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'A Port of Two Seas.'

*Lisbon and European Maritime Networks in the Fifteenth Century**

INTRODUCTION

For centuries “the Mediterranean was probably the most vigorous place of interaction between different societies”, David Abulafia has argued. It is said to have played a key role in the history of human civilization.¹ This notwithstanding the institutional and cultural differences which Christian, Jewish and Muslim traders encountered while criss-crossing Mediterranean waters, differences that have fuelled debate amongst economic historians. In some cases, however, no political or religious obstacles stood in the way of commercial exchange, resulting in late medieval port cities becoming instrumental for what Wim Blockmans has called “economic and cultural European integration”. In a nutshell, Blockmans argues that there is an alternative dimension to European integration that emerged not through military conquests or forced conversions, but through the ever-increasing movement of people and the exchange of commodities from different economic systems, in which port cities played a key role.² This being the case, this paper will focus on Lisbon – located outside the privileged milieu of multi-cultural interactions that was the Mediterranean Sea – and will strive to answer the question: did the mobility of merchants and their commodities in Lisbon bring meaningful contributions to this late-medieval European integration?

Historically, Lisbon has been at the crossroads of what nowadays we would call ‘international trade’. In the early twelfth century, while it was still under Islamic rule, its commercial relationships stretched towards the south of the Iberian Peninsula, from al-Andalus to the Maghreb, in north Africa, and the Mediterranean. This was achieved both over land and by sea, with Portuguese merchants engaging in

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¹ D. ABULAFIA, *The Great Sea. A Human History of the Mediterranean*, London 2011 (Allen Lane), p. 648. F. BRAUDEL, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, London 1973 (Collins).

² W. BLOCKMANS, *L'unification européenne par les circuits portuaires*, in *La ville médiévale en débat*, F. ANDREWS, A.M. DA COSTA eds., Lisbon 2013 (Instituto de Estudos Medievais), pp. 133-144.

cross-cultural trade both in Iberia and in other parts of Europe.³ By the end of the Middle Ages, the port of Lisbon had been established as the location where a large part of Portugal's overseas trade would take place, thus connecting the city to over fifty port towns – from Reval in the Baltic sea to Venice in the Mediterranean, including the Atlantic islands and Elmina in Western Africa.⁴

The title of this essay invokes a quote coined by Ovid, “a port of two seas”, which he used to describe the relationship between Constantinople and the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea. Although Lisbon only connects to a single ocean, the city soon became an important antechamber between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean in the later Middle Ages: that is, the confluence of two major, different yet complementary commercial systems, embodying distinct climates, agricultural production, food and cultures.

Over the last half-century, historians inside and outside Portugal have looked at Lisbon's overseas trade, the creation of merchant communities, the arrival of foreign traders, the development of institutions, and the royal and urban management of economic policies from different approaches. This include works produced on the binomial commercial relationships between Portugal and foreign territories (with Italy,⁵ Spain,⁶ England,⁷ Normandy,⁸ Flanders,⁹ and the Baltic¹⁰), on merchant

³ For example, in the twelfth century the merchants of our-day Algarve took their commodities to ports such as Montpellier, where they traded with Muslim, Christian and Jewish traders. B. OF TUDELA, *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela. Critical Text, Translation and Commentary*, London 1907 (Henry Frowde).

⁴ A. ANDRADE, F. MIRANDA, *Lisbon. Trade, Urban Power and the King's Visible Hand*, in *The Routledge Handbook of Maritime Trade around Europe, 1300-1600: Commercial Networks and Urban Autonomy*, W. BLOCKMANS, J. WUBS-MROZEWICZ, M. KROM eds., London 2017 (Routledge), pp. 333-351, 344.

⁵ V. RAU, *Cartas de Lisboa no Arquivo Datini de Prato*, in “Estudos Italianos em Portugal”, 21-22, 1962-63, pp. 3-13; L. D'ARIENZO, *La presenza degli italiani in Portogallo al tempo di Colombo*, Rome 2003 (Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato); M. BERTI, *Le aziende Da Colle: una finestra sulle relazioni commerciali tra la Toscana ed il Portogallo a metà del Quattrocento*, in *Toscana e Portogallo: Miscellanea Storica nel 650° Anniversario dello Studio Generale di Pisa*, Pisa 1994 (Edizione ETS), pp. 57-106.

⁶ H. CASADO ALONSO, *El triunfo de Mercurio. La presencia castellana en Europa (siglos XV y XVI)*, Burgos 2003 (Cajacirculo); IDEM, *Genèse et fin des réseaux de commerce castillans dans l'Europe des XV^e et XVI^e siècles*, in *Réseaux marchands et réseaux de commerce. concepts récents, réalités historiques du Moyen Âge au XIX^e siècle*, ed. D. COULOUN, Strasbourg 2010 (Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg); J. HINOJOSA MONTALVO, *De Valencia a Portugal y Flandres. Relaciones durante la Edad Media*, in “Anales de la Universidad de Alicante. Historia Medieval”, 1982, n. 1, pp. 149-168; IDEM, *Intercambios comerciales entre Portugal y Valencia a fines del siglo XV: el “dret portogues”*, in *Actas das II Jornadas Luso-Espanholas de História Medieval*, I-II, Oporto 1987 (Instituto Nacional de Investigação Científica), II, pp. 759-779; F.T. BARATA, *Mercadores, mercados e investimentos comerciais: as relações comerciais luso-aragonesas na primeira metade do século XV*, in *Congresso internacional Bartolomeu Dias e a sua Época*, III, Oporto 1989 (Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses) pp. 161-176; IDEM, *Navegação, comércio e relações políticas. Os portugueses no Mediterrâneo Ocidental (1385-1466)*, Lisbon 1998 (Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Junta de Investigação Científica e Tecnológica); IDEM, *Portugal and the Mediterranean trade: A Prelude to the Discovery of the “New World”*, in “Al-Masāq”, 17, 2005, n. 2, pp. 205-219.

