

***Francesco Adami,
a young Livornese merchant in London
1673-1674***

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Introduction*

Explorers of the past have fewer and fewer opportunities nowadays to work on uncontaminated primary sources. It is even rarer to discover a whole archive in its original location in a city like Florence, where both public and private archive material was almost entirely mapped in the course of the twentieth century. Evidently, however, exceptions are still possible, and so it was that in 2014 a student of Early Modern History moved to Florence and went to live in a historic palazzo on the Lungarno Guicciardini after a long period of illness spent in the Tuscan countryside. The owner of the building proudly showed him a very singular room that she had recently restored. It was the first and possibly only example, in Florence, of a gallery-cum-library in the neo-Egyptian style, built between 1802 and 1804 for Giovan Lorenzo Lami, a Sienese nobleman (but of Livornese origin) who inherited the assets and the palazzo of Senator Alessandro Gaetano Adami, the customs director at the port of Livorno, who died with no direct heirs in 1799. Due to the alternating fortunes of the Adami family in the nineteenth century, the exotic gallery, together with its precious contents, was completely neglected and forgotten about during the twentieth century. This was still the case at the time of my visit in December 2014, when, at the end of the gallery, I noticed eight wall bookcases, four of which were packed with dusty documents, packets of letters, files and accounts books: I had discovered the Adami-Lami Archive.¹

* The research project I am conducting at the European University Institute is called '*Hard times in the Levant. Livornese merchants and their family, social and commercial ties around the Early Modern Mediterranean (1680s-1720s)*'. Its aim is to understand, through a critical analysis of around 30,000 previously unseen documents from the Adami Archive, the vicissitudes and activities of Francesco and Domenico Adami in the eastern Mediterranean after their father Antonio ordered them to leave the family home in Livorno to seek their fortune elsewhere. It represents a peculiar case of social mobility within the Mediterranean. One of the things that makes the Adami Archive so unusual is not just that it is so complete, but that it offers similarly complete testimony of the not particularly successful careers of these two merchant brothers. So, on the basis of their not particularly successful careers, can we learn more about what did make a merchant successful in the Ottoman Empire in that particular period? The Adami brothers probably chose an unpropitious moment to move to the Middle East, because they had to deal with the plague, internal Ottoman rebellions and the competition of many small-scale merchants operating in the shadow of commercial giants such as the Levant Company in markets that no longer offered lucrative profits.

¹ The wording 'Archivio Adami-Lami' appears in the 'declaratory provision of particularly significant historic interest' of the archive collection, as per article 13 of the Code of the Cultural Heritage and

At the time of the discovery I knew nothing about this family, its origins or the important role it played in the economic and political life of Livorno and Florence in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. I was just overwhelmed by what had happened. Unfortunately, nothing but the catalogues remained of the old book collection accumulated by Anton Filippo and Alessandro Gaetano Adami in the second half of the eighteenth century. The archive was just a mass of papers, with no inventory or coherent archival order. The first step towards being able to work on the documents was therefore to reorganize the substantial body of material in a functional manner. Over the following thirteen months, aided by Luca Faldi, an archive officer at the Soprintendenza Archivistica della Toscana, I drew up a preliminary inventory and arranged the archive documents in a more useable manner. The new and uniform organization of the documents, now numbered progressively, transformed the appearance of those dusty bookcases, to which a fifth one was added to house a significant proportion of the packets of correspondence previously heaped up at the bottom of the first bookcase.

The results of this necessary endeavour were truly surprising, because the Adami-Lami Archive now comprises 800 archive files (corresponding to several hundreds of thousands of documents), divided between miscellaneous envelopes, book-keeping registers, financial documents, written records, drafts of theatre pieces and packets of correspondence pertaining to three distinct families: the Adami and Lami families, and the documents of Antonio Matraini, a merchant from Lucca who had family ties with the Adamis, covering a time span ranging from 1650 to 1950. The Adami-Lami Archive also contains the majority of papers of Anton Filippo Adami (1710–1768), a politician and man of letters known for having produced the first Italian translation of Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man* in 1756.

