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Textiles Market in 16th-century Seville: Business and Mercantile Groups

MERCANTILE GROUPS IN 16TH-CENTURY SEVILLE AND EUROPE-AMERICA
TRADE: A NECESSARY HISTORIOGRAPHICAL REAPPRAISAL

The central role played by Seville in European-American trade in the 16th and 17th centuries is a historiographical commonplace; the city housed the Casa de la Contratación, which managed the trade monopoly, and was the port of departure and arrival, along with the subsidiary harbours in the Bay of Cádiz. The city's geographical position, linking the Mediterranean and Northern Europe, had already turned Seville into an international trade hub in the Late Middle Ages. This prompted the settlement of various foreign merchant communities, especially important among which were the Genoese and Florentines; less important such groups during the 15th century were the Bretons, English and Flemish. From within the Iberian Peninsula the most important communities were the Portuguese, Burgalese, Catalans, Valencians and Galicians.¹

In the course of the 16th century, these communities became more numerous and their economic activities more diverse. This was made possible by the opening of multiple overseas markets during the first half of the 16th century, which allowed European merchants to undertake highly lucrative economic activities in the New World, from the exploitation of precious metal to the production of sugarcane, pearls, dyes (brazilwood, cochineal), hides, silk and medicinal plants, among many others. Portuguese businessmen started playing a significant role in the Sevillian economy in the 1540s, especially in relation to the transatlantic trade in woad and slaves.² Other groups, which had previously played a secondary part in the Sevillian economy, such as the Flemish and French, were to increase their presence substantially from the 1560s onwards.³ The increasing presence of American merchants in Seville from the 1580s onwards suggests that a major economic transformation was underway with the emergence of important economic groups

¹ This work has been funded by the project “Mercados y tratas de esclavos en el Atlántico ibérico del siglo XVI” (HAR2016-78056-P), funded by the Ministerio de Economía, Industria y Competitividad del Gobierno de España. E. OTTE, *Sevilla y sus mercaderes a fines de la Edad Media*, Seville 1996.

² M.F. FERNÁNDEZ CHAVES, R.M. PÉREZ GARCÍA, *La penetración económica portuguesa en la Sevilla del siglo XVI* in “Espacio Tiempo y Forma, Serie IV, Historia Moderna” 25, 2012, pp. 199-222.

³ E. CRAILSHEIM, *The Spanish connection. French and Flemish networks in Seville (1570-1650)*, Köln 2016.

capable of acting autonomously in the metropolis and other European markets, and in the colonies, especially Peru and Nueva España. If the presence of these groups in Seville is regarded as indicative of the existence of active demand factors with the ability to affect supply,⁴ the dramatic growth undergone by Flemish companies in Seville during the reign of Philip II has been interpreted as a clear sign of the increasing degree of control exercised by foreign agents over American trade, facilitated by a lack of domestic production with which to satisfy ever-growing American demand⁵ and by the inability of local mercantile groups (Sevillian and Andalusian, but also Toledoan and Burgalese) to play a major international role.⁶ Often, the proliferation of foreign mercantile and financial groups in 16th-century Seville has been explained in terms of “substitution”: for instance, when the Genoese gained royal consent to transfer silver abroad in 1566, they abandoned their previous transatlantic trading activities, which had been risky; for their part, the Burgalese, which had long been in control of Andalusian and Sevillian trade with the Netherlands, France and England, fell on hard-times as a result of the political-military events in the Netherlands and northern Europe from the 1570s onwards. It is widely held that the Flemish took advantage of these circumstances to take up the baton in Seville, and replace the Genoese and Burgalese in their traditional mercantile and financial roles.⁷

In our opinion, understanding of the Seville-based trade between Europe and America is still poor. Arguably, the most useful contribution to date was the work undertaken by the Chaunu on the fluctuations of commercial traffic with the Indies. Many traditional ideas, some of which we have just mentioned, are based on a weak empirical foundation, despite the enormous amount of economic data available in the Sevillian archives. It is obvious that the topic is of gigantic proportions, and that many basic research tasks remain incomplete. In this paper, we shall limit ourselves to exploring the relationship between international trade and the domestic production of textiles and other related products, such as dyes (chiefly woad), and trying to illustrate the coexistence of diverse mercantile and financial groups around this economic sector. Obviously, the exchange system rested on a substantial port infrastructure and extensive maritime networks; the complexity of maritime mercantile traffic which is explained in the following sections reveals the current shortcomings in historical understanding of maritime freight during this period.

⁴ L. GARCÍA FUENTES, *Los peruleros y el comercio de Sevilla con las Indias, 1580-1630*, Seville 1997.

⁵ A. GARCÍA-BAQUERO GONZÁLEZ, *Andalucía y la Carrera de Indias 1492-1824*, Granada 2002; A.M. BERNAL, *España, proyecto inacabado. Costes/beneficios del Imperio*, Madrid 2005, p. 189.

⁶ F. MORALES PADRÓN, *Historia de Sevilla. La ciudad del Quinientos*, Sevilla 1989, pp. 85-86; F. BRAUDEL, *El Mediterráneo y el mundo mediterráneo en la época de Felipe II*, Mexico 2005, vol. I, pp. 838-841.

⁷ F. MORALES PADRÓN, *Historia de Sevilla. La ciudad del Quinientos*, cit. pp. 81-82; G. JIMÉNEZ MONTES, *Sevilla, puerto y puerta de Europa: la actividad de una compañía comercial flamenca en la segunda mitad del siglo XVI*, in “*Studia historica Historia moderna*”, 38, 2016, pp. 353-386, especially p. 384.

BURGALESE MERCHANTS AND SEVILLE'S TEXTILES MARKET, CA. 1470-1550

In the late 15th century, prior to the advent of American demand, the Sevillian textiles market was mixed, in terms of both actors and products. It was possible to find English, Flemish (Courtrai), French (Rouen) and, to a lesser extent, Florentine cloth, while the presence of products from Perpignan, Valencia, Segovia, Baeza or Chillón also indicate the importance of domestic production. The trade in foreign products was controlled by Italian (Genoese, Florentine and Sienese), English and Castilian (mainly Burgalese) merchants, while Spanish textiles were traded by Castilians, Andalusians, Catalans, Valencian and Italian merchants. Concerning wool *camelotes* and silk (Genoese velvets, damasks) the dominion of the Genoese was clear, while trade in cotton (*fustanes*) and canvas – especially from France and the Low Countries (*angeos*, Rouennais canvas, Laval canvas, hollands, etc.) – was disputed by Genoese, Andalusians and Burgalese merchants.⁸ Natalia Palenzuela's work on the period 1470-1509 demonstrated the important role played by the trade in textiles (wool cloths, *fustanes* and canvasses) for the Burgalese networks in Seville and other European hubs;⁹ this trade was part of the international Burgalese commercial system so masterfully described by Hilario Casado.¹⁰

During the first quarter of the 16th century, the Sevillian textiles market was revolutionised by the Burgalese merchants, who imposed their control by bringing in massive imports of French and Flemish canvasses cloths. With the emergence of the American markets, the Burgalese, who had created a veritable transatlantic system fuelled by dyes (woad, orchil and brazilwood), sugar, spices and slaves, flooded the Sevillian market with textiles to meet both Andalusian and American demand. In the early years of Charles I's reign, between 1518 and 1525, the import of textiles became the main activity of the Burgalese community in Seville. According to our estimates, textiles accounted for 86% of the value of the trade conducted by Burgalese merchants in Seville during this period. The remaining 14% involved the circulation of other products, such as copper, alum and oil. Under textiles, the record indicates that canvas amounted to over 53% of imports, while English cloth amounted to under 2% and that from Courtrai under 1%; *estameñas* represented 6% and silk just over 3%.¹¹ It is clear that the Sevillian market was responding to ongoing changes in the European productive structure, but also to the active role played by Burgalese merchants as middlemen for European textile centres such as Nantes, Rouen, Bruges and Antwerp. Accounts dated to the 1530s refer to this process as a veritable flood of foreign canvasses, which led to the

⁸ E. OTTE, *Sevilla y sus mercaderes*, cit., pp. 158-161.

⁹ N. PALENZUELA DOMÍNGUEZ, *Los mercaderes burgaleses en Sevilla a fines de la Edad Media*, Seville 2003, pp. 139-150.

¹⁰ H. CASADO ALONSO, *El triunfo de Mercurio. La presencia castellana en Europa (siglos XV y XVI)*, Burgos 2003.