⁷ V.M. SHILLINGTON, *The Beginnings of the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance*, in “Transactions of the Royal Historical Society”, 20, 1906, pp. 103-132. V.M. SHILLINGTON, A.B. CHAPMAN, *The Commercial Relations of England and Portugal*, New York 1907 (Burt Franklin); W. CHILDS, *Anglo-Portuguese Trade in the Fifteenth Century*, in “Transactions of the Royal Historical Society”, 2, 1992, pp. 195-219; EADEM, *Anglo-Portuguese Relations in the Fourteenth Century*, in *The Age of Richard II*, J. L. Gillespie ed., New York 1997 (Sutton Publishing), pp. 27-49; EADEM, *Trade and Shipping in the Medieval West: Portugal, Castile, and Eng-*

companies, traders and agents,¹¹ and on the influence of political powers on Lisbon's foreign trade.¹² However, most of the existing research is fragmented into geographical or thematic approaches, therefore not necessarily focussing on Lisbon, and failing to draw systematic connections between the Iberian, Atlantic, Mediterranean and African economic realities.

This chapter argues that late-medieval Lisbon rose to become a cosmopolitan centre of international trade, contributing to a change in commercial trading networks and consumption patterns. However, it also argues that the growth of trade contributed to competition between the traders, which sometimes had the opposite effect of causing traders to distance themselves from purported European integration. In order to do this, this study will examine fiscal, commercial, legislative, royal and judicial sources, extracted from the following collections and archives: chancelleries of the kings Afonso V, João II and Manuel (ANTT, Lisbon); parliamentary records (*Cortes*, ANTT, Lisbon); English Customs Accounts (TNA, London); *llibres de colleta* "Dret portugués" (Arxiu del regne de València); ledgers from the Archivio Salviati (Da Colle; Francesco di Nerone; Banco Salviati di Pisa); Fondo Estranei,

land, Oporto 2013 (Fédération Internationale des Instituts d'Études Médiévales); E.M. CARUS-WILSON, *The Overseas trade of Bristol*, in *Studies in English Trade in the Fifteenth Century*, E. POWER, M. POSTAN eds., London 1933 (Routledge), pp. 183-246; T.V. DE FARIA, F. MIRANDA, 'Pur bone alliance et amiste faire': diplomacia e comércio entre Portugal e Inglaterra no final da Idade Média, in "CEM/ Cultura, Espaço & Memória. Revista do CITCEM", 1, 2010, pp. 109-128.

⁸ R. FRANCISQUE-MICHEL, *Les Portugais en France, les Français en Portugal*, Paris 1882 (Guillard Aillaud).

⁹ E.V. BUSSCHE, *Flandre et Portugal*, Bruges 1874 (C. de Moor); A.H. DE O. MARQUES, *Notas para a história da feitoria portuguesa na Flandres, no século XV*, in *Ensaio de História Medieval*, ed. A.H. DE O. MARQUES, Lisbon 1965 (Portugália Editora), pp. 219-267; J. PAVIOT, *Les relations économiques entre le Portugal et la Flandre au XV^e siècle*, in *Congresso Internacional Bartolomeu Dias e a sua Época*, I-III, Oporto 1989 (Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses), III, pp. 531-540; F. MIRANDA, *Commerce, conflits et justice: les marchands portugais en Flandre à la fin du Moyen Âge*, in "Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest", 117, 2010, n.1, pp. 193-208.

¹⁰ A.H. DE O. MARQUES, *Hansa e Portugal na Idade Média*, cit.; F. Miranda, *Die Saga der portugiesischen Feigen. Der Handel mit dem Nord- und Ostseeraum im Mittelalter*, in "Hansische Geschichtsblätter", 133, 2016, pp. 77-97.

¹¹ V. RAU, *Uma família de mercadores italianos em Portugal no século XV: os Lomellini*, in "Revista da Faculdade de Letras", 22, 1956, pp. 56-83; EADEM, *Bartolomeo di Iacopo di ser Vanni. Mercador-banqueiro florentino em Lisboa nos meados do século XV*, in "Do Tempo e da História", 4, 1971, pp. 97-117; S. TOGNETTI, *Il Banco Cambini. Affari e mercati di una compagnia mercantile-bancaria nella Firenze del XV secolo*, Florence 1999 (Leo S. Olschki); IDEM, *Gli uomini d'affari toscani nella Penisola Iberica (metà XIV secolo - inizio XVI secolo)*, in "eHumanista", 38, 2018, pp. 83-98. J. SEQUEIRA, *A Companhia Salviati-Da Colle e o comércio de panos de seda florentinos em Lisboa no século XV*, in "De Medio Aevo", 7, 2015, n. 1, pp. 47-62; EADEM, *Michele Da Colle: um mercador pisano em Lisboa no século XV*, in *Con gran mare e fortuna. Circulação de mercadorias, pessoas e ideias entre Portugal e Itália na Época Moderna*, N. ALESSANDRINI, S. B. MATEUS, M. RUSSO, G. SABATINI eds., Lisbon 2015 (Cátedra de Estudos Sefarditas "Alberto Benveniste"), pp. 21-34; F. GUIDI-BRUSCOLI, *Bartolomeo Marchionni. "Homem De Grossa Fazenda" (ca. 1450-1530): un mercante fiorentino a Lisbona e l'impero portoghese*, Florence 2014 (L.S. Olschki). IDEM, *Da comprimari a protagonisti: i fiorentini in Portogallo nel Basso Medioevo (1338-1520)*, in "eHumanista", 38, 2018, pp. 65-82.

¹² A. ANDRADE, *A estratégia régia em relação aos portos marítimos no Portugal medieval: o caso da fachada atlântica*, in *Ciudades y villas portuarias del Atlántico en la Edad Media*, B. ARIZAGA BOLUMBURU, J. SOLÓRZANO TELECHEA eds., Logroño 2004 (Instituto de Estudios Riojanos), pp. 57-89; A. ANDRADE, F. MIRANDA, *Lisbon. Trade, Urban Power and the King's Visible Hand*, cit.