However, this eminent but forgotten man of letters was not the prime focus of my attention. While drawing up the inventory my curiosity had been aroused by the titles of some of the numerous archive items that read 'Pacco lettere Francesco Adami Acri 1697' (Bundle of letters, Francesco Adami, Acre 1697), 'Carteggio Domenico Adami Aleppo 1703' (Papers, Domenico Adami, Aleppo 1703), 'Ragione Adami & Gras in Acre 1699' (Adami & Gras Firm in Acre 1699) or 'Ragione Adami & Niccodemi in Aleppo 1707' (Adami & Niccodemi Firm in Aleppo 1707). I therefore set out to investigate whether there was a reference bibliography on the presence of Livornese merchants in the Middle East at the end of the seventeenth century. I immediately realized there was a gap, due above all to the scarcity of specific sources, which could be at least partially filled through an analysis of the lives

Landscape of the Ministry for the Cultural Heritage and Activities. The surname Lami, which fell into disuse from 1799, was reinstated and added in the 1920s by the last heir of the Adami family, thereby becoming Adami-Lami.

of two brothers, Francesco and Domenico Adami, active in the eastern Mediterranean between 1686 and 1715, first as clerks then as agents for the Levant Company, and finally as the owners of their own trading companies in Acre (Palestine) and Aleppo (Syria). Amongst other things, Francesco Adami was appointed vice consul of the English Nation in Palestine in 1699, an office he held until he died in 1702 after being struck down by the plague that was rife in the region.

The lives of Francesco and Domenico were very complicated, punctuated by unfortunate historic events that often contributed crucially to their personal failures, as I shall endeavour to illustrate in future research.

Training and apprenticeship

In this essay I will limit myself to describing the initial phase of the trading experience of Francesco Adami, the first of the two brothers, that is, his training in the trading company of Francesco Terriesi in London. I chose this early phase of international training not just because it was decisive for his subsequent career as a merchant, but also because the theme of how young people learnt the trade is of great historiographic interest.

Training, not apprenticeship. These terms, at least in the field of premodern economic and social history, might appear to overlap, but a distinction needs to be drawn. Training entailed professional work experience undertaken principally in a trading house² for at least a year, while apprenticeship was a period of professional training that involved the stipulation of a contract stating what duties the apprentice was to perform in a guild or corporation so as to repay his master for the investment.³

Unfortunately, due to the clear lack of primary sources, such as the private papers of young people entering the world of trade, and of case studies that can be used for comparative purposes, it is very complicated to adequately describe

² Although restricted to seventeenth-century Genoa, Giovanni Domenico Peri described the 'principiante' or trainee in great detail: 'When the young man wishing to enter the trading is expert in the aforementioned matters, he can be employed in a 'Scagno', that is, a trading company. Initially the most important trading houses, which employ young men from other companies, must be identified. Here in Genoa, the name 'Giovane di Scagno' is used to define all those who want to work in commerce. But in my view, this definition is appropriate above all for the trainee, who should be young and at the right age to learn. Employed in a firm to learn how to trade, he must carry on and obtain the favour of the mentor, a support and sure guide for reaching his objectives [...]'. GIOVANNI DOMENICO PERI, *Il Negoziante* (Genova: Pier Giovanni Calenzano, 1638), 64-69.

³ Patrick Wallis proposed the following very effective definition of apprenticeship: 'Early modern apprenticeship was a system of training in which young men, and less often young women, entered contracts to work for established craftsmen and merchants for a lengthy period, generally of some years, in exchange for instruction in a craft or trade'. PATRICK WALLIS, "Apprenticeship and Training in Premodern England," *The Journal of Economic History* 68, no. 3(2008): 832-61: 834.

mercantile training because, though it was common practice among traders, it was conducted more informally than the activities performed in guilds.

As far as apprenticeship is concerned, on the other hand, recent studies of young people's professional training in the early modern age coordinated respectively by Marteen Prak and Patrick Wallis, and by Anna Bellavitis, Martina Frank and Valentina Sapienza have revitalized the theme thanks to the contribution of multidisciplinary and transnational research groups, ranging from economic to gender history, even though the available resources have led them to concentrate mainly on training practices within corporations rather than on the professional training experiences of individual traders.⁴

Family background

Francesco Adami's youthful period of training was therefore one of professional training. But who was Francesco Adami, this obscure figure born into a family of flourishing Tuscan merchants, who, having set out from Livorno in 1686 as a simple economic migrant, held no lesser an office, between 1699 and 1702, than that of English vice consul in Palestine?

