

The Mercers of Parma; 1585-1739:  
A Microcosm of the World of Commerce

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

Examination of 21 inventories and other documents from Parma, ranging from 1585 to 1739, correlating with historical trends over the period, revealed changes in the local and internationally ramified trade in mercery: cloth, apparel, fibre and ancillary goods. Prices for denotable goods varied in an inverted U curve, lower at the beginning and end of the period, high in the middle period when war and plague placed labour at a premium. Developments in trade patterns tended toward larger firms locally, with greater international connections and toward dominance of the international trade by Northern European countries and away from Italy. Consideration was given to details of money, measurements systems, technological developments and specialized terminology, which led to compilation of a glossary, appended.

### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED:

ASPr -*Archivio di Stato di Provincia di Parma* —the State Archives of Parma

NDP -*Notai di Parma* — a section within ASPr

ADNP -*Archivio Distrettuale Notarile di Parma* –Archive of the District  
Notarial Society of Parma

Monetary notations follow the European pre-decimal system:

£ Pounds (British)	Livres (French)	<i>Lire</i> (Italian)
s. Shillings (British)	Sous (French)	<i>Soldi</i> (Italian)
d. Pennies (British)	Deniers (French)	<i>Denarii</i> (Italian)

P£ designates Parman *Lire*

T£ designates the French *Livre Tournois*

Bo£ designates Bolognese *Lire*

Ve£ designates Venetian *Lire*

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **The Thesis and the Theory Behind the Thesis:**

#### **The Thesis**

The main thesis informing this study holds that examining the records left from mercers in Parma in a period spanning the 17th century will demonstrate linkages with places and events at distances in time and space, and that the information in these documents is not fully comprehensible if those distant factors are not taken into account. In examining the documents and their context, twenty-one inventories from Parma ranging from 1585 to 1739, we would thus expect to find that they were not isolated from developments in the rest of the world but that that ambience was itself the result of influences from much farther in the past, and that they were currently affecting and being affected by entities and activities from Japan to Mexico. In fact, this is what we do find. The main trends of history, demography and technology are clearly demarcated from the secondary literature. The inventories, upon close analysis, confirm these predictions. Goods were sourced from across Europe and from India and the Far East.

We conclude that the examination of this limited selection of documents can give us a ground-level insight into the lives of mercantile workers who, although constrained geographically and temporally, were part of distributed networks of commercial activity and participants in a culture that stretched from deepest antiquity to nearly the present

day. In fact there is little distinction to be made in terms of culture and activities between these mercers and present day small shopkeepers in many specialized trades.

### **The Theory Behind the Thesis.**

The theory underpinning this thesis can be expressed succinctly: The World is One! Rather than being divided geographically into regions or countries, or chronologically into eras or centuries the world is an interactive unity. Any such division could only be heuristic, that is, undertaken to simplify a problem that would otherwise be of intractable complexity, in the conscious awareness that the division must ultimately be abandoned when the inquiry has sufficiently advanced. Not only was that world a unity, the ongoing advances in transportation and communications mean that it was, and is, growing smaller apace.

In this context I propose that the world of commerce can be viewed as a hologram. By examining the reduced sub-group of data found in the Parman invoices we can discern the outlines of the whole, albeit at reduced definition. More data would essentially show the same overall structure, but in greater detail. <sup>1</sup>

In our present discourse, this tells us that we cannot know everything, or even everything important, about Parman commerce if we only look at Parman commerce: it is necessary to consider the wider context and the relationships that bind our subject matter

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For a more detailed exposition of this concept, although in a different metaphorical structure see Carl Jung's remarks on 'Synchronicity' in his Forward to the *I Ching or Book of Changes*, by Richard Wilhelm, tr. Cary F. Baynes (London: Penguin. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 1983), xxiv

to the larger arena of human activity. These relationships are distributed both geographically and temporally.

The most basic infrastructural preconditions for trade, that is money and measuring units, were standardized structurally across Europe since Carolingian times, and, at that, were modeled on Roman exemplars. We also see evidence that technological progress in the productive processes was not linear, and that even though some aspects of the fabric production were becoming increasingly mechanized, there were areas of resistance to the onward “March of Progress,” inexplicable if the purely economic aspects of technical advance are viewed but logical if looking at the actual lives of the producers, not just at the raw input/output figures.

### **Who and What are Mercers, and Why Study them?**

Parma, the locus of this study, is an ancient city in the Po Valley of Northern Italy. The second city of the Emilia-Romagna after Bologna, its Roman foundation dates from 183 BC. During the sixteenth century, that is, before the great plague of 1630, the population of Parma, as capital of the duchy, increased by 22%, greater than that of Northern Italy as a whole, which rose by 14%.<sup>2</sup> That plague, the last to sweep across Northern Italy, killed 15,000 Parmans, which was half the population at that time.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Maurizio Gariboldi, “Cultura materiale e strutturale del quotidiano a Piacenza nel periodo Farnese, Parte Prima,” Bolletino Storico Piacentino, LXXXI (1986) 65.

<sup>3</sup> Carlo M. Cipolla, Before the Industrial Revolution: European Society and Economy 1000-1700 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. tr. C. Woodall (London: Routledge, 1993), 133.

The trade carried on by mercers has been central to human life and welfare for a very long time. As part of the basic human activity of trading goods for other goods, it is of primal importance and has been continually in practice from earliest times through the present day and doubtless into the future. The 21 inventories and other documents in this study range from 1582 to 1739, divided into three subperiods; 1582-1631, 1655-1676 and 1686-1736. By examining them we can access a momentary episode in this long tradition, a video clip, as it were, of a very long feature film. We should, however, never lose awareness of the deeply established roots of this tradition, of which these mercers are exemplars. Nor should we imagine that these inventories have no significance outside of the narrow terms of this study.

The study of the details of the mercery business, then, can serve as a microcosmic view of the fluctuations of economies, cultures and lifestyles over time. In the present study, with inventories spanning the period from the late 16<sup>th</sup> through early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, we have the potential to observe changes in many aspects of Parman society as it responded to large-scale influences, both endo- and exo-genic, such as iterations of the plague, invasive wars, and large-scale climate change, as well as the loss of Italy's dominance in the manufacturing, banking and cultural sectors. Working on post-mortem inventories in 18<sup>th</sup> century Amsterdam, Anne McCants notes that inventories yield information not only on subsistence, but also on quality of life factors, economic changes, commercial practices and changes in household management. She also remarks that inventories that show debt loads are properly speaking combinations of inventory proper

and administrative accounts of the principal.<sup>4</sup> We see this composite nature in many of our Parman documents.

The term ‘mercery’ had a three-fold meaning including a particular range of goods, the people who traded in them, and the area where they lived and sold those goods.<sup>5</sup> Mercers, under that name or a close cognate, begin to appear again in European cities in the 12th century, including everyone from small pedlars on up.<sup>6</sup> For our purposes, mercers are merchants specializing in clothing, fabrics, and apparel-related items, but as we shall see, the boundaries of these specialties were fluid. Mercers in Paris and London were making the transformation from just craft work to dealing as early as the later 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup> The parallelism of these processes in different regions shows that similar social and economic influences will often generate similar responses by individuals and organizations that may otherwise not be in close contact with each other. The universality of these concerns and problems ensured that the guilds shared a common structure and function, if not always a common name, across Europe.<sup>8</sup>

As with most other clearly-established trade groups, the mercers, in Italy as in the

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<sup>4</sup> Anne McCants, “After-Death Inventories as a Source for the Study of Material Culture, Economic Well-Being, and Household Formation among the Poor of Eighteenth Century Amsterdam,” Historical Methods 39 (Winter 2006), 10- 12.

<sup>5</sup> Anne F. Sutton, The Mercery of London: Trade, Goods and People, 1120-1578 (Aldershot and Burlington Vt: Ashgate, 2005), 18.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 5-7.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 31-32.

<sup>8</sup> Henri Pirenne, Economic and Social History of Medieval Europe (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1949), 180.

rest of Europe, were organized into guilds, which Mackenney has defined as: “(a) free association of laymen who acknowledged a common identity as townsmen, as practitioners of the same trade, as spiritual brothers.”<sup>9</sup> Guilds began to self-organize from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards.<sup>10</sup> As such, guilds were component parts of the medieval city-state. Guilds organized life in medieval cities in its economic, social, political and religious aspects, although the *arti* or trade guilds should not be confused with confraternities or *scuole*, which were of a more religious nature, at least in Venice, although clear distinctions are not always possible. The terms seem to have undergone an evolutionary process, the *scuole*, from the Greek SCHOLE, a union of the people, being the original term, and *arte* coming in later to indicate the trade-based guilds.<sup>11</sup>

The mercers in our study manifest a wide variety of goods. In the medieval guild system they fell somewhere between drapers, who focused on bulk cloths, and haberdashers who dealt in smaller items such as handkerchiefs, underwear and stockings. Sutton derives ‘haberdasher’ from the Old French *Hapetask*, referring to pedlar’s wares or the sack they were carried in. Haberdashers took on small wares, especially at the retail level, while a mercer might retail higher quality small wares. Caps were seen as haberdashery.<sup>12</sup> Davanzo Poli identifies haberdashers as *marzeri*, a guild which in Venice

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<sup>9</sup> Richard MacKenney, Tradesmen and Traders: The World of the Guilds in Venice and Europe C1250-1690 (Totowa NJ: Barnes and Noble, 1987), xii -xiii.

<sup>10</sup> Doretta Davanzo Poli, Arts and Crafts in Venice. trans. Angelini, Bartons, *et al.* photo Smith, Mark E (Venezia: 1978, eng. trans. 1999), 25.

<sup>11</sup> Davanzo Poli, Arts and Crafts, 25-26.

<sup>12</sup> Sutton, Mercery of London, 118-119.

had taken over the previously independent guild of embroiderers.<sup>13</sup> *Marzeri* organized and delivered raw material, thread, and collected and resold finished product.<sup>14</sup> In Venice, the mercers' guild encompassed many different trades. Cappers, stringers, purse-makers, lacemakers and others were all separate sub-trades within the mercers' guild, making the mercers the most important guild in Venice.<sup>15</sup> In 1446 the mercers sought to subsume twelve new categories of tradesmen and their products, to include all goods made outside Venice.<sup>16</sup>

In Bologna the mercers were known as *Strazzarolli* which is actually closer in meaning to "drapers." (Note that in the compiled glossary, *strazzarolli* is seen to derive from *strazzato*, 'in rags', suggesting a meaning closer to second hand or rag dealers. Possibly an ironical epithet parallel to calling the present day fashion business the 'rag trade.')

In a process parallel to that in Venice, a series of actions led to that guild accepting others as subordinates, paying dues to the drapers, but obeying different, or sometimes no, regulations. The first of these subordinated guilds to be taken in were the *rigattieri* or *zavagli* who were not mentioned in our documents before 1600 but were predominant by the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. As in other places, the *zavagli* had the semi-official rôle of valuers, especially in non-commercial transaction such as wills or dowries. They also had a reputation for shady dealing, undervaluing goods to gain themselves an

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<sup>13</sup> Davanzo Poli, Arts and Crafts, 275.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 288.

<sup>15</sup> MacKenney, Tradesmen, 111.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 90-91.

advantage at auctions. The *merciai* or haberdashers dealing in second rate small goods, and the itinerant blacksmiths also came in under the drapers in Bologna. Tailors struck a deal that they alone would cut clothing to measure for clients, but the *strazzarolli* were able to cut fabric into generic or ready made garments.<sup>17</sup> A possible factor in the subordination of smaller guilds to larger could be that the municipal governments preferred there to be a limited number of guilds so as to maintain order. Riots between guilds competing for market share were not unknown.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, second- tier cities were content with merging trades that were separate in the greater centres.

As we shall see, our mercers in Parma were engaged in all these aspects of the business, dealing in assorted made garments and small goods and providing raw materials and productive equipment to other workers, as well as undertaking production on their own. In addition, some of the inventories suggest that they were also edging over into the business from such tradesmen as the *fabbri* or ironmongers. We see this, for instance, in the several dozen chisels of various types and 232 pounds of eight specialized types of wires, some imported, in the 1655 Zalli inventory.

Guilds were comprehensive service organizations for their members. As well as maintaining control over the quality of goods produced, they protected their members' interests in other ways. They transmitted skills and knowledge down through

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<sup>17</sup> Fabio Giusberti, "Dynamics of the Used Goods Market, Bolognese Drapers and Scrap-Merchants in the Early Modern Era" in Antonio Guenzi, *et al* Guilds, Markets and Work Regulation in Italy, 16<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> Centuries (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 298-303.

<sup>18</sup> Lianna Farber, An Anatomy of Trade in Medieval Writing: Value, Consent and Community (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press 2006), 165.

generations. They provided insurance for the members and their families. Members would join as *garzone*, apprentices at twelve years of age, and after five to seven years graduate as *lavorante*, journeymen. After two to three years they could be tested in the *prova d'arte* for the status of *maestro*, master. Occasionally licenses were issued to women.<sup>19</sup>

As mentioned, certain masters, designated as *rigatiere* and *zavaglio*, performed a function as experts qualified to make estimates and draw up inventories and other items. They thus had both private and public functions.<sup>20</sup> In the Zalli inventories, among others, we observe notations indicating that the valuations were approved by such masters. We note also that the designations *rigatiere* and *zavaglio* also have the strict definitions of dealers in used apparel. The English equivalent term would be 'frippers'. In Florence, at least, these *stimatori* were in fact employees of the *rigatiere* guild.<sup>21</sup> They would be the experts on the values of the used or shop-worn items that form the bulk of the post-mortem inventories. That said, the evaluator in our last inventory, the Zurlini 1739, was one of the Zucchi from the previous two inventories, a mercer. In any case, it is important to note that the 'just price' would not be decided by market consideration of supply and demand only. A large component would be the price as established by these

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<sup>19</sup> Davanzo Poli, Arts and Crafts, 24-27.

<sup>20</sup> Fabio Giusberti, Impresa E Avventura: L' industria del velo di seta a Bologna nel XVIII secolo. (Milano: Inst. i Storia Economica Università L. Bocconi, 1998) 68-69.

<sup>21</sup> Anne Matchette, "Credit and Credibility: used goods and social relations in sixteenth century Florence." in The Material Renaissance, ed. Michelle O'Malley and Evelyn Welch (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2010)

experts acting in this quasi-judicial rôle.<sup>22</sup>

Upon examination of the archives of the Parman tax rolls for 1636, sorted for the mercers, we can note that Donna Maddalena Vegnina (sic), is listed under her own name, with a declared capital of £100, as is Madonna Francesca Tarozzi, with a like amount of capital. Madonna Romana Ganzi was an *oleara* or (cooking) oil seller, with a capital of only £15, which likely came under the *lardarioio* or grocers. In the master furriers, subsumed under the mercers, Madonna Monicha da Vilana is named as the ‘first’ of the three listed. In the Donelli inventory the account is in the name of Signora Barbara. In the accounts sections of several others, we see items outstanding to various female workers, for raw materials, production equipment and so on. In some other cases, we cannot be certain about the standings of these individuals, but it cannot be ruled out that they held rank in their Guilds in their own rights. Although women were certainly not numerically dominant in these trades, it is very clear that they had a presence and a degree of respect.

The universality of the guild structure in Europe gives us insight into the common life experiences of our mercers. They all shared certain experiences and training. They had been educated in schools organized by and for merchants, with paid clerics as the instructors, in which they learned, *inter alia*, note-taking and bookkeeping. Education was completed in workshops.<sup>23</sup> They utilized notaries, specialists in those skills, whenever

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<sup>22</sup> Jean Chauvard, “Du bon usage des sources notariales et fiscales: L’étude du marché immobilier dans la Venise du XVIIe siècle,” 56, Mélanges de l’École française de Rome: Italie et Méditerranée modernes et contemporaines (MEFRIM) (2000-10): 112.

<sup>23</sup> Armando Sapori, tr .Patricia A Kemen, The Italian Merchant in the Middle Ages (New York: Norton, 1970), 33-35.

there was a change in the status of their concerns.<sup>24</sup> On the 1636 declarations of capital, however, not all of the entries were signed by the principals. Of the 326 line entries, 138 were entered as unsigned, 278 as signed; and in 23 the entry was left blank. It is possible some of the merchants were not able to sign, or that they had their entries made by clerks or notaries. These common experiences would certainly instill common attitudes or worldviews as well as behaviour patterns. It is because of the utilization of notaries to record the major phase-changes in their lives and businesses that we have access into the part they played in the critical period of European and Italian history that is spanned by the range of these inventories.

Another common quality that all these mercers, Parman and others, would share would be in the structures of their businesses, which, however large they might grow, would usually follow the model of home industries. Giusberti classifies the essential components of mercantile activity as: entrepreneurial, capital, raw material, central organization and production.<sup>25</sup> We have seen the mercers in our sample following these constraints.

Guilds had a function as welfare organizations for their members and families, including defending their economic interests. Less positive aspects of the rôle of the guilds stemmed from their positions between the local aristocracies, mostly urbanized, and the unorganized populations. The elites relied on the guilds to represent the working

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 29-30.

<sup>25</sup> Giusberti, Impresa, 91-92.

classes and to control societal tensions.<sup>26</sup> In Parma, particularly, where there was a very tight regulatory régime over the distribution of foodstuffs and the activities of craftsmen, especially in the silk industries, the guilds' activities in defending their interests contributed to a stifling of innovation in productive and commercial techniques. Gian-Luigi Basini, in his study of guilds and markets in four Northern Italian cities, Parma and Piacenza and Modena and Reggio Emilia, in two neighbouring duchies, Farnese and d'Este respectively, describes some of these restrictive activities. In Parma, for instance, the guilds promoted regulations that closed the markets to outsiders. Silk manufacture and trade were so tightly controlled that even as late as 1746, when the much of the rest of Italy had gone to large-scale water-powered machinery, in Parma there was only one large *Molino dell' Acqua*.<sup>27</sup> Spinning by mill rather than by hand was still not universal. In Reggio Emilia attempts to set up water mills to spin linen, hemp or wool were still failing as late as the early 1800's despite subsidies.<sup>28</sup> This may not have been only due to guilds' opposition; there was also the matter of the French invasion.

Of course, the question of 'progress,' or the inhibiting of it, is very much laden with preconceived values and positions taken to advance agendas. 'Progress' becomes a more indeterminate quantity when we move away from the sort of retro-Whiggish

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<sup>26</sup> Paolo Guenzi and Paolo Massa, "Introduction" in Guenzi *et al.*, *Dynamics*, 3 and 10-11.

<sup>27</sup> Gian Luigi Basini, "New Entrepreneurial Demands and Economic Organization in Two Northern Italian Cities in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries." in Guenzi, *et al.* *Dynamics*, 185 *fn.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 180 *fn.*

viewpoint that equates it with modernism. As we shall discuss later, one of the tendencies observable throughout the period was the consolidation of small master-owned shops into larger enterprises, under the direction of merchants, some of whom, indeed had been shop masters themselves. In the case discussed by Belfanti, of the arms industry in the Brescia region, although the craft masters and guilds resisted, this development ended with the destruction of their industry.<sup>29</sup>

“Progress” would seem to be a nebulous value, and before leaving the topic of guilds, we should take note of Jean Gimpel’s remark that guilds had a tendency to evolve away from their origins as working-mens’ organizations. What many developed into were syndicates of bosses, who claimed and enforced monopolies on their trades, with their own courts and police, that “effectively enslaved the majority of textile workers.” The workers, in turn formed an early proletariat, alienated from the product of their labour,<sup>30</sup> the twenty-six stages of which they performed in isolation.<sup>31</sup> Rather than idealized craftwork, the process as described seems to resemble a geographically distributed production line.

The span of time encompassed by the twenty-one inventories in our study, one hundred and fifty seven years from 1582 to 1739, can be broken down into three

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<sup>29</sup> Carlo Marco Belfanti, “A Chain of Skills: The Production Cycle of Firearms Manufacture in the Brescia Area from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries” in Guenzi *et al.* Dynamics, 266-283.

<sup>30</sup> Jean Gimpel, The Medieval Machine: The Industrial Revolution of the Middle Ages (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1977), 104-106 and 110.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 99

subperiods. The first, from 1582 to 1631, includes five inventories; the second, from 1654 to 1676, nine inventories; and the third, from 1683 to 1739, seven. The inventories were compiled to fulfil a variety of purposes. Some were post-mortem inventories to determine the values and types of legacy goods, prior to distribution among family members. Some formalized the formation of a partnership, and at least one documented the dissolution of a company, ten years after its formation. One was simply the acknowledgment of a debt owed by a priest to a mercer. Most of them listed the goods in the shops by types, giving the values per unit of the good and the totals, but there was variation in formatting. In at least one instance the document amounted to a simple list, giving quantities but almost no values. In others the totals were not systematically annotated, and arithmetical operations had to be formatted into the spreadsheets to confirm the totals. In at least one case, the handwriting of the original varied sufficiently that it was apparent that more than one notary had worked on its preparation. One thing this indicates is the willingness of the person or company commissioning the document to pay for a more elaborate preparation. So we will see as we go along that there is a rough correspondence between the quality of the document and the general prosperity of the commissioning party. In some cases the inventories included real estate: houses, sometimes more than one, occupied by family members or rented, including or not including work and retail space; areas of land, either attached to houses or under cultivation; work and storage sheds, sometimes with grain stores; courtyards, with flooring and roofing specified.

In analyzing the twenty-one inventories, we have classified all the entries into

eighteen categories, including shop equipment and cost of making of some items. These were entered into a master spreadsheet, which is more than 1800 line-items deep, with currency columns for each inventory. Some of these categories only show up in a very few documents, others are widely distributed. The numbers of line-items devoted to each of these types of commodities is very informative. In the Made Cloths, section, including Silk, there were 1,165 lines. Lace: 693 lines. Braids, Ribbons and Cords: 256 lines. Household Furnishings: 98 lines. Silk Thread and Fibre: 94 lines. Buttons, etc: 83 lines.. Personal Items: 68 lines. Thread and Yarn: 54 lines. Embroidery: 27 lines. Fringe and Trim: 25 lines. Precious Metals and Valuables, including precious metals, precious and semi-precious stones, etc, there were 16 lines. Raw Materials: 14 lines. Arms and Armour: 11 lines, Bullion Thread: 3 lines. Selvedge: 1 line. Besides made and raw materials, Shop Equipment: took up 69 lines and Production Costs: 7 lines.

Shop equipment is a mixed category, some items in use in the shops, but others listed as new merchandise, for sale. Household furnishings are also mixed; mostly the possessions of the mercer's families, but sometimes also clearly merchandise. The arms and armour category includes only personal possessions of the shopkeepers who were wealthy enough to be members of the urban militia under ducal control.

Beyond those qualifications, three things are immediately apparent. Firstly, the predominant items are in the categories of Made Cloths and Lace, with 1,858 lines between them, with Braids, Ribbons and Cords coming third at 256. These are clearly the mainstays of the Mercer's trade. The other thing that falls out of the list is that haberdashery and ironmongery have a place in this trade. Hard guild divisions are clearly

things of the past or of larger places. The third thing to note is the items for thread and yarn, silk thread and bullion thread, and the other raw materials, including metals and valuta. These were on hand to be made into finished products directly by the mercer, or to be distributed to other producers, either by sale or on the putting-out method.

The mercers did not only deal in local products. Local, of course, really meant from within the city, or the surrounding *contado*, or as far as Piacenza, the other city in the Farnese duchy. Everything else was considered ‘foreign’. This then accessed a market of probably not more than 300,000 people. Their goods were widely sourced however, and although there is little indication of it, except perhaps in the 18<sup>th</sup> century documents, some of their production was being widely exported. They were at the cusp of world-wide trends in finance, trade, and even politics until about 1620 at least. The goods that were being carried to their shops in Northern Italy from India, China, and Persia were prompting counterflows of silver and gold to the East. Silver acquired from the mines of Bohemia or Bolivia was moving through Europe by various pathways to fill the “insatiable thirst for silver” of the Extreme Orient.<sup>32</sup> The Genoese, even after suffering four bankruptcies of the Spanish crown, to whom, between 1595 and 1647 they were the bankers, were still shipping fifty tonnes of silver per annum in trade to the Orient via the Mediterranean.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> E. Braudel and F. C. Spooner, “Les métaux monétaires et l’économie du XVIème siècle,” in Relazioni del X Congresso Internazionale di Scienze Storiche, vol. 4 (1955), 236.

<sup>33</sup> Farouk Tabak, The Waning of the Mediterranean 1550-1870: A Geohistorical Approach (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 2008), 58.

In some of our inventories the notaries have not recorded complete values. Sometimes they have only given totals for the lines but not the item values. This is inconvenient because it requires us to back-compute, but that is not critical. In other cases, the total values have also not been given. These are post-mortem cases where there is to be a direct transfer from the deceased to undisputed heirs. The lack of valuations may have been because there would have been no dispute about the values as there would be no unclarity about the succession. These inventories give us a small insight into what Paolo Malanima has characterized as one of three types of the circulation of goods. These are non-monetary circulation, local circulation and international circulation. The non-monetary would in turn be of two types, familial and matrimonial. As there are often no records detailing these types of transfers of property, they are consequently difficult to study. In the cases of these inventories of goods and property that is transferred within a family, we may have a glimpse into these aspects of the circulation of goods that are otherwise removed from the regular commercial records.<sup>34</sup>

TECHNICAL MATTERS TO KEEP IN MIND:

MEASURES AND MONEY AND TERMINOLOGY

Certain problems arose on first looking into Parma's mercers. Among these were simple questions of language, units of measure and the whole field of units of exchange,

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<sup>34</sup> Paolo Malanima, "Types de circulation textile d' Ancien Régime: L'Exemple Toscan (XVIIe et XVIIIe Siècles)," in Échanges et cultures textiles dans l'Europe pré-industrielle: Actes du Colloque de Rouen 17-19 mai (1993), 215-217.

that is, what was used as money. Indeed, that led directly to considerations of what was money, where did it come from and how did it evolve, and why are these matters simultaneously familiar and obscure? The units of measurement used, although they seem to belong to a familiar schema, display subtleties and variations that require a closer scrutiny. Both of these fields have been treated with in separate sections.

### **Parman Units of Measurement.**

Unlike England which had established a uniformity of units of measurement from at least as early as the 1239 recension of Magna Carta,<sup>35</sup> or France, which had done so somewhat later, Italy, at this period still divided among many individual jurisdictions, did not have any degree of standardisation whatsoever, beyond some concordance among the names of measures. R. E. Zupko's Italian Weights and Measures From the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century<sup>36</sup> laid out the differential standards of each type of measure. We have extracted the Parman figures from his work. The units listed here as "in Parma" are those that Zupko included as having an official standard in Parma. Others that would be relevant were of a traditional usage, or were generally used in the Emilian district but had not been given a standard designation in Parma. Many of these occurred in the

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<sup>35</sup> Nicholas, Vincent, "Magna Carta Translation" In M. Gambino: What Does the Magna Carta Really Say? Smithsonian Magazine March 2012. Paragraph 25 specifies uniform weights and measures. Online at: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/document-deep-dive-what-does-the-magna-carta-really-say-166954663/> Last modified May 2012.

<sup>36</sup> R.E. Zupko, Italian Weights and Measures Italian Weights and Measures From the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century. (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1981).

inventories and were first located in dictionaries, but did not occur in Zupko or did not have specifically Parman or Emilian usage. These cases will be indicated by “in Emilia” or “in *other*”, or, if not found in Zupko, that will be noted. We should note that Piacenza, the other half of the Farnese state in Emilia- Romagna, had its own standards of all these measures as well as its own currency, with the same names but different values.

One unit not included in Zupko, which turns up in the Emprini-Arnod inventory, is the *alla*, which seems to be the Italian equivalent of the *ell*, a common measurement of length in northern Europe, known by many variations of the name, such as *eaune* in France. The exact measurement is also variable from location to location, even within countries. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines it as “a former measure of length used mainly for textiles, normally 45 inches in England and 37 inches in Scotland ... the measure was orig(inally) linked to the length of the human arm or forearm<sup>37</sup>.” In Vienna, .779 metres.<sup>38</sup>

E. A. Kennelly, a professor of engineering at Harvard, in 1924-5 examined the persistence of pre-metric units in Europe. By that time, it was already difficult to find examples of the old standards, so completely had they been supplanted or absorbed by the metric system. He lists the *Ell* under its various names in many countries, in most cases already applied to a metricized unit of convenience. At one point, almost in passing, he

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<sup>37</sup>J. Pearsall, ed. Concise Oxford Dictionary, Tenth Edition (Oxford: 1999)

<sup>38</sup>D. Damieri, A. Lodovisi, and G. Luppi, La Bona Opinione: Cultura scienza e misure negli stati estensi, 1598-1860 (Modena: Museo della Bilancia, 1997) 178.

does mention a ‘Franco-Italian Ell’ of 114 centimetres.<sup>39</sup> As the Emprini-Arnod inventory indicates a strong French influence, including cash totals specified as being in French money, this was likely the unit in question. Similarly, the goods listed as being counted in feet, ‘*piedi*’ might have been in the ‘old French foot’ which Kennelly gives as 32.48 cm, about 6.5 % longer than the English foot.<sup>40</sup>

Since Zupko and Kennelly, some further work was published by researchers working specifically in Italian measures. Jean-Claude Hocquet remarks that the consensus, almost universal, on measures of length, time and weight are very recent. Before they were instituted, many daily activities, and assurances of quantities and prices in commerce, were not to be taken for granted. The old systems varied from location to location and were inherited from the feudal regimes, which fractionated Italy. Often there would be different measures for different applications, although having the same name, as for example, there was one *braccio* for merchandise, and another for wood used in building, and a square *braccio* for land survey.<sup>41</sup>

Hocquet also discusses a theory put forward by the Malavasi brothers that the original measure was the *pertica*, since, as the Modenese mercantile *braccio*, 0.633 metre equals 6/5ths of the lumber *braccio*, 0. 523 m., these units could be obtained by divisions, of the *piede* or foot into the *pertica*. Hocquet dismisses this theory as fanciful, to put it

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<sup>39</sup> E.A. Kennelly, Vestiges of Pre-Metric Weights and Measures Persisting in Metric System Europe: 1926-1927 (New York: MacMillan, 1928) 32.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>41</sup> Jean-Claude Hocquet, “Pesi e misure nell’economia reale” In Damieri *et al.* La Bona Opinione, 177- 178.

mildly. To him, the basic unit is the *miglio*, or mile of a thousand paces of two steps of 2.5 feet, which is equal to 500 *pertiche*. The common *braccio* then is half of that, or 2.5 feet. The lumber *braccio* is derived from 1/3000 *miglio*. His argument is bolstered by the tables he provides of different regional measures. Parma, our focus, also has two *braccia*, with about the same relation between them as the Modenese.<sup>42</sup> Each of these feet is divided into 12 *oncie*, or inches.

Before leaving Hocquet, it is worth summarizing his thoughts on the utility of standardization. Standardized measures, even within a fairly small region, allow control of quality and quantities in commerce, and also, from the point of view of the administration, provide easily applied tables of taxation and price control. Advancing his argument, Hocquet notes that the Duke of Ferrara, Ercole II d'Este (1534 -1559) appointed a commissioner, Tommasino Lancillotti, to establish standards for commercial measures, which he did by translating all of the measures of volume into weights.<sup>43</sup> Unfortunately, Hocquet did not mention exactly when this appointment happened.

Banzola, in his article Le antiche misure parmigiane e l'introduzione del sistema metrica decimale negli Stati Parmensi traces the origins of the measures back into deep antiquity. Quoting L. Pignorini, he observes that the ancient measures were based on a unit of about 30 cm, which continued as the Roman foot of 0.296 m. which may have

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 179.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 182-184.

been based on the Athenian foot as laid down by Solon.<sup>44</sup> A *pertica* of 12 feet was authorized in Parma in 848.<sup>45</sup> Other units that we have found in our analysis of inventories include: the *moggio*: from the Roman *Modius*, a measure for grain, the *staio*, from *Sestarius* or *sestario*, 1/16 *moggio*, as measure of volume, and the *tabola*, *tavola* or *mina*, 1/32 *moggio* as measure of volume.<sup>46</sup> In Parma, in fact, there were three *braccia*: for wood and walls, 0.2954 m, for silk, the same, 0.2954 m, and for other cloths, the *braccio lungo* of 0.63950 m.<sup>47</sup>

Parman measures were organized in a consistent and rational system of twelfths. The *staio* subdivided into 12 *tavole*; the *tavola* subdivided into 12 *piede*; the *piede* subdivided into 12 *oncie*; the *oncia* subdivided into 12 *punti* and the *punto* subdivided into 12 *atomi*. The whole system was standardized to a *pertica* in iron bars on the cathedral wall.<sup>48</sup> The *braccio* as two *pie di* is first mentioned in 1228. The Parman pound (*libbra*) was very close to the Roman pound, at 0.32745 kg versus 0.32800 kg. The system was parallel in that each pound is 12 ounces (*oncia*), each ounce is 12 *denarii* and each *denaro* is 12 scruples.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> L. Pignorini, quoted in Vincenzo Banzola, “Le antiche misure parmigiane e l’introduzione del sistema metrica decimale negli Stati Parmensi” Archivio Storico per le Province Parmense Ser. 4 no.18 (1996) 139.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 141-142.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 140.

The system of twelves appears to be parallel to the monetary structure of twelve *denarii* or pennies to the *soldo* or shilling, and both cases have the feature of making easy computation by fractions in a world of Roman numerals, where decimal calculation was not as intuitive as it is today. Twelve divides easily into halves, thirds, quarters and sixths, simplifying precise estimations of dividends and multiples. However, the appearance may be deceptive. As noted in the chapter on money, the system of twelve pence to the shilling has its origins in the bimetallic ratio, the proportional value of gold to silver, which had librated about 12:1 since pre-Roman times.<sup>50</sup> With that ratio a coin or ingot of a set weight of gold would be valued at twelve times an equal weight of silver. Although the system of weights, pounds to ounces seems to continue the parallelism of pounds to shillings, in fact the shilling or *soldo* was originally set at one twentieth of a pound or *libra* of silver.<sup>51</sup> This relationship was preserved in the denomination of English money as ‘pounds sterling’. The parallelism thus appears to be illusory or coincidental.

Official balances for the standardization of weights were established in Parma since 1493.<sup>52</sup> This was likely the standard practice in mercantile cities across Europe. Certainly in London, which did extensive trade with Italy, large and small ‘beams,’ that is stalyards, or *stadera*, were municipal utilities from early times.<sup>53</sup> The small beam, or ‘tron’ established in Edward I's reign, which was for weighing of small quantities of

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<sup>50</sup> Pierre Vilar, Or et monnaie dans l'histoire (Paris: F. Flammarion, 1974) 31.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>52</sup> Banzola, “Le antiche,” 145.

<sup>53</sup> Sutton, Mercery of London, 70.

high value goods, such as silks and fustians, was often supervised by a retired mercer as a sinecure.<sup>54</sup> This shows one of the functions of the guilds in securing the welfare of their members.

Damieri, Lodovisi and Luppi included in their work La Bona Opinione a chart of measures used in the Este duchy, essentially Modena, Reggio Emilia, and surrounding area, just next door to Parma. Where these were at odds with the Parman, we have entered them in the listing of measures below.<sup>55</sup> Some other dissenting values were found later on in their work and have also been appended to the list. The variations in measures were in many cases endemic, as the various standards had grown up not only independently in each jurisdiction, but in many cases in each trade, without consultation with each other.

The French-originated metric system was imposed during the Napoleonic regime in 1801, with a list of the equivalents in the old names published in Lombardy in 1803, but in 1820 the old system was re-established. Interest in re-establishing the metric system arose in the 1850's and it was officially restored following Unification in 1863.<sup>56</sup> The comparative inefficiencies of the old system compared to the new must have been so patent as to override nationalistic sentiment. The extinction of the old units has been so complete, that of several Italian dictionaries available here, only the Zingarelli allows the priority of the word '*alla*' as (my translation) 'an old unit of measure, about two *braccia*,

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>55</sup> Damieri *et al.*, La Bona Opinione, 64-65.

<sup>56</sup> Banzola, Le antiche, 159-167.

see the English *ell* or French *eaune*.<sup>57</sup>

Unattributed measures were found in various dictionaries. Needless to say, not all entries from Zupko, Kenneally, or Banzola have been entered here. The ones that have been are those that have seemed to have some relevance either to the specificities of the inventories or to understanding the evolution of the system as found in Italy and particularly Parma and her trading partners. Among those trading partners, besides France, discussed already, were Ferrara, Venice and Genoa. In some inventories we had to make conversions from one system to another to arrive at equivalences. Luca Molà, in The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice gives some measures for Venice, noting that a bale (*balla*) of raw silk had an average weight of 250 lb, (whether Venetian or English pounds not specified) and that the *braccio* for silk was shorter than for wool.<sup>58</sup> Molà notes that by Genoese measure a standard bolt of cloth measured 40 *braccia*. He also gives us useful indicators of the weight of silk fabric, such that a *braccio* weighed about 4.5 oz of silk and a bolt took about 15 lb. of silk.<sup>59</sup> As silk fabric, and even made garments are often valued in the inventories according to their weights, this is useful information in establishing values. Similarly, Guido Guerzoni, in The social world of price formation: prices and consumption in sixteenth century Ferrara gives us the dimensions of the *braccio* for silk and cloth fabrics there as: for silk 0.634358 m. and for

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<sup>56</sup> N. Zanichelli, ed. Vocabulario della Lingua Italiano Compilato da Nicola Zingarelli (Milano 1967), 38.

<sup>58</sup> Luca Molà, The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University, 2000) 60.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 266.

other cloths 0.673606 m.<sup>60</sup> He also gives us the measures for cereals and pulses, but we will not find instances of these traded outside Parma in our inventories.

To sum up, the entire sphere of measures and dimensions was one that was far outside the daily experience of someone raised and educated later than the middle twentieth century, not only because the units are strange but also because of the assumptions of universal uniformity implicit in the metric or even in the British/US traditional systems. That moneys need to be calculated for their exchange rates is still a given, but that basic units of measurement such as pounds and feet needed similar calculation in the daily activities of small businessmen such as our mercers requires a shift in consciousness. Such a shift is essential to understanding of the subject matter as these inventories lay it out before us.

### **List of Units**

*Alla, eaune, ell*: see remarks above.

*Biolca*: area measure, in Parma 0.308 ha.<sup>61</sup> This was generally the area of land a peasant could plow with two oxen in one day.<sup>62</sup>

*Braccio*: measure of length, originally the length of two arms, between middle finger

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<sup>60</sup> Guido Guerzoni, "The social world of price formation: prices and consumption in sixteenth century Ferrara" in O'Malley and Welch The Material Renaissance, 102 *fn* 1.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>62</sup> Although the *Biolca*, a measure of plowland, would seem extraneous to our mercers' affairs, in fact one of the inventories, the Montauti 1608, contains a notation for real estate, including 23 *biolche* of land 'by true measure.'

tips, in Parma. 0.545 m, “for wood and walls” equal to 12 *oncie*.<sup>63</sup> “An arm’s length, a yard (about 2/3 of an English yard)<sup>64</sup> For mercantile uses .6931m.<sup>65</sup> For cloth, in Parma .640 m.<sup>66</sup> Note the remarks from Banzola above.

*Brenta*: a wine keg. In Parma, 0.717 hl.<sup>67</sup> 75 *boccali*. 36 pints.<sup>68</sup>

*Carro*: a wagonload, in Parma, for hay 11.666 cu m.<sup>69</sup> or 6.56 ql, and for lumber 4.63<sup>3</sup>.<sup>70</sup>

*Denaro*: this is both a unit of currency and of weight. It derives from the ancient Roman coin the *denarius*, or penny, and is also a pennyweight, made up of 24 *grani*. In Parma, the weight was 1.144g.<sup>71</sup>

*Denier*: In this case, a measure of fineness of fabric particularly silk; equal to weight in grams of 9000 metres of the yarn.