Banco Cambini (Ospedale degli Innocenti di Firenze); the *civiele sententiën* (Bruges); and chronicles.

PULL FACTORS

Chronicler Fernão Lopes described Lisbon and its port as a place of intense commercial contact, producing impressive numbers about the circulation of vessels on the River Tagus. In his work, Lopes claims that the port in Lisbon would hold, at times, as many as four to five hundred ships.¹³ Although the chronicler perhaps exaggerated numbers in terms of overseas trade, fifteenth-century Portugal did become partly responsible for the revival of European commercial exchange, thanks to the novelties shipped from the Atlantic islands of Madeira and the Azores, as well as from the markets of Western Africa. The overseas expansion played an important part in turning Lisbon into one of Europe's largest gateways, but its commercial relevance had begun far earlier, thanks to its long-standing tradition of foreign trade, its shipping capacity, and the existence of a diverse merchant community – composed both of Portuguese and foreign merchants. From a very early period, Portugal hosted Galician, Castilian, Cantabrian, Basque, Catalan, Valencian, Genoese, Florentine, Milanese, Venetian, English, Breton, Fleming and Hanseatic traders, as well as traders from other parts of Europe, while Portuguese merchants could also often be found in many other European ports.¹⁴

The long-standing importance of Lisbon as a European port having been established, what helped the city become a relevant socioeconomic node in European trade? Traditionally, historians tend to begin by considering Lisbon's purported privileged geographical setting and location. At the mouth of the Tagus – the largest river in the Iberian Peninsula – Lisbon is indeed at the crossroads of fluvial and maritime routes, aided by its estuary offering excellent conditions for anchorage, as shown by several sixteenth-century paintings.

Luisa D'Arienzo has stated that Lisbon's "felice posizione geografica" brought commercial benefits to the Portuguese city.¹⁵ However, although Lisbon's geographical position was indeed beneficial in connecting the north and the south, it also had some disadvantages. The winds and currents off the coast near Lisbon hindered navigation: experienced seafarers coming from the Mediterranean often preferred to sail away from the coast of Portugal, rather than approaching or stopping at any Portuguese port. Examples from the 1420s and 1430s demonstrate that

¹³ F. LOPES, *Crónica de D. Fernando*, 2nd ed., Lisbon 2004 (Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda), p. 6.

¹⁴ A.H. DE O. MARQUES, *Hansa e Portugal na Idade Média*, 2nd ed., Lisbon 1993 (Editorial Presença); F.T. BARATA, *Navegação, comércio e relações políticas*, cit.; F. MIRANDA, *Network Takers or Network Makers? The Portuguese Traders in the Medieval West*, in *Commercial Networks and European Cities, 1400-1800*, A. CARACAUSI, C. JEGGLE eds., London 2014 (Pickering & Chatto), pp. 171-186; F. MIRANDA, D. FARIA, *Lisboa e o comércio marítimo com a Europa nos séculos XIV e XV*, in *Lisboa Medieval. Gentes, Espaços e Poderes*, J.L.I. FONTES et al. eds., Lisbon 2016 (Instituto de Estudos Medievais), pp. 241-266; A. ANDRADE, F. MIRANDA, *Lisbon. Trade, Urban Power and the King's Visible Hand*, cit., pp. 333-351.

¹⁵ L. D'ARIENZO, *La presenza italiana in Spagna al tempo di Colombo*, Rome 2010 (Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato), p. 84.

the Florentine galleys en route to England and Flanders rarely stopped in Lisbon, preferring to stop in Cadiz.¹⁶ Galleys, of course, were not well suited to deal with open waters – at least, in comparison with caravels, Portugal's major contribution to the shipping industry.

Since geographical determinism obviously does not fully explain Lisbon's integration in wider maritime networks, other approaches must be considered. Firstly, size: in the 1400s, Lisbon was the largest city in the Iberian Peninsula with approximately fifty thousand inhabitants – making it larger than Barcelona, Valencia and Seville.¹⁷ For this reason, Lisbon's urban growth prompted a wide, international supply chain to feed the city, attracting merchants from all four corners of Europe and the Mediterranean. Grain for bread arrived in Lisbon from the Baltic, Normandy, England and, on occasion, even from the Maghreb.¹⁸ Secondly, it was in Lisbon that the Portuguese crown established itself and its institutions, making it the capital of the kingdom from the second half of the thirteenth century, a factor that had both social and economic consequences. On the one hand, Lisbon hosted royal officials, urban oligarchs, noblemen and religious elites, with their growing habits of conspicuous consumption, satisfied mostly through the import of luxury commodities (sumptuous fabrics, reliquaries, books, glasswork, etc.).¹⁹ On the other hand, royal institutions benefited from revenue coming from the international trade, allowing for a particular sort of bidirectional relationship to be established between the crown and merchants: the negotiation of commercial rights.²⁰

In the Middle Ages, the Portuguese crown granted a whole array of commercial rights that went way beyond what, traditionally, merchants obtained through the acquisition of safe-conduct. The crown intensified the negotiation of commercial rights in the fifteenth century, aiming to attract wealthy foreign merchants capable of ensuring the flow of domestic production and overseas commodities. This payer-exclusivity of trade allowed the crown to gain immediate access to funds to finance its military operations in Morocco and to support the expeditions to explore the Atlantic.²¹ The list of monopolised products is extensive and includes commodities that were extremely important to the Portuguese economy, some of which will be examined further ahead.

In addition, the arrival and settlement of foreign merchants in Lisbon may also be justified by two additional factors: the wide variety of commodities at their disposal, and their intrinsic quality. The list of Portuguese commodities in Italian,

¹⁶ M.E. MALLETT, *The Florentine Galleys in the Fifteenth Century*, Oxford 1967 (Clarendon Press), *passim*.

¹⁷ A. ANDRADE, F. MIRANDA, *Lisbon. Trade, Urban Power and the King's Visible Hand*, cit., p. 336.

¹⁸ A.H. DE O. MARQUES, *Introdução à história da agricultura em Portugal*, 3rd ed., Lisbon 1978 (Edições Cosmos), pp. 166-189.