Francesco was born on 16 April 1654 in Empoli,⁵ one of the most important freight hubs in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany,⁶ and he was one of the ten children of Antonio Adami and Dianora Tronci. Although his direct descendants would be awarded the prestigious title of 'Patrician of Pistoia' in 1755,⁷ Antonio Adami descended from a family of innkeepers that originally came from Monghidoro, a small town in the mountains of Emilia-Romagna, before moving to Empoli in the second half of the sixteenth century. As he was the fourth-born son, Antonio initially embarked on a military career, joining the Compagnia Colonella headquartered in Livorno,⁸ while his wife Dianora was from a well-off family that managed a number of estates in and around Empoli.

⁴ MAARTEN PRAK and PATRICK WALLIS, eds., *Apprenticeship in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); ANNA BELLAVITIS, MARTINA FRANK, VALENTINA SAPIENZA, eds., *Garzoni. Apprendistato e formazione tra Venezia e l'Europa in età moderna* (Mantova: Universitas Studiorum, 2017).

⁵ Archivio della Collegiata di Sant'Andrea di Empoli, Registro dei battezzati della Parrocchia di Sant'Andrea, vol. 42, 23.

⁶A recently published collection of essays focuses on the importance of Empoli as a strategic intermediate emporium between Livorno and Florence: GAETANO GRECO and GIULIANO PINTO, eds., *Empoli. Nove secoli di storia* (Roma: Storia e Letteratura, 2019).

⁷ Anxious to gain recognition of the social status they had acquired by the middle of the eighteenth century, in 1755 Anton Filippo and Alessandro Gaetano Adami presented 'evidence of nobility' demonstrating that they descended from a Pistoia family of the same name. Archivio Adami-Lami, 'Causa Provanze di nobiltà della famiglia Adami di Pistoia', archive piece no. 38. Archivio di Stato di Firenze, *Deputazione sopra la nobiltà e cittadinanza*, 'Filza XXXIII di Processi di Nobiltà dei Patrizi Pistoiesi', cc.123v-124r. MARCELLA AGLIETTI, *Le tre nobiltà. La legislazione nobiliare del granducato di Toscana (1750) tra magistrature civiche, Ordine di Santo Stefano e diplomi del principe* (Pisa: ETS, 2000), 56.

⁸ '14 October 1663, Livorno. I attest to the truth for he who expects the truth, that Antonio di Alessandro Adami from Empoli, besides being a soldier of this garrison in the Company of Captain

Francesco's family did not have noble origins, then, but nor were they poor peasant folk. Instead, the family was part of the Tuscan merchant bourgeoisie that sought social betterment through public office, as happened to Antonio (appointed contractor of the 'Bottega del Sale Fino' in Livorno), his uncle Jacopo (the chamberlain, or treasurer, of Portoferraio), and his younger brother Pier Filippo (a notary employed in several public offices). Besides holding public offices, the Adamis also occupied many ecclesiastical posts.

Livorno became the base for the development of the branch of the family originating with his father Antonio, because, by the end of 1650, he had taken over from his elder brothers the management of the so-called 'chantina del portucciuolo', the tavern of the Colonnella military company based in Livorno. He steadily developed the opportunities offered by the wine trade, exploiting the trade route along the river Arno; a network of small vessels loaded goods and barrels at Porto di Mezzo, travelled downstream through Empoli and Pontedera and ended their journey in Pisa and, obviously, in Livorno. Moreover, in 1660, Antonio Adami entered into a long-term 'livello' contract to rent the Medici estates of Cerbaiola (in the hills above Empoli), Cigoli and Vicopisano. From Empoli and Livorno the Adami family periodically traded hundreds of barrels of Trebbiano, Montalcino and Chianti wine produced on holdings owned by the Medici, Antinori, Bardi, Pandolfini, De Nobili, Rucellai and Niccolini families, often with the support of agents such as Lorenzo Maria Lanfredini and Leonardo de' Frescobaldi, or of the trading company founded by the Florentine nobleman Onofrio Bracci.

