo degli Alberti e compagni di Brugga*. ASFi, Mercanzia 1322, 13 agosto 1436. It is through this partnership that they held a stake in the Cologne branch, whose business capital was tied in with that of Bruges. Shortly after completing this tax return, he must have travelled to Basel, where he is mentioned in the records for the first time on 25 May 1434 (ASFi, MAP 131 C, S. 17r). But he was probably already at the Council in 1433.

1739 ASFi, Catasto 75, c. 212: According to the *Catasto* of 1427, he was 16 at the time, his brothers Bartolomeo and Giovanni 8 and 5 ½ respectively. There is no mention of an absence of Antonio. ASFi, Catasto 494, c. 330v: In the *Catasto* of 1433, Antonio is 22 years old, Bartolomeo 14. Giovanni is no longer mentioned, which means he had probably died. In the Council records, Antonio de' Gianfigliuzzi is referred to as *Antonius de Albertis, Janfiliaciis* or *Jamlacis*.

Tommaso Spinelli, as he later told the court.<sup>1740</sup> When he joined the office of the Basel branch, Antonio brought with him his experience in dealing with the Curia and high-ranking clerics. In the local Basel sources, he is often referred to as *Antonio de Valencia*, which suggests that he came to Basel having travelled from this Spanish city. Without doubt, these connections with potential customers from the Iberian Peninsula were of commercial interest, since no other bank in Basel seemed to have relations with this region in Europe. Thus, it seems that the Basel team had been put together with a great deal of planning and forethought. They certainly appeared to have worked well together, an observation that is also borne out by the fact that they stayed and worked together for at least twenty, at times difficult, years.

In Florentine court files, Dego degli Alberti is referred to as *governatore e amministratore dela compagnia e ragione deli Alberti di Basilea che diceva in Benedetto e Antonio deli Alberti e compagni*, whereas Antonio only holds the rank of factor.<sup>1741</sup> This means that Dego was head of the Basel company and Antonio Gianfigliuzzi was his employee. Susannah Foster is probably mistaken when she assumes that the Alberti agency in Basel, like Cologne, was dependant on the *corpo* in Bruges: Basel was subsidized by the company in Rome and, like the latter, received no working capital of its own: *che nacque da quella di Corte di Roma*.<sup>1742</sup> This means that the company was under the direct influence of Francesco d'Altobianco degli Alberti, even though it operated under the name of Benedetto e Antonio degli Alberti e co. di Basilea.<sup>1743</sup>

The Basel branch was directly affected by the restructuring of the Alberti empire around 1435: Dego terminated his partnership in Bruges and began focusing on Basel.<sup>1744</sup> The fact that he

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1740 ASFi, Mercanzia 1325, c. 224v. – The fact that a Gianfigliuzzi worked for an Alberti bank was not extraordinary considering that the two families were closely linked through several marriages. Foster Baxendale found five marriages between the two lineages until 1401, among them the parents of Francesco d'Altobianco degli Alberti, whose mother was a Gianfigliuzzi. Passerini (1869–1870); Foster Baxendale (1991), p. 748. The commitment of Antonio's family towards the Alberti enterprises was not limited to collaboration; his mother Margherita reported in the Catasto of 1433 that she had debts amounting to f. 1,600, of which f. 200 were owed to Francesco d'Altobianco e co. di Roma, 150 to Francesco d'Altobianco proprio, and 100 to Antonio di Riccardo. Next to that, she also owned 6 large farming estates. ASFi, Catasto 494, c. 330v. She says nothing about the whereabouts of her sons Antonio (22 years old) and Bartolomeo (14). The Spinelli archives hold a court document of 27 November 1431, according to which Bartolomeo was awarded the estate of Jacopo and Lorenzo Gianfigliuzzi. YUSA 267, 4975. This branch of the Gianfigliuzzi family had ties to the Medici. In 1427, Antonio and his brother still owed Cosimo und Lorenzo de' Medici f. 90; ASFi, Catasto 49, c. 1157v: *Rede di messer Jacobo Gianfigliuzzi et d'Adovardo suo figliuolo*. ASFi, MAP 131, A, c. 184v. Nothing is known of an Alberti branch in Valencia at this time. According to the *ricordanze* of Bongianni di Bongianni Gianfigliuzzi for the years 1433–1475, Antonio's distant relative Gherardo Gianfigliuzzi owned a branch office in Valencia, to which Bongianni himself went in 1434. It is, therefore, very well possible that at some time between 1427 and 1433, Antonio split off from the Alberti and joined Gherardo's Iberian branch.

1741 ASFi, Mercanzia 1325, c. 161r.

1742 Foster (1985), p. 199. ASFi, Mercanzia 7130, c. 252r.

1743 ASFi, Mercanzia 271, cc. 361v. – ASFi, Mercanzia 7130, c. 252r: Apart from Francesco, Giorgio di Francesco Canigiani was also a silent partner in the Rome branch and thus also in the Basel branch.

1744 ASFi, Mercanzia 1325, c. 263v; Mercanzia 4402, c. 87r.

remained loyal to the family business was something that he came to regret, as the Alberti network of branches soon began to crumble.<sup>1745</sup> Dego's younger brother Nerozzo chose a different path and withdrew his investment. In 1442, he told the Catasto that he had left the Alberti company in 1435, adding that everyone knew what had happened to his brother who had stayed with the bank: *E dipoi ci dividemmo nel 35, e ciò che per chatasto demmo, tutto a me rimase, come per la mia scritta apare, che di tutto v'è [in]formazione. Lui rimase nella compagnia con Benedetto e Antonio degli Alberti. Come le cose son seghuite questo è noto a tutti.*<sup>1746</sup>

From their own very sparse written records it is almost impossible to gather any information concerning the exchange transactions conducted by Dego degli Alberti e co. di Basilea. However, some of their transactions are listed in the books of the Mercanzia, which contain the minutes of the negotiations between the various, bitterly quarrelling branches of the Alberti family. During the dispute between the branches in Basel and London, it is reported that between 10 September 1434 and August 1435 nineteen bills of exchange with a total value of over 1,230 sterling had been settled between the two companies, one of them through Cologne. This sum probably accrued almost exclusively from transfers made to English participants at the Council.<sup>1747</sup> The large sums outstanding as a balance between the two banks on 15 June 1436 also bear witness to the lively trade with customers in the London area. At that time, London had outstanding debts with the Basel branch amounting to ducats 2,489 18s. 4d. Dego's counterclaim amounted to over 7,140 ducats.<sup>1748</sup> In London's balance sheet drawn up on 19 March 1436, six bills of exchange issued by English clerics to the Rhine had not yet been settled. In the other direction, there were no payment transactions.<sup>1749</sup> It is not only a coincidence of source availability that England features by far at the top of the list of Dego's exchange transactions. In contrast, he seems to have had no connections to the flows of money in northern and Upper Germany.

Bernardo da Uzzano, Dego degli Alberti, Antonio Gianfigliuzzi e co.

In the bankruptcy proceedings concerning the Alberti empire, the Basel branch office sided with Francesco d'Altobianco degli Alberti and, together with the latter's bank at the papal court, formed an alliance against the branch offices in Bruges, Cologne, London, Florence, and Venice.<sup>1750</sup> In April 1436, the Basel and Rome branches sued the other Alberti companies for

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1745 See above p. 141.

1746 ASFi, Catasto 617, 295r. – In that same year, he was awarded two offices of honour at the reception hosted by Florence for Duke Francesco Sforza. See del Corazza (1894), p. 290.

1747 ASFi, Mercanzia 271, c. 179v; ASFi, MAP 81, no. 48, cc. 521r–524v.

1748 ASFi, Mercanzia 133, c. 37r.

1749 ASFi, Mercanzia 271, cc. 173v, 174v, and 175r.

1750 ASFi, Mercanzia 271, cc. 36rv. See above p. 136.

large sums of money. Dego degli Alberti made claims totalling over f. 6,000 against Bruges, 4,000 against London, and 2,050 against Florence; from Cologne he demanded over 2,000 Rhe. fl.<sup>1751</sup> He also sued Benedetto degli Alberti in Venice and Florence before the Mercanzia court. On 13 August 1436, he even appeared in person before the lords of the Mercanzia to give evidence;<sup>1752</sup> by 21 February 1437, he was back in Basel.<sup>1753</sup>

The proceedings against Alessandro Ferrantini, who resided in London, dragged on until 13 June 1437. In the end, he was found guilty by the Mercanzia and sentenced to pay f. 7,140.<sup>1754</sup> Since he did not have such sums at his disposal, neither in cash nor account, the outstanding amount was raised by selling goods that belonged to him. The lion's share involved bales of wool that Ferrantini had shipped from London to Italy for sale and which, in the meantime, had been seized in Pisa. Dego also received a number of grammar books which had been confiscated at Benedetto degli Alberti's house in Florence. The twenty-seven books in question had been purchased by Ferrantini and were meant to be delivered to the Duke of Bedford (*ducha di Betteforte*).<sup>1755</sup>

On 17 May 1437, Basel representatives were back in Florence, this time to sue the Cologne branch office, which had failed to pay the f. 980 resulting from the first trial. Basel was represented by Antonio de' Gianfigliuzzi. On 12 and 15 June, Billotti from Cologne appeared before the Mercanzia, only to claim that he had retired from the Cologne business in 1434 and that he could therefore not be held liable for transactions concluded afterwards.<sup>1756</sup> The never-ending conflict with their former partners in the international bill of exchange business caused major problems for Dego degli Alberti and Antonio de' Gianfigliuzzi. For their clients, it was absolutely irrelevant whom the court in Florence had found guilty. All that mattered to them was that their bank in Basel was obviously experiencing payment difficulties and that they had lost their main partners in leading international banking centres such as Bruges, London, and Venice, along with the papal court. As a consequence, many of them seem to have decided to seek new banking arrangements. One of these was Oddo de Varzis, who acted as apostolic prothonotary in Basel. On 26 July, he appointed the *legum doctorem* Domenico di Niccolò Martelli and Angelo di Lorenzo della Stufa, brothers of the heads of the local Medici branch office, as his procurators in Florence in connection with his financial claims against Francesco d'Altobianco degli Alberti. The corresponding agreement was drawn up in *banco cambii honorabilium virorum Cosme et Laurentii de Medicis [...] et eorum sociorum societatis basileensis*.

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1751 ASFi, Mercanzia 7130, cc. 252v and 253r.

1752 ASFi, Mercanzia 1322, cc. 72v–73v.

1753 ASFi, Mercanzia 271, c. 160r.

1754 ASFi, Mercanzia 271, cc. 122v–123v.

1755 ASFi, MAP 81, no. 48, cc. 521r–524v. - John of Lancaster, duke of Bedford.

1756 ASFi, Mercanzia 1325, cc. 263v–265r and unnumbered pages dated 15 June 1437.



The act was witnessed by Vieri di Nicola de' Medici and Angelo di Bindacio da Ricasoli.<sup>1757</sup> Evidently, Varzis had decided to shift all his business activities from the bankrupt Alberti to the Medici.

The Basel Alberti branch was dissolved in the course of the bankruptcy proceedings; Deگو and Antonio separated from Benedetto, Antonio, and Francesco degli Alberti but decided to stay in Basel and establish a new company. However, on their own, they didn't have the financial means to operate on an international scale during an event such as the Council. Moreover, their previous payment network, which relied on the Alberti branch offices, had broken down and they had no connections to a Curia-based bank. This meant that, after the bankruptcy of their *maggiori*, and unless they were willing to give up all their business in Basel, they had to swiftly find a new way of operating. For them and for the former Alberti directors in Bruges and Cologne, rescue came in the shape of a partnership with the company of Bernardo da Uzzano and Francesco Boscoli, who ran a Curia-based bank. Grigorio d'Antonio Cruschi was a silent partner.<sup>1758</sup> On 15 August 1436, the two parties entered into a five-year contract involving a branch office in Basel: *per trafficare de mercantia et di canbi et depositi*. Da Uzzano/Boscoli,

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1757 ASFi, Diplomatico, Medici, 1437 luglio 26. See Camerani Marri (1951), p. 51.

1758 ASFi, Mercanzia 7151, c. 67v. – Bernardo d'Antonio da Uzzano was born into one of Florence's leading banking families on 28 February 1398. The da Uzzano were one of the few entrepreneurial families to recover from the financial crisis of 1342 and, in the early 15th century, belonged to the oligarchy that ruled Florence in the years before the Medici rose to power. Bernardo was a *socio minore* with capital of over f. 4,000 in the company of his famous uncle Niccolò da Uzzano – who achieved fame as Cosimo's main rival – and Michele del Bene, where he served as director, as shown by his *prestanze* to the *Catasti* of 1427 and 1430. In 1431, Bernardo inherited the company, but as his uncle had left behind so many assets as bequests to others in his will, the bank had to continue with a negative working capital. Niccolò's will is published in Gherardi (1881), pp. 230–232. Despite his excellent business network, Bernardo faced financial difficulties time and again. In 1433, he had his 13-year-old son Giovanni emancipated, probably to safeguard the family's assets from impending claims by creditors. See Kuehn (1983), p. 202. The officials of the Catasto confirmed: *Veduto detti bilanci gli toccherà di danni circha f. 700*. ASFi, Catasto 487, c. 107, here quoted after Dini (1980), p. 385. Bernardo tried to attain the same status and standing as his uncle as a banker and politician but never really succeeded in gaining an independent and influential position in the Republic. Rather, he appears to have been an opportunist who never was able to really shape the course of events but always chose the option which seemed most favourable to him at the time. Thus, in 1433, he was a member of the council (*balìa*) which banned Cosimo de' Medici from Florence, but not even a year later he was a member of the other council that allowed him back again. As a banker, he was actively involved in the business with money from the *monte commune* in his hometown and was among the wealthy from whom the city borrowed money between 1427 and 1434 through the *ufficiali del banco* to cover the costs of war. McLean (1998), pp. 592–596: Medici (f. 155,887), Bernardo di Lamberto Lamberteschi (f. 34,825), Bernardo d'Antonio da Uzzano (f. 13,854). – Boscoli was one of the most dazzling figures in the world of Florentine banking in the first half of the 15th century. See Esch (2000), p. 119. ASFi, MAP 82, no. 82, c. 101: In June 1436, Boscoli was financially broke and had to sign a settlement agreement with the heirs of Averardo di Francesco de' Medici and Andrea di Lippaccio de' Bardi. For him, too, being able to work for da Uzzano in Rome certainly came as a blessing.

and Deگو degli Alberti were each called to deposit 2,000 cameral ducats in the *corpo* (*mettere et fermi tenere*).<sup>1759</sup> In July 1437, Bernardo represented Deگو as his procurator in the bankruptcy dealings against his relatives before the Mercanzia.<sup>1760</sup>

By partnering with da Uzzano, Alberti and Gianfigliuzzi had regained access to a large network of correspondents represented in most of the leading commercial centres. This meant that the Basel bankers were now again able to issue bills of exchange to Rome (Francesco Boscoli e co.) and to Geneva (Bardo di Neri e co.). In Bruges and London, they were connected to the international payment system through the companies of Filippo Borromei. In Flanders, they ranked among the creditors; on a *conto d'aparte* they had a balance of 400 grossi (groats) of Bruges and just over 64 grossi in a current account.<sup>1761</sup> Filippo Borromei's *libri mastri* for the year 1438 lists more than twenty bill of exchange transactions in which Deگو was involved. The respective trade centres included Basel, London, Bruges, Geneva, and Venice (see Table 14).<sup>1762</sup> The largest sum amounted to 1,200 Venetian ducats, which Filippo Borromei e co. in Bruges drew on the Tommasi bank in Venice. The *beneficiari* were Deگو and Antonio Gianfigliuzzi. Most of these transactions involved arbitrage trading, but they also included a small number of money orders to clerics. The transactions listed in Borromei's books were probably only a small part of the Basel bankers' turnover; unfortunately, however, none of the records of the other correspondents have been preserved. They also cooperated with a large number of merchants from other cities in Italy, such as the heirs of Buonsignore d'Andrea Benzi, Grimaldi, Contarini, Pizamanno, and Spinola.<sup>1763</sup> Apart from their connection with English customers, there was also a link to Cologne. On 12 September 1437, the Council drew 4,600 cameral florins on offertory boxes in Cologne. The money was meant to be used to pay their galley captain in the Mediterranean, Nicod de Menthon.<sup>1764</sup> Northern Germany and Nuremberg played no part in the bank's business transactions.

In 1438, the books of Filippo Borromei in London and Bruges listed accounts for exchange transactions conducted by Bernardo da Uzzano e Deگو degli Alberti e co. di Basilea, amounting to a total of fourteen bills of exchange. These involved a narrow network of correspondents based exclusively in the banking centres of Bruges, London, Venice, and Geneva. The fact that

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1759 Da Uzzano was mentioned for the first time on 13 August 1436 in connection with the Alberti Bank in Basel: ASFi, Mercanzia 1322, c. 72r. – Filippo Borromei's ledger in London of 1438 mentions business deals with *Bernardo da Uzzano e Deگو degli Alberti e compagni di Basilea* that date two years back. These probably refer to the continuation of earlier deals with the former company.

1760 ASFi, Mercanzia 1325, 15 luglio 1437.

1761 ABIB, no. 661. See Zerbi (1952), p. 434.

1762 ABIB, mastro 7, cc. 69–70, 153–154 and 209–210; mastro 8, cc. 192–193, 199v and 266–267. – See Biscaro (1913), pp. 47, 296, and 306.

1763 ABIB, mastro 7, cc. 69–70, 153–154, and 209–210; mastro 8, cc. 192–193, 199v, and 266–267.

1764 Kuske (1917–1934), p. 319.

Table 14 Correspondents of Bernardo da Uzzano e Dego degli Alberti e co. di Basilea, 1438

Bruges	Filippo Borromei
	Lorenzo di Niccolò di Zanobi (Rinieri)
	Girolamo Grimaldi
Venice	Bartolomeo Contarini
	rede di Buonsignore d'Andrea (Benzi)
	Alessandro Borromei
London	Benedetto Spinola
	Ubertino de' Bardi
	Filippo Borromei
Geneva	Bardo de' Neri (Bovattieri)

the Roman Curia knew of the connection between the da Uzzano / Boscoli Bank and Basel is borne out by a payment of 15 ducats made by the Apostolic Chamber to the bank for a messenger who had been sent to Basel.<sup>1765</sup>

On 10 March 1438, the director of the Medici branch in Basel, Roberto Martelli, reported to Cosimo de' Medici about the problems the da-Uzzano bank was experiencing because the head of the bank had fully sided with the Duke of Milan and thus against the pope and Florence: *Questi di Bernardo da Uzzano, con tucto sieno divenuti – dico questo de' Gianfigliuzzi – duchesco, credo non ci potrà molto istare.*<sup>1766</sup> Indeed, Bernardo da Uzzano's company in Basel did not last the five years as agreed upon by the two partners. It was liquidated in September 1438. In the twenty-seven months of its existence, they had made a profit of 1,232 Rhe. fl. which shows that the downfall was not the fault of the heads of the branch office at the Basel Council, but the financial situation of their partner Bernardo da Uzzano, who went bankrupt a year later.<sup>1767</sup>

1765 Esch (1998), p. 281.

1766 ASFi, MAP II, no. 618.

1767 On Bernardo da Uzzano's financial problems, see Dini (1980), p. 385. – On the bankruptcy proceedings, see ASFi, Mercanzia 10874, cc. 64v–65v and 71r–72r. – ASFi, MAP II, no. 635: petition by Bernardo da Uzzano to Cosimo de' Medici regarding the case against him. – Bernardo's son Giovanni is the author of the famous *Pratica di Mercatura*. See a note by Giovanni in ASNSPI, Salviati, serie I: Libri di commercio, no. 1, c. 181r: *Richardo chome questi di [8] d'ottobre 1440 mi truovo senza padre e quasi senza nulla dell' avere del mondo.*

Dego degli Alberti e co.

After the split from da Uzzano and Boscoli, Dego degli Alberti and Antonio Gianfigliuzzi sought reorientation and decided to remain north of the Alps and settle down in Basel definitively. In 1442, Antonio asked his younger brother Bartolomeo to come to Basel. Because he was twenty-two years of age at the time, we may assume that he had already gone through at least six years of training at a different bank before making his way north. The earliest evidence suggesting he was in Germany is a statement made by his mother for the Catasto in 1442, where she mentions that he occasionally spent time enjoying himself in Basel, sometimes in the company of his brother Antonio: [kursiv:] *Atende a darsi buontempo e alle volte chon Antonio suo fratello a Basilea.*<sup>1768</sup> He only appears once in the records in his role as a businessman; namely, when he appointed a legal representative for the court in Basel and conferred general power of attorney on him in 1443.<sup>1769</sup> By 1444 at the latest, he had returned to his native city, as we know from a series of documents from Florence bearing his name from this time on. Among them are various contracts he concluded when, in 1444, he married the fourteen-year-old Sandra degli Alberti, the daughter of Nerozzo di Bernardo; this entitled him to the usufruct of her dowry.<sup>1770</sup> The marriage is an expression of the close connections between the two families, not least in business matters. It might also be seen as a kind of compensation made by the Alberti brothers to the two Gianfigliuzzi.<sup>1771</sup> By 1446, Nerozzo degli Alberti was in such a bad state that he no longer was able to live in Florence. Instead, he went to stay with his brother in Basel and Geneva.<sup>1772</sup>

Only very few sources regarding the transactions of Dego degli Alberti e co. have survived. A financial statement of the Council to their depository on 10 May 1439 lists several bills of exchange made out to the company which it had transferred to its deposit. They had been sent from Bruges, Cologne, Mainz, Genoa, and Nijmegen. In return, the bank sent a bill of exchange on orders of the Council to Poland. The names of the bank's correspondents are not named in this document.<sup>1773</sup>

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1768 ASFi, Catasto 619, c. 276r.