¹⁹ A.M.P. FERREIRA, *A importação e o comércio têxtil em Portugal no século XV (1385 a 1481)*, Lisbon 1983 (Imprensa Nacional Casa da Moeda), *passim*; J. SEQUEIRA, *A Companhia Salvati-Da Colle e o comércio de panos de seda florentinos em Lisboa no século XV*, cit., pp. 47-62; EADEM, *O Pano da Terra. Produção têxtil em Portugal nos finais da Idade Média*, Oporto 2014 (U. Porto Edições), pp. 153-160. F. GUIDI-BRUSCOLI, *Bartolomeo Marchionni*, cit., pp. 83-86.

²⁰ V. RAU, *Privilégios e legislação portuguesa referentes a mercadores estrangeiros (séculos XV e XVI)*, in *Fremde Kaufleute auf der iberischen Halbinsel*, H. KELLENBENZ ed., Köln 1970 (Böhlau Verlag), pp. 15-30.

²¹ *Ibidem*.

Spanish, English, Norman, Flemish and Hanseatic markets is extensive – the Bristol customs accounts for the second half of the fifteenth century, for example, includes dozens of Portuguese commodities, such as oranges, dates, marmalade, soap and vinegar, among others.²² From the list of commodities shipped to European and Mediterranean markets, at least six deserve careful analysis because of the quantity shipped, the quality offered, and the dimension of the commercial network formed.

Wine and olive oil were mainstays among Portugal's exports in the Middle Ages. Wine was shipped in very large quantities to almost every market in Atlantic Europe, with the English being its prime consumers.²³ Recent research carried out on the Bristol customs accounts demonstrates that, in the second half of the fifteenth century, Bristolians bought 18 per cent of their wine from Portugal, most of which came from Lisbon (see Tab. 1 below). Bristol's import of Portuguese olive oil reached 33 per cent in the customs accounts for this commodity, whereas wax and sugar exceeded the threshold of seventy per cent.²⁴ The availability and the price must have been factors influencing Bristolians to opt for Portugal for these commodities.

Tab. 1. **Correlation between the commodity and the amount imported from Portugal in the Bristol Customs Accounts, 1461-1504**

| COMMODITY | IMPORTED FROM PORTUGAL |
|-----------|------------------------|
| Wine | 18% |
| Olive oil | 33% |
| Wax | 79% |
| Sugar | 71% |

Source: THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES (TNA), E122, *Bristol Customs Accounts*.

Availability and surely the price of the product, but its quality, must have influenced the English merchants' choice of Portuguese commodities. In the fifteenth-century account known as *The Noumbre of Weyghtes*, it is said that:

“Also in Portugal the chief merchandise is sweet wine that grows within the land, that is to say bastard, ‘capryke’, ‘osey’, ‘raspey’, ‘reputage’ and ‘land’ wine. There is also olive oil growing which is most wholesome for men’s food and medicines; and when it is old it is

²² THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES (TNA), E122, *Bristol Customs Accounts*.

²³ W. CHILDS, *Trade and Shipping in the Medieval West*, cit., p. 98.

²⁴ See forthcoming by F. MIRANDA, H. CASADO ALONSO, *Comércio entre o porto de Bristol e Portugal no final da Idade Média, 1461-1504*, in “Anais de História de Além-Mar”, XIX, 2018, pp. 11-36.

good wool oil. There is also wax, honey, dates and figs, pomegranates, oranges, litmus, lemons."²⁵

Late fourteenth-century Tuscan merchants had similar views about the quality of olive oil and other commodities. In 1399, in Lisbon, Bartolomeo Manni sent a letter to the Datini Company in Pisa in which the quality of the olive oil, honey, and even fish were underlined:

*"From here we bring olive oil and honey . . . And the salt that we buy here is perfect: it's white and good . . . Here they make large quantities of smoked sardine, . . . and they are big, like two or two and a half for each herring."*²⁶

The export of hides from Lisbon is another example of the city's integration in multi-layered, multilateral commercial networks, encompassing a vast area from Ireland to the Italian city-states. Portuguese hides have been recorded in Flanders from as early as the fourteenth century, and in England from the fifteenth century onwards.²⁷ This commodity also found high demand in Valencia in the second half of the 1400s. On 20th March 1497, for example, the *Dret Portugués de València* recorded a Portuguese vessel entering Valencia laden with hake, conger, sugar, 36 ox hides and a dozen kid (goat) hides.²⁸ With the development of the tanning industry in Tuscany as of the 1200s, higher demand for raw materials opened new commercial channels in the Atlantic markets.²⁹ Lisbon positioned itself at the centre-stage of this international trade in the fifteenth century, providing their Tuscan clients with Portuguese, Galician and Irish hides – with the majority being shipped on board Portuguese vessels.³⁰ The Salviati case-study (see Tab. 2 below) shows that 22 per cent of the hides imported by the company came from Portugal, and 13 per cent from Ireland – meaning that 35 per cent of this trade was managed through Lisbon.³¹

²⁵ Our translation from S. JENKS, *Werkzeug des spätmittelalterlichen Kaufmanns: Hansen und Engländer im Wandel von memoria zur Akte (mit einer Edition von The Nounbre of Weygbtys)*, in "Jahrbuch für fränkische Landesforschung", LII, 1992, n.1, pp. 283-319, 307-308.

²⁶ Our translation from V. RAU, *Cartas de Lisboa no Arquivo Datini de Prato*, cit., p. 8.

²⁷ O. MARQUES, *Hansa e Portugal na Idade Média*, cit., pp. 30-34; W. CHILDS, *Trade and Shipping in the Medieval West*, cit., p. 97.

²⁸ ARXIU DEL REGNE DE VALÈNCIA, *Mestre Racional*, n. 12.125, f. 3v.

²⁹ T. ANTONI, *I costi industriali di una azienda conciaria della fine del Trecento (1384-1388)*, in "Bollettino storico pisano", 42, 1973, pp. 9-52.