¹¹ R.M. PÉREZ GARCÍA, *El capital burgalés y la conexión de Sevilla con el eje económico del norte de Europa a comienzos del reinado de Carlos I*, in *Andalucía en el mundo moderno. Agentes y escenarios*, J.J. IGLESIAS RODRÍGUEZ, J.J. GARCÍA BERNAL eds., Madrid 2016, pp. 35-57, especially, pp. 52-53.

destruction of the Sevillian local industry, which was incapable of competing against them.¹²

In the decades that followed, the Burgalese merchants took advantage of their strong position in the incipient world-economy, which then still revolved around Seville and Lisbon, to control the global redistribution of textiles and, using their position as middlemen, to pitch markets and products with one another for their own profit. The record for 1535 illustrates the distribution of the textiles market among different economic groups in Seville (Table 1).

Tab. 1. Textiles market in Seville in 1535. Distribution by economic groups

Economic group by origin	Mrs.	% value	Number of transactions	% transactions
Burgos	7,955,858	57.03	130	53.9
Castile (Espinosa)	1,287,592	9.23	12	5
Toledo	423,079	3.03	13	5.4
Biscay	563,596	4.04	13	5.4
Catalonia	186,784	1.34	6	2.5
Genoa	423,269	3.03	6	2.5
Baeza	8,760	0.06	1	0.4
Granada	40,000	0.3	1	0.4
Seville (major merchants)	1,456,462	10.44	13	5.8
Seville (other merchants)	1,602,839	11.5	46	18.7
TOTAL	13,948,239	100	241	100

ARCHIVO HISTÓRICO PROVINCIAL DE SEVILLA (AHPSE), *Protocolos Notariales de Sevilla*, 3308, 3309, 3312, 10557. Sample: 241 transactions.

Burgalese domination was overwhelming, and this has a lot to do with the sort of cloth that was being traded in Seville, as we shall see shortly. If their activity is added to that of the Castilian bankers Pedro and Alonso de Espinosa, the financial moguls of Seville during the reign of Charles V, and who were also involved in the textile trade,¹³ both groups controlled nearly 66% of all trade. The role played by other groups was secondary, but not negligible. Merchants from Toledo, Catalonia and Andalusia connected the production centres in the Iberian Peninsula (Perpignan, Valencia, Zaragoza, Segovia, Toledo, Baeza, Granada, etc.) with Seville and the Indies, opening the international markets to Spanish producers. However, by 1535, and for at least a quarter of a century, the Sevillian textiles market was dominated by French and Flemish canvas. These canvasses (largely rouennais, *angeos*, *bretañas*, and *hollands*) amounted to two-thirds of the overall value of trade in

¹² R.M. PÉREZ GARCÍA, *Francisco de Osuna y los mercaderes. Espiritualidad, moral económica y pastoral católica pretridentina ante el mundo de los negocios*, forthcoming.

¹³ E. OTTE SANDER, *Sevilla, siglo XVI: Materiales para su historia económica*, Seville 2008, pp. 202-203.

textiles, while cloth (including products from Perpignan, Barcelona, Zaragoza, Valencia and Segovia), barely amounted to 11.7%; other textiles were clearly marginal, such as *estameñas* (3.2%), *camelotes* (0.5%), *fustanes* (just over 2%), and silk (velvet, satin, etc.), which barely amounted to 3% of the total. It is, therefore, clear that by 1535 the Burgalese were in total control of the import textiles market in Seville, owing to their virtual monopoly over the import of Flemish and French canvasses. As such, the Burgalese merchants were using Seville as a platform from which redistribute these canvasses in Andalusia and, especially, in America. The major Burgalese merchants in Seville – Alonso de Nebreda, Alonso Gómez de la Serna, Gregorio de Castro, Cristóbal Gutiérrez de Sanvítores, Juan de Escalante, Martín de Valcázar, Andrés de Lantadilla, Diego Díaz de Melgar, Pedro de la Torre and Lesmes de Palencia, among others – were directly involved in the transatlantic trade, and also had other Seville-based merchants who specialised in channelling goods towards the American markets among their customers.

In any case, Seville was for the Burgalese businessmen much more than simply a node in a wider export system between Europe and the Indies. Similarly, the Burgalese were much more than mere middlemen between French and Flemish production centres and Andalusian and American markets. Seville and Lisbon were key business and information centres for the Burgalese merchants, whence they could connect European production centres with the emerging American markets and the traditional, and seemingly insatiable, Indian markets.¹⁴ Seville and Lisbon were the ports of departure and arrival for the *Carrera de Indias* (the *Carreira da Índia* for the Portuguese), the hubs where the goods and information which the Burgalese needed to maintain their dominant mercantile and financial position over European production centres converged. Their control over the import of Atlantic dyes (woad, orchella, brazilwood, cochineal) put them in a strong position *vis-à-vis* the industrial centres, in combination with their ability to sell in Europe Indian canvasses (an important component in the Portuguese cargoes arrived via the Cape)¹⁵ or silk produced by the incipient industries in New Spain, and amounted to a serious attempt to gain overall control over the European textile sector, impose conditions on non-European producers, and use price fluctuation and global competition to their advantage. The activities of the Seville-based Burgalese merchant Juan de Escalante († 1543), who also had a strong presence in Lisbon, are a case in point.

Although more research is needed, it seems that in the long-term the Burgalese did not manage to impose their interests over those of Spanish and European production centres, nor to fully displace other mercantile groups which had, hitherto, played a secondary role. The evidence suggests that by 1550, although the Burgalese and other merchants from Castilla la Vieja still maintained a dominant position, the tide was beginning to turn, a tendency that was fully to crystallise in the second half of the 16th century. Traditional perspectives have stressed the rapid increase in Spanish textile production from the late 1540s onwards, as well as the

¹⁴ In this aspect, see H. CASADO ALONSO, *Los flujos de información en las redes comerciales castellanas de los siglos XV y XVI*, in “Investigaciones de Historia Económica”, 10, 2008, pp. 36-68.

¹⁵ J. GIL, *La India y el Lejano Oriente en la Sevilla del Siglo de Oro*, Seville 2011.

erratic economic policy in 1548-1558, which would have opened the Castilian economy to the influence of foreign agents.¹⁶ This allegedly erratic economic policy is often illustrated by the dispositions issued by the Castilian *Cortes* during those years. In our opinion, however, historians have greatly misrepresented the impact of these measures. At any rate, there is little doubt that the Sevillian global textiles market was undergoing significant changes. Table 2 presents the market share of various economic groups.

Tab. 2. **Textiles market in Seville in 1550. Distribution by economic groups**

Economic group by origin	Mrs.	% value	Number of transactions
Burgos	5.929.217	50,3	66
Castile (Valladolid, Medina del Campo)	1.292.806	11	11
Segovia	20.000	0,17	1
Toledo	661.011	5,6	5
Seville	2.444.972	20,74	29
Granada	590.302	5	2
Baeza	78.609	0,7	1
Catalonia	41.023	0,35	1
Portugal	3.798	0,03	1
Genoa	12.628	0,1	1
Florence	425.841	3,6	4
Flanders	60.401	0,51	3
Cristóbal Rayzer (german)	225.000	1,9	1
Total	11.785.608	100	128

ARCHIVO HISTORICO PROVINCIAL DE SEVILLA (AHPSE), *Protocolos Notariales de Sevilla*, 3373, 5886, 10577. Sample: 128 transactions.

Although Burgalese merchants controlled half the market, they had lost seven percent points of market share since 1535. Castilian merchants (from Valladolid, Medina del Campo and Segovia) had increased their presence by nearly 2%. In addition, this no longer involved only a single powerful family, like the Espinosas, but a number of different merchants competing to commercialise the region's products. Traders from Toledo and Granada had also consolidated their position, especially the latter, who dealt with Granadan silk. The arrival of agents from Portugal, Flanders and Germany (Cristóbal Rayzer was the Fuggers' representative in Seville) is also indicative of a new situation. Rayzer is first found selling *fustanes* manufactured in southern Germany on behalf of the Fuggers.¹⁷ *Fustanes* can be

¹⁶ J. LARRAZ, *La época del mercantilismo en Castilla 1500-1700*, Madrid 2000, pp. 26-33.

¹⁷ H. KELLENBENZ, *Los Fugger en España y Portugal hasta 1560*, Salamanca 2000, pp. 251-252, 288, 446-447, 484-488.

attested in Seville from the beginning of the century, and it is likely that at least some of the *fustanes* sold in Seville during the intervening decades also belonged to the Fuggers.¹⁸ Florentine merchants, on the other hand, could be found again in Seville, where they had been an important mercantile community in the late Middle Ages.