*Libbra*: a pound, in Italy usually 12 *oncie*, like the Roman pound. In Parma, 0.328 kg.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Zupko, Italian Weights and Measures, 41.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>65</sup> Damieri *et. al.* La Bona Opinione, 64-65.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 178.

<sup>66</sup> Zupko, Italian Weights and Measures, 50 The *brenta* also appears in inventories, as the sizing of barrels in various household lists, including the Montauti 1608 and the Rubianni, as does *carro*.

<sup>68</sup> Damieri *et al.*, La Bona Opinione, 64-65.

<sup>69</sup> Zupko, Italian Weights and Measures, 86.

<sup>70</sup> Damieri *loc. cit.*

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 105-7.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 129-130.

*Migliaio*: one thousand of any item.<sup>73</sup>

*Oncia*: a general measure, equal to 1/12 of some unit such as the *piede* or *libbra*. In Parma, as a measure of length, 0.0454m, equal to 12 *punti*; as a measure of weight, 0.0273 kg, equal to 24 *denari* or 8 *dramme*.<sup>74</sup>

*Passo*: the Cambridge Italian English Dictionary gives this as “a short fathom, about 5 feet”<sup>75</sup> Five feet was the old Roman army pace or *passus*, hence the name. <sup>76</sup>

*Peso*: a unit of weight, 25 lbs. In Parma 8.2 kg. <sup>77</sup>

*Pertica*: a ‘perch’, measure of length. In Parma, 3.253 m. Equal to 6 *braccia da legno*.<sup>78</sup>

*Pezzo*: A measure of cloth, In Vicopisano 4.669m, in Messina 16.904 to 25.356 m. A bolt.<sup>79</sup>

*Piede*: a foot. 40% of a *braccio*. <sup>80</sup>

*Pinta*: a pint. In Parma 1.991 l.<sup>81</sup>

*Scrupulo*: a weight, often synonymous with the *denaro*, consisting of 24 grani, equal to

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 174 and 176.

<sup>75</sup> Cambridge Italian-English Dictionary.

<sup>76</sup> Philip Matyszak, Ancient Rome on Five Denarii a Day (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 2007), 87.

<sup>77</sup> Damieri *et al.*, *loc. cit.*

<sup>78</sup> Zupko, Italian Weights and Measures, 190.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 194.

<sup>80</sup> Hocquet, “Pesi e measure” 178-9.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 202.

1/3 *dramma* or 1/24 *uncia*. At Parma 1.139 g. <sup>82</sup>

*Staro*: measure of area. In Parma 0.051 ha, equal to 12 *tavole* or 1/6 *biolca*. <sup>83</sup>

*Tavola*: Table, slab, plank. Area measure. In Parma 0.428 a. equal to 4 sq. *pertiche*. <sup>84</sup>

We can observe here, as in other areas, the persistence of the system of twelfths in the scales of measurements, the easiest system for multiplying and dividing before the Indo-Arabic numeral system privileged decimal arithmetic.

### Money

As well as encountering the problems of language and measures, on first opening the inventories we face issues of money in its varieties and structures. No examination of mercantile or social issues can be complete without consideration of money. Money is not only cash, it is also an indicator or sign of other, more obscure and complex aspects of society. Money's relationship with the rest of the economy is reciprocal, both affecting and being affected.<sup>85</sup> It has a number of functions: besides easing trade as a medium of exchange, and serving as a reserve of value, money has a nominal value, as a unit of account.

Vilar notes that in France for many centuries all accounts were rendered in *livres* although no such coin had yet been minted. The shilling and pound for long were money

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<sup>82</sup> Zupko, Italian Weights and Measures, 254.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 279.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 284.

<sup>85</sup> Marc Bloch, quoted in Vilar, Or et monnaie, 20.

of account only, they were not minted but were only numerical expressions, used to facilitate accounting.<sup>86</sup> Simply put, when a bookkeeper had piled up a large number of coins of a certain value, it was easier to note these as units of the next largest denomination. Specialized accounting skills, including published tables were needed, especially as many coins were not marked with either weight or value.<sup>87</sup> A chequered table, or *scacchiere*, and tablets ruled in squares were used for placing counters for calculations. *Manuali di Mercantori (sic)* were published handbooks of mathematical tables.<sup>88</sup>

At certain times in Europe gold coinage from Constantinople and Egypt was used as money of account, even when payments were actually made in kind, in horses, foodstuffs, dried fish and such like.<sup>89</sup> Money of account was the money of purchase and contracts and accounting and existed mostly on paper.<sup>90</sup> Actual coins were minted in gold and silver, in *lire, soldi and denarii* denominations.<sup>91</sup> Vilar points out that monetary problems arise when the various functions of money are confused.<sup>92</sup> The issue of money becomes even more notional if we take into account Marcel Mauss's animadversions,

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<sup>86</sup> Vilar, Or et monnaie, 24.

<sup>87</sup> Evelyn Welch, "Making Money: pricing and payments in Renaissance Italy" in O'Malley and Welch, Material Renaissance, 72.

<sup>88</sup> Saponi, The Italian Merchant, 36.

<sup>89</sup> Vilar, Or et monnaie, 41.

<sup>90</sup> Braudel and Spooner, "Les métaux," 255.

<sup>91</sup> O'Malley and Welch, The Material Renaissance, xx.

<sup>92</sup> Vilar, Or et monnaie, 26.

following Simard, that money can have a rôle as fetish or divinity, that barter systems are not reduced to simple economic calculations, and that two societies can have completely different concepts of money.<sup>93</sup>

From all this it follows that in considering the commerce of Early Modern Italy, and its relations with the wider world, we cannot blithely assume that we understand money as it was understood at that time, or that our 21<sup>st</sup> century concepts jibe closely with the instinctual concepts of our 17<sup>th</sup> century Parman mercers. It furthers our understanding to look into the whole question both more deeply and more broadly.

At many points in our inventories we see this ‘money of account’ mechanism at work. The notaries will have given the price of an item in *soldi*, which when multiplied by the quantity would give a price in *lire*, but that final total is still in *soldi*, or even in some cases, the price was given in *soldi*, but the final line total was in *soldi*, even though the total would have come to multiple *lire*. Without the concept of money of account as distinguished from money of exchange, this would be baffling behaviour on their part.

Vilar also points out that money, besides having a role as the medium of exchange and payment, is also the measure of value. Even items that are not monetarized, or are exchanged by barter or other non-monetary agreement, are still conceptualized as having a monetary equivalency. Further, money serves as a reserve of value, it signifies wealth not in circulation but held back.<sup>94</sup> As commerce and finance developed from the late 13<sup>th</sup> century onward, for instance, gold served to symbolize Italian monetary wisdom, as well

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<sup>93</sup> Marcel Mauss, quoted in Vilar Or et monnaie, 28.

<sup>94</sup> Vilar, Or et monnaie, 22-23.

as facilitating the flow of commerce.<sup>95</sup>

Not only is money as a feature of society very old, the LSD structure, in the ratio of 1:20:12, familiar to those educated before Britain went decimal, is also very old, and was found broadly in Europe, not only in Great Britain, but particularly in the Italian and French instances found in these examples. This structure, of Pounds, Shillings and Pence, to use the more Germanic terminology, or *Lire, Soldi* and *Denari* in Italian, goes back to Roman antecedents.

German and other barbarian successors tried to preserve the Roman gold *aureus* in circulation.<sup>96</sup> As no new gold was available to be minted, silver coinage was substituted by the Carolingians, Pepin and Charlemagne, in their attempts at reform. They remodeled the monetary system based on a penny of 2 grams of pure silver (gr. ag.) Twelve of these pennies (12 *d*) constituted one *solidus* or shilling and 20 *solidi* one *livre* or pound. As 240 pennies would weigh about 480 gr. ag, this closely matched the new pound of about 491 grams.<sup>97</sup> This defined the LSD/ pounds shilling pence/ *lire, soldi, denarii* structure that pervaded Europe till modern times and that we find throughout our Parman documents.

Gold is worthy of a few lines on its own account, and a few more in regard to its relationship with silver. A constant factor in the evolution of gold's position was simply that there was little to none of it available from European sources. The shortage was

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<sup>95</sup> Sapori, The Italian Merchant, 20.

<sup>96</sup> Pirenne, Economic and Social, 2.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 2-5 and 107-8.

exacerbated by, among other things, export to the East for luxuries such as silk and pepper.<sup>98</sup> As trade was limited, the need for money of exchange was also limited, and so gold was not minted in Europe from the 9th through 13th centuries, but some coins minted in Byzantium or Egypt, circulated and were used as money of account.<sup>99</sup>

Italian states began minting gold coins in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The florin or *fiorino d'oro*, was minted in Florence in 1252, stamped with a lily, the symbol of Florence, and saw widespread circulation. Its original value of one *lira* increased by 1500 to 7 *lire* due to an increase in the exchange rate in favour of gold which had reached as high as 1:13 or 1:14 by the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The Florentine *ducato* started at about £7 s.5 and stabilized at £7.<sup>100</sup> Genoa and Venice followed Florence's example in minting their own ducats. The Venetian ducat of 31/2 grams of gold was equal in value to the silver pound, and so the pound became real money, not just an accounting term. The first gold denier north of the Alps, the *gros tournois*, (*grossus denarius Turonensis*), struck by Louis IX became international currency<sup>101</sup> and in some of our 18<sup>th</sup> century documents, the *livre tournois*, *lira turonesi*, is the explicit unit of account. The enlargement of the range of currencies seems to have been both a product of the expansion of international trade and an enabling factor in further expansion. As we proceed through the period of our

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<sup>98</sup> Vilar, Or et monnaie, 39.

<sup>99</sup> Pirenne, *loc. cit.*

<sup>100</sup> Jean Boutier, "Les <<Notizie Diverse>> de Niccolò Gondi (1652-1720): À propos de la mémoire et des stratégies familiales d'un noble florentin" in MEFRIM 98 (1986-2), 1097.

<sup>101</sup> Pirenne, *loc. cit.*

inventories, we find international trade increasing.

The bimetallic ratio, or the relative values of gold and silver, always fluctuated, but had generally been wobbling around 12:1 since pre-Roman times.<sup>102</sup> The basic structure of European money was founded upon it. Twelve silver pennies had value equivalent value to a gold *sou* which weighed the same as a penny. A pound of silver was worth 20 *sous*. This structure was in place from Carolingian times, even when the *sou*, *soldo*, shilling and *livre*, *lira*, pound were still only money of account.<sup>103</sup> The basic numerics were retained up to the point when Britain went decimal in the 20th century.

When the bimetallic ratio deviated very much in one direction or the other the possibility of profit inspired major historical movements. In the early 1300's, when the ratio was at 13:1 or 14:1 Genoa, which needed gold for production of wire and jewellery as well as for coin, financed Portuguese expeditions down the coast of Africa, in an attempt to go behind the gold caravans crossing the Sahara.<sup>104</sup> Later, Portugal's large sailing ships, the *caravelles*, pursued *tiberi*, the powdered gold of rivers, all the way around Africa and on to the Far East.<sup>105</sup> When they encountered the Chinese and Japanese economies, where the bimetallic ratios were as low as 5:1 in China or 11:1 in Japan they began trading silver heavily for gold and other products such as fabrics and

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<sup>102</sup> Vilar, *Or et monnaie*, 31 -32.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 57-59.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 61-69.

spices.<sup>106</sup>

A major implication of this flow in coined metal for the present study is to indicate the volume of trade with the East, however defined. Throughout our study of the inventories we find items referring to products that are clearly not of European origins, such as Chinese and Indian printed cottons. Attempts were made to duplicate the Indian cottons as early as 1619, but the Indian products were recognized by the Europeans to be superior.<sup>107</sup>

This all comes as a revelation to one raised in a primarily Eurocentric milieu. Although the basics of the great voyages of discovery are part of the atmosphere, so to speak, the fact that the trade patterns with the East did not originate with these adventures, that the explorations were primarily motivated by the search for one particular commodity, gold, not just by an inchoate urge to explore, and happened incrementally, not in a few great efforts, and that there was a back-story concerned with such an arcane concept as the bi-metallic ratio, all come as a revelation of deeper currents operating behind such headline events as the voyages of Diaz, Da Gama and ultimately Columbus. Our mercers, dealing as they did in goods from as far away as China and India, were enmeshed in these intercontinental currents.

Another theme that shows up throughout this period is that of inflation. We have observed the silver penny of the Carolingian period decay from being the main money of

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>107</sup> Beverley Lemire, and Giorgio Riello, "East and West: Textiles and Fashions in Early Modern Europe" Journal of Social History Summer (2008), 888-9.

exchange to being small change; the silver shilling or *soldo* move from money of account to being the main currency; and then replaced by the gold *gros*, first as money of account and then as actual minted coinage. This inflation affected the values of commodities and we should expect to see them varying over time. We would expect the inflationary trend that we have seen working itself out over the previous 600 years, including a quintupling of prices by the 16<sup>th</sup> century to continue. However, the analysis of the prices of goods in our inventories, compared over the time scale, does not bear this out. We shall see prices rise during the middle part of the period, in response to the labour shortages induced by the plague, and then stabilize or even decline in the later part of our period.

### **Terminology**

The problems of terminology occupied a great deal of the time and effort in preparing this study. Many of the terms were technical jargon specific to the mercery trade, and in the dialect of the place and period. No equivalents had been listed into English, and many were obscure even in Italian dictionaries. Because of these lacunae, it was necessary to compile a glossary, which is attached as an appendix. This was performed using a spreadsheet, rather than a word processor program, because of the ease of tabulation that a spreadsheet allows.<sup>108</sup> The glossary, which is now over 1,400 lines long, was compiled from several sources. When a term from an inventory was unknown recourse was made to a number of dictionaries, both bound, from the Killam Library, and

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<sup>108</sup> From long-time familiarity, I used the Lotus 123 ver. 6 for Windows spreadsheet, which has all of the keystroke manoeuvrability of the older versions of Lotus 123 (the first ‘killer app’ for PC’s) combined with the cut- and- paste facility of Windows.

on line from Google Books. In addition, a number of the texts referenced in the course of research included glossaries. As these were Italian to Italian, they required translation in turn. Not all terms made available through these sources were utilized. If a term had not arisen through examination of the inventories, it would not necessarily be entered into the glossary. If all terms from the textual sources had been used, the glossary might be double its current size.

Originally the method of work with the printed dictionaries in the Killam was to take the glossary, sit down with two or three dictionaries and go down the list alphabetically. Later when the list of problematics became shorter, another method evolved, which was to go through only one or two letters, but taking down *all* the dictionaries, except duplicates, and just cover that restricted gamut. This allowed greater concentration on specific quandaries. Even after work with multiple dictionaries, both printed and on-line, there remained some terms that stubbornly resisted clarification. More than that, the fine distinctions made at the time are sometimes hard to discern at this distance. The several terms all meaning ribbon, for example *Tavella*, *tavellone*, (*wide*) *stretti* (narrow), etc, often appear on sequential lines in a given inventory, but are all just rendered as ‘ribbon’ for want of more precise definitions.

Likewise, in one inventory (Zalli 1655) *salia*, *sarza* and *sargia*, all meaning ‘serge’ appear in consecutive lines (except that *sargia* can also mean an overcover on a bed.<sup>109</sup> This may be the same as a bedspread, but the modern word is *copriletto*.) Are

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<sup>109</sup> Paolo Malamina, Il Lusso di Contadini; Consumi e industrie nelle campagne toscane del Sei e Settecento (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1990), 19.

there fine distinctions to be made among varieties of serges? Did they come from disparate sources already labeled, and entered on the inventory by the notary without further inquiry? Would Maestro Zalli have distinguished them? Can we know?

Conversely, the same term can sometimes have several meanings. *Burato*, for instance can mean ‘gauze’, ‘wide-woofed canvas’, or the embroidery that is built on such canvas. Sometimes this only becomes clearer when looking at the prices and quantities. The embroidery will have a much higher unit price than the plain gauze, and while the gauze may be stocked in bolts or pieces of many *braccia*, the finished embroidery would not.

One final remark on terminology and language: the Italian language, like all languages everywhere and always, was in transition. Modern orthodox spellings and orthographies were not yet established. Many spellings of personal and place names did not yet have their finalized forms. The notaries and others spelled things the way they heard them, and sometimes they heard them according to the language as it was spoken in their home locales. Many personal names particularly were spelled in forms that would not be acceptable today. For instance, more than once, we encountered ‘Joanni’ instead of ‘Giovanni.’ Spellings have been modernized to avoid distress.

### **Methodology**

The first problem encountered with these inventories was that they were penned by notaries writing in the early modern Emilian dialect of Northern Italian speech. At this time spelling was not only not standardized, many of the terms used were technical jargon belonging to the mercer’s trade. The notaries themselves were not always totally

conversant with this discourse. In her study of 88 inventories from Rome in the same period, Il Gusto Delle Cose, Renata Ago noted certain anomalies in her documents. She attributed these problems to the fact that the inventories were prepared by notaries, who were not familiar with terms that would have been clear to tailors, for example, and that the same notaries would not have been able to clearly distinguish goods that were part of the household from finished goods or materials intended for production.<sup>110</sup>

These were not only problems with the Italian records. Anne McCants, working on similar documents from Amsterdam, also remarks on the difficulties with handwriting and spellings, which were often inconsistent, and that such valuations as there were could be given to groups of items, rather than singly.<sup>111</sup> Paula Hohti, working in 16<sup>th</sup> century Siena, makes observations, citing Jacqueline Musacchi, on the unreliability of the notaries when assigning values.<sup>112</sup> Françoise Bayard, working on mercers in Lyon and the Beaujolais in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries also raised issues that arise as well in our work. The values given may represent expert estimates, but are they sale prices on the local markets, or the purchase prices, or possibly theoretical prices estimated by the notaries? She saw four obstacles to certainty in the valuations: first was uncertainty about whether fabrics of known prices at different times were in fact identical; second was about

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<sup>110</sup> Renata Ago, Il gusto delle cose: Una storia degli oggetti nella Roma del Seicento (Roma: Donzelli, 2006), 99 and 110-111.

<sup>111</sup> McCants, "After Death Inventories," 15.

<sup>112</sup> Paula Hohti, "The Innkeeper's Goods: the use and acquisition of household property in sixteenth century Siena," in O'Malley and Welch, The Material Renaissance, 243.

equivalence of units, in her documents some fabrics were measured in *eaunes* or ells, others by piece or remnant; thirdly, some fabrics were unvalued if not in the inventory of the deceased; fourthly, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century she found a need to take account of money valuations.<sup>113</sup> We shall also see the questions of exchange rates between different currencies, particularly French *Livres Tournois* and various Italian *Lire*, arise in our later inventories.

Some other problems have also been remarked upon. Ago notes that only property ‘in the strict sense’ is included in her inventories, and that the goods of spouses was not always distinguished from that of the principal, as each spouse often had access to the other’s goods. Similarly, goods of patrimonies was often confused.<sup>114</sup> Both Ago and McCants have remarked on what appears to be endemic biases against women in their appearance in the inventories, in part possibly because they were poorer and notaries would not so often be engaged by them.<sup>115</sup> Gwendolyn Heley, working on probate records from Newcastle-upon-Tyne in Northern England, also considers that some people were just too poor to have their goods inventoried.<sup>116</sup> This does not seem to be as much of an issue for our mercers, as some of the documents were for persons of extremely modest

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<sup>113</sup> Françoise Bayard, “De quelques boutiques de marchandise de tissus à Lyon et en Beaujolais aux XVIIe siècle” in Gavignaud-Fontaine, *et al.*, 442.

<sup>114</sup> Ago, *Il Gusto*, 217.

<sup>115</sup> Ago, *Il Gusto*, 60. McCants, “After Death Inventories,” 10.

<sup>116</sup> Gwendolyn Heley, *The Material Culture of the Tradesmen of Newcastle upon Tyne 1545-1642: The Durham Probate Record Evidence* (Oxford, Eng: Archeopress, 2009), 131.

circumstances. Perhaps Parman notaries worked cheaper?

That these parallel problems can be seen arising in venues as widely spread geographically as Newcastle, Lyon, Amsterdam, Rome and Venice indicates that there was a generalized business culture, working from broadly similar premises and methods, and dealing with problems that were also parallel. The techniques for dealing with these problems would bear a degree of similarity. Thus, by studying the documents from Parma, we can gain an entrance to European-wide commercial culture.

At the period studied here, bookkeeping practices appear to have been in a transitional phase, evolving from the methods used in the Middle Ages toward more modern styles. Armando Saponi notes that even in early days, merchants were obsessive about record keeping. Even when working in Roman numerals, their records could be as accurate as later on in Indo/Arabic notation. Compound interest was being calculated as early as the 13<sup>th</sup> century, as well as the average maturity of sums of several loans falling due at different dates, or “*ragguaglio in un di.*” He remarks that bookkeeping by the method of ‘superposition’ rather than double-entry was as accurate although more labour was required.<sup>117</sup> In fact, double entry bookkeeping had been initiated by the Franciscan Friar Luca Pacioli in his *Summa* of 1497 but clearly was not yet widely utilized.<sup>118</sup> That said, Richard Goldthwaite gives a detailed account of a sophisticated double entry system

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<sup>117</sup> Saponi, *The Italian Merchant*, 30-31.

<sup>118</sup> “The History of Negative Numbers” Leo Rogers, University of Cambridge. Last viewed June 11, 2014.  
<http://nrich.maths.org/5961/index>

in use in Florence in the 1580's and 90's.<sup>119</sup> A concomitant of double-entry, negative numbers, had also been worked on by Fr. Pacioli but the concept was not accepted by mathematicians until the 19<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>120</sup> and we do not see them in our inventories. Many of the inventories, of course, were simple lists of possessions, but those of the large-scale concerns, particularly the later ones, included extensive lists of credits and debits, on top of commercial capital. Here, in a more modern document, we would expect to see the subtraction of the liabilities from the assets, giving a bottom line, but these did not occur.

Our inventories exhibit transitional development over their time scale. The actual entries are in Indo/arabic notations, but the sums are only in single columns, sometimes with page by page subtotals, but not double entry. In some of them, particularly the earlier ones, some of the formal notations, such as dates are in Roman numerals. As they get past the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, we start to see the concept of percentage being used, first written out, then later with the familiar % sign, or an early form of it. In one of the inventories, the notary, or maybe a valuator, is attempting to use decimal calculations, but without a developed notation.<sup>121</sup> The notaries, like the *zavaglii*, often had a civic as well as a private function. In Parma the Governor, the official overseeing the ducal civil administration, posted notaries at the city gates to record all

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<sup>119</sup> Richard A. Goldthwaite, "The Florentine Wool Industry in the Late Sixteenth Century: a Case Study" In Journal of European Economic History, 32, (2003) 530.

<sup>120</sup> Rogers, *loc. cit.* See also: "History of Negative Numbers" Martha K. Smith, University of Texas. Last viewed June 11, 2014.  
<http://www.ma.utexas.edu/users/mks/326K/Negnos.html>

<sup>121</sup> Saponi, The Italian Merchant, 36.

foodstuffs entering the city, as part of a complex effort to control prices and ensure the availability of food.<sup>122</sup>

Spreadsheets were developed for the actual translations of the inventories. In this case the particular capabilities that were privileged were columnisation and sorting. In the inventories, the descriptions of the items were simply written out. The monetary values were loosely columnized, but the values and quantities were simply written into the descriptive lines. In part this was a consequence of the paper stock being plain, with neither lines nor columns ruled. By columnizing the entries, which often required setting up parallel sets of columns both for the actual prices per item, the units, the numbers of units per item, it was possible to use the computational capabilities of the spreadsheet to evaluate the actual prices of the units. As sometimes the notary had omitted some of the steps, giving only the numbers of items and the final prices, treating the material in this way permitted computing the actual unit prices when these may have been concealed.

When the first treatments of the inventories had been done, another spreadsheet was developed, laying out the years of the entries along the X axis and the types of goods on the Y axis, the goal being to generate enough data points to enable graphing changes in prices over the century and a half of the study. In preparing the inventories for transcription into this spreadsheet, it was found to be necessary to go over them again. In some cases the notary had just entered an item as ‘another’ or ‘*do*’ meaning ‘ditto’, when there were repeated items, and these lines had been copied directly. In other cases the

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<sup>122</sup> Evelyn Welch, “Making Money,” 74.

descriptive terms had been entered first. In both these types of entries, the spreadsheet would not be able to sort directly on the item, and so these lines required revising to put the searchable term first in the line. On reviewing the inventories prior to entering them on the master sheet, it was found in the cases of those done earlier in the study that continued practice at reading the original Italian made for different interpretations of the items, and these also needed to be corrected. Some notaries had only entered the total values, and the actual rates had to be computed. In the simpler cases, a simple formula could be entered on the right hand side to compute the values in LSD (*lire, soldi, denarii*)

At the same time, the need to return the inventories to their original order, for example to check for errors had to be anticipated. This can be dealt with by inserting another column in the extreme left, and simply numbering each row successively. This way, when the sort has been done with the item row as the primary key, this number column remains attached to the items. When required, a simple sort, using the number column (column A) as the primary key, will restore the inventory to the original arrangement.

Another problem encountered when entering items on the master sheet arose from the practice of the notaries of treating the whole household as one unit. They seldom specified which room a particular item had been found in. This meant that when entering items, for example, under shop equipment or household furnishings, or as made garments, some guessing was necessary. Generally, furniture that was designated as ‘walnut’ would be put under household, where similar items designated ‘wood’ would go in as shop, and

so on. This may not have been always accurate, but, following the heuristic principle, it permitted getting on with it rather than simply ignoring the entry. Sometimes when the context was clear and production equipment was obviously what it was, the rule could be set aside.

Once the items from the individual inventories were entered on the master sheet, it became apparent that a great deal of compaction was necessary. Each item had been entered pretty much as it appeared on the original inventory. Since there was no consistency in the nomenclature from document to document, let alone from notary to notary, this resulted in a huge worksheet, around 1,800 lines, with sometimes very few entries per line. The next task was to designate differently named items as equivalents so that the prices could be tracked over the century and a half of the study. Again, the sort function in Lotus 123 was used on each of the categories within the sheet: valuta, thread, silk, made fabrics, etc. By designating each sort-range as including the category but extending it horizontally right out to year 1739 and column BV, coherency could be maintained. Right away it became apparent that many of the items in thread' had to be transferred to 'silk.'

One problem in the nomenclature proved insoluble, at least not feasibly soluble. Consistency of translation of many of the product designations would have been desirable, but as there was no absolute consistency in the originals, the final listings fall back on leaving many terms in the original Italian, either because the exact translation could not be determined or because there was no way to make a choice between

competing candidates for the meaning. In these cases, reference to the compiled glossary may clarify the issue, or at least explicate the dimensions of the problem.

Quickly scanning the spreadsheet, one item that jumps out is that there is very little presence of lace before the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, at which point it becomes a major item. Lace became at about that time a socially necessary item of clothing for anyone of any status at all, and remained so for over a century. By the early 18<sup>th</sup> century lace was being replaced by muslin, which was much cheaper and the Italian lace industries collapsed.<sup>123</sup> The industries of Northern France and Flanders also suffered from this change in fashion, although there was some recovery for the Flemish lacemakers.<sup>124</sup> Only a little *passomano* is found in the early part of the study, but lace of all kinds becomes dominant from about 1655, and increasingly heavy after 1661, then drops off again after 1718.

Similarly for ribbon, there are only one or two entries before about 1614, but they grow heavier after 1655/61, and this presence goes on right to 1739. Braids and cords are first mentioned in 1654, and are heaviest in 1655/6. Are these data reflective of changes in fashions over time, of the business plans of the various shops, or both, or some other factors altogether?

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<sup>123</sup> Santina M. Livey, "Lace and Lace-patterned Silks: Some Comparative Illustrations" in Studies in Textile History: In Memory of Harold B. Burnham, ed. Veronika Gervers, (Toronto, ROM, 1977), 186.

<sup>124</sup> Anne Kraatz, tr. Pat Earnshaw, Lace, history and fashion (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), 36-38.

In examining many of the line items from various inventories, there appear several lines with errors in the arithmetic. Some are indeed errors. In some cases, however, a closer look reveals that the apparent error arose from a misinterpretation of the units. Silk, like gold and silver, has been weighed out by the Troy system of a twelve ounce pound, rather than the avoirdupois sixteen ounce pound. When some of these lines were more closely analyzed, the totals worked out correctly if the quantities were converted to ounces, then multiplied by the price in *Lire* and *Soldi*, then divided back to give the final price. In other cases, that method did not work, but taking the price as pounds and fractions of pounds did. In the Bedeschi inventory particularly, there was an inconsistency in the method, such that sequential lines could be confirmed as correct by one or the other of these methods.

In examining the listings of accounts for the various inventories, specifically the lists of creditors and debtors, we see that information about the social classes of the patrons and supporters of the businesses is derivable. These considerations aside, the list of creditors displays features that are interesting in and of themselves. As mentioned, the creditors rank at all levels of Parman society. We assigned letter values to the different classes as follows, in descending order of rank:

F-Feudatories, Top Aristocrats, MandF

CL-Clergy including Nuns

UMC/M-Upper Middle Class: Lower Aristocrats, Rentiers, Lawyers, Officers, etc

UMC/F -Upper Middle Class Women

LMC/M- Lower Middle Class, Master Craftsmen, Merchants, etc, Men

LMC/F- Lower Middle Class, Master Craftsmen, Merchants, etc , Women

LCM-Lower Class Men

LCF-Lower Class Women

With these assignments made, it was possible to sort the spreadsheets on the initial letters, giving numbers of creditors in each category and the aggregate debt per category, as shown, and display the results in tabular format. In addition we have several other Parman documents from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century: the census and tax rolls by trade and parish for 1636, lists of the members of several guilds, including the mercers', furriers', tanners', spinners and weavers and resellers of cloths. Cross-checking these adds nuancing to our evaluations.

### **Synopsis of Historical Trends**

From the late Medieval period through the onset of the 30 Years' War Italy, or at least the North and Centre, was the most advanced economy in Europe. Fortunately for those working in this field, there are extant records of prices, wages and urbanization from about 1300 c.e. onward, a continuity not found elsewhere except in England.<sup>125</sup> Despite not being a unified political entity, Italy as a whole outpaced the economic development of the rest of Europe. The location, between the urbanized areas of the Middle East and Northern and Western Europe provided the basis for developments in

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<sup>125</sup> Paolo Malanima, "The Long Decline of a Leading Economy: GDP in Central and Northern Italy, 1300- 1913" European Revue of Economic History 15, (2010) 190.

agriculture, industry and banking.

Although, after 1600 Northern Europe began to catch up, Italy had accumulated a positive balance that allowed it to gain wealth into the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>126</sup> North and Central Italy, in particular, were highly advanced in the 13<sup>th</sup> and early 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, but their industry and trade declined in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, as it did elsewhere, and then recovered again in the 16<sup>th</sup> and declined once more in the 17<sup>th</sup>. Although there was a slight recovery in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the non- agricultural output in the 1860's was about 20 to 25% lower than in 1420-1440 and the overall Gross Domestic Product declined from a high point at about 1570, so that in 1861, just before the Industrial Revolution, it was 10% lower than in 1310.<sup>127</sup> Our inventories straddle the middle of this long era, but do not extend quite to the time of the Industrial Revolution in the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Many factors influenced these developments, including technological and political events.

<b>Table #1: List of Inventories</b>				
Year	Title	Source	Capital in Lire	Type/ Remarks
1582*	Frangheri/ Manghisti	NDP #2592	6,607	Formation of Partnership

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<sup>126</sup> Richard Goldthwaite, Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy 1300-1600, (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University, 1993) 13-16.

<sup>127</sup> Malanima, The Long Decline, 181, 185-6 and 188. Malanima reaches these conclusions through an analysis of agricultural and non-agricultural product taken as against cycles of population decline and recovery, and urbanisation and de-urbanisation.

<b>Table #1: List of Inventories</b>				
Year	Title	Source	Capital in Lire	Type/ Remarks
1605*	Barozzi	NDP #3625	6,603	Sale of business
1608 *	Montauti	NDP #3290	51,206	Post Mortem? Business & household with real estate
1614 *	Bonifatia	NDP #4862	577	Post Mortem, division of legacy. With Household goods
1631	Rubianni	ADNP #5928	0	Post Mortem, Goods, House- hold & Real Estate
1654	Carduini	NDP #5005	526	Acknowledgement of debt.
1655	Zalli	NDP #5794	10,670	Formation of Partnership. Shop equipment.
1657	Baistrocchi	ADNP #6401	3026	Post Mortem? Shop equipment. household, personal clothing.
1658 *	Riccardi	ADNP #8094	26,545	Post Mortem, business & household.
1659 *	Riccardi	ADNP #6402	93,074	Post Mortem, Sale of business. Accounts only
1661	Corradi	ADNP #6405	23,604	Post Mortem, business, shop equipment.
1664 *	Tirelli	ADNP #9930	3592	Post Mortem, business & household.
1676	Emprini/ Arnod	ADNP #10332	3,909	Winding up business? Sums in French, Bolognese & Parman money. Accounts.
1676	Donelli	ADNP #9152	3,717	Post Mortem. Goods, household & Real Estate
1683	Bedeschi	ADNP #11285	21,316	Post Mortem, business, stock & credits

<b>Table #1: List of Inventories</b>				
Year	Title	Source	Capital in Lire	Type/ Remarks
1695	Cornutti	ASPR f.34	20,872	Formation of partnership. Values in French money.
1705	Cornutti	ASPr i. 53	86,152	Winding up business. Merchandise, shop furniture, cash. Sums in French, Bolognese & Parman money.
1718	Menochii	NDP #112	5,1616	Winding up business. Merchandise.
1719	Zucchi	NDP #112	58,005	Sale of business. Merchandise, accounts, shop furniture.
1728	Zucchi	NDP # 306	12,029	Consignment of goods between brothers. Merchandise.
1739	Zurlini	NDP #175	17,124	Sale of business. Merchandise

List of Abbreviations:

ASPr -*Archivio di Stato di Provincia di Parma* —the State Archives

NDP -*Notai di Parma* — a section within ASPr

ADNP -*Archivio Distrettuale Notarile di Parma* -Archive of the District Notarial Society of Parma

All documents were gathered in the designated archives by Dr. Gregory Hanlon.

Those denoted with an asterisk (\*) were copied by hand; the rest were photographed and provided in JPEG files. The photographed inventories had the advantage of providing a wider variety of peripheral information than the hand-copied ones. For one thing, they included much more of the peripheral documentation that the notaries included as part of

the legal processes, so that the context of the document was enriched. At a more subtle level, the differences in the handwriting often gave some indications of the processes involved in the creation of the documents. Some were of a clearly highly schooled hand others were almost illegible. Some varied, the hand changing in the middle of the document, indicating that there was more than a single official involved in the creation. Some gave the impression of a perfunctory job done one in one take on the cheap, others showed that a team had prepared a higher quality and higher probity instrument for a higher paying client. All of these different levels of information added depth of focus to the analysis.

There was no particular selection protocol in use: the inventories were treated in random fashion as they came, with no preconceptions of what would be derived from them. In this way the dangers of *a priori* impressions contaminating the direction of the work was avoided.

Several trends are apparent as we view the series of inventories divided into these three sub-periods. These inventories are randomly derived from a loosely structured sample. As such, they can be indicative of trends and events, but not strongly demonstrative. One is the continual development of ever- larger financial positions. In the first period there is only one inventory with a final valuation in five figures. Not until 1659, in the second period, do we see an inventory with a final valuation close to, but not quite reaching, six figures. The average of the inventories for the first subperiod is only P£12,998; the average of the nine totals in the second subperiod is P£18,740, half again. The average of the seven totals in the third subperiod comes to P£31,588. This is close to

twice the average of the second subperiod and two and a half that of the first. It includes the largest of all the inventories, the Cornutti 1705, which was winding up with a net worth almost four times its initial capitalization of ten years before. This arc, declining slightly in the first half of the second period, the beginning of which coincides with the aftermath of the great plague of 1630, and growing again into the third, reflects the decline and recovery noted above for the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Another trend was toward involvement in the trade with non-Parman principals. Right from the beginning there was widespread sourcing of goods, but with the Emprini/Arnold inventory at the end of the second period, we see active involvement of entrepreneurs from outside Parma, in that case a Frenchman and a Bolognese. By the time of the Cornutti inventories we actually find the majority of the goods priced in non-Parman currencies. At the same time, an increasing proportion of the goods are imported and are sized in non-Parman units.

Something else that can be seen from this series of inventories concerns the question of the practice of the mercers living in the same premises as their shops. In some of the inventories it is very clear that they did, as many of the items were for household furniture that was clearly not for sale. In the first sub-period, three of the five clearly did. In the second sub-period, neglecting Carduini, who was not a mercer, five of eight showed such indications. In the final sub-period, however, there were no indications of residence in the shop. These were often very large firms with partnerships that would have precluded a single family residing there. The later period also shows no post-mortem inventories, which may compromise the observation about residences and domestic

equipment.

Interestingly, there is a decline in the frequency of lists of credit accounts in the inventories. Three of five in the first sub-period contain such lists, only two of nine in the second do so, and only one of six in the third. We cannot think that they did not give credit, but possibly they had become more efficient at collecting.

Evidence of these mercers engaging in the putting-out trade, that is providing raw materials and equipment to other producers, comes in part from the account lists, and from these we see only one case in the first sub-period, one in the second, but two in the third, although those are both from Cornutti. Further evidence on this point may come from closer examination of the equipment listings.

Another aspect that is developing throughout the period, and that is clear from the inventories, concerns the sourcing of goods, that is, the places of origin of the various materials. The entire range of inventories was surveyed for mentions of place names as the sources of merchandise. In some cases this was straightforward, in others it was necessary to read between the lines. *Indiane*, for example, refers to printed cottons from India, as *chinetti* were cottons from China. Calicoes were also Indian, having been shipped from the port of Kalicut. Although some Indian printed cloths were seen in the Eastern Mediterranean long before, these calicoes and *Indiane* cottons really only arrived in Europe with the opening of the direct sea-routes around Africa.<sup>128</sup> Some confidence can be expressed that these were direct imports from those countries, as techniques for

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<sup>128</sup> H. Wescher, "Cotton and Cotton Trade in the Middle Ages," CIBA Review, 6 (Basle, Switz: 1948), 2359.

imitating them in Europe were not developed during the period. Although there were many efforts to duplicate the Indian prints, they remained major (60-70%) components of imports by the Dutch and English East India Companies through the 1680's. The Indian dyes and mordants were superior to any in Europe, and the problem was not solved as there were neither direct observation of the Indian methods nor books describing them. The solutions, first by William Sherwin in England in 1676 and then finally by Francis Nixon of Drumcondra, Ireland in 1756, succeeded because they independently developed entirely new methods.<sup>129</sup>

Other references are more ambiguous. Cambrics, or *cambraia*, although named for their origin at Cambrai in France, were more standard products, and widely produced. For the most part, however, the inventory references are clear that the goods came *from* the specific spot. Ormessines, highly figured silks, named after the Island of Hormuz in the strait of the same name at the entrance to the Persian Gulf,<sup>130</sup> are accepted as a place reference in the early periods, but by the end of the study some are explicitly being produced in other locales, such as England. Similarly, damasks are listed as being from Syria, when they appear in the early inventories.

Most of the origin references were to specific place names, cities or provinces, so it was necessary to assign these to regions. Very striking differences are apparent when comparing the frequencies of foreign references through the three periods, both in the

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<sup>129</sup> Lemire and Riello, "East and West: Textiles," 893-897 and 900-903.

<sup>130</sup> Cambridge Italian Dictionary, vol.1, 524.

average number of references and in the geographical distributions.<sup>131</sup>

It is clear from these considerations that the mercery trade was evolving in the direction of larger operations, with a diminishing of the correspondences between family and trade, although that certainly continued. Still, we see a larger presence of a larger scale style of operation, owned and managed by individuals who maintained a certain distance from the centre of commercial operations.