³⁰ F. MELIS, *Di alcune figure di operatori economici fiorentini attivi nel Portogallo nel XV secolo*, in *I mercanti italiani dell'Europa medievale e rinascimentale*, L. FRANGONI ed., Florence 1990 (Le Monnier), p. 13; S. TOGNETTI, *Aspetti del commercio internazionale del cuoio nel XV secolo: il mercato pisano nella documentazione del Banco Cambini di Firenze*, in *Il cuoio e le pelli in Toscana: produzione e mercato nel tardo Medioevo e nell'Età Moderna*, ed. S. GENSINI, Pisa 1999 (Pacini), pp. 17-50, *passim*; J. SEQUEIRA, *Entre Lisboa e Pisa: alguns exemplos de viagens comerciais no terceiro quartel do século XV*, in *Ao Tempo de Vasco Fernandes*, ed. R.M. RIBEIRO, Viseu 2016 (DGPC, Museu Nacional Grão-Vasco, Projecto Património), pp. 173-185, 183-84; EADEM, *Comprar, organizar e expedir: mercadores pisanos no negócio internacional dos couros portugueses e galegos no século XV*, in "eHumanista", 38, 2018, pp. 131-145, *passim*; A. CARLOMAGNO, *Il Banco Salviati di Pisa: commercio e finanza di una compagnia fiorentina tra il 1438 e il 1489*, I-II, Pisa 2010 (Università degli Studi di Pisa), *passim*; F. GUIDI-BRUSCOLI, *Bartolomeo Marchionni*, cit., pp. 88-89.

³¹ A. CARLOMAGNO, *Il Banco Salviati di Pisa*, cit., I, pp. 325-326.

Tab. 2. Number (in pieces) and origin of hides sold by the Salviati Bank of Pisa, 1438-1485

| Year | Maghreb | Portugal | Spain | Ireland | Sicilian | Sardinian | Other |
|-----------|---------|----------|--------|---------|----------|-----------|-------|
| 1438-1445 | - | 320 | 208 | - | - | 790,3 | 3354 |
| 1446-1450 | 2229 | 9 | 1564 | - | - | 26,6 | 246 |
| 1451-1455 | 58 | 574 | 995 | 1998 | - | - | 266 |
| 1456-1460 | 574 | 160 | 0 | 106 | 50 | - | - |
| 1461-1465 | - | 500 | 707 | 0 | 689 | 105 | - |
| 1466-1470 | 2907 | 2960 | - | 1000 | 366 | 125 | - |
| 1471-1475 | 2078 | 1595 | - | 300 | - | 48 | - |
| 1476-1480 | - | - | 220 | - | - | - | 147 |
| 1481-1485 | - | - | 337,5 | 254 | - | - | - |
| Total | 7846 | 6118 | 4031,5 | 3658 | 1105 | 1094,9 | 4013 |

Source: A. CARLOMAGNO, *Il Banco Salviati di Pisa: commercio e finanza di una compagnia fiorentina tra il 1438 e il 1489*, I-II, Università degli Studi di Pisa 2010, I, pp. 325-326.

In fact, from 1450 to 1475, the Salviati company bought most of its hides from two markets: the Maghreb and Portugal (Tab. 2). These two markets surpassed any Spanish, Sicilian and Sardinian competition. After this period, foreign merchants found hindrances when buying hides from Portugal: in 1481, the crown issued a decree banning the export of hides, which lasted six years.³²

Along with wine, olive oil and hides, the importance of kermes (*kermes vermilio*, a red dyestuff), sugar, and slaves of course, should also be included in this discussion. Each in their own way, these represent different stages of Portugal's foreign trade and the widening of the country's commercial networks. Kermes was rediscovered as an export commodity in the second half of the fifteenth century. Again, *The Nourish of Weyghtes* states that Portuguese kermes grew in the wild in the mountains of Sintra, and that it was of a high quality.³³ Dominique Cardon argues, for instance, that its rise in the trade might even be explained by the fact that Pope Paul II (1464-1471) changed the robes of cardinals from purple to red.³⁴

Departing from Lisbon, Portuguese kermes reached the markets of the Hansa, England and Tuscany.³⁵ Between 1459 and 1478, the Salviati Bank of Pisa bought 44 per cent of their kermes in the Maghreb and 33 per cent in Valencia, but the town of Sintra was also an important contributor, providing 23 per cent of this

³² H. da G. BARROS, *História da Administração Pública em Portugal nos séculos XII a XV*, 1-11, 2nd ed., IX, Lisbon 1945-1954 (Sá da Costa), pp. 265-268.

³³ W. CHILDS, *Trade and Shipping in the Medieval West*, cit., pp. 23-25.

³⁴ D. CARDON, *Le monde des teintures naturelles*, Paris 2014 (Belin) pp. 600-601.

³⁵ J. SEQUEIRA, *O Pano da Terra*, cit., p.114.

commodity.³⁶ According to Federigo Melis, the quality of Portuguese kermes could be measured by the price put on it, as the most expensive for consumers in the London market, and presumably to have been of the highest quality.³⁷

The introduction of sugar cane plantations in Madeira, in the first half of the fifteenth century, changed the way in which sugar was traded on the entirety of the European continent in the second half of the 1400s. Lisbon, once again, positioned itself at the heart of the trade. Although the 'sugar revolution' had begun in the mid-fifteenth century – in 1452, Prince Henrique, the Navigator, granted Diogo de Teive the privilege of installing the first sugar mill in Funchal; and, in 1466, the Portuguese brought the first black slaves to the island to work in the mills – it took several years for production to meet domestic and international demand.³⁸ In the second half of the fifteenth century, Bristolian merchants, for instance, bought sugar both in Lisbon and Madeira, but they seem to have only visited the Atlantic island once, in 1486.³⁹ That year, they bought more sugar in Madeira than in Lisbon (Tab. 3).

Tab. 3. **Bristolian sugar imports from Madeira and Lisbon and the duties charged in the Bristol Customs Accounts, 1468**

| Origin | Quantity (cases) | Duties charged (£) |
|---------|------------------|--------------------|
| Lisbon | 66,25 | 132,5 |
| Madeira | 232,25 | 443,25 |

Source: TNA, *E122, Bristol Customs Accounts*.