The slow transformation of the mercantile groups that participated in the Sevillian textiles market was related to other changes, in this case in the types of textiles which were being sold in the city. Although canvas was still the predominant commodity, amounting to 56.4% of textiles market volume (especially rouennais, which accounted for 24% of the overall value transacted), its market share had dropped by five per cent since 1535. Other traditional textiles, such as *estameñas* (0.75%), were about to disappear. Conversely, Granada silk (8,1%) and cloth (*paños*) (19%) were rapidly gaining ground. Cotton textiles (*fustanes* and *cotonías*, 2.5%), and textiles from Milan (around 1%), were, significantly, also present in Seville, although in small quantities. At any rate, the growth of silk (up by 5 per cent) and cloths (*paños*) (up by 8 per cent) indicates the beginning of a new phase in the evolution of the domestic textiles market. Although the cloth (*paños*) cargoes included some English goods from London, the most significant growth is attested among national production centres – Perpignan, Barcelona, Zaragoza, Valencia, Segovia, Baeza, Puertollano, and perhaps also Cuenca – which were increasingly important in meeting the demand posed by the Sevillian market.

As such, towards the mid-16th century, the increasing presence and diversity of foreign economic groups was not incompatible with a burgeoning domestic production, which up to that period was proving itself equal to competing with foreign products.

CASTILIANS, SEVILLIANS, FLEMISH AND PORTUGUESE AND THE IMPORT AND DISTRIBUTION OF TEXTILES IN THE 1570S

Between the 1550s and the 1570s, the market was to undergo important changes, although, in general, canvasses remained a very important commodity. In our 1577 sample, canvas accounts for 19% of total turnover, as we shall see shortly. We have examined records for 1577, including sales made on the previous year which were to be liquidated in 1577. The sample features the prices of wool, silk and canvas, as well as of other textile manufactures, such as smocks, rugs, gloves, shirts and bedlinen, among others. Other textile products were left out of the analysis because they belong, strictly speaking, to a different sector, and because

¹⁸ It is rather illustrative that one of the main traders in *fustanes* during the reign of Charles I was the Burgalese Diego Díaz (or Dias), agent of the Fuggers in Seville in the 1520s (H. KELLENBENZ, *Los Fuggers en España y Portugal hasta 1560*, cit., p. 253): his involvement in the *fustanes* trade is documented, for instance, in 1520 (AHPSe, *Protocolos Notariales de Sevilla*, leg. 3245, f. 381r-v). Other Seville-based Burgalese merchants such as Alonso de Nebreda, Antonio de Velasco and Cristóbal Gutiérrez de Sanvítores also sold *fustanes* in the city in the 1520s, the 1530s and the 1540s. Our sample for 1550 also attests to the Flemish merchant Enrique Ansemann being involved in the *fustanes* trade (AHPSe, *Protocolos Notariales de Sevilla*, leg. 10557, f. 72r-v), illustrating one of the main vectors of the Sevillian economy during the reign of Charles I.

their share on the total turnover was negligible. The sample includes not only sales carried out in the city of Seville, but also transactions undertaken during the fair of Los Molares, a manorial town near Utrera and Seville; this fair was an important event in the exchange of textiles both on the regional scale and also for the Indies.¹⁹ In total, the sample includes textile sales worth 21,823,100.75 *maravedís*. In order to be as precise as possible, we have only taken into consideration those transactions whose records are complete, featuring both length of fabric sold and price per measurement unit (see Tables 4 and 5). Table 3 represents the aggregate value of transactions.

Tab. 3. Textiles market in Seville and Los Molares in 1576-1577. Distribution by economic groups

Economic group by origin	Mrs.	% value	Number of transactions	Economic group by origin
<i>Seville/Castile/Burgos</i>		36.59	28	21.37
-Pedro and Lope de Tapia	2,341,094			
-Antonio de Salinas and Miguel de Jáuregui	2,582,054			
-Francisco Morovelli	784,425			
-Miguel de Solórzano	795,789			
-Lesmes de Palencia	224,466			
-Juan Aranda de Gumiel	213,448			
Basque?				
-Bartolomé Sarriá de Abeça	1,043,927	4.78	1	0.76
Subtotal	7,985,203	41.37	29	22.13
Flanders	2,789,518	12.78	10	7.63
Seville	2,333,237,5	10.69	16	12.21
Seville/Baeza	2,113,172	9.68	22	16.79
Segovia	1,783,578	8.17	19	14.5
Toledo	1,431,539	6.55	10	7.63
Granada	521,110	2.38	1	0.76
Valencia	289,196	1.32	2	1.52
Utrera and Los Molares	125,415	0.57	11	8.39
Catalans	101,040	0.46	2	1.52
Others	112,193,25	0.51	5	3.81
Unknown	1,283,972	5.88	4	3.05
Total	21,823,100.75	100	131	100

Source: AHPSE: *Protocolos Notariales de Sevilla*, 6004, 6005, 6006, 9214, 9215, 9216, 7784, 7788, 19717; *Protocolos de Los Molares*, 23263P. Sample: 131 transactions.

¹⁹ This fair has been studied by A. MORENO CURADO, *La feria de la seda en la villa de Los Molares (siglos XV-XVII)*, Sevilla 2005.

The first group combines Sevillian, Castilians and Burgalese merchants; the Burgalese had been losing ground since the 1550s, but were still important in the city. These merchants, often based in Burgos or Medina del Campo (for instance, Simón Ruiz), had a strong presence in Nantes, Rouen and Flanders, while operating in the Sevillian market through agents, who also did business on their own behalf. The group is defined as Sevillian/Castilian/Burgalese because none of these merchants belonged to the traditional Seville-based families, but worked for them while taking advantage of already existing distribution channels for Flemish and especially Breton canvasses, and thus gained a prominent position in the Sevillian and American markets. According to the data, these merchants controlled 41% of the market, but continuing the previously detected downward trend. It is also true that the commercial landscape was by this time much more complex than before, in terms of both agents and commodities. At any rate, their continued activity in Seville demonstrates that the transfer of capital and mercantile know-how from the northern regions to Seville and its American trade did not come to an end with the decline of Burgalese merchant houses, but led to a complete transformation of the market and triggered the emergence of new mercantile interests. The Dutch wars accelerated this process, but this is not to say that the Burgalese merchants disappeared altogether, but that they reoriented their activity, using new agents and merging with Sevillian families, as has been amply demonstrated elsewhere.²⁰ Other authors have also detected this phenomenon in Medina del Campo,²¹ where investors also turned to Castilian and Andalusian production centres. Although it has been (rightly) argued that this was a reaction to the crisis of the Burgos-Bilbao-Flanders economic axis,²² it should be added that, even if economic flows along that axis were now much more difficult, the partial substitution of Flanders for Brittany and Rouen (centres which preferred dealing with Seville than with Castile)²³ allowed for the large-scale importation of canvas (not only French, but Flemish too) to continue. As such, the transformation of Castilians and Burgalese merchants into “Sevillians”, was an efficient response, as their continued dominance demonstrates, to the events along the North Sea. Basas rightly pointed out the need to study “the Sevillian history of the Burgalese, or the Burgalese phase

²⁰ R.M. PÉREZ GARCÍA, *La trayectoria histórica de la comunidad mercantil burgalesa en la Sevilla moderna: ascenso social y mutación económica. El caso del mercader Alonso de Nebreda*, in *Andalucía en el mundo atlántico moderno*, cit., pp. 157-191. See also, *Los negocios de Alonso de Nebreda, mercader bugalés de Sevilla. La expansión del eje económico Flandes-Castilla-Florenzia hacia las Indias en la primera mitad del siglo XVI*, in *Mercaderes y redes mercantiles en España, siglos XV-XVIII*, M.F. FERNÁNDEZ CHAVES, B. PEREZ, R.M. PÉREZ GARCÍA eds., forthcoming.

²¹ H. CASADO ALONSO, *Medina del Campo Fairs and the Integration of Castile into 15th to 16th Century European Economy*, in *Fiere e mercati nella integrazione delle economie europee secc. XVIII-XVIII*, ed. S. CAVACIOCCI, Florence 2001, pp. 495-517, especially, pp. 514-517.

²² F.H. ABED AL-HUSSEIN, *El comercio de los géneros textiles: seda, paños y lienzos*, in *Historia de Medina del Campo y su Tierra. Auge de las Ferias. Decadencia de Medina*, ed. E. LORENZO SANZ, Valladolid 1986, vol. II, pp. 45-66, especially, p. 58, quoting F. RUIZ MARTÍN and A. GARCÍA SANZ.