1769 StaBS, GA A 23, 130v. – Ehrensperger (1972), p. 281, talks about this Bartolomeo without referring to his kin relationship with Antonio Gianfigliuzzi.

1770 Archive of the Buonomini di S. Martino di Firenze, Archivio Gianfigliuzzi, Spogli di atti e contratti della Gabella. On Bartolomeo d'Adovardo Gianfigliuzzi, see the records regarding his inheritance in ASFi, Carte Stroziane III, CXXIX, nos. 9 and 12.

1771 In a letter to Filippo Strozzi in August 1469, Marco Parenti wrote about women who might be suitable wives for Lorenzo de' Medici: *e v'è qualche oppositione in quella, che me la gusta, chome sarebbe ia di Bartolomeo Gianfigliuzzi. Qui è bellezza e nobiltà, ma le condizioni del padre non sodisfa' molto.* Quoted after Molho (1994), p. 232. This caveat does not appear to have really bothered Filippo Strozzi, as he himself then married Selvaggia de' Gianfigliuzzi. See ASFi, Carte Stroziane V, no. 1086, 3. – Strocchia (1981), p. 379: When Bartolomeo died in 1493, Monna Nanna, as Sandra is referred to in the records, put on a magnificent funeral for him: "a string of flags decorated with the family arms und richly painted with the image of S. Bartolomeo sent to her husband's tomb in 1493".

1772 ASFi, Catasto 663, c. 735v.

1773 Haller (1901), pp. 243–244.

A further sign of Antonio Gianfigliuzzi's attachment to Basel comes in the shape of a pane of glass that he donated to the Basel Charterhouse and which was located in the southern wing of the cloister, at least until it was destroyed in the seventeenth century. The twelve stained glass windows in this row were sponsored by personalities attending the Basel Council. Apart from the banker Gianfigliuzzi, who is referred to as *Antonius Aduardi* here,<sup>1774</sup> the benefactors also included the cardinals Albergati and Cervantes, as well as Stephanus de Novaria. The Florentine businessman was thus in the very best of company, which in turn shows how well respected he must have been among Council participants. He seems to have been especially close to the Carthusians, for he is also mentioned in the monastery's *Liber beneficiorum*. The two donations can no longer be exactly dated; therefore, it's impossible to ascertain whether they were based on an intercession, thanksgiving for salvation from hardship (pest, war, bankruptcy), or some other motivation.<sup>1775</sup>

The image of the wealthy merchant who is in a position to purchase properties or open new branch offices is countered by the *portate* to the Catasto of 1442. There, Nerozzo degli Alberti wrote that his brother Deگو was barely able to make a living. He was not making any profit in Basel, or only very little, and was worried that he could be sent to jail (*le Stinche*) because of his debts: *Lui si truova al presente a Basilea, cercha di ci vanzarsi le spese come meglio può, pocho o nulla vi si fa, ma tutto ciò che fa per non venire ad abitare nelle Istinche. Nulla di là si truova, e meno di qua.*<sup>1776</sup> Antonio Gianfigliuzzi fared no better, as we learn from the statements his mother made to officials of the Catasto. He, too, had very few assets and was heavily in debt: *Nonn'è niente di sustanza e nonn'è casa. E debito asai.*

The reason for this destitute financial situation is to be found in the archives of the Mercanzia. In 1442, his former partner Grigorio Cruschi had appeared in Basel. From there he travelled with Deگو and Antonio to the Imperial Diet in Frankfurt, where Frederick III issued a *littera familiaritatis* and a letter of safe conduct for Deگو degli Alberti, Grigorio d'Antonio Cruschi, and Giovanozzo de' Mozzi.<sup>1777</sup> However, a visit to the king was not Cruschi's main motive

1774 Ehrensperger makes four different people out of Antonio de Valencia, Antonio de' Gianfigliuzzi, Antonio Aduardi, and Antonio de Florencia. Almost certainly, one and the same person is meant here, namely Antonio d'Adovardo de' Gianfigliuzzi. See Ehrensperger (1972), pp. 302 and 357. – Gianfigliuzzi donated the tenth window. It bore the inscription: *Antonius Aduardi de // Janfigliuzziis mercator // civitatis Florentiae*. See Wackernagel (1890), p. 375.

1775 StaBS, Klosterarchiv Kartause L, fol. 352: *Oretur pro Antonio de Florentia campore, unde X flor. ad fenestram quandam in maiori Galilea et in elemosinam*. – See Baer (1941), p. 499.

1776 ASFi, Catasto 617, c. 295r. Nerozzo was faring much better. He was now paying taxes on several houses and estates which, however, nearly all belonged to his daughter Sandra, who had inherited them from her mother's side.

1777 Österreichisches Staatsarchiv in Wien, Haus-, Hof und Staatsarchiv, Reichregister vol. N, fol. 16v. This entry only has three lines. See Chmel (1840), p. 130. – After the bankruptcy and death of Bernardo da Uzzano on 17 February 1440 in Rome, Cruschi had founded a new company with Francesco di Giachinotto Boscoli, who had gone bankrupt with Bernardo da Uzzano a short time before. Bankruptcy proceedings regarding

for crossing the Alps. What he was really after was the money that Deگو degli Alberti owed him and Francesco Boscoli from their former company; in other words, they wanted their share of the investment they had made along with any realized profit.<sup>1778</sup> Deگو accepted these demands but was unable to fulfil them. All the attempts undertaken by Ognibene Sagramoso and Lorenzo Becchi, the procurators appointed by Cruschi and Boscoli, to collect this money in Basel, failed. On 27 August 1445, the Mercanzia ordered Deگو to pay f. 1,500, which he was probably never able to do.

When, in 1442, the majority of participants at the Council left Basel, leaving behind very few wealthy prelates, the city quickly lost in significance as an international banking centre. Instead, Geneva became ever more important for Deگو and Antonio's business ventures. The first records of the presence of their representative in the city on the Rhone date back to 1439 and 1441. They soon decided to open a branch office there.<sup>1779</sup> While Deگو remained in Basel and continued to pursue his banking and trading businesses, his partner Antonio set up a new company in Geneva. On 10 November 1442, the bank of Antonio della Casa cashed in a bill of exchange in Rome for the first time for *Antonio Gianfigliuzzi e co. di Ginevra*.<sup>1780</sup>

When nothing more than a residual Council was left in Basel, which was then forced to move to Lausanne acting on the orders of King Frederick III, there was practically no business left to be made. In view of such dismal prospects, Antonio Gianfigliuzzi signed a contract for a new joint-stock company in Geneva on 19 July which he himself managed.<sup>1781</sup> In 1447, Deگو and Antonio closed their exchange office in the "Schlüssel" and bought a house in Geneva in Antonio's name.<sup>1782</sup> Three years later, they sold the property on the Schlüsselberg for 470 Rhe. fl. to Heinrich Halbisen.<sup>1783</sup> At this time, *Anthonis von Jan Vigliacys* is already listed as a citizen of Geneva.<sup>1784</sup>

We learn more about their business activities from the 1454 *Libro Giallo* of the company of Antonio della Casa and Simone Guadagni in Geneva, where Antonio and Deگو are mentioned

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his estate were opened in Florence in 1447. See ASFi, Mercanzia 1334, c. 66v and ASFi, Mercanzia 10874, c. 124r. – Gianfigliuzzi, too, was in Frankfurt, as we learn from his mother in the Catasto. ASFi, Catasto 619, c. 25r: *E truovasi in Franchoforte nella Magna drieto allo 'mperadore*.

1778 ASFi, Mercanzia 7151, c. 67r. They don't seem to have bothered about Giovanni, the son of Bernardo da Uzzano, who had died in the meantime.

1779 AOIF 12735, cc. 37 right, 170 left, and 173 left.

1780 AOIF 12735, c. 173 right.

1781 ASFi, Diplomatico normale, S. Croce, 1446 luglio 19: The capital amounting to 2,000 ducats was provided by ser Giovanni di Luca Martini, Niccolò di Piero di Buonaccorso, and Zanobi di ser Martino. ASFi, Diplomatico normale, S. Croce, 1466 dicembre 23: Verdict of the Mercanzia against Bartolomeo Gianfigliuzzi, who still owed the depositors the 2,000 ducats that Martino di ser Giovanni di Luca Martini had invested in the limited company and who was now asked to settle with their heirs.

1782 Geering (1886), p. 278.

1783 Saporì (1946); Ehrensperger (1972), p. 278.

1784 Koelner (1953), p. 243.

several times.<sup>1785</sup> Here Antonio Gianfigliuzzi is referred to as *sensale*, which means he was working as a broker in the meantime.<sup>1786</sup> Deگو degli Alberti now appears to have been no more than one of Antonio's employees: on 24 August 1454 Antonio della Casa gave him f. 30 for Antonio Gianfigliuzzi: *paghammo chom'ordinò a Degho Alberti suo, quando andò a Firenze*.<sup>1787</sup> Whether this occasion was referring to Deگو's final homecoming to Florence – he was just on sixty years old – or whether it was simply a business trip we do not know. But it is certainly the last time we find mention of his name. Nor do we know when exactly he died. In 1465, Antonio Gianfigliuzzi is listed as a taxpayer in Geneva, where he died in 1467.<sup>1788</sup> He left his businesses to his widow Tita and their son Adovardo, who both remained in Geneva. In 1493, Adovardo took his uncle Bartolomeo's descendants to court in Florence in the firm belief that they – that is, he and his mother – were entitled to the proceeds from the estates that his father had left to his brother in Florence.<sup>1789</sup> It appears that he won the case before court because, in 1499, he wrote a will in which he left his wife and their four sons houses in Geneva as well as in Florence. He wished to be buried in Santa Trinita in Florence.<sup>1790</sup>

## Medici

### Company History

In the autumn of 1432, the Medici sent the head of their Geneva branch, Giovanni d'Amerigo Benci, to Basel to assess the commercial prospects of the upcoming ecclesiastical assembly.<sup>1791</sup> Since he had already worked in Constance, Benci was accustomed to the financial opportunities of a Council and the general conditions in Germany.<sup>1792</sup> But it seems that he did not feel really

1785 StaBS, Schlüsselzunft 55 and 243. – See Geering (1886), pp. 274–276; Schulte (1900), pp. 342 and 512; Wackernagel (1907–1916), II / 1, p. 512; Eckstein (1911), pp. 23 and 27.

1786 See index of persons in Cassandro (1976b).

1787 Cassandro (1976b), p. 208.

1788 Bergier (1963), pp. 308–310. Contains Gianfigliuzzi's tax payment in Geneva in 1465.

1789 Archivio Buonomini di S. Martino di Firenze, Archivio Gianfigliuzzi, Processi.

1790 Archivio Buonomini di S. Martino di Firenze, Archivio Gianfigliuzzi, Testamenti 1340–1759. – The ceiling in the main chapel of S. Trinità still bears the crest of the Gianfigliuzzi today. The family crypt is under the main altar.

1791 In his *ricordanze*, Roberto di Niccolò Martelli describes the founding story of the Basel company, see Weissen (2021), p. 513.

1792 Giovanni d'Amerigo Benci was born in Florence in 1394 as the son of a petit-bourgeois family. From 1408 on, he was in the service of Giovanni d'Averardo de' Medici, where, a year later, he was registered as *giovane di bottega* in Rome and in 1415 in Constance. ASFi, MAP 153, no. 1, fol. 79. Before 1420, he was made responsible for the bookkeeping in this branch office. In 1431, he married Ginevra de' Peruzzi, who followed him to Geneva. Shortly afterwards, Cosimo de' Medici summoned him back to Italy to act as general director of the Medici enterprise, together with Antonio Salutati da Pescia. When Salutati died in 1443, he took over sole responsibility for the job, which he carried out with great success until his death in 1455. In the Catasto of

comfortable in the city on the Rhine, mentioning in a letter to Geneva that he would prefer to be there: *Noi qua stiamo tanto agi quanto si po dire, ma a me non fa troppo pro; più tosto vorrei essere costà, e anche non poso per più cagioni.*<sup>1793</sup> Notwithstanding, he seems to have come to the conclusion that the Council could be commercially promising for his *maggiori* although, without the Council, the city held no economic prospects. In Florence, the *maggiori* decided to set up an agency that was to be temporally limited and bound to the Council. Together with Tommaso Ruffaldi of Siena – who was in the service of the Milanese merchant Mariano Vitali – and Franceschino Sangiorgio of Piacenza, the company Giovanni d’Amerigo Benci e co. di Basilea was established and began operating on 28 November 1432.<sup>1794</sup> The first bill of exchange transaction is documented by a power of attorney issued in Nantes on 20 March 1433.<sup>1795</sup> How important the presence of the Medici bank was for the Council elders is evidenced by a letter of safe conduct they issued for Benci: *Cum spectabilis vir Iohannes Americi Benci, [...], ad nostram instantiam personaliter cum suis sociis rebus et bonis, invenibus et servitoribus ad civitatem Basiliensem et Concilium ibidem existens se transtulerit, sitque eius huiusmodi accessus dicto Sacro Concilio utilis et expediens, [...].*<sup>1796</sup>

In May 1433, Roberto di Niccolò Martelli, an experienced factor at the Roman office, was sent to Germany and appointed director of the Basel branch.<sup>1797</sup> Benci returned to Geneva in August to manage the branch office there<sup>1798</sup> but remained in overall charge of operations in Basel.<sup>1799</sup> Soon afterwards, the joint Florentine-Milanese-Piacenza company collapsed. Ruffaldi left the company as well as Basel. Sangiorgio was evicted by Martelli, who accused him of being a thief: *detto Francischino lo quale era ladro.*<sup>1800</sup> On 27 June 1434, the company name was changed to Cosimo e Lorenzo de’ Medici e co. di Basilea.<sup>1801</sup> From 1435 on, an account

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1457, his heirs declared assets worth f. 26,338, the second largest estate in Florence next to that of the Medici. See Roover (1963), p. 53, and many others; Renouard (1960–).

1793 ASFi, MAP 88, no. 119.

1794 On Tommaso Ruffaldi see Mainoni (1982), pp. 91–93; del Bo (2000/1), pp. 189–190; Tognetti (2004), p. 37; Spinelli et al. (2006), p. 72; on Francesco Sangiorgio, see del Bo (2000/1), p. 12; on Mariano Vitali, see del Bo (2008).

1795 Camerani Marri (1951), pp. 44 and 46. ASFi, Diplomatico, Medici, 1433 marzo 20.

1796 ASFi, Diplomatico, Medici, 1433 marzo 22.

1797 ASFi, MAP 131 C, cc. 1ff. We know that Benci was back in Basel on 9 September. See Roover (1963), p. 450; Roover (1974), p. 304; Ehrensperger (1972), p. 281. – In his *ricordanze*, Roberto Martelli left behind a description of his career until he took over the leading position in Basel. ASFi, Fondo Martelli, no. 303, c. 60r. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 513–518.

1798 ASFi, Catasto 429. He received f. 15 to cover the living expenses for his stay in Basel.

1799 Bergier (1978), p. 286.

1800 ASFi, Fondo Martelli, no. 303, c. 57r: ‘Said Francischino, who was a thief’. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 513–518.

1801 ASFi, Fondo Martelli, no. 303, c. 57r. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 513–518. – For the first use of the name, see Camerani Marri (1951), p. 46.



for *i nostri di Basilea* was also kept in Florence.<sup>1802</sup> In the contract issued by the head office in that same year, Basel is referred to as a branch office: *la compagnia di Firenze, quella di Corte e di Basilea, quella di Vinigia e di Ginevra*.<sup>1803</sup>

For the first years of its existence, the legal status of the Medici branch in Basel remained more or less undefined as we have no article of association. This does not mean that such a contract once existed but was lost in the course of the centuries. On the contrary, it appears more likely that such an agreement never existed, considering that the Medici were in exile in Venice in 1433 and 1434. During this period, they did not even renew the contract for the main company, which, in principle, would have been necessary in view of the death of a partner. Instead, they waited until 1435 when they were back in Florence and in political power. During this interim period, it was impossible to conclude a contract for a branch office, as the legal entity of the main partner was not given in the first place. As the Medici probably never considered establishing a permanent branch in Basel – borne out by the fact that they rented and did not purchase office premises<sup>1804</sup> – a deed of partnership for this branch would not have made any sense since a contract would have had to be concluded for a fixed period. Moreover, the enterprise needed to remain extremely flexible, allowing for the possibility of a move should the Council decide to switch to a new location, or instant liquidation should the Council be terminated at short notice.

As we glean from the *libro segreto giallo*, the Medici furnished their branch in Basel with capital totalling f. 324 in the years 1433 and 1434.<sup>1805</sup> Such a small sum was probably not considered as an actual working capital, but merely as start-up aid and money to cover expenses. Roberto Martelli noted that he had to work without sufficient assets for five years.<sup>1806</sup> In the balance sheet for 1442, too, we find no reference to any substantial *corpo* deposited by shareholders.<sup>1807</sup> This is actually not surprising considering that the Rome branch had no equity either.<sup>1808</sup> The lack of self-financing is explainable when one considers that these two specific branches had their client focus on the high echelons of the Church: as these clerics were not so interested in receiving loans as in investment, the coffers were usually full of borrowed capital.<sup>1809</sup> Thus, for instance, among the depositors at the Basel bank was Cardinal Jean de la Rochetaillée with a balance of over f. 2,000.<sup>1810</sup>

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1802 ASFi, MAP 153, no. 3.

1803 Roover (1974), p. 549.

1804 ASFi, MAP 104, no. 60, cc. 598–602. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 497–508.

1805 ASFi, MAP 153, no. 3.

1806 ASFi, Fondo Martelli, no. 303, c. 57r: *sanza avere corpo alcuno*. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 513–518.

1807 ASFi, MAP 104, no. 60, c. 599. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 497–508.

1808 Roover (1974), p. 90.

1809 Roover (1974), p. 78.

1810 ASFi, MAP 104, no. 60, c. 60r. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 497–508. – Cardinal Jean de la Rochetaillée, also known as Jean de la Plaigne.

Soon after establishing the Basel agency, Giovanni d’Amerigo Benci appointed so-called *fattori* to the management; these were employees with power of attorney, who received a fixed salary but had no share in the company capital.<sup>1811</sup> One of these men was Roberto Martelli, born in 1408.<sup>1812</sup> He came from a respected merchant family with close commercial ties to the Medici. Many of his brothers were directors of Medici branches: Antonio in Pisa, Bartolomeo in Ancona, Ugolino in Pisa, and Alessandro in Venice.<sup>1813</sup> Roberto began his career in banking working for the Albizzi before joining the Medici, to whom he felt a political allegiance his entire life. From 1424 onwards, he worked at the Rome branch, where, over the course of time, he rose to the position of factor and chief accountant.<sup>1814</sup> He then moved to Basel, where he lived until 1438. His rapid departure from Basel was mainly politically motivated, given that, after his active involvement in the so-called “seal affair” was revealed, his presence in the city was opposed by the great majority of Council participants. He himself saw his life in danger there: *mi trovai sendo in Basilea quasi in pericolo di morte*.<sup>1815</sup> By 26 August 1438 at the latest, he was in Ferrara where he became director of the Medici’s local Council bank.<sup>1816</sup> His reception in the city seems to have been close to triumphal, for he was heaped with honours: from the Greek emperor he received the title *conte paladino*, from his German counterpart the privilege of legitimizing any out-of-wedlock children.<sup>1817</sup>

1811 Regarding these terms, see Edler de Roover (1934); Roover (1963), pp. 116–118.

1812 We have two different dates of birth for Roberto. Litta gives 1408, a date which is supported by the Catasto entry of 1433, where Roberto is described as being 25 years old. Litta (1819–1894), VI, tavola 1 and ASFi, Catasto 473. In the Martelli family archive (in the ASFi) his date of birth is given as 17 September 1406.

1813 Roover (1963), p. 66. – Litta (1819–1894), VI, tavola 1: This branch of the family died out in 1752.

1814 In 1431, he drew up the annual balance sheet for the Rome branch, AOIF 12744.

1815 ASFi, Fondo Martelli, no. 303, c. 60v. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 513–518. – ASFi, MAP 96, no. 15: In a letter to Bartolomeo de’ Battiferri of 20 January 1438, he writes about his plans: *Non dubitate del mio istare qui. Sono in buona gratia di Palermo e di messere Lodovico, et per conservarla fo tucto quello m’è possibile. Tais non credo abbia tanta possanza. Io non potrei senza grandissima incomodità e danno della compagnia lasciare qui, e però non posso come e voi e io disidero venirvi ad vedere: quanto più presto potrò, fia. Voglio, partendomi, lasciare qui ordinato in forme la cosa passi con honore della compagnia*. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 494–495.

