

with Ibn Sahl b. Rabban al-Tabari (d. after 240/855) and Ibn Luqa (d. c.308/92) as well as with al-Razi (d. 923), we have long discussions of contagious diseases in Arabic medical texts. In addition, quarantines were not employed in the Muslim world until the nineteenth century (see the work of Andrew Roberts for what the Ottomans learned from the Russians in this regard); furthermore, a quarantine involves isolating the healthy—not the already sick—to see if they become unwell.

Arvide Cambra brings up the anachronistic reference to modern microbiology again in a footnote on the passage of the treatise in which Ibn Khatimah describes how most of the used-clothes salesmen of Almeria died of the plague (vol. 1, p. 63; but see also vol. 1, p. 82). Reading the text in this fashion leads to inaccuracies in translation: for instance, she needlessly inserts the term ‘contagion’ where it does not exist—as when she translates ‘What is clear and regarding which there is no secret or occultation is that this sickness is contagious, it spreads and is infectious, that is where its evil and harm lie’ (vol. 1, p. 62) [my translation of the Spanish]. Comparing the Arabic in the partial edition found in the al-Khattabi edition, however, we find that Ibn Khatima wrote only that it is clear that ‘this disease spreads its evil and transmits its harm’, with no mention of contagion or infection (Muhammad al-‘Arabi al- Khattabi, *al-Tibb wa-l- atibba’ fi-l-andalus al-islamiyya* [2 vols., 1988], vol. 1, p. 179). Part of the problem in attributing a modern etiology to Ibn Khatima’s understanding of the plague is his repeated insistence on God being the only agent with causative power, which obviously contradicts modern understandings of contagion. This leads to an artificial division between the religious and medical in his work, as we see when Arvide Cambra comments that Ibn Khatima’s repeated assertions of God’s agency are theological insertions into a medical discussion instead of part of a coherent world-view (vol. 1, p. 73). This type of misreading is a classic error in the history of medicine.

This translation has been printed by Logos, and there appears to have been little in the way of editorial review. Peer review, despite its imperfections, continues to be valuable and could have preserved the translator from numerous missteps in her translation of Ibn Khatima’s treatise.

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*Tribunali di Mercanti e Giustizia Mercantile nel Tardo Medioevo*, ed. Elena Maccioni and Sergio Tognetti (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2016; pp. 221. €25).

This volume, edited by Elena Maccioni and Sergio Tognetti, offers a timely exploration of the contested jurisdictions and multiple avenues of recourse that have always been important features of the landscape of trade. Its focus on the confluence of the development of sophisticated legal and mercantile structures in the late Middle Ages is one that harks back to Max Weber’s study of commercial partnerships and Federigo Melis’ use of notarial records.

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Drawing on examples from Florence, Ragusa (Dubrovnik), Pisa and Barcelona, its chapters measure the reach of merchant courts between trading centres, show the appeal of arbitration as a means of resolving disputes and uncover examples of merchant justice in surprising places from the court of the Bishop of Florence to contracts commissioning pirates on the Tyrrhenian sea. The archival sources explored by this volume, especially the *Notarile Antecosimiano* of the *Archivio di Stato di Firenze* remind us of a rich vein of material that merits renewed interest.

Merchants in the late Middle Ages seem to have been wary of legal disputes. Benedetto Cotrugli, writing in the fifteenth century, thought the profession of the merchant more challenging than that of a judge. Where brevity and the speed of response were, in his estimation, key qualities for the perfect merchant, he saw protracted court cases as the antithesis of this ideal; yet legal institutions and frameworks were integral to securing investment and settling disputes.

The reach of merchant courts was considerable. They were often involved in merchant disputes across trade routes. This reach was a product of the transmission of their statutes, resident trading communities in other cities and of their correspondence. The Florentine *Mercanzia* emerges as a prime example of a court that acted for its city's merchants far beyond its own circuit of walls. Founded in the fourteenth century by Florence's major guilds, it drew its judges from their ranks and from *forestieri* who were not Florentine citizens. References to the *Mercanzia* recur across this volume. The *Mercanzia's* judgments are an important source for Sergio Tognetti's study of the failure of the Florentine Perugini Company. Francesco Bettarini finds the *Mercanzia* engaged in disputes concerning Florentine companies in Ragusa (Dubrovnik). Luca Boschetto charts the *Mercanzia* changing structure in the fifteenth century and Lorenz Böninger presents the court of the *Podestà* in Florence as an alternative to the *Mercanzia* for German merchants in the city.