²³ J.-P. PRIOTTI, *Conflits marchands et intégration économique (Bretagne, Castille et Andalousie, 1560-1580)*, in *Le commerce atlantique franco-espagnol. Acteurs, négoce et ports (XV^e-XVIII^e siècle)*, J.-P. PRIOTTI, G. SAUPIN eds., Rennes 2000, pp. 73-99.

of Sevillian history”.²⁴ By this time, the mercantile landscape was a good deal more complex, with new names, routes and profiles. The dominance of these merchants (who acted either directly, for instance the merchant Lesmes de Palencia²⁵ or by means of agents) was therefore not as overwhelming as that of the fully-Burgalese merchants in the central decades of the century, but it still was highly significant. This explains why, despite bankruptcies and unpaid debts, Simón Ruiz never lost interest in the Sevillian and American markets, to the perplexity of historians;²⁶ in fact, the obstacles that hampered the Flemish traffic and the increasingly hard negotiating stance of the Italians led these men to rely increasingly on the American market.²⁷ Our sample does not feature any French or Breton merchants from Saint-Malo and Vitré, who presented active competition to the Castilians in the Andalusian and American markets;²⁸ this absence is likely due to the small size of the sample and the fact that the French community tended to live in Sanlúcar (especially the Bretons) and Cádiz, although their activity in Seville is attested in the 1590s. We have also to ascertain to what extent Castilian and “Sevillian” merchants relied on Italian and Castilian financiers (for instance, the Ruiz, Maluenda, Quintanadueñas, and Espinosa de la Torre,²⁹ who had taken a very active part in the import of northern canvasses) and what was, therefore, their level of autonomy.

Canvas specialists operating in Seville during this period include Antonio de Salinas (probably of Burgalese origin)³⁰ and Miguel de Jáuregui, a leading canvas

²⁴ M. BASAS, *Mercaderes burgaleses*, quoted in R.M. PÉREZ GARCÍA, *La trayectoria histórica*, cit., p. 158.

²⁵ Lesmes de Palencia’s professional longevity is remarkable; he features in the 1535 record, and his transactions can be traced back as far as the 1590s. According to E. Sanz, in 1567 he owed the Jorges two million *maravedies*. E. LORENZO SANZ, *Comercio de España con América en la época de Felipe II*, Valladolid 1979, t. I, p. 388. For his prior activities in the canvasses sector see E. OTTE, *Sevilla, siglo XVI*, cit., p. 200.

²⁶ E. LORENZO SANZ, *Comercio de España con América*, cit., pp. 236-248.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 312.

²⁸ J.-P. PRIOTTI, *Plata americana, costes de transacción y mutaciones socio-económicas en el comercio hispano-francés (1570-1640)*, in *El sistema comercial español en la economía mundial (siglos XVII-XVIII). Homenaje a Jesús Aguado de los Reyes*, I. LOBATO FRANCO, J.M. OLIVA MELGAR eds., Huelva 2013, pp. 99-125. French and Breton merchants demanded payment in Spanish *reales*, which were highly appreciated in France, and never sold in instalments, a common practice among Castilian and Burgalese in Seville, according to our sample data.

²⁹ The bibliography about the significant Spanish colony in Nantes and Rouen is extensive: see, for instance, J. MATHOREZ, *Notes sur les rapports de Nantes avec l’Espagne (I)*, in “Bulletin Hispanique”, 14, 2, 1912, pp. 119-126; (II) 14, 4, 1912, pp. 383-407; and (III), 15, 1, 1913, pp. 68-92. M. MOLLAT, *Le commerce maritime normand au XV^e siècle et dans la première moitié du XVI^e siècle. Étude d’histoire économique et sociale*, Paris 1952. H. LAPEYRE, *Una familia de mercaderes*, cit., pp. 98, 323-330. H. CASADO ALONSO, *La Bretagne dans le commerce castillan aux XV^e et XVI^e siècles*, in *1491 La Bretagne, terre d’Europe*, J. KERHERVÉ, T. DANIEL eds., Brest 1992, pp. 81-98. Also, *Le commerce des “marchandises de Bretagne” avec l’Espagne au XVI^e siècle*, in “Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de L’Ouest”, 107, 2000, 2, pp. 29-50. See too, *Las colonias de mercaderes castellanos en Europa, in Castilla y Europa. Comercio y mercaderes en los siglos XIV, XV y XVI*, ed. H. CASADO ALONSO, Burgos 1995, pp. 15-56.

³⁰ The information available about this merchant is very limited, although we know of a Francisco de Salinas, who was a leading importer of rouennais canvas from 1560 onwards, and who in 1567 was deputy of the tax for the entrance and first selling (the *alcabala*) of canvasses to the city. He had started his career as an agent of the Ruiz between 1560 and 1561, and of Francisco and Andrés Maluenda from 1563. The letters written by the Ruiz mention “these Salinas”, so it is likely that

merchant who took the collection of the *alcabala* of canvas on lease in 1576;³¹ Antonio and Miguel's turnover in 1577 was 2,582,054 mrs. (11.83% of the overall value of transactions); Miguel de Solórzano worked for himself, but also on behalf of the Burgalese García and Miguel de Salamanca;³² Francisco Morovelli was a Florentine who worked for Simón Ruiz between 1571 and his death in 1585, and who occasionally worked in association with Pedro de Tapia,³³ whose brother Lope de Tapia was also a leading canvas dealer (in 1577 he sold canvas worth 2,092,944 mrs., 9.59% of the overall value of transactions). The Tapias also worked for Simón Ruiz, replacing Morovelli after his demise in 1585; Pedro and Lope de Tapia and Simón Ruiz also had the same agent in Nueva España, Pedro Sánchez Alemán; Lorenzo Sanz labelled them as Castilian,³⁴ although they appear to originate from Granada,³⁵ and the fact is that in terms of economic behaviour they fit the label. The Tapias also worked together with Miguel de Jáuregui and other merchants such as Diego de Rojas, and were heavily involved in the colonial market.³⁶ In conclusion, leaving aside the Flemish merchants, the leading group of canvas importers had grown around the Ruiz (Morovelli, the Tapias) and other Burgalese merchants; they often worked in association, doing joint investments in risky markets such as the slave trade; Morovelli joined the Tapias and the Jáureguis to send a slave ship to America, thus spreading the cost and the risk.³⁷ As we shall see presently, these traders, in collaboration with the Flemish merchants, also leased out the *alcabala* of canvas in the city, which had previously been controlled by the Burgalese.

Bartolomé Sarriá de Abeça o Abecia was, according to E. Lorenzo, a very rich merchant with a capital of 50,000 ducados. From 1561 onwards he is found dealing in canvas alongside his partner Francisco Arias.³⁸ Although Sanz considers him a Sevillian (he worked and lived in Seville), in a power of attorney from 1577 he declares himself to be a citizen of Vitoria, so he could have been excluded from the

Antonio and Francisco were related. Cfr. E. LORENZO SANZ, *Comercio de España con América*, cit., pp. 326-327.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 266-267.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 403. Between 1551 and 1554, Seville and Medina del Campo were the main nodes in Salamanca's commercial network (29% of the commercial transactions took place in Seville, and 27% in Medina del Campo, but between 1566 and 1569, 69.75% of their transactions occurred in Seville), cf. H. CASADO ALONSO, *Crecimiento económico y redes de comercio interior en la Castilla septentrional (siglos XV y XVI)*, ed. J.I. FORTEA PÉREZ, *Imágenes de la diversidad. El mundo urbano en la corona de Castilla (s. XVI-XVIII)*, Santander 1997, pp. 283-322, and here, pp. 299-300, 318, 321. See also, E. OTTE, *Sevilla, siglo XVI*, cit., p. 199. Also, C. URIARTE DE MELO, *Les contrats des compagnies de Burgos dans les échanges entre Rouen, Nantes et l'Espagne dans la seconde moitié du XVIe siècle*, in *Le commerce atlantique franco-espagnol*, cit., pp. 113-128.

³³ E. LORENZO SANZ, *Comercio de España con América*, cit., pp. 246-248, 276, 309-314.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 399. Pedro Sánchez Alemán was in Nueva España between at least 1582 and 1585.

³⁵ Based on the evidence presented by their descendants and examined in J. CARTAYA BAÑOS, "Que no concurren las calidades de limpieza". *Algunos expedientes sevillanos para las órdenes militares españolas en los siglos XVI-XVII*, in "Tiempos modernos", 23, 2011/2, pp. 1-24, here, pp. 9-10.

³⁶ E. LORENZO SANZ, *Comercio de España con América*, cit., pp. 276-277.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 312-313, 277.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 329.

“Sevillian” group.³⁹ In support of this idea is also the fact that he had a close connection with the collection of sea-tithes, which indicates that he was still closely connected with the Cantabrian economic system. In contrast, he worked hand-in-hand with the “Sevillian” group, and the record attests to his association with Jerónimo de Valladolid, one of the Ruiz’s most important agents in Seville, along with Francisco Arias, who was also Abecia’s partner.⁴⁰ Furthermore, Abecia is found taking up the lease “of the rent of the entry duties on lace and all other related transactions” between 1577 and 1579, alongside Miguel de Jáuregui, Antonio de Salinas, Lope de Tapia, Francisco Morovelli and a group of Flemish merchants led by Juan de Bonsel,⁴¹ which demonstrates how close his relations with the group were.