As the century progressed so did sugar production, as well as the role Lisbon took on in this international trade. In 1498, Madeira produced more than two thousand tons of sugar: 588 tons were sold to Flanders; Venice, Genoa and Constantinople each imported 191 tons; England about 90 tons; and Livorno just under 90 tons.⁴⁰ The importance of the sugar trade can be measured in many ways. For a period of 11 years after 1480, the Salviati Bank of Pisa made almost as much profit

³⁶ ARCHIVIO SALVIATI (AS), *Libri di commercio*, Serie I, 280, 281, 282, 286, 294.

³⁷ F. MELIS, *Di alcune figure di operatori economici fiorentini attivi nel Portogallo nel XV secolo*, cit., p. 14.

³⁸ A. VIEIRA, *A Madeira e o mercado do açúcar: séculos XV-XVI*, in *História do Açúcar: Rotas e Mercados*, Centro de Estudos de História do Atlântico, Funchal 2002 (Região Autónoma da Madeira. Secretaria Regional do Turismo e Cultura), pp. 55-89; J. R. MAGALHÃES, *O açúcar nas ilhas portuguesas do Atlântico, séculos XV e XVI*, in "Varia Historia", 25, 2009, n. 41, pp. 151-75. V. M. GODINHO, *Os Descobrimentos e a Economia Mundial*, I-IV, 2nd ed., Lisbon 1991 (Editorial Presença), IV, pp. 73-93.

³⁹ According to the Bristol Customs Accounts from 1461 to 1504, Bristolian merchants bought sugar in Lisbon in 1466, 1469, 1471, 1474, 1475, 1486 and 1504. (TNA, *E122, Bristol Customs Accounts*).

⁴⁰ *Descobrimentos Portugueses. Documentos para a sua História*, ed. J. DA S. MARQUES, I-III, Lisbon 1944 (Instituto Nacional de Investigação Científica), pp. 488-490; V. RAU, J. DE MACEDO, *O açúcar da Madeira nos fins do século XV. Problemas de produção e comércio*, Funchal 1962 (Junta Geral do Distrito Autónomo do Funchal), pp. 14-15.

from Madeira sugar bought in Lisbon than from the sugar they had sold in the previous 34 years from Palermo and Valencia combined (Tab. 4).⁴¹

Tab. 4. Profits on sugar sales, in *florini larghi*, by the Salviati Bank of Pisa, 1455-1489

| Year | Sugar from Palermo | Sugar fino from Valencia | Sugar from Madeira |
|-----------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 1455-1489 | 103.10.07 | 32.14.07 | 130.06 |

Source: ARCHIVIO SALVIATI, *Libri di commercio, Serie I*, 278, 283, 294, 301.

Next, Lisbon would become the centre of commerce of another important commodity, one with long-lasting implications for the whole of mankind: African slaves. After the first two Africans were captured in 1441, thousands would follow, brought to Portugal by force in the second half of the fifteenth century.⁴² In 1460s Lisbon, Pisan merchant Michele da Colle had a black Muslim slave who he later converted to Christianity through baptism.⁴³ From 1469 to 1473, along with other merchants, Lisbon merchant Fernão Gomes was granted the privilege of trading slaves from Western Africa; and, from 1486 to 1495, Florentine Bartolomeo Marchionni also obtained a contract allowing him to trade slaves, which he then shipped to Seville, Valencia and Florence. From 1486 to 1493, the Lisbon *Casa dos Escravos* (House of Slaves) records show that 3,589 slaves were registered as entering the market – each one of them valued at four thousand *reais*.⁴⁴ In the short-term, the slave trade contributed, among many other factors, to the success of the colonisation of Madeira, and to its economic development. In the long-term, it created shifts in transcontinental commercial networks, as well as in the economy, in society and in the culture of the empire and its colonies.

INTEGRATION AND OPPOSITION

Many foreign merchants chose the Portuguese capital as the location for their business operations and their homes. The existing records from the Portuguese chancellery provide a clear view of Lisbon's cosmopolitan atmosphere. During the reign of King Afonso V (r. 1438–1481), at least 143 foreign merchants requested safe-conduct, letters of protection and privileges to trade in the Portuguese capital for long periods of time, but since only a third of Afonso V's chancellery records have survived in the archives, historians suspect this number could have been much

⁴¹ AS, *Libri di commercio, Serie I*, 278, 283, 294, 301.

⁴² G.E. DE ZURARA, *The Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*, 2 vols. London 1896 (Printed for the Hakluyt Society), chs. 17, 19.

⁴³ J. SEQUEIRA, *Michele Da Colle: um mercador pisano em Lisboa no século XV*, cit., p. 28; A.C. CARDOSO, *Os livros de contas do mercador Michele Da Colle (1462–63). Do registo contabilístico à atividade comercial e financeira na praça de Lisboa*, University of Porto 2016, p. 46.

⁴⁴ F. GUIDI-BRUSCOLI, *Bartolomeo Marchionni*, cit., pp. 118-34.

higher. The king granted these privileges to merchants of at least 15 different nationalities, as seen in Tab. 5.

Tab. 5. **Safe-conduct and letters of protection granted during the reign of Afonso V to foreign merchants (1438-81)**

| Origin | Quantity |
|--------------|------------|
| Castile | 36 |
| England | 34 |
| Genoa | 20 |
| Brittany | 14 |
| Galicia | 11 |
| Florence | 7 |
| Biscay | 5 |
| Unspecified | 5 |
| Piacenza | 2 |
| Granada | 2 |
| Asturias | 2 |
| France | 1 |
| Venice | 1 |
| Piemonte | 1 |
| Maghreb | 1 |
| Milan | 1 |
| Total | 143 |

Source: ARQUIVO NACIONAL DA TORRE DO TOMBO, *Chancelaria de D. Afonso V, passim*.