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<sup>131</sup> Useful help in identifying some of the Italian places was obtained from the following websites: “Italian Language Study Online” Last viewed March 2013, currently down <http://www.italian-language-study.com/specific-vocabulary/city-names.htm> and “In Italy™ Online” Last viewed June 11, 2014, <http://www.initaly.com/towns/s.htm>

## **Chapter 2: Analysis of the Inventories**

### **First Period 1582–1631:**

#### **The Indian Summer of Italian Manufacturing**

The twenty one inventories in our study range in time from 1585 to 1739. This range has been sub-divided into three periods: 1582 to 1631; 1655 to 1676; and 1686 to 1739. Although apparently not equally distributed in length or density, these periods, cast against trends in Italian, and even European, history and economy display an evocative appositeness. The first period begins as a time of rising prosperity in Italy was drawing to a close. Indeed, the 1500's were sufficiently prosperous that Renata Ago characterized them as a 'Golden Age' which was then followed by a 'Silver Age.'<sup>132</sup> There had been a general upward trend through until the 1550's and '60's with a 50% rise in prices.<sup>133</sup> This rise was interrupted by the Crisis of 1580-84, which was general in Europe<sup>134</sup> and the plague of 1579-80 and the Great Mediterranean Famine of 1590-92.<sup>135</sup> These events should be considered as accidents, rather than indications of fundamental trends. ( The

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<sup>132</sup> Ago, Il Gusto, 122.

<sup>133</sup> Alexandre R.E. Chabert, "More about the Sixteenth Century Price Revolution," in Economy and Society in Early Modern Europe: Essays from *Annales*, ed. Peter Burke, (New York: Harper,1972), 47-54.

<sup>134</sup> Braudel and Spooner, "Les métaux," 252.

<sup>135</sup> P. Massa Piergiovanni, "Social and Economic Consequences of Structural Changes in the Ligurian Silk Weaving Industry from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century" in The Rise and Decline of Urban Industries in Italy and the Low Countries (Late Middle Ages -Early Modern Times) ed. Herman Van der Wee (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1988), 19-20.

two weasel-words ‘Exogenic Shock’ used by economists to explain or excuse the failures of their theories to work out in the real world, may be apposite here.)

External trade, which had weakened in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and then recovered in the 16<sup>th</sup>, weakened again in the 17<sup>th</sup>.<sup>136</sup> Italy’s economy, that had been the most developed in Europe in 1500, larger than that of the Netherlands, had fallen behind that of the Low Countries by 1600.<sup>137</sup> The wool industry, paradoxically, expanded as the fall in external demand was taken up by increased domestic consumption.<sup>138</sup> Plagues, also paradoxically, generated an increase in personal wealth, as they left fewer people to share the national product.<sup>139</sup> After these disruptions, the economy expanded again until about 1619, and then began to decline again.<sup>140</sup> This was coincident with the Thirty Years’ War, another ‘exogenic shock’. Our first inventory for this period comes from 1582, in the middle of these disruptions, and our last, 1631, is a year after the next plague, in 1630, and is a postmortem for two mercers who may have died in that pestilence. 1630, with its famine, plague, war, and death, was the real watershed.

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<sup>136</sup> Malanima, “The Long Decline”, 181.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 188-189.

<sup>138</sup> Goldthwaite, Wealth and the Demand for Art, 17.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 33-34.

<sup>140</sup> Gregory Hanlon, Early Modern Italy 1550-1800: Three Seasons in European History (Houndsmills and London: MacMillan, 2000), 207-208.

### **First Period, 1582–1631**

This period includes five inventories: Frangheri/ Mangisti from 1582, the earliest of them all; Barozzi from 1605; Montauti from 1608; Bonifatia/ Mangnini from 1614; and Rubianni from 1631.

As mentioned above, the figures for the financial positions of the firms in this first period are quite modest. The largest is the Montauti with a total capitalization of £51,206; the smallest is the Rubianni with no ascribed value and only a small amount of commercial goods, although a solid domestic list. A brief analysis of the statistical ‘measures of centre’ shows that:

- the median, the middle value, is the Barozzi at £6,063;
- the mean value, the arithmetical average, is £12,998, and
- the mode, the most frequent value, is in the £6,000 to £7,000 range;<sup>141</sup>
- the total valuation for all five comes to £64,993.

In the first period’s five inventories there were a total of 18 places named as sources of goods, as seen in the table, and this averaged 4.8 references per inventory. Of these, more than half, 11, were from places in Italy. We should note that the majority of sources were not named, and so were presumed to have originated in the Parman/ Emilian region. Some, of course, were named more than once.

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<sup>141</sup> Herbert F. Weisberg, Central Tendency and Variability 15 et seq.  
Series: Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences #83  
(Thousand Oaks and London: Sage, 1992)

<b>Table # 2: Sources of Goods First Period</b>						
Source	1582	1605	1608	1614	1631	total
Belgium	1		1			2
France	1					1
Germany	1					1
Greece	1					1
Iran	1		1			2
Italy	5	2	7	1		15
Spain					1	1
Syria			1			1
Count	10	2	9	1	1	24

### The Frangheri/ Mangisti Inventory, 1582

This inventory is the earliest we have treated in this series, dating as it does from the later 16th century. Among its notable features are the fairly restricted range of goods, just silk threads, fabrics, mostly of silk, and some made-up garments. Of these latter, some were imported already made. The feature that really stands out is the extensive list of accounts receivable, whose total value is almost half that of the goods in the shop. The notary, Ottavio Manli, gave a total for the goods as £6,607 s.7 d..3. Our total was £6,538 s.2 d.4, a very close match. It is important to note that the capital accrued to the mercer's businesses was not only in raw materials, made garments and shop facilities. A significant proportion could be in their accounts receivable. The notary's totals for the accounts receivable was £2,507 s.0 d.6. Our spreadsheet totaled it to £2,468 s.14 d.9, showing an error of £58 s.14 d.3. about 10%. The table of accounts below, working with

rounded figures, gave a total of £2,589.

With the outstanding accounts that came to £9,369 s.6 d.1. Rounding for easy calculation we see that the outstanding accounts came to 26% of the total capital. Cloth of one kind and another made up £2,018 s.4.d.4, or 21.5%; garments, some local made and some imported, amounted to £538 s.14 or 6%. Lace made up £88 s.7, less than 1%. while ribbons, cords and embroidery was £988 s.6, or 10.5%. Thread, silk and other fibres amounted to the largest single component of the stock £2,695, or slightly under 29%. A catchall category we have designated as Haberdashery etcetera, which mostly includes buttons, made up £255 s.19, about 3%.

As discussed in the Methodology section, a ranking system for the social classes among the creditors/debtors of the various concerns was developed, with a letter coding that permitted using the spreadsheet's sort function. This then facilitated analysis of the debt structure against the social rank of the clientèle, and was readily presentable in table form. Table 2 shows that structure for the 1582 inventory. The largest outstanding account was to the Sgr. Cavaliere Lodovico Vera who owed £280. Due to his rank as Cavaliere, or noble, we would have to place him in the Upper Middle Class, Lower Aristocrat category. The next three largest accounts were to three members of the Cerato family: Sgr Francesco, Sgr. Girardo and Sgr. Cavaliere Gasparo at £191s.15; £108 s.2 d..3; and £102 s.14, d..3, for a total family indebtedness of £404 s.11 d.6. Gasparo's knightly rank would indicate that they should all also be classed as UMC/M. The smallest debt load was that of Signor Camillo Baiardi, also a noble, who was on the hook for a lordly six *soldi*.

The list of debtors to the shop is 139 entries long and ranges through all classes of Parman society. We do not see a corresponding list of creditors, and so must conclude that the business was solvent. The notary's total of credits was £2507 s.0 d.6, ours was £2468 s.7 d.9, a difference of about £40. At the lower end of the list of debts are seven that are in sub-lira amounts. Sgr. Camillo Baiardi, occupation not given, owed only s.6. Maestro Don Geronimo Bazo, a priest, and Maestro Donino, no surname, a *muratore*, literally 'waller' currently 'bricklayer.' Each owed £7. There are five accounts to members of the Bergonzi family, one each to Sgra's Antonia and Camilla, three to Sgr's Ippolito, Julio and Marco. The name sounds like Lombard aristocracy but Ippolito is styled *Maestro*, the title of a master craftsman or tradesman, so their rank is ambiguous. They have all been given benefit of the doubt and ranked with the Feudal classes at the top of the hierarchy. Collectively they owed £54 s.12. There is no doubt about the status of Sgr. Marchese Malaspina, owing £5 s.1, or Sgr. Marchese Battista Pallavicino, who owed merely £1 s.11. Sgra. Isabella Pallavicina owed £6 s.18. These people were at the top of the local aristocracy. Pietro Martero, a bombardier, owed £6. (In the modern army, bombardier is the artillery's equivalent of a corporal, here he has been entered as Lower Middle Class, Male, as a skilled craftsman.) It is significant that there are no entries for Lower Class Women, and only four for Lower Class Men. The figures are summed and averaged by the software, and so give some figures in decimal amounts rather than *lira* and sub-*lira* units.

<b>Table # 3 Social Ranks of Accounts in Frangheri/Mangisti Inventory, 1582</b>			
Rank	number	£ amounts (rounded)	£ average
Feudatories, Top Aristocrats, M. & F.	6	80	13.33
Clergy including Nuns	3	50	16.67
Upper Middle Class: Lower Aristocrats, Rentiers, Lawyers, Officers, etc /Men	12	516	43.00
Upper Middle Class Women	5	45	9.00
Lower Middle Class, Master Craftsmen, Merchants, etc. M& F	110	1959	17.81
Lower Class Men	4	19	4.75
Lower Class Women	0	0	0.00
Totals:	134	2589	19.32

As in many of our inventories that include lists of accounts, we see a general distribution among the many layers of Parman society of the time, from the highest to the lowest. In the case of this one, we do not see the greatest outstanding debt levels at the highest social levels. Quite the opposite, it is very mixed, and the titled families have quite modest debt loads recorded in this document. We know little about other debts such as fees and taxes. We shall see if this structure persists through the period of our study.

The Frangheri firm must have been supplying materials to the industrial forces producing and fitting cloth and garments, as well as retailing made clothing. The large quantities of cloth of varying grades and prices, stocked by the bolt as well as the *braccio*, might have been intended for home use, the making of clothing for family members,

while the lace and trimmings could also have moved out to the domestic seamstress. *Renso*, described as ‘*da fiandra*’ ‘from Flanders’, was priced at £197 s.5 the ell-wide bolt, also at £4 s.19 the *braccio* for 41 1/3 *braccia* coming to £183.18. A bolt of *tirliso* for linings went for £64 s.10 and a black *cambelloto* was priced at £55 s.2 for 1.9 bolts, coming to £106 s.11. Mantuan sendal, in various colours, was the stock in the largest quantity, 135 *braccia* at £1 s.6 came to £256, s.10. The largest total value as well as the most expensive item per *braccio* was for grosgrain silk in black and various colours, a partial bolt of 14.5 *braccia* at £24 s.5 coming to £350 s.18.

The large quantities of threads and fibres, mostly silk, must have been targeted at weavers in Parma or its *contado*. There was 85 pounds, 3 ounces of wool imported from Flanders at £4 s.3 the pound, for £421, s.19, but the largest, and most expensive item was 37 pounds, 7.5 ounces of coloured silk thread from Verona and Parma at £22 s.15 / pound for a total of £855 s.19. Whether this was intended to be used in the putting- out trade, or retailed to weavers or tailors, or to other putters- out, we have no indication, but clearly it was to be used by weavers or other producers.

#### The Barozzi 1605 Inventory

This much shorter inventory records the sale of cloth and shop utensils by Maestro Galiazzo Salito, called Cazardino, to Pietro Antonio Barozzi and Ottavio Barozzi, brothers, and sons of Maestro Dr. Ercole, who lived in the parish of Sta. Maria Borgo Tascheri. The inventory is incomplete; not all of the lines of goods have been transcribed,

but we can see that the notary, Lazzaro Zanardi, has given an overall total value of £6,063 s.6 d.5, while our total for the 41 lines that we have is £4,330 s.2, for a difference of £1733 s.4 d.5. This difference must be mostly accounted for by the missing lines.

Much more extensive than the merchandise is the list of outstanding credits transferred to the Barozzi brothers. There are 197 line accounts listed. The notary, Zanardi, lists the total at £3,752 s.11. Our total, derived with the spreadsheet's sum function came to £3,560 s.16, a respectably small error. The smallest account was to Antonio Maria Ugier for s.13, and there were seven others under £2. Francesco dal Co, whose occupation was listed as 'wool weaver' owed £1. At the other end, there were four accounts above £100. Maestro Paolo Ferrari and GiovAntonio Ferrari owed £116 s.10 and £122 s.13, respectively. Don Gironomo Azzoni, a priest, owed £130 s.10 and Sgr. Gasparo Tagliaferro, owed £130 s.10. Also among the mid-range debtors was Sgr. Felice della Rovere, whose name hints at a Genoese connection. He owed £55.

There were fewer clear indications of rank than in the previous invoice, and many of the assignments were guesses, compromising the reliability of the results to a degree. Generally, any male without some designation got entered as Lower Class Male. Sorting on family names first allowed greater clarity. If one member of a family rated a *Maestro*, then all were listed as Lower Middle Class.

We see that the accounts for collectibles and for inventory are at a ratio about 1:1.6. What we do not see are any items for shop equipment, either for salesroom furnishings or for production gear such as looms or spinning wheels, so we speculate that the business was solely retail, and the sale of the business might have been without

facilities, that is only the inventory and the credits, not the shop itself.

<b>Table #4 Social Ranks of Accounts in Barozzi Inventory, 1605</b>			
Rank	number	£ amounts (rounded)	£ averages
Feudatories, Top Aristocrats, M&F	1	55	55.00
Upper Middle Class: Lower Aristocrats, Rentiers, Lawyers, etc	7	43	6.14
Upper Middle Class Women	6	37	6.17
Clergy including Nuns	3	177	59.00
Lower Middle Class, Master Craftsmen, Merchants, etc. M&F	55	1400	25.45
Lower Class Men	94	1545	16.44
Lower Class Women	5	36	7.20
Totals: raw	171	3293	19.26

There are only twenty eight lines of cloths for a total value of £3,837 s.7. Thirteen lines are for wool cloth, the traditional heavy fullled fabric, a total of 268 *braccia*. The most expensive are two lines of black and coloured cloth from Milan at £16/ *braccio*. There are eight lines of *rasse*, or *rascie*, a lighter cloth, amounting to 650 *braccia* at various prices ranging from £1 s.1 to £2 s.15. One of these lines is for *rasse* ‘on the loom’ at s.17.d.1. This indicates that weaving was going on, either in house or put out to external weavers. There are twelve lines for threads, both *stame* or inferior silk, and wool. These are priced by the pound and ounce. The total value is £492 s.15. The highest value

item is for twisted weft thread at s.54 the pound. Silk threads were valued less at s. 30, 34 and 34 the pound.

In the case of this firm, the amount of capital in stock and in receivables is almost equal, at a ratio of about 1:1.6. Also, the preamble mentions shop equipment, but there are no entries for such in the document as we have it. The large number of small accounts may also indicate that the business was engaged in putting-out, or possibly some in-house weaving, but without the missing information about equipment, we cannot tell exactly. On the other hand it may have been totally retail, and the sale was of the merchandise and accounts, without facilities.

#### The Montauti Inventory 1608

This is a post-mortem inventory. The goods and furnishings of the shop of the late Maestro Sgr. Bastiano Montauti are to be divided among his sons, the brothers Sgr. Francesco and Sgr. Bartolomeo. An elaborate preamble of more than ten double pages details the legal concerns. As well as the shop goods and merchandise, the estate included real estate: several houses and shops, a stable and some farmland, plowlands and a cow pasture, with a supply of grain.

In this inventory we see a commercial enterprise in full flower. The accounts show that this Montauti firm was not only a retailer of mercery material but was also the hub of an extensive putting- out business, financing the efforts of craftsman families by fronting them materials and capital, in some cases equipment, with the end goal being to recover the outlay in finished product. We find two separate accounts for the rental of a house and

spinning wheel for a period required to finish a product. We see also accounts detailing materials held by others in distant locations, such as Cloth of Gold held in Rome, presumably by an agent there, and loans of cash and materials to other persons.

There are extensive lists of goods, both manufactured and as raw materials. There are accounts of raw materials on loan to handworkers, along with expense funds and equipment such as looms, and even a house as workshop. The high value merchandise includes several types of ormessine silk. Some is from Lucca, but most is listed as from Parma, telling us that production of this luxury good was ongoing locally. The household fittings are elaborate and obviously made to supple an extensive ménage. There are accounts of moneys owed and owing. All is detailed, as the questions of succession were complex and required the greatest attention.

Interestingly, the final listings, of household goods obviously held personally by family members, are assigned monetary values, which they are not in many other accounts. This allows us to form some idea of the relative costs of domestic upkeep. Many post-mortem inventories simply list the articles, without values, so this one is more informative.

There is a considerable amount of weapons and military equipment. The firearms collection is intermediate, comprising both matchlocks and wheellocks. There is armour, swords and halberds, suggesting that at some time a member or members of the household were in military service. Ago notes that in her Roman inventories, nineteen out of forty-six men possessed arms, showing adherence to a cultural model she characterizes as '*cavalleresco-militaire*.' The presence of swords showed noble

*cavalleresco*) status, which did not preclude mastery of a trade. The presence of halberds showed service in the army, probably militia of the guild or district, or the guards of the city gates.<sup>142</sup> This identification of sword ownership with nobility may have been local Roman practice; not necessarily indicative of the designations in Parma, where it could stem from membership in the militia.

The list of outstanding creditors is extensive, almost 200 lines, and distributed through all levels of society from the Ducal family on down. We have attempted to sort them out on the same categories as the Riccardi 1659 document. In many cases the rank is not obvious, as many trade designations and family names are similar. One clue that is given by the notary involves capitalization. Trade names are not capitalized, where family names are. Due to the careful preparation of the document, it is clearly a fine copy and not a preliminary one, there is enough consistency to give some confidence on this point. As the plebeian classes often did not use family surnames at this point in history, we can assign those without to the Lower Class Male or Lower Class Female categories, along with those known by nicknames only. Ottavio Blondi called 'Grassimo' by contrast, had both family and nicknames. Nicolo Tomai was called 'Bardotto.' Down in the list of 'desperate' accounts we find Somano Morgantio 'called Bargone.'

Giovanni Battista Rotti had the sobriquet 'Genovese,' probably indicating that he or an ancestor were incomers from Genoa or its territories. A like question arises about Annibal da Ferrara: was that a surname or an origin? Many of the names and nicknames in the accounts list seem to indicate geographical origins. Gio. Antonio Cremonese

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<sup>142</sup> Ago, *Il Gusto*, 171.

clearly had roots in Cremona in Lombardy. Giovanni da Palmia might have sprung from any number of locales scattered about Italy but likely a village in the Appenines south of Parma, as might Diomede, Ugenio and the standard bearer Alfiero Cesare Palmia. We have, all in the ‘desperate’ list, three aristocratic Scotti; Count Isodoro, Count Horatio, and Count Horatio again, specified as ‘Husband of the Flemish Lady’. The Scotti, Douglas of Piacenza, descended from North British expatriates, but emerged among the leading nobles of Piacenza.

Angelo Ferrari is listed as holding some cash for velvety fine ormessine, but whether he is a weaver, who has not yet finished production of the material, or a wholesaler who has taken an order that is not yet filled is not clear. Because the item is listed by weight, we might expect that he has been provided with silk thread, at £30 the pound, and has taken a contract to weave the rich fabric. Other *ferrari* are listed in the creditors’ accounts, without the capital letter, and these we have considered to be farriers and have rendered them as such.

<b>Table # 5 Social Ranks of Accounts in Montauti 1608 Inventory</b>			
Rank	number	£ amounts (rounded)	£ averages.
Feudatories, Top Aristocrats, M&F	14	1158	82.71
Upper Middle Class: Lower Aristocrats, Rentiers, Lawyers, Officers etc, Men	12	2186	182.17
Upper Middle Class: Lower Aristocrats, Rentiers, Lawyers, etc, Women	5	235	47.00
Clergy including Nuns	7	177	25.29

<b>Table # 5 Social Ranks of Accounts in Montauti 1608 Inventory</b>			
Lower Middle Class, Master Craftsmen, Merchants, etc, Men	129	9845	76.32
Lower Middle Class, Master Craftsmen, Merchants, etc, Women	7	1228	175.43
Lower Class Men	27	2817	104.33
Lower Class Women	1	13	13.00
Totals: raw	201	17646	87.79

The list here is sufficiently more extensive than that in Riccardi 1659 that we have added a female division to the Lower Middle Class category, giving us Lower Middle Class/Female and Lower Middle Class/Male codings

The total count of accounts receivable in this list is 201, of which 121 were considered 'desperate' or hard to collect. The total sum receivable was £21,875, s.13, d. 6, and of the 'desperate' accounts £3,4480 s.13, d. 0. The largest single amount outstanding was a joint account to Paolo Burci and Marchini for £1,624, followed by Gasparo Moleri for £1,349 and Camillo Tagliaferri for £860. The rank attributions here are, respectively Lower Middle Class/Male, Lower Middle Class/Female and Lower Class Male.. Seven military officers have been included in Lower Middle Class, Male. We wonder if these were not commercial loans, financing the respective businesses of these clients. The largest UCM outstanding sums were for Drs. Francesco Zandemaria and Filippo Maria Rossi, #s 7 & 8, with £636 s.14 and £613 s.1d.6. The largest amount outstanding for a noble was £369 s.17 for the Marchese Guido Pallavicino, #12 from the top. Count Fortunato Cesis was in 14th place with a debt of £351 s.15. At the other end of

the scale were eight accounts for less than £2. One to Count Horatio Scotti, husband of ‘*la Fiammengha*,’ the Flemish Lady, for £2 s.5. stood ninth from the bottom. Count Giulio Paracioli owed £69 s.4. The total of the receivables should be contrasted to the cash actually in hand in the cash box, the considerable sum of £4,583 s.4, or almost one quarter of the receivables.

As a side note, benefit of the doubt has been given to all members of various branches of the Rossi family, who at one time were a major noble family in the Parma region. The major branch, counts of nearby San Secondo, was responsible for the erection of many of the castles and noble country houses or *rocche* around the Emilia. Although they were later supplanted in dominance by the Farnese, we have listed all of the Rossi in this list, as UMC/M, which includes lower nobility. This may in fact be slighting them somewhat. The principle branch retained the title of Counts of San Secondo and were noted art patrons well into the period we are treating here.<sup>143</sup>

In addition to the accounts for monies in outstanding collectibles, there are a number of advances to workmen for money and materials that are intended to enable production of finished or semi-finished materials. The total sums advanced in cash was £840 s.4, and in raw materials, such as silk thread, £2,893 s.8 d.7. Those figures were computed on the notary’s line sums, neglecting one or two small discrepancies found by the spreadsheet.

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<sup>143</sup> See: Giuseppe Bertini’s article Centre and Periphery: Art Patronage in Renaissance Parma and Piacenza in Charles M Rosenberg, The Court Cities of Northern Italy, (Cambridge, and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 98 *et. seq.* online at: <http://books.google.ca/books> Last viewed, June 11, 2014

One of the largest accounts for supplies, and the first on the list, was to Agostino Polotti for grain in the amount of £326 s.10. As a general purveyor, not only of mercery goods, we see again the central position in the commerce of Parma that was occupied by the Montauti concern. This same impression is reinforced by the number of items that were to two or more persons, apparently partnerships or families. Gasparo Melone, Paolo Burci and Marchini shared responsibility for £1,624, details not given. Ludovico Guidetto and company were in for £53 s.19. Nicolo Tomai called Bardotto and Luciano Cernitori were jointly on the hook for £97 s.13. Angelo Malamatia and his brother owed £730, while Leonardo Ormesino and Marco Putaglio owed £100 even. Gracio Baneri and Florida Gravelli, a married couple were jointly responsible for £ 801. Those were all in the list of accounts denoted as ‘above the books’. In the ‘desperate’ list we find an item for Orlando do Vellinis, Suenocio (sic) Rusitici and Pietro da Casa, aggregate debt £122 s.6. These may not all have been business advances, but the impression is strong that not only were the Montauti supporting other enterprises, they were making investments that occasionally turned out to be ill-advised.

The general affluence of the family/firm is also to be found in the totals for the several pages, three hundred and twenty lines, that list the household goods, in all £9,101 s.17. As these items include linen, hemp and silk threads to be spun and woven, we can assume that some production was also going on in-house, as well as put out to client producers. Jean Boutier, in his analysis of the self-sufficient noble Florentine household of Gondi, in the later 17<sup>th</sup> -early 18<sup>th</sup> century, notes that significant items in the accounts

were for flax threads to be spun at home ‘by the ladies of the house.’<sup>144</sup> These ladies included not only genteel family members, but also servants.

From the extensive size of the list, more than twenty pages, which include multiples of furniture items, arms, and bedding, we see an extended family living together. As the items are not sorted by type, the notary probably went room to room in the house, noting the items as he found them, and transcribing the pages from his notes to the fair copy in the same order.

The merchandise and other property totaled £9,101 s.19 and this part was drawn up with the assistance of Don V. Fabbio of the Dyers’ Guild, acting as an expert on the values. It is difficult to derive the final total valuation of the goods from the document itself, as it was divided and subtotalled page by page, without a final total given, but the spreadsheet gives a final total for the goods and materials on hand as £13,900 s.5 d.3. There are ten entries for cash and material in the hands of various weavers and finishers, with details of the goods they are to produce. One item is just listed as for the rental of a house and spinning wheel. This may have been a house rented from a third party and put out to a worker, or more likely a family, to produce a quantity of yarn or thread. A term for that account was specified as being to the end of the semester June 1608. The amount of the account is £131 s.8. The worker in that case is not named, but is referred to as ‘her.’ Another rental is specified as ending September 1614, for £262 s.16. Ortensio and

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<sup>144</sup> Jean Boutier, “*La Fattoria, Le Palais, La Boutique. Les Consommations textiles d’une famille aristocratique florentine, Fin XVIIe -Debut XVIIIe Siècle*”\_in Échanges et Cultures textiles dans L’Europe pré-industrielle: Actes du Colloque de Rouen, 17-19 mai 1993 (Lille: 1993) 31-32.

Domenico had both money and supplies of silk thread. There was a line for money for the knitters of stockings, so we do not know if these two were knitters, or employed them. Angelo Ferrari, for example, held cash for a velvety fine *orsoglio*, £97 s.10, but there were also items for thread and fur he had been advanced amounting to about four times as much again. We see here the putting- out system in full flower, providing workspace, equipment, raw materials and interim financing to craftsmen and women who would be producing high value textiles.

One thing that has not been found in this inventory, oddly enough, is a final total of the value of the estate. Using the spreadsheet, and neglecting a few ambiguous line totals, we compute the value of the goods in the store as £19,944 s.8 d.3.

The value of the goods out in the hands of cottage workers is	£ 2,893 s.8 d.7
Value of household goods	£ 9,101 s. 17 d. 0
Cash amount advanced to cottage workers was	£ 840 s. 4 d. 0
and the total of receivables was	£ 2,1731 s. 18 d.0
	=====
less bad debt	- £ 3,305 s. 1 d. 1
For a grand total of	£ 51,206 s 11 d..9

Besides all these credits, was ample additional cash in the strongbox of £4,583 s.4.

The real estate includes three houses, with detailed descriptions of their locations in various parishes of the city, one of which integrates with five shops, storehouses and paved courtyards, and another outside the city in the Village of San Leonardo, with attached pasture land of 23 *biolche*. (See the section on Measures: the Parman *biolca* was

an area of 0.308 hectares.) On the land was a pair of cattle. A value was indicated for the cattle which is difficult to read.; it may be Ducats 8, s.4. There is also listed a wagon with all necessary agricultural implements, without valuation. The line giving the total value has a blank space at that point.

As this was a family business there is a very extensive listing of household goods from the various houses, a list that occupies 320 lines. There are eight bedsteads, two sleeping boxes and a truckle bed, mosquito nets, three sets of bed curtains, one in green *bavellata* with a silk fringe worth £400, another canvas set worth £120, and a third for £10 and orange canopy in old plain fabric for £25. There are duvets and palliasses and mattresses and page after page of bedsheets in hemp and linen, with values ranging from £5 to £60. Featherbeds are stuffed with goose or chicken feathers. We see here clear evidence of an extended family and their servants.

There is kitchen equipment suitable and sufficient to feed all the members of this large establishment. Two sets of firedogs speak of two fireplaces at least. The list of clothing is extensive for men and women. Among the furniture and garments are line entries for hemp to be spun and hemp already spun, bobbins of thread, and silk waiting to be spun. The family members were working in the production of thread for the cloth producing industry. All in all we see a large family business, prosperous and solvent, with an extensive domestic establishment to support the commercial activities.

As an interesting side note related to the units used in the trade, at one point there is a listing of various types of damask, given as a list without line totals, just a summary of quantities and total value. The quantities were in *braccia* and fractions given in *uncia*.

*Oncia* is an Italian term that translates into English as either *inch* or *ounce*, and as silk is at various times quantized either by length or by weight this gives rise to some ambiguity. As is discussed in the chapter on measurements, units for measurement of silk were often different from those used for other substances. By back-computing this section of this inventory, we see that in this case, there were 5 *oncia* to the *braccio*. The *braccio* being approximately 2 feet, we see that the *oncia* was between 4 and 5 English inches in length.

#### The Bonifatia/Vagnini Inventory 1614

This inventory is apparently a post-mortem, dated 3 July, 1614, by notary Filippo Faleschi. The document was drawn up for Donna Magdalena Bonifatia Vagnini to assign portions of her father Maestro Giovanni Angelo Vagnini's business to her siblings Giovanni Michel Angelo and Francesco and Margareta. In many lines this inventory gives only quantities and totals, so it was necessary to back-compute to arrive at the prices and values, many lines giving only totals for lots rather than item counts. It is clear from the goods and equipment that Maestro Giovanni was engaged in retailing silk, lace, fringes and embroidered goods of various sorts and in small lots. Some of the made-up embroideries were from Bologna, 102 *braccia* of the narrow and 3 of the wide, at 12 *soldi* for the narrow and £2 s.10 for the wide. There were four lines for Rheims- style linen (*renso*) but the total value only came to £78 s.16. We have to wonder whether these were the values that new goods would have rated on the open market, or whether they were the marked-down values that they would have been given for used or shop-worn materials.

However, since there were very limited household goods, only one bedstead with

accompanying sheets and linens, and only one set of firedogs, we must conclude that the scale was very small. The inventory is only 54 lines long, and no final total is given, but the spreadsheet computes the sum of the line items to £577. Further evidence of modest income lies in the bedsheets, which are of hempen cloth rather than linen. He seems to have lived and worked alone, as his married daughter is commissioning the inventory and clearly acting as executor of the estate. We conclude that he was a widower. The preamble mentions that the business is located in Parma on the Via Sepulchra. The house may have been included, that is not clear, but it is clear that the living accommodations were very restricted. By the time of the 1636 tax register, the declared value of the concern, as noted above, was only £100.

#### The Rubianni 1631 Inventory

This brief document is a post-mortem inventory. The preliminary notes indicate that it is the testament of two brothers Rubianni, Pietro Alessio and Cesare, who were the heirs of two intestate brothers, Ottavio and Pietro Giacomo Rubianni, who in turn were heirs of the late Giovanni, brother of the said Pietro Alessio. This convoluted tree indicates a concern that had been in business in the same family apparently for three generations, and in which all of the named persons were in some way active. Because of the date of the document we have to suspect that the brothers died in the great plague pandemic of 1630, which killed about half of the population. A large proportion of the items are for furniture and furnishings, mainly household goods, but also productive. As these items are mixed up in the order of the lines, it appears that the notary just went from

room to room, noting down the items as they appeared, without attempting to separate them by application. There are no values on any of the line items, possibly because the concern was staying intact inside the family, rather than distributed or sold off. There are no mentions of evaluators, probably for the same reasons.

The presence of four used bedsteads along with several pairs of bedsheets, in hemp, and featherbeds, and two cradles with covers, suggest that the business was that of an extended, multi-generational family. All the expected kitchen wares are present for cooking, eating, fermenting and storing wine and so on are found in used condition, along with tableware and water dishes for animals. There are religious paintings and walnut prayer stools, used. From this alone we can form a picture of daily life in a reasonably well-off family in Northern Italy in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Real property listed consists of: a large house, walled and roofed with columns, a bricked courtyard and two wells in Parma; another house in the district of Sta. Maria, beside the City Hall and two others out to rent, and a grain shed, with tiled roof and floor, in the city in the parish of San Giacinto. The listing of real estate at the end of the inventory indicates a long-established family concern. There is no indication that the business is winding up, rather that it will be conveyanced to another generation, with equipment supplies and premises remaining in the family. There is no listing of outstanding accounts.

On the production end, we see bales of hides, 305 of unspecified animals, 500 white sheepskins, 300 white calfskins, 20 white pigskins, 409 rabbit skins ‘for tanning’, and three hides of ‘wethers (castrated sheep) to make gloves’, three dozen deerskins and

14 dozen unspecified furs. There are three ironbound vats for tanning hides, used, and two others, old and to be burned. There are knives for working leather and various workbenches and boards for cutting gloves. Finished and unfinished goods included gloves for men and women, some with fringes, or tassels, or embroidered, in lots of dozens. At the end along with almost illegible discussions occupying several pages is the note that Giacomo Rubbiani was a glover. With that information, the selections of the particular types of materials and finished and partly finished goods becomes clear. These were the raw materials, tools and final products of this trade, that would ultimately be consigned to retailing concerns. Glovers were another subtrade under the Mercers.

The documents from this first period show businesses recovering briskly from the depression of the late 16<sup>th</sup> century that was noted above. The mercers are not only in retail trades, but are involved in the production of merchandise, spinning and weaving fibre and cloth. Some of this production is taking place in their houses, with the work done by family members, or possibly domestic staff. In other cases, the accounts clearly indicate that they were enabling other workers to take part in the creative cycle through the putting-out process. They were fronting these workers fibre to spin, thread to weave, machinery on which to work, and, apparently in some cases, the actual premises in which the work was to be done.

Another notable feature of these inventories is the lists of accounts outstanding to various debtors. These extensive lists, by their length and the distribution over all classes of Parman society, lowest to highest, speak of firms that were deeply integrated into their social milieu. The feeling is that they had formed solid connections with their fellow

citizens over enough time that they trusted and were trusted.

The sources of the materials were primarily local, 13 of 23 named places were in Italy, and most of these either very local or within the Po valley, and so accessible by water. Of the remainder, two sources were in Belgium, two in France, one each in Germany, Greece and Spain. We see then that the internationalized trade was not totally absent, but had not yet reached the scale it would attain later on.

### **Analysis of the 1636 Tax Roll**

After converting the 1636 tax roll into a Lotus 123 spreadsheet, the first operation was to insert decimal numbers at the places where there was a blank in the column on the left hand side, that was numbered sequentially so that any sorting operations could be reverted to the original order by resorting on that column. As some blank entries indicated that sequential persons were brothers or business partners of those preceding them others, decimal numbers were used for the extras. This allowed any sorting operations to be reverted to the original order by resorting on that column. The second thing was to add surnames to those persons just listed as a relative of their predecessors on the original list, and as these generally had the occupation space left blank, these were copied in. The third thing was to insert another column to the left of the names column and manually move the surnames to that new column so that the whole list could be sorted by family name. This gave the possibility of sorting on many separate pairs of primary and secondary keys which in turn made it possible to derive data of a number of different correlations.

This still left a number of blanks. For instance #85 is an entry for Niccolo Barilla, occupation *Lardaria*, that is, grocer, capital £1,200, and #85.1 is blank for name, occupation Mercer, capital £200. We are presuming that Sgr. Barilla had two sides to his business and entered his name in slot #85.1. Similarly, entry # 213 is for Giovan Pietro Pederzano called. Lischino, occupation mercer, capital £10, with a note that he does not exercise that trade any more. #213.1 name blank, occupation 'printed cards,' capital£40, notation "sells pamphlets, etc." Once again, the name has been copied down one slot. Some others were less straightforward to deal with. Silvio Venturini, #11 did not have a listed profession, but had a capital of £1,000. Similarly #15, Bertolano Franchini, no listed occupation, capital £4,000, and Ranuccio Sarti(?), #20, capital £100; and so on for a total of nineteen entries with no occupation listed out of 238, although some had considerable capital. In only one case have we retroactively assigned a profession, on *a priori* evidence. Signor Giovan Batista Corradi, #119 has a capital of £6,000. We have an inventory for a later generation of the Corradi family, and so he has been heuristically designated as a mercer. Of the total list, when sorted for professions, no fewer than 79 show as mercers, with two having secondary specializations: Francesco Pellicioli was also a furrier, capital £7,000 and Antonio Belidi was also a *spadaro* that is, he sold swords, capital £1,500. Girolomo Mantelli, dealing in mercery and cloth had a capital of £30,000, but a declared debt of £10,695.s.2. d.9.

Of the mercers for whom we have inventories, on the tax rolls we see three Bedeschi brothers, Girolamo, Bernardino and Desiderio with a combined capital £13,600; Madonna Maddalena Vegnina (sic), £100; Gasparo Zucchi, £7,000, and, as mentioned

already GiovanBattista Corradi £6,000, with a note “minus £4,000 for buying stock.” The total capitalization for all of the listed mercers was £280,801.6. The total listed debts for various firms was £28,715.475. So the total net worth of all the mercers in Parma at that moment was £252,086.13. Probably not all of the mercers had declared their outstanding debt loads, besides the ones noted here. As the list was drawn up in advance of a tax increase, we might also expect understatement of assets.

The largest capitalization of all the mercers was £52,360 belonging to the Acerbi heirs, a clear outlier. The next largest was Giacinto Aicardi at £34,000. The smallest were two at £10 each, being the aforementioned Lischino, who did not practice mercery any more, and the other Lorenzo Bocazzo. (There were a few with no listed capital, but they were partners in firms.) There were six others at less than £100. The mean figure was £3,191, the median, or middle figure was £800, so that more than half had capital of less than £1,000.

Forty of the eighty mercers had residences listed by Parish. They were widely and fairly evenly distributed. Only three parishes, San Gervasio and Santa Maria B.T. and San Vitale had as many as four mercers listed as present there. San Bartolomeo, San Michele del Canale, San Michele dell’Arco, and San Pietro had three each, with one entry for simple San Michele. San Paolo had two, and other parishes had only one mercer each. Obviously there was not a centralized ‘Mercery’ district of the type that Sutton describes for London.<sup>145</sup> The nature of the trade, which involved satisfying the daily needs of the people of the city, privileged the distribution of retail- and work-shops among the

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<sup>145</sup> Sutton, Mercery of London, 18.

populace in their various districts. A cursory reading of the 1636 census rolls, encompassing more than forty parishes and neighbourhoods reinforces this impression. Occupations and trades and social rankings were distributed evenly around the city.<sup>146</sup>

As noted, there were eighty listed mercers in the 1636 tax rolls, but there were also a number of other related occupations, who might have been subsumed under the mercers' guild structure: fourteen weavers, fourteen tanners, six glovers, six dealers in leather goods, three silk merchants, three weavers or dealers in *bavellino*, the low grade silk fabric made from damaged thread, three dealers in hemp canvas and rope, two furriers (and one mercer had a subspecialty in fur), two spinners, two cloth finishers, two hatters, two shoemakers, one cloth retailer, and one embroiderer(male). The total count came to one hundred and forty one. Some were indeterminate. One man was in the mercer's guild, but the designation was unclear; if it read *bottonaro*, he made buttons, if *lottonaro* he might have been a wrestler, not an expected sub-trade. Then again, if there were an apostrophe, not visible in the original, it could have been *l'ottonario*, a brass smith, from *ottone*, brass (metal, not nerve.)