1816 ASFi, MAP 13, no. 15: Letter of 26 August 1438 from Ferrara to Cosimo de’ Medici.

1817 Litta (1819–1894) makes these two claims without providing any evidence. On the award of the title Imperial Count Palatine, see Beinhoff (1995, pp. 20–21). After Martelli’s return to Italy, he became a partner in the Medici’s Rome branch, where he remained until he died. From 1438 to 1443 and from 1447 to 1458, he served as general depository to the pope, in 1439 and 1446 as one of the *priori* of the Florentine Signoria. Cosimo sent him twice to Rome with the task of representing his interests at conclaves. In both cases, with the election of Nicholas V and Callixtus III, men were chosen who could be considered friends of the Medici at the time of the election. Pius II knew Martelli from their joint time in Basel. He received privileges from all the popes he served. – In art history, Roberto is known to have been a friend and sponsor of Donatello, who sculpted a statue for him. Donatello is also said to have designed the palazzo that Roberto built on Via de’ Spadai, called *Poscia dei Martelli*. But he certainly did not spend his youth in Roberto’s house, as some have reported, because the artist was 23 years older than the banker. Martelli died in 1464, a respected and wealthy citizen. Roover (1963), pp. 96, 198, 314, and 421. See Cambi (1785–1786), p. 228; Cavalcanti (1821), p. 127; Kauffmann (1935), pp. 43–45; Cornelio (1961), pp. 174–176. – ASFi, Archivio Martelli, Documenti in

At the same time as Roberto Martelli, Giovenco di Lorenzo della Stufa moved from Rome to Basel where he is mentioned on 23 February 1434 for the first time.<sup>1818</sup> As treasurer, *cassiere*, he was responsible for the cash book. Cosimo sent him to Flanders and England on repeated occasions to settle business matters there. In 1436, he met up with Alessandro Ferrantini in London, the manager of the bankrupt Alberti branch, to enquire about business opportunities.<sup>1819</sup> As head of the bank in Basel, he is officially mentioned for the first time in the records of 8 May 1439, although we may assume that he took over from Roberto Martelli a few months before that.<sup>1820</sup>

When the ecclesiastical assembly transferred to Ferrara and from there to Florence, leading to its split, and the number of well-heeled prelates in Basel dwindled, the Medici gradually lost interest in sustaining a branch in Basel. In the *libro segreto giallo*, the ledger of the main office in Florence, the Basel branch office is mentioned for the last time in 1440.<sup>1821</sup> The company was liquidated as of 1 August 1441 and Giovenco della Stufa returned to Florence.<sup>1822</sup> The company that took over was called *Giovanni d'Amerigo Benci e co. di Basilea*.<sup>1823</sup> From this day on, a distinction was made between *ragione vecchia* and *ragione nuova*.<sup>1824</sup> The *maggiori* in Florence barely took notice of this change in the legal basis and name, and kept on referring to it as Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici's bank in the records over the next months.<sup>1825</sup> The fact that, on the one hand, reference was still made to the *Medici di Vinegia* and the *Medici di Corte di Firenze* and, on the other, to the *nostri di Ginevra* when a deal was cleared in Basel, indicates that one

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Pergamena, no. 37. To date, there is only one small study on Martelli, which describes his part in the creation of Benozzo Gozzoli's frescoes in the Cappella dei Magi: Crum (1996).

1818 ASFi, MAP 131 C, c. 9r.

1819 ASFi, MAP 13, no. 77. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 484–485. – On 12 November 1436, he was in Bruges with Roberto's brother Giovanni. See ASFi, MAP 11, no. 611 of 8 February 1438.

1820 ASFi, MAP 13, no. 114. – He was born around 1413, the son of a very wealthy father. He received his training in business and banking from the Medici in Rome, where he kept the account books from 25 November 1432 onwards; this had been begun by Roberto Martelli in 1422 and was later continued by Antonio della Casa and Girolamo de' Bardi. After returning to Florence from Basel, he served the Republic of Florence and the Medici family in various important capacities. On 1 January 1444, he is documented as *padrone di navi mercantili*, as he described himself in a letter to Cosimo. He describes in it the arrival of the Florentine fleet. Probably he was the commander of the fleet at the time. His name is mentioned in the chronicles of his home city when, in 1459, he played an important part in the reception of the pope and the son of the Duke of Milan there. His date of death is not known but it must have been after 1469. AOIF 12508; ASFi, MAP 5, nos. 469 and 525; Messeri (1894), p. 297; Anonimo (1907), p. 45; Watson (1963), pp. 326, 330 and 332; Roover (1974), p. 304.

1821 ASFi, MAP 153, no. 3.

1822 ASFi, MAP 5, no. 525: Letter from Bartolomeo di Giovanni di Nettolo Becchi to Giovanni di Cosimo de' Medici of 5 August 1441: *Questa mattina e tornato da Basilea Giovencho della Stufa sano e salvo. Di tutto l'addio sia lodato.*

1823 ASFi, MAP 97, no. 5; MAP 104, no. 60, c. 60r. Roover (1974), p. 409. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 497–508.

1824 ASFi, MAP 104, no. 60, c. 60r. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 497–508.

1825 Thus, for instance, in a document issued in Basel: ASFi, Diplomatico, Medici, 1442 novembre 12.

was again dependent on Geneva.<sup>1826</sup> Furthermore, the head of the agency is still referred to as *actori et negotiorum gestori Cosme de Medicis, sive Johannis Benci in Basilea*.<sup>1827</sup> All this indicates that the Medici had entered into a contract with Benci regarding the Basel branch in 1441, thus transferring the main responsibility for the company to him. The fact that we are talking about a liquidated company here becomes evident from the circumstance that Basel's entire reserves were transferred to the company in Geneva.<sup>1828</sup> The staff was reduced to a single factor and a *garzone* and a large part of the business premises was closed down.<sup>1829</sup> Business activity, too, sank markedly: in March 1442, only three transactions by the current factor were outstanding, while twenty-seven loans from his predecessors had not yet been settled.<sup>1830</sup>

During the last phase of its existence, the Basel branch of the Medici bank was headed by Lorenzo di Giovanni Becchi, who by then had already become a member of the Arte della Seta and the Arte del Cambio in Florence. This suggests that he was not only a factor, but actually a partner.<sup>1831</sup> He had become the agency's manager by 1 August 1441 at the latest; in January 1444 he is mentioned in a notarial deed in Basel: *Laurencio Iohannis Nettoli de Florentia, factori*

1826 ASFi, MAP 104, no. 60, c. 600. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 497–508.

1827 StaBS, St. Urk. 1275.

1828 ASFi, MAP 153, no. 3, c. 20.

1829 ASFi, MAP 104, no. 60, c. 601. The rent for the period from 25 March 1441 to 31 July 1441 was f. 40. For the following twelve months, only f. 50. This has probably more to do with the circumstance that premises were given up and returned to the landlord than with a fall in rental costs. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 497–508.

1830 ASFi, MAP 104, no. 60, cc. 598–602. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 497–508.

1831 His identity is somewhat blurred in the written tradition, for in the contemporary sources he is named as either Lorenzo di Nettolo, Laurencio Iohannis Nettoli, Laurentius de Medicis, or Lorenzo di Giovanni. ASFi, MAP 97, no. 5; StaBS, St. Urk. 1275; ASFi, Diplomatico, Medici, 1442 novembre 12; ASFi, MAP 104, no. 60, cc. 598–602. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 497–508. - De Roover, and later Losi and Ehrensperger, made him a relative of the predecessor: Lorenzo di Giovanni della Stufa. Thereby, they refer to documents in Camerrani where, without reference to a family name, mention is of a Lorenzo di Giovanni. Camerani Marri (1951), nos. 148–150; Losi (1968), p. 187; Roover (1974), p. 304. However, there is no historical evidence of a Lorenzo della Stufa in this period. Since it is almost impossible that a man of such standing and family heritage would not appear somewhere in the files of the *tratte*, the Catasto, the Mercanzia or the Arte del Cambio, this identification must be mistaken. I myself suggested the name Lorenzo di Giovanni Nettoli in an essay, as a Lorenzo Nettoli was in fact commissioned to transport cash from Geneva to Florence in early 1444: Roover (1974), p. 402. The Medici archives contain evidence of the existence of a Lorenzo Nettoli: ASFi, MAP 22, no. 222 and MAP 28, no. 283. But Nettoli is not the family name of our Basel Medici man; it is the Latin genitive form of the first name of his grandfather Nettolo: Lorenzo di Giovanni di Nettolo. A Giovanni di Nettolo is mentioned only once as the head of the Becchi family in the Florentine Catasto of 1427. Until 1414, this Giovanni Becchi worked for the Medici before establishing his own trading company in Imola. His son Bartolomeo can be traced to 1439 as an employee of Roberto Martelli in the Medici branch in Rome. His second son Lorenzo became a member of the Arte del Cambio in 1439 and joined the Arte della Seta in 1441. In November 1446, he signed a legal document in the Medici office in Rome; as a merchant, he was in contact with the bank of Antonio della Casa and submitted a tax return as late as 1480. His brother Francesco was a *priore* like his father. The younger brother Guglielmo was the bishop of Fiesole from 1470–1490: Roover (1970a), pp. 65, 66, 310, and 332; BNCF, Carte Passerini 176; ASFi, MAP 131, A, c. 24v; ASFi, Catasto 79, c. 243; Catasto 93, c. 45r; AOIF 12737, c. 117v; ASFi, Diplomatico normale, Dono Gondi,

*et negotiorum gestori Cosme de Medicis, sive Iohannis Benci in Basilea.*<sup>1832</sup> Three weeks later, he was in Geneva, where he wrote a letter to Florence saying that he would be in Basel in four days' time.<sup>1833</sup> It's the last record we have of his connection to Basel. The evidence suggests that Becchi did not permanently reside in Basel but travelled back and forth between Geneva and Basel as the circumstances required.

The Basel Medici company is still listed in a balance sheet of the Borromei in Rome dated 24 March 1443: *Giovanni Benci e compagni di Baxilea f. o s. 12*,<sup>1834</sup> but by 12 July 1443, this Medici branch had suspended all activities: *prestantissimus vir Cosma de Medicis, civis et mercator florentinus olim Sacrum Concilium Basilee sequens*. As the Council still owed them money, Giuliano Barrati was appointed as procurator on the same day and given the task of reclaiming the outstanding sum. His appointment is rather surprising, because this Roman merchant was not an experienced banker. He was a small spice trader facing bankruptcy, who had come to Basel because of the Council and from whom the local Medici branch had purchased paper, candles, and other items of daily use. In 1436, Tommaso Spinelli had obtained a laxative from him.<sup>1835</sup> About a year before his appointment, the manager of the Medici bank wrote in letter that Barrati still owed the bank f. 350, noting at the same time that his entire shop was not worth more than f. 100.<sup>1836</sup> Baratti did not remain in Basel very much longer; by June 1445 he was back in Rome.<sup>1837</sup>

In his *ricordanze*, Roberto Martelli proudly noted how successful his work had been. Before he came to Basel, the branch office had earned merely 200 ducats, with expenses running at 300 ducats. Creditors had f. 6,000 to f. 7,000 worth of claims against the Medici; these were offset by debtors' obligations of approximately the same amount. There was roughly f. 2,000 in the till. In his first year as manager, the bank earned an income of more than f. 1,557 by 27 June 1434 (see Table 12), although the people in Geneva consistently owed him something between three and four thousand florins; the entire profit he made from transactions with

no. 45. – In 1427, Lorenzo Becchi was 8 years old. Thus, it is actually quite realistic to believe that, at 22, he headed the still very small branch office in Basel.

1832 StaBS, St. Urk. 1275 - Little is known about Lorenzo's life before his arrival in Basel. In January 1434, he was active in his father's company in Imola. In that summer, he appears to have switched to the Medici in Rome. Cf. ASFi, MAP 5, nos. 284, 297, and 298.

1833 Bergier (1978), pp. 289–290. Letter of 25 January 1444: *E xi truova a Baxilea uno vantagatiximo maestro [...], e questo vi dicho perchè mi ritrovai in chanpo con questi tedeschi a Lafenbergh, indixino d'agosto, [...]. In fra 4 di xarò a Baxilea.* – ASFi, Diplomatico, Medici, 1443 giugno 17: The cardinal of San Martino confirmed he had received from Lorenzo di Giovanni, the director of Cosimo e Lorenzo de' Medici e co. in Basel, f. 100 for the cause of the Holy Roman Empire at the Council of Basel.

1834 YUSA 90, 1704.

1835 YUSA 645, 8949.

1836 ASFi, MAP 104, no. 60, cc. 598–602: *Giuliano Baratti f. 350 Reno. Costui nonn à a mala pena tanto possi vivere non che pagarci. Trovaxi una bottega di speciale che quando si vendesse tutto saria faticha di ritrarne f. 100.* Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 497–508.

1837 RTA XVII, p. 670.

correspondents were credited to the branch in Geneva. On top of that, the *maggiori* had never provided him with the f. 6,000 they had promised to contribute to the *corpo*. He was so short of cash that he had to borrow money from the chairman of the Council, Cardinal Cesarini. Despite all the adversity, business had flourished under him, and, in September 1434, he had been able to report to Florence that he was expecting to make a profit of several thousand florins: *abiate per fermo che al continovo mi troverò d'avanzo costà migliaia di fiorini*.<sup>1838</sup>

Resulting from his work between 1 August 1433 and 24 March 1438, Roberto Martelli transferred a total of 8,966 florini 14 soldi 1 denaro to the *maggiori*, after deducting the costs of f. 2,961 from the proceeds.<sup>1839</sup> Until the end of Gioenco della Stufa's assignment, Cosimo de' Medici entered a profit of merely f. 5,065. The difference is mainly due to provisions for *mali debitori* (Table 15).<sup>1840</sup>

The only surviving balance sheet we have of this company, dated 24 March 1442, lists a revenue of duc. 518 s. 11 d. 2 for the financial year of 25 March 1441 to 24 March 1442; in the following year, it had shrunk to duc. 370 s. 10 d. 6.<sup>1841</sup> The income of duc. 889 s. 1 d. 8 recorded

Table 15 Revenue of the Basel Medici branch, 1433–38

Period	Revenue in f.
01.08.1433 - 26.06.1434	1,557.05.01
27.06.1434 - 24.03.1435	3,895.18.01
25.03.1435 - 24.03.1436	3,347.01.11
25.03.1436 - 24.03.1437	2,007.01.00
25.03.1437 - 24.03.1438	1,119.09.09
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,927.00.00</b>

1838 ASFi, MAP 20, no. 50. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 485–488.

1839 ASFi, Fondo Martelli, no. 303, c. 57r. Obviously, a small error had occurred in Martelli's calculations, probably caused by rounding.

1840 ASFi, MAP 153, no. 3: In the financial year of 1435 (25 March 1435 to 24 March 1436), profits amounted to f. 3,570 15s., and the next year to f. 1,605. These sums were pooled on 16 May 1439 and sent to Florence. Of the total of f. 5,175 15s., f. 1,983 were left in Basel as a reserve for *i mali debitori*. The profit of f. 3,192 15s. was divided between the partners Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici (2/3), Antonio Salutati (1/6), and Giovanni Benci (1/6). In the years 1437, 1438, and 1439, gross profits amounted to f. 776 11s. 1d., f. 899 25s. 10d., and f. 722 28s. 1d. After accounting for deductions regarding defaulters and money to cover staff salaries, the net profit for these three years amounted to f. 1,872 14s. 6d. This last sum included f. 324 that had been held in Basel as a reserve in 1433 and 1434. The f. 1,872 14s. 6d. were transferred to Florence in 1441, where they were divided up according to the aforementioned key.

1841 ASFi, MAP 104, no. 60, cc. 598–602. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 497–508.

in the balance sheet for these two years, was eaten up by the costs and assets that were no longer collectible (*si perderanno*), with the result that there was no profit to be distributed among the partners: *non vi fu avanzo*.<sup>1842</sup> The balance sheet shows how revenue and costs came about (see Tables 16 and 17). However, the accounting entries are so short that it is not always apparent what kind of business is behind the sums mentioned. Nevertheless, what we do see is that the profit resulting from the trade in goods was, at something over 26 ducats, very small indeed, which can be explained by the predominance of money transactions in connection with the Council banks. Four accounts belonging to clerics had been closed at a profit, presumably involving proceeds from advanced annate payments or consumer loans. The revenue also included the premium for an insurance transaction with the Bardi in Bruges. Accounts with the Medici in

Table 16 Revenue of the Basel Medici branch, 25 March 1441 – 24 March 1442

<b>in ducati d'oro camera</b>	<b>f.</b>	<b>s.</b>	<b>d.</b>
Account of the Borromei in Milan	5	10	
Account of the Medici in Venice	73	7	
Account of Gherardo Gianfigliazzi in Valencia	5		
Interest on an account with the Medici in Venice	16		
Insurance for the Bardi in Bruges	28		
Account of <i>maestro Guglielmo di Berda</i>	3		
Account of <i>messere I. da Trevigi</i>	1	6	
Account of the Cardinal of Palermo	7	4	
Account of the Bishop of San Penxò	54	10	
Profit from the sale of goods	14	11	4
Profit from the sale of silver wares	11	11	1
Cash book (24. 3. 41 – 6. 5. 41)	5	7	5
Cash book (6. 5. 41 – 24. 8. 41)	62	13	3
Cash book (24. 8. 41 – 24. 12. 41)	40	12	8
Cash book (24. 12. 41 – 24. 3. 42)	41	17	9
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>

1842 ASFi, MAP 104, no. 60, c. 599. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 497–508. – The bishop of San Penxò mentioned in the text could not be identified.



## 5 Market Spaces

Table 17 Expenses of the Basel Medici branch, 25 March 1441 – 24 March 1442

<b>in Rhenish florins</b>	<b>f.</b>	<b>s.</b>	<b>d.</b>
Minor expenses up to 1. 8. 41	80	4	
Board for a merchant from Lübeck (Gherardo Bueri?)		17	8
Purchase of wine from Wernli von Kilchen	18		
Board for Giovanni Talani and a second employee of Gherardo Bueri from Lübeck	1	3	
To Giuliano Baratti for paper, wax, food, and alms (1 RG)	8	8	4
To Giuliano Baratti for the board of Lorenzo and a certain <i>giovane</i> for 8 months	48		
Rent to Heinrich Halbisen (24. 3. 41 – 1. 8. 41)	40		
Rent to Heinrich Halbisen (1. 8. 41 – 1. 8. 42)	50		
For fodder to Heinrich Halbisen (24. 3. 41 – 1. 8. 41)	2	11	6
Letter charges	9		
4 books for the bank	1	21	
4 paper notebooks	1	17	3
Debts of Ianni, a former cook	4		
Debts of a page	1	8	
Debts of Giovanni Ciedeler, a former servant	1		
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Expenditure in cameral ducats</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>12</b>	

Venice, Gianfigliuzzi in Valencia, and Borromei in Milan showed a surplus. The ledger, which was used for all exchange transactions, showed a surplus of almost 150 ducats.

The main positions on the expenditure side included the rent paid to Heinrich Halbisen and board for employees and their guests; the foodstuffs were purchased from Wernli von Kilchen, a local merchant, and from the Roman Giuliano Baratti. The correspondence costs and the purchase of account books amounted to a mere 12 Rhe. fl. Strangely enough, no reference is made to salaries. Overall, the Basel Medici branch was a very small bank in the year under review, with very little commercial initiative. Expenditure in Basel amounted to a total of almost 271 Rhe. fl., which equals around 200 cameral ducats.



The development of the Medici's return on business confirms Traugott Geering<sup>1843</sup> and Franz Ehrensperger's<sup>1844</sup> finding that the boom triggered by the Council reached its climax in Basel in the years from 1433 to 1437/38. This also shows that it was not so much the number of participants, which peaked in 1439, but the purchasing power of the people present that was the decisive factor.<sup>1845</sup> This was especially true for the Medici bank, which specialized in doing business with wealthy clients and was not overly involved in the small loan sector. An important indicator of the development of business intensity refers to the costs of sending and receiving letters. In the period from 13 December 1433 to 27 June 1434, the bank spent f. 10 on postage,<sup>1846</sup> while for the entire year of 1441/42 it amounted to merely f. 9.<sup>1847</sup> If one assumes that the decline of traffic through Basel after 1439 probably also led to an increase in postal charges (the fewer letters a messenger was given to transport, the higher the postage for a single letter), the remarkable decline in business volume also becomes evident.

As far as the different branches of business are concerned, the annual balance sheet reveals that in Basel, too, most of the profit resulted from financial transactions. Although the stock of goods was considerable, they were by far outweighed by money deposits (f. 763 16s. 6d. in goods compared to a deposit of over f. 2,000 made alone by Cardinal de la Plaigne).<sup>1848</sup> In that same year, 1441, the bank's profit from the goods trade amounted to merely f. 25 22s. 5d.<sup>1849</sup>

The Basel branch accounted for 5.2 per cent of the Medici enterprise's total profits (not counting wool and silk manufacture), which puts them at fourth place in the overall ranking behind Rome, Venice, and Geneva (Table 18).<sup>1850</sup> Only in Ancona, Bruges/London, and Florence was less profit made.

The *fattori* did not share in the profits but neither did they have to bear the losses, a circumstance that bitterly disappointed and frustrated Roberto Martelli. In 1439, he complained that the *maggiori* had earned f. 8,966 14s. 1d. a oro di camera in Basel, thanks to his efforts for which he had received a mere annual salary of 100 ducats, not even a quarter of what he believed he deserved. If they had not made him a partner in 1439, he would have left the company.<sup>1851</sup>

1843 Geering (1886), p. 289.

1844 Ehrensperger (1972), p. 331.

1845 Wackernagel (1907–1916), I, pp. 520–521.

1846 ASFi, MAP 131 C, c. 14.

1847 ASFi, MAP 104, no. 60, c. 601. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 497–508.

1848 ASFi, MAP 104, no. 60, cc. 599ff. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 497–508.

1849 ASFi, MAP 104, no. 60, c. 601. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 497–508.

1850 Roover (1963), p. 69.

1851 ASFi, Fondo Martelli, no. 303, c. 57r: + *Somma f. 11927 0s. 5d. De quali i maggiori n'ebbono f. 8966 14s 1d. a oro di camera che il resto si spese e per salari e per altre spese e tucto questo si fece senza avere corpo alcuno e a mme fu assignato per mio salario ducati 100 l'anno che non mi fu dato il quarto di quello meritavo e se non fusse istato che poi dell'anno 1439 mi fecero loro compagno non vi restavo contento. In his ricordanze, which are only a few pages long, he addressed this bitterness a second time. ASFi, Fondo Martelli, no. 303, c. 61r: fu proveduto come factore con salario sì piccolo che se non fusse la speranza del tempo a venire parendomi essere molto male tractato, non*

Table 18 Profits of the Medici enterprise (not including manufactories), 1435–41

Branch	f.	s.	d.	Share in %
Rome	35,960	21	0	36,9
Venice	27,740	1	10	28,9
Geneva	19,924	25	6	20,2
Basel	5,065	0	6	5,2
Ancona	4,168			4,3
Bruges / London	2,350	0	0	2,4
Florence	2,200	0	0	2,1
<b>Total</b>	<b>97,408</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Roberto's successors in Basel probably received the same amount in annual salary. In order to work on Cosimo's behalf, they must have had power of attorney although we actually know very little about their decision-making powers.<sup>1852</sup> Only in a letter from Cardinal Cesarini to Cosimo do we hear that to be able to conclude very large transactions they required the go-ahead from head office.<sup>1853</sup> The same probably pertains to financially or politically risky transactions in general.<sup>1854</sup> Still, Roberto Martelli was able to grant the Council bills of exchange worth 8,000 Rhe. fl. in Nuremberg for the war against the Hussites without having to ask for permission from Florence. But, considering the size of the sum, it again seemed advisable to have Cardinal Cesarini assure Cosimo that the bank was taking no risk by granting these loans, because they were covered by Church dues and the cardinal's personal liability.<sup>1855</sup>

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*restavo mai contento perché sapevo in VI anni avere durato in extimabile fatica e per honore e grande reputazione e ancora utilità di compagnia avere facto grandemente mio debito.* Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 513–518. – The assertion that he had become rich in Basel is certainly not true. The claim that he had lent the Holy Roman Empire f. 8,000 from his own purse, with which the latter ransomed the city of Plzeň from the Hussites, is based on a wrong interpretation of Medici business records. See Litta (1819–1894), I, tavola I.