A step below the Burgalese and their Castilian partners were the Flemish. Their share of the business is surprisingly small, if we stick to the idea of “substitution” advocated by the traditional thesis; there is little doubt that their market position had improved substantially but they were still far behind Castilian importers. In the 1550s, their market share was still negligible, but by the 1560s they had become significant importers of canvas and upholstery,⁴² controlling just under 13% of the market, second only to the Burgalese and Castilians, alongside whom they took up the *alcabala* of canvas, as previously noted. The most important Flemish merchant was Juan Bonsel, whose turnover in 1577 was 781,525 mrs.

Table 3 also illustrates how Sevillian merchants struggled to stay in the game, their market share dropping by approximately 10 per cent since 1550. The most important among them was the oil merchant Pedro Xuárez, whose market share in the canvas sector (in his case, only rouennais) amounted to 2.77% (580.884 mrs.). The involvement of an oil merchant in the canvas trade is of great interest; oil was one of the commodities sent to Northern Europe in exchange for canvas, and the practice is also attested for Simón Ruiz and his Seville-based firms⁴³ and for other Burgalese merchants in Seville throughout the 16th century. The remaining Sevillian merchants involved in the canvas trade led mid-sized enterprises; as we shall see shortly, in the cloth trade Sevillians seem to have chiefly carried out small transactions at the local level.

These groups, which largely specialised in canvas, controlled 64.84% of the transactions in our sample. Below them were the cloth merchants, another essential commodity for Spanish industry. Two important groups were the Baeza and the Segovia merchants, which jointly controlled 17.85% of the textiles market. The former group included the widow of Juan de Alarcón, Ana Pérez, and her partner, the Baeza-born Francisco de Galarza; they sold cloth not only from Baeza but also from Puertollano, Córdoba and, exceptionally, La Puebla de Montalbán. Ana Pérez

³⁹ AHPSE, *Protocolos Notariales de Sevilla*, 6005, f. 643r, he features as a citizen of Vitoria, receiving an annual rent of 15,663 mrs. from a lease on Castile’s sea harbours; the lease was managed by Juan Ochoa and other merchants, but was paid to Bartolomé Sarriá in 26-IV-1577.

⁴⁰ E. LORENZO SANZ, *Comercio de España con América*, cit. pp. 279-280.

⁴¹ AHPSE, *Protocolos Notariales de Sevilla*, 6004, f. 715r, 717v.

⁴² E. OTTE, *Sevilla, siglo XVI*, cit., p. 285-286.

⁴³ E. LORENZO SANZ, *Comercio de España con América...* cit. pp. 246-248.

also had connections with the Portuguese textiles market; her brother sold Ana's products in the Portuguese town of Mértola.

Even more active were the brothers Francisco and Cristóbal de Molina. Francisco de Molina was a *jurado* in Seville, and worked in partnership with his Baeza-based brother Cristóbal. In association with Portuguese businessmen like Antonio Faleiro, Cristóbal redistributed the Azores woad, sent by Francisco, in exchange for Baeza cloth.⁴⁴ They specialised in the distribution of cloth from Ciudad Real, Los Pedroches, Segovia and England and, occasionally, also dealt in Florentine *raja*; all their Castilian cloth was at least of a *veinteno* quality (i.e. cloth woven with 20 hundreds of threads). Their relationship with Portuguese woad dealers was very intense; as a result, the circulation of cloth from Baeza, Córdoba, Chillón, Agudo, Los Pedroches, Ciudad Real, etc. and that of woad were mutually dependent.⁴⁵ Payments for woad were partially made in cloth, which was afterwards sold in the textiles market. Between the 1550s and the 1560s, Portuguese and Italian firms were taking over the woad business, previously brought by the Burgalese from Toulouse and, to a lesser extent, from the Azores.⁴⁶ These Lisbon-based firms used woad and the credit that it provided to enter the textiles market and other economic sectors. The record attests to the activity of Milanese agents of the Affaitati in Lisbon, but their relationship with the Portuguese branch of these Lucchese bankers is unclear. It is, however, obvious that they played an important role as middlemen. In addition to merchants like Tomás Trusson, we are interested in Francisco and Andrea de San Julián, whose activities were analysed by Enrique Otte. The latter was in business with the Schetz bank, from Antwerp,⁴⁷ which is hardly surprising, since one of the Affaitati's most important branches was in that city, where they traded with Indian spices arrived via Lisbon; the firm went bankrupt in 1568.⁴⁸ As representatives of the Affaitati, the San Juliáns brokered loans with nobles and other important personalities of the kingdom, while also managing maritime insurance policies and tax leases. When the Affaitati ran into

⁴⁴ M.F. FERNÁNDEZ CHAVES, *Antonio Faleiro de Acosta, mercader portugués de pastel, 1573-1583*, in *Andalucía en el mundo atlántico moderno. Agentes y escenarios*, pp. 59-85.

⁴⁵ E. OTTE, *Sevilla, siglo XVI*, cit., M.F. FERNÁNDEZ CHAVES, *El pastel de las ilhas atlánticas portuguesas y la producción textil en la Andalucía del siglo XVI*, in *Comercio y cultura en la Edad Moderna. Actas de la XIII Reunión Científica de la Fundación Española de Historia Moderna*, J.J. IGLESIAS RODRÍGUEZ, R.M. PÉREZ GARCÍA, M.F. FERNÁNDEZ CHAVES eds., Sevilla 2015, pp. 525-538. Also, *Antonio Faleiro de Acosta*, in *Andalucía en el mundo atlántico moderno. Agentes y escenarios*, cit.

⁴⁶ About the Burgalese involvement in this sector, which led Gilles Caster to speak of a "Burgalese system", cfr. F. BRUMONT, "La commercialisation du pastel toulousain (1350-1600) in "Annales du Midi", 205, 1994, pp. 25-40, also *Bordeaux, porte de sortie du pastel toulousain (vers 1490-1570)*, in *Pays de cocagne. País de cocanha. Son histoire, ses légendes*, ed. J. FIJALKOW, Puylaurens 2006, pp. 117-139. For the Burgalese merchants and their control over the woad routes from Toulouse and their role as exporters of Castilian wool and importers of canvas from Rouen, Nantes and Flanders, see H. CASADO ALONSO *Finance et commerce International au milieu du XVIe siècle: La compagnie des Bernuy*, "Annales du Midi", 195, 1991, pp. 323-343. Also, *Le Rôle des marchands castillans dans la commercialisation internationale du Pastel toulousain (Xve et XVIe siècles)*, in *Second International Symposium Woad, Indigo and other natural Dyes*, D. CARDON et alii eds., Arnstadt 1995, pp. 67-70.

⁴⁷ E. OTTE, *Sevilla, siglo XVI*, cit., pp. 186, 225, 236, 253, 308, 315.

⁴⁸ V. VÁZQUEZ DE PRADA, *Letres marchandes de Anvers*, I-IV, Paris 1950, I, pp. 195-196.

trouble, the San Juliáns went to work on behalf of important Portuguese merchants like the Caldeira, who dealt in slaves and other goods.⁴⁹ These Italian bankers were replaced in the woad and the textiles business by Azores-based Portuguese merchants, which from then onwards held a virtual monopoly, and Castilian traders, who had close connections with cloth production centres. This process of substitution was complete by the 1570s. The merchant Bento Váez is a case in point; this Oporto-born and Seville-based merchant was connected with the Affaitati bank in Seville and with the San Juliáns, whom he partially replaced in the woad business.⁵⁰

Following these Seville and Baeza-based merchants who worked with Portuguese importers, we find the company led by the Segovia-born Francisco de Riofrío and Juan de la Puente,⁵¹ who held a virtual monopoly over Segovia cloth in the Sevillian market. Other Segovia-born merchants in operation in Seville and the regional and overseas markets were Pedro de Bilbao Lazcano, active in the 1570s, and Antón de Mesa, active in the 1590s.⁵² Until the 1550s their supply of woad relied on the Burgalese group,⁵³ but from the 1590s onwards they also began buying indigo off the Portuguese, another illustration of the progressive penetration of Portuguese dye merchants, who already controlled the supply of woad from the Azores in Seville and Lower Andalusia, into the Castilian economy.⁵⁴ Cloth from Segovia was highly appreciated in Seville and the American market, which explains the success of these merchants.