Perhaps most tellingly, Cédric Quertier has used the *Mercanzia* records to shed light on the subtle interaction of trade interests, overlapping jurisdictions and diplomacy in fourteenth-century Pisa. These records offer rare access to legal disputes in the city, as many of Pisa's own legal documents were destroyed when the city was subjugated by Florence in 1406. Pisa was Tuscany's main port and the *Mercanzia*, a court whose correspondence also extended to Venice, Genova, Rome, Avignon and Bruges, was acutely attuned to the interests of Florentine merchants resident there, and to shifts in its politics. The importance of the *Mercanzia* in protecting Florentine trade in Pisa was heightened further during the transition from the relatively favourable context of Gambacorta rule to the more hostile environment of Jacopo D'Appiano's Pisa in 1392.

Far-reaching merchant courts were by no means peculiar to Florence and its *Mercanzia*. Maria Elisa Soldani's chapter shows that the court of the *Consolati Ultramarini* offered a similar forum to the *Mercanzia* for Catalan merchants in Pisa and that its statutes, the *Llibre del Consolat*, were an important reference text for commercial law in late medieval Mediterranean trade that also served as a model for later Atlantic exchange. Elena Maccioni's study of the growing influence of the *Consolat de Mar* as the court in which commercial disputes were resolved in late medieval Barcelona is a revealing parallel.

Informal settlements and arbitration seem to have been preferred mechanisms for resolving disputes. Sergio Tognetti's chapter reveals that the concern to protect the reputation of investors and to prevent the escalation of a crisis of liquidity in Florence led to a private settlement being preferred. The Perugini Company could not be allowed to fail for a debt of only five thousand florins. Francesco Bettarini's study of Ragusa (Dubrovnik) describes a strong preference for arbitration in resolving merchant disputes.

Legal mechanisms and structures were applied in unexpected circumstances. Lorenzo Tanzini, working from the accounts of the Lutiano family, who had served as notaries to the Bishop's Court in Florence for generations, reminds us of this court's importance in the worldly arena of papal finances. These accounts are held in the *Notarile Antecosimiano*. The principles of merchant justice, merchant legal documentation and recourse to merchant courts were even involved in perhaps the most notorious example of merchant injustice in the late Middle Ages, piracy. Cédric Quartier describes a contract between the *Mercanzia* and pirates for hire, Antonio Puccini and Matteo di Cecchino, who were contracted as owners of ships at the rate of four hundred florins a month to attack Milanese shipping and to defend Florentine trade from the port of Pisa. They were replaced by Jacopo di Nello, a Florentine, and Nicoloso Natte from Genova. Failure to fulfil these contracts could even trigger legal proceedings. Natte was absolved at a trial in the *Mercanzia* from any responsibility for the loss of his ship in 1391.

The return to the study of merchant courts and of merchant justice will be of great interest. Benedetto Cotrugli's timely merchant and interminable lawyer are figures who might be recognisable to modern litigants in Europe. This volume is an excellent contribution to current scholarship, and a stimulating reminder of the wealth of sources that the records of late medieval merchant courts can provide.

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*The Geraldines and Medieval Ireland: The Making of a Myth*, ed. Peter Crooks and Seán Duffy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2016; pp. 408. £45).

This impressive collection of essays, edited by Peter Crooks and Seán Duffy, will appeal to readers with an interest in medieval Ireland and England. The Geraldines were at the forefront of the English invasion, conquest and settlement of much of Ireland from the late twelfth century. They established English lordships in Ireland that were subject to the authority of England's monarchs. They ramified into a host of lineages, the most important of which were headed by the earls of Desmond and the earls of Kildare (later dukes of Leinster). They were the progenitors of a significant proportion of the people in Ireland, and not only those whose surnames reflect their patrilineal descent. This book shows that the leading Geraldines were acknowledged as members of the English elites, and actively exercised that role to varying degrees