Pier Antonio Possi, also serves as the cellar-master [...] of the Company [...] of the Colonnella, and so as such enjoys all the customary rights and privileges; and so that he might be recognized as such we have prepared the present attestation, signed in person and surmounted by the seal of this military company. Donato Salamoni Cancelliere.' ('A dì 14 Ottobre 1663 Livorno, Attesto per la verità a chi si aspetta la verità, che Antonio di Alessandro Adami da Empoli, oltre ad esser descritto soldato di questo presidio nella Compagnia del capitano Pier Antonio Possi, serve anche per cantiniere [...] della Compagnia [...] della Colonnella, pertanto come tale gode tutte le facultà e privilegi consueti, e perché sia riconosciuto come tale gli abbiamo fatto il presente attestato sottoscritto di prima mano, e sormontato con il sigillo di questa militare banca. Donato Salamoni Cancelliere.'). Archivio Adami-Lami, archival piece 383, pack no. 2, document no. 15, 14/10/1663.

In the early modern age, the family in Tuscany was largely viewed as an organic entity, in which individuals and their personal needs carried only relative weight. The interests of the group, of the house, as a compact multi-generational structure always prevailed. It was a complex unitary system, not immune to internal conflicts, comprising many individuals differing by gender, generation and kinship ties, but all systematically functional to each other.⁹

Knowledge of the family context is important for understanding Francesco Adami's initiation into a life of trade in a foreign country. Through his extensive family network, Francesco came into contact with some of the main drivers of change in his time: the expansion of the maritime powers before the outbreak of the Spanish War of Succession that sealed English supremacy of the seas, transcontinental trade, the feverish advance of knowledge and information and the growing pace of emigration.

Between London and Livorno

Antonio Adami's decision to send his twenty-year-old son Francesco to train in London was by no means coincidental. In London, Francesco stayed with and was watched over by Francesco Terriesi (1635–1715), a friend and trading partner of Antonio's. Terriesi was a prominent merchant and the most authoritative Tuscan figure in the English capital at the time, more so than the grand duke of Tuscany's official representative, Giovanni Antelminelli, whose place he took in 1680.¹⁰ Antonio Adami, who was in close contact with Tuscany's economic elite, from whom he purchased the wine that he then resold in Livorno, wanted to forge a profitable relationship with the community of English merchants that had become established in Livorno during the seventeenth century.

⁹ ROBERTO BIZZOCCHI, *In famiglia. Storie di interessi e affetti nell'Italia moderna* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2001); MARZIO BARBAGLI, *Sotto lo stesso tetto. Mutamenti della famiglia in Italia dal XV al XX secolo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1984); CESARINA CASANOVA, *La famiglia italiana in età moderna. Ricerche e modelli* (Roma: Carocci, 1997); GUILLAUME CALAFAT, "Familles, réseaux et confiance dans l'économie de l'époque moderne. Diasporas marchandes et commerce interculturel", *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 66/2 (2011): 513-31. On the intermingling of family and trade in Livorno, albeit from the perspective of a Sephardic group of merchants, see FRANCESCA TRIVELLATO, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

¹⁰ Francesco Terriesi himself attested to his friendship with Antonio Adami, when he became head of customs at the port of Livorno: "The present letter is to greet you, remembering our old friendship when the departed soul of the sergeant major, my brother, was still alive, and to wish to continue to employ myself in your service on every occasion [...]" ("La presente segue per salutarla ricordandole l'antica amicizia che passava fra di noi quando era viva la b[uona] a[nima] del signore sergente maggiore mio fratello, desiderando di continuar in ogni occasione d'impiegarmi in suo servizio [...]"), Archivio Adami-Lami, Francesco Terriesi to Antonio Adami, document 64, archival piece 473, Florence 19/10/1691. For a biographic profile of Francesco Terriesi, see STEFANO VILLANI, "Note su Francesco Terriesi (1635-1715) mercante, diplomatico e funzionario medico tra Londra e Livorno," *Nuovi Studi Livornesi* 10 (2002/2003): 59-80.

A structured English community in Livorno can be identified from 1620 onwards, and the year 1621 – when Richard Allen was appointed consul of the English Nation – perhaps marked a turning point between an initial period of the English presence in Livorno, uncertain and ill-defined, and a new phase in which the presence of English trading companies in the city became gradually more important both for the economy of the port and for the English economic and political community. If in the decades around the end of the sixteenth century the English in Livorno were mainly sea captains – often the owners of their own ships – from 1620 onwards the English community essentially consisted of the commercial agents of London-based companies and rich merchants and shipowners. In the space of a few years it became the most important English community in Italy, overtaking those of Venice, Genoa and Naples. From 1640 the English community in Livorno included some of the richest merchants in the city, who were surrounded by a large number of relatives, clerks and small traders, making the English presence on the streets of Livorno very evident.¹¹