Also important were the Catalan merchants Salvi Xifre and Juan Bonet, and the Valencian Miguel Ángel Lambias, main representatives of the traditional Aragonese commercial colony in Seville.⁵⁵ They sold rouennais canvas, silk from Valencia,

⁴⁹ M.F. FERNÁNDEZ CHAVES, *Capital y confianza. Enrique Freire, factor de los tratantes de esclavos portugueses, 1574-1577*, in *Mercaderes y redes mercantiles en España, siglos XV-XVIII*, M.F. FERNÁNDEZ CHAVES, B. PÉREZ, R.M. PÉREZ GARCÍA eds., forthcoming.

⁵⁰ M.F. FERNÁNDEZ CHAVES, *La consolidación del capitalismo portugués en Sevilla. Auge, caída y resurgir político del mercader Bento Váez, 1550-1580*, in *Andalucía en el mundo atlántico moderno. Ciudades y redes*, J.J. IGLESIAS RODRÍGUEZ, J.J. GARCÍA BERNAL, J.M. DÍAZ BLANCO eds., Seville 2018, pp. 183-238.

⁵¹ Already attested by E. OTTE, *Sevilla, siglo XVI*, cit., p. 206. Cloth associated to the name “Francisco de Riofrío” feature in the fair of Los Molares as late as 1613, A. MORENO CURADO, *La feria de la seda*, cit., p. 108.

⁵² A. GARCÍA SANZ, *Paños segovianos para Sevilla e Indias, siglo XVI*, in *Andalucía, España, Las Indias. Pasión por la Historia. Homenaje al profesor Antonio-Miguel Bernal*, C. MARTÍNEZ SHAW, P. TEDDE DE LORCA, S. TINOCO RUBIALES eds., Seville, 2015, pp. 325-336, especially, pp. 331-337.

⁵³ H. CASADO ALONSO, *El comercio del pastel. Datos para una geografía de la industria pañera española en el siglo XVI*, in “Revista de Historia Económica”, 3, 1990, pp. 523-548.

⁵⁴ J.I. PULIDO SERRANO, *La penetración de los portugueses en la economía española durante la segunda mitad del siglo XVI*, in *Más que negocios. Simón Ruiz, un banquero español del siglo XVI entre las penínsulas ibérica e italiana*, ed. J.I. PULIDO SERRANO, Madrid 2017, pp. 267-312.

⁵⁵ For the activity of these merchants, see, J.M. BELLO LEÓN, *La presencia catalana en Andalucía a finales de la Edad Media*, in “Anuario de Estudios Medievales”, 40, 2010, 1, pp. 93-127. M. ROYANO CABRERA, *La comunidad mercantil de la Corona de Aragón afincada en Sevilla durante el reinado de Carlos I: el caso de Galcerán Desclergue*, in *El legado hispánico: manifestaciones culturales y sus protagonistas*, A. LOBATO FERNÁNDEZ, E. DE LOS REYES AGUILAR, I. PEREIRA GARCÍA, C. GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ eds., León 2016, vol. I, pp. 415-432. See also, *La comunidad mercantil catalano-valenciana afincada en Sevilla en la primera mitad*

cloth, *palmillas* and occasionally rugs from Hellín and Alcaraz, among other textiles.⁵⁶ According to our sample, their market share did not reach 2%, but it is likely that this is not representative, and that their activity was, in fact, more significant. At any rate, this and other evidence collected in Medina del Campo clearly indicate that Aragonese merchants were active in the Castilian markets, something which is somewhat at odds with the traditional thesis.⁵⁷

As noted, Toledo-based merchants continued acting as middlemen between the Central Plateau and the Sevillian market.⁵⁸ According to our data, their presence in the Sevillian market was discrete, and their operations were pretty much limited to facilitating the supply of Segovia cloth. They were, however, much more active in the fair of Los Molares, next to Utrera and near Seville, which were an important event for the regional and American textiles markets.⁵⁹ In the fair, Toledoans sold cloth from Cuenca, Las Navas, Brihuega, Soria and Ocaña; they dealt in many different cloth qualities including *bayetas*, *estameña*, sackcloth and *palmilla*, as well as canvas and cheap silk, such as *tafetán*. They are also attested selling superior quality cloth, for instance *venticuatrorenos* and *ventidosenos* cloth and *palmilla*. Their market share grew between 1550 and 1577, while that of Granada-based merchants, who specialised in silks (damasks and velvets), fell.⁶⁰ Although they do not feature in our sample, we know of the activity of other Segovia-based merchants in Los Molares and other similar fairs in Lower Andalusia, for instance Pedro Muñoz Hernández, active in the 1570s;⁶¹ this demonstrates that the crisis of the Castilian fair system and the decadence of northern fairs led merchants and producers towards the

del siglo XVI, in *Familia, cultura material y formas de poder en la España moderna. III Encuentro de jóvenes investigadores en Historia Moderna*, ed. M. GARCÍA FERNÁNDEZ, Valladolid 2016, pp. 121-130.

⁵⁶ In fact, Salvi or Salvador Xifre was the only seller of Catalan *rajas* (rascie), at least between 1579 and 1580, see E. OTTE, *Sevilla, siglo XVI*, cit., p. 205.

⁵⁷ F.H. ABED AL-HUSSEIN, *El comercio de los géneros textiles: seda, paños y lienzos*, in *Historia de Medina del Campo y su Tierra. Auge de las Ferias. Decadencia de Medina*, ed. E. LORENZO SANZ, Valladolid 1986, vol. II, pp. 45-66, especially, pp. 58-60.

⁵⁸ R.M. PÉREZ GARCÍA, *Las ciudades de Sevilla y Toledo en la conexión de las redes económicas judeoconversas entre Castilla y América a mediados del siglo XVI*, in *Comercio y cultura en la Edad Moderna*, cit., pp. 846-858.

⁵⁹ Along with Cordoban merchants, the Toledoans brought a lawsuit concerning the payment of dues against the lord of the village, the 3rd Duke of Alcalá, which demonstrates the lord's interest in the fair, A. MORENO CURADO, *La feria de la seda*, cit., pp. 77-79.

⁶⁰ Granada silk, which had already been struggling for some time, ran into deep trouble in the aftermath of the Rebellion of the Alpujarras, but still had a market in Seville. For this crisis and the growth of the Levantine, especially Valencian, silk industry, see R. FRANCH BENAVENT, *El comercio y los mercados de la seda en la España moderna*, in *La seta in Europa, secc. XIII-XX*, ed. S. CAVACIOCCHI, Florence 1993, pp. 565-594. For the slow recovery of the Granada silk industry, see E. GARCÍA GÁMEZ, *Seda y repoblación en el Reino de Granada durante el tránsito de los siglos XVI y XVII*, in "Chronica Nova", 28, 2001, pp. 221-255, and also, R.M. GIRÓN PASCUAL, *Mercaderes de seda, "verlegers" y veinticuatro: los Castellano Marquina de Granada (1569-1644)*, in *Comercio y cultura en la Edad Moderna*, cit., pp. 405-419; for the importance of taxes as evidence for the activity of the silk industry, see, E. SORIA MESA, *El negocio del siglo. Los judeoconversos y la renta de la seda del Reino de Granada (siglo XVI)*, in "Hispania", 253, 2016, LXXVI, pp. 415-444.

⁶¹ A. GARCÍA SANZ, *Paños segorianos para Sevilla*, cit., p. 337.

southern urban industries, which offered profitable business opportunities beyond the export of textiles towards the Indies.⁶²

Finally, merchants based in Los Molares and Utrera had but little impact in the market; most of them limited their activity to selling a small amount of low-quality cloth and some silk in the fair, although some exceptions exist. The group “Others” includes a woad-importing Portuguese merchant called Gaspar Fernández Rubio, who worked in partnership with Francisco de Molina, as well as a merchant from Venice and another one from Córdoba. The small presence of Cordoban merchants is remarkable, given that a good deal of the dye brought to Seville was sold to Córdoba-based traders and dyers.⁶³ The entry “unknown” records the cargo of a Honduras-bound *nao*, whose owners do not feature in the record.

In this period, therefore, most foreign textiles were still being imported by Castilian and local merchants, resulting in an active trade both within the region and overseas. Although novel, this market was becoming increasingly integrated in the credit circuits of woad importers, a sector which was initially dominated by Seville- and Lisbon-based Burgalese and Italian traders, and later taken over by the Portuguese, a process of substitution that had fully crystallised by the 1570s. Finally, although cloth and silk had increased their market share, as well as gaining in terms of quality and variety, canvas was still a key commodity.