Together, Castilian and English traders obtained nearly half of these royal privileges – 25 and 24 per cent respectively – a high percentage, which is perhaps explained by the long tradition of Anglo-Iberian commercial exchange, and certain

merchants' needs to seek protection following certain piratical attacks.⁴⁵ Genoese (14 per cent) and Breton (10 per cent) traders came third and fourth in quantity, revealing, once again, their historical commercial connections to Portugal. In the case of the Bretons, these were paramount in supplying grain to the city of Lisbon in the fifteenth century.⁴⁶ Florentine, Venetians, Piedmontese and Milanese traders can be found further down the list, although it is likely that their community in Lisbon was larger than what is shown in these records: the lack of a complete inventory of foreigners living in the city (the non-existence of certain records in Portugal), and the fact that some merchants co-operated with each other might help explain these disparities.

The arrival of foreign nations to Lisbon is preceded by these references and privileges. The Genoese arrived in 1270, the Florentines settled in 1338, and the English settled in no later than 1311, having established their factory in Lisbon in 1352.⁴⁷ To this list, one may add merchants who came from Normandy, Livonia and Prussia.⁴⁸

Many of these businessmen lived on Lisbon's riverfront and on the *Rua Nova dos Mercadores* (New Merchants' Street), making Lisbon considerably more cosmopolitan than the rest of the kingdom:⁴⁹

*“Turning left, one arrives at another street, one named New, New Merchants' Street, which is much wider than all other streets, ornate on both sides with beautiful buildings. Therein gather, every day, traders and folks from all parts of the world . . . because of the good amenities of the harbour and of commerce.”*⁵⁰

The Pisan merchant, Michele da Colle, left his hometown at a young age to gain experience as a merchant abroad. He lived in Valencia for five years before moving to Lisbon in 1462, where he rented a house on this street.⁵¹ The Fleming merchant Maarten Lem, a denizen of Lisbon, was one of his neighbours.⁵² It was not uncommon for foreigners to find female partners in Lisbon. Bartolomeo Marchionni, for instance, also a resident of the *Rua Nova*, had intimate relations with at least two Portuguese women, with whom he had a total of five children.⁵³

⁴⁵ H. CASADO ALONSO, F. MIRANDA, *The Iberian Economy and Commercial Exchange with North-Western Europe in the Later Middle Ages*, in *The World of the Newport Medieval Ship*, E. T. JONES, R. STONE eds., Cardiff 2018 (Wales University Press), pp. 205-227.

⁴⁶ A.H. DE O. MARQUES, *Introdução à história da agricultura em Portugal*, cit., pp. 89, 166.

⁴⁷ *Nova História de Portugal*, J. SERRÃO, A. H. de O. MARQUES eds., I-XII, Lisbon 1987 (Editorial Presença), IV, pp. 40-44; W. CHILDS, *Trade and Shipping in the Medieval West*, cit., p. 107.

⁴⁸ A. H. DE O. MARQUES, *Hansa e Portugal na Idade Média*, cit., pp. 100-109.

⁴⁹ A. J. GSCHWEND, K.J.P. LOWE, *The Global City. On the Streets of Renaissance Lisbon*, London 2015 (Paul Holberton Publishing).

⁵⁰ Our translation. from D. de GÓIS, *Descrição da cidade de Lisboa*, J. da F. Alves ed., Lisbon 2001 (Livros Horizonte), p. 50.

⁵¹ A. C. CARDOSO, *Os livros de contas do mercador Michele da Colle (1462-63)*, cit., pp. 47-48.

⁵² M. LEME, *Os Lemes - Um percurso familiar de Bruges a Malaca*, in “Sapiens: História, Património e Arqueologia”, 0, 2008, pp. 51-83, 45-48.

⁵³ F. GUIDI-BRUSCOLI, *Bartolomeo Marchionni*, cit., p. 26.

The settlement of groups of foreigners in Lisbon brought changes to the social and religious life of the city, and, ultimately, to the city's landscape. In the late thirteenth century, the Germans founded a brotherhood dedicated to St. Bartholomew; in 1414 the Flemings established a chapel dedicated to the Apostles (or the Holy Cross) and the Chapel of St. Andrew; in 1471 the English founded the Chapel of St. Dominic; whereas the Italians dedicated theirs, in 1518, to Our Lady of Loreto – the latter of which is still standing.⁵⁴

Alongside the existence of communities and places of worship, foreign merchants also established profitable collaborations with Portuguese Jews. Fleming merchant Maarten Lem, Lombard Lomellini and the Florentine Marchionni, for instance, all partnered up with Jewish businessmen Isaac Abravanel, Guedelha Palaçano and Moisés Latam. They all orbited around the crown and the royal family, providing banking services and partnerships in commerce.⁵⁵

Although foreign merchants encountered a favourable environment for their socioeconomic life and professional activities in Lisbon, they were not immune to hindrances and opposition to their presence in the Portuguese capital. The way these foreigners infiltrated the productive and distributive sectors of the city with their tentacles of economic power caused producers and merchants alike enormous discomfort. Robust merchant companies operating in Portugal took advantage of commercial privileges auctioned by the crown, seizing control over the production and distribution of many commodities. As a result, smaller traders – especially those who were Portuguese – would be excluded from profitable businesses. Perhaps used as a mechanism for financing public debt, the crown granted individual merchants or merchant companies monopoly over, for example, alum, coral, cork, hides, kermes, orchil, silk, soap, sugar, and woad.⁵⁶ Merchants channelled their dissatisfaction of these monopolies into parliamentary debates. In 1446, at the *Cortes*, the king heard butchers complaining that the monopoly on the trading of ox hides in Lisbon allowed the Genoese to buy the commodity below fair value. Nine years later, the problem persisted, and the butchers complained to the king once again, saying that the monopoly now granted to the Genoese and the Florentine traders did not allow freely to negotiate the hides to the highest bidder, and that this business was not profitable to them butchers nor to the crown. This time, the king replied by saying that his hands were tied, since the crown still owed the Italians money from his sister's wedding to Emperor Frederick III in 1452 – the Genoese

⁵⁴ A.H. DE O. MARQUES, *Hansa e Portugal na Idade Média*, cit., p. 100; W. CHILDS, *Trade and Shipping in the Medieval West*, cit., p. 119; N. ALESSANDRINI, *La chiesa di Nostra Signora di Loreto e la Nazione Italiana di Lisbona (sec. XVI-XVIII)*, in *Chiesa di Nostra Signora di Loreto 1518-2018. Una chiesa italiana in terra portoghese*, N. ALESSANDRINI, T. BARTOLOMEI, eds., Lisbon 2018 (Fábrica da Igreja Italiana de Nossa Senhora do Loreto), pp. 180-93, 181.