1852 Giudici (1850), II, p. 78, quotes a corresponding provision from the *Statuti dell'Arte di Calimala*.

1853 ASFi, MAP 12, no. 417.

1854 ASFi, MAP 20, no. 50. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 485–488.

1855 ASFi, MAP 12, no. 417: *Et quia pridie erant necessaria quatuor milia florenorum Renensium, induxi Robertum ut faceret litteram cambii in Norimbergam ut solverentur pro succursu eiusdem fidelissime civi tatis Pilznensis obsesse ab hereticis. Rehabuit de pecuniis que quotidie colliguntur circa tria milia, et ante non multos dies habebit residuum, et multo plus de semidecima imposta in Alamania. Et quia maior pecunia erat necessaria nec in promptu inveniebatur, ut res fidei non paterentur aliquid detrimentum induxi dictum Robertum ad mutuandum alia quatuor milia nationi gallicane, oro qua summa se obligarunt circa 25 prelatos et alias personas usque ad summam*

The fact that staff from the Medici branch at the Curia were sent to Basel has a lot to do with the type of business conducted at the two banking centres. Benci, Martelli, della Stufa, and probably also Becchi, had experience in dealing with high clerical representatives. They were familiar with the wishes and quirks of this special clientele and knew what cooperating with them meant. Of course, it was also of great advantage that these employees knew many of the participants at the Council personally from their time in Rome; this made business dealings much easier.

The branch managers were supported by so-called *garzoni* and *giovani* – that is, young and subordinate employees – by servants (*famiglio*) and a host of helping hands (*anciullo*, *ragazzo*, *paggio*, *cuoco*). Their task consisted of transporting valuables from one office to the other and of performing less sensitive chores (secretarial, minor accounting, assembling, and dispatching of goods, etc.). In Basel, we repeatedly come across the *giovane* Piero Malzi who, however, never became a *fattore* during his time with the Medici.<sup>1856</sup> In all positions in which banking know-how was required, we only find Italians; simpler tasks, however, were also performed by Germans.

Unfortunately, it is no longer possible to determine the number of staff that worked for the Medici in Basel. In an account book containing records from December 1433 to June of the following year, there is mention of eight people. Since one probably has to count in one person responsible for the kitchen and one for household chores, we can reckon with roughly ten men.<sup>1857</sup> From 1 August 1441 on, after the bank had scaled down activities, only the manager and a *giovane* (Zacheria Müller) were left in Basel; a *cuoco* (Ianni) and a *fanciullo* (Giovani Ciedeler) had recently been dismissed or had at least left work, leaving behind debts.<sup>1858</sup>

#### German Merchants as Clients of the Medici Bank

Economic activity in the regional and local markets in Germany was only a sideline for the Basel Council banks.<sup>1859</sup> Trade and banking with the Germans alone would not have generated enough turnover and profit to induce Florentines to take up residence north of the Alps. Moneys could be transferred between German cities and the Council – also without the participation of Italians – via the inner-German payment system. For example, on 15 September 1436, Heinrich

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*6 milia florenorum et plus. Nichilominus ne sotietas vestra posset terminare in damno, ego me oblogavi ipsi Roberto in solidum usque ad dicta quatuor milia que sine dubio recolligentur et plura. Nichilominus si quo casu non recolligentur usque ad illam summam ut scitis non potestis perdere quia adhuc esse debent apud vos quatuor milia et quadringenti vel circa ducati, ymo multo maior mihi deberetur si fieret mihi certa ratio.*

1856 ASFi, MAP 153, no. 2, c. 32d. 25 May 1440: In 1439, Piero Malzi received an annual salary of 32 scudi in his role as a *giovane* at the Geneva Medici branch. The branch in Bruges referred to him as Piero Malzi di Friborgho in 1441, ASFi, MAP 134, no. 3, c. 21v.

1857 ASFi, MAP 131 C: Ruberto Martelli (*fattore*, branch manager), Giovenco della Stufa (*fattore* or *garzone*), Ghaltieri (*famiglio*), Francesco (*nostro* without specification), Giacomo (*famiglio*), Rubino (*famiglio*), Piero Malzi (*nostro* without specification), Iodoco (*ragazzo*).

1858 ASFi, MAP 104, no. 60, cc. 598–602. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 497–508.

1859 On the three levels of banking activity in Germany, see Hildebrandt (1991), p. 831.

Halbisen from Basel paid in his own name and that of the mint master Peter Gatz 200 Rhe. fl. to the Apostolic abbreviator Nicolaus Volrat, which the Nuremberg merchant Fritz Usmer had issued to Cardinal Cervantes.<sup>1860</sup> During the Council of Basel, the influx of German funds was integrated into the Florentine financial network. At this time, the city transformed into a global trading hub, allowing German traders to access financial services from Italian merchants comparable to those available in Venice or Bruges.

Prominent merchants in Basel – such as Halbisen, Wernli von Kilchen, and Niklaus Gottschalk –<sup>1861</sup> as well as German bankers who had come to town because of the Council, such as Johannes Westfeling,<sup>1862</sup> – made, as clients, extensive use of the services of the Florentines. Shortly after the establishment of the Medici branch office, they took out loans there and bought bills of exchange. The fact that Halbisen hosted the Medici and Wernli von Kilchen the Borromei bears witness to older relationships between these German and Italian merchants.<sup>1863</sup> The Upper Rhine high finance “with international tentacles” that Wolfgang von Stromer found in the invoices of the general treasurer of the counts and dukes of Savoy undoubtedly worked closely with the Medici in Basel and Geneva.<sup>1864</sup> The last documented transaction between leading Basel merchants and the Medici can be found in the general ledger of the subsidiary in Bruges from 1441. At that time, Heinrich Halbisen conducted business with Bruges and Geneva through the Basel Medici branch. In this way, he paid for the purchase of a large quantity of wool at Ubertino de’ Bardi in London. Payments were also made through his son, who was staying in Mechelen and visited the fair in Antwerp.<sup>1865</sup> After the Council banks departed, this golden age of Basel trade came to an end very quickly.

As far as the connection between Basel and Venice is concerned, in addition to Heinrich Halbisen, Wernli von Kilchen, and Hans Amelung, there were other merchants who used this service: the Diesbach-Watt company; Hans Bromm<sup>1866</sup> and Wolf Blum<sup>1867</sup> from Frankfurt; Matthäus Bachendens (Bacgarach) from Cologne; and Dibur (von Burg?) from Strasbourg (Table 19).<sup>1868</sup> They twice used the mediation services of Jakob, the landlord of the inn Zur Krone in Basel. On

1860 ASFi, MAP 89, nos. 23/24. Usmer at Stromer (1970a), p. 375.

1861 ASFi, MAP 131 C, cc. 11, 12, 13, 17, and 36.

1862 Wäckernagel (1907–1916), II, p. 512.

1863 On the relationships between the Borromei and the Diesbach-Watt-Gesellschaft with Peter von Watt and Wernli von Kilchen, see above p. 202. – Is Bernart Altisan in Rocchi (1980), p. 96, one Bernhard Halbisen? If so, a man from Basel would already have been active as a merchant in Spain around 1394.

1864 Stromer (1995a), p. 155: “mit internationalen Tentakeln” (‘with international tentacles’). He did not realize that Michele di Ferro was one of the most important Medici bankers of the time: correspondent of the Medici in Geneva between approximately 1420 and 1424; then, with Amerigo Benci, shareholder of the bank in Geneva. Cassandro (1976b), p. 574.

1865 Sieveking (1906), pp. 46–47; Apelbaum (1915), p. 27; Ehrensperger (1972), p. 319.

1866 Simonsfeld (1887), I, p. 224; Sieveking (1906), p. 21; Braunstein (2016), pp. 253–257.

1867 Stromer (1995a), p. 83, according to Barbarigo’s Mastro B fol. 88a/b, 97 b.

1868 ASFi, MAP 134, no. 1.

Table 19 Bills of exchange for German merchants from Basel to Venice, 1436/37

<b>deliverer</b>	<b>Deposit</b>	<b>payee</b>	<b>Disbursement</b>	<b>Lire</b>
Piero Bachirech	28.06.36	Piero Bachirech (Peter von Bacharach) o a Giovanni Brome di Franchoforda	28.07.36	20.00.00
Matteo Bacchendens di Cholongna	14.07.36	Matteo Bacchendens di Chologna	30.07.36	40.00.00
Iachopo, ostiere della corona	15.06.36	Piero Bacherech e Giovanni Brome	01.08.36	50.00.00
Iachopo della Corona	12.07.36	Piero Bacherech e Giovanni Brome	01.08.36	60.00.00
Ghuernieri della Chiesa	19.07.36	Giovanni Charlini, fattore di Piero di Vatt, o Bartolomeo, famiglio di Ghuernieri della Chiesa	02.08.36	60.00.00
Ghuarnieri della Chiesa	19.06.36	Giovanni Charlini, fattore di Piero Devunit di Norinbergho, o Bartolomeo, famiglio di Ghuernieri della Chiesa	04.08.36	100.00.00
Giovanni Amelonch da Basilea	21.08.36	Giovanni Amelonch da Basilea	20.09.36	10.00.00
Arigho Elbison	21.10.36	Giovanni Cherlini	12.01.37	40.00.00
Arigho Elbison	07.12.36	Giovanni Bruno, fattore di Buolf Brumm di Franchofordia e per lui gli demmo alla chomeseria di Luigi de' Richoverati	22.01.37	40.00.00
Arigho Elbison	21.01.37	Churado Dibur o Giovanni Dibur	15.02.37	10.00.00
Egdo Stang	07.01.37	Churado Dibur, Giovanni Dibur da Strasborgho	15.02.37	10.00.00

the other hand, they were not involved in arbitrage transactions between the banks, although many of them transferred bills of exchange between Venice and Bruges through the Medici.<sup>1869</sup>

What is striking about the composition of the group of German merchants who processed bills of exchange via Basel is the absence of merchants from Nuremberg; for them, the presence of the Medici in Basel brought no new business options.

There was also cooperation between Heinrich Halbisen and Gherardo Bueri in Lübeck. When the Florentine died, Friedrich Sennheim from Basel came forward as Halbeisen's procurator. He received 346 Lübeck marks from the executors of the estate. Whether this debt was due to goods deliveries or exchange transactions cannot be ascertained.<sup>1870</sup>

### Correspondent Structure

No other Florentine bank in Germany achieved a trading volume comparable to that of the Medici branch office at the Council of Basel, which existed between 1432 and 1444.<sup>1871</sup> Until 1436, the nucleus of its network of correspondents was composed of the Medici in Venice, di Corte in Florence and Geneva (Amerigo Benci e co.), Ventura & Pazzi in Avignon and Barcelona, Gherardo Bueri in Lübeck, and Ubertino de' Bardi in Bruges and London. This structure is extensively reflected in the dispatch charges recorded in an account book from 1433/34 (Table 20).<sup>1872</sup> The large number of letters to Venice seen there is certainly due to the fact that Cosimo und Lorenzo de' Medici were themselves staying in the city at the time, so that all *lettere private* had to be sent there. The importance of Basel for transactions with Bruges, transactions which then continued on to London, is confirmed. As their own messengers were constantly on the road to Geneva and would carry the letters for free, the actual volume of correspondence between these two places, along with Avignon and Barcelona, must have been much higher. The fact that there are no German cities among them shows that letters to these cities were not conveyed by paid postmen but rather by friendly clerics and merchants.

An account book of the Medici in Venice from 1436/37 shows the bankers in Basel and the recipients of their letters as a circle of Italian banks that conducted a lively trade in bills of exchange. Most of them were for more than 50 Rhe. fl. The posting texts are too succinctly worded to enable identifying which of these transactions involved the balancing of accounts and which involved bankers trying to make a profit by exploiting exchange rate fluctuations in

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1869 ASFi, MAP 134, no. 1: Stefan Volkmeier (5r), Wilhelm and Georg Mendel (5r, 32r, 37v, 48v, 136v), Ludwig Poltus (30v), Lienhard, Karl, and Wilhelm Hirschvogel (30v), Georg and Heinrich Rummel (31v), Nikolaus Wolf (32r), Hans Meuting (75v). Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 550–552. - On Volkmeier, see letter from Lienhardt in Nuremberg to his brother Stefan in Venice from 4 February 1435 in ASFi, MAP 68, no. 484.

1870 Fouquet (1998), p. 218.

1871 In this chapter, only the bankers' business with persons will be addressed. On transactions on behalf of the Council as an institution, see p. 288.

1872 ASFi, MAP 131, C.

Table 20 Number of letters to and from Basel, December 1433 – June 1434

from	to Basel	from Basel	to
Venice	5	14	Venice
Bruges	1	4	Bruges
Geneva		4	Geneva
Barcelona	2	2	Barcelona
Avignon	1	1	Avignon
Rome		1	Rome
Florence		1	Florence

the international banking centres. Basel was the only German city that, during the time of the Council, was involved in moving such large sums of money.<sup>1873</sup> The branch office in Basel was fully integrated into the framework of the Medici interbank strategy. Nevertheless, the Rhenish florin commonly used in Basel was a little-known currency for the Florentines and trade with it was not simple. In February 1433, Giovanni d’Amerigo Benci wrote from Basel to the manager of the Medici bank in Geneva, warning him against arbitrage transactions with these coins, as the exchange rate had evidently not evolved as expected: *Credetti fosse grascia in questi fiorini di Reno: egl’ è il chontrario; non ve ne traete più a pregi in mercatanti, e avere costì uno marco d’oro a fiorini 83 sono contento, e non lo fate di somma che potesino avere verghogna.*<sup>1874</sup>

In addition to the main network, there was a second one with merchants who only engaged in occasional money transactions with the Medici in Basel. These were primarily the other Italian companies in Basel and Curia-based bankers: Guarienti, Borromei, Alberti, della Casa.<sup>1875</sup> The pan-European origins of the Council participants also led to relationships with unusual trading centres: of these was the Breton city of Nantes. It was where Jacopo Tomucci from Lucca worked, and the Medici in Basel issued a bill of exchange to him for 111 scudi on 9 July 1436

1873 An example of such a posting from ASFi, MAP 134, No. 1, c. 49v: *A’ nostri di Basilea per loro, lire cinquanta di grossi, sono per la valuta a grossi 48 1/2 per ducato, che insino a di 21 del passato rimettemmo per loro a Bruggia a’ Bardi da Luigi Benbo in somma di lire 127 11s. di grossi, sono per tanti qui a ser Francesco Balbi e fratelli, portò ser Francesco detto; posto a libro grande, a c. 16 – L. 50.* Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 550–552. - De Roover and Stromer have described how these arbitrage transactions functioned: Roover (1963), pp. 112–123; Stromer (1970a), p. 438.

1874 ASFi, MAP 88, no. 119. Probably written shortly after 5 February 1433: ‘I thought there was profit in these Rhenish florins: but it’s the opposite; you don’t extract more value from merchants, and I am content to get one gold mark for 83 florins there, and don’t make an amount that could bring shame.’

1875 ASFi, MAP 131 C, cc. 5v, 9r, 17r, and 18r. – AOIF 12737, cc. 11r, 37v, and 236r. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 553–566.

for the canon Jean Billy. On 29 May 1437, Tomucci sent the mandate back, refusing to settle it, and gave instructions to pay the amount to Colo della Mossaya.<sup>1876</sup>

Until the bank was closed, basically nothing changed regarding the composition of the Medici network, as the balance sheet of the correspondent accounts from March 1442 shows (Table 21).<sup>1877</sup> The only change was in Bruges, where the Bardi were superseded by the newly established Medici bank as correspondents; the Bardi subsidiary in London remained part of the system. Even though this information comes from a balance sheet that only reflects a snapshot in time on a particular day, it nevertheless expresses the fact that many more bills of exchange were honoured in Basel than were issued, for correspondents in Basel had almost no assets. The close connection to the trading centres of Geneva and Venice are clear, whereas the Curia and the Council of Basel had by this time drifted apart to such an extent that there was little monetary traffic between the two places.

The involvement of the Medici bank in Basel in the Florentine system of financial transactions by means of bills of exchange is shown in many supporting documents for bills of exchange issued in Basel or serviced there. In this way, the participants of the Council could have funds sent to them for their own subsistence; and the envoys of ecclesiastical or secular institutions could get the florins with which they tried to gain the favour of the decision-makers and paid the costs of the proceedings. The Curial clerics made up a particularly large and wealthy group. They were mainly served by Cosimo's bank in Basel, as it was the only one with a *di Corte* sister

Table 21 Balances of the correspondents of Giovanni Benci e co. in Basel on 24 March 1442 (sums in cameral ducats)

		Liabilities	Assets
Avignon	Jacopo Ventura		16
Barcelona	Jacopo Ventura	2	
Bruges	Bernardo Portinari	4	
London	Ubertino de' Bardi		46
Corte	Borromeo Borromei	1	
Corte	Cosimo de' Medici	64	
Geneva	Giovanni Benci		2,248
Venice	Cosimo de' Medici		777

1876 ASFi, Diplomatico, Medici, 1436 luglio 9. – Billy did not agree with this course of action and had a protest notarized in Venice: ASFi, Diplomatico, Medici, 1437 ottobre 7.

1877 See [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 497–508.



company until 1438, when, commercially speaking, the zenith of banking business in Basel had already been reached. Therefore, it dominated bill of exchange transactions between the Council and the Curia during the first phase of the synod. The protonotaries, secretaries, and procurators generated a lot of revenue for it with a large number of transfers, albeit mostly for small amounts. Business with the cardinals was certainly much more lucrative, for the bank had a near monopoly. Only for money transactions with exchange marketplaces outside Italy could other banks carry out transactions for *porporati*: a payment for Cardinal Prospero Colonna from London to the Rhine was executed by the Alberti; the Spanish cardinal Ram had money from his homeland transferred by the Borromei.<sup>1878</sup>

The Italians and the French were the predominant clients for the Medici's bills of exchange in Basel that were not connected to their sister company in Rome (*i nostri di Corte*).<sup>1879</sup> The small number of *pagatori* and *beneficiari* from the sphere of influence of the Duke of Milan is noteworthy. This fact can be easily explained by the political situation of those years, for Milan was facing an alliance of the pope, Venice, Florence, and Genoa in 1435.<sup>1880</sup> Among the German clients were primarily people from the north and Scandinavia; transactions to Upper Germany or the Rhineland are documented much less often. Thus, the connection to Gherardo Bueri in Lübeck is reflected in the sources with great clarity.<sup>1881</sup>

### Mercantile Trade

The Medici's range of goods was completely tailored to the needs of its clerical customers. In 1442, it included golden cups, chalices, and silver spoons.<sup>1882</sup> They even had two bishop's mitres (*2 capelli da vescovi, chollì cordoni*) in stock.<sup>1883</sup> Nevertheless, business with the holy gentlemen was not always easy. Roberto Martelli ordered expensive cloth (*domaschino bianco broccato d'oro*) in Florence for Cardinal Albergati in 1434.<sup>1884</sup> The cardinal had already left Basel when the cloth arrived, and Martelli was left sitting on the goods (*mi restò adosso*). The gold on the borders of the cloth got blacker and blacker, so nobody else wanted to buy it. The purchase price was debited to the Medici account in Florence and is possibly the same amount that is mentioned in the Basel balance sheet of 1442.<sup>1885</sup>

1878 YUSA 90, 1700. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 523–527.

1879 A complete list of the documentation for bills of exchange transactions with the Italians and the French is much too long to be included here. A few examples from the ASFi must suffice. MAP 13, no. 94, Diplomatico, Medici, 1435 gennaio 15, 1436 luglio 9, 1437 ottobre 7, 1442 agosto 8, 1443 giugno 18. See StaBS, St. Urk. 1275.

1880 Odenweller (2019), pp. 105–107.

1881 On bills of exchange transactions with Gherardo Bueri in Lübeck, see p. 290. On Venice, see [Weissen \(2021\)](#), p. 550.