The next most numerous trade was the grocers, *lardarii*, with sixty four listings. Along with them were eleven distillers and a seller of liquor, nine dealers in cooking oil, a dealer just in rice, a fish monger, a baker, and a cheese seller, for a total of eighty eight. The total declared capitalization for the grocers was £130,631, with an average of £2009.71. The highest amount was £18,890, and the lowest was £8. Thirty eight of the

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<sup>146</sup> *Archivio di Stato di Provincia di Parma (ASPr), Comune di Parma 1934*  
Census rolls for Parma, January 1636.

sixty four grocers, more than half, had capitalizations of £700 or under. Comparing these figures with those for the mercers, we see that mercers financially had twice the impact of the grocers, but that at the lower ends of the range, the grocers were about as prosperous as individuals.

After these purveyors of necessities were fourteen hosts, or innkeepers, twelve market gardeners, six booksellers, four jug makers, or maybe potters, three paper shops, one printer, two basket makers, six blacksmiths, one of whom specialized in saws and another who work at a hostelry. Among the odds and ends were a banker and two men who invested inherited money, *rentiers* in other words; and two farmers, one of whom produced lumber and the other kept a stable. A German man may have been a secretary.

### **Second Period, 1655 -1676**

#### **Recovery!**

Our second period begins after the plague of 1630, and also after the end of the period of recovery that began after the European Crisis of the late 1500's. A reprise of the general crisis affected the whole Mediterranean from 1620 to 1650. The little Ice Age, which ran into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was descending to new depths of cold and misery from the 1580's onward.<sup>147</sup> A great famine in 1648-1649 and another plague striking Genoa and Southern Italy in the late 1650's had not only a demographic effect, but also damaged

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<sup>147</sup> Tabak, The Waning, 207.

Italy's commercial position. The English market for Italian silk, to take one instance, effectively dried up due to the precipitous drop in the population, and by the time numbers had recovered, England was engaged in producing silk products to such a degree that silk stockings, which had been exported from Italy to England, were now flowing from England to Italy.<sup>148</sup> It has already been noted that by this time the preponderance of silk thread used, in England as in the rest of Europe, was of Italian origin. Exports to Spain suffered from the same catastrophe. Plague also had an effect of reducing the size of the workforce in Italy, which raised the costs of labour by placing the survivors in a stronger bargaining position, and in turn raising the costs of Italian products. These products were still of better quality than those of their competitors, except perhaps the French, but were being produced by outdated methods.<sup>149</sup> Decreases in population did not trigger immediate declines in prices, which trailed by some decades, and then rose again with population recovery. Real wages had been declining from the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards. In fact, an inverse relationship has been noted between population and the wages that city dwellers were more dependant on than countrymen.<sup>150</sup>

Paradoxical effects of the plague were also observed. Farmers fled the plague, leading an exodus from the cities to the countryside, which eased the problem of urban

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<sup>148</sup> Gigliola Pagano de Divitiis, English Merchants in Seventeenth Century Italy tr. Stephen Parkin (Cambridge:1997), 138-9.

<sup>149</sup> Carlo M Cipolla, The Economic Decline of Empires, (London: Methuen,1970), 204-5 and 209-10.

<sup>150</sup> Malanima, The Long Decline, 5-7.

food supplies.<sup>151</sup> Grain prices which had been rising until 1630, stabilized, and remained depressed for over a century, which eased food prices but depressed the flow of capital from the cities to the countryside.<sup>152</sup> In fact, the prices of grain fell faster than those of textiles.<sup>153</sup> This would have the effect of providing food for the people but impoverishing them so that they would have trouble buying it. The decline of prices would also push production downwards. These remarks, however, should be viewed carefully. They refer to the general situation in Italy as a whole. In Parma and Piacenza the prices of grain and other products were more volatile due to the effects of Duke Odoardo's unfortunate military adventures, which wound up costing the Farnese state £60,000,000 and so debasing their coinage that it was hard for them to purchase foodstuffs or any other foreign commodities. In fact, at one point in 1648 the price of a *staio* of wheat had risen to £42.<sup>154</sup>

The second period was one of a short interlude between the crises and plagues that punctuated Italian and European affairs in the Early Modern era. Another feature of the period, which we shall see in the inventories, was an increased breadth, geographically, of the sources of the goods our mercers were dealing in, and likewise a great increase in their tendencies to do business with firms not only outside Parma, or the Emilian region,

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<sup>151</sup> Piergiovanni, "Social and Economic Consequences," 20.

<sup>152</sup> Tabak, The Waning, 219.

<sup>153</sup> Malamina, Il Lusso, 93.

<sup>154</sup> "Parma in the Era of Duke Odoardo the Great (1630-1650)" Gregory Hanlon, [http://Academia .edu](http://Academia.edu). 21, 22 and 28. Last viewed June 9, 201: Text following in Italian in: Storia di Parma vol.5 (Parma: Monte Universitaria Parma, 2014)

but indeed outside Italy. This tendency starts to appear toward the end of the second period, and becomes very prominent in the third. Besides the geographical sourcing of the goods, we also see in their accounts that there are outstanding items to clients in other cities, and we also see an increased incidence of pricing and accounts being listed in currencies other than Parman. We can, in some cases, derive the exchange rates between Parman and other Italian *Lire*, and even the French *Livre Tournois*.

The total capitalization for the eight inventories in this period was £168,663;

the largest was the Riccardi 1659, at £93,074;

the smallest was the Baistrocchi at £3,026.

The mean value was £18,740;

The mode was in the £3,500 to £4,000 range; and

The median fell between the Zalli and Corradi at £17,137.

<b>Table# 6: Sources of Goods, Second Period</b>								
Source	1654	1655	1657	1658	1661	1676	1676	total
Belgium		1		1	1	1	1	5
Bohemia	1				1			2
China					1		2	3
England							2	2
France	1	3			1	1	8	14
Germany		2		1	3	1		7
Greece							1	1
Italy		18	1	13	22	1	1	56

Source	1654	1655	1657	1658	1661	1676	1676	total
Japan						1		1
Spain				1	1			2
Switzerland		2		1	1	1		5
Syria			1					1
Count	2	26	2	17	31	6	15	99

In the second period, there were seven inventories that listed goods with origins and a total of 99 named places, as seen in the table, and this averaged 11.4 references per inventory. 97 items had listed sources and 56 of these 97, again more than half, were of Italian origin. This sub-period has nine inventories in it: Carduini 1654; Zalli 1655; Baistrocchi 1657; Riccardi 1658 and 1659; Corradi 1661; Tirelli 1664; Donelli 1674; and Emprini/Arnod 1676. We begin to see in these inventories an increasing trend toward trade with more distant places, outside Parma and actually outside Italy or even Europe.

#### The Carduini Inventory 1655

This is a very short list, not properly an inventory but a list of debts acknowledged by the Mo. Ro. Jo. Bapt. Carduini, priest of Parma, Parish of St. Catarina to Master Lodovici Panceri, son of Giuliano, mercer of Parma, Parish of St. Nicolas.

For all its brevity, only some eighteen lines, it has a few points of interest. All the line items are for mercery; cloths, silk thread, buttons, etc. Four of the textile items are specified as of *turchino* or deep blue, colour. The small amount of whalebone would be used for stiffeners for collars and other fittings. The anomalous item for a pair of lady's green silk britches indicates that there was a woman in his household: housekeeper,

family member, we cannot tell. Presumably she would be responsible for making up the other items for his use. The cost of making these up, at £29 was eight times the cost of the fabric, at £4:10.

The total valuation was £526 s.10 by the notary, or £ 525 s.8 d.6 by the spreadsheet, an acceptably small accumulated error. This seems large, compared to the small business run by Bonifatia, who was actually in trade.

#### The Zalli Inventory 1655

This was not a post-mortem inventory. It records the entering into a partnership of Sgr's Bernardino Zalli and Angelo Giarbella, with a capital of £20,000, of which £10,000 is in merchandise and the other half is to be in notes in the merchant bank. It would seem that the majority of the capital is coming from Sgr. Zalli. The contract specifies that the partnership is to last for five years, and to be conducted in the house where Sgr. Zalli resided. Sgr. Giarbella was not to deal in any other cloth but that which was connected with the business.

The notary, unnamed in this case, has rounded the total value of the concern down by £670. That it is a rounding down is apparent from the evenness of the final figure given, £10,000. This is a significant margin, and may have been nominal to make the figure match the agreed upon capitalization. His arithmetic on the section listing the debts owed was perfectly accurate to the *soldo*, so we suspect a deliberate adjustment, rounding the numbers to facilitate the negotiations, or possibly a concealed payment, or maybe a hidden interest rate.

This is a particularly difficult inventory. Beside the length, the notary used spellings that appear non-standard even for the period. Many terms have not been found, or interpreted even with inspired guessing. We have to posit that the notary was particularly in the dark as to the nature of the business and the denominations of the goods. At lines 377-378 and 379-380 there are clear errors, in that satin from Bologna and *damaschino* from Bologna are priced the same for bolts and *braccia*. The prices, £8 s.10 and £12 s.10, look appropriate for one *braccio*, not a bolt of these expensive cloths.

As well as the extensive and varied list of mercery products, they were also dealing in housewares such as desks, wooden spoons, cups, tobacco pouches, chisels of two sizes by the dozen, and even a backgammon set. Also, we find iron and steel wire in various gauges and qualities, sold by the pound and ounce. In Zalli's shop is a list of tools and shop furniture, without values given. Apparently he was bringing this lot into the partnership.

Beyond that, we see that the business was very active, not only in the strict sense of mercery, i.e. goods concerning apparel, but also what seems to be general hardware and home supplies. There are three separate sections, one for the actual shop merchandise and furnishings, one for household goods, which have not had values assigned, and a smaller third section of the debts owed by Bernardino Zalli to other businesses and individuals.

In addition there is a short list of the debts that Zalli had incurred that were to be paid from the business. There are fifteen line items to merchants in various cities around

northern Italy, from Milan to Bologna. The list of outstanding debts is interesting in that it demonstrates the intercity, which in that age meant interjurisdictional, nature of Bernardino Zalli's affairs. It also gives some insight into some of the current exchange rates. The Parman *lira* was worth 83.5 % of its Piacenzan counterpart, and 49% of the Milanese. (Although Parma and Piacenza were both part of the Farnese state, and close to each other, they maintained their historical divergent units of measure and currency.) He also had outstanding debts to Mantuan, Parman, Bolognese, Creman, Salònese and Reggian individuals, and also some who were listed only by name, including one lady and a knight, and an unnamed Jew in Mantua. The sums for all of these creditors were listed in Parman currency. There are fourteen creditors, ten from other places than Parma. Also notable is the complete absence of the upper and lower classes. The total for the accounts as shown by the notary came to £8,551 s.5, the spreadsheet total was the same. The difference in Table 7 is due to neglecting the *soldi*, and rounding the averages. This degree of accuracy here reinforces the speculation that the round figure for the inventory was formalized, possibly to hide something.

<b>Table # 7 Social Ranks of Accounts in Zalli Inventory, 1655</b>			
Rank	number	£ amounts (rounded)	£ averages.
Clergy including Nuns	0	0	0.00
Feudatories, Top Aristocrats, M&F	0	0	0.00
Upper Middle Class: Lower Aristocrats, Rentiers, Lawyers, Officers etc, Men	1	392	392.00

<b>Table # 7 Social Ranks of Accounts in Zalli Inventory, 1655</b>			
Upper Middle Class: Lower Aristocrats, Rentiers, Lawyers, etc, Women	1	22	22.00
Lower Middle Class, Master Craftsmen, Merchants, etc, Men	12	8303	691.92
Lower Middle Class, Master Craftsmen, Merchants, etc, Women	2	156	78.00
Lower Class Men	0	0	0.00
Lower Class Women	0	0	0.00
Totals: raw	16	8873	554.56

#### The Baistrocchi Inventory 1657

This is a brief inventory of the shop of a bleacher and leather gilder (or is that a leather bleacher and gilder? The syntax leaves room for unclarity) who also worked in silk. The items are mostly used household and shop furniture rather than new merchandise. The notary's hand is very clear, but his columnization of the amounts leaves something to be desired. He has mostly not given item values, just line totals, so it was necessary to back-compute to get many of the values.

The preamble to this inventory is very brief, merely mentioning that is a "listing of the things which concern Sgr. Camillo Baistrochi of his own share." It does not enlighten us about whether the maestro was deceased, or entering into or dissolving a partnership, or anything much more than that. It does tell us that he was a 'bleacher and leather gilder.' Whether these were two occupations, or separate aspects of one, is indiscernable. What is clear is that he had in stock an amount of gilded leather, 127 sheets, at 16 *soldi* each, with some stock of metals, pewter, brass and copper in sizeable pound lots, valued

in *soldi*/pound. In preparing this inventory for analysis, we have had to work backwards to derive the values and totals.

The inventory details a list of household furnishings, bed sheets, clothing, kitchen equipment, small arms, pictures, etcetera, all in the small quantities that would indicate they were the personal effects of the householder and family. Values are given on these items, which may be those provided by the *rigatieri* for used goods. There is also shop equipment for silk work: six spinning wheels, a warper for setting up a loom, a set of balances for weighing silk and a pair of winders, some specialized equipment for making ormessine, and chests to store it in,( thus occasioning the removal of Iran from the list of sources from here on) a set of scissors and a yardstick for silk. The loom in question was one of a type used for cendal, a fine silk fabric. There is also a set of balances for weighing gold and a large stalyard for weighing heavier items. There was a grindstone. As mentioned above there were valuable metals, 64 pounds of copper at s.30/lb, 50 pounds of pewter also at s.30/ lb and 16 pounds, 6 ounces of brass at s.36/lb. Maybe these were stock for leather-gilding. There were 127 sheets of gilded leather, and some skeins, wound and prepared, of silk, valued at 60 *Lire* for the lot. Clearly Maestro Baistrocchi was not done with the leather gilding trade. Possibly his wife or other family members were the silk workers, or the three looms were to be rented out to outside producers. The total valuation for the inventory was £3,028, written out, not given in numbers. The value computed by the spread sheet was £2,807 s.8.

### The Riccardi 1658 & 1659 Inventories

The 1658 inventory has only one line of preamble, indicating that it is an inventory for the late Sgr. Giovanni Riccardi and company, including remnants and flawed material. It is quite brief, only 72 lines. Its format is useful in one way, it has a separate column for the sources of each of the items, which permits sorting on places of origin. Fifteen points of origin are entered, most of them within Italy, Germany, Flanders, San Gallo (which we are taking as the town in Switzerland rather than a type of fabric or the kind of cut lace otherwise known as *broderie anglaise*.) One entry is ambiguous; line 21 is *fratesco*, which usually means ‘monk’s cloth’ a type of coarse, mixed fibre fabric used for monks’ robes, a big market. In that column, however, possibly it indicates sourcing from a monastic industry.

The preamble to the 1659 inventory, in simplified Latin rather than the Italian of the body of the document, states that Giovanni Riccardi, one of the principle partners in the firm, along with Matteo Riccardi and Pietro del Santo, had died. His will specified his brother, Lorenzo, as his universal heir. Lorenzo wished to sell his share of one third of the capital, specifying that total value at £ 30,587:15. His share was therefore worth £10,195:15 by the notary’s count. This explains some of the anomalies in the inventory itself, in that the total at the top, minus the 1/3 rd share amounted to £ 20,381:9, which amounts to the final figure given at the bottom of the inventory of £20,184:1:6 to within a rounding error of £297:6:6.

There are some surprising items. Line 54 for example lists ‘black and coloured cloth’ from San Gallo at £27:10 per *braccio*, a very high price. We might not be surprised

if it were for a particularly rich silk brocade, or other high value material, but there is no such indication at this line. At another place, local cover cloth is listed at £1 /*braccio*, but quilted cover cloth is at £27, which gives a hint as to the added value of such items. Also problematic are certain entries that seem to indicate silk thread or fibre, measured by weight, rather than length as would be the case if it were woven cloth, yet designated ‘embroidered’. There would be no issue if the designation were ‘for embroidery’, which would indicate a thread or fibre. As it is, however, questions arise.

The 1659 inventory, by contrast, is a list of outstanding accounts, more than 250 of them. The accounts are with persons from all levels of society from the highest on down. The total credit in the 1659 inventory, as given by the notary, is £30,587:6, and our total was £20,401:6:6, a difference of £10,186:5:6, about 30% of the true value. The listed persons are designated as ‘creditors’ but it is apparent on examination that these accounts are of accounts receivable rather than debts owed.

<b>Table # 8: Social Ranks of Accounts in Riccardi Inventory, 1659</b>			
Rank	number	£ amounts (rounded)	£ averages.
Feudatories, Top Aristocrats, M&F	7	5051	721.57
Upper Middle Class: Lower Aristocrats, Rentiers, Lawyers, Officers etc, Men	75	7112	94.83
Upper Middle Class: Lower Aristocrats, Rentiers, Lawyers, etc, Women	11	381	34.64

<b>Table # 8: Social Ranks of Accounts in Riccardi Inventory, 1659</b>			
Rank	number	£ amounts (rounded)	£ averages.
Clergy including Nuns	48	2770	59.00
Lower Middle Class, Master Craftsmen, Merchants, etc, Men & Women	55	2586	47.02
Lower Class Men	75	2439	32.52
Lower Class Women	5	63	12.60
Totals:	276	20339	73.69

In the F category, we find the very top of Parman society *The Serene Prince Alessandro Farnese* and *Her Highness, the Most Serene Duchess*, although their accounts, at £ 1,212 and £1,360:5 respectively, are not the largest individual debts. That honour rests with *Il. Sgr. Marchese Pietro Francesco Bergonzi* at £1,750:17:6.

As with any such tabulation, there are a few gray areas. One is including in the Upper Middle Class/Male group *Sgr. Alessandro, Factor for the Ursulines*, who did not have a clergyman's designation as he was a businessman working for the Ursulines, a cloistered order. Was the account his personally, or theirs, requiring an entry under clergy? We should also note that among the Lower Middle Class list, there were items for both goods and cash loans. We can speculate that many of these were holding materials for finishing under the putting-out system. One, for *M. Giacomo Antonio Gobbi, for the attic*, suggests rental on a work space.

### The Corradi 1661 Inventory

The Corradi inventory of 1661 is a post-mortem. The widow and heir of the Magnifico Signor Jacobo Corradi, Magnifica Donna Danesia Corradi is holding the estate for the son, not named. (Magnifico/a was a designation for wealthy merchants). The items are mostly cloths, in bolt and *braccio* quantities. There is a quantity of lead seals. These would be put on bolts of finished cloth to certify the quality and quantity of the goods, and would have been used on fabric being shipped abroad.<sup>155</sup> The other side of the international trade was that the fabrics on offer were from widely spread sources. Other than whatever was implied by those seals, the business seems to have been entirely retail.

In this long post-mortem list, we see clear examples of one of the major difficulties in this type of work, that is, differentiating between products with similar names. An instance here is between *vallesina* and *vallessi*. Our glossary makes it clear that these are in fact different products, possibly named after different places of origin. Careless transcription would be tempted to make them the same in English, but the first one is a type of lace from, or in the manner of, Valenciennes in Brabant, or possibly Valais in south-west Switzerland, with a sub- definition of a type of women's dress, often found in dowry lists. The other one is a mixed- fibre fabric from, or in the manner of, the canton of Valais, Switzerland. In this inventory we find several entries for them named separately, all priced by the *braccio*, none by the unit, so not the made garment option. This precludes confusion: in other inventories the distinction is more difficult to make.

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<sup>155</sup> Geoff Egan, "Lead Seals for Textiles—Some Archeological Evidence Relating to Fabrics and Trade" Costume 22, (1989), 39.

We suspect that the notaries may not have been totally *au courant* with the distinctions, and simply inscribed something that sounded like what they were told was the name of the item. We have entered them in the master sheet in both the **Lace** and **Made Cloths** sections, in an attempt to differentiate, at least by unit price, lace being costlier than mixed fibre cloth. Notwithstanding, there remains some confusion and ultimate clarity may always elude us.

The inventory details the goods in the shop, with amounts and prices, as well as some unvalued household and shop furnishings. The errors in the totaling on these two documents verge on being disturbing. The 1661 inventory gives a total value of the merchandise on hand of £23,604:12, while our total for the same inventory, derived using the spreadsheet's arithmetical functions, was £47,379:2:10, a difference of £23,775:2:10, an error on the close order of 50%. A previous generation of the Corradi, Sgr. Giovan-Battista, appeared in the 1636 tax roll with a capital of £6,000. The concern had grown seven-fold in twenty-four years, if the declarations were accurate renderings. The goods are mainly cloths in bolt and *braccio* measures with prices, and there are two valuers signing off on the values, a merchant, the Magnifico Sgr. Giovanni Sandri and a noble priest, the Illustrissimo Sgr. Giulio Accursi, Vicar of St. Nicola. There are 335 lines of merchandise items, not only cloths but also made garments, and items such as buttons, kerchiefs and slippers, fur gloves for men. There is also silk thread by the pound and ounce. Still the overwhelming majority is in fabric, 170 of the 335 lines, and 31 lines of buttons of various types and grades, all in dozens. The quantities and types of goods suggest that the business was strongly, if not primarily, concerned with wholesaling to

tailors or retailers, but it is likely that the goods would also have been purchased by home-makers or housekeepers engaged in family tailoring. There were remnants of *vallessina* and other items suggesting that some cloths were cut to order, not just dispensed by the bolt. The listing of items by the *braccio*, 153 lines, would reinforce that assessment.

There were eleven lines for britches for men, women and boys, from Mantua, Fabriano in the Marches, and even Flanders. Stockings and sleeves for men and women, camisoles for ladies and girls and garments for one and three-year olds, all suggest retail sales to families.

Some lines indicate fabrics in seals. These would be put on bolts of finished cloth to certify the quality and quantity of the goods, a method widely used from the 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries to regulate quality and taxation. They would have been used on fabric being shipped abroad. Customs houses would attach them to certify the payment of duty. Geoff Egan notes that seals originating in England had been found as far away as Hungary, and seem to have the names of Dutch or German middlemen on them, The seals were made in two, sometimes four parts, folded around the edge of the fabric and a rivet on one side pushed through and flattened on the other.<sup>156</sup> The seals would have to be destroyed to be removed, thus mitigating fraud. Some of the fabrics in seals such as *terzinos* from Gramezza and Calistano, villages in the Appenines just south of Parma and others were all local. We may have indications here of the putting-out trade going both ways through the city gates.

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<sup>156</sup> Egan, "Leaden Seals," 50 and 51 *fn* 3.

The originating sources of goods were widely spread, as mentioned, and this suggested creating a table:

<b>Table # 9: Origins of goods in Corradi Inventory, 1661</b>		
Places	Count	Values <i>Lire: soldi</i>
Piacenza	12	2153:19
Saxony	1	184:16
Bohemia	1	80:13
Romagna	1	196
Bergamo	7	1511:6
Cadiz	2	437:16
Germany	5	951:17
Varese	1	429:15
Fornovo, near Parma	1	16
Arbanzano <sup>157</sup>	1	9
Cremona	4	446:4
Crema	2	178:14
Mantua	4	117:5
Ülm	3	274:7
Remoro, near Piacenza	2	78
Rheims	8	214:10
Fanano, in the Emilia, near Parma	3	59:13

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<sup>157</sup> The only location on the map of North Central Italy that resembles this name is Arbizzano, which is just north of Verona in Val Policella.

<b>Table # 9: Origins of goods in Corradi Inventory, 1661</b>		
Places	Count	Values <i>Lire: soldi</i>
Viadana, on the Po	1	96:16
Fabriano	2	138
Flanders	1	108:10
Graminazzo, on the Po, nearby	1	\$0.05
Roccabianca, on the Po, nearby	1	\$0.30
Verona	4	60:18
Padua	1	30:10
Bologna	7	280:3
Milan	3	42:11
Grameza	1	0.79
Calistano, local	1	0.25
Marolla, south of Reggio Emilia, nearby	1	0.05

The entries are in the order in which they appear in the inventory. The item for Cadiz was made on the assumption that the eponymous fabric ‘*cadis*’ actually originated on the southern tip of Spain, but it may have been an imitation. Similarly ‘*renso*’ was originally designated as coming from Rheims, whether in fact these particular exemplars actually did. ( The reasonable prices; ranging from £1 s.18 to £2, s.15/ braccio for the *renso*’s, and s.31 & 30 for the *cadis* might suggest local origin, with no long distance freight charges.) “San Gallo’ on the other hand, as has been discussed, is so ambiguous that it was omitted as an origin. This extensive sourcing indicates that the Corradi were engaged in international trade in significant volume.

There is also a list of utensils, without valuations, listed as being in the house of Signora Anna, the guardian. They include benches and ladders, a steelyard, a two-arm balance with weights and another balance for weighing gold, and an iron for attaching to the steelyard, with weights. There is a bench for spooling, with a hammer and two anvils and shears for depilling silk stockings. These are clearly production tools for use in the trade.

#### The Tirelli Inventory, 1664

This inventory was available in a hand-copied version. Unfortunately, it does not include prices or totals, only names of items and quantities. As a result we are not able to include the prices on the master spread sheet, except for one or two items. Most of the items listed are household furniture and furnishings. The inventory states that it is the furniture found in the will of Sgr. Murzio Tirelli, some of which was found in the house with his brother, Sgr. Gioseffo Tirelli and part with Sgra. Orsola Calla, Murzio's wife "in repayment of a loan." There is a listing of tablecloths, some of which were old and worn, but others were still being made and twelve were new, of hemp cloth, with one 'loaned to Orsola.' Were man and wife estranged and living apart? Was Sgra. Orsola working at a separate business from her husband?

The ribbons, buttons and other stock indicate a retailing, rather than manufacturing venture. The credit of £ 2,592 with the parish of SS Agostino & Pellegrino indicates that there had previously been disposable income to loan to the Church, as well as religious sentiment. As we do not have previous accounts from this concern, we cannot determine whether that sentiment was excessive, or may have led to a subvention that

could have weakened the business. On the other hand as these items are all household goods, it may be that this is a post-mortem inventory of a householder not directly engaged in retailing, but possibly in tailoring. The quantities of goods would be small if a retail venture, but might be intended for more direct usage. As we do not have the preambles, this remains unresolved.

The few items that do have prices listed for them include five bolts of ribbons of various colours at £26/ bolt for a total of £130; some other ribbons by the *braccio* at £2 and 2 *soldi* per; and there is a card of 500 needles at 16 *soldi* for the card. Those are the only priced items. There are some other needles, also in cards, and some bodkins, in a card of 500, but with no price listed. These indicate the presence of a knitting or tailoring industry, confirmed in the census of 1636. It is difficult to imagine lots of that size being purchased for strictly household uses. There is an item for 19 pounds of linen from the spinner M. Carzoli “to be made into britches.” There are buttons, both linen and hide covered, in lots of dozens. There are also narrow bands in multiple *braccia* lots and hide strings by the dozen. All these trim items would seem to reinforce the tailoring speculation.

#### The Donelli Inventory, 1676

This is a post-mortem inventory for the estate of Sgr. Carlo Donelli in the account of his wife Sgra. Barbara. It includes the shop merchandise, various accounts and the shop and household goods and furnishings. The first three pages are written in beautiful notarial hand, the remaining 13 in a hand of decreasing legibility, possibly not by one

person alone. Those first pages include the actual shop inventory with prices and totals. The rest wanders around accounts with outside parties, assignments of legacy items and ends up with several pages of household and shop furnitures, with no values attributed. This list includes a large number of paintings of religious topics, more than we have seen in other inventories, telling us something about the Donelli family's loyalties. That the total inventory of the shop is included in three, (actually two and one quarter) pages, tells us that the business had been declining for some time without any replacement of sold merchandise. This might be expected when the proprietor had been ailing for a time, lacking the energy to continue trading, if there was no successor prepared to take the helm.

The trade goods include just three lines for silk, coloured, black, and flame coloured, by the pound, apparently avoirdupois, not troy, at 42 *soldi*; for the grade 12 coloured, at £5 s.7 d.6/pound; and £33/pound for the grade 6 black. There are two lines for floss silk, also by the pound, at £17 for the grade 6 coloured and £9 for the loose, crude grade 8. There are twelve lines for ribbons, silk, 'ordinary,' wool and linen, for prices ranging from £12 and 17 each for the silk ones, but anomalously s.7 for the silk extrawide. Narrow wool ribbons were going for £3 s.10 and linen ones for £1 s.5 for extrawide and £1 for narrow. There were cords to make lace and silk cords. There were linen napkins at £1 s.8 for large bleached and £1 s.5 for narrow.

There are lines for *passamano* silk lace at prices that seem anomalously low, 3, 2 and 4:6 *lire per braccio*. This would seem more appropriate pricing for an inch. Possibly the notary made an incorrect notation for the quantity. Silk buttons were priced at £12 per

dozen from Massina (sic) and £8 from *nipon*, possibly Japan?. ‘Massina’ was probably Messina in Sicily, a silk centre of European importance, but one not encountered before in these inventories. Linen buttons were three *soldi* the dozen. Buttonholes, finished in silk were d.20 each. Cloths were variously measured in bolts and *braccia*. Cloth imported from Ülm went for s.35/*braccio*. Cloth listed as *della villa*, presumably made on a country estate nearby, went for s.23/*br*. ‘Low’ cloth from San Gallo went for £22 per bolt or s.22 per *braccio*. If these items were of the same grade, we might adduce that the bolts were of 20 *braccia* or about 40 feet in length. ‘High’ cloth from San Gallo, part intact, part in remnants, went for £26/bolt. Whalebone was priced at s.3 the piece..

After the second page, there is a small notation in the same notarial hand on page 3 listing the *confidanti elletti* for the parties as Girolomo Donini and Gio. Inania. From then on it is a different, much rougher hand, maybe of one of the principals. This goes on almost totally illegibly for four more pages. It improves again on page 8 and notes that it is an “inventory of the goods, house, clothes, part divisible, part indivisible, furniture of the house and other items in the legacy of Carlo Donelli, made at the order of Snra. Barbara Campanini Donelli, his wife, as guardian and general trustee of the Signori(ni) Girolamo, Galtruda, Theresia, Catharina, and Brigida, brothers and sisters of Donelli, his sons both legitimate and natural, after the death of the Signor, and of the capital of the shop, cloth, picture, fustians of the same and the linen and buttons in the shop and to be returned, and of the two houses in the country as signed. Also an unused house, covered, with a shop corridor, and another little house, and other gifts and for other reasons and pertinences, in S. Paolo in the City of Parma and in the countryside”.... From this point it

gets harder to read again. There are subscripts of later dates seeming to detail some other furniture and bequests.

The total capital of the stock, apparently entirely retail, came to £3,723 s.10. d 6. Farther down, on page 9 is given a total evaluation of £4,000, and then later is another line adding £1,000, and there are entries seeming to note that payments are to be made on that capital at 6% to some family members.

#### The Emprini/Arnod Inventory, 1676

This inventory is of the business of M. Emprini and M. Arnod, made at the order of the brothers of Arnod, Mauricio and Antonio, who were workers in the company. The preamble, several pages long is almost totally illegible. The actual list of goods is more readable, but there are many errors in the arithmetic, line by line. Some pages are explicitly of goods priced in French money. After a certain number of pages the totals are no longer explicitly in French money but the sums continue sequentially, so we assume that the entire document is in French currency, *Livres Tournois*. A number of the items are explicitly French goods, seemingly imported directly. M. Arnod's name is spelled that way in the early parts, but later, in the list of creditors it is spelled *Arnoud*, which indicates that he himself was French. Some of the creditors have French names. We can conclude that a great, possibly preponderant, amount of the trade was with France. As we shall discuss below, there was an international change in fashions by 1650, away from the Hispano- Italian and toward the French styles. We are seeing here a flowering of the tendency, remarked on earlier, toward the internationalization of the trade. Not only are

Parmans doing business across borders, but it appears that international entrepreneurs are establishing themselves in Parma.

On other pages, there is an interesting variation, in that some line items are computed down to fractional *denarii*. The notary uses the % sign, or an early variant on it, which we have remarked elsewhere seems to have been coming into usage about this time. Pages 63, 64 and 65 are heavily overwritten and in a less legible hand than most of the others and so are difficult to translate. P.63 is in Italian and pp. 64 and 65 are in Latin. The calculations are in some cases done to a degree of precision unusual in these documents, often computing price totals to the half *denaro*. This may have resulted from computing exchange rates.

Some of the terms for goods remain obscure, and have so far resisted interpretation, *Pareballotte, deabe*, on page 46 seem to be descriptions of types of muslin, based on the column heading, and so we have entered them but there is no assurance. *Tailla da Picardia Tailla da hollanda and Tailla di Arras* may be references to types of cut lace, and have speculatively been entered as such, but with reservations. As their unit prices per ell are two to three times greater than the muslin items above them this may be valid. In the note, repeated on most pages, indicating that the items are in “Money of France”, “France” is sometimes spelled *Franza* and sometimes *Francia*. Possibly two notaries prepared the list, while the final draft was inscribed by a copyist who simply reproduced what was in front of him.

In a totally separate section of the inventory are totals for goods in Parman money and accounts for creditors in Parman money. The business seems to have had two

separate sections, one dealing in French money, to French clients, and possibly long distance to France, and another dealing locally to Parman clients in Parman money. There seems to have been also a Bolognese connection, as two of the accounts are in Bolognese money, with equivalents in Parman. The exchange rate was 3:1 in favour of the Bolognese *lira*. The last page lists the loans made by Arnaud to the firm, partly in French money with the equivalents in Parman *lire*. This figure gives a ratio of 4:1.82 in favour of the French currency. In the accounts outstanding in Parman funds, there were four to lace makers. The total of debt to outside creditors was £3,195 s.13. d..5.

There is the usual list of outstanding accounts, including some to the ‘women who make black lace’ and those that make lace that the masters in the mountain that are white lace.’ Whatever that phrase actually means, we see that work was being contracted out. Three of these were for funds to be recovered, indicating perhaps that, at least in this highly valued product, the putting-out business was not wholly extinct. Those accounts total to £3,033 (notary’s) or £3,033 s.10 (ours.) Another group of accounts was summarized, then marked down 20% maybe because considered uncollectible. The final, all-up value placed on the concern was £13,349 s.16 d.10.

<b>Table # 10 Social Ranks of Accounts in Emprini/Arnod Inventory, 1676</b>			
Rank	number	£ amounts (rounded)	£ averages.
Feudatories, Top Aristocrats, M&F	0	0	??
Upper Middle Class: Lower Aristocrats, Rentiers, Lawyers, Officers etc /Men	1	28	28.00

<b>Table # 10 Social Ranks of Accounts in Emprini/Arnod Inventory, 1676</b>			
Upper Middle Class Women	1	59	59.00
Clergy including Nuns	0	0	??
Lower Middle Class, Master Craftsmen, Merchants, etc. Men	7	600	85.71
Lower Middle Class, Master Craftsmen, Merchants, etc. Women	2	73	36.50
Lower Class Men	21	2175	103.57
Lower Class Women	5	147	29.40
Totals:	37	3082	255.19

In the case of this inventory, deriving the average price of dry goods was complicated by the fact that the majority of the values were listed in French money, and the lengths were in ells, or *alla*. As noted in the section on measures, these were probably the Franco-Italian ells which Kenneally denotes as 114cm. As this is almost exactly twice the Parman *braccio* of .565 m. we could normalize these as 2 *braccia*. Similarly, as the *Livre Tournois* was derived from the inventory at an exchange rate of 4.18 to the Parman *Livre*, the prices could also be normalized. The two operations together allowed us to arrive at an average comparable to the averages for the other inventories.

The average price of Parman sourced goods was £ 4 s.12 d.10.6 /braccia or £59 s.611 d.4/ bolt. For French goods the average prices, after normalization to Parman measures and money, were £11 s.5 D.1.6/ braccia. There were only two entries for French bolt goods, two *camellotti* at 22 and 24 *Livres Tournois*/bolt, but as we have no ideas of the comparative size of French and Italian bolts, we can only note that this translates as

P£ 92 s.4.d.2.4/ bolt. There were also some items priced by the French foot and by the *passo*, in fact there are three items in each category. The French foot, slightly longer than the English foot at 32.48 cm, or about .6 *braccio*, was easily normalized to Parman measure, giving an average price of £9 s.12. Five French feet gives 162.4 cm, close enough to 162.15 for three Parman *braccia*, and a ratio of 3:5. The normalized value of these goods in Parman money and measure comes to £4 s.2 d.2.4. We see here, the same problem the notary had to deal with, namely that the calculations left us with fractional *denarii*. We see further evidence of foreign influence.

A negatively salient feature of this inventory is the total lack of household goods. This indicates that the retailing venture was completely separated from the residential facilities of the principals, a further feature of the transition from an early modern to a fully modern style of retail operation, which marks a convenient stage to move to our third section.

### **Third Period 1684 -1739:**

#### **Into the Abyss!**

In the third period of our study the Italian industrial collapse was well underway. By 1680 both North and Central Italy were backward and depressed, manufacturing had collapsed, there was overpopulation relative to resources, and agriculture was the dominant sector. In Milan, for example, where in 1600 there had been sixty to seventy firms making wool cloths, in 1682 there were five, and by 1700 only one. Where at the end of 16<sup>th</sup> century there had been 500 firms working silk cloth and cloth of gold, by the

18<sup>th</sup> century there were only 32.<sup>158</sup> By that time Italy was importing manufactures and exporting foods and partly processed goods. The population, which had been about twelve million in 1600, and had been strongly hit by the plagues of 1630 and 1659, rebounded to about thirteen million in 1700.<sup>159</sup> The interglacial period, 1681-1740, meant that the Little Ice Age was hitting less hard than it had previously, or would later, only ending in 1890.<sup>160</sup>

Changes in the methods of organizing production were in full flower across Europe. The putting-out method whereby city merchants advanced raw materials and machinery to workers, usually rural, had strongly advanced everywhere in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This put money in the hands of rural people, and brought them into the commercial network, and doubled the wool cloth production in Florence between 1700 and 1740.<sup>161</sup> On the other hand it brought about a flight of industry from the cities, a factor in the crisis of the silk spinning industry in Milan.<sup>162</sup> A deskilling process probably went hand in hand with the crisis.

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<sup>158</sup> Cipolla, Economic Decline, 196-7.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 211-212.

<sup>160</sup> Emmanuel LeRoy Ladurie, "History and Climate" in Economy and Society in Early Modern Europe: Essays from *Annales* ed. Peter Burke (New York: Harper, 1972), 159.

<sup>161</sup> Malanima, Il Lusso, 86.

<sup>162</sup> A. M-L. Trezzi, "A Case Study of De-Industrialization of the City: The Silk Mill of the City and Duchy of Milan from the Seventeenth to the Eighteenth Centuries" in The Rise and Decline of Urban Industries in Italy and the Low Countries (Late Middle Ages - Early Modern Times) ed. Herman van der Wee 139-151. Leuven: Leuven University Press. 1988.

Part and parcel of this tendency, the industry, like others, fell increasingly into the hands of merchants rather than craft masters. Largely this was in response to international demand. The original guild masters had worked “to demand” rather than “to price” in supplying their local, urban markets. The increasing presence of international demand required a focus on competitive pricing, which in turn led to breaking up the productive processes into single activities at each workplace, the stages being shifted around to the cheapest work sites, whether non-guild urban or rural workers. A centralized controlling presence was necessary to co-ordinate what Basini has called a “decentralized factory.” These were the *mercatores qui faciunt laborare*. In this process the guild masters lost independence and became essentially wage labour, at the mercy of the merchants, who were at the position closest to the market.<sup>163</sup> These ‘drapers’ stored the raw fibre and finished work in their houses, where the workers would assemble for production. Basini is careful to remark that the situation was somewhat more nuanced than this seems at first glance. For one thing, many of the trade masters became merchants themselves, and all of the workers were connected with a network linked by commercial organizations.<sup>164</sup> As we go through the inventories in the third period, up to 1739, we will observe this trend toward the centralization of the trade in the hands of larger, more strictly mercantile houses.