PRICE OF TEXTILES IN SEVILLE AND LOS MOLARES IN 1577

Table 4 presents an estimate of average textile prices in Seville in 1577 according to the available data (not all record entries feature this information). Information concerning the length of textiles sold is also partial; sometimes the record refers to the number of pieces or, in the case of canvas, bundles, instead of length. Records concerning cloth are always much more precise than those referring to canvas, which was often transacted wholesale (by the bundle). Similarly, canvas prices are expressed in terms of mrs./Flemish pound, which cannot be compared with the price of cloth, expressed in terms of mrs./*vara*. Sometimes, the price is expressed in terms of *real* per piece, as presented in Table 4. Whenever possible, the number of *varas* has been added up, but this can only offer a notional guide, which, moreover, only applies to part of the sample.⁶⁴ With these qualifications in mind, we can see that canvas amounted to 95% of all textiles sold, while cloth amounted to 4% and silk to 1%, based on those entries in which length is specified. It is worth stressing that these results are merely notional, but in any case the dominance of canvas seems overwhelming.

⁶² H. CASADO ALONSO, *Medina del Campo Fairs*, cit., pp. 515-517.

⁶³ M.F. FERNÁNDEZ CHAVES, *Antonio Faleiro de Acosta*, cit. J.I. FORTEA PÉREZ, *Córdoba en el siglo XVI. Las bases demográficas y económicas de una expansión urbana*, Córdoba 1981.

⁶⁴ We do not compare the prices reflected in our sample with E. Otte's because we are focusing on a single year, and price fluctuations would tend to confuse the results. Moreno Curado also presents a list of prices for the fair of Los Molares, which is particularly accurate for 1613 (and some other related data for 1576), but we have decided not to go into comparisons for the reason stated above, A. MORENO CURADO, *La feria de la seda*, cit., pp. 99-100, 105-106, 117, 141-144.

Tab. 4. *Varas*, pieces and average price of textiles in Seville and Los Molares, 1576-1577

Textile	<i>Varas</i> or pieces	Average price mrs./ <i>vara</i> or piece
A) Cloth		
Camel hair	178 pieces	5,562.5
<i>Raja</i>	296.3	1,105
<i>Velarte</i>	371.63	858.5
<i>Vellón</i>	173.2	671.5
Cloth (unspecified)	1,971.28	665.39
<i>Vellorí</i>	52.5	629
<i>Palmilla</i>	337.9	603.7
<i>Bayeta</i>	535.85	356.42
<i>Carisea</i>	91.35	323
<i>Frisa</i>	327	296.87
<i>Jergueta</i>	10	272
<i>Estameña</i>	123.35	261.37
<i>Arpillera</i>	34.5	248.2
<i>Anascote</i>	14	238
<i>Fusta</i> (cotton-made cloth)	47	114
Subtotal A	4.379'86 <i>varas</i> 178 pieces	
B) Silk		
Velvet	360.46	986
Damask	284.95	748
Satin	99.6	744.6
<i>Tafetta</i>	40.8	252.9
Subtotal B	785'81 <i>varas</i>	
C) Canvas		
<i>Bocacías</i>	192 pieces	613.6 mrs. / piece
Holland	4,105.8	178.5
Rouennais	48,515	133.34
Naval (Laval)	4,951	81.2
<i>Melinges</i>	5,146.25	62.8
<i>Esguines</i>	41 pieces	1.787.5 mrs./pound
<i>Angeo</i>	10,430.68	56.5
<i>Brines</i>	916.75	55
<i>Samalones</i>	1,425	48.5
Subtotal C	112.442'65 <i>varas</i> 233 pieces	
TOTAL		117,614.26 <i>varas</i> 411 pieces

Source: AHPSE: *Protocolos Notariales de Sevilla*, 6004, 6005, 6006, 7784, 7788, 9214, 9215, 9216, 19717; *Protocolos Notariales de Los Molares*, 23263P. Sample: 112 transactions.

Tab. 5. Most highly priced textile products in Seville and Los Molares (in *varas*), 1576-1577

Origin Cloth	Mrs. / <i>vara</i>	Origin silk	Mrs. / <i>vara</i>	Canvas (origin unspecified)	Mrs. / <i>vara</i>
Riofrío and Segovia	1,394	Toledo (velvet)	1,292	Holland	178.5
Segovia	1,360	Toledo (velvet)	1,292	Rouennais	133.34
Florence (<i>rajá</i>)	1,326, 1,122, 1,054	Granada (<i>dos pelos</i> velvet)	1,224	Laval	81.2
Segovia de Pedro Muñoz	1,241	Valencia (satin)	816	<i>Angeo</i>	56.5
Segovia	1,224	Granada (damask)	748	--	--
Segovia Juan de Gumiel	1,112, 1,105, 1,088, 1,054	<i>Tafetán moruno</i>	374	--	--
Segovia Diego de Bilbao	1,037			--	--
Baeza 24no <i>velarte</i>	918				

Source: AHPSE: *Protocolos Notariales de Sevilla*, 6004, 6005, 6006, 7784, 7788, 9214, 9215, 9216, 19717; *Protocolos notariales de Los Molares*, 23263P. Sample: 112 transactions.

Mention must be made of the camel hair cloth of which 145 pieces are attested. Most of these pieces were imported by Castilian and Flemish merchants; only one piece is recorded as having been imported from Italy. No information exists about the origin of the rest.⁶⁵ Italy is also recorded as the origin of several pieces of Florentine *rajás*; these textiles were highly appreciated, and they fetched a high price (1,326 mrs./vara), at a level with the best cloth from Segovia. With these exceptions, most of the cloth on sale in Seville, for both the domestic and the overseas market, was produced domestically, and some production centres, such as Segovia, were particularly active. As pointed out by Ángel García Sanz, these cloths were highly appreciated both in Seville and the colonies,⁶⁶ but also elsewhere in the Iberian Peninsula. Segovian cloths fetch the highest price in the sample, and in no case did they sell for under 1.000 mrs.; those from Riofrío and the city of Segovia were known by the name of the manufacturer,⁶⁷ and were all of a *ventidoseno* quality. A consignment of *venticuatreño* cloth is attested; it was manufactured slightly to the

⁶⁵ Camel hair, also imported by Italian and Flemish merchants, was already known in Seville before 1577; see, E. OTTE, *Sevilla, siglo XVI*, cit., pp. 210-211.

⁶⁶ A. GARCÍA SANZ, *Paños segovianos para Sevilla e Indias*, cit.

⁶⁷ From the early 16th century the manufacture of Segovian cloth was supervised by the "facedores de paños" who endorsed the goods under their control by naming them after themselves, A. GARCÍA SANZ, *Mercaderes hacedores de paños en Segovia en la época de Carlos V: organización del proceso productivo y estructura del capital industrial*, in *Auge y decadencia de Castilla*, ed. A. GARCÍA SANZ, Barcelona 2016, pp. 139-161.

north of Segovia, in Villoria, and sold for 646 mrs./*vara* (the transaction involved 35.5 *varas*, sold for 29,900 mrs).

Second to Segovia cloth in terms of market value were the cloths from Baeza, which were sold for between 451 and 918 mrs./*vara*, an average of 678 mrs./*vara*. Cloths from Baeza were better quality than those from Segovia, as most of them were of *venticuatreno* quality, which fetched the highest prices among the Baeza cloths (between 918 and 782 mrs./*vara*). All these cloths were black or blue, and occasionally they made blue, green or black broadcloth. Below these cloths we find a *vellorí* cloth (not dyed) for 714 mrs. and Morisco cloths of *dieciocheno* quality, at 612 mrs./*vara*, that is, more expensive than the *ventidoseno* and *venticuatreno* quality cloth from Baeza. The Morisco cloths were dyed in various colours, including “blue”, “green”, “yellow and white”, and “red”. *Vellón* cloth from Baeza was between these last categories (between 612 and 748 mrs.) in terms of market value.

Other Andalusian production centres feature less prominently in our sample. The record features 10.25 *varas* of blue *catorceno* cloth from Córdoba, at 340 mrs./*vara*, sold in the fair of Los Molares. The weak presence of Córdoba cloth must be qualified, not only because Professor Fortea demonstrated that the city was a first-rate cloth producer, being closely connected with Portuguese woad and credit circuits,⁶⁸ but because, if other years are taken into consideration (1574-1575, 1578-1579), we find at least the sale of 236.5 *varas* for 114,724 mrs. Most of this cloth, however, was of a low quality: 205 *varas* of purple *dieciseiseno*, the rest being green and “yellowish” *catorcenos*, at an average of 385.3 mrs./*vara*. On the other hand, in 1577 the looms in the area of Los Pedroches produced better quality cloth, including a *venticuatreno* fabric at 850 mrs./*vara* (the transaction involved 35.24 *varas*, which sold for 29,892 mrs).