1882 ASFi, MAP 104, no. 60, c. 601. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 497–508.

1883 ASFi, MAP 104, no. 60, c. 602. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 497–508.

1884 ASFi, MAP 104, no. 60, c. 601. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 497–508.

1885 ASFi, MAP 131 C, c. 5.

Success in the goods trade was highly dependent on the course of the ecclesiastical assembly. Roberto Martelli wrote to Lorenzo de' Medici in 1434 that cloth for 800 ducats was sold within a few days. Only a few years later, he reported to Florence that no real profit could be made in the cloth trade in Basel.<sup>1886</sup> The branch manager in Bruges, Bernardo Portinari, was asked to have goods (*alchuni broccati d'oro*) that were stored in Basel sent to him in Bruges if they could be sold there.<sup>1887</sup> The balance sheet and inventory from 1442 are evidence of the almost complete collapse of mercantile trade, which in the previous year had only yielded a profit of f. 25 22s. 5d.<sup>1888</sup> Three items for over f. 56 were debited on the balance sheet, as the goods had not been paid for. Cloth worth f. 478 was still in the warehouse; it had come from London, Rouen, and their own workshops in Florence.<sup>1889</sup>

#### Miscellaneous Services (Building Trust)

The worldly-wise merchants also offered their international clientele in the unfamiliar German cities assistance that went far beyond banking strictly speaking. These services show that the money business was already largely based on personal relationships at that time. Important customers, for example, were helped with the arduous transport of luggage. This work was undertaken by specialized carters or young bank employees who had to make the sometimes quite perilous journey between the individual trading centres. It was understandable that the bank was asked to include other goods in its commercial shipments. This developed into a small business that the financial institutions offered as a service to their customers without any expectation of profit. In 1430, Cardinal Antonio Panciera from Aquileia had to pay the Medici in Rome somewhat more than a ducat for the transport of a case: *furono di spesa a una valigia mandamo*.<sup>1890</sup> Detailed lists of the crates to be transported were drawn up in order to make sure that the carters did not steal anything. Such a document is the only source for the fact that transport services like this were also offered from Basel.<sup>1891</sup>

The transport of goods was connected to the trade in insurance contracts. Cosimo de' Medici, however, always warned his people against taking part in these transactions.<sup>1892</sup> For this reason,

1886 ASFi, MAP 20, no. 50. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 485–488.

1887 ASFi, MAP 68, no. 588: *A Basilea et Ginevra restano anchora molti drappi di detta ragione, fra' quali sono alchuni broccati d'oro, come per una nota vedrai. Se ti paresse o tu credessi finirli chostà a pregio che noi ce ne salvassimo, puoi scrivere nell'uno luogho e nell'altro che tti siano mandati, che chosi s'è ordinato faranno. Ma abbi a righuardo di non farli venire se non credi spacciarli con profitto.*

1888 ASFi, MAP 104, no. 60, c. 601. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 497–508.

1889 ASFi, MAP 20, no. 50, 22 September 1434: *Abiamo in questi di venduti drappi per ducati 800 con poco utile, che altro non s'è potuto fare, e di quelli ci restano faccian quanto si può. Sono in buon luogo e bene governati.* Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 485–488. – ASFi, MAP 104, no. 60, c. 602. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 497–508.

1890 ASFi, MAP 131 A, c. 80v. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 534–549.

1891 ASFi, MAP 68, no. 641.

1892 Roover (1974), p. 127.

evidence of activity of Medici subsidiaries in this branch of trade is very rare. It is, therefore, not surprising that only one insurance transaction can be documented for the Basel branch: It gave an insurance guarantee for a transport of the Bardi company in Bruges. As the goods arrived at their destination undamaged, the substantial premium of f. 28 was booked as profit.<sup>1893</sup>

In the best cases, the bond of trust between banker and client could also assume very personal forms, as a letter of Cardinal Albergati to the manager of the Medici branch in Basel documents. In the letter, the clergyman not only asks for a small loan, but also for assistance in finding suitable accommodation in the city.<sup>1894</sup> Tommaso Spinelli once lent a prelate tableware for a dinner, and the latter could not give all of it back.<sup>1895</sup> Often, through the fulfilment of personal wishes like these, a close relationship developed, one which positively affected the solidity of the business relationship.

#### Political Activities of the Medici in Basel

In addition to all of the positive economic prospects, political interests also influenced Cosimo de' Medici's decision to establish a subsidiary in Basel. During his year-long exile in Padua and Venice from October 1433 on, he continued to pursue his political agenda.<sup>1896</sup> He was intent on learning everything that happened at the Council and tried as far as possible to influence the political decisions of the ecclesiastical assembly for the benefit of the Republic of Florence. He expected regular reports on the proceedings of the Council from the heads of his bank. Moreover, he had many other Italians send reports to him from Basel.<sup>1897</sup> Thus, there is a letter in the Medici archive from the cardinal of Cyprus about the course of the proceedings in Arras involving the cardinal of England and the duke of Burgundy, as well as the report of Marchus Marinonus to Cardinal Branda da Castiglione about the course of events in Basel in September 1435.<sup>1898</sup> The favours were, however, reciprocal, as cardinals who supported Cosimo hoped that he would intercede with the pope on their behalf when they had a request. One example is the letter from the six cardinals residing in Basel to Cosimo, in which they asked him to intercede with

1893 ASFi, MAP 104, no. 60, c. 60r. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 497–508.

1894 ASFi, MAP 46, no. 10, 15 March 1436: *Mandiamo là ad Basilea Iacomo Spagnolo, nostro famigio, presente portatore, ad provederze d'una casa apta per noy. Pertanto vi preghiamo che vi piazza essere cum luy se bisognerà ad cerchare la dicta casa. Et bisognandoli per fare fornire la dicta casa, denari, vi preghiamo che per fine ad 20 o ad 25 fiorini li paghiati, e metete ad nostro conto.*

1895 YUSA 90, 1700: *miser Charlo Adelangno da Trevigi, per resto di taze li prestamo a una ciena fecie, che li furo abbatuti, sianne in parte sichuri e dovrà pagare presto.* Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 523–527.

1896 Cosimo and the Council of Basel is too extensive an issue to deal with comprehensively in this investigation of banking strategies. The following remarks are therefore limited to a summary of the political activities of his factors in Basel.

1897 ASFi, MAP 20, no. 72: Letter of 9 December 1438 from Francesco da Todì in Basel to Cosimo de' Medici.

1898 ASFi, MAP 72, no. 436; MAP 12, no. 173. – Additional letters from the Council with no direct connection to the Medici: ASFi, MAP 66, no. 34.

Eugene IV for the release of funds from Cardinal Colonna at the Curia.<sup>1899</sup> For their part, the Medici were helped by the Council fathers to collect moneys in the Kingdom of Castile by getting the Council president to send an official letter to Spain on the matter.<sup>1900</sup>

Since the Signoria of Florence had no official delegates in Basel after the Council moved to Ferrara, Cosimo's branch managers served as nunciature substitutes<sup>1901</sup> and as sources of information, without the Republic having to take a prominent stance. Roberto Martelli, Giovenco della Stufa, and Lorenzo Becchi had the assignment to report to Florence everything that they could find out about political developments at the Council or elsewhere in northern Europe. Nine letters from the branch managers in Basel to the *maggiori* in Italy are kept in the Medici archive in the Archivio di Stato di Firenze. Business matters play only a minor role in these letters; they are mainly reports on the proceedings at the assembly, personal assessments of the situation, and prospects.<sup>1902</sup>

In his *ricordanze*, Roberto Martelli describes two courses of events that he participated in and was proud of because they had contributed to the renown of the company he represented.<sup>1903</sup> In 1434, he provided the German nation at the Council with an interest-free loan of 8,000 florins, which played a crucial role in organizing the successful campaign against the Hussites.<sup>1904</sup> A year later, he had provided 12,000 ducats for the costs of reunification with the Greek Church at the request of all the Council participants.<sup>1905</sup>

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1899 ASFi, MAP II, no. 548: Letter of 17 December 1434 from Cardinal Colonna to Cosimo de' Medici. – ASFi, MAP 148, no. 43: Letter of December 1434 from the six cardinals residing in Basel to Cosimo in support of Cardinal Colonna.

1900 MC, II: 1435 August 19, Deputatio pro communibus.

1901 Helmraht (1987), p. 257.

1902 ASFi, MAP II, nos. 543, 609, 611, and 618; 13, nos. 77 and 114; 20, nos. 50, 55, and 76.

1903 ASFi, Fondo Martelli, no. 303, c. 60r: *perché la nostra compagnia mediante lo mezo mio vi fe' due cose degnie di memoria a laude e gloria della detta compagnia*. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 513–518.

1904 ASFi, Fondo Martelli, no. 303, c. 60r: *negli anni MCCCCXXXVIII l'exercito degli ussi ovvero boemi a campo incontro alla città di Pilsna e quella avendo per fame quasi ridotta all'ultima disperazione e conoscendosi che dove quella a terra vi fuse perduta tucta la Magna e per conseguente tucta la cristiannità era opressa da i detti infedeli prestammo f. 8000 di reno alla nazione giermanica senza alcuna utilità e fussi tale sforzo che non solamente si dette soccorso alla detta terra ma mediante l'operazione del cardinale di Santo Agnolo si misse tra i detti boemi tale discordia che in tra lloro per 2 battaglie furono insieme se n'amazzarono ben XXVIII mila di che in tucto n'è conseguito la loro disfazione e mai poi preso armi contro e cristiani*. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 513–518.

1905 ASFi Fondo Martelli, no. 303, c. 60v: *E da ppoi nell'anno MCCCCXXXV sendo per lo Concilio già ordinato di fare la unione de' greci e mancando al Concilio e per mandare l'imbasciadori in Gostantinopoli e quivi fare convenire tucti quelli della Chiesa orientale acciò disponessino e deliberassono la passata dell' Omperadore e di tucti quelli che passarono in Ytalia ducati d'oro XII mila e non possedendosi a questa somma provedere per lo Concilio non obstante moltissime provisioni avessono facte. E protestando l'imbasciadori greci che per la nostra Chiesa occidentale non si servava l'operarsi facto e che tucto lo Concilio insieme congregato mi richiesono gli volessi aiutare e sobvenire in tanto loro bisogno avendo preso la obligatione di tucti e prelati verano e factomi ben sicuro gli servi di decta somma donde ne seguì che l'imbasciadori del Concilio insieme con quelli de' greci e accordorono allora la passata de' greci di qua e passarono*. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 513–518.

The most direct and public intervention of the Florentine bankers in the political proceedings of the assembly was the seal affair. When, on 5 May 1437, the Council fathers passed a decree according to which the Union Council with the Greeks would take place in Avignon, a minority drafted a decree in favour of Florence or Udine. As a representative of Cosimo de' Medici, Roberto Martelli became involved in a conspiracy,<sup>1906</sup> the goal of which was to affix the Council seal on the minority decree. In the night of 13 to 14 June, the bottom of the coffer of seals – secured with four locks – was prised off, the seal affixed to the decree, and sent off. Although the seal was put back in the coffer, the fraud was soon discovered. The theft was kept secret at first, and the roads leading to Italy were blocked. The messenger was intercepted and the dubious document, together with a number of letters of the archbishop of Taranto, were taken back to Basel.<sup>1907</sup> People from the circle of the Council president Cesarini were quickly identified as the perpetrators: his servant Alexander, his secretary Bartolomeo de' Battiferri, and Roberto Martelli. The main culprit, however, was Giovanni Berardi da Tagliacozzo, the archbishop of Taranto. Cardinal Cesarini swore that he had nothing to do with the affair. The Council believed him and decided not to investigate him. However, he subsequently lost much of his previous influence. Battiferri fled to Italy; Alexander was arrested in Strasbourg and imprisoned in Basel.<sup>1908</sup> The archbishop confessed that he had asked Martelli to transport the decree but denied that he had broken open the coffer of seals.<sup>1909</sup> He evaded the trial, which began on 21 June, by fleeing to the papal court in Bologna.<sup>1910</sup> Margrave William of Hachberg-Sausenberg, the representative of the council protector, and Baron Rudolf of Ramstein, an influential figure in the Basel region, aided in his escape.<sup>1911</sup>

Among the letters intercepted were those of Roberto Martelli, which caused some resentment when they were read before the Council assembly. Omitting the connection to the Medici bank, Enea Silvio Piccolomini reports: *Robertus, ut erat dicax, furere synodum ajebat, patres quosdam temulentos asserebat, quosdam ignavos, asinos, boves appellabat*. Martelli had sarcastically described the Council fathers as drunkards, donkeys, and oxen.<sup>1912</sup> This kind of humour was not well received by the prelates. In the end, he was briefly placed under house arrest and interrogated. The manager of the Borromei bank, Giovanni da Castro, was subjected to the same procedure, but he does not

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1906 Sources: Piccolomini, (Pius II) (1823), pp. 73–75; MC II, pp. 979–982. Secondary literature: Zhisman (1858), pp. 171–173; Valois (1909), pp. 63–65; Becker (1935), pp. 52–54; Clifford (1972), pp. 435–439.

1907 Becker (1935), p. 53; Clifford (1972), p. 436. Sources: MC II, p. 979; CB, V, p. 253.

1908 Clifford (1972), p. 437. Sources: MC, II, pp. 982–983 and 985. According to Piccolomini, (Pius II) (1823), p. 75, he renounced worldly life and entered a monastery.

1909 Clifford (1972), pp. 437–438.

1910 MC, II, p. 990. – Clifford (1972), p. 438.

1911 Wurstisen (1883), pp. 236–237.

1912 Piccolomini, (Pius II) (1823), pp. 74–75. “Robert, as he was witty, said that the synod was mad, claimed that some of the fathers were drunk, others lazy, and called them donkeys and oxen.”

seem to have become involved in the affair.<sup>1913</sup> Many details of the story are unclear, and Josef Zhisman even considers it fictional.<sup>1914</sup> A letter that Roberto sent to Battiferri in Ferrara does not contain any clear proof of his guilt, but does confirm that something happened that made his stay in Basel very unpleasant: He was abandoned, had to struggle alone because he had no one to talk to and was hated by all those who followed the *Tais* (Cardinal Louis Aleman?). The fact that he, too, had not left for Ferrara was only out of consideration for the reputation of his bank.<sup>1915</sup> He even wrote in his *ricordanze* that he believed he was *in pericolo di morte*. He did leave Basel a few months later and went to Ferrara to take over the management of the Council bank there.<sup>1916</sup>

## Borromei

### Company History

Tommaso Spinelli and Galeazzo Borromei entered into an ideal partnership for operating a bank at the ecclesiastical assembly. Tommaso brought his experience in business with the high clergy to bear and could expect that the greater part of his clerical clientele, whom he had met as head of the Alberti bank in Rome, would betake themselves to the city on the Rhine. The two men probably assumed that the pope with the Curia would also undertake the journey. It is possible that the initiative for this partnership also came from the Borromei, for Galeazzo's brother Antonio knew the conditions at the Council from his own experience: the *insignito et venerando dotor miser Antonio Bon Romei* had accompanied, with twenty horses, a delegation of the city of Venice to the Council in Basel in 1433. He was knighted by Emperor Sigismund on 3 October 1433.<sup>1917</sup> Galeazzo, on the other hand, was able to provide a great deal of money and the services of an existing network of subsidiaries (London, Bruges, Venice). In this new enterprise, Tommaso took on

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1913 MC, II, p. 990.

1914 Zhisman (1858), pp. 171–172.

1915 ASFi, MAP 96, no. 15. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 494–495.

1916 ASFi, Fondo Martelli, no. 303, c. 60v: *L'anno MCCCCXXXVIII e venono a Fferrara e per la contradizione che ffu in Basilea per rispetto del luogo dove lo Concilio per la decta unione cielebrare si doveva che cchi voleva in Vignione e chi in Firenze, mi trovai sendo in Basilea quasi in pericolo di morte solo perché chi lo voleva in Avinione che erano la più parte istavavano da mme tucte le difficoltà avevano e invero insieme con monsignore di Santo Agnolo ne feci una exactissima diligenza e perché nella fine del MCCCCXXXVIII in quello Concilio non n'era rimasto se non passione e ogni mala visione faceva me ne parti e venni a Ferrara del mese di maggio 1438 dove trovai Cosimo e Piero e Giovanni suoi figliuoli*. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 513–518. See Crum (1996), pp. 404–406. –The Council fathers in Basel did not give up the idea of having the Greeks come to the city on the Rhine, when the latter had long since reached agreement with the papal party. Evidence of this is an entry written by the Council protector Konrad von Weinsberg, in which he describes the best route for the Greeks to take from Ferrara to Basel. Generallandesarchiv Karlsruhe, GA 15 Schubl. G no. 57/15, p. 49.

1917 Beinhoff (1995), pp. 311, 320, 198, and 201. Andrea Gatari reports on this journey and on Antonio Borromei in a diary, see Gatari (1904), p. 378.

the function of manager. The account of the *libro segreto* of the company showed assets of f. 5,454 on 22 December 1435. How much of this was *corpo* and how much profit can no longer be broken down.<sup>1918</sup> Presumably, all the equity came from Galeazzo, who in return had a three-quarters share in the profits. Tommaso was entitled to the rest of the profit and brought his knowledge and manpower into the company.<sup>1919</sup> The firm was named *Galeazzo Borromei e co. di Basilea*.

In an explanation, probably given in connection with financial demands of Galeazzo's daughters, he reports on this sojourn in Basel.<sup>1920</sup> He waited there for six months before he opened a bank, probably to look into the prospects of success. The first piece of evidence for his presence at the Council is an entry in an account book of the Medici bank on 3 June 1434.<sup>1921</sup> Since the anticipated profits failed to materialize, he left the Council: *visto ch'io mi perdea lo tenpo*.<sup>1922</sup> He returned to the papal court in Florence, to which many of his Basel clientele had also gone.<sup>1923</sup> Thanks to an account of expenses from his stay north of the Alps,<sup>1924</sup> and the information that Galeazzo died six or seven months after his departure from Basel, the time span of Spinelli's stay in Basel can be determined as from 16 February 1434 to summer 1435.<sup>1925</sup>

Tommaso worked in Basel with only a small number of employees. His deputy was Giovanni da Castro, whom Galeazzo had sent from Padua to Basel as a *garzone*, presumably to have a trusted overseer there. His father was the renowned jurist Paolo di ser Angelo da Castro, a friend of Enea Silvio Piccolomini, who was Giovanni's godfather.<sup>1926</sup> Giovanni's principal task was to keep the books. The second *garzone* was the son of Tommaso's sister Isabella, Lionardo di ser Piero Doffi, who, like the servant (*famiglio*) Ianno of Maastricht (*todescho, da Traiecto*), are shown to have been in Basel from 22 December 1435 to 30 May 1437. Two other Germans, Michele and Ruggieri, and one Benedetto da Miscia, servants, had already left the service of the Florentines in December 1435.<sup>1927</sup>

After Tommaso's departure, da Castro ascended to the position of manager in the rank of a *fattore*, without being made partner. He stayed until the closure of *Borromeo Borromei e co. di Basilea* in Germany; the last surviving balance sheet was drawn up on 30 May 1437. The closure of the bank seems to have been closely related to the seal affair.<sup>1928</sup> On 3 August 1437, Tommaso Spinelli in Ferrara wrote a letter to Giovanni da Castro in Basel in which he reported on a conversation with his

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1918 YUSA 90, 1700. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 523–527.

1919 YUSA 85a, 1585a.

1920 Tommaso's text: YUSA 85, 1584. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 511–513. - Quarrel with Galeazzo's daughters: YUSA 85, 1585.

1921 ASFi, MAP 131 C.

1922 YUSA 85, 1584. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 511–513.

1923 Caferro (1995), p. 728.

1924 YUSA 645, 8949b.

1925 Galeazzo died in Venice. YUSA 85, 1574a.

1926 Martines (1968), pp. 499–500. See Mueller (1997), p. 221.

1927 YUSA 90, 1700 and 1703. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 523–532.

1928 See below p. 364.



father, who wanted him to return home immediately. Behind this demand is the seal affair, in which Giovanni was involved. The two main culprits, Battiferri and Taranto, had fled from Basel to the papal court, and Tommaso had been in contact with them for business reasons a few days before his letter. In Ferrara, there were concerns that da Castro might also have to flee Basel hastily, as he had also been questioned by the council authorities about his involvement. Tommaso advised him to depart soon, leaving only one employee behind at the bend of the Rhine.<sup>1929</sup> This is exactly what da Castro seems to have decided a few months later, for, on 10 March 1438, the director of the Medici bank wrote a letter to Cosimo, saying that Giovanni da Castro had left Basel and the young employee who had been left behind and who was the bearer of the letter had also left.<sup>1930</sup>

### Correspondents

There are no goods accounts on the balance sheets of the Borromei company in Basel, and mercantile transactions are not mentioned in the surviving letters. A diamond is the only asset in the accounts that does not derive from a purely monetary transaction. Presumably, Tommaso Spinelli largely focused on the banking business.<sup>1931</sup> The system of correspondents with whom he and da Castro collaborated can be reconstructed on the basis of four extant balance sheets.<sup>1932</sup> The nucleus was composed of the other enterprises of Galeazzo Borromei in Venice, Bruges, and London, as well as the companies of the Milanese relatives in Bruges and Milan. This family-based entrepreneurial system was supplemented by bankers who, in individual transactions, were able to issue bills of exchange directly to Basel: Martini (Avignon), Aitanti (Barcelona), Rau (Genoa), Giachinotti & Cambini (Corte), Rucellai (Florence), da Como (Milan and Geneva), Bardo di Neri (Geneva), da Meleto (Bologna), and Spinelli (Mantua). Jacopo Tomucci in Nantes and the Franchi Sachi in an unnamed location (Tournai?) could send bills of exchange to Basel as a commission transaction via Galeazzo Borromei in Bruges. Since the most important business in Basel consisted of servicing the bills of exchange of the Council participants or paying out loans secured with bills of exchange, the bank in Basel was drawn upon much more frequently with bills of exchange than it obliged its correspondents to pay out. As a result, the company found itself indebted to nearly all of its partners (see Table 22).<sup>1933</sup> The only exception was the Borromei bank in Milan, which reported a positive balance.

1929 YUSA 89, 1694a. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 489–492.

1930 ASFi, MAP II, no. 618: *Questo de' Bonromei in tutto s'è levato di qui, e quello giovane ci era rimasto per loro, sarà aporatore di questa.* – On 8 May 1438, Alessandro Borromei, head of Antonio Borromei's company in Bruges, was at the Council, as evidenced by his signature as a witness to a procura of Vieri de' Medici for Bernardo Portinari attests. However, he was almost certainly only passing through at the time. See ASFi, MAP 89, no. 27.