This was not a trend that affected only the industries that produced and dealt in

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<sup>163</sup> Giorgio Borelli, “A Reading of the Relationship between Cities, Manufacturing Crafts and Guilds in Early Modern Italy,” in Guenzi, Massa *et al.* 19-21.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 26.

fabrics and apparels, but was generalized throughout many industrial sectors. Gian Marco Belfanti provides an apposite description of the same forces at work on the firearms industry centred in Brescia over the same period. Centralization and ‘rationalization’ of the weapons industry, which previously had supplied the armies of Europe, resulted in a slow collapse of the small workshop system and ultimately the loss to the industry of its dominant position. He remarks that the small craftsmasters were not able to resist because they lacked capital to hold out through periods of low demand, and also lacked the organizational skills necessary. Even subsidies and other interventions by the Venetian state could not keep this industry alive.<sup>165</sup>

Style preferences were changing even for home consumption, with French fashions and luxury items being preferred.<sup>166</sup> English and Dutch concerns were taking charge even of the rural production systems in Italy, as well as other aspects of the commercial system. Although the export of raw silk and silk yarn was growing, to the point that by 1770 Italy was supplying two thirds of the silk fibre used in Europe,<sup>167</sup> the export of silk cloth was declining. In part this was due to such external historical factors as the settlement in England of Huguenot weavers who left France after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which had provided them with security, in 1685. English silk cloth production took off, to the detriment of the Italian,<sup>168</sup> but by this time the Mediterranean

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<sup>165</sup> Belfanti, “A Chain of Skills,” 266-283.

<sup>166</sup> Hanlon, Early Modern Italy, 334.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>168</sup> de Divitis, English Merchants, 140-141.

had long been a target of aggressive exporters from the North, England and Holland particularly.<sup>169</sup> The French fashion industry took off after 1660.

The general economic crisis hit most sectors hard, but the luxury goods were particularly harmed. The decline was general across Italy by 1688. The export of raw materials meant that the same goods were being reimported as finished products, and the finishing skills were being lost.<sup>170</sup> Our third period up to 1739 takes us well into this era of decline, from which Italy was not to recover for a century and a half. We shall also see, as mentioned above, an increasing tendency to engage in trade outside the borders of Parma or the Farnese state, and even a major presence of French-backed dealers in the Parman trade.

The total capitalization of the seven inventories in the third session was £221,114; the largest was the Cornutti 1705 at £86,152; and the smallest was the Menocchii at £ 5,615.

The median was the Cornutti 1795 at £20,872. the mode was in the £20,000 to £25,000 range; and the mean value was £31,587.

In the third period, there were seven inventories and a total of 126 named places, as seen in the table, and this averaged 20.83 references per inventory. Here we see 54 of the 126 were of Italian origin, less than half for the first time. Again, the caveat is that

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<sup>169</sup> de Divitis, *ibid.*, 30.

<sup>170</sup> L. Tesseyre-Salman, L'Industrie de la soie en bas Languedoc: XVIIIè -XVIIIè siècle (Paris: École des Chartes, 1995), 39-40.

many commodities were not detailed in their origins, and so can be presumed to have been locally sourced.

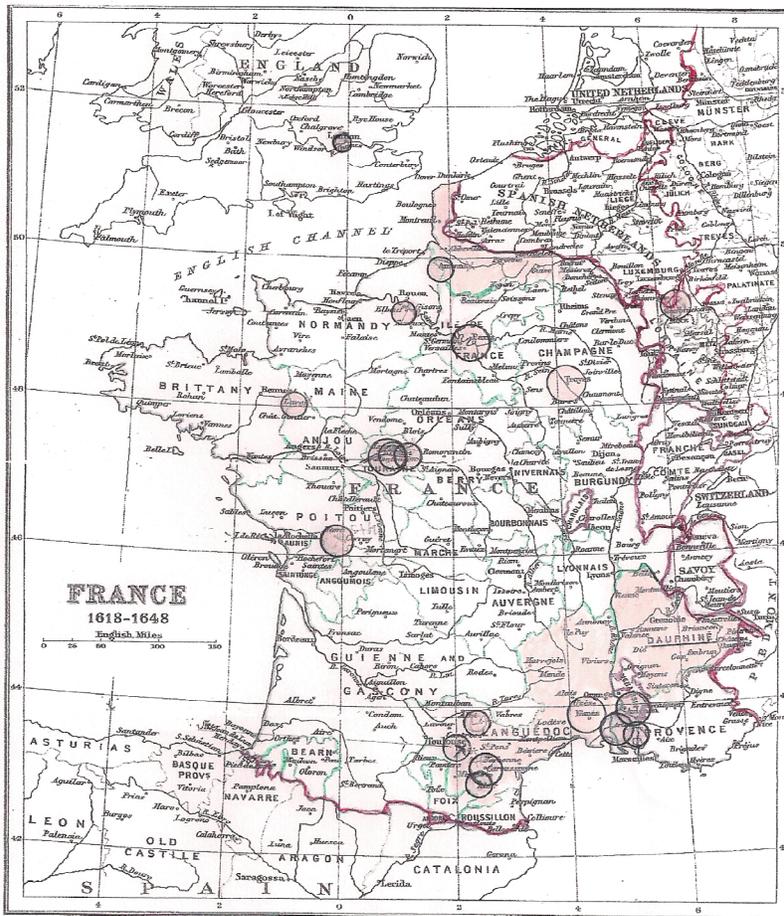
<b>Table #11: Sources of Goods, Third Period</b>								
Source	1683	1695	1705	1718	1719	1728	1739	Total
Belgium	1	2	2					5
Bohemia	1							1
China	1				1			2
Corsica					1			1
Dalmatia					1			1
England	1	1	2					4
France	2	16	13		3	1	1	36
Germany	1			1	5	3	3	13
Holland	1	1	1			1	1	5
India		1	1		1	1	1	5
Italy	9	9	8	8	15	4	9	62
Morocco		1	3		1			5
Spain	1				1	1		3
Switzerland			1	1	1			3
Syria						1		1
Count	18	31	31	10	30	12	15	147

The three largest entries, were from France, with 36 sources, Germany with 13 and Italy with 64. The French sources and the numbers of items were: Dauphiné, 30; Paris,23; Amboise/St.Amboise, 21; Troyes,18; Nîmes,17; Picardy,16; Avignon,13; Arles,8; St. Maixent,7 ; Carcassonne, 7; Elboeuf, 3; Limoux, 3; St. Affrique, 3,

Lacaune, 2; Laval, 2; Tours, 2; Amiens,2; Lyons,1; Salone, 2; Teritelle (not identified),1;  
Several of these were multiple occurrences, making the total 32. We see strong  
manufacturing districts in France: Languedoc, Dauphiné and the mouth of the Rhône in  
the South; and Paris, Picardy and Champagne in the North. The German sources  
were: 'Germania' (unspecified) 116; Ülm (Holme), 5; Augsburg, 4; Frankenthal 2;  
Bolzano,1; Nuremburg, 1; totalling 129. The English source was London, 2.

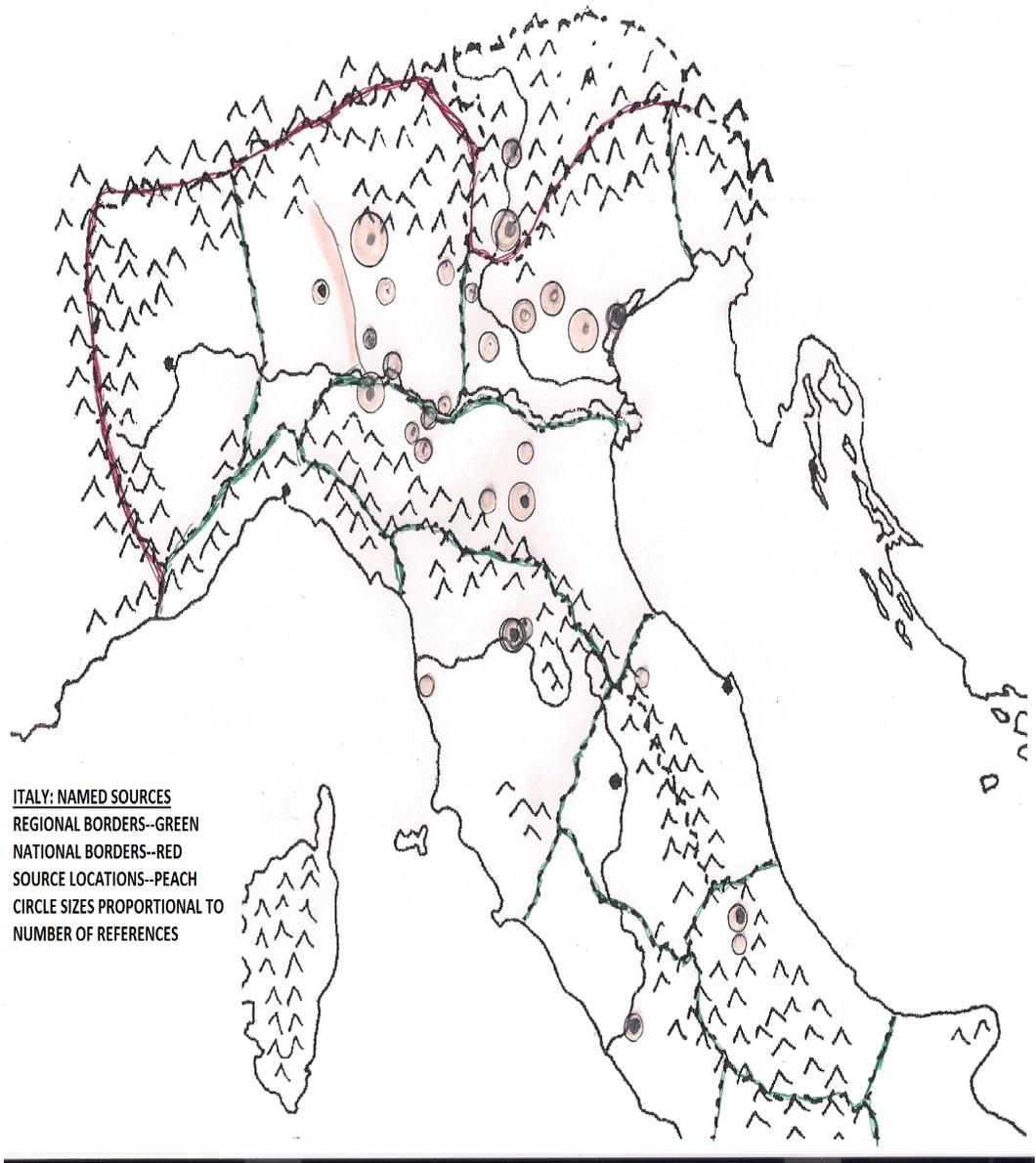
The Italian sources were: Bergamo, 112; Padua (style), 27; Piacenza, 19;  
Montagna, 16; Scio, 13; Ghiara (da Adda?),10; Bologna, 9; Florence, 7; Mantua, 6;  
Verona, 5; Brescia, 4; Cremona, 4; Fabriano, 4; Parma, 3; Rome, 3; Silegha,(Sardinia?)  
3; Salò, 2; Milan, 2; Venice, 2; Casalmaggiore, 1; Cento,1; Fiesole, 1; Fontenalato 1;  
Livorno,1; Matelica,1; Ostia, 1; Pergola,1; Roccabianca, 1; Samarano,1; Solferino, 1;  
Vignola,1; totalling 61. Here we see a concentration of sources, particularly in the Po  
Valley and other areas of Northern Italy, with lesser concentrations in the Veneto and  
Tuscany. Bolzano or Bōzen, although now in Italy, at that time was considered as in  
Germany. The nearest name to 'Silegha' in Italy is in Sardinia, but it may be Silesia in  
Germany.

Among the seven inventories in our third period, we see two sets of paired  
documents, each ten years apart, allowing us a degree of longitudinal perspective. The  
Cornutti inventories are from 1695 and 1705 and the Zucchi inventories are from 1718  
and 1728. We also have the Bedeschi inventory from 1684, the Menocchii brothers from  
1718 and the Zurlini from 1739. We can see from these how two family firms evolved in  
different directions. We will also see continue the expansion of long-distance trade.



**FRANCE: NAMED SOURCES**  
**PROVINCIAL BORDERS---GREEN**  
**NATIONAL BORDERS---RED**  
**SOURCE LOCATIONS---PEACH**  
**CIRCLE SIZE PROPORTIONAL TO # OF REFERENCES**

**Figure 1: France: Named Sources**



**Figure 2 Italy: Named Sources**

The Bedeschi Inventory, 1684

This is the post-mortem inventory of Sgr. Steffano Bedeschi. His goods are left to his son Sgr. Desiderio, consigned to Paolo Testi to negotiate and manage. There are

fourteen pages of goods, with another page as an addendum listing a line of credit brought into the business by Sgr. Steffano and some cash in hand. In checking the arithmetic on this inventory, several errors were discovered in the line items. One or two were not just errors, but were incomprehensible. The column check ignored these and only corrected the arithmetic of the totals as listed by the notary. The rounding off of the total to £18,000 might indicate that no more than a nominal accuracy was called for or expected, as the firm was being kept inside the family. In 1636 the Bedeschi firm was in the hands of Signori Girolamo, Desiderio and Bernardino and was worth £13,000.

The notary's hand is clear and legible. On some lines, and at the end of the notation on the last page, are some later corrections, which are visible because the ink has faded, whereas the ink on the body text is still quite black. Hard to know the reason without chemical analysis, but this serves as a reminder that inks could vary. What we do not see in this inventory is any indication that production work was being performed on a putting-out basis. There are no credit items for goods, credits or equipment to other households or shops outside of the Bedeschi premises. Also, unlike many other inventories, there are no long lists of accounts in the names of customers and patrons. Since many of the items are for raw materials it could be that this enterprise was concerned with distributing these materials to other shops on a cash basis.

There are nine lines of bolt goods, mostly Rheims-style linen but also ribbons, *quadretto*, San Gallo and high black tweed from Flanders which was the highest priced at £210/bolt, followed by a German *Stametto* at £55. Linen ribbons from Roccabianca nearby cost 10 *soldi*/bolt. There are 61 lines of *braccia* goods, of many varieties including

silk voile from Bologna at s.26/braccio, cendal at £5 /*braccio* and black wavy ormessine at £5.s.5. Locally- sourced floss silk was listed at £5 s.5 and the plain was £4 s.16. Many items were for remnants, indicating that cloths were being sold in cut pieces, and/or tailoring was going on in the shop. Remnants of serge from Bergamo went for £2 and £2 s.12/*braccio*. Similar material, also in remnants, from London went for £6 as did some from, or in the style of, *Salone*, that is, Salon-en-Provence. Serge from Amiens, in remnants again, was priced at £4. Camellotti remnants in various grades ranged in price from £5 to £2 s.10.

Among the made garments, we see britches from Fabriano for men at £3, and others at £2 s.15 and £1 s.5. from Piacenza , large and with stripes, £5, s.15. Thick underwear for ladies, crimson, was £5 s.10 and red, white, and maroon at £5, and for little girls, from CastelFranco in Emilia, near Bologna, £4. Ladies' camisoles went for £9, and little girls' 2 *soldi*.

The costs of making clothing items, even silk ones, exceeded the costs of the materials themselves. Silk britches of 14.5 weight, sold at £3 s.12 but the cost of making them was £6 s.10 the pair. In 10.5 weight silk the price was £2 s.16, but the cost of making was the same. Maybe the silk was priced separately and blended in with the making in the final pricing, but here they are listed sequentially.

*Passamano* lace hems and trimmings were found at 4, 3 or 2 *soldi/braccio*, peacock eye trim at s.3 and squared trim at s.6. All were stocked in hundreds of *braccia*. Floss silk was there at 18 *soldi* the ounce and silk thread on reels at £15 the pound. 'Royal' silk on reels was £25 s.10 the pound, or £30 in balls; second grade was £19, and

embroidery silk, for making cloaks and socks also £30.

There is no mention of any household equipment or real estate: nothing to indicate that any member of the family lived in or adjacent to the shop. On the last page, in the summing-up there is a line for credits that belong to Sgr. Steffano and brought into the business of £2,776 s5, another for the cash in his purse of £540, and 'all cash included in the present list' £5,209 s.10. The sum of the capital stock was £12,790 and the bottom line total, as mentioned above, was rounded to £18,000. The actual total of those lines, however, comes to £21,316 s.8. so we suspect a final total adjusted for convenience.

#### The Cornutti Inventories, 1695 and 1705

In these two inventories, for the same concern ten years apart, we see a family firm first apparently in full flower, but then ten years later winding up, still firmly on the profit side of the balance, and distributing its assets, a significant portion being outstanding accounts receivable. The documents are very informative, particularly the 1705 accounts. Each gives sums in more than one currency, i.e, French and Bolognese as well as Parman, and it is possible to gain some insight into the exchange rates at that time. In order to render this currency situation on the master sheet, we added columns to the left of each inventory item and entered the letters Bo. for Bologna, Fr. for France and Pr. for Parma to indicate the types of money the items were in.

The 1695 inventory does not give a final total, merely the listing of the goods, quantities and values, so we have been free to total the entire inventory on the spreadsheet. All the values are specified as in French money. There are no indications of

outstanding credits or debits in this inventory, nor does the preamble specify the reasons for taking the inventory, except that it was ordered by Sgr. Germano, brother of Signor Giovanni. We thus suspect a postmortem, and that Sgr. Giovanni left the firm intact and solvent. He also seems to have initiated the practice of dealing in foreign currencies, probably to facilitate trade with France. The next generation extended this to include Bolognese trade and currency, and apparently came a cropper.

The 1695 Cornutti inventory includes merchandise and shop tools, with the cloths mostly in ells, with the sources widely distributed. Some of the accounts and values are in Bolognese money. There are some personal items, such as hats and fans and bustières. There are braids, in silk, in silk with gold, sold by the dozen or by the ell, and there is bullion braid, that is, the military- type trim made by twisting gold or silver thread around silk filament. These are sold by the ounce, £ 4/oz for silver, £ 4. s.15 and £ 5 for gold. There is English ormessine, taffeta from Avignon and black lace from Paris, all in ells. Cloth from Picardy comes in bolts. Almost all of the cloth, even that which seems to be sourced in the local mountains is sized in ells, the influence probably of the increasing trade in both directions with France and the rest of Europe. The only major exception is a section of about 25 lines which was priced in Bolognese money. No conversion data is given. There is a consolidated item for all of the shop equipment and furniture. The total valuation is £ 20,328 s.14 d.1.

Several items were given in both Parman and Bolognese money, allowing us to make an estimate of the exchange rates by calculating the rates between each pair of values, aggregating the rates and dividing by the number of items. We get an average

figure of 3.46, mostly lying between 3.2 and 4.8, with outliers at 2.5 and 7.17. That is to say, an account of 80 *Lire* Bolognese was payable at 275 *Lire* Parman. We do not know why there is this spread of rates over the 55 items that are given with both values.

Possibly the accounts were negotiated at different times in accord with fluctuations of the exchange rates.

Similarly, near the end of the document, some accounts are given which convert French *Livre Tournois* into Bolognese *Lire*. This rate we do not have to compute, as it is given by the notary as 8. A trial conversion multiplying a sum in Bolognese *Lire* by 80% accurately gave the sum in *Livre Tournois*; that is, *Bo.*£978 becomes *Fr.* £780, neglecting *Bo.*15 soldi. Also in that section are debts given with an exchange rates of 110% to Parman money, but it is not clear if these were from French or Bolognese originally.

The bottom line of the inventory does not give a clear ‘bottom line’ in the modern sense, with grand totals of the assets and debits and a final profit or loss figure. We have discussed above the history of the negative number, which was not a concept in use at this period. The listing of outstanding credits at the top, plus the sense of the comments in the debt figures on the last page seem to indicate a final loss and pending closure of the concern. Many of the stock listings seem to be unchanged from ten years before, showing that these items had been carried unsold. We can also observe the greatly expanded level of trade and accounts in both French and Bolognese money from the previous inventory, and are tempted to speculate that the new management, or heirs of the previous owner had overextended and overestimated the possibilities of expanding the trade.

The Cornutti 1705 inventory is explicitly about the winding up of the same

company. It is denoted as the last inventory. It starts with a list of outstanding charges against the principles, in French and Bolognese money, with a derivable conversion of 80% in favour of the French. This is followed by a listing of credits, in Bolognese *lire*, converted to Parman at 3.46:1.

The list of merchandise largely recapitulates that from ten years earlier, indicating that the goods had not sold well, or in some cases, at all. The final total for the items priced in French money comes to £17, 984 s.10 with an error of less than 1.1 *livre*. The total of the Bolognese priced goods was £2,522 s.12 (notary`s) or £2,446 s.10 (spreadsheet). An overall total valuation of the firm assets minus debits, was not given.

Applying the above conversion rate, to the total in French currency we get £75,176 s.1 in Parman money. Additionally, in Bolognese money there was Bo £3651 s.7, which makes P£10, 974 s.19. The grand total then becomes P£86,152. This is by far the largest capitalization of the whole series. Regardless of the lists of unsold goods, the capitalization of the firm more than quadrupled over ten years. Possibly the principals, rather than saving what they could from a dying enterprise, were selling out to take their profits.

The 1695 inventory does not give a listing of outstanding accounts, but the 1705 one has an extensive and interesting outstanding credits list, including many of the highest ranked in Parman society, secular and ecclesiastical. There are the usual ambiguities, which we resolve by designating everyone with a *Signor* in front of their names as Upper Middle Class/Male unless there was also a military rank. In those instances where the debt was only given in Bolognese money, we have back calculated to

give the equivalents in Parman *lire* at the average rate of 3.46:1. The one item we find in Reggian currency we have entered as equal to Parman, as we do not have an exchange rate.

<b>Table # 12: Social Ranks of Accounts in Cornutti Inventory, 1705</b>			
Rank	number	£amounts (rounded)	£ averages.
Feudatories, Top Aristocrats, M&F	10	972	97.20
Upper Middle Class: Lower Aristocrats, Rentiers, Lawyers, Officers etc /Men	48	17551	365.65
Upper Middle Class Women	3	869	289.67
Clergy including Nuns	1	796	796.00
Lower Middle Class, Master Craftsmen, Merchants, etc. Men	4	1217	304.25
Lower Middle Class, Master Craftsmen, Merchants, etc. Women	0	0	??
Lower Class Men	0	0	??
Lower Class Women	0	0	??
Totals:	66	21405	324.32

At the end of the document, on Page 19 is a list of the outstanding debts, all in Bolognese money, except for two items specified as being in French Money, but converted into Bolognese at the rate of 80%, that is Fr.£780s.12 = Bo.£970 s.15. It specifies here that the French money is in fact '*tornesi*'. Two items were for small personal loans, also converted to Bolognese, but from Parman, and a total debt in

Bolognese £ was 1,038:15. “Our Basilio`s” part of the assets of Fr.£17,898 came to £8,949, 8% to be deducted by convention leaving him £8,233. For the amount for the goods and furniture, Bo.£2,522:12, Basilio`s part is £1,261, again deducting 8% leaving Bo.£1,160. There are some small items for goods that were still owing in French money. We see here the winding up of the firm while it is in a positive financial balance. Basilio was presumably a family member who was to be the recipient of a portion of the outstanding profits.

#### The Menochii Inventory, 1719

This is the inventory of the business and merchandise of the Signors Gio, Bat(is)ta and Giuseppe, the brothers Menochy. (This orthography occasions a further remark on the transitions in the language: the final letters of Menochii have the dots of two ‘i’s but the tail of the last one is curved under the prior one and joins it, creating a ‘y.’) The inventory is brief, only five double pages. The total capitalization is only £5,611 s.9 d.10. Although the document was filed in the state archives on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January 1718 by the notary, Maestro Carnevalini, it appears to have been actually drawn up by an attorney.

This inventory presents some difficulties due to Maestro Bertonelli the attorney’s habit of lumping items together into lots and giving only the aggregate prices, which makes arriving at the unit costs difficult. This official has also used the expression ‘per cent’, although written out and not symbolized. In some of the lines the arithmetical calculations seemed incomprehensible. Most of these clarified themselves when it was realized that the notary was calculating in decimals, but without an actual decimal point.

Sometimes decimal amounts were used in the *lire* or *soldi* columns, and occasionally in the count columns. Confusing the issue, the use of decimal sums and rates was sporadic, not consistent. Some items had the figures in the usual unit counts of items and monetary units. Possibly at this time the conventions had not yet matured, and he was still feeling his way toward a regular notation. There is a subscription from one Giacomo Colla, who testifies from his expertise as to the accuracy of the valuation, although he lists his status only as '*confidante eletto*' designated consultant for Giovanni . Similarly, Francesco Ottalli was consultant for Giuseppe. Apparently they were arm's length merchants brought in to assist with the inventory, a practice we have seen all through this study.

Among the items are quantities of sewing needles, knitting needles, brass shuttles and wooden strakes for corsets. There are no accounts for credit or to workers. It suggests that the firm was supplying materials to homeworkers, but not on a putting-out basis, especially as the needles are listed in sets and cards. Some of the items could be used in the manufacture of cloth, such as brass shuttles and the rushes used in cleaning wool, but the only production equipment mentioned is some winders and warpers, no looms. There were bases for the cauldrons used for making *bavella* and the cans used in this process, along with some *bavella* and cauldron remnants, suggesting that the shop had been in production at one time, or had bought up leftover material and equipment from other concerns. Whimsically, there were twenty violin cases and some jars and sticks of cinnamon, items not occurring in any of our other documents. There were the usual bolt and *braccio* goods, threads and floss and some made garments, such as lots consisting of a camisole, trousers and a pair of cotton and linen sleeves priced at £5 the lot, or white

britches, cotton and linen, 9 pair at £22 s.10 the lot. There are two pairs of men's silk britches at £27 coming to £ 54. There are also a few odd kerchiefs and aprons, but not much else in the way of made-up apparel.

#### The Zucchi Inventories.1718 and 1728

The 1718 inventory was produced to facilitate the sale of a business by the brothers Carlo and MarcAntonio Zucchi to Giacomo and Cristoforo Colla, also brothers. There is an assigned panel of expert valuers, Sgr. Giacomo Tondù chosen by the Zucchi and Francesco Ottali by the Colli. We note that Giacomo Zucchi had served as a valuer in the Menochii inventory. The sale encompassed equal parts coinage and funds. The notary was again Domenico Carnevalini, who registered the inventory April 13, 1718. The organization of the inventory is of interest. Stock numbers were assigned to the various fabric items, which were listed in coherent groups, with subtotals for the groups. This may reflect the assistance of the senior mercers who were assisting with the inventory. It may be that the Zucchi had organized their goods by stocknumber in a coherent fashion, which, in contrast to the rather disorganized documents from a century before, may reflect evolution in business practice. Made garments are interspersed among the numbered items, but do not have numbers themselves. All the subtotals for groups of items were collated and totaled at the bottom of the document giving a grand total of £58,000 closely agreeing with our total of £58,004 s.15. The 1636 tax roll includes an entry for Sgr. Gasparo Zucchi with a capital of £3,000. In fifty three years the capital of this family firm had increased by almost twenty times.

As well as merchandise there were shop equipment items, such as benches, some of which were listed as in the Zucchi home and in the homes of Sgr Panitti and Sgra Bulgari, so we can see that production was being undertaken as well as retailing. There was no listing of outside accounts.

The notary saw fit to specify that the sums were '*moneta di Parma*,' Several items, even some from Padua, are priced in Venetian *Lire*, and are converted to Parman, which gives us the exchange rate of Pa £1.6 : Ve£ 1 or in reverse Ve£1: Pa£0.63. There is an item specified as in Paduan money and measure, but the total is not converted; possibly an error conflating Paduan and Parman.

We also have a number of items in different measures which have been converted and so we find that the French ell was equal to 2 Parman *braccia*, the Milanese bolt had a length of 98.5 Parman *braccia*, that the goods from Nîmes were at 113 ells to 207 *braccia*; that German ells were at about 1.85 Parman *braccia*, the Florentine bolt was at 51.25 *braccia*, and that 257 Piacenzan *braccia* came to 236 Parman. Both of these types of relative values point up again the increasing internationality of trade as we enter strongly into the 18<sup>th</sup> century. A table of item sources will help:

<b>Table 13: Origins goods in Zucchi Inventory, 1719</b>		
Place	Count -lines	Values <i>lire: soldi</i>
Florence	38	2320:9
Arles	7	157:10
Nîmes	38	3739:12.5
Scotland	3	329
Dauphiné	26	2563:5.5

<b>Table 13: Origins goods in Zucchi Inventory, 1719</b>		
Place	Count -lines	Values <i>lire: soldi</i>
Piacenza	64	4600:8.5
Bergamo	97	7883:18.5
Milan	2	267
Germania	128	7698:16.33
Zurich	8	443:10
Bolzano	1	252
Verona	2	1484:6
Augsburg	2	1083:2
Cento	1	60
Dalmatia	1	46
Giara	9	310:12
Franckental	2	239:15
Rome	1	76
Nurenburg	7	369:10
Bologna	3	335:14
Morocco	2	270
Lyons	4	188
Padua	7	2408:15
Montagna	10	1179:3
“The North”	5	734:10

Some caveats about this list: It was not possible to identify the origins of every item, and only the fabrics and some leather were included, not the garments, of which there were few, and fewer of these with origins listed. The numbers of lines does not equal the number or types of goods, as the notaries listed individual pieces per line, but

all of one type, with a sub-total. The listing for 'Scotland' is for three entries for 'tweed', *Scotti* in Italian. By this late date, they might have been imitations from somewhere else. There were six sequential lines for Moroccan Leather; the last four specified 'Lyonnaise'(sic). As the first two were not otherwise specified, Morocco got the credit for them and Lyons for the others. Scio was in some listings with Montagna in the same line, but Montagna had some solo credits, and so was accredited with all those lines. We do not know if "the North" means Northern Italy or Northern Europe.

We see here a great amount of material from places far from Italy, particularly areas in Northern Europe. We have expected this as we get into the 18<sup>th</sup> century, both because of the general expansion of trade routes and contacts through the Mediterranean to and from the Northern countries and because of the general decline of Italian manufacturing and exports in the textile industries. What we also see here, that is antinomian to those expectations, is a very strong presence of materials from Italian cities. Piacenza shows very strongly, and by value Bergamo provides more than the whole of the nebulous region of *Germania*. Florence has made a strong showing in serges and reversible *scarlatini*, but we would have expected, after the Florentine wool industry's strength had collapsed and been replaced by silk,<sup>171</sup> that their strength would have been there. French towns from the Southeast, Arles, Nîmes, Lyons, and the Dauphiné region, have clearly made strong incursions into the Italian market place. German influence is beginning to rival the French, as the recovery from the 30 Years War sets in.

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<sup>171</sup> Goldthwaite, The Florentine, 547-548.

The 1728 Inventory is an assignment of goods from one of the next generation of Zucchi brothers, Pio, to another, Giovanni. The notary was Antonio Tarasconi. There is a latin subscript : “entered in the Public Archives of Parma in book ??? under letter C, this third day of January 1729. Signed Petro Villani, Atty.” The written style of the inventory is very neat, in a beautiful hand with only a few arithmetical errors. Clearly the Zucchi concern paid for a high quality job, probably from two drafts. This extra expenditure may account for preparation by an attorney rather than a notary. Unlike the previous one, however the goods were simply listed line by line, not arranged by groups with subtotals.

We notice that this inventory is very much reduced from the previous one, both in total values and in number of items. The inventory comes to £12,000 in the notary’s total, corrected by the spreadsheet to £12,022 s. 16 d.7. The correction was made on the line totals, neglecting some uncertainties in the line arithmetic. The first impression is that the company had fallen on bad times due to incompetence or misadventure such as economic downturn, but a closer examination reveals almost no overlap in the goods. The 1728 inventory items are pretty well all in Parman units and money, there are fewer types of items, and, because there are few in foreign measures or money, none that can be directly compared. This is not a final inventory for the firm, but just what the preamble line says, a consignment of goods, possibly acquired in a side deal somewhere, by one of the brothers to the other, to be blended in with the general stock of the business. This would explain the expensive quality of the document; they were not on their uppers and did not need to economize. It also displays a creditable measure of caution in that even within the

family they make sure that all transactions are properly recorded against disputes and differential memories down the line.

There are seventeen lines of bolt goods, druggets and sangallo, mostly, some from German towns, some from Verona, to a total value of £2,821 s.6. There are 16 lines for goods by the *braccio*, value £3,452 s.19. d.6, druggets, baizes, fustians, vallessinas and serges. There is silk on the reel, 142 pounds and some ounces, value £3,670 s.10, clearly the largest single price point. Outside of that are a few lines for made up garments such as britches and kerchiefs and a few random pieces of fabric.

Clearly the Zucchi family's involvement in the mercery business was passing on to the next generation, who were being careful to assiduously document transfers of merchandise from one of them to the other, as is only good business practice, even (or especially) between brothers.

#### The Zurlini Inventory, 1739

This inventory and valuation for sale were made for Sgr. Paolo Antonio Zurlini to Sgr. Carlo Antonio Albanesi, both of Parma. Notaries were chosen by agreement of both parties. The subscript at the end affirms that the valuations, if not the entire document, was prepared by mercers nominated as experts by the principles. These were Francisco Guercini, nominated by the Zurlini party and Giovanni Zucchi nominated by Albanesi, each qualifying his expertise as that of a 'public merchant of the city.' Eleven years on from the previous document and we see Giovanni Zucchi in a place of prominence and confidence.

There are a number of errors, listed as '*selia bona*' or error corrections. These amount to 15 lines out of the 126 that are actually line items for costs, greater than 10%. The corrections all seem to have been of underestimates. The first line item, for example is for coloured shoulder ribbons, with tips, 71 ounces at £4 s.7 each. The next line corrects by 4 units of 7 ounces, at the same rate, giving for the first line a total of £310 s,7 d.6 and the next line adding £30 s.12 d.6. The next line is for the making of 42 bundles of ribbons @ s.50 for a total of £105, and so on down for almost three pages, all listing ribbon bundles, with error corrections, and costs of making them up. The ribbons are not counted by the bundle, but by the ounce, and the costs of making up are by the bundle, with some variations, all librating around 50 *soldi*. Interestingly this is sometimes expressed in *soldi*, sometimes in *lire* as, for example £3 s.5. As the document came to the end of page four, the notary simply listed the total cost of making up the bundle, omitting the number of bundles. Overall, the cost of making up the bundles came to approximately one third of the corrected price of the ribbons. As these columns were all additive, the costs were being added on to the cost of the material, not an included portion of the price.

There are silk threads, by the ounce, and floss silk remnants and pieces, also by the ounce, both at £4 s.17 the ounce and other silk thread, warp and weft, on canes, at £5 s.18. There are silk handkerchiefs at prices ranging from £11 each for the ones in voile in persian style down to £3 s.10 for the ones in voile from Bologna. Various silk fabrics went for prices ranging from £5 s.5 per *braccio* down to £4 s.5. Cambric, the fine linen in weave #360 (the number indicates the number of warp threads in a given width; the higher the thread count number, the higher the quality) went for 40 *soldi/braccio*.

At least for this inventory the errors are caught and corrected, suggesting that this method of involving experts other than the notaries themselves results in a superior final document. The handwriting does deteriorate toward the end, suggesting exhaustion on the part of the preparer(s). The variations in the handwriting suggest that this is at best a second draft.

Among the line items are 25 for costs of making garments, mostly bundles of ribbons. There are some items just for fabrics, but the ribbon bundles, with tips or silver dots or other ornamentation are the majority. There are 14 line items just for bundles of ribbons, 10 for stockings and one for *valessio* silk for making stockings. The distribution suggests that this business was really more of a tailoring shop than retailing fabric. There is an item for pins for winding silk, apparently made of holly wood, at £10 each.

There are no lines for accounts outstanding, reinforcing the suspicion that this may have been a very small shop, possibly with only one or two persons staffing it. The total capitalizations, accurately computed, came to £16,000, obviously rounded from the spreadsheet figure of £15,999 s.2 d.1.

### CHAPTER 3: LIFESTYLES

In this chapter we examine the evidence from our inventories for the life-styles of the mercers of Parma during the time of our study. The inventories divide themselves fairly naturally into three periods; 1582 to 1631, 1654 to 1676, and 1683 to 1739. In each of these periods, some of the inventories include items that can be considered as household goods and furnishings rather than shop equipment. By looking at the details of these items, we can derive some impression of the domestic life of the small to medium commercial and/or industrial family. Some show evidence of longstanding prosperity, consonant with clientèles reaching to the apex of Emilian society. Others are of constrained circumstances, on a level hardly above cottage industry. Over the whole time under consideration, however, there are changes that appear.

We should take notice that the relationships between the entities denoted by “Household,” “Family,” and “Business” may not always be perfectly clear, particularly in the cases of the larger establishments whose real estate holdings were extensive, comprising more than one house, and apparently including servants as well as family members. Because the family members themselves may have been extensive groups, we do not know whether all of them were involved in the business aspects, or to what extent. Some may have had other activities, some maybe none. Likewise, where the household goods suggest the presence of servants, we cannot tell to what extent they were adjuncts to the trade, engaged, for example in weaving or spinning along with other duties. In some of the larger and later cases, such as the Emprini/Arnod, or even the earlier Barozzi,

the business premises may have been entirely separate from residence. In the case of the Zucchi, the family is clearly involved across generations, and in the later instance, between brothers in one generation. What we have not seen clearly indicated is the presence of non-family apprentices or journeymen, which we might expect in trade-oriented households. They may have been there, and subsumed under the utilizers of the numerous beds, chairs, benches and so on in the larger establishments. In the very small ones there was clearly no extra room for them.

### **The First Period.**

Of the five inventories that we have from the early part of our period, 1582 -1631 three of them give some indication of the life style and domestic arrangements of the mercers of Parma at that time. The scale of operations of the businesses and the households are radically different, and in proportion to the extent of the inventories themselves. The total worth of the Bonifatia/Vagnini inventory, 1614, apparently made to show various other descendants of Maestro G.A, Vagnini the extent of the legacy left by him, and in the hands of his daughter Magdalena Bonifatia Vagnini, the small size of the total heritage, was only £ 577. Of 49 lines, twelve are for household goods, apparently not for sale but for the use of the proprietor. By contrast, the Montauti inventory from 1608, 56 pages long in the original, embraces 25 pages of household goods, to a value of £9,101.

Nevertheless, some common themes can be adduced. For one thing, in both cases we see merchant/producers, for mercers both sold and produced clothing and other

apparel, occupying the same premises where their business was carried on. In the Vagnini we find one walnut bedstead, with posts and feet, and two pairs of hemp bedsheets, a featherbed, and its pillows. In Montauti, there we see eight bedsteads, seven of walnut, one of iron, and two sleeping boxes, and a truckle bed. There are 23 line items for bedsheets, some hemp, some linen, some specified as old and ragged. There are seventeen lines for mattresses stuffed with feathers, wool or straw (palliasses) , six for mosquito nets, three for bedcurtains and one for a canopy, and three for mattress covers.

Vagnini lists only a few items that would be used in the kitchen: a breadmaking table, a bronze kettle, a fireplace set consisting of an iron chain, a cauldron and six roasting pans; a pair of firedogs,<sup>172</sup> an old fork and a frying pan, a barrel with iron hoops and a large sieve. There is one walnut table and a laundry kettle. We can see the Vagnini household doing its daily living in one room, probably the only one in the house with a fireplace.