⁵⁵ M.J.F. TAVARES, *Os judeus em Portugal no século XV*, I, Lisbon 1980 (Imprensa Nacional - Casa da Moeda), p. 280.

⁵⁶ An article on monopolies and public debt in late medieval Portugal is currently under preparation by the authors.

and Florentine merchants having lent the crown money to pay for Leonor's dowry.⁵⁷ Restrictions on the trading of hides remained until the early sixteenth century.

The production and trading of cork also led to intense debates with the king. In 1456, Afonso V granted a monopoly on cork to Flemish merchant Maarten Lem and Genoese merchant Marco Lomellini for a period of ten years. Almost two decades later, in 1475, in the *Cortes* of Évora, representatives of the urban councils addressed petitions to the king wherein they complained that it made no sense for the crown to concede monopolies on things God had given them for free – to produce cork all they had to do was go out and collect it from cork trees. Notwithstanding the arguments presented, the king rejected the petition to put an end to the monopoly by saying that it was more lucrative for the kingdom this way.⁵⁸

These kinds of complaints extended to other commodities, such as kermes and silk. Those operating outside the monopolies tried all sorts of arguments and legal approaches to overcome what they considered to be a significant problem. Unable to compete against the rich foreign merchants, representatives of the people in the *Cortes* of 1481/82 petitioned the king to decree the immediate expulsion of all foreign traders operating in Portugal.⁵⁹ Since none of the foreign merchants got expelled from Portugal, the king surely ignored their request.

Whether because of institutional inefficacy or some sort of animosity towards foreigners, customs houses in Portugal quite often created hindrances to foreign merchants. On a couple of occasions, English and German merchants submitted petitions to the king and urban councils complaining that sometimes customs officials robbed their commodities, reserved them for sale at a lower price to certain individuals without their authorisation, and even ignored them when they knocked on the door of the customs office during working hours.⁶⁰ The Germans, for instance, protested against unfair treatment, since customs officials charged them three to four times more than what Portuguese merchants would pay.⁶¹ On another occasion, the English also criticised the business relationship they had with the Portuguese Jews. In 1454, they claimed that the Jews were indeed their best clients for the cloth trade, but that they rarely paid their debts on time, which caused some animosity between them.⁶²

To what extent these examples show the integration of foreigners – or the opposite – is very hard to distinguish. From a certain point of view, the mercantile cosmopolitanism of Lisbon was not much different from that of Bruges in the mid-fifteenth century. The crown, the city and society seemed open enough to the idea

⁵⁷ H. DA G. BARROS, *História da administração pública em Portugal nos séculos XII a XV*, cit., IX, pp. 265-68; J. SEQUEIRA, *Comprar, organizar e expedir*, cit., pp. 131-32.

⁵⁸ See A. ANDRADE, F. MIRANDA, *Lisbon. Trade, Urban Power and the King's Visible Hand*, cit., p. 341.

⁵⁹ ARQUIVO NACIONAL DA TORRE DO TOMBO (ANTT), *Cortes*, m. 3, n. 5.

⁶⁰ See the examples given in A. ANDRADE, F. MIRANDA, *Lisbon. Trade, Urban Power and the King's Visible Hand*, cit., pp. 346-347.

⁶¹ J. DA S. MARQUES ed., *Descobrimientos Portugueses. Documentos para a sua História*, cit., supl. vol. 1, 356 and ff.

⁶² M.J.F. TAVARES, *Os judeus em Portugal no século XV*, cit., I, p. 296.

of welcoming foreigners and one can very rarely find (unsuccessful) attempts to hinder their presence in the kingdom.

CONCLUSION

In the mid-sixteenth century, chronicler Damião de Góis wrote that Lisbon was one of two cities in the world that, from its port, was capable of summoning the Atlantic, Africa and Asia in a huge embrace.⁶³ This was not merely a matter of geographical determinism, the fact that the city was well located between the north of Europe and the Mediterranean, or between Europe and Africa. It was mostly a statement buttressed on the fact that the city had a good port, shipping infrastructures (shipbuilding, merchant ships, warehouses), royal protection for foreign merchants, quality commodities at a low cost, and novelty products (from the Atlantic islands and Western Africa). In addition, merchants could find a good number of conspicuous consumers in Lisbon, mostly amongst the members of the court and clergy. For most of the Middle Ages, merchants found Lisbon to have an open, culturally diverse environment created by the relatively peaceful coexistence between different cultural and religious groups. The cases of opposition towards foreigners and Jewish merchants mentioned earlier in this chapter are not significant enough for one to argue that there was a lack of tolerance in Lisbon. What existed was, of course, economic competition between merchants. All of this contributed, nonetheless, to the positioning of Lisbon at the centre-stage of multiple commercial systems, and to making it one of the first global cities.

Late-medieval European integration, as discussed in the introduction to this essay, is rather different from the integration that came about through the European Union in the twentieth century. However, if the mobility of merchants and their commodities did contribute, in any way, to its primeval existence in the late Middle Ages, Lisbon was surely at the forefront of this development. However, the following centuries would bring more disintegration than integration in Portugal – with the expulsion of the Jews, the Muslims, the rise of the Inquisition, and, of course, the rise of slavery.

⁶³ The other was Seville. D. DE GÓIS, *Urbis Olisiponis Descriptio*, Lisbon 2002 (Guimarães Editores), p. 83.