1931 On Tommaso Spinelli, see [Caferro \(1995\)](#); [Caferro \(1996\)](#); [Jacks/Caferro \(2001\)](#); [Caferro \(2008\)](#).

1932 See [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 523–532.

1933 If one adds up the correspondent accounts of the four balances, the amount for debtors is about nineteen times greater than that for creditors. These numbers can only serve as an indication of the imbalance between the Basel bankers and their partners, as they are subject to too many imponderables.



Table 22 Negative balances of the Borromei bank in Basel, 1435–37.

	<b>Debitors</b>	<b>22.12.1435</b>	<b>24.03.1436</b>	<b>24.03.1437</b>	<b>30.05.1437</b>
?	Giovanni e Francolino de' Franchi Sachi		55		
Bruges	Filippo Borromei e co.	10		0.5	
	Galeazzo Borromei e Antonio di Francesco e co.	17		46	50
London	Galeazzo Borromei e Antonio di Francesco e co.	4	20	0.5	0.5
Avignon	Martino Marti e co.				12
Barcelona	Piero Aitanti	4 067			
Genoa	Oddo Rau				25
Bologna	Nicholò di Piero da Meleto	19	9		
Corte	Adovardo Giachinotti e Andrea Cambini e co.	22	22	24	1 244
	Borromeo Borromei e co.			137	1 163
	Galeazzo Borromei e co.	1 938	2 573	4 235	2 873
Florence	Giovanni Rucellai e co.	23			
Geneva	Ambrogio e Iac Jacopo omo da Como di Milano			137	89
	Bardo di Neri e co.		58		
Milan	Ambrogio e Iacomo da Como		7		
	Filippo Borromei, Alexandro e Paolo da Castagnolo				24
Mantua	Buonsignore e Conte Spinelli e co.	34	34		
Nantes	Jacopo Tomucci		18	10	217
Venice	Galeazzo Borromei e Lazaro di Giovanni	313	6		

## 5 Market Spaces

Table 22 (continued)

	<b>Creditori</b>				
Venice	Niccodemo Spinelli	67	67		
Milan	Filippo Borromei, Alexandro e Paolo da Castagnolo		17		0.5
	Ambrogio e Jacopo da Como	41		790	
Bruges	Galeazzo Borromei e Antonio di Francesco e co.		52		
	Filippo Borromei e co.			4	4
Corte	Galeazzo Borromei e co.		3		

The most important connection points were the Curia, Venice, and Bruges. From Barcelona, only one single transaction can be found in the Aitanti account. However, as the lists of creditors has many Catalans on them, this payment method must have been more important than the balances express. Most of the banking centres served by the Borromei were also catered to by the Medici bank; they also had at their command, however, a connection to Milan, which was certainly very important. They were also able to serve Council visitors from Genoa and Mantua directly.

Among the clients that Spinelli served in Basel were a striking number of personages from the Duchy of Milan and the Venetian domain, where the Borromei themselves were anchored.<sup>1934</sup> In addition to Bretons, Englishmen, and Spaniards, many German clients are recorded. However, as there are no accounts of correspondents in Nuremberg or Lübeck, it can be assumed that business in these cities was transacted via the Basel merchants Heinrich Halbisen, Wernli von Kilchen, and Wernli Fridigman from the Diesbach-Watt company, who are mentioned on the balance sheets, in some cases with considerable amounts. On the other hand, hardly any Florentines and Frenchmen are represented. The first were probably sufficiently served by the Medici and Alberti; the bank apparently maintained no relations with France. In his analysis of the political affiliations of the clients, Caferro comes to the conclusion that the Borromei bank served supporters of the pope exclusively, whereas the Medici succeeded in doing business

<sup>1934</sup> See the balance sheets from Basel in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 523–532.

with Council supporters as well.<sup>1935</sup> A surprising finding given that Cosimo's support of the pope was not only obvious since the seal affair.

### Business Performance

Business performance in Basel was very disappointing for Tommaso Spinelli, and expenditures were, according to his own words, higher than profits: *non vi si faciea nulla, altro che spendere*.<sup>1936</sup> The four surviving balance sheets of the Borromei bank do not cover all the booking periods, nor do they give the period of time balanced; therefore, the gaps make a reconstruction of the business transaction impossible.<sup>1937</sup> Only for the period from 24 March to 30 May 1437 are the numbers complete to the extent that a small profit of 23 cameral ducats can be determined. However, this balance only bears on the last months of business activities, when the Basel based company was in liquidation and did not conclude any new business transactions. Consequently, the ledger no longer lists any creditors. The negative development of the *libro segreto* account (from 5,454, 5,453, 5,353 to 5,327 cameral ducats), to which earned profit or loss was usually allocated, shows a decline in business from December 1435 to May 1437. On the second to last balance sheet, a small loss of somewhat more than f. 27 was reported, which was almost compensated for in the final accounts by a surplus of f. 23. This leads to the conclusion that the business result cannot have been very good. Either a very small profit or even a loss was generated. With regard to the decline of the amount named on the balance sheet in the *libro segreto*, the first hypothesis is probably the more likely one.

In the balance sheets of the di Corte bank, which were issued after the death of Galeazzo Borromei on 16 June 1436, Chomesseria di Ghaleazzo Borromei e co. di Basilea was listed under the creditors with f. 346 14s., Galeazzo Borromei e co. di Basilea with f. 2,398 17s.<sup>1938</sup> On another balance sheet from 15 July, the amounts of the Basel branch on the list of creditors amounted to f. 2,612 10s. 4d., respectively f. 790 14s.<sup>1939</sup> In the last compilation of assets and liabilities of 15 October 1436, the creditors in Basel totalled f. 722 4d. and f. 1,793 1d. respectively.<sup>1940</sup>

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1935 Jacks/Caferro (2001), pp. 42–43.

1936 Tommaso claimed to Galeazzo's daughters that the keeping of a *libro segreto*, which had been begun in the hope of registering profit-sharing, had therefore been abandoned. See YUSA 85, 1584. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 511–513. – However, the *libro segreto* is always mentioned on the four Basel balance sheets (YUSA 90, 1700 and 1703). Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 523–532. – The court decision: YUSA 235, 4376.

1937 On the basis of the balance sheets of 24 March (A) and 30 May 1437 (B), it can be seen that the profit was determined according to the following procedure: (debtors of the ledger A + entrata B) – (creditors of the ledger A + uscita B).

1938 YUSA 90, 1701.

1939 YUSA 90, 1702.

1940 YUSA 90, 1702.

## Il Banco da Verona

### Benzi & Guarienti

The company of Buonsignore Benzi from Siena and Pace de' Guarienti from Verona had – together with its successor companies – the longest corporate history of all the Basel Council banks, but it is the most poorly documented. In the archives in the hometowns of the two merchants, there is – in contrast to the huge holdings in Florence – hardly any archival materials on the commercial activities of its citizens. And in the family archive of the Guarienti in Tamassia, anything that recalls the commercial era in the history of the count's family has been weeded out over the centuries. Therefore, the history of the company can only be described in fragments.

By virtue of their size and experience in the Curial financial business, the bankers from Florence would have been perfectly capable of covering all the important monetary needs of the Council of Basel. At a time, however, in which Sigismund, the Roman-German king, was residing in Italy, and fierce battles between Florence, Venice, Milan, and the pope were being waged, it probably seemed too risky and politically imprudent to the Council fathers to place themselves solely in the hands of bankers from one city.<sup>1941</sup> It was, therefore, not the major companies of the Alberti or Pazzi for whom they lobbied the Basel city council for tax and customs relief alongside the Medici, but for Benzi and Guarienti.<sup>1942</sup> *Buonsignore Benzi e Pace de Guarienti e sociis* appears in Basel for the first time on 7/8 April 1433. As is often the case in ecclesiastical records, the legal designation of the firm is not used, but rather the name of the director of the usiness: *Guilielmi de Guarentis, depositarius concilii*.<sup>1943</sup> Guglielmo, the son of Pace, was thirty-three years old when the bank opened. It cannot be determined with certainty how long he stayed in Basel, but soon business was being run by his brother Pietro, who was nine years younger.

While Pace de' Guarienti left the management of the northern European branches to his sons and factors and lived in Verona himself, his partner Buonsignore Benzi remained active as a Curia-based banker in Italy. From there, he also briefly played a political role in an episode of the Council of Basel. The Council fathers had agreed with the Greeks to conduct negotiations for the reunification of the two churches in Italy and to bear all the costs for this. When Siena was being discussed as the future location of the Council, the Signoria of the city wrote to Benzi, who was in Bologna in the pope's entourage, on 12 July 1436. Although he had also been a citizen of Bologna for many years, the Signoria asked the *concvivis noster*, if he could

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1941 See Beinhoff (1995), pp. 167–194.

1942 See above p. 321.

1943 StaBS, Politisches C2, Akten Concil von Basel, c. 31.

grant them a credit of f. 30,000. In the end, Siena was not chosen and Benzi did not have to provide the huge sum.<sup>1944</sup>

For the partners of the bank *da Verona*, as this company was called by the Florentines,<sup>1945</sup> Basel was not only a temporary subsidiary of the main company based at the Curia, but also the base of operations for entry into business with Curial moneys from the Baltic Sea region, from which the Alberti had just withdrawn. The first documented contact to a German client is the personal pledge from Andreas Pfaffendorf, the representative of the Teutonic Order in Basel, at the *banco Bonisniorum* for a loan of 112 ducats. The city council of Gdańsk pledged to Pietro de' Guarienti in a letter of 24 November that he would receive this money via *Bruck in Flandern bynnen korcz*.<sup>1946</sup> After this first transaction with a client in this market space, further revenue was expected to be generated there. In a letter written on 30 September 1434 to Paul von Rusdorf – the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order – Pietro de' Guarienti first of all complained that another loan to Andreas Pfaffendorf for 446 Rhe. fl. had not yet been repaid despite several interventions to the Order's representative in Bruges. Surprisingly, he then offered the Grand Master to lend him in *necessitatibus et requestis necessariis* not only 400 or 600, but rather the enormous sum of 10,000 or 20,000 Rhe. fl.<sup>1947</sup> Apparently, this offer was not taken up, as there are no further financial contacts between the bank and the Order; it illustrates, however, quite an aggressive move in an only recently abandoned market.

As the changes in the Guarienti company structure after Benzi's death coincided with the great crisis of the Council in spring 1438, the Medici assumed that the Veronese would leave Germany.<sup>1948</sup> However the latter decided to stay, and Pietro continued to work in a company under the name of his father, *Pace de' Guarienti e co*.<sup>1949</sup> In 1439, he became a citizen of Basel as *Dominus Petrus de Verona, mercator*.<sup>1950</sup> The appearance of two new representatives of the *banca de Verona* in Basel also points more to an expansion of business activity than a reduction. In 1438, *Omninea Bonum von Bern usser Lamparten* granted the Council protector Konrad

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1944 Brandmüller (1994): Comprehensive depiction of the negotiations between the Council of Basel and the Signoria of Siena with literal text of the letter to Benzi. – As additional possible creditors, the following were taken into account: Giovanni Tagliacci, fellow citizen and residing in Venice; the Florentines Cosimo de' Medici and Andrea de' Pazzi. See Brandmüller (1994), p. 220.

1945 ASFi, MAP II, no. 618.

1946 Hirsch (1858), pp. 237–238: 'soon via Bruges in Flanders'; Neumann (1863), p. 147; Dombrowski (1913), pp. 80–81; Forstreuter/Koeppen (1973), p. 651.

1947 Forstreuter/Koeppen (1973), p. 695. Forstreuter mistakenly believes Guarienti is a Council official. The source of this error is the signature of the banker, who signs as *Petrus de Guarientis de Verona, Sacri Basiliensis Concilii depositarius*, although he did not write this letter in that function.

1948 ASFi, MAP II, no. 618.

1949 AOIF 12737, c. 173r, 2 July 1441 and c. 218r, 26 February 1442. Published in Weissen (2021), pp. 553–566. – This firm can be found in ASFi, NA 19069, cc. 278v–279r.

1950 StaBS, Missiven A 9, 93; Öffnungsbuch I, 49; GA o I, c. 281v.

von Weinsberg a credit for 234 Rhe. fl.;<sup>1951</sup> and in a Council notification of 19 June 1439, *Omnibinum de Sacramosia de Verona, Angelus de Portiis de Roma mercatores de banca de Verona* are mentioned.<sup>1952</sup> In what capacity Ognibene de' Sagramoso and Angelo de Porciis acted for the company, whether as employees or partners, is not clear from the Council records.<sup>1953</sup>

The Guarienti established enterprises with a focus on the Council bank in quick succession, whose dates of existence and shareholding circumstances can no longer be ascertained in detail. First, they entered into a partnership agreement with Andrea da Casale, a native of Imola, who – in conjunction with Ludmann Meltinger, Jacob Waltenheim, Heinrich Halbisen, and other merchants – promoted the production of paper in Basel.<sup>1954</sup> A document from 1441 – in which Burkart von Mutzwiler, known as Ziegler, and Lienhart von Rotemburg confirmed a loan of 30 Rhe. fl. – also bears witness to their connection with the local economy.<sup>1955</sup> After the cessation of cooperation with da Casale, two Florentines became partners of the Guarienti.<sup>1956</sup> Lamberto di Bernardo Lamberteschi lived in Basel, and Giovanozzo de' Mozzi (in Basel sources: *Johann Notzo*) operated a trading company in Geneva.<sup>1957</sup> Corporate capital of f. 1,000 for the businesses in Basel and Geneva was made up of three equal deposits. Guarienti was the manager of the enterprise, the *si mit knaben und sust geregiert und versorget, besetzt und entsetzt, in genomen und ussgeben*; the Florentines were silent partners.<sup>1958</sup> This relationship also had a political aspect, as Lamberteschi's mother was an Alberti and his wife a Pazzi. He had come to Basel as a refugee, banned from Florence by Cosimo de' Medici.<sup>1959</sup> The Guarienti banks were, therefore, to be considered as competitors of the Medici in the 1440s.

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1951 Albrecht (1850), p. 91; Ammann (1966), p. 178. There are several ways of spelling for the name Ognibene Sagramoso in the sources: Sagramori, Sacramori, Sacramoso. The variant used here is the one that his descendants use today.

1952 CB, VI, p. 506. – CB, VI, p. 57: De Portiis was already in Basel before 24 May 1437. – ASFi, MAP 12, no. 433: He invested money in the spice trade of a fellow countryman, Giuliano Baratti, who was working in Basel, and lost it. Letter to Cosimo de' Medici complaining that Baratti's account books had been handed over by the courts to Roberto Martelli. Martelli had given them back to Baratti, as the two men were friends: *el libro dove stavano scripte le nostre rasonni, el quale sigillato fo deposto in nelle mano de Roberto Martello, homo della vostra Signoria, con esserli facto expresso commandamento avesse quel libro cosi sigillato ad conservare sopte certa pena. Roberto predicto non avendo alcun respecto al commandamento et al dovere, tirato da amicitia contracta già bon tempo con decto Iuliano, à rassignato el libro al dicto Iuliano senza altre licentia della Corte aspectare, in grave dampno e prejudicio e iactura mia, e ancho in pocho suo honore.* – CB, VI, p. 694: He is documented in Germany for the last time on 2 November 1439.

1953 CB, VI, pp. 506 and 644; Gilomen (1998), p. 98.

1954 Apelbaum (1915), p. 52; Mainoni (1982), p. 138.

1955 StaBS, GA A 23, c. 16. – Further mentions of Guarienti in court documents: GA A 24, cc. 17, 17v, 18, 21v, 39v, and 42v. See Ehrensperger (1972), p. 277.

1956 See below p. 378.

1957 According to Ehrensperger (1972), pp. 277–278, Mozzi was living in Basel and only went to Geneva later.

1958 Ehrensperger (1972), p. 277: 'they have led and equipped it with young employees and others, hired and dismissed, taken in and spent.'

1959 For a detailed account of Lamberteschi, see below p. 373.

Very little is on the record about the Guarienti company's bill of exchange business in Basel. That they must have had at their command a broad network of correspondents in Upper Germany is shown by a Council document from 19 June 1439, in which the *banca de Verona* pledged to transfer shrove money to Basel that was deposited in Ulm with Johannes Rieter, in Ravensburg with Joss Humpis from the Great Ravensburg Trading Company, in Constance with Anton Geisberger, and in other locations.<sup>1960</sup> From a bill of exchange transaction protested in Florence, which Pietro Guarienti had initiated from Basel in November 1441 for one Bartolino di Dono de Gaeta, connections to Antonio e Pietro de' Pazzi e co. in Rome can be discerned, the extent of which cannot be specified.<sup>1961</sup>

The partnership between Guarienti, Mozzi, and Lamberteschi only lasted until 1445, and ended in fierce disputes, which were also fought with weapons and kept the Basel magistrates court busy.<sup>1962</sup> Pietro de' Guarienti was ordered to pay Piero di Domenico Lamberteschi, Lamberto's nephew, a reparation of three florins. A few weeks after this verdict, the two families met again before the court.<sup>1963</sup> This time they were litigating over unspecified business disputes. Lamberteschi insisted on seeing the account books of the company, and Guarienti refused. The court decided that the account books (*rödelen, registren und rechenbücher*) were to be examined by neutral arbiters, *der ouch ir sprach sy und sich der sachen verstand*. The parties agreed on Antonio di ser Paolo, Simone Guadagni, the manager of Antonio della Casa's company in Geneva, and the Venetian Giorgio Corner. However, this arbitration did not settle the *spenne* and *zweytracht* (tensions and discord) and a complicated legal battle ensued, which was carried out in Geneva and Basel. Pietro Guarienti was no longer in Basel at this time: he was running the bank in Rome. On 8 May 1446, he appointed Giovanozzo de' Mozzi as his procurator and tasked him with collecting *Gebennis vel Basilee* money from Lamberteschi.<sup>1964</sup> The amount at stake before the magistrate's court was 220 Rhe. fl., which Lamberteschi eventually had to pay.

1960 CB, VI, p. 506. These German merchants probably constituted a consortium in order to be able to process this large sum. Members of the Geisberger family (today Baron Gaisberg von Schöckingen) are documented as employees of the Great Ravensburg Trading Company in the second half of the fifteenth century. See Schulte (1923), I, p. 163.

1961 ASFi, NA 19069, cc. 278v–279r. Note from Lorenz Böninger.

1962 StaBS, GA E 3, c. 35r.

1963 Apelbaum (1915), p. 52. – On Mozzi and the proceedings in the dispute between Guarienti and Lamberteschi, see StaBS, GA O 1, cc. 298–300, 311. – StaBS, GA E 3, cc. 35, 51, 52, 58, 66, 126, 127, and 167. – StaBS, GA A 23, cc. 16 and 23. – GA A 24, cc. 17, 17v, 18, 21v, 39v, and 42v. – StaBS, GA A 26, c. 283v. – StaBS, Öffnungsbuch I, c. 247; II, c. 194.

1964 ASFi, NA 12518, c. 87r: 'who also spoke their language and understood the matters.' – Although he was a partner in a trading company operating in Geneva and Basel, Giovanozzo de' Mozzi pretended to be a poor man before the Florentine tax officials in 1442. ASFi, Catasto 608, cc. 856rv: *Per questa scritta vi si mostra la povertà di Rubaconte e Giovanozzo d'Antonio de' Mozi el quale Rubaconte è stato infermo circha d'anni 8 o più [...] più non anno di rendita; Giovanozzo se n'è ito di fuori per disperato e di lui non so chesene sia pel debito del chomune e di spezielta. Rubaconte d'età d'anni XXVII o circha e Giovanozzo d'età d'anni XXVIII o circha abiaticci buona discrizone che queste sono teste d'averè provigione dal chomune e no paghare.*

## Ognibene Sagramoso

The successor to the Guarienti Bank in payment transactions with Germany can be considered to be the company of Ognibene Sagramoso; he resided in Basel as a banker and merchant from 1438 to 1447. He first worked in a managerial capacity in Guarienti's company. By 1442, he had become independent, for the balance sheets of the Rome Borromei bank compiled by Tommaso Spinelli mention him in 1443 and 1444 as a correspondent bank in Basel: *Ognibene de' Sagramori di Baxilea*.<sup>1965</sup> In 1447, he took over rooms in the cloth merchants' guildhall "Zum Schlüssel" from Dego degli Alberti as a tenant and remained there until the end of the Council.<sup>1966</sup> Afterward, he went to Rome, where he ran a *di Corte* bank.

## Life in the Florentine Colony in Basel during the Council

The group of bankers from Italy was somewhat smaller in Basel than in Constance and probably numbered around fifteen during the period of greatest business activity. The resident bankers were joined by merchants travelling to Bruges and those coming from there. Vieri di Nicola de' Medici is also documented as being in Basel on 26 July 1437.<sup>1967</sup> He was a direct descendant of Vieri di Cambio, with whom Giovanni de' Medici had spent his first years as a merchant. The reason for his stay in Basel is not known. Further evidence of a Florentine presence can be found in the Charterhouse of Basel. Next to a depiction from the life of St Bruno was the coat of arms of the Guicciardini family: three horns. The donor of this image could not be determined. He was probably a visitor to the Council of Basel; but he most certainly was not an employee of the Medici bank, as Casimir Baer postulated.<sup>1968</sup> Ehrensperger, while searching through the Basel legal archives for Florentines, also found *Franciscus Damaryge de Zati* and the barber *Lucas Bartolomei* in addition to the moneychangers. The first one is Francesco d'Amerigo Zati.<sup>1969</sup>

1965 YUSA 90, 1704: Balance sheet of 24 March 1443. On it, Ognibene has a debt of 13s. – YUSA 90, 1707: Balance sheet of 1444. – See Caferro (1995), p. 736.