Montauti, by contrast, lists two kitchen tables, in poplar, and two breadmaking tables; three pairs of firedogs and a complete fireplace set with tools; three spits with tripods and their hardware plus a rotisserie. They had seven casks of various capacities and uses, three barrels and three vats, all with iron hoops, three vinegar kegs and three tubs for wine; a flyscreen for meat; three and a half pairs of food warmers, an assortment of kettles, basins and mixing bowls in copper and brass. There are plates, bowls and other pewter, large mixing spoons in brass. All this was set up to feed and provide for an

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<sup>172</sup> Renata Ago remarks on the presence of firedogs in an inventory as a sure sign of the presence of a fireplace. *Il Gusto*, 71-75.

extensive family with its attached personnel. We suspect there were servants. There is a listing for a po-chair.

Vagnini mentions no chairs or stools, and only a bench and some shelves for the shop. Presumably there were sitting facilities in the living quarters, but no mention is made. Montauti mentions sixteen stools, and a set of twelve chairs bound in percale, a closely woven white cotton fabric. Maybe the stools were for servants and the chairs for family members.

All the other items in Vagnini are merchandise or the materials for making it. It appears that the Vagnini firm, as well as selling fabrics by the *braccio*, stocked embroidery from Bologna and other sources, Cambrai and Rheims style linens, and bonnets and buttons by the dozen. They carried lace and the thread for making it. They also carried ribbons of different types and the presence of remnants of the ribbon material suggests that there was actual production going on in the shop. There is the listing for a bench and adjoined shelves, and another just for shelves. The shop itself must have been as sparsely appointed as the living quarters.

The Montauti, in contrast, although their listing of goods for sale occupies tens of pages, give no indications of being directly involved in production on a hands-on level. Instead, there are seven items detailing loans of cash and materials to other persons, Rugier Villa, Cesare da Longhi, Ottavio Dall' Cacha, Peccorino, Angelo Ferrari, Gio. Pietro Bigati, Lodovico Beravi, Ortensio, and Domenico, all itemizing the fabrics they were to return finished. There is an item for rental of a house and spinning wheel for the semester ending June 1608, debited from rental of the wheel for a period to Sept. 1, 1614,

name of the person not legible. From this we see that the Montauti were actively engaged in the putting-out business, where they provided facilities, financing and raw materials to various workers and received back the finished products. This is another level of sophistication altogether from Vagnini. There is also an extensive list of credits out to various individuals, which we have analyzed in another section.

The Barozzi inventory from 1608 affords us no information about the domestic arrangements of the family, so we may speculate that they did not live on the shop premise. It also has a long list of financial accounts, and the large number of small sums in credit of producers also indicates an active putting-out business. The Frangheri/Manghisti inventory from 1582 is equivocal. It also has no household information, and an extensive list of credits out, but it is not so suggestive of putting-out accounts. Still, from Montauti and Barozzi we can perhaps see the mercers' trade, at least in their cases, evolving gradually toward more of a financial institution, dealing with money and credits as much as fabrics and haberdashery.

The Rubianni inventory from 1631 at the end of the first period contains, about 135 lines out of almost 190 listed household furnishings; only 14 described production equipment for the glover's shop and 13 were devoted to raw materials and finished and half-finished gloves. Values are not given, merely the listings of the items by type and quantity. Some real property is involved; a grain shed with walls and tiled roof and a courtyard and some supplies of barley in the city of Parma, parish of San Geronimo is mentioned in the main inventory, and in the postscript some others, two in the suburbs, and one in the city in the parish of Sta. Maria, near the city hall, and another in the same

district. These appear to belong to family members. There is also a house that is bringing in rental income.

The inventory includes such items as four sets of firedogs, both iron and brass, and also an iron firescreen and three sets of firechains, used for suspending food in the fireplace to be cooked, and one fireplace set. We can see that there were several hearths for heating and cooking. There were four bedsteads, three in walnut, and all with columns and cloth, and a sleeping box in poplar. Along with these were seven pairs of hempen bedsheets, along with two featherbeds, one with cover, one specified as stuffed with chicken feathers. Two rather fancy cradle covers, in ormessine, one red with gold embroidery, the other striped in orange white and green, both used, are found early on, but only one cradle, walnut, used. There is a po, described as a bench rather than a chair. Possibly a two-holer?

Four large tables, three in walnut, one in poplar and a small one in walnut, along with a variety of chairs, seats and stools. There are three walnut credenzas. There is a wide variety of kitchen equipment, knives, cauldrons, boilers, pots and stirrers, frying pans, buckets and pails and basins, all in various sizes, in brass and copper, with covers, tablecloths and cutting boards. This all seems to give us evidence of a long-established business, which has accumulated property for the accommodation of an extended family. There is no indication that the business is about to wind up, but there is also no indication about the occupations of the other members living in the other houses. We do not know if they are also employed in the manufacture of gloves. The presence of the grain shed and stores of barley indicates that the family has centrally organized food acquisition and

storage for their various households. Overall the impression is one of solid prosperity based on a trade in what was still at that time a luxury good, gloves in fine leather.

The whole inventory is not as extensive as the Montauti of 1608, and the level of wealth on display is not as overwhelming, but the Rubianni were obviously more than just comfortable tradesmen, but were solidly among the bourgeoisie. Unlike the Montauti they were producers rather than dealers, maybe not strictly speaking mercers, but also not the weavers, spinners and finishers who were subject to the mercers via the putting-out trade.

### **The Second Period**

Of the nine inventories in the second period 1655-1676, only three have items listed that are clearly household furnishings and not shop equipment. These are the Baistrocchi inventory from 1657, the Tirelli from 1664, the Donelli from 1676. As the series continues we will see that this trend follows with the increasing proportion of purely business-directed documents over post-mortem inventories, which detail all the personal effects of the decedent.

Although in some cases there might be ambiguities involved in distinguishing household fabric items from mercers' stock-in-trade, in the case of the Baistrocchi inventory that unclarity does not arise, as his trade is listed as bleacher and leather-gilder, so we can be confident that fabric items were not part of the business. That said, there are a few tools listed near the end that seem to indicate a dabbling in the cloth industry. Among the clearly household items are one set of fireplace furnishings, with firedogs, logholders, pokers and forks. As there was only one set, we can conclude that the family

lived in a house of modest size, with only one fireplace. Since this inventory has values attached to the household items, we see the value of that set as 90 *lire*. There are one large and one small table, at 43 and 4 *lire*, four older tablecloths, one in crushed silk at two *lire*, and what looks like a packet of eight new ones, at one *lira* each.

There is a single walnut bedstead, at eight *lire*, two mattresses stuffed with chicken feathers at 18 and 21 *lire*. There are four pairs of sheets, one in wool at 60 *lire* and the others in hemp at 14, 20 and 22. Linen napkins are valued at £2. and *refranto*, or crushed silk ones at £4.s.10. A bed curtain, in *stametto*, or lower grade silk, with ribbons and cover was valued at £16. We are seeing here a household with only one married couple at the most and no indication of children or servants. A firechain and a tripod plus some wine casks and vats and the gear for moving wine from one container to the other are the only items that pertain to food preparation.

There is not much personal clothing listed; two suits in silk at six and eight *Lire*, two overcoats or tabards in ormessine at 10 *Lire*, a tabard and suit with silk trim at £19 and a tabard of black cloth with buttons at £13 pretty much complete the list of male clothing. Eight chemises in linen at eight *Lire*, one in hemp at seven and a calico apron at one and ten are all there is of female dress. We take note that a wife's dowry clothing remained hers and might not have been included. There is a small amount of military equipment; a sword at £14, a shield at two and a sabre and dagger set at £12.

All in all, we surmise that what we have here is a household comprised of a nuclear family of a man and woman, the man engaged in leather bleaching and gilding, the woman in the silk trade. Possibly they were elderly and their children were grown and

had left home. The last item we should take note of in this inventory is a shroud, value 20 *Lire*. Someone was planning ahead, and possibly using it as a support for private devotion.

The Donelli inventory from 1676 gives an image of a slightly more elaborate household. The first item is a credenza with boxes with locks and keys, and coins to the substantial value of £700. The second is another locked box with the household's bedclothes, tablecloths, and handkerchiefs, all laid out in pairs, 51 pairs in all. There is one bedstead with two mattresses and a palliasse and a used canopy with fringes. For other furniture there are a sideboard, walnut, used; an armchair, walnut and a stool, five seats and a cedar chest with a lock. There are two wool covers.

A major item in the household properties is pictures. Four are on religious themes: Mary Magdalen and John the Baptist, three *braccia* high; the visitation of Saint Elizabeth, in a frame, Roman style, that is a black frame with a gold stripe for contrast; St. Anthony of Padua holding the baby Jesus(?) and an angel, similar with gold stripe; and another in an old style frame with gold stripe and images of the Blessed Virgin and Magdalen. There are also seventeen other unspecified pictures. There is a brass lamp to go on top of the bed and a set of firedogs. All that is listed for the kitchen is a credenza, but that is the last item. The sparseness of this inventory makes us wonder if the notary was not omitting items such as kitchen wares for some reason, possibly because of their lack of resale value. It is also possible that they did not cook, but ate out. Renata Ago, in her work on parallel classes of people in Rome, has remarked that many people did not cook: they ate at hostelries or had their food prepared there and took it home, and so many homes had no

kitchen or food preparation equipment.<sup>173</sup> However, the 1636 tax roll shows only fifteen 'oste,' so this might not have been so common in Parma, despite its location on the busy Via Emilia, the main highway of Northern Italy.<sup>174</sup>

The Tirelli inventory from 1664 has a more extensive listing of household goods than any of the previous ones. In fact the preponderance of items on the list are of that type. There are two bedsteads, one of poplar, one of walnut. The poplar one is associated with a headboard described as 'beautiful' The walnut one has three covers and a palliasse, used and linen bedcurtains, also used, with a rustic cover. There are four hemp bedsheets, like new, and a white one in very good condition. There are two walnut cases and a walnut chest, and two chairs, with fringes, a walnut chair, used, and two walnut seats, also used.

There is one set of firedogs with shield, but also a firechain and a fireplace shovel. In the kitchen there is a small copper frying pan with a small pan, and a pasta-making table, chafing dishes, a maiolica salt cellar, casks and barrels, wine transvasing gear, pewter bowls and plates. A stone basin holds 1½ *caldarini*. There are pictures, one of St. Francis with no frame, one of the Madonna holding her son, with a frame, one at the head of the bed of the crucifixion.

### **The Third Period**

In the third period, from 1695 to 1739 we have seven inventories, but only four

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<sup>173</sup> Ago, Il Gusto, 216-7.

<sup>174</sup> ASPr Comune di Parma 1934: Census rolls for Parma. Jan- Feb 1636

firms are represented, as the Zucchi and Cornutti are each covered by two inventories, ten years apart. None, however, include items classifiable as household goods. As all of them document business transactions of one type or another, none of them are post-mortem, and so the absence of household appointments is understandable. The timing of the inventories in these paired cases shows clearly that those firms were winding up their activities. The Zucchi firm particularly, for all its aggressive efforts at expanding their field of activities outside of Parma itself, was clearly not living up to the hopes and expectations of the brothers. If large and well-set up companies such as these were incapable of overcoming the adverse conditions of the decline of Italian dominance in these fields, it is not surprising that smaller family firms, operating out of the same premises that they occupied, would encounter even greater adversity. The last inventory in our list, from 1739, occurs in a time that was literally an interregnum. The Farnese rule had come to an end in 1731, not to be replaced by the Bourbons until 1748.

In our three periods, we have seen a decline in frequency of home-operated firms from three out of five in the first period, through three out of nine in the second, to none out of seven in the third. The change in the distribution of home-operated firms over the period from 1585 to 1729 can be taken as diagnostic of larger changes in the commercial environment in Northern Italy, with radiating effects from the macro-economic down to the domestic level. Some of our examples were of extremely modest, even humble pretensions but even they have disappeared from our data set. A larger sample of documents, approaching one hundred, would allow us to invoke the statistical principle known as The Law of Large Numbers, and permit us to make statements with

greater confidence.<sup>175</sup>

The grounds for reservation that we see concerning this conclusion stem firstly from a single line on the last page of the Zucchi 1719 inventory, in which, on the listing of shop equipment, rather than household furnishings we see noted: “All the shelves belonging to the shop and in the home of Sgr. Zucchi.” This seems to indicate that the home and shop were separate premises, but that some of the shelves, and possibly some of the work were located at the proprietor’s residence. It might also be, however, that the shelves in question were merely there temporarily, possibly in transit. As there are also lines adjacent to this one indicating that there were benches “where Sgr. Panitti lives” and “of Snra. Bulgari,” this may come as an indication that the putting-out system, at least, was still in operation.

A more serious reservation concerning these assessments stems from the nature and apparent purposes of the inventories. The inventories that were explicitly taken as Post Mortems, that is, to account for the goods and assets of a deceased person, included the real estate and domestic appointments of the persons involved. This was to be expected as such information was needed to settle matters of succession and division of properties. The inventories taken as part of business negotiations, on the other hand, would not be expected to include furniture and living accommodations. To draw conclusions about developing trends from the presence or absence of household materials in these inventories would seem to be unjustified. The question is not totally clear however. It might develop from processing of a greater number of documents that in fact

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<sup>175</sup> Weisberg, Central Tendency, 54-55.

there were some that occupied a middle or composite position, that is, business transfer documents that included real estate and household appointments as well as production facilities.

The inventories were selected at random, with no *a priori* preconceptions about what would or should be discovered, or particular agendas, outside of pure research in mind. This method prevented distortions in the results that otherwise would have been nearly impossible to escape. The evolving business culture and environment toward larger and more specialized organizational styles in turn lead to a greater presence of separated commercial and residential facilities, and also a tendency toward separation of business and personal documentation by notaries. The evolution way from mixed post-mortem and trade-oriented inventories in the first part of the study period to almost exclusively trade documents at the end is thus in line with more global developments.

## CHAPTER 4: COSTS AND VALUES

### Problems:

Several questions can be addressed by the data we have compiled from the Parman invoices.

1: Did the general nature and specific details of business for our mercers change over the time of our study?

1a: Since the mercer's goods originated from a wide geographical spread, did that increase or contract?

1b: Did the prices of various goods, or their relative frequencies of appearance in the inventories vary with time? Were these variations, if established, reflected in exchange rates of international currencies?

2: Will the changes in the costs of these items give us an insight into the general costs of living for ordinary Parmans and the fluctuation of these costs?

2a: How did these vary over the three periods of the study?

2b: Will the proportional costs and presence of the varieties of yard goods and of made garments of various types clarify living standards? The caveat here is that declining costs might reflect a decline in disposable income. Without more information on grain prices and rents, cost of living cannot be definitively determined.

As it was mentioned in the Analysis section, there was a steady increase in the international quality of the trade, based on the proliferation of place names and the presence of pricings in non-Parman currencies, with their exchange rates.

### Values of goods: Changes over the Years

Some classes of goods are sufficiently pervasive in our inventories that average prices can be computed and tracked across the time period covered. In many cases these goods occurred with sufficient regularity that they give an indication of the rises and falls of consumer prices with the vicissitudes of political and economic trends. Particularly in the case of mercery the chain of items that leads to wearable clothes, that is, thread, fabric and finished garments will give an approach to each of our main questions.

Yarns and threads are particularly critical to the entire process, in that they underpin the entire industry. Threads have to be processed from raw fibres, generally by slow and complex processes, before the activity of weaving cloth fabric can begin. In the pre-industrial age, spinning was the bottleneck. The work of nine or ten spinners was required to keep one weaver supplied with woollen thread for the loom, five or six in the case of cotton.<sup>176</sup> This was not reflected in the 1636 tax rolls, which show only two spinners to fifteen weavers, but we have seen from our inventories that spinning was sometimes a secondary occupation within a household. We do see that in the census reports for 1636. In the Parish of *Santissima Trinità*, for instance, examining about 2/3 of the entries, we see 51 persons engaging in spinning, either as the primary or supplemental occupations in a household, as against seven weavers. Along with the spinners were three who were listed as threadmakers; the distinction is unclear, and four who ‘unwound silk’. Assisting the weavers in using the thread once it was prepared were fifteen knitters,

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<sup>176</sup> H. Heaton, “Industrial Revolution” in R. M. Hartwell, ed. The Causes of the Industrial Revolution in England, (London: Methuen 4<sup>th</sup> printing 1967-1977), 38-39.

twelve who made silk stockings and one who made cotton ones, six who made silk braid or lace, five tailors and one sewer, who was married to a tailor.<sup>177</sup> Interestingly, there is no stereotyped sexual division of the work; some spinners were male, some weavers and tailors were female, both sexes made braid, lace and stockings. In addition, of course, much spinning was done on the putting-out system by workers in the countryside, who would not appear on the municipal rolls.

Looking at the table for the occurrences of different threads in the inventories, we notice several details. Silk and wool run pretty well neck and neck in the number of references for each period: 29 to 11 in the first period; 22 to 19 in the second; 17 to 8 in the third. Another clear point is that the average prices fluctuate, both absolutely and in relationship to each other.

<b>Table# 14: Prices of fibres, per ounce</b>								
Type	Silk, overall, including floss		Wool thread, all types		Linen thread. All types		Hemp Thread	
Year	#	price/ oz	#	price/ oz	#	price/ oz	#	price/ oz
1585	14	£2 s.1 d.10	2	£10 s.7	0		0	
1605	0	0	8	s.2 d.3	0		0	
1608	11	£2 s.9	1	£2. s8.d.9	1	£2	4	£1 s.18
1614	4	£5 s.10	0	0	0		0	

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<sup>177</sup> ASPr Comune di Parma 1934: Census rolls for Parma. Jan- Feb 1636

Table# 14: Prices of fibres, per ounce								
Type	Silk, overall, including floss		Wool thread, all types		Linen thread. All types		Hemp Thread	
Year	#	price/ oz	#	price/ oz	#	price/ oz	#	price/ oz
total:1st period	29		11		1		4	
1654	2	£7 s.14	1	£3 s.16	0		4	s.8 .,6
1655	0		1	s.4	0		4	£5 s.3 d.3
1657	0		0	0	0		0	
1658	0		1	£2	0		0	
1659	0		0	0	0		0	
1661	19	£2 s.5. d.6	15	s9.d.1	2	s.7 d.4	0	
1664	0		0	0	0		0	
1676	1	£3	1	£1	1	£1 s.18	0	
total 2 <sup>nd</sup>	22		19		3		8	
1683	8	£1 s.2 d.6	0	0	1	£3 s.10	0	
1695	0		0	0	0		0	
1705	0		0	0	0		0	
1718	2	£4	4	£2 s.3 d.2	3	£ 3 s.8	3	£1 s.8.d.9
1719	2	£2 s.1 d.6	2	£2 s.1 d.6	0		0	
1728	2	£2 s.2 d.1	0		0		0	
1739	3	£2 s.2 d.6	2	s.16 d.9	0		0	
total 3 <sup>rd</sup>	17		8		4		3	

In the fifteen years of the first period the costs of both wool and silk yarns doubled. In the second period both wool and silk fibres peaked in 1654 and then gradually

fell back toward, but not as far as the first period, and in the third fell back again to a cost reminiscent of the first period a century before. Although the cost of silk fibre was usually higher, by a factor of two or three, there were points when it was almost five times the price of wool, and other times when the prices were equivalent.

It should be remarked that, even though the bottleneck in the production of fabric was the spinning process, hand spinning was never completely supplanted. The spinning wheel, invented in China, never completely replaced the drop spindle, even though the wheel could produce 400 grams of wool in a day, while the spindle took seven days for the same amount. Several factors contributed to this recalcitrance. For one thing, the wheel was expensive and required greater dexterity than the drop spindle. Most of the spinners right across Europe were peasant women, who had other work to do. They could carry the portable spindle with them and do bits of spinning while attending to children or flocks or other matters. The wheel required sitting still and concentrating only on one task.<sup>178</sup> Also, warp threads were usually combed and spun on the spindle, as they required greater strength than weft threads, which could be produced on the wheel and carded. Only with the introduction in the Low Countries of the Saxony wheel, which used two bobbins, were wheel-spun carded threads considered suitable for warps. There is no evidence of the Saxony wheel in Italy in the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> centuries,<sup>179</sup> although it may

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<sup>178</sup> Heidi M. Sherman, "Flax and Linen in the Rus Lands," in Netherton, and Owen-Crocker Medieval Clothing and Textiles, vol.4, 7 and *fn*'s 24 and 27.

<sup>179</sup> John H. Munro, "The Rise, Expansion and Decline of the Italian Wool-based Cloth Industries 1100-1730: A Study in International Competition, Transaction Costs, and Comparative Advantage," in Roger Dahood and P, E Medine, eds. Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History, 3<sup>rd</sup> series vol. IX, (Brooklyn NY: AMS Press, 2012).

have entered later. Our source is silent on that point. Even as late as 1636 in the Census lists for Parma at several points are notations that so-and-so's wife spins *alla rocha*, with the drop-spindle.<sup>180</sup>

In silk, however, possibly because it was the higher-valued product, mechanization began much earlier. Machines for throwing' silk were developed in 1272 by Bergheriano of Bologna. The Bolognese kept these machines, which contributed to Bologna's long prosperity, secret until 1538.<sup>181</sup> The water-powered mechanical development followed closely on the beginning of the silk industry in Bologna, which was sparked by the defection of Lucchese silk workers in 1272. Even after 1600, when the Bolognese and general Italian wool industry had collapsed, production of silk veil and *organzine*, powered by these hydraulic mills, increased by one third over the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>182</sup>

In Venice, the first of these machines was established not until 1538, having been "made off with." Molà uses that phrase to convey the attitude of the Bolognese, who considered that they had been robbed of valuable secrets, which they had been at pains to defend. As late as 1727 there were trials in Bologna on charges of absconding with silk

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<sup>180</sup> ASPr Comune di Parma 1934: *Census rolls for Parma. Jan- Feb 1636*

<sup>181</sup> M.M. Postan, *Essays on Medieval Agriculture and General Problems of the Medieval Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univesrsity Press, 1973), 84.

<sup>182</sup> Domenico Sella, "The Survival of the Urban Economies of Central and Northern Italy in the Seventeenth Century: Recent Studies and New Perspectives," *Journal of Medieval Studies*. Vol 10, no 1 and 2.( 2000), 279-281.

industry secrets to other cities.<sup>183</sup> Various states had set out obstacles to the emigration of silk-workers. In some cases the penalties were up to and including death, either by formal execution, or by bounties paid for the killings. In Parma, these strictures applied to other clothworkers as well. In the Proclamation for Protection of the Wool Guild of November 1577, the penalty for workers leaving the city to work elsewhere was the gallows (*forca*). This was modified the same day by extending amnesty to workers returning to Parma.<sup>184</sup> By the time of the decree of 1583, penalties were restricted to confiscations, fines and public floggings.<sup>185</sup> In Piacenza, the effort to intimidate workers into staying put went on longer, and was explicitly concerned with the silk works. As late as 1662 a ban on silk workers emigrating and taking their skill with them carried a capital penalty.<sup>186</sup> Nevertheless, by about 1450 these methods were more or less abandoned as fruitless, and silk workers moved around freely, except for masters who held secret techniques. As a result, the methods of work and production became pretty much uniform across Europe.<sup>187</sup>

The long delay between the origin of these machines in Bologna and their dispersal probably cannot be explained only by the great, even deadly, secrecy in which they were held. Another factor was simply inherent resistance to innovation, either

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<sup>183</sup> Giusberti, Impresa e Avventura, 11.

<sup>184</sup> Gridario 8/83 and 8/84.

<sup>185</sup> Gridario 8/111.

<sup>186</sup> Gridario 40/127.

<sup>187</sup> Molà, The Silk Industry, 42-6 and 46-51.

because of the guilds' defending of their status or the workers' resistance to learning new techniques. Basini notes that late attempts to set up water powered mills to spin hemp, and wool in Reggio Emilia in the 1790's had failed by 1803, despite subsidies.<sup>188</sup> This was 300 years since the first establishment of the silk industry in Emilia in 1502.<sup>189</sup> In 1775 there were 24 silk mills, 22 water powered, while in Parma there was only one large spinning mill, the *Molino dell'Acqua*, and one in Piacenza. The general tendency in the industry throughout the later 18<sup>th</sup> century was toward the lowering of the technological level, so that the main export was silk thread, of which, by this time 95% of Europe's supply was Italian.<sup>190</sup>

By 1585 there was a spinning machine in use at Ala in the Trentino.<sup>191</sup> Venetian patricians were investing in these water-powered mills, which grew to hundreds in the Veneto and the Lombard plain, while hand-powered spinning faded.<sup>192</sup> The silk spinning industry in Milan was also in crisis at the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In other words, although wool thread was still being prepared on an occasional handwork basis by country workers in between their farming activities, silk spinning was already at least partially a mechanized industry. Otherwise we might expect the differential prices to be even higher.

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<sup>188</sup> Basini, "New Entrepreneurial Demands," 180 *fn*.

<sup>189</sup> Mario Bussagli, *La Seta in Italia* (Rome: 1986), 176.

<sup>190</sup> Basini, "New Entrepreneurial Demands," 185-6 and 185 *fn*.

<sup>191</sup> Molà, *The Silk Industry*, 5.

<sup>192</sup> Sella, "The Survival," 280.

While on the topic of water-powered textile mills we should note that even the Bolognese silk machinery was not the first. Fulling, a process in the production of woollen cloth that consists of compressing the newly woven fabric by beating or trampling in water, was being mechanized even earlier. John Mendel notes that there is evidence of a water-driven fulling mill, or *gualchiera*, operating in Verona in 975.<sup>193</sup> Fulling by foot added 20% to the final cost of the fabric; by machine 5%, a significant saving.<sup>194</sup> Gimpel remarks that of all the industries that adopted this sort of cam-actuated reciprocal mill, which included papermaking, brewing and iron-smelting, none was so transformed as fulling. Such a mill could replace twenty foot fullers with one mill overseer.<sup>195</sup> In an industry in which labour was 60% of the final cost,<sup>196</sup> all of these technological innovations could only have direct effects on the supply of finished fabric and so ultimately of clothing. Supply rising, we would expect costs to fall. This might be to the advantage of the consumer, but not necessarily to the merchants, especially not those involved in the export trade.

Silk thread, for example, both as spun or floss (*bavella*), as it is a needed raw material for the textile industry, provides a clue to the state of the industry and the prices of final products. In the 1608 Montauti inventory, the average price of silk fibre was £4

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<sup>193</sup> John Mendel, "The Orientation of Strikers in Medieval Fulling Mills: The Role of the "French" Gualchiera," in Netherton, and Owen-Crocker, *Medieval Clothing* vol 1, 67-75.

<sup>194</sup> Munro, "The Rise, Expansion and Decline," 56-57.

<sup>195</sup> Gimpel, *Machine*, 14-16.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

s.5 d.4 per ounce. In 1655 the price per ounce was £3 s.0 d.9 and in 1659 £10/oz. In 1661, £4 s.4. Then there is a long hiatus, in which silk fibre, thread, yarn or floss does not appear until 1718 when it appears again in the Menochii inventory at £6 s.6 d.4 and finally in 1739 at almost the same price at £6 s.6. Considering the overall trade in silk fibre, we see that the average price, over all types, was £2 s.1 d.10 per ounce in the 1582 Frangheri invoice. £2.s.9 in the 1609 Montauti, rising sharply to £5 s.10 in 1614. In 1654, forty years later, the average price had risen to £7 s.14 and by 1661 had leveled out at £2 s.5 d.6. By 1695 the price per ounce had stayed almost the same at £2 s.6, spiking slightly in 1718 to £4, then leveling again to £2 s.6 d.2 in 1719 and £2 s.2.d.1 in 1728, rising to a final peak of £4 s.14 d.6 in 1739. The overall trend was shown as a steady rise from a low price per ounce of under 3 *lire* the ounce, rising to £7 s.14 and leveling out again. Overall the price of silk fibre stayed within the range of £2. s.1 and £5 s.10 for the whole time, with an outlier of £7 s.14 in 1654. Given that the expectation would be that prices would rise over a century and a half, along with the general tendency toward inflation that was observed in the evolution of currencies, as discussed above, we must conclude that some counterinflationary influence was in force. In fact the century from 1630 to 1730 was one of deflation.<sup>197</sup> Increasingly generalized mechanization leading to lower commodity prices is an obvious candidate as a contributing factor, but also massive impoverishment due to war and high taxes, and de-industrialization and de-skilling in Italy.

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<sup>197</sup> Hanlon, Early Modern Italy, 210 *et seq.*

Examining the prices of wool threads and yarns over the period, we find, not surprisingly, that the values are much lower. In 1582 the average price was £0 s.13 d.3 per ounce on only 3 entries. In 1605 the price was s.16 d.2 on 9 entries, in 1608 s.12 d.7,  $n=8$ . In 1654, however, there was only one entry, for wool imported from Flanders, at £3 s.6. In 1655, the average of five entries was £5 s.4.d.1, and most of these entries were for hemp yarn. In 1657, again there was only one entry, at 30 *soldi* or one *lira*, ten *soldi* for a skein. In 1658, the only example was for 2 *lire* a pound. There were no entries for 1659, but in 1661, with 15 examples, the average price was s.4. d.11 an ounce for wool and hemp yarns. In 1676 the average price for yarns was £2 s.3 an ounce. In 1683 spools of linen thread were going for £3 s.10. In 1718 the average price for yarns was £2.s.4.d.7, and only a small change to £2 s.1.d.5 in 1719. Finally, by 1739 the price for yarns had dropped to £0 s.16 d.9, down again to the price of 125 years before.

Although the sparse numbers of entries give us very limited degrees of confidence in the results, we do seem to see the same general pattern of a rise to the middle of the period, and then a drop again to the price more than a century before.

The other fibres, hemp and linen, show up much less frequently on these lists, with hemp more frequent than linen in the first two periods, and also peaking in cost early in the second period. Cotton showed up only in the 1661 inventory and was not included in this table.

The price of yarns is significant to the general question of the welfare of the people of Parma in this period because it is an essential source material for the production of clothing. With the very high prices for yarns in the middle of our period,

we can see that the prices of made fabric and garments would also rise, and likely disproportionately. We will confirm or refute that prediction when we consider the fluctuations in those items. The prices of fabrics, however, presents a structural difficulty in that there are very few types that show up in inventories throughout the whole spread of our period. Wool cloths, the most basic type has 158 line entries, not counting the simple ‘cloth’ or ‘tela’ listings. Unspecified ‘tela’ entries in fact probably indicated wool cloth in most cases, but for lack of exact knowledge, were just entered on the spreadsheet as cloth, which took 133 listings. None of these appears consistently across the period. There is marked unevenness in the distributions, best summarized with a table.

<b>Table # 15: Cloth Entries by Year and Period</b>								
Year	“Wool”	“Cloth”	Camels	Damasks	Druggets	Floss Silks	Other Silks	Estamines
1582	14	0	0	2	0	0	2	1
1605	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
1608	0	6	0	6	0	0	4	0
1614	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Period 1 Totals	14	11	0	8	0	0	6	1
1654	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
1655	4	8	0	2	0	1	3	7
1657	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1658	10	4	0	0	0	1	0	7
1659	3	4	1	0	0	2	0	1
1661	9	13	3	3	0	2	2	6

<b>Table # 15: Cloth Entries by Year and Period</b>								
Year	“Wool”	“Cloth”	Camels	Damasks	Druggets	Floss Silks	Other Silks	Estamines
1664	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1676 x2	0	6	7	0	4	0	5	12
Period 2 Totals	26	36	11	5	4	6	10	34
1683	0	7	7	0	2	3	3	11
1695	0	47	3	0	2	0	2	3
1705	10	29	7	0	1	0	0	2
1718	0	5	0	0	0	5	0	0
1719	9	34	12	2	2	0	5	14
1728	0	2	0	0	7	0	0	1
1739	0	5	0	0	4	0	0	0
Period 3 Totals	19	129	29	2	18	8	10	31
Count	99	223	51	28	26	20	42	101

It is apparent that the “wool” items had a modest presence in the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, that is, our first period. They almost totally eclipsed other fabrics. In the second period they appeared more strongly, but the others also began to appear in greater numbers. There was no consistent patterning to their origins, Italian or imported. The more generalized ‘cloth’ showed quite a different pattern, with a low level but more steady presence in the early 16c. but making a very strong appearance as the 18c. dawned.

Some of the more specialized fabrics showed very different patterns. The various types of cloths known as “*camellotti*” or “*camellottini*” camels, real or simulated, which

have only sixteen line entries, show only one entry before 1661, in 1582, priced at £55 for a bolt. In 1676 French and 'English style' camels were priced at *Livre Tournois* 20 and 24 the bolt and in 1719 German camels were priced at Parman £108 the bolt. Damasks, which we see from the glossary could be either a rich silk fabric or a figured linen (which would demand a much lower price) show two entries in 1582, at more than nine *lire* the braccio, and appear again with six entries in 1608 at various prices from £4 s.5 d.2 to £14 s.4 (Parman). In 1655 there are two entries, for £12 s.10, both for the *braccio* and the bolt. We suspect a copying error and plump for the *braccio* as correct. By 1661 embroidered *damaschino* has dropped to 2 *soldi* the *braccio*, or £1 and change for coloured damask. In 1719 the prices are again between one and two *lire*. Druggets, wool or wool mix serges, do not appear until 1676, and then are found in every inventory till the end of the period except one. In 1676 they are priced at 29 and 40 *soldi* the ell. In 1683 prices were at £2 and £6 s.10 the *braccio*, and in 1695 at Tournois £2 s.18/ ell or £2 s.10 /*braccio*, and again at T£ 2.s18/ell in 1705. ( This was likely the same material, as these were successive inventories of the Cornutti shop.) In 1719 two different lots were at £1s.17 Parman the *braccio*, in 1728 bolts were going at a range from £48 to £96 and £2 s.1/ braccio. In 1739 the price of druggets was £52 the bolt or 30 *soldi* the *braccio*. This wide range of prices suggest that there may have been other variables, such as colour and sheen.

Estamines, or *stametti*, fabrics woven from the strongest part of the wool, show a similar pattern. Hardly present at all in the earlier part of the period, they become a significant part of the mercery trade as the period goes on.

Overall, the three periods show a remarkable expansion in the diversity of the fabric types available. Prices of fibres rose dramatically entering the second period and then fell back to nearly the original levels. This may have been partly or wholly due to the plagues of 1630 and, in Genoa, but not the Po valley, 1659 which eviscerated the working population and put labour and the products of labour at a premium. Paolo Malanima has remarked that wages and population levels have generally enjoyed an inverse relationship: wages decline as population rises, and recover as population declines, so that by 1914 “real wages per day (in Italy) were still lower than they had been 500 years before, but higher than prior to the Black Death.”<sup>198</sup> By 1700 the population had recovered to about 13 million, but the economy remained depressed.<sup>199</sup> Wartime taxation both in Italy and in foreign markets may have been another factor. Made fabrics on the other hand showed such a remarkable increase in the varieties available that it is unclear if correspondences over the whole 154 years can be reliably derived.

An interesting, possibly anomalous, observation from the master list appears when looking at the category of “Fringes and Trims” which only takes up twenty five lines. It includes a number of types of fringes and trims, some embroidered, some knitted, most in silk or satin of varying grades and colours. Five fringe items are sourced from Verona, including a *ternetta*, a type of non-perforated silk trim, which went for £1 s.15 the ounce in 1661. The interesting point is that none of these entries are near the end of the period. The 1661 Cornutti inventory is the latest that contains ‘fringe’ items, and it has five of

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<sup>198</sup> Malanima, The Long Decline, 177.

<sup>199</sup> Cipolla, Economic Decline, 208-212.

them, all in *braccio* lengths, the most expensive at 11 *soldi*; the lowest at s. 2 for a gauzy type. Two of the others were at s.6 and the last at s.3, d.6/ *braccio*. In 1658 the Riccardi stocked a mossy coloured fringe at £2 per pound. In the Zalli 1655 inventory there were six fringe listings. Two were for yellow fringe from Verona, at £9 the bolt or 8 *soldi* the *braccio*. and also from Verona fringe with small crosses at £4 s.5 the bolt or s.3 the *braccio*. There was also a coloured floss silk item at s.4/br. and another gold (coloured) fringe at s.6/br. In 1608, fringes with satin, still in the loom, black and coloured, were priced at £2 s.6 and s.16 per ounce, and our earliest entry in 1582 was a waste-silk fringe at £1 s.2/ ounce.

The distribution for trim was slightly different. The earliest appearance was in 1608, a knitted black satin trim for £1 s.5 /*braccio*. Next after that was the above mentioned *ternetta* from Verona in 1661 at £1 s.15 an ounce. The only other entry for trims was in 1683, in which year there were five entries, a light, plain black silk at £7/ *braccio*; a narrower trim at s.7/*braccio*, a trim with flames for chasubles at s.14/br, a squared trim at s.6, and one with peacock eyes at s.3. 1683 is just into the third period, but after that we have no entries at all for any items in this grouping. Fashions were changing against ubiquitous wearing of lace, and toward the High Baroque aesthetic under French influence, and so they were also changing against the habit of adding extra fringes and trims to garments.

Embroidery, measured in pounds and ounces for the silk and gold and silver work, and by length, in *braccia* or ells for the linen and wool, is almost all clustered before 1657. There are seven entries in the 1582 inventory, ranging from £16 to £27 the

pound for silk, and £6 s.10 for fine gold and silver, with a narrow Bolognese embroidery for £1 s.7 the *braccio*. In 1608 there are seven listings for embroideries, ranging from £1 s.16 and s.22/br for embroidered satin remnants up to £7 s.15 and £8 s.5/oz for gold and silver in a bone pattern. In all these cases it should be kept in mind that silk was weighed in the Troy system of 12 ounces to the pound, just as gold and silver were. In 1614 the narrow Bolognese was down to 1 *soldo* per *braccio*, the same but wide at s.2, and some small embroideries on waste silk in lots of indeterminate sizes for £4 and £8 for the lots. In 1654 the narrow and wide embroideries from Bologna are at s.7 and 10 the *braccio*. Those are the only entries for that year. In 1655 there are eight entries, including some coloured work from Piacenza at s.30/ ounce, some flawed work in silk and floss at s.36. A more problematic item is small embroidery with linen and wool, two entries, one for s.29/braccio, but the other at £27 s.10 the piece. There are also some other entries for s.5, 8 and 10 /*braccio*. These are the last entries for embroidery for fifty years, the next appearance being in the Cornutti 1705, with three entries, all in ells and priced in French money at 33, 36 and 50 *soldi*/ell. Because of the French pricing and measure, we must suspect that these items were imported from France. When the pricing was normalized to Parman *Lire* at the rate of 4.5:1 the prices came to P.£7.s.8; £8 s.2, and £11 s.5 the ell. These are the last entries we find for embroidery, and as they seem to have been imported, and after a fifty- year hiatus, we suspect that the embroidering craft in Italy must have come on perilous times, either for lack of demand due to changing fashions, or some other cause such as foreign competition.

Finally, although there are clear indications, as noted above, of the frequency of

residence in the shops, there is less certainty about the ownership of the premises. Unless there is a real-estate entry in the inventory, even a mention of the shop is uncertain on this point. Two of the five inventories in the first sub-period explicitly detail real estate. Four of the nine in the second include houses and lands, but none of those in the third do. This may indicate a trend toward moving one's domestic arrangements to a distance from the commercial activities.

It is clear from these considerations that the mercery trade was evolving in the direction of larger operations, with a diminution of the correspondences between family and trade, although that certainly continued. Still we see an increase in presence of a style of work suited for operation on larger scales, owned and managed by individuals who maintained a certain distance from the centre of commercial operations.

It would be tempting to fall into a Whiggish mindset, saying that since these trends seem to lead toward the structures and mechanisms of commerce and industry that we are familiar with today, therefore they are hallmarks of inevitable progress. If we were to follow this line of argument, we would then be forced to assume that, as life and other things are better now than then, each of these developments would be accompanied by an improvement in the general economic status of the populace at large.

Although we do not have with wage figures for our period, some comparative statistics are available. Jan Devries, in The Industrious Revolution, gives compiled average consumption wages for labourers in various parts of Europe, computed by cost-of-living standards for unskilled building labourers, normalized to London in 1500-49 at 100.