Production centres in the Southern Plateau reflect the high degree of specialisation in the Spanish textiles industry. Ciudad Real, Puertollano and La Puebla de Montalbán feature with an aggregate of 151,903 mrs. including *venticuatreno* cloth from Puertollano and Ciudad Real (at 986 and 629 mrs./*vara*) and a *frisa* from La Puebla at 170 mrs./*vara*. The average price of these cloths is 629 mrs./*vara*. As we shall see shortly, Alcaraz and Hellín specialised in rugs, which account for a significant 220,878.5 mrs. The most expensive of these was a 30 *palmos* rug from Alcaraz, with fetched a price of 12,000 mrs.⁶⁹ The sample also features 24 dozen gloves from Ciudad Real, at 40 *reales* (1.360 mrs.) the dozen.

Other wool-based cloths, such as *palmilla* and *bayeta*, had a strong market presence, as they were versatile, mid-priced commodities. The former, all of which were dyed green and/or blue, fetched a price between 272 and 816 mrs., while the latter sold for between 204 and 493 mrs. The lowest price corresponded to English black *bayeta*, while the highest was attached to a *venticuatrena bayeta*, also black. The remaining *bayetas* were purple, green, yellow and white, in different combinations,

⁶⁸ J.I. FORTEA PÉREZ, *Córdoba en el siglo XVI*, cit.

⁶⁹ In the last quarter of the 16th century, Alcaraz 30 *palmos* rugs sold locally for between 18 and 22 *ducados* XVI, J. SÁNCHEZ FERRER, *Alfombras antiguas de la provincia de Albacete*, Albacete 1986, pp. 125-126, so the price difference in Seville (where they sold for 32 *ducados*) was at least of 40%.

and sold for between 221 and 442 *maravedies*.⁷⁰ Even cheaper were the low quality *frisas* and *estameñas*, the origin of which is not specified; the former came in different colours, while the latter were generally brown, except for a yellow piece.⁷¹ *Cariseas* only came in black and white, although they were more expensive than *frisas* and *estameñas*. Other low quality cloths appear only in small quantities. *Arpillera* fetched a very low price, between 170 and 391 mrs./*vara*, as did *anascote*. *Fusta* (cotton-made cloth) features only once, with a sale of 47 *varas* at 114 mrs./*vara*. Similarly, *jergueta* features once, although it fetched a higher price (272 mrs./*vara*) than other low quality fabrics.

The presence of silk in the sample is fairly limited. This is remarkable, as it is known that they were widely commercialised and that they were in high demand. The most common types in the sample are velvet from Toledo and Granada, followed by satin from Valencia, and, far behind, other types. Silk came generally in black, blue and brown, with some exceptions which were dyed in “colours”, “red” and “yellow”.

Finally, the most common and cheapest type of fabric in the sample is canvas. The most common varieties are listed in Table 4, but other types are also attested. The most expensive type was Holland canvas, sold at an average of 178.5 mrs./*vara*, followed by rouennais canvas, at 133.34 mrs./*vara*, naval canvas (Laval), at 81.2 mrs./*vara* and *melinges*, at 62.8 mrs./*vara*, among others. Although holland canvas was highly appreciated, the greatest market share corresponded to rouennais, a result of its excellent quality/price ratio. This continued with a commercial tradition that linked the French and Low Countries Atlantic-facing coasts and the Iberian Peninsula. Other similar fabrics were of French origin, such as *angeo*, which came from Anjou (sometimes “Bloforte” – Beaufort – is mentioned as the origin of this commodity), *melinges* and *brines* from Maine and *laval* from Brittany, among others.⁷² How much of this canvas was re-exported is unclear. Our sample only records a cargo of canvas (1,989 *varas*, 1.78% of the total amount of the total known amount of canvas) loaded onto a Honduras-bound *nao*.

Castilian and Flemish merchants often cooperated in the canvas sector, selling and buying these fabrics with one another. This is largely due to the fact that the Castilians used previously-created distribution channels to direct these textiles to the Indies, and complemented their cargoes of French and Low Countries canvas with Castilian textiles, such as the aforementioned rugs and small quantities of cloth from Segovia and Baeza.

Therefore, hollands and Rouennais canvas were among the most widely commercialised types, including Holland doublets and flax tablecloths. The merchants who dealt in canvas also sold rugs from Hellín and Alcaraz, which were highly valued. Table 6 presents the high prices fetched by these Castilian

⁷⁰ These combinations were “black and brown”, “red”, “green and white”, and “white and brown”.

⁷¹ Colour mentions include “red”, “red and blue”, “brown”, “*frailesco*”, and “coloured”. We only know the provenance of those made in La Puebla de Montalbán.

⁷² For the denominations of French flax textiles, see H. LAPEYRE, *Una familia de mercaderes*, cit., pp. 458-463. Also, H. CASADO ALONSO, *Le commerce des “marchandises de Bretagne”*, cit.

manufactures, especially the rugs from Alcaraz.⁷³ However, none of them were as expensive as a “Turkish” rug sold by Lope de Tapia for 28,000 mrs.; the same merchant sold 16 other rugs, of an unknown origin, for 38,817.5 mrs. These merchants rarely sold finished products, such as shirts, and only Bartolomé Sarriá de Abeça is featured selling 355 men’s, woman’s and child’s shirts for different prices. Another exception concerns a cargo of table cloths (at least 48) and napkins, which fetched different prices (the information is highly fragmentary, and little more may be said for the moment). These pieces of clothing, along with gloves, mittens and ruffs, appear occasionally in small numbers, and we have decided to leave them out of the analysis. Other pieces of clothing, such as the aforementioned doublets, were being handled by Sevillian merchants along secondary distribution channels, which must not concern us here.

Tab. 6. Rugs sold in the Sevillian market in 1577

Seller	Alcaraz				Hellín			
	Number	<i>Palmos</i>	Total price (mrs.)	Price per rug (mrs.)	Number	<i>Palmos</i>	Total price (mrs.)	Price per rug (mrs.)
Alonso de Merlo (Sevillian)	1	30	12,000	12,000	-	-	-	-
=	3	20	15,750	5,250	2	20	7,500	3,750
=	3	15	8,156.25	2,718.80	12	15	26,112	2,176
Pedro Jiménez de Enciso (Sevillian)	4	30	48,000	12,000	-	-	-	-
=	4	25	36,000	9,000	-	-	-	-
=	4	20	21,000	5,250	-	-	-	-
Lope de Tapia (Castillian)	4	20	19,500	4,875	12	-	24,480	2,040
=	1	15	2,380	2,380				-
Total	24	-	162,786.25	-	26	-	58,092	-

AHPSE, Protocolos Notariales de Sevilla, 9215, 6005.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data presented, we must challenge the usual assumption that the Sevillian market was flooded by foreign commodities and merchants; the development of the Spanish cloth industry, and the production of silk in Toledo, Granada and Valencia, goes hand in hand with a proactive attitude on the part of

⁷³ For this, see, J. SÁNCHEZ FERRER, *Alfombras antiguas*, cit.

peninsular merchants to the commercialisation of these products. We do not want to deny the importance of Breton and Dutch canvas, but we should question the role played by foreign merchants in their traffic; as we have demonstrated, the participation of foreign merchants was generally related to other products, such as dyes, which introduced the Portuguese merchants into Spanish commercial circuits, or took place in association with other merchants, for instance the importers of Florentine *rajás*, in association with Catalan merchants, in the late 1570s, or the Flemish importers of canvas, who worked in association with Castilian partners. At the same time, while the canvas market always had a strong international flavour and was in the hands of transnational economic groups (largely Burgalese, Castilians and Flemish, whose weight grew over time, especially from the 1560s onwards – between 1550 and 1577 their market share increased by 12%), we must revise the alleged collapse of the Burgalese economic groups during the reign of Philip II; instead, what we see is a process of adaptation and alliance (often sealed by marriage) with powerful Sevillian merchants in response to increasing international competition⁷⁴. We must also highlight the development of textile production, both for export and the domestic market, in the crowns of Castile and Aragon. Throughout the 16th century, these products were distributed by merchants from Toledo, Baeza, Granada, Catalonia, Valencia and, naturally, Burgos, linking active production centres with the international markets via Seville. It seems clear that traditional commonplaces about the “stagnation” of pre-industrial production in Spain, and about the absence of a domestic market, will have to be revised. This work, which will be followed by more studies, has tried to explore the transformations undergone by an open and internationalised market, supported by a solid and highly diversified textile industry, and sought to develop a new chronological framework with which to gain a better understanding of its rhythms and circumstances.

⁷⁴ R.M. PÉREZ GARCÍA, *Mercaderes burgaleses en la Andalucía de los siglos XVI y XVII: procesos de enriquecimiento, ascenso social y ennoblecimiento*, forthcoming.