1966 Geering (1886), p. 278.

1967 Camerani Marri (1951), p. 51.

1968 Baer (1941), III, pp. 480, 487, 489, 500, 512, 514, 561, and 586. See also Ehrensperger (1972), p. 357, who dispensed with the reference to the Medici.

1969 Francesco d'Amerigo Zati: StaBS, GA E 1, 153. Ehrensperger (1972), p. 447, thinks he is a medical doctor, but the man certainly belongs to the very wealthy Florentine mercantile family Zati, which held a very important position in trade in Buda at that time. See Prajda (2017), p. 53. The Catasto of 1433 attests to the wealth of the family: ASFi, Catasto 73, cc. 177 and 183. Francesco declared a fortune of f. 1,378 that year. His younger brother Uberto was counted among the ten richest Florentines with a fortune of f. 20,486. – The barber Lucas Bartolomei, who, in the account books of the Basel Medici branch dating from the years 1433 and 1434, often appears under the name of Luca barbiere, and who, in 1437, sued Ennelin Frigk on matters concerning outstanding wages and a loan (StaBS, O1, c. 41v). – On 26 July 1437, Vieri di Nicola de' Medici signed a document in Basel in his capacity as a witness. See Camerani Marri (1951), p. 51. He was a direct descendant of Vieri di Cambio with whom Giovanni de' Medici had trained as an apprentice for several years. The reason for his visit to Basel is not known. – In the Basel Charterhouse, a picture was kept depicting the



On the other hand, it is impossible to identify the barber, who appears frequently in the Medici branch's account book from 1433 and 1434 as *Luca barbieri* and whom Ennelin Frigk sued in 1437 for outstanding wages and loans.<sup>1970</sup> Giuliano Baratti had travelled from Rome to try his hand as a junk dealer in Basel, with little success.<sup>1971</sup>

In the Medici bank's statement of account of 1442, there are various amounts relating to rentals of residential and commercial premises. For the period from 25 March to 1 August, 40 cameral ducats were paid out, for the following twelve months only 50. Heinrich Halbisen is named as landlord: *Arrigo Albixon, nostro oste*.<sup>1972</sup> Further documentation of this is an entry in the annual financial statement of the city, where it says: *Item empfangen XVII guldin zinses von den wechszelern in Heinrich Halbysens hus*.<sup>1973</sup> It is known that Halbisen rented out chambers at the house "Zum Schlüssel" to *walchen* (Italians) on Ascension Day in 1433.<sup>1974</sup> It is doubtful that the tenants were the Medici bankers, as the rents paid in the house "Zum Schlüssel" were significantly lower than the amount entered by the Medici under rentals.<sup>1975</sup> It is possible that they had immediately taken lodgings in his residence "Unter den Becherern 22" (today: the lower section of the Freie Strasse).<sup>1976</sup> In any case, the bank was not only located in the immediate vicinity of the market square, but had as neighbours Basel citizens, who enjoyed a very high standing as merchants, such as Niklaus Gottschalk, Hans Irmi the Elder, and the Medici's landlord.<sup>1977</sup> The Florentines worked in spacious and imposing rooms. This fact reflects not only the reputation of the bank, but also the nature of its trade, which did not consist of the small bill of exchange business with walk-in customers, but of contracts with a very distinguished clientele.

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life of St Bruno. Next to the image – which shows the saint visiting the hermit Raymundus – was the crest of the Guicciardini family from Florence: three horns. However, it was impossible to identify the donor of the picture. It was probably a visitor to the Council of Basel but certainly not an employee of the Medici bank, as once assumed by Baer. Baer (1941), III, pp. 480, 487.

1970 StaBS, OI, c. 41v. – The only way to search for this name is in the data files of Herlihy/Klapisch, which they drew up from the Catasto declarations of the year 1427. Four men named Luca di Bartolomeo figure in them; none of them mentions a family name or profession.

1971 See below p. 371.

1972 ASFi, MAP 104, no. 60, c. 600. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 497–508.

1973 Harms (1909–1913), I, p. 157: 'Item received 17 florins rent from the money changers in Heinrich Halbysen's house.'

1974 StaBS, SI 10, 45v. – Koelner (953), p. 206: "1434 vermittelte er [Heinrich Halbisen the Elder] – der italienischen Sprache mächtig – die Vermietung des einen Zunftgadens zum Schlüssel an einen *walchen*, und *söllent min herren mit dem walchen nüt ze schaffen han*. Die Namen der Mieter zum Schlüssel sind nicht überliefert." ('In 1434, he [Heinrich Halbisen the Elder] - who spoke Italian - arranged for the rental of one of the Schlüssel guild rooms to a *walchen*, and *söllent min herren mit dem walchen nüt ze schaffen han*. The names of the tenants have not been handed down.') See Geering (1886), p. 270.

1975 See Geering (1886), pp. 270–271.

1976 Geering (1886), pp. 275–276, reports that Halbisen rented out his own house from 1440 on. See Schönberg (1879), p. 608.

1977 Claus Gottschalk's house was at "Unter den Bechern 4", Hans Irme the Elder's at "Unter den Bechern 19". Both details in Schönberg (1879), p. 608.

During their first years in Basel, the Alberti had their living and business premises in the Schlüssel guildhall (Schlüsselzunft) and paid 192 Rhe. fl. a year for them. Basel sources show that after their separation from da Uzzano and Boscoli, Dego and Antonio realigned themselves in the city and prepared to settle for good north of the Alps. In 1441, the two men acquired the status of citizens of Basel and became members of the guild zum Schlüssel, in which the merchant princes Peter Gatz, Claus Gottschalk, Wernli von Kilchen, and Andres Wiler were important members.<sup>1978</sup> Dego bought the house “Zum weissen Bären” on Schlüsselberg 5, and Antonio became *kaufher zer Strolen* (today: Freie Strasse 11).<sup>1979</sup> Their properties were close to the house of the cloth merchants’ guild, where they rented an exchange office and a chamber for 16 Rhe. fl.<sup>1980</sup> They gave up these premises again in 1447 and sold the property on the Schlüsselberg three years later to Heinrich Halbisen for 470 Rhe. fl.<sup>1981</sup>

There is little surviving information about where other Italian bankers lived during their stays in Basel. Tommaso Spinelli rented rooms from the Basel merchant Wernli von Kilchen (*Varnieri della Chiesa, nostro oste*), which were also situated near the cloth merchants’ guildhall. Thus, he worked in the immediate vicinity of the Medici, the Alberti, and Basel’s wealthiest citizens Heinrich Halbisen and Claus Gottschalk (*Niccolò Chociale*), whom he called *vicino*.<sup>1982</sup> Regarding the bankers from Verona, only Ognibene Sagramoso is documented; he rented the premises of Dego degli Alberti in the house “Zum Schlüssel” in 1447.<sup>1983</sup> There is a clustering of banks around the cloth merchants’ guildhall in Basel. Their landlords were long-distance traders known to the Florentines from the international marketplaces of Bruges, Venice, and Barcelona. Lamberteschi, however, is in every respect a special case. He lived at some distance from the small colony of Florentine bankers, to which, as an exile, he did not belong. He lived with his wife and children in the house “Zum Liebenstein” on today’s Gernsbach 8, which was a fashionable neighbourhood. Namely, his neighbour was the former Basel mayor Jacob zu Rhein, who was closely related to two fifteenth-century prince-bishops of Basel.<sup>1984</sup> The fact that there is no evidence that he bought a house during his twenty years in Basel is not due to gaps in the archive collections, but rather to his hope that he would not have to stay there forever.

Information on the daily lives of the Florentines on the Rhine can be found on the balance sheets of the Medici and Borromei/Spinelli, as well as in Roberto Martelli’s ledger (*stracciafoglio*), which covers the period from 13 December 1433 to 27 June 1434. Its thirty-eight pages account

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1978 Koelner (1953), pp. 11 and 23.

1979 Koelner (1953), pp. 55 and 230.

1980 StaBS, GA, Öffnungsbuch, I, 120. – Ehrensperger (1972), p. 446, note 160, maintains that they are one and the same person. – See Geering (1886), p. 278; Koelner (1953), p. 55; Ehrensperger (1972), p. 278.

1981 Ehrensperger (1972), p. 278. See Saporì (1946) on the Gianfigliuzzi.

1982 YUSA 90, 1700. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 523–527.

1983 Geering (1886), p. 278.

1984 Schönberg (1879), p. 617.

for his modest expenses and earnings; in contrast to Bartoli's notebook from Constance, it does not mention any bill of exchange or large credit transactions.<sup>1985</sup> The Florentines spent a lot of money for their own needs in the local economy. Martelli notes the purchase of horses, paper, candles, wine, and clothing. Citizens of the city and immigrant craftsmen received commissions: tailors, carters, horse traders, knackers, and many others. Many of these purveyors and service providers were not, however, citizens of Basel, as the Italians preferred to work with their fellow countrymen: they understood their language and their requirements. Everyday comestibles like meat, wine, and bread were bought from the Germans; everything else – candles, paper, spices, and medicine – were bought from compatriots if possible. The barber also came from Italy. The Florentines endeavoured to continue the way of life of their homeland in the North as well and lived in an almost self-contained world.

To a small extent, goods from Basel were sold to southern Europe: gold wares to Venice<sup>1986</sup> and musical instruments to Florence.<sup>1987</sup> And, of course, the local servants and cooks hired by the bankers, as well as the landlords of their dwellings and business premises, profited from the Florentines.<sup>1988</sup>

There is no documentation regarding social contacts of the Florentines with the local populace. They undoubtedly crossed paths almost every day in the small city, but nothing is known about shared festivities or other friendly occasions. They would certainly have joined the citizens of Basel in the lavish celebrations on the feast day of the patron saint of Florence, John the Baptist. Nevertheless, one gets the impression from the letters of Tommaso Spinelli and Roberto Martelli that they mainly kept a close eye on one another. The years of absence from home led to new friendships and networks among the Italians that could last for many years.<sup>1989</sup> The importance of these friendships from the Basel years are evident in the life of Enea Silvio Piccolomini, later Pius II, who lived in Basel for nearly ten years. The time together in Basel became even more important for Giovanni da Castro later on, because – when he was persecuted by creditors around 1460 – Pius II granted him special protection in the Eternal City. He used this freedom to pursue his interest in minerology in the course of which he discovered important alum deposits in Tolfa, which were important for the economic history of the fifteenth century.<sup>1990</sup> Another acquaintance of Enea from his time in Basel was Giuliano Baratti, a not

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1985 ASFi, MAP 131 C.

1986 ASFi, MAP 131 C, c. 4.

1987 Bergier (1978), pp. 289–290.

1988 ASFi, MAP 104, no. 60, cc. 599ff. Published in [Weissen \(2021\)](#), pp. 497–508.

1989 YUSA 89, 1685a. The years of living together as an Italian colony in a small German town were alluded to by a cleric as late as 1467 when he asked Tommaso Spinelli for a favour: *Per amore dela bona memoria di messer lo vescovo nostro, che sapete quanto singolare amore et affectione vi portò sempre, e, a Roma, e, persino a Baxilea in farvi sempre honore e utile.*

1990 Roover (1963), p. 438. See Gottlob (1889), pp. 278–305; Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana (1960–), XXII, pp. 225–227; Delumeau (1963); Caferro (1995), pp. 726–727. – Tommaso also remained in touch with da

very successful merchant who traded in spices and medicines in Basel and acted as a procurator for the Medici bank in settling their accounts. In 1445, Enea referred to him as his soulmate and *veterem et Basiliensem amicum*. An indication of their close relationship was Enea's decision to live with Baratti when he was sent by King Frederick III to act as ambassador to the Pope.<sup>1991</sup>

Old Basel connections were also sought to be utilized by Ognibene Sagramoso who, in 1453, wrote to the imperial court at Wiener Neustadt; he wanted King Frederick III to grant him a *littera familiaritatis*, and therefore requested the intercession of Bishop Enea with the emperor on his behalf. Ognibene, who had been allowed to use the title of count for some years already, was addressed by Enea as *Magnifice comes, amice honorande* in the letter of reply from Austria of 27 January 1454. The bishop continued that it had not been easy, as the emperor did not like to grant merchants such privileges (*nam qui negotiantur his Cesar hujusmodi litteras egre concedit*). He would send his deed to Rome through his nephew Pietro Piccolomini along with the ducats that Sagramoso had sent him, as they were too light. Where had he got such inferior coins, he asked (*miratus sum unde aureos tam malos extraxeris*)? He went on to say that his actions violated their friendship (*Quod jus amicitie minime patitur*). Nevertheless, he still considered him an honourable merchant who did not want to deceive him. Their friendship was certainly worth more than a couple of grams of gold (*Existimo tibi pluris esse amicitiam meam quam auri parvum pondus*).<sup>1992</sup> This passage does not shed a good light on Sagramoso as a banker. He is documented in account books as being involved in bill of exchange transactions until December 1455 in which money was transferred via the Medici in Florence and Jacopo Attavanti in Venice to Naples, London, and Rome.<sup>1993</sup> His bank no longer existed when Enea ascended the Chair of St Peter as Pope Pius II in 1458. Around 1456 he had returned to Verona, where he held the office of a *provveditore* in 1460. He made his last will and testament there on 2 June 1473. His descendants today form the family branch of the Counts Sagramoso di San Paolo di Campomarzo.<sup>1994</sup> Contacts with Florentines he knew from Germany were very scarce in Enea's later years.

A few weeks after his coronation as Pius II, Giovenco di Lorenzo della Stufa became the father of a son. He had him christened Enea. There are only two Florentines with this given name in the *tratte* of the Republic of Florence. The other one is Enea di Jacopo di Domenico di Bernardo Lamberteschi, who was a great-nephew of the Lamberto Lamberteschi living in Basel.<sup>1995</sup> When

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Castro. In 1465, Spinelli had 3,914 pounds of alum transported for him from Rome to Florence. YUSA 87a, 1187.

1991 Piccolomini, (Pius II) (2003–2007), p. 1; Izbicki (2006), pp. 215 and 231.

1992 Weiss (1897), pp. 269–270. The letter from Ognibene to Enea is not extant.

1993 ASFi, MAP 134, no. 3, c. 13v; AOIF 12615, c. 2 sinistra.

1994 See Oneto (1938). I would like to thank Counts Cesare and Gabriele Sagramoso for their assistance with my archival research.

1995 Florentine Renaissance Resources, Online *tratte* of Office Holders, 1282–1532. Machine readable data file. Edited by David Herlihy, R. Burr Litchfield, Anthony Molho, and Roberto Barducci. Florentine Renaissance Resources/STG: Brown University, Providence, R.I., 2002 <http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/tratte/>, 08.06.2021.

Enea and Roberto Martelli met again as pope and director of the Medici bank in Rome, their relationship was definitely not a good one. The humanist had not portrayed the banker in a very flattering light in his account of the Basel seal affair; furthermore, he evidently dashed any expectation the latter had for the office of depositary of the papal coffers.

### 5.6.2 Lamberto di Bernardo Lamberteschi

Lamberto di Bernardo Lamberteschi came from a very wealthy and eminent mercantile family, one that can be counted among the political and economic elite of Florence around 1430. His grandfather Lamberto was an Alberti factor from 1347 to 1367,<sup>1996</sup> as was his nephew Tommaso di Niccolò (1355–1370).<sup>1997</sup> His father Bernardo was one of the richest businessmen in Florence in the first decades of the 15th century.<sup>1998</sup> In the *Prestanze* of 1403, he ranked seventeenth in the quarter of Santa Croce; ahead of him were five Alberti households; in the *Catasto* of 1427, he was the biggest taxpayer in the quarter with assets of f. 41,727. The richest Alberti, Filippo di Tommaso, followed in third place with f. 19,000; Francesco d'Altobianco was only sixteenth with f. 10,752.<sup>1999</sup> Bernardo Lamberteschi had made his fortune primarily as an investor and not as a merchant. He invested his money mainly in *accomenda* contracts in which cloth was traded between Catalonia, Flanders, England, and Hungary. He also invested in shops of silk and cloth merchants in Pisa and Florence.<sup>2000</sup> In his tax returns, he reported close business relations with the Alberti: Filippo di Tommaso names mutual debtors for f. 6,000 in 1427; Giannozzo and Antonio were his creditors.<sup>2001</sup> His close connection to the Alberti is also expressed by the fact that he married Ravenna di Duccio degli Alberti in 1391.<sup>2002</sup> His interconnections in Florentine society have often been the subject of historical social research.<sup>2003</sup>

Lamberto was born in about 1402 and, because of the great wealth of his father and his distinguished ancestry, occupied an important position in Florentine society as a young man. He played a leading role in public, state-sponsored plays in Florence in 1427 and 1429, as the chronicler Cambi recorded.<sup>2004</sup> In 1427, his father sent him to Flanders on one of the Republic's

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1996 Foster (1985), p. 175. She provides here three pieces of evidence from ASFi, *Notarile Antecosimiano* showing that Lamberto acted as procurator of the Alberti. Lamberto also APS, I, no. 537, p. 554.

1997 Renouard (1938), p. 57; Foster (1985), p. 175.

1998 Martines (1963), p. 353; Conti (1984), p. 73.

1999 Martines (1963), pp. 353 and 365–366.

2000 Foster (1985), p. 175.

2001 Foster (1985), p. 190.

2002 Renouard (1938), p. 57; Foster (1985), pp. 175 and 269.

2003 Doreian et al. (2005); Wasserman/Faust (1999).

2004 Cambi (1785–1786), XX, pp. 173 and 175. See also Kent (1978).

galleys.<sup>2005</sup> Shortly before 1430, he married Lena d'Andrea Pazzi, who was then about fourteen years old. Their union underlines his being a member of the city's elite.<sup>2006</sup> Since 1422, his father-in-law had been a partner at Francesco di Giachinotto Boscoli e co., which was the Rome branch of the bank of Francesco d'Averardo de' Medici.<sup>2007</sup> This puts him in close company with families that stood in political opposition to Cosimo de' Medici. Namely, Lena Pazzi was the aunt of the conspirators who, on 26 April 1478, stabbed Giuliano de' Medici to death in the cathedral of Florence.<sup>2008</sup>

In the middle of the 1430s, Lamberto and his closest relatives abruptly fell out of the circle of the city's ruling elite, as the Lamberteschi were on the side of the Medici adversaries in 1434. Chronicler Cambi noted the names of Lamberto and Domenico di Bernardo Lamberteschi on the list of the *rubegli del Chomune di Firenze*, who were banished from Florence after the return of Cosimo from exile in Venice.<sup>2009</sup> In the official city records, there is an entry saying that Domenico was banished to Verona or Civitave in Friaul (*quale luogo de' due vorrà*) for five years on 11 September 1434.<sup>2010</sup> This is consistent with the fact that Domenico's son Piero states in the Catasto of 1469 that his family had not paid any taxes since 1434.<sup>2011</sup> At first, Lamberto was not affected by this banishment. Banking transactions were still carried out in his name from Florence until 1436. On his orders, the bank of the Pazzi – his relatives – issued two bills of exchange to the Medici branch in Venice.<sup>2012</sup> He was still in Florence on 16 August 1436, when he gave the *uffiziali* of the city information about the assets of his banished brother Dominico.<sup>2013</sup> Father Bernardo was already dead by then.

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2005 ASFi, Catasto 68, cc. 41r–46r.

2006 Ansell/Padgett (1993), p. 1276: Padgett and Ansell – who have tried to determine the network of relationships of the Florentine elite on the basis of lists of creditors and debtors in the Catasti of Florence – have only been able to establish the Lamberteschi as trading partners of the Velluti.

2007 Roover (1963), p. 38.

2008 See Spallanzani (1987), p. 314.

2009 Cambi (1785–1786), XX, Domenico di Bernardo: p. 364, and Lamberto di Bernardo: p. 365. The banishment of Domenico is also in the chronicle of the Morelli/Morelli (1774), p. 125.

2010 ASFi, Capitani di Parte, numeri rossi 70, c. 3r and ASFi, Otto di Guardia e Balìa della Repubblica, 224, c. 50v. On his banishment, see Shaw (2000), pp. 70 and 88.

2011 ASFi, Catasto 911, cc. 444r–445: *dal 1434 in qua è stata ispenza per essere stati ribelli*.

2012 ASFi, 154a, 64r, 1 October 1436: *A Lamberto Lamberteschi di Firenze per lui duc. cinquanta di grosso. Sono per tanti ci trassono per lui da Firenze à tratto per lui da Firenze i Pazi per loro lettera di cambio de di 13 di settembre. Insomma di duc. 73 di grossi in messer Antonio Borromei e chompagni e a lloro gli demmo contanti per Robertino loro. Sono per la valuta n'ebono da' Rucellai. Posto a libro grande a c. 28. duc. 50*. A second bill of exchange was honoured in Venice for Lamberteschi on 20 June 1436. Here, too, the transaction was processed by the Pazzi in Florence. ASFi, 154a, c. 52r.

2013 ASFi, Capitani di Parte, numeri rossi 70, c. 69v. – ASFi, Emancipazioni 3, cause inopie, f. 175r, 23 September 1437. Lena Lamberteschi requests that the municipal authorities separate her dowry of f. 2,000 from her husband's estate. Presumably, by taking this step (*emancipazione*), she was protecting her own money from

Lamberto's name appears in Basel for the first time in 1438, when *her Lambertus the Lamparter*, probably under the impact of the murderous plague epidemics of those years, joined the Seelzunft (religious community) of the cloth merchants' guild Zum Schlüssel.<sup>2014</sup> In the same year, *Lampertus Bernardi de Lampertesii de Florencia* bought citizenship of the city.<sup>2015</sup> He must, therefore, have taken up residence in Basel shortly before. He appears as an exile in Florentine documents on 24 December 1439, when he was declared a *rubello* by Capitano della Balìa.<sup>2016</sup> In his history of the city, Rudolf Wackernagel rightly describes him as a Florentine refugee.<sup>2017</sup>

In spite of becoming a citizen of Basel, Lamberto had only one objective: the fall of the oligarchy around Cosimo de' Medici and, consequently, his own return to Florence.<sup>2018</sup> To this end, he joined – from Basel – other like-minded men, and even took an active part in an armed campaign against Florence. Giovanni Rucellai reports in his *zibaldone* that Lamberto was one of the Florentines who rallied around Rinaldo degli Albizzi and worked to overthrow the Medici. In April 1440, he was among the men who attempted a military attack on Florence under the leadership of the condottiere Niccolò Piccinino and was only defeated in June at the famous battle of Anghiari.<sup>2019</sup> Since the Florentines were unable to capture Lamberto after the battle,

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the city authorities, who were taking action against the banished members of the family with confiscations. From this point on, she was considered as an independent household by the Florentine officials so that she – in contrast to her husband – also had to pay taxes there in the following years. In return, she received four properties from the Lamberteschi estate, which her father-in-law Bernardo had mentioned in his Catasto in 1427. – Additional documentation on the confiscation of the Lamberteschi estate in ASFi, Capitani di Parte, numeri rossi 65, cc. 44r and 164r–v.