<b>Table # 16: Real Consumption Wages of Unskilled Building Labourers: Index: London 1500 = 100 <sup>200</sup> [Brackets indicates few data points.] From DeVries.</b>					
	1500-49	1650-99	1700-49	1750-99	1800-49
Western Europe					
London	100	96	110	99	98
Amsterdam	97	98	107	98	79
Antwerp	98	88	92	88	82
Paris	62	60	56	51	65
Southern Europe	71	[52]	61	43	[30]
Central & Eastern Europe	74	66	58	55	48

From this we see a general lowering of living standards for labourers except in a few locations in England and the Low Countries. Southern Europe in general, as well as Eastern and Central Europe, experienced linear declines in living standards, at least for the labouring classes. The Northern European cities held approximately level, but with some fluctuations. In other words, to the degree that generalization of these figures to other classes in these societies would be valid, the Whiggish assumption is invalidated. Developments in the styles and methods of commerce and industry did not lead in an obviously confirmable pattern to improvements in the living standards of the people, especially in Southern Europe, which includes the Northern Italian city-state we are examining here. In Eastern Europe, things were even worse. Other indicators of welfare,

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<sup>200</sup> Jan DeVries, The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behaviour and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 83.

such as health, might be approachable via such measures as average height of adults. Devries adduces studies on the declines of average male heights in several societies, but the figures given are for decades from the late 18<sup>th</sup> through mid- 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, well outside our period. <sup>201</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 170-190.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS**

Over the course of the 154 years of the study certain trends were observed. These trends are part of the development of the localized trade in ‘mercery,’ but are also part of the development of international, even intercontinental commerce. The Parman mercery is a microcosm of the world of commerce, both spatially and temporally, as these are themes that have been working themselves out from time immemorial to the present day and doubtless into the future.

One trend was toward the emergence of ever-larger business concerns. Although the mercers’ businesses started out, like many others, as small family- based shops, with limited inventories of goods for retail sale, and thread and other raw materials for production of cloth, often with the looms in house, to be operated by the family members or associates, we saw over time the growth of some of these firms, as indicated by their capitalizations, by many multiples. In some cases, toward the end some seemed to have evolved into purely commercial enterprises, with a complete disconnect from the domestic lives of the owners. The feeling evoked by these shops was much more like a modern business than a medieval shop.

This trend, as discussed, was part of a larger historical tendency toward the take-over of many previously guild-oriented, locally directed trades by larger mercantile operations. These larger operations were oriented toward trade outside of the immediate urban market place. We saw the increase in sourcing of goods from places outside the Parman region and indeed outside Italy. From the beginning there had been goods

sourced from India and China, as well as from closer in the East, but the breadth of sourcing from other places in Europe multiplied over our period.

This change was closely related to improvements in the technologies of transportation, as the sailing ships from the Atlantic nations took over the Mediterranean trade from the more traditional but less efficient galleys.<sup>202</sup> Other technological changes, particularly the spread of water powered mills for spinning of silk and other fibres reduced the costs of these core elements to the point where their prices remained stable regardless of the age- old tendencies toward inflation. Ultimately Italy was supplying the majority of the silk fibre used by the weaving industries of the rest of Europe, but was reduced to importing finished products that had once been her monopolies.

So we see that over the period from 1582 to 1739 the percentage of business conducted with suppliers outside of Parma itself multiplied five times, and that the absolute number of references has increased from 23 to 126, almost six times. We also see that the number of countries with whom commercial contacts are maintained has gone from seven to fourteen; doubled, in other words. We would not expect these contacts to have been direct in all cases. Although in the Emprini/Arnod 1676 Inventory there was suggestion of direct connections with France, for the most part we would anticipate the connections to have been through networks of third party dealers and carriers. As the period of our examination coincided with radical changes in shipping practices, both world-wide and in the Mediterranean context, it would have been

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<sup>202</sup> De Divitiis, *et al.* English Merchants, 36-7.

remarkable if some similar developments had **not** taken place. Basically, since the first, abortive, incursions into the Mediterranean by English ships, domination and even control of ship- based commerce had devolved into the hands of the Atlantic nations, English, Dutch and Portuguese, who were not only carrying goods into and out of the Mediterranean, they were making strong incursions into the carrying trade with the East.

<sup>203</sup> Given these changes and given the expansion in demand, both in Italy and the broader Europe, for lighter and more colourful fabrics, of which class the Indian and Chinese imports were not the only exemplars, as against the traditional heavy wools that had been the specialities of the Italian guilds, <sup>204</sup> we observe here the decline in the dominance of the Italian industry relative to the globalization of commercial and industrial technique. An unexpected observation is the dominance of the French and German production, even more than the British, taking over from the native Italian.

The internationalization of the trade became evident as we entered the later inventories, where we saw the accounts including sums in various currencies, from other states in Italy and from France. Dealing with these currencies required the computation of exchange rates, which were either explicitly stated or apparent from the parallel entries. In some cases, it seemed that the actual currency of the business was the French *Livre Tournois*, which was then translated into Parman *Lire*, and in fact one of the principals in the Emprini/Arnold firm seems to have been French himself. Parallel to the pricings in currencies from various states, we see that some goods were in non-Parman units, and we

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<sup>203</sup> de Divitiis, English Merchants, 3 *fn.* and 6-7, and 36-38.

<sup>204</sup> Cipolla, Economic Decline, 204-5 and 205 *fn.*

saw also the conversions from various local *braccia*, and between the Parman *braccio* and the ‘Franco-Italian ell’ or *eaune*. By the end of the period, the Parman mercery trade was actually slipping out of the hands of the Parmans.

Other historical trends are also seen working themselves through in these inventories. One is simply the evolution of the Italian language. At various places we see forms that would be solecisms in modern Italian. Standardization of spellings was a work still in progress, and it seemed at points that even within single documents when there had been inputs by more than one notary or clerk, a given word could be spelled in different ways, as for example *Francia* and *Franza* in the Emprini/Arnod, or even the different spellings of Arnod/Arnaud in that same document. Language is never static.

We saw also the evolution of notarial, or perhaps accounting, practice. In the later inventories the documents start to bring in the concept of percentages, sometimes written out, sometimes using an early form of the ‘%’ sign. We did not see double-entry bookkeeping, although it had already been invented, in Italy, and Renata Ago had noted its use in Rome at a contemporary period. This might have been appropriate in those inventories when there were listings of outstanding payables along with receivables and capital aspects, but it was not there.

We also did not see the use of negative numbers, which, although posited as a concept at the same time as double-entry, was not accepted by mathematicians until considerably later. The arithmetic did seem to get more accurate, and toward the end of the study we find deliberate and labeled error corrections, rather than obvious roundings down or up to meet *a priori* goals.

In the later Zucchi inventory, detailing a consignment of goods between two brothers, we also see an increased sophistication of practices, in that earlier transfers of goods and credits between family members were often listed only by the titles and quantities, but not the valuations. Valuations were not seen to be necessary in those cases. In the Zucchi we see that practice had evolved to acknowledge that even within a family disputes can arise in the absence of careful documentation. We have seen this in recent events in Canada concerning such disputes as those within the Billes family over the control of the Canadian Tire corporation, or between the Beaverbrook Gallery in Fredericton and the Aitken family over the art collection in the gallery.

Among the changes that we have see over the period was evolution in dress styles. These were apparent in such areas as the rise and fall of lace as a *sine qua non* of fashion, reflected in its rise and then disappearance from the inventories.

Overall we can trace the evolution of commercial practices and particularly of the specific industry from the Early Modern phase, hardly more than late Renaissance, in the direction of more fully Modern practices. We see that the study of these inventories uncovers details of the lifestyles and business practices of the Parman dealers in apparel-related materials, and we see that they were part of the global commercial network that was in operation even 500 years ago. As a part of that system they were subject to the fluctuations of politics, war, famine and plague, as well as the ongoing technological progress.

### **Last Thoughts**

Questions always arise after finishing a work such as this of what could have been

done differently and what follow-up work could continue afterward. For one thing, as the initial opening of the documents was done with an exploratory attitude, that is, with no preconceptions of what would be discovered, the opportunities for ongoing work are less constrained. Since a large portion of the time elapsed in this study was used in preparing the glossary and learning to read and translating the documents, if continuing from this point were an option, an optimal strategy would have been to treat more of the inventories, and other archival documents. Following on the train of thought in the introduction in re: holography, this would have increased the density of data-points and thus given higher resolution of the final output. That in turn would allowed greater detailing of the concluding remarks and more certainty about the validity of the conclusions.

If the focus were to be broadened into areas suggested by the inventories but not closely followed, it might be fruitful to look at the whole question of the changes in fashions over the period in question, not only in Italy but for all of Europe. Mention has been made of the shift away from Spanish styles, with their emphasis on black garments, toward French fashions with a greater colour palette. There were not enough data-points in these inventories to validly compare coloured versus similar plain fabrics as far as relative prices are concerned, but with more it might be possible to chart the changes in the prices and styles as new dyestuffs from the Americas became available and supplanted the European ones.

As well as matters of colouration, there were changes in the styles of the cut of garments that have been well documented by others. To what degree were these related to

the changes in demand for the lighter weight fabrics that caused such distress to the Italian producers of heavy woollens? The demand for lighter fabrics seems to have proceeded apace with the technological developments that made clothing cheaper, and so permitted investing in garments that would wear out and be replaced in step with fashion, rather than those that could literally last a lifetime. These are really questions for Costume Studies rather than History, but the overlap is suggestive. Other technological advances that were glanced over lightly here, were those of transportation in the larger context of the cultural and political dispersion of European polities to other continents and the resultant backwash of culture, technology and fashion to Europe. The potential avenues for research are unlimited.

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(Textiles of Fashion and Furnishings from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries)
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- 112, Menochii 1718.
- 113, Zucchi 1719
- 306, Zucchi 1728
- 175, Zurlini 1739

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**APPENDIX: GLOSSARY OF ITALIAN/ENGLISH TERMS RELATING TO THE  
MERCERY TRADE**

		Mercer's Glossary
	accapiare	to tie with a noose
	accetta	hatchet
	accia	linen or flax thread or yarn, sometimes cotton yarn. Same as filo
	accialino	1 sharpening steels 2. steel beads
	accite, acciole	steel
	aceto	vinegar
	achuba	type of button
	acroce	type of button
	adonita	a colour? a flower? adornato?
	adorato, adornato	Gilded, adorned
	affaldare	to pleat, to fold
	affaldellare	to separate spun silk into strands
	afiosi	on the surface
	afrique	place name: St. Affrique, a town in Languedoc, source of a fabric
	agoche	needles
	agochiatore	knitters
	agochioni	large needles, bodkins, knitting needles,
	agiafo???	?
	aiutante	military rank, adjutant, a creditor of one mercer.
	alabastro, alabastro, alabato	alabaster, a kind of fine transparent marble, sometimes coloured.
	albera	white wood, more specifically poplar. Malaspina devotes five columns to the many varieties and usages of poplars in Italy. Used for cheap furniture.
	albof	1. place name: Elboeuf in Normandy 2. a fabric from Elbeuf, similar to Landrines, but with rougher finish.3. poss. - alboeu, a food box
	ale	wings
	alla	1.covered market 2. Unit of length, poss equal to 2 braccia, an 'ell'
	alla veneziana"	Venetian style" In furniture, items made of softwood and painted

alti" and "bassi"	Literally "high" and "Low" . These terms seem to vary with context, sometimes indicating the quality of a cloth, sometimes the height of pile, esp. of velvets, and sometimes the width of the bolt, in the case of Venetian tabbies. see Molà
altobasso	velvet with high and low pile, giving figures
amaca	hammock
Ambuese	place name: Amboise in the Loire valley. Source of a fabric
ametta	starch
ammacare	to bruise, dent, batter
amoretto	puto, cupid
amachia, amachiato	stained
amuar, amuel	silk fabric, amuar sempli: a heavy silk with waves, or moirè. Amuar doppi: grosgranno, a heavier version
anello	ring, link
anelusato	ringed? garnished with rings?
anima	core
animale	animal, but specifically, pig
annatto	American red-orange dye obtained from the tree <i>Bixa orellana</i>
antiporto	screen, shutter, portiere
appanatte	1.covered with a cloth, 2. obscured, rendered opaque
appoggio, appoggiare	1. n. support, 2. vb.to lean,to lean, to brace
aquarella	the art of painting in thin, transparent watercolours
arabascio	A soldier's coat, cassock, jacket
arabebia,	1 .Arab style?, decorated with arabesques? 2. type of coat
aranchiatta, ranchiatta	orange (colour)
aras, Arras	1.Town in France,2 hanging, tapestry
Arbanzano	place name
arbio	1. Stone water dish, poss. for animals 2. Small writing table, secretaire? 3. Basin for marinating pork
archimia	mixture of different dyes
arredo,arredamento	furnishings
arela	type of fabric made from cane, used for making mats and covers
arella da cappone	chicken cage
arenso	see 'renso'
armadietto, armanietto	cabinet, often lockable
armadio	cupboard, armoire

arti	trade guilds
artighine	workman's cloth??
ascoco	chequered
asmita	style of button
aspa	handle, crank
aselta.. assetto?	1.set-up, structure, order, readiness. 2. board, trim 3., order, readiness 4. with silk?
assa	1 skein, or hank of yarn maybe on a spindle 2.bench for workers, particularly embroiderers, 3.board, plank
asta	pole
astalate	from 'astallare?' to close, install?
attacare	attach
attrezzi	tools
Augusto	from Augsburg
aurifrigio, fregio	passamano with gold thread
Avignon	place name: Avignon, source of fabric
avoce	velvety
avolio, avorio	ivory
B	
bacario, begaro	butcher
bacchetta	stick, rod
baccilo. bacino	basin
bagaglie, bagalie	technically, military baggage, but sometimes used equal to bagatelle
bagatella	game, gaming pieces, stuff of low value
bagli	bale
baietta	light wool cloth, black, with nappy surface, baize. Milward remarks that this was originally a fine light fabric, but later became coarser and hairier. (Milward p. 298). Bayard calls it a type of coarse, loose flannel. (Bayard p.436)
baiettone	like baietta, but coarser
balandrano	garment. same as 'gabbano'
baldachin	silk fabric originating in Baghdad, a rich brocade
baldaquino	canopy, made from baldachin silk, baldaquin
balla	1.bale 2. measure of weight, approx 200 kg
ballantone	1 large balances or scales. 2. large ball or wad of cloth?
balse, balza	1. reinforced cloth 2. flounce, frills
bancali	tapestries used as coverings for chairs and coffers
banchetto	banquet
banchi	benches
bandinelli	ribbons
bando	night cap, night bonnet

banzola, bandola	1. bandolier 2. end of a skein, 3. large cittern
banzollo	1. bench. 2.stool
bara	coffin
baracano, baracanati	coarse, waterproof fabric made from, or resembling one made from, goat hair.
baratare	v. to barter
barato, barratolo	jar, can, medicine bottle
barcha	boat
barraccina	moss
basino	Similar to Fustian but finer and stronger
baslotto, basola	unspecified cooking implement
bastardono	1.alloyed (of gold) 2. spurious, fake 3.bastardella. type of earthen cooking pot
battare	1.to beat, 2 to scour
battilana	worker who prepares wool, literally 'wool beater'
battiste	1. a cotton muslin having a wiry finish 2. or, a lightweight wool fabric in plain weave
batu?	beaten. in fabrics, 'fitto' or 'serrato' closely woven
baulette	vanity case
baulo	trunk, chest
bava di baco di seta	silk filament
bavelata	bibbed
bavela, baviglio	bib
bavella,bavero, bozzola	1.floss silk, 2. inferior silk made with fibre taken from the cocoon before reeling the main fibre, then carded like wool 3. the fabric made with it.. 4. waste silk, 5.cocoons
bavellata	fabric made from bavella
bavelleri	makers of bavella
bavellino	fabric made from bavella
bavera	lady's coat, pelerine
bavero	collar, neck opening in a garment
beccheria	butchery, meat trade
bechincere, paracenero	firescreen
begoni	begonia
beretina, bertino, berrettino	1.Type of Biretta, an ecclesiastic cap 2. colour, like a dark maroon 3. type of blue-gray enamel used in maiolica
bergamo	1: woolen fabric 2. Oily substance extracted from oranges from Calabria 3.Aromatic herb. 4 a desert pear
bernuzzo, bernusse	burnoose
bertero/a	= 'bertino? ash gray,? type of cap?
bertola da fuoco	fire screen, fireguard

bertoldo	1. wily peasant 2.unfinished cloth?? 3: blockhead, dolt
berucroni	see: baracanno
bestiaio, bestiario.	herdsman
bettilie	type of very fine muslin
bettolo, bezzolo	1.large barrel?? large bottle?? tavern, dive 2. mixer?
bèzzo	1.Bernese coin with a bear (betz) 2 Venetian coin = 4 soldi
bianchaio	bleacher
biancheria	linen, as in lingerie, all sorts of white clothing
biandini	bands
bigello	coarse gray cloth
bigio	1. grey or russet, 2. homespun cloth
bindello	band of silk
biolca	a measure of land: the field a peasant can plow with 2 oxen in 1 day. Emilian dialect
biro, sbirro	constable, guard, deputy, thug, henchman
bisella	a rough, grey coloured wool 'destined for the lower classes'
biselieri	weavers of 'bisella'
bissino	a kind of fine silken stuff called bisse
bisso, bissola, bissoto	1.fabric made from the filamentary secretions of a mollusc, pinna nobilis. very expensive, not used since c. XV. 2. the finest grade of linen, crisp, used for altar cloths
bocale, boccalina.	1 jug, ewer, 2..tankard 3.. fabrics, such as buckram or callimanco
bocazine	a type of calamanco, or woollen stuff (Annandale's)
boemio	a circle cloak (Spanish)
bofetto, buffetto, buffè	1.buffet 2. bellows for fireplace, or firebox?
boghelata	spotted
boiled silk	silk that has been processed in hot water to remove sericin, usually before dying
boli	1tax discs 2.seals 3 . large pills 3. balls
bolognino	Bolognese coin worth 6 quatrini
bombasine, bombazine, bambagiare	1' Cotton and hemp. Creates shine heavy canvas.2. Cotton double fustian on silk warp
bombaso, bonbace	cotton wool. cotton
bonetta	female head covering, bonnet
boralletti	type of head garment, possibly var, berretti?? emprini p.58
bordona / bordino	1: border, trim, fluffy? 2: from Bordeaux?
bordoncino	Thinnest part of a feather
borgo	district, suburb

borra	1. animal skin to stuff. 2. wool remaining on the teeth of combs 3. stuffing, wadding 4. rubbish,,5. see buratto
borràcia, borrhachina/o	water bottle. flask. powder horn.
borracina	coarse material for making sacks.
borsetto	handbag
bota	1.baistrocchi p.1 barrel? bottle? 2. mark down??
botte	barrels
bottoniere	buttonhole
bottono	button
bozolla/o	1. coccon. 2.silk thread drawn from the outside of the cocoon 3. spool or reel
bracatelle	mixed fabrics, whose bottom chain had a silk warp and a weft of waste silk, cotton or flax
braccio, brazza	1. a unit of length, approximately two feet 2. a yardstick 3.braccia for silk 63.8cm, for wool 68.2
brachessa, braghessa braghine	trousers, culottes, overalls
brado/a	wild
Brazil wood	red dye from the tree Caesalpina sapan
brazzallo	epaulette
brefo	neonate, baby
brendenali	firedogs
brento	1.a liquid measure, 71.6 litres at Parma,75.7 l. @ Piacenza,89.8 l. @ Como,75.8 l @Reggio, 71.4 L. @Pavia, 70.5 l @Verona 70 l. @Bergamo 47.4 l. @ Cremona (Cambridge IT Dict).2. keg
bresina	darkish colour
briola	small beret
brocato	brocade, a basic satin weave with raised designs
broccadello	silk fabric imitating brocade, but with designs in high relief
bronzo	1.bronze. 2. a type of kettle or cauldron
bucato, bugada	laundry
bucco di gettone	spout, nozzle
buceli	piercings, holes
bucherame	buckram or calico
bufato	buffet, sideboard
buffalo	buffalo? buffalo horn?? emprini p.50
bugadera	worker in cauldron remnants?
bugiaduci	silk cauldron remnants
bulzo	type of women's and men's headdress, round rolls of gilded leather
bumbasa	a twilled silk and cotton, wool or linen dress fabric

burano lace	a type of lace, styled like the waves surrounding the island, maybe made on Burano Island
buratone	1. sieves, 2.fabric
buratto, burattino	1: A linen or woollen textile with a very wide woof. 2: A canvas gauze used for embroidery. 3,embroidery made on such gauze, finer and looser than needlepoint, often used used as border trim, 3: coarse tissue for a sifter 4. mixed cloths
busa	animal droppings
buso	1. hole, opening, cavity 2. empty, useless
bussola	compass, wooden cup
busta	envelope, folder, docket
bustanino, bustarina	bustière, bag
bustina	bag, sachet
busto	bust, bustière, corset
C	
cadenello, catenello	1.chain 2.chain stitch 3. chainwork embroidery? 4. watch chain, pendant chain
cadino?	chain, lock bar???
cadizzo, cadisse	from the Fr, 'cadis' wool fabric, grossolano originated in Cadiz
cadrega da camera	commode
cadreggio	see quadreggio
caffè	coffee coloured
cagnolina	puppy
calamanco, calamaco	woollen stuff w/ fine gloss, checkered in the warp
calcare	to press down
calcetoni	big britches
calcette a gucchia	knitted silk stockings, a major export from Verona
caldaio	boiler, cauldron
caldarino	1.small boiler, cauldron 2. bedwarmer
calegaro	tanner
calfo	from calfattare? to caulk?
calmucco, calamacco	type of wool fabric with a long pile, also 'pelone'
calzettoni	knee length socks
calze, calzone	stocking, breeches, drawers.
cambellotto,camellotto, camelottini, ciambellotto, giambellotto,zambellotto etc	1. fabric of hair of camel or angora goat 2. mixed weave, with woollen warp and silk woof 3. a garment worn by Knights Commander of St. John over their chapter mantle (Spanish)
cambraia	Cambric, a lightweight, closely woven lustrous white linen or cotton fabric, named after the town of Cambrai.

camera di soggiorno	living room
camicia	undergarment, chemise, smock
camino	fireplace
camiziotta, camiciotto	1. shirting material 2. linen shirt of various colours, 3. work blouse, smock
campuccio	from 'campucchiare?' to live in abject poverty? hence poor?
canda, candito	1. bleached, white, spotless 2. candied (process) crystallized
candegliero	candlestick
candelino	small candle
canella	cinamon
canepa, caneva, canapa, canoppa	1. hemp or linen canvas, 2. hemp 3. small room,
canestro	basket
canevazzo, canova, canevacchio	1. hemp cloth, or linen and linen canvas, 2. silk cloth worked with gold or silver thread. 3. Mixed cloth with a silk warp and a weft of waste silk and flax. 4. Coarse, Tailor's toile, horse trappings 5. tea towel, duster
canevetto	poss. canovo? hemp rope? Duster?
canodare	to reel or quill a fibre, silk especially Zalli p.6
cannellin, cannellato, canetta	silk fabric, worked with gold and silver, but coarser than canapa
cantino	box
cantare	unit used for pepper, = 150 lb
capecchio	hooded mantel
capedoni, canedoni, cavedoni, cappi fuochi	firedogs
cavezo, cavezzo	1. The head hole in a garment 2. remnant 3. poss. cavezza; halter or nose band?
capelleria	Hat Shop, Hatter's Shop
capette	decorations, like shells
capezoli, capezzeria	pillows. bolsters
capisoli	mixed cloth based on waste silk
capitoncello	type of waste silk
capo	1. head, 2. cape
cappa	cape cloak
cappa di camino	hooded cloak
cappono, cappoto	long mantel, overcoat
cappello	final dying bath for silk colths
cappifuoco, capifoco	trestle? griddle?
capriciole	Fabric with strands of stame or bavella, etc and embroidered with cooked silk

carcasoni, carcassone	from Carcasonne, place in France, a coarse cloth, or a sailor's smock made from it
carda	carding machine, card
cardiatura, cardatura	1. carding, working fibre hanks to straighten and clean the fibre, similar to teazeling 2. the combed fibre, poss used as fill in quilts?
cardiatto	from cardare, to card, that is, to comb out fibres into straight floss
candiatto	Greek style, from Kandia
carezzani	a type of garment; from carezzare, to caress?
cariola	small bed on wheels, for servants. a truckle- or trundle-bed
carnatte	flesh coloured
carpetta	carpets, gowns
carra	a unit of capacity. 1 cart load, used for grapes
carte di tavelle	wide ribbons for decorating tables
cartollo, carzollo	1.large bobbin 2. cartouche?
carza, carzia? Carzetti? carta	1.carzia or crazia? venetian copper coin? 2. canvas of linen or hemp?3.paper?
casaque	sometimes meant a long cloak, sometimes a shorter cloak, usually sleeveless.
cassa	1.chest or coffer 2. bodice without sleeves
cassetto	drawer , box
cassettone, cantarone	chest of drawers
cassone da dormire	sleeping box. a type of roll-out bed for servants to sleep in at the feet of the masters' beds.
castarino	1.Beaver fur, 2. a type of heavy fabric imitating beaver fur, often used for hats
castrato	gelded sheep or goat, wether
catellano	type of wool cloth, originating in Catalonia
catena	chain
catenàcchio	Bolt, bolted, chained, padlock, bar
catinella	small basin
catino, cadino,	1. washbasin 2, variety of Juniper, 3.piece work
catte tarquiato	with a number plate or seal
cattiva	bad
cavagno	basket, panier, esp.covered, a hamper
cavagnolle longhe a venditoribus	long baskets used by salesmen to carry goods to purchasers
caval	wax goods
cavalcaro	riding
cavalero	horseguard, cavalryman, pony soldier
cavaletto	tripod

cavaliere	1. knight, lower ranked nobleman 2. silkworm, in dialect of the Veneto
cavallino, cavellotto	1. possibly a bodice? from caval, the part of the body where the bust meets the sides?? 2. a horse, not large but spirited 3. obsolete copper coin
cavichio, caviglio, cavezzo	1. Cavichio, a unit of cloth, in Parma, 10 braccia 2. hardware 3. a wooden pin or peg used for processing skeins of silk 4. a measure of land 5. a halter 6. a remnant of cloth
cazzone	large boxes
cella	cell
celone	bedspread. bed covering, tablecloth
cendalo, cindalina, cendalina, cindalo	1. Silk taffeta, inferior to ormesino, sendal 2. after c. XVIII a long garment with cape
cenetto	1. light supper
cenorina, cenerito	1. ash or cinder coloured 2. medium gray fabric woven by and for nuns
cerchione	rim
cervo	deer, deerskin
cesore, cesoia, cessoietta, cessoione	shears, scissors, snippers, tailor's shears
cesta	basket, hamper
chente	a fine linen cloth
chiapponi	clasps
chiarore	light, glimmer
chiavaa, chiavache	tenters, for drying cloth, stretched on tenters, on tenterhooks
chiochiri	1. snail 2. Scala a chiochiri, spiral staircases. 3. Archimedean Screw
chitarra	guitar
chitarone	an older style of stringed instrument, a chittern
ciambelloto	1. costly fabric, of wool, or camel or goat hair, hard wearing. 2. a type of silk fabric, possibly camel coloured
cidella	hook
cimossina, cimossa, cimossina	selvage, selvedge: a woven border made from the threads of the main fabric, or cloth with selvage
cinetto	chintz, a type of cotton fabric from China, or imitating Chinese fabric
cinte	belts, trusses
cintoli, cingoli, cingione	cord belts
cinturina da gamba	garter

cipare, incipare	poss. powdered? from Cipria, facepowder?? poss. inceppare? to hinder, shackle? poss. incipriare, to powder??
cisore	scissors
citra	cedar wood
cochineal	American red dye, from the insect <i>Dactylopus coccus</i>
codibet	with tails ??
codilla	tow: the coarse or waste fibre from flax or hemp production
cola, collone, colino	strainer
colare	to strain
coli/cozzi da letto	bed curtains
colla	glue, gum, applied as waterproofing
collare	collar
colletti	collars, bundles, bundled
collo	1. neck ( of a garment)2. parcel, bundle
colmeritano	From <i>colmare</i> , to fill. In fabrics, fulled, or fluffed up
colombino	Shade of blue based on mixed red and blue dyes
coltello, cortello	knife
coltrine, coltrice, coltrone	quilt, blanket or feather bed
come vedrans	as we shall see??
compagne	mate, matching
compromesso	1. compromise 2. expert opinion
conchiare	to tan, to soak, macerate
concola	a tray
concolla	1: concolore? solid coloured, similar colour? 2: with colour? 3: 'with glue'? applied as water resist? 4. waterproofed?
condiglio	knotted rope; "di prete" monk's rope belt
condo	
condotta	1. behaviour, 2. management
condotta asegnazione	transport charges
confinare	to border on
coniglio, coniato	rabbit, cony
considine??	?
contante	cash money
conterie	figured work made by stringing margarite together
conzo, congio. concio	ancient Roman liquid measure, approx 0.8 litres
coperta, copertura	blanket, cover
copia	copy
coppata	roofed
coppi	terra cotta tiles
copriletto	bedspread

corali	corals
corami	gilt leather, in sheets, a form of decorative art
coramidore	tanner
corbello	1. a large basket, 2.corbel. support or brace, eg for table
cordame	braids
cordari	ropemakers
cordella. cordellina	1.fine braided silk 2. ribbon
cordiliera	the cordillera, mountain range
cordiolato. cordiolana, cordelon, cordelin	1: type of rashes, half wool, from Spain or France 2: fabric with ribs or cords
cordino	1. piece of string or twine 2. tail, queue
cordoncino	thread, twine
cordovano	cordovan leather
cordoni	small narrower belts, replacing the cinture, usually silk, sometimes with gold threads and pearls
corgino	mens' belt
cornice, corniloni	frames, setting
coro	chorus, choir. coroide. choir tunic.
corona	1. crown 2. rosaries
corte, cortile	courtyard
coscia	thigh, as in the length of a garment
costa	1. rib (velluto a costa..corduroy)
cotoncino	cinetto
cotoneta	cotton. Rough, opaque, lowerclass dress material.
cotonine	Cotton. Sailcloth material
cotono	cotton, cottonny
cotta	1. cooked, boiled 2.of silk, boiled to remove sericin 3. coat, tabard,. surplice
cottino	piecework
cotto, cozzo	bricked, as the courtyard owned by a mercer's family
credenza	a type of furniture, a sideboard
credenzino	small credenza
credenzone	large credenza
Crema	1. from Crema, a town north of Cremona, source of fabrics 2. Cream coloured
cremassina, cremisi	1. crimson 2. the kermes dye
cresponi	crêpe, silk fabric with a frizzy surface. The most difficult silk finish.
crivello, crivelleto, crivellino, crevellino	1. sieve 2. riddled, perforated
crocetta	small cross
crudo	1. raw, uncooked. 2. in the silk context, unboiled, the opposite of <i>cotto</i> . raw silk was inferior to boiled silk.

cucchiale, cuichiaro	spoon
cucire	to sew
cucito	needlework, stitched, handsewn
cudretto	see: quadratto
cuffia	see: scuffia
culatelle	underwear
cuna	cradle
curati	1. accurate, well kept. 2. bleached
cusacchi	mixed cloths with silk warp and cotton weft, of Levantine origin
cuscinio. cuscinetto, cuscinetto	cushion. pad
D	
daino	buckskin, fallow deer
damasco, damaschino	1.a reversible linen fabric with woven designs of 5 point construction, or Double Damask of 8 point construction, 2. a rich silk fabric 3. a Damask blade
damiensio	from or style of Amiens
dazio	the customs office
debito	debt
dedalo	labyrinth, maze
denier	1.Measure of fineness of fabric; equal to weight in grams of 9000 metres of the yarn 2. or, 1.2744 gr. 3 measure of weight, about 1/50 oz
dentro	inside
derrate	commodities
diaspri, diasperate	1.silk woven in a style that was particularly lucent, diaper. 2.A white fabric with small diamond-shaped figures.
dispensa	storeroom
dobletti, dobretti, dobloni	mixed cloths with a silk warp and a wool or cotton weft, of French origin
dofed, daftio	from daffare, things to be done?
doi	due, two
dolfine	from Dauphiné
dopietti	1.double. 2 double-barrelled (as a gun) 3.second grade silk
doppi	cocoons with two silk worms, yielding a second grade thread
doppio in piccolo	second grade silk
dose	small quantity, dose
drappi da Fontego	low quality fabrics produced for the German merchants (Venetian)

drappi da parangon	high quality fabric produced for show at the parangon
droguet, drogetto	1. Drugget ,a low priced wool cloth, 2. type of serge, half wool half linen, or all wool. 3.Silk Fabric worked with strong wefts.
duaggio, duente	coarse homespun clothing
duranto	type of strong fabric
E	
ellana	Greek
epsomilia?? apsomilia??	see: spumiglia
essor, essornare	to deck, trim, garnish
estamine	see Stametto
F	
fabbrica	factory, plant
fabbricato	building
fabbro	blacksmith or ironmonger
Fabriano	a town in the Marches
faienza	tin-glazed ceramic ware.
falla, falatto	flaw, flawed
falda	1:layers,folds, pleats 2. lower part of cassock or garment 3. brim, hem.
faloppa	type of waste silk, silk damaged by the death of the chrysalis
fanale, fane, fantaculo	lamp
fanano	fanalino. small lamp? tail light?
fanone.	1. whalebone 2. papal vestment, maniples
fasion	fashion, style
fatori	factories, workshops
fattura	lit. 'making'; could refer to embellishment and work carried out on the surface of a garment
fazzelotto, fazoletto, fazzola	1. handkerchief " da colla" scarf. 2 poss also, 'bed hanging?'
fellaro??	
felpa	1.plush 2. brushed fabric
feltrino??	
feltro	felt
felzata	coarse woollen cloth resembling felt
fenditolo	1. grafting knife. 2. cleaver. 3. knife blade from 'fendere' to split
fentri d'alesina?	alessare: to bore, to ream?
ferandina, frandina	Light fabric of mixed wool and silk
feria	fair, holiday
feriale	ordinary, work-a-day
ferraiolo, ferrarollo	short cloak, overcoat (Tuscany), often worn against rain

ferrarezza	hardware, metal fittings
fettone	large pieces
fiamengha	Fleming, Flemish Lady, a creditor
fiamma	flame
fiaschetto	small flask
fiasco	flask
fibbia, fubia	buckle
figurate	figured
filara	1. from filare, to spin 2. filare, a row or line 3. a spinning woman, spinster
filaticcio	1. coarse silk, 3. floss silk 3. waste silk, (Tuscan dialect) made from damaged cocoons "the silk of the poor"
filatino?	possibly 'filet lace', made from embroidery on a net?
filatoio	1.any of several types of machinery to spin and throw silk, enabling a few workers to simultaneously turn hundreds of bobbins or spindles 2. a silk spinner or reeler (person)
filato	spun yarn
filé, filet	embroidered lace made on a mesh
filiatore	spinner
fillo	linen
filo	thread, wire
filocello, fillosello	thread made from waste or damaged silk, carded, not spun, used in making buratte. Synonym of "Bavella"
filosellari	waste silk thread makers (Lombard dialect)
filza, filzolo	reels
finette	a type of fine wool cloth, see 'rascia'
fiocca	button, tassel, tuft of wool
fiocio	flocked
fiore (di lino)	flowers (of linen)
fischa?	whistle? poss fiscella, fischina, a wicker basket?
fitto	1.rent, an important element in shopwork economy 2. 'tessuto fitto' closely woven fabric
focolare	hearth
fodera	lining. cover
fodretto	lined, covered
foggia	1. a town 2. fashion 3. The upper part of a hood, a cap
folador da carta	paper maker
folio	folio, book
folle/ folto?	1.mad, unsure, neutral 2. thick, dense folla. 2. crowd, 3. fulling liquor 4. bellows. pouch , bag
follicello	follicle? type of fabric?

fondaco	depot
fondo, fondachioli, fondioli	waste silk produced by reeling
fondo, fondono	bottom, base, support
fonsace	?
foradino, forador	perforator, piercer, driller, poker
forato	perforated, perforated stirring tool?
foratoio	punch, gimlet, auger
forbici , forfe	scissors
forbito	polished
forcerino	strong box
forche	1. pitchforks 2. gallows
forestiera	foreign, as an imported product or supply
fornasari	part of a stove, oven or forge? small oven?
Fornavo	place name, a town near Parma, source of fabric
fornitura	furnishing, equipment, ornamentation See fattura
fortino	fireplace fork
forzalone	strong box
frali??	?
fralloni?	frail? fragile?
frandine	mixed cloths with silk warp and wool weft
franza, frangia	Fringe
frassino, frase?	ash wood
fratesco, fra'co, fraterio	for monks, for monks, of a fraternity
frattura	a break or fracture
fripperia	old clothes, second hand store
frisato	1. Heavy worsted cloth 2.striped cloth
frisetto	fine silk
frodio?	fraudulent? fake? smuggled?, adulterated?
frugina??	1. worn down. worn and torn ? 2. poss. frugone, stick for poking?
frusto	crude, threadbare
fruttaroli	fruit vendors
fruzena, frusan	1. eaves, gutters. 2. reddish colour?3. stirred? poked?
funicella	cord, thin rope, strong twine
fuoco	1. fire, fireplace, hearth 2. household
furetto	ferret
furnitura	supplies, equipment, furnishings
fusello	small spool for lace making, might be made of bone, lead
fusilo	musket, rifle
fustagno	1. Fustian, a fabric of wool and cotton or linen and cotton fibres; 2: Corduroy
fusto	stalks, sticks

G	
gabbana, gabbano, gabbanello	fisherman's or shepherd's cloak, gabardine. a riding garment
gabbia	cage
galla	surface
gallantono	silk trimming with precious metal thread,
galletta	name of the cocoon (Venetian dialect)
gallette ruse e semenze	cocoons perforated by silkworms allowed to mature so as to lay eggs for next year's crop.
gallina	chicken
galoni	Bullion Braid, braid made of precious metal for uniforms
gamaitino	harness maker?
gambiere	leggings
gancio	hook, clasp, fastener
ganzi	silk fabrics with heavy use of precious metal threads
garza, garzetti,	gauze, from "Gaza" linen or cotton loosely woven
garzare	to card or tease, working raw fibre to align and clean it
garzella	carder, carding comb
garzetti	teasled, carded
garzone	shop boy, apprentice
gasetta?	Gauze?
gavardo, gavale, gauato	tool for removing ashes and cinders from fireplace, a shovel
gazza	1. magpie, 2 turquoise coloured (like a magpie's wing)
gelso	mulberry
genuflessorio	kneeler
Gera	a town in Northern Italy, source of fabric
ghinè	guinea, a coarse fabric
ghirlanda	garland or circlet
Giara	1. region a: along the Adda River b. in Sardinia; source of fabric 2. jar, earthenware vessel 3. eighth part of cantaro, measure of oil.
giarrettiera	garter
giavazzo, giazzo, giazo	ice? giavazzo? jet black? jade? colour of a shiny black horse
gioia	jewel. gem
gipare	to make Giubbe: to tailor
giubba	full cloak, to be worn by men, women or children
giuppone	overgarment for the torso, male, or female after 1600, jacket
giustacoro	jerkin, padded jacket
glacè	glacè, glazed

glelosa	lattice blinds, jealousies
gloria	1. glory, splendour 2. liturgical instrument
gobbo	humped, hunchback, bent
gocallo, gociallo	possibly a dripping pan
goro e crescente	dying technique and pigment used to obtain black
gradella, graticolla	grill, gridiron
Grameza	place name, source of fabric
gramezza?	1. wretched, scanty, dirty mean 2. for birthing?
Graminazzo	place name: town north of Parma, source of fabric
gramma	dirty, soiled
gramola, gramolina	beaters, for use in kneading bread, or processing cloth
granaio	barn, attic, grain store
grana, grain (eng)	.kermes, a red dye made from insects on oak trees. <i>Kermes vermilio and Kermes ilicis.</i>
granata	garnet
grano	grain, wheat
granoturco	maize
gratusa, gratugia	grater
gravezza	heaviness, seriousness, sadness
grembiule	apron
grezza, greggia	1.ugh! 2. raw, in silk, the filament straight off the cocoon 3. colour of unbleached hemp or canvas
grepatti?	poss. from greppia: a crib, manger or rack, thus, racked??
griafa a giazzo?	griafa- signed? signed in black?
grigio	1. grey or russet 2. homespun
grigione	coarse homespun
grisferro	1. rough or coarse woollen cloth. 2. iron grey
grismoro	dark gray
griso	1. low quality cloth made without raising and shearing, lentinella 2. lead coloured?
grodetta	Gros de Tours. a weave similar to taffetta, but with double warp
grossagrana, grognano	Grosgrain, a heavy ribbed fabric of silk, often used for ribbons, Petersham
grossamo	coarse
grosso	unit of money, equal to 26 small denari; 1 16/28 grossi = 1 lira: note, there is some variance in this. In Florence a grosso was = 20 quattrini of 4 d. each
grossolano	coarse, rough, unrefined
guaia	poss. 'guaina?' 1: a tight fitting dress or corset? 2: slot for ribbons or cords. 3 guaio, trouble, difficulty

guralchiera	A water powered fulling mill, the first type of water mill to convert circular to reciprocating action. There is evidence of one in Verona as early as 975 .
guanciali,	pillows
guarnello	Linen and cotton, or only cotton. Thin weave. Also known as Fustagno
guarnire	garnish, decorate
guarnizione	decorations, trimming
guazzo	gouache, method of painting using opaque pigment ground in water and thickened with glue, opaque water colour
gucciatori	knitters
guindolo	reel for winding silk as it comes off the cocoon
H	
hastio, hastaro	pack saddle, pack saddle maker
heredita, eredita	will, legacy, inheritance
himo	1. Wool and Goat hair. 2. Simple gowns for the poor.
hochelada?	1. possibly = ogellata? silk/cotton mixture. 2. possibly Ochialetto, a monocle or lorgnette
hofici, ofici	Book of Offices
hogshead. (Eng)	large barrel = 52.5 gallons = 238.5 l.
holme	see 'olme'
huomo da tabard	coat hanger, coat stand
I	
imbiancate	whitened
imbotite	padded, stuffed, quilted, upholstered
imbuto	funnel
impannate	refers to oiled or waxed fabric used in windows, particularly in loom rooms to isolate but let in light
inarvate	rubianni p.10, 20018
incanata	1. grooved, canalized? 2: reelful, spoonful
incannare	to reel up, wind up
incarnato di cremisi	shade of crimson, flesh-like
incierata	waxed
incornisatto	framed
incudina	anvil
Indiana	striped cotton fabric, named "Indian" but often originating in Holland or England, any printed or painted cloth
inducisi	hardened? induced?
indumento	garment
iniere	entire, complete
infioccare, infiochare,	to decorate with ribbons or tassels

ingipare	to make like a 'gipone'
inquattro	in squares. in fours, in a frame
inspolettare	to reel up. from 'spolletta', a spool
intagliare	to dig out, carve
intarsiato	inlaid
invetriate	glazed
invetriatura	glaze, glazing
involio	integument
isabella	horse colour
J	
Jaroflo??Javoflo?	place name?
K	
kerseys (Eng)	cloths of average quality and thickness
kermes	red dye obtained from insects Porphyrophora polonica and P. hameli
L	
lacca	lacquer, red lacquer colour obtained from insects esp. Keria lacca and K. chinensis
lachs, lache	laces
lacione	Lacaune in Languedoc, source of a fabric
ladaami	damaged goods? stolen goods??
lama, lameta	blade
lamino	poss. lama, laminated silk fabric with silver or gold thread
lampasso	a type of fabric, lampas
lana filata	worsted wool, thread or fabric.
lana	wool
lanaiolo	1. wool merchant 2. any wool worker
lancè	1. wooly, downy 2: lanica, spear, lance, lame, type of worked satin?
lanchin	cotton fabric , yellowish, probably from India, but named for Nanking in China. Nankeen
lanificio	entrepreneur taking charge of the whole cycle of wool cloth production
lardarolo	vender of cheeses, salamis, mortadellas (Giusberti)
lastre	slab. plate
lattada?	lattato? milk white? timplated? Carduini
laucati	poss: lauto? lavish abundant, magnificent?
laval	Laval, in Maine, source of a fabric
lavando	wash basin
laveggio	saucepan
Lavezzo	wash basin, sink
lavorate	worked, ornate, finished work, embroidered

lavorcini	small decorations
lavoro	works, decorations, ornamentations
lavorini	small passamano, embroidery
lavozerino	same as <i>lavorcini</i> ??
lazeduro, alazeduro	laces
lazetto?	laced up??
lechio	dripping pans
lecho, lechino	dandy, fop
legato, legazzo	bound
legatura	one of the two standards for density of warp, in Venice 400 threads
legno tauro	American dye used for dark colours, from bark of the logwood, <i>Hematoxylon campechianum</i>
legno; legname; legnano	wood: timber
lembo	edge, border, skirt, flap, strip, hem
lendinella	1 griso 2. <i>pettine spicchiato</i> , combed up in spikes?
lentima	sackcloth
lenza	1. fine linen, lawn or cambric 2. braided cord 3. (fishing) line
lenzuola, lenzuola, lentola	sheet, bedsheet
Leone	Lyon in France. Source of fabric
leoro??	lion coloured?
lettiera	bedstead
leutto	lute
lex	poss. leccio, quercus ilex, holm-oak
libraio	bookseller
ligato	knotted
ligatore	to tie together
ligatura, legatura	tapes, bindings
Limos	Limos in Languedoc, source of fabric
linaccio	coarse linen, canvas, Holland cloth
linarolo, linaiolo	flax dresser, linen merchant
lino	flax, linen
lintoli, lenzuola	sheet
lisca	1. reed or grass used for making baskets, seats, or flask covers 2. stalk of hemp or flax 3. scales. of fish or hemp 5. large pocket knife, 6. fish bone
liscio / liscia	1. straight (not curly) 2. smooth, polished 3. smoothing iron. 4. smoothing stone 5. a type of face make-up
lite	lawsuits, quarrels
lizzi	heddle cords, used by weavers to raise the cords of the warp
Londra. Lodra, Ludra	from London, London style

londrina, landrina	wool fabric of fine quality in English style, but also possibly from Holland or France, made with Spanish wool.
lora	instrument for transvasing wine
Loreno	place name
lovo, lupo	longhandled hook for retrieving pails from wells
luoghi	shares, investments
Lucca	Place name: city in Italy
lucerne	1. oil lamps. 2. three cornered hats
luma	light, lamp
lumaca	snail, spiral
lustrini	1. silk fabric with a simple weave 2. spangles, sequins
lutidi	poss: luteo? orange yellow, saffron(colour)
lutto	mourning
M	
maci?	?
macetti?	maci? ground, thin? macerated, soaked then ground? wornout? soaked in the ground, as linen or hemp = retted?? small frocks?
madder (eng)	red dye from the roots of the Rubia tinctorum
maglia	1. knitted fabric 2. 'stitch, mesh 3. eyelets 4. mail (chain)
malassa	skein or hank of yarn, maybe on a spindle or reel. see assa
malclassè	fr. textile tightly compacted and quilted
malifilli, maifilli	waste silk, synonym of bavelle
manganate	fabric compressed between rollers and given sheen
mangle (eng)	machine for pressing and calendaring cloth
maniche à cameo	elbow sleeves tight at top and wrists but wide in middle
manico, manicotto	1. handle, 2. sleeve, or cuff
manieto	poss. maniero. style, fashion, costume
manilo, manin	type of small gold chain, bracelet, cord
maniscalco, marescalca	farrier, smith
manopolino	1. kitten 2. knob, handle
manopolo	gauntlet, glove
mansonica	1. from 'monsone' monsoon? 2. from manso, a house or homestead, thus 'homestyle?'
manto	large cloak
marazza	small hatchet
marbrade	marbled
marca	mark, marque, brand
margarite, malgaritini	small glass beads made by cutting small glass tubes
marocho, marochino	fine leather used for shoes

Marolla	place name, one of at least two towns in Italy, source of fabric
marsina	type of garment, tail coat
mastrone	large softwood box for storing flour
mata	mud, mud coloured
matassa	skein, hank
mattarnci? mattanazzi?	place name? beaten? for slaughtering? hollowed out? for mattresses? zucchi 1719 pp 10and11
mattassatore/ trice	skein winder
Matelica	place name: town in the high country of the Marches, source of fabric
materazzo	mattress
mattarollo, materello	1. rolling pin, roller 2. long club, cattle prod
mattoni	bricks
mavro	1. colour of a dark sky, bright blue 2 mauve.3. Morroccan
mazza	hammer, club
mazzo	bunch
melano	honey coloured??? melanzano? aubergine? melangola? Seville orange?
melica	maize
meloni	melons
merciaio, marzaro, merzero	mercator, haberdasher, merchant who sold and sometimes produced cloth. from the Latin 'merces', goods. DeVoto traces the origin of this word back to MERK, a pre-indo-european root 4000 years old, demonstrating the depth of the roots of mercantile activity.
merletto	lace
meschie	stirrer, slotted spoon
mescoli	large mixing spoons
mese	type of weave
mesgio	mixed (fibres)
messa	table for making bread, every household had one
Mezzalano	half wool
mezzano	middling, middle size
mezzene	lard
miara, migliara, milla	1. 1000. 2. unit of weight, 476, 998 kg. 3. measure of quality of cloth, number of threads.
miglio	millet
milla??	thousand?
mistalino	1. fabric of wool mixed with linen 2 spoon, trowel
mistaloni?	1. mistollana = wool mixed with cotton? 2. 'musteloni?' mustela = marten

mobili	furniture
moccaiaro	mockado, a kind of woollen cloth imitating velvet, mock velvet
moera, amoere, moerra	moirè silk
moggio	a unit of volume, used for grains and pulses
moietta	instrument for carrying burning embers, tongs
molline, mollinello	1. mill, grindstone 2, warmingpan?
mondo	clean, shelled, husked, spotless, pure
montagna	Montagne in Poitou
Montelica	town in the Marches, poss same as Monselica, or Matellica.
montoni	sheepskins, lambskins
morello, morello, morelloche	dark or flaming red, the colour 'murrey'
morlachi	1. Dalmatian 2. pelle di... beaver pelt
mortal e pistonò	mortar and pestle
moscarola	flyscreen
moschettato	speckled, spotted
moschetto	1. musket. 2. mosquito net
mosco	musky green color
mostre	cuffs, turnups
motara	mud, mudcoloured
muffole	mittens
mulina da seta	1. silk mill, 2. any of various types of machines, hand- or water-powered, for spinning and throwing silk, same as filatoio
mulini	mills
mulladori	miller? muleteer?
muschi	musky, mossy coloured
musolima, mussola	muslin, transparent fabric of silk, wool or cotton, named for Mosul
mutande	briefs, underwear
N	
naijootz, nusotti	poss. the same as Nainsook, or jacconet: a thin cotton fabric between Muslin and cambric
nanchino	nankeen, shiny, yellowish cotton fabric, from China see lanchin
nastro	ribbon
navazzolle	1. wooden tub, to be placed on tripod 2. laundry tub
navetta	shuttle
navii	turnips? ships?
nechetto	1. from Necare to kill? 2. from the River Neckar? 3. necchio a Viking ship?"

neo	beauty spot, blemish, flaw
nero	black
nettie.	1. from nettare. to clean, cleaned, polished 2. from nettile, spinnable
niposto	fr. nipote? nephew, dependant, progeny???
nocciola	1. hazelnut 2. light brown
noce	walnut, walnut wood
nostrani	our, home, local
novetta	novero?? group, list
O	
oca	goose
occhiali	spectacles, goggles
occio	1. eye 2. buttonhole
ofellari?	offellaria? confectioner's shop? ofelimita utility?
ofo	damaged?
ogofe?	ogive??
olenza?	Hollandish? fragrant? oily?
olme, olmo, Holme	1. elm 2. from Ulm in Germany
ondato, ondulato	wavy
opelanda	see 'pellanda'
operata	worked, decorated, embroidered
operina?	little embroideries?, little decorations? one act opera?
orchieri	pillows
orchil	red dye with violet hues, obtained from lichens Rocelly tinctoria
ordi	deformed? hideous (pl) the warp?
ordigni	implements, gear
ordito	1. warp 2. twisted or reeled up
orditore, ordidore, orditoio	warper, for placing the warp thread on a loom
orecchini	ear drops, ear rings
orefici	goldsmiths
organza, organzi	1. organdy, a stiff translucent cotton muslin, from Ùrgench, capital of Khwarezmia, where it was made 2. organza, a thin, stiff dress fabric made from silk
organzina	organzine: a silk warp thread made from raw silk first spun, then thrown together to make a single thread of two or three filaments. see <i>orsoglia</i>
ori	golds. things made of gold
origilia, origiliere	pillow
orlo	edge, hem
orlare	to hem

ormessino, ormessine	A textile of light silk, named for Hormuz in the Persian Gulf, produced in Italy from 16c. produced with patterns by end of 16c
ornata	ornate, adorned, ornamented
orno	a wooden recipient, , fashioned with iron hoops, sometimes for salt
orolio	mushrooms?? =orlo, hem? =orologio, watch?
orsoglia, orsoio, organsin	1. twisted silk, warp thread 2. organzine, organdy, highest quality Chinese silk, Zetanino
ortolano	kitchen gardener
osella	Venetian coin worth 4 sequins (16th c)
osoze	bony? daring?
ossi	fuselli? spools. toggles, bone buttons
ostata	worsted
Ostiano	Town in the Emilia, source of fabric
ottone	brass
P	
padella, padelino	frying pan
paglione, paglone	1.coarsely chopped straw 2. straw mattress, palliasse
paiarizzo	palliasse
pailla	same as palli?? paglia? paillette-sequins-lustrini?? spangles?
paillette	sequins
paio	pair
paiolo, parolo	kettle, used more for laundry than cooking, copper pot
pala	1.shovel 2. type of wood?
palaia	coppice for pole timber
Palandrana	like a zimarra, but shorter
paliarizzo	palliasse, straw mattress
palli	ceremonial cloths
pallo	ball
panca, panchetta	bench, stool
panella	basket
paneto	1. Light cloths 2. small loaf or roll, block (as in butter)?
paniere	basket
pannicello, pannolino	1. small panel 2. bit of cloth, 3. nappy 4. basket
paniretti	small cloths? Rubiani 1631
panno, pagno	originally, woollen cloth, later generic cloth
paonazzo	Livid purple, colour obtained from a first bath in a red dye and a second in the vagello
paone	= pavone? 1. purple 2. peacock
para	pair

paragono, parangono	1. comparison, paragon, example, sample 2. An exhibition or temporary fair of high quality cloths, so purchasers could compare goods without visiting several shops. 3. cloths prepared specially for the Parangon, so of highest quality, mar
paramente	vestments
parechale	percale? prepared? parecchio? a good deal of?
parechenere	firescreen
piresalotto, pareballotto??	parabolic? emprini p.48
parseghino	parsley, parsley coloured
pasa parla, passapalle	1. bore guage 2. order passed by word of mouth
pasato	1. faded 2. stair carpet, strip carpet?
passamaneri	trimmings makers
passamano	1. type of lace 2. trimming
passo	1. a short fathom, about 5 ft. the Roman pace. 2. a guage 3. a quantity of firewood, more than a bundle.
patera	panels with reliefs, often of animals, attached to the outside of residences
pavaglioni	seasonal urban markets of cocoons held in Reggio Emilia and other towns
pavera	percale
pecchio, pecchia	dyer's vat
pecchione	large dyer's vat
Peccorino	nickname of an artisan in Parma ca 1608
pella	skin, hide
pellanda, pellicia, opelanda	fur coat
pellila	= pellicella? thin skin, membrane, fine skin, fur?
peloso	hairy, furry
pelo, pello, pellila, pellizi	1. hair 2. fur 3. type of velvet.
Pelpignara	1. place name, from Perpignan 2. type of cloth with elastic qualities, used for men's hose.
peltro	pewter
pena	feathers
penine	stiffened velvets of the French types
pentolo	pot
Pergolla	1. town name 2. an outdoor framework providing a shady walkway and frame for vines, a trellis
peritia. perito	skill, craft
pericia, perizia	expert opinion
perle a lume	glass beads made by winding a tube of glass while hot into a spiral, then filled with gold and silver paste, then painted
perpetuana	type of Serge known for hard wear and good quality

Persiana, (alla);	1. Silk from Persia, 2.Persian style 3. Male garment, of plush or valessò, with buttons
persichina	peach blossom colour
pertani? pertanti?	therefor?? on that account?losses?
pescheria	fish market, fish trade
peso	unit of weight equal to 25 lbs
pessare	to weigh
peteni / petine	combs
petto	chest, of person or garment
pevere	large funnels or wooden cups
pezza	bolt of cloth
pezzo	piece
pianetta	chasuble, ecclesiastical garment
piannette	baubles to sew on to gowns as ornaments
piatello	small plate, saucer
piatti da portata	serving dishes
picarota	trimmed with dots? pitchy??
Picardie/a	from Picardy
picco	pickaxe
piccolotti	small lace
piccotati?	peaked? Zucchi 1719 p.10
pidria	large funnel
piegate	folded, pleated
piella	spruce, white wood
pigare	to crush, squeeze, tamp down
pignolato, pugnola	fustian
pilli	1.pills, pebbles, 2. rammers 3. toggles, buttons
pilo	1pile 2. fuzzy, warm fabrics
pinto	painted
piombino	lead seal, attached with wire
piombo	lead
pioppa	poplar
piramatista?	pyramidal??
pistarola, (pestarolla) con coltello	tool with a half-moon blade, used to both cut and pound meat
pistola	pistol
piuma	feather, plume
piumazzo, piumone, pumazzo	duvet
piviale	type of garment, foot length, with vestigial cape, a cope
pizza	reel
pizzati, pizzetti	trimmed with lace
pizzo	fine lace

pluchare	to depill a cloth
polacca	bootee, laced ankle boot
pollaroli	poultry vendors
pollice	inch, width of a thumb
pomada	salve. ointment, pomade
pomello	knob, handle, pommel
ponsò	very bright red colour
pontina	spool
portata	one of the two standards of density of the warp, 40 threads (Venice) (Lanaro) Note: Lanaro contradicts himself on this point, At one entry he says 40, and another 100 threads.
portera	1. awning cloth 2. portière
posate	cutlery
poste	silk veils, related to sendals, sometimes made like a net and usually worn like a belt
potta	?
pozade??	reeled?
pozzo	well. pool
preto	pure, real
prezza	1.loan 2. price
prioli	piorale?? of a prior or prioress???
pristinari	original? primitive?
procuratore	proxy
Provencia	from Provence
prunetta	prune coloured
puanto?	smelly?
pugnale	dagger
punta	tips, points
punto	one-twelfth of an ounce or of an inch
purgatte	1. examined, passed, tested for quality, certified 2. clarified, purified, purged
pusino? purino?	liquid manure? pusigno? late supper, late snack??
putta	little girl
putto	1. little boy 2. cupid
Q	
quadrato, quadretto, quadrotto	1. panel 2. squared, in squares 3. a fabric, coarse homespun 4. a low stool or sitting cushion
quadregio, quadretto	1. a kind of coarse homespun cloth 2. chair covered in wicker or leather
quadro	1. painting, picture 2. "stoffa a quadri" artist's canvas
quarti	1. measure for silk, 15x95cm 2. fourth grade

quatrino	1. fourth part, fourth grade. 2. a farthing = 4 denarii 3. coarse linen
quatrocello	small chair, stool
quintino	1. fifth part (of a measure) 2. vessel holding a fifth. 3. fifth grade?
R	
raggione	accounts, reckonings
ramare	kettles
ramado, ramata	hook, picker upper.
ramato	copper covered
ramice	sieve
ramie	bast, fibre similar to flax
ramo	1. copper, 2. copper vessel
ramino, rametto	2. copper vessel. 3 bast fibre, similar to flax
rampino uncinato	pot hook
ranciato, aranciato, rantanto	orange coloured
Ranconis??	place name??
randella	cudgel, walking stick
rapazzo, rapezzo	a patch
rascia, rassa, rassaia	1. satin. 2. fabric made with "Salonica wool" 3. 'rashes' a very fine twilled woollen material. name originated from Arras alternate name 'finette'
raseti	razors
rasettare	to repair
rasetto	1. sateen 2. repaired 3. mixed cloth of silk and waste silk or hemp, or cotton
raso	satin, shiny silk fabric
rastello, rastrello, rastelletto	1. shelves 2. shelved cabinets 3. railing 4. a tool for folding fabric
razzo	Flemish style tapestry, Arras
rattina	fabric like a reversed twill, with curly pile. "ratskin"
reale	1. royal, real, actual. 2. a quality designation for silk
recamata, ricamata, ricamo	embroidered, decorated, ornate
recamo	tackle (nautical)
reeling (eng)	the process of unwinding the cocoon in a basin of hot water
refe, ref, revo refo	Hemp or linen thread
refe filo	thread
refe piu grosso	yarn
refranto, rifranto	1. crushed,, broken up 2. type of fabric?
Remoro	place name

renso	1.suede 2.A type of fine linen used for undergarments, from Rheims, lawn 3. the flax fibre to spin lawn with
resa	1.return, yield,2. returned, as in unsold goods,3. repayment
respiro, a respiro	delayed payment, respite
restagno	fabric, like fustian
reta	net, network
reverso, rovescio, rovescino	type of fabric, sometimes used for the sides of stockings
revocar	revoke, recall
ricamato	glued on
rici	nice, rich
riccio	curly, crispy
rigadini tedeschi	cloth of linen and cotton
rigadone	large stripes
rigantino	striped cotton material
rigata	striped, from <i>riga</i> , a line or stripe. <i>Telle rigate</i> were made with flax warp and mixed flax and silk weft, giving the striped effect
rigatiere. recatiere	1. fripper, a dealer in used goods . 2.same as ' <i>zavaglio</i> '
ripieno	full, overflowing
riporto	1. ornament. esp.gold or silver embroidery 2. added material 3. carry over
riscotarsi, riscottare	to collect, as a debt; to redeem
ritrato	portrait
rizzare	1. to straighten 2: to bristle
rize	1.standing up, stiffened, referring to veils or caps with internal frames 2.bristle
rizzo = ricci	1. curly 2. pile 3. raised
robba	things, items
Rocabianca	a village in Italy
rocheto, rochelo	1. spool or bobbin, warp winder .2. transparent overgown, open at the sides
rondo	round?
rosaseca di cremisi	dried-rose crimson
rosetta	rosette
rosetto	lipstick, rouge
rovescio,roversetti, roverso	upside down or inside out, reversible
ruga	wrinkle
ruggina	rust
S	
sacchetto	bag, pouch
saietta	fine serge

saio/a	1. male clothing 2. monastic tunic, habit 3. twill
salarole	wooden box for storing salt before it goes to the table, salt store
salia, saglia, sargia. sarza	1. one of the basic weaving structures. 2. serge, a hardwearing worsted with a twill weave.
salino	salt cellar for the table, maybe in majolica, pewter or silver
Salone, Salonichio	1. wool fabric from Salonica, or Salone in Provence 2. coarse wool fabric, whitish in colour
salvietta	serviette, napkin, towel
samis, samito	fabric woven from a continuous weave of six threads 2, silk or mixed fabric of Greek origin
samitari	weavers of samite, silk without pile
sangallo	1. <i>broderie anglaise</i> , cotton fabric embroidered to form a buttonhole outline, which is then cut away. named for the Swiss town 2. buckram.3. calico
saracatto	poss. Saracenesca, rolling shutter?, sluice gate? poss from saracco, a saw? sawn, serrated?
saracenesca	Rolling shutter
sarietta	type of fabric. serge
sarto	tailor
sarzia, sargia	1. Sardinian? 2. Serge. 3. flowered cretonne. 4. an overcover on a bed, taking its name from the fabric
satela	colour
satina	sateen, cotton fabric shiny in imitation of silk from Zaitun, Arabic for China
sbaraino	1. Back-gammon set, 2. shaved?
scagni	three legged stools
scala a perolli/piolli	ladder with rungs
scaldavivanda	chafing dish, plate warmer
scaletta	stepladder
scali	1. Spangles for headdresses, made up by goldsmiths 2. ladders
scalzetti	a fibre, since sold by the pound at silk rates.
scampolo	remnant
scancia	oblique, bias cut
scanno	seat, isolated or part of a set, esp. in solemn places. bench
scansia	book case, set of shelves
scapini	slippers
scarlato	1. colour, crimson or bright red, obtained from a bath based on grana 2. silk fabric woven on the bias, the type neckties are made from today.

scarpetoni	large shoes
scarpe, scarpette	1. low heeled shoes 2. bootees
scarsela	pouch for hanging from a belt
scarzore	one who 'garza' the fabric?
scatolo	box, can
scavette	hollow tips
scavizze	drop seat (for underwear)
scavo	hole
scheda	cards
schiere	ranked, terraced, lined up
schiuma	froth, foam
sciantung, sciantun	type of silk, from Shantung, in China, made with fibre from wild silkworms
Scio	1. placename: Schio, a town north of Vicenza. 2. poss. Kios in Greece
(a)sciugamano	hand towel
scodelli	bowls
scofiotti	bonnets
scoiatolo	squirrel (fur)
scolarare, scolariti	to fade, discoloured
scope	brooms
scorza d'arbore	bark, tree bark, possibly a pattern or weave?
scossale	Female garment, apron
scotto, scottini	Tweed, Herringbone, coarse woollen stuff
scrana	bench. chair with high back and arms
scrittori, scrittoio	1. writing kit 2. desk or decorative furniture, often with drawers 3. a small box for powder or snuff, often jewelled
scudella	shield, escutcheon
scuffia.	hood, coif, bonnet
scuola	confraternity of members of different guilds, gathered for social and religious purposes
secchia	pail, bucket
secreto, segreto	1. secret 2. secret drawer
sedaze	second choice silk used for the weft and processed in the silk mill
sedazzo, steaccio	large sieve
sedegele	type of waste silk
sedieta	small chair
segale	rye
segnì	1. seals, marks, tokens, proofs 2. units of volume?
sego	suet, tallow
selia. seliabona	error correction

selino	saddle
selvaggio	selfedge, selvage, the edging on woven fabric, plaited back on itself, often including coloured threads to indicate the quality and type of the main bolt
sempio	plain
sempri?	semplici? at all times? simple?
sendalo, sendal(eng)	light silk fabric similar to a veil
senseria	brokerage fee
seppellare	to bury, inter
serpa	1.small box, cassette, 2 carriage box, cab 3 snaky neckpiece, boa
serra	greenhouse, glass house
serradure, serrature	lock, clasp
serrande	rolling shutters
sesini	plum coloured
sesto	sixth
seta	silk
seta cruda	unboiled or raw silk
seta leale, reale	true silk, the first choice raw silk
setacci	sieve
setaiolo	entrepreneur who bought the raw silk, coordinated production and traded the fabric
sfritto	frieze.
sgabello	stool
silega. silghe	1.scouring rushes?? 2. type of fine grain? 3. place name. Silega or Siliqua in Sardinia 4. Silesia?
Silesia	1.Silesia 2. of fabric from Silesia
simesan	Place Name: St. Maixant in Poitou
Skozia	Scotland
smalto	enamel
smolta, smolte	1.maybe a silk fibre, since sold by the oz 2 poss from smollare, to soak, to loosen. 3 from smoglia, a tub to wash or soak clothes in???
smonte	maybe silk fibre that has been picked out of cloth, from smontare, to disassemble??
soglio. soio	small cask, tub, for transvasing wine
soio, soioni	silk, from French soie
solaio	1.loft, attic 2. floor
solaro del grano	loft for grain
solerata	floored (of a house)
Solferino	town name
solino	1. crude cloth 2.collar, cuff, neck band
solio	plain

sorta	sort, kind
sotana	skirt
sotille	fine, soft
sotto copa	saucer
sottoposta	silk veil, narrower type of posta, made with mixed silk thread
spada	sword
spago	string, twine
spalle	shoulders
spalliera	tapestry used as a wall hanging
spalliera à verdura	verdant wall hanging
spalliera	bed headboard or chairback
specchio	mirror
Speglada	silk? poss from spelagare or spelare, uscir da pelago, depilare??? to strip?? to fleece? to abrade? Sheared?
spelagia	the slender outside covering of the cocoon
spelta	spelt, a type of wheat
spezate	1. broken. 2. small change. 3 spices, spiced
speziario	spice dealer
spezzare, spezzatare	to break, to break into pieces
spiedo as	spit
spigato, spigoro	twill
spigone	1. spikes. 2. lavender
spilla	pin. brooch
spina	1. cotton cloth embroidered ' <i>a spinapesce</i> ' 2. herringbone
spina di seta sovii	twilled silk
spinning (eng)	1. the operation of twisting the silk thread with a right torsion 2. generally, the entire operation silk twisting including spinning and throwing
spolverino	dustpan
Spomilione, spumiglia	fabric with warp of silk and weft of bavella, 'crespone'
sponda	edge, border
sportelli	doors, wickets
staderni	from <i>stadera</i> . a steelyard, weighing device or stadia, levelling staff
stadrone	large steelyard
stafetto	trouser loops
staffa	stirrup
stagno	tin
stalla	stable
stame	wool yarn, twisted

stametto	1. fabric woven with the strongest part of the wool, the 'stame' 2. fine carded wool, 3 wool dyed before weaving
stampatoro, stampatoio	fabric stamper or printer
starolo	basket
stecchi	sticks, stakes, stems
stimatoro	value estimator
stoino	doormat
stoppa	tow, oakum, stuffing
stopolo?	from stoppa ?'stuffing? wadding? flax tow?
stoppare, stoppatto	to stop up, stuff
storta	sabre, scimitar, curved sword
stortetta	curved dagger
stoviglie	crockery
straze, straxxe	type of waste silk
strazzarolo	1. Dealer in second hand clothing, which there was no shame in wearing, if silk. (Mola p. 42) 2. In Bologna, member of the drapers' guild (Giusberti)
strazzatto	in rags
strettina	narrow ribbons
stringa	lace, ribbons
stringhetti	ribbons
strisce, stricche	stripe
strusi, strosi, strusetti	type of waste silk produced in reeling and winding.
strutto	lard
stuoia	mat
subbia/ subbio	1. chisel, esp for stone. 2 beam, as for a loom
subiotti	1. chisels 2. beam 3. chiselled?
suddetto	above mentioned, ditto
sugamano	towel
suolo	soil
Suppelletilli	furnishings
suprafina	superfine as a grade of cloth, cloth of that grade
sutilii	nicknacks
sutilla	fine. soft
T	
tabacchiere	tobacco pouch? humidor? snuff boxes
tabarro, tabardo	overcoats, cloaks or mantles, tabards
tabbi	1. tabby, a type of strong, wavy taffeta, medium quality fabric of pure silk or mixed with waste silk and flax or cotton, giving a variegated colour. 2. a weave with each weft thread passing alternately over one and under one warp thread

taffeta	type of silk fabric, the first of the three fundamental armatures, from tafta, or tafteh, Persian for cloth.
taigla, talla	amount, tally, measure, height, build, width
taglione	cutting board
tailleur	lady's suit, tailor made coat and skirt
talinada	sliced ? cut? shear. slashed? trimmed? poss. tali nada? poss talare: reaching the ankles?
tamarazzo	mattress covers
tamburro	1.drum 2. Tambour Lace made using a tulle net as base and a crochet hook
tane, tanello, tanetto. tano	Tawny, chestnut coloured
tapetto	1.carpet, 2. tapestry
tapezzeria	1. tapestry 2. wall paper 3. upholstery
tara	faults, flaws
tarezzato	flawed
targhiato. tagiata	1. plated, sealed with a name plate 2.registered
targia. targa, tarzi	number plate, shield, tag
tartanigo	tortoise shell
tarzi?	seals? number plates? inlay?
tassello	gusset, reinforcement, wedge
tavella	flat brick, flat block
tavelle	ribbons
tavellina	form of tavella
taveloncello	small ribbon? small flooring block?
taveloni	1. hollow flooring blocks, 2.wide ribbons
tavolo	table
tavelotto	1.table cloth 2. small table
tavole	tables, planks
techia, tichia	roasting pan
teglia	baking pans
tela. tella	1.cloth, of several types with thrown silk and cotton or flax weft, in stripes and patterns.2. linen, calico or canvas cloth 3. the first and simplest of the three fundamental weaves, the most basic weaving structure
tela vergata	striped cloth with a flax warp and weft of waste silk and flax
(in) telaio	(in the) loom
telaio, tellaro	1. a loom. 2. any frame, as for picture, mirror or map, or for craft work
telletta	1.fabric, double twisted and fulled, with a reversed figure. 2. very fine silk cloth
tempiale, tendella	part of the equipment of a loom, which keeps the fabric in alignment

tenda	curtain, awning
tentore. tintore	a dyer
termatte	heated?
terratico	land held through a quit-rent
teritelle	place name: near Avignon in the Papal States???
terlizo, terlici, terligia	1. an ordinary cloth made of tow. 2. a kind of sack cloth used in doublets and hose. 3. cloth from Flanders 4. Linen and hemp. 5. Triple twilled.
ternetta, terlanetta	type of non-perforated silk trim
ternfiliate	made with three threads
terzanello	1. mediocre fabric woven from the residue (cascami) of silk. 2. light silk fabric used for linings
terzetto, terzarollo	firearm, short pistol, caliver, carbine
terzino	1. bottle holding 1/3 fiasco. (1 fiasco = 2 to 2 1/2 litres) 2. textile type
terzone	packing canvas, gunny sack, sack cloth
tesa	hung or suspended
tesiatoro	weaver
testo	a type of dish or cooking implement
tetaro	frame
throwing (eng)	process of twisting the silk thread with a left hand torsion
tia	??
tina, tino	1. tub, cask, vat 2. the blue dye fermentation tank for woad
tintoro	dyer
tiraz	a type of brocade, or else a large stripe on the hem with calligraphic script
tirintana, tiretaine	1. Waste cotton spun into coarse cloth. Could not be mixed. Venice. 2. A cheap rough cloth with a warp of linen, cotton or hemp and a woof of cheap wool
tirliso. tarliso, tarlison	linen cloth
tirzitene	poss same as tirintana?
tiserino?	Frangheri 1.42
tissadro	weaver
tobletto	dobletto
toccare	to touch
tocha, tocca, tocco, tozzo	1. piece (of cloth) 2. spoiled
toghelara	carder for fibre?
togliere	1. to take out, to clean. 2 in textiles, can be = garzare, to card
tonda	type of female garment, with hood
tondino	dinner plate

tondo	round, round plate
topa di botte	barrel lids
torcha n.	1. a hand press. 2. torchi, a torch, candle
torcere	in thread, the process of twisting together the first filaments, which have been spun in one direction, in the opposite direction to form thread. in English, to throw. This is done in all sizes of cordage, from silk thread to ships' hawser
torchio, torchinetto	hand press
torchitoio, torchitrice, torcitore	throwing machine, slubber, twister
torchino	blue colour
torchon	1. choker 2. coarse bobbin lace with geometrical or shell designs, made by peasants. Also known as beggar's lace
torga	filament reeling apparatus/ spinning wheel??
torgiato	reeled
tornella, torneta	fringes, trimmings
tornesello	Venetian copper or bronze coin
tornete, tornese	1. winder? 2. Livre Tournois, value in Naples 2 centesimi
tornitura	turning, turnery, lathework
tortaruga	tortoiseshell
toseti, tozi	shearings, clippings, fleece? from tozzare, to shear
tossare	to shear
tovaglia. tavagliola	1. tablecloth 2. napkin
tozzo	1. piece 2. type of head covering 3.. stocky. squat, thick
trabacca, trabaccola, trabucola	baldaquin, canopy or bed curtains, made from various cloths
trabbicola	clothes horse or drying rack
trama	weft or woof. threads that are woven through the warp threads. These threads are not spun and thrown separately, like <i>organzino</i> , but are directly spun two or three together. they are less strong than warp threads
trapontata	quilted
traversa, traversino	1. apron 2. type of fabric??
trazetto	drawn? pulled out?
trecce	plaits, braids
trillia	same as <i>cambellotto</i>
trinciatoio	fabric slasher
trinciato, trinsatto,	1. sheared fabric 2. slashed to let rich lining show.
trine	lace
tripelle	tripod

Troes	place name: Troyes
tuia	1.cask 2. thuja, arbor vitae, cedar
tumolante	bumpy, spiky (of a fabric)
turchini	deep blue, peacock blue turquoise
tutore, tutrice	1. tutor 2. guardian, as of an estate. trustee
U	
Umion	place name?
ungarene	long cassock of modern style, layered and ornamented
usato	worn out. used
V	
vachetto	cow hide
vagello	the blue dye bath based on indigo, with madder, alum of lees, and bran
vaglio, vagoio	sieve, sievemaker
vaguaya??	?
vaio, varo	fur, squirrel fur, miniver
valare	to be worth. value
valessina, valessino	1. possibly Valenciennes lace. 2. possibly Valais, a place 3. a woman's dress
valessio	1. type of cloth,cotton and linen or hemp, light fustian 2. Placename, Vaud in Switzerland, a source of fabric
valico	section of a filatoio, which usually comprised two, three or even more valichi
valisino	Valigia?valise? valigiano? valley dweller? poss, same as valessino?
Varese	a town in Northern Italy, north of Milan, an early industrial centre.
vasi, vasori	jars, pots
vasori	trays, drawers
vela, velami	1. veil 2.sail
velette, velotte	sheer cloth
velletto	1. veil, 2. handkerchief, often decorated
vellutai	1.velvet makers, 2. makers of any kind of silk cloth with pile
vellutti zenoini	Genoese style velvets
velo,vello	1.gauze 2. voile, a type of sheer fabric with dots woven in 3. a veil 4. skin, membrane 5. furry, fleecy skin of an animal 6. tuft of wool?
velutti altibassi	high and low velvets, the most prized variety, with piles of different heights
velutto	velvet
velutto a coste	corduroy , velveteen
ventaglio	fan

ventarolle	1. weather vane. 2. fire screen, 3. fan 4. chatterbox
verchiati	hooped, as a barrel
verdastre	greenish
verghio	scabbard
vernigli	gilded silver
vesta/e	1.clothing, 2.an overgarment
veste da camera	dressing gowns
vestimento	clothing, outfit, suit
vetro	glass
vezzola	a cask. about 3 brenti
Viadana	town across the Po from Parma
vianda	type of dry pasta
vimini	wicker
vitello	calf, calfskin?
voce, avoce	entry in a list
volante	frills
volta	vault
voltierra del rosto	rotisserie
vomero	1. vertical cutting blade, as a ploughshare or coulter 2. a nasal bone 3. minesweeper
W	
winding (eng)	operation of winding skeins of raw silk before spinning and/or throwing
X	
Y	
Z	
zaccho	mail coat, hauberk
zambelotto	plain woollen cloth, maybe woven with camel hair, possibly imported from Near East, known as camelot in French or chamblet in English
zanpini	fireplace tongs
zantorgne, zanforgne	grills, gridirons
zavaglio	a broker or dealer, authorized to make estimates on legal documents
zavatino	shoe polish?, slipper, shoemaker
zeffo	see 'reffo'
zelosa, gelosa	Lattices, jalousies
zetani, zetanini	a broad range of fabrics based on a satin weave, with or without pile
zibellino	sable fur

zimarra	wide overcoat, to the ankles, buttoned in front, for a magistrate or mature person. went out of fashion about 1650
zipar, zipolare	to bung, to peg, to bung with a spigot, to stuff or pad
zucchetto	mailed jacket