- 2014 StaBS, Öffnungsbuch I, 3 Missiven A 9, 93: 11 July 1438. – See Wackernagel/Thommen (1890–1910), VII, p. 400, no. 243; Koelner (1953), p. 55.
- 2015 Koelner (1953), p. 224.
- 2016 ASFi, Otto di Guardia e Balìa della Repubblica, 224, c. 74r.
- 2017 Wackernagel (1907–1916), II/1, p. 397.
- 2018 The struggle for his estate in Florence is documented in many sources: ASFi, Archivi della Repubblica, Notificazioni di atti di emancipazione, no. 3; Archivio Bardi, Series III, no. 133, cc. 8v, 15r, 22rv, and 28r; Capitani di parte Guelfa, numeri rossi 65, cc. 44r, 163r, and 164r; Capitani di parte Guelfa, numeri rossi 70, cc. 44v, 53r, 90v, and 91r; Capitani di parte Guelfa, numeri rossi 71, c. 1r; Diplomatico normale, Archivio generale appendice, no. 648; 1444 novembre; Diplomatico, S. Maria del Bigallo, 1437 ottobre 5; Diplomatico, S. Maria del Bigallo, 1446 ottobre 7; Manoscritti 441, cc. 50r and 74r; NA 20611, c. 17v; Otto di Guardia e Balìa della Repubblica, no. 224, c. 74r.
- 2019 The text by Giovanni Rucellai at Kent/Perosa (1960–1981), p. 50; Battista (2013, p. 169). Another chronicle describes, certainly erroneously, a Lorenzo Lamberteschi, but he is otherwise historically unidentifiable: *ipse Nicolaus Piccinninus cum omni ejus exercitu et posse et maxime cum d. Rainaldo, d. Maso de Albizis, Ludovico de Rossis, Laurentio de Lamberteschis, Roberto de Antilla, Io. Pieri Arrigi, Antonio Nicolai Barbadori, Francisco Joanni alias Carnesecca et d. Nicolao Antonii Gianfigliazzis et multis aliis publicis inimicis et rebellibus comunis Florentie contra territorium florentinum hostiliter*. On these events, see Griffo (1986), pp. 283–289. Lamberteschi's participation in this campaign against Florence is also mentioned by chronicler Dei (1985), p. 56.

they had Andrea del Castagno paint a larger-than-life image of him, hung it from a window in the Palazzo del Podestà and added a mocking verse by Antonio Buffone:

*Io son Lamberto Lamberteschi, a cui  
Ben si può dire : A te volò il cervello !  
Con questi traditor farmi rubello  
Della mia patria, ove già ricco fui.*<sup>2020</sup>

In a document from 1448, Lamberto Lamberteschi also displayed bellicose behaviour in Basel. The books of the merchants' guild "Zum Schlüssel" note that he was in possession of *zwey armbrüst, zwen wellkropfen, zwen gurtel, zwen lidrin kocher* from the guild. Evidently, he actually took part in military activities of the city of Basel and went to war against the neighbouring nobility together with his fellow guild members.<sup>2021</sup>

While Lamberto refused to continue paying taxes in Florence, he fulfilled his duty in Basel. In the Basel tax list of 1454, he figures as *der Lamparter* with assets of 3,950 Rhe. fl.<sup>2022</sup> He thus was among the wealthy inhabitants of the city, although there was a host of other inhabitants who declared much greater wealth. How far this information corresponded to the actual circumstances must remain open, because certainly no one in the city on the Rhine knew about the extent of his holdings in Italy.

His wife was not among those banished; she could have stayed in Florence to represent the interests of the family.<sup>2023</sup> However, in the Catasto of 1446, it was noted that she resided with her husband in Parma. Furthermore, the information about her residential address in Florence, which is normally customary on tax returns, is missing. She not only joined her husband in Parma, but also followed him across the Alps and lived in Basel for several years.<sup>2024</sup> Their children Venna, Bernardo, and Carlo very probably were born in Basel between 1453 and 1457.<sup>2025</sup>

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2020 Martines (1980); Edgerton (1985); Spencer (1991). The text of the poem at Cavalcanti (1838–1839), p. 578. The gist of the poem: I am Lamberto Lamberteschi, to whom one can say your brain has flown away! I have joined these traitors in rebelling against my homeland, where I was once rich.

2021 Koelner (1953), p. 224: 'Two crossbows, two winding flasks, two belts, two leather quivers.'

2022 Schönberg (1879), p. 617; Koelner (1953), p. 224.

2023 Foster Baxendale (1991) has been able to document this behaviour frequently with the women of the exiled Alberti men.

2024 ASFi, Catasto 658 (II), cc. 590rv: *oggi si ritruova a Parma chol marito*. – StaBS, GA A 36, sabbato ante palmar, 1487.

2025 ASFi, Catasto 911, cc. 316rv: Lena lists in 1469 the members of her household: *Mona Lena sopra scripta 54 anni in circha, Venna Maria sua figliuola 15 in circha, Bernardo suo figliuolo 13 in circha, Charlo suo figliuolo minore 11 in circha*.



Lamberto often left Basel for business and political reasons and stayed in Upper Italian cities, avoiding the territory of Florence. During these absences, he had citizens of Basel represent him in his affairs, such as Burckart Fry.<sup>2026</sup> Nevertheless, he is documented so frequently as being in Basel that it was certainly his principal residence.<sup>2027</sup>

In addition to the politician and the merchant, another facet of Lamberto de' Lamberteschi can be found in the *manoscritto veneziano* in the British Library, namely, that of a healer and an early alchemist. The Lamberteschi couple is named in manuscript Sloane 416 as the source of very different recipes: for the production of the perfume *de Valens*, for pregnancy tests, but also a recipe for how to make a weak horse look strong and healthy. These were persons with a broad spectrum of interests and profound knowledge. What they did with these interests and this knowledge in Basel, and whether they found friends with similar interests, eludes clarification from the sources available.<sup>2028</sup>

As the Florentines hardly did any business with Lamberteschi – banned from Florence by Cosimo de' Medici – he had to find other partners. Between 1438 and 1441, Lamberto established a company with Pietro di Pace Guarienti.<sup>2029</sup> His older brother Domenico, who had been banned to Verona, may have been in the background. In 1445, the collaboration ended in a dispute that led to protracted litigation in the Basel courts.<sup>2030</sup> Subsequently, the wealthy Florentine did business with Basel merchants. It is confirmed that he started a company with Hans Waltenheim the Younger:<sup>2031</sup> *guette zyt xellschafft und fruntschafft*.<sup>2032</sup> What kind of business the two men did is not documented.<sup>2033</sup> In 1452, Lamberto issued a bill of exchange for his business partner, which entitled him to receive 200 Rhe. fl. The partner from Basel did this with Arrigo degli Orsi in Bologna and confirmed receipt of the money in writing.<sup>2034</sup> The transaction was offset through the bank of Ognibene de' Sagramoso in Rome.<sup>2035</sup> Thus, Lamberto had found

2026 StaBS, GA A 26, c. 283v.

2027 StaBS, O I, pp. 286b and 298–299. – StaBS, GA E 3, 23: In 1446, Peter Scherrer of Basel blocked his wife's assets, which lay with Lampertus de Lamberteschi. In the same year, Meister Peter of Neuenburg blocked assets that lay with *den bankierern in Lambertus von Lamberteschis hus*. – StaBS, GA 24, cc. 271–272. Fights over promissory notes, etc., between Lamberteschi, Meltinger, and others, who had vouched for Guarienti. – StaBS, GA A 26, c. 83v: Burkart Fry took a letter in Latin to Bologna. – StaBS, GA 38, cc. 31–34: Lengthy minutes about relations between Lamberteschi and merchants in Basel. StaBS, GA B, c. 172v: In 1451, bond from Ludman Meltinger, Hans Zschach, and Rudolf Herstrass for Andres Wiler in trust of Lambertus of the Lamberteschi. – StaBS, Schlüsselzunftarchiv 10, c. 51: Business with the guild. – See Ehrensperger (1972), pp. 66 and 280–281.

2028 Tosatti (1991).

2029 See above p.366.

2030 See above p.367.

2031 See StaBS, Schlüsselzunftarchiv 196 and 199.

2032 StaBS, GA A 26, c. 283v: 'Good times, companionship, and friendship.'

2033 Apelbaum (1915), p. 52.

2034 Files of this family in ASBo, Archivio Banzi. Arrigo cannot be found in them.

2035 Sagramoso also had connections with the Medici in Florence in 1455. ASFi, MAP 134, no. 3, c. 13v: *Rimetemo a Vinegia a nostri per loro conto [...] d'uso da Ognibene de' Sagramosi [...] qui a Giovanni Buorromei*.

a way to carry out exchange transactions without involving the Florentines. This transaction has survived because Lamberto's son Bernardo unsuccessfully filed a suit against the Waltenheim heirs in the Basel courts in 1487. He claimed that the 200 Rhe. fl. had never been paid back to his father in Basel.<sup>2036</sup> A court decision in a dispute with Piero and Jacopo de' Pazzi on 30 December 1454 – which has not survived in detail – also shows a connection with Sagramoso, whom Lamberto knew from Basel.<sup>2037</sup> These names point to another probable partnership, for the Pazzi surely tried to help him, being related to his wife. In their tax declaration of 1457, Arrigo degli Orsi in Bologna figures as their correspondent. After the closure of Sagramoso's Curia-based bank, the Pazzi may have taken his position in Lamberto's money transfers.<sup>2038</sup>

It should be noted that the relationship between Lamberteschi and Sagramoso may have gone beyond a mere correspondent relationship, for there was also a connection between the two of them through Christoph Roder from the diocese of Naumburg. This jurist advocated for the interests of the Veronese in dealings with the executors of Gherardo Bueri's will in Lübeck. Moreover, he was the procurator of Lamberto and Lena de' Lamberteschi. He was in Florence for them twice in order to appoint notaries as procurators for them there.<sup>2039</sup> It is also striking that Sagramoso closed his bank in Rome almost at the same time as Lamberteschi's death. Nevertheless, any further assertions in this regard would be pure speculation.

Only two more money transfers of Lamberto to Rome are documented. In the Burger archive of the city of Thun, a letter from *Uwer williger Lambertus de Lambertheschis burger ze Basel* to the city council dated 9 January 1454 has been preserved. It concerns a bull that a messenger could collect from him against payment of more than f. 33 in Basel coins. On 5 February, he acknowledged receipt. He gave the messenger a small promotional gift: *das mir geschicket ist von Rom von unsrem heiligen vatter bobst Nicolaus etlich agnus dei*.<sup>2040</sup> He issued the last evidenced

2036 StaBS, GA A 26, c. 283v; GA A 36, sabbato ante palmarum. 1487: *Heinrich von Ursis am zweinzigsten und nunden tag des monatz junii im jar gezalt thusent vierhundert funffzig und zwen jor. Lieber fründ, es ist harkomen Johannes Waltenheim von Basel mit einem uwren briefe uff lyhung zweyhundert guldin, der da gesandt ist zue Omne bene zu Rom und statt uff zweintzig tag des octobers, und ein uwren breif an mich, der mir vest den selben empholhen hat und ein andren sinen gesellen, genant Jacob Oppermano, der nit harkomen ist; harumb üch und uwer schriben angesehen, so ir zu mir gethan, und ich ime gezalt hundertfunffzig und syben ducaten, sechtzehen schilling uff geld ze rechnen. Welt üch hie mit warnen, daz ir daselbs zue Basel mögen bezalt werden. Nit me, dan gott helff uch. Und wyset die übergeschrift Lamperto Lamperteschi.* See Ehrensperger (1972), pp. 280–281.

2037 ASFi, NA 2557, inserto 2. Reference from Lorenz Böninger.

2038 ASFi, Catasto 829, c. 528v.

2039 ASFi, Diplomatico normale, Archivio generale appendice, no. 648: Christoph Roder was probably a jurist. In November 1444, Christoph Roder appeared in Florence and appointed a notary as procurator. The latter was to represent the interests of Lamberto Lamberteschi at the execution of his father Bernardo's will. In 1466, he was in Florence because of Lena Lamberteschi. See ASFi, NA 20611, c. 17v. According to information from Lorenz Böninger, there are many sources mentioning Christoph Roder in Florence. In 1473, he is named *habitor populi Sancti Proculi* (ASFi, NA 13146, cc. 171–231).

2040 Burgerarchiv Thun, Missiven 1447–1472, vol. 3a, BAT 665, nos. 109, 111, and 113: 'Since then several Agnus Dei have been sent to me from Rome by our Holy Father Pope Nicholas.'

bill of exchange in 1456. Although his name is not mentioned in the documents, there can be no doubt which Florentine in Basel contracted a payment with the city of Lucerne: *und sint also zu ein Florentzer ein Lantparter komen, der dann gelt usslicht gen Rom; dann in aller statt Bassel nit mer dann ein wechsele ist der gen Rom gelt oder wechsel brieff gebe.*<sup>2041</sup>

When Basel clerics needed to borrow money from a banker in Rome in 1451 for the servitia of Bishop Arnold of Rotberg, they evidently could not find anyone with a correspondent in their hometown. Eventually, the Medici Bank granted them a loan of 440 Rhe. fl., which was to be repaid on August 21 at their branch in Geneva. The debtors would certainly have avoided this detour via the city on the Rhône if repayment in Basel had been possible.<sup>2042</sup> Seven years later, the servitia of the bishop of Basel Johannes von Venningen also went through Geneva banks; the first instalment was paid through Antonio della Casa and the second through Piero and Giovanni de' Medici.<sup>2043</sup> Lamberteschi's standing with the Curia seems to have been weak, and his turnover in the bill of exchange business must have been very low.

As far as other fields of business Lamberteschi was active in are concerned, there are only scattered references. In the account book of the Geneva branch of Antonio della Casa and Simone Guadagni, it is mentioned that they bought white taffeta for him from Guasparre Bovattieri in Bologna. It was sent to Basel and had to be paid for by the next All Hallows' fair.<sup>2044</sup> Finally, the Basel sources tell us that he also put his money to use as a creditor in the pawnbroking business. He granted Dorothea von Wittenheim a loan of 14 Rhe. fl. against deposit of her jewellery.<sup>2045</sup>

Piero Lamberteschi was also a member of Lamberto's household at times. Piero was assuredly not Lamberto's brother, as Ehrensperger writes, but rather his nephew: the son of Domenico, born in about 1429.<sup>2046</sup> *Petrus Lamberteschis de Florentia* was given Basel citizenship after taking

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2041 Amiet (1876–1877), p. 324, attachments 31 and 209: 'And thus they came to a Florentine counterpart, who then paid out money for Rome; for in all of Basel there is no more than one moneychanger who provides money or bills of exchange for Rome.' – Amiet (1876–1877), p. 210; Ehrensperger (1972), p. 279.

2042 StaBS, Domstift VI, p. 5. See also Esch (1998), p. 298.

2043 Wirz (1911–1918), I, p. 112, nos. 326 and 327. – On the back of an official document of 21 July 1458 (StaBS, Domstift VI, no. 61) – in which Cardinal Jacob (St Anastasii) confirms having received the servitia of Bishop Johannes von Venningen from Piero and Giovanni de' Medici – is the name N. de Bonaparte. This is not a banker, as Ehrensperger (1972), p. 282, assumed, but rather the cameral cleric Niccolò di Bonaparte. See ASFi, MAP 28, no. 208.

2044 Cassandro (1976b), p. 332. He paid this amount at the All Hallows' fair of 1453: Cassandro (1976b), p. 333.

2045 StaBS, GA E 3, 68: *da ist inn ein granat und drü perlin, in dem andern ein saffyr mit vil kleinen perlin und in dem dritten ein Ribulin mit dry klein perlin* and two rings *hat der ein ein rubin, ein türckis und zwy perlin uff den siten.* 'In one there is a garnet and three pearls, in the other a sapphire with many small pearls, and in the third a ruby with three small pearls. And one of the two rings has a ruby, a turquoise, and two pearls on the sides.' See Ehrensperger (1972), p. 279.

2046 Ehrensperger (1972), p. 280. In the literature, a Piero Lamberteschi can be found; he is most probably not the same man as the Piero living in Basel. The latter was at the court of King Sigismund in Hungary in 1422. He acted as a middleman between the royal court and Poggio Bracciolini, who was to write the official chronicle

part in a military action together with other townsmen: *receptus est in civem quod nobiscum fuit in campis multotiens*. Unlike his uncle, however, he never became a member of the cloth merchants' guild.<sup>2047</sup> As no independent business activities of his have been documented, it can be assumed that he was in the service of his uncle, or perhaps he was his partner. He was still in Basel in 1448, as a notation in the court archive regarding the purchase of a stallion attests.<sup>2048</sup>

On 6 November 1458, the banishment of Lamberto and his brother Domenico was extended by the Medici for another twenty-five years. This news did not reach Lamberto, as he had passed away on July 8 of that year and was buried in the Barfüsser Church in Basel, which was part of the Franciscan monastery. The inscription on his gravestone is extant, thanks to a transcription from the seventeenth century:

*Anno Domini M.CCCC.LVIII*  
*Hic jacet*  
*LAMPERTUS de BERNHARDI*  
*de Lampertescus,*  
*civis Basil.*  
*expulsus de Florentia indigne.*  
*Cuius anima requiescat in pace*<sup>2049</sup>

These few words make clear Lamberto's inner conflict between his hometown, to which he always wanted to return, and the city that granted him exile and citizenship. He probably always felt that he was a guest in Basel and did not even buy a house there. Upon his death, Basel's direct connection to the Europe-wide payment system was cut off. For a journey to Rome in 1468, the city's preaching friar Heinrich Schnetz obtained a bill of exchange from banker Zilli in St. Gallen, who was able to issue bills of exchange to Tommaso Spinelli in Rome.<sup>2050</sup> Apparently, there was no longer the possibility of processing transactions like this via Basel.

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of the king. In 1423, the king granted him, Antonius Frontis, and Zenobius de Panzaciis (Panciatici) in Buda facilities in trade with Hungary. See Davies (1982), p. 167; Beinhoff (1995), p. 172. – Additional relatives have been documented in Hungary: Niccolò served under Filippo Scolari in the Hungarian army. However, he and Giovanni de' Lamberteschi were sentenced to imprisonment in 1401 during Sigismund's measures against the Italians. See Beinhoff (1995), p. 173.

2047 Koelner (1953).

2048 StaBS, GA A 24, c. 168.

2049 According to Benno Schubiger of the Basel Historical Museum, which is located in the former Barfüsser Church, this gravestone no longer exists but is documented in Tonjola (1661), p. 251. – See StaBS, Schlüsselzunftarchiv, 224. See Ehrensperger (1972), pp. 280–281.

2050 See above p. 213.

After the death of her husband, Mona Lena stayed on in Basel for two or three years with her young children.<sup>2051</sup> Only on 26 October 1464 is she documented in Florence, where she sold one of the last family estates – Torre al Gallo – to the Lanfredini family.<sup>2052</sup> The levy to the Catasto of 1469 contains no indication of a connection to Basel. Her children Bernardo and Venna can be detected in Naples in 1475, where the daughter was married to Antonio Villani and the son had an account with the silk merchant Tommaso Ginori.

Piero di Domenico was in Rome in 1458 and had a connection with the bank of the Baroncelli. On 12 July 1460, he was declared a rebel by the Republic of Florence along with his brothers Antonio, Jacopo, and Andrea.<sup>2053</sup> The first documentation that he had returned to the city of his birth is from 1469, when, as head of household, he wrote a summary of the property of the descendants of Domenico di Bernardo Lamberteschi to the Catasto. There is nothing about his time in Basel in this text. He was not living in Florence then, but in Prato. His wife Cilia, who was twelve years older than he, lived in Rome, where he wanted to go again soon.<sup>2054</sup> According to Florentine custom, it was extremely rare for a wife to be significantly older than her husband. Presumably, Piero had married a rich widow. In 1480, the Catasto only mentions his small inheritance.<sup>2055</sup> Because of the long years of exile, the fame of this noble family had faded in Florence and most of their huge wealth had been lost. Bernardo di Lamberto got back citizenship of Florence in 1494, as can be found in the Cittadinario, but the family never recovered from their banishment.<sup>2056</sup>

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2051 StABS, GA A 36, sabbato ante palmar, 1487.

2052 ASFi, Carte Gondi, no. 10.

2053 ASFi, Otto di Guardia e Balìa della Repubblica, 224, c. 104r.

2054 ASFi, Catasto 9II, cc. 444r–445r. – On 10 September 1469, Piero is documented in Florence when he acted as procurator in an inheritance dispute against the heirs of Cipriano di Lionardo Spinelli. See YUSA 87, no. 1644b. On the Pazzi as heirs of Piero, see Kuehn (2008), p. 146.

2055 ASFi, Catasto 1002, c. 481r.

2056 ASFi, Cittadinario Fiorentino, Manoscritto 419, consorti dei Rinucci e Tigliamochi.