What made Livorno such an important trading hub was its excellent geographic position, the existing laws and the infrastructure that facilitated the growth of the warehousing and transit of goods. Livorno also managed to attract the peninsula's land routes, in particular by replacing Genoa as a port for the northern region of Lombardy. This was decisive in making Livorno the linchpin for the import and export of goods to and from England. In 1667 Sir John Finch, an Englishman residing in Tuscany, described it as the 'Magazine and Scale of the English Levant Trade', thanks also to the almost complete absence of customs duty on goods.¹² Analysing goods traffic in Livorno, Jean Pierre Filippini identified a triple function of the Tuscan port which, in the early modern age, was simultaneously a regional port, a peninsular port and an international port. English merchants dominated trade both with the Levant and the routes linking Tuscany with areas

¹¹ MICHELA D'ANGELO, *Mercanti inglesi a Livorno 1573-1737. Alle origini di una 'British Factory'* (Messina: Istituto di Studi Storici Gaetano Salvemini, 2004), 68–69; A 1642 fiscal source shows us the presence of ten British merchants in Livorno out of a total of 171 (80 Jews, 33 French, 8 Flemish). The number of English merchants would rise during the seventeenth century to 20–25. For further information on the number of English people present in Livorno, STEFANO VILLANI, "Una piccola epitome di Inghilterra". La comunità inglese di Livorno negli anni di Ferdinando II: questioni religiose e politiche', in STEFANO VILLANI, STEFANIA TUTINO, CHIARA FRANCESCHINI, eds., *Questioni di storia inglese tra Cinque e Seicento: cultura, politica e religione* (Pisa: Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, 2006 [2003]); and Id., "I consoli della nazione inglese a Livorno tra il 1665 e il 1673: Joseph Kent, Thomas Clutterbuck e Ephraim Skinner," *Nuovi Studi Livornesi* 11 (2004): 12–15.

¹² MICHELA D'ANGELO, *Mercanti inglesi a Livorno*, 54. Public Record Office, State Paper, 98/8, Livorno 4 and 11 April 1667, Finch to Arlington; quoted by GIGLIOLA PAGANO DE DIVITIIS, *Mercanti Inglesi nell'Italia del Seicento*, 140, and MICHELA D'ANGELO, *Mercanti inglesi a Livorno*, 109. Sir John Finch, an authoritative intellectual, studied in Cambridge and Padua and later became professor of anatomy at the University of Pisa between 1659 and 1664.

¹³ GIGLIOLA PAGANO DE DIVITIIS, "Il Mediterraneo nel XVII secolo: L'espansione commerciale inglese e l'Italia," *Studi Storici* 27/1 (1986).

where the English had a strong trading influence, for instance the particularly lucrative trade in caviar between the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and Russia.¹³

It is understandable, then, that Antonio Adami felt the need to ensure that his son honed his professional skills in this merchant culture, in order to exploit the great opportunities offered by the vast English trading network, especially as Francesco was a young man and Antonio had to find a suitable role for him.

The training of Francesco Adami

In December 1672 Francesco Adami left Livorno for England, embarking on a long sea journey lasting 39 days. He disembarked in London on 22 January 1673, and arrived at Francesco Terriesi's house late that night. The following morning Francesco was woken by the songs of a Catholic Mass; Terriesi had arranged for Masses to be conducted at home in order to avoid any kind of political repercussion. The social climate in England in the 1670s was febrile because of the conflict with the Dutch Republic, while there was a growing fear of Catholicism among the population due to the pro-French policies of Charles II.

While reordering the Adami-Lami Archive I came upon some invaluable letters sent by the young Francesco Adami to his father Antonio during his stay in England between 1673 and 1674, written at intervals that ranged from 20 to 120 days. Acting as a counterpoint to these were other letters written by Francesco Terriesi to Antonio in the same period, which are also conserved in the archive.

Francesco's sojourn in London represented a significant investment on his father's part. A letter written by Francesco Terriesi in 1674, shortly before the young trainee returned to Livorno, shows that Terriesi had advanced some of those considerable costs. The content of the letter that the future resident of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany in London sent to Antonio Adami is important, because it reveals the scale and nature of those costs. In fact, Terriesi listed every item of expense that he advanced.

One totally neglected aspect of historic research into seventeenth-century merchants is the quantification of the investment made in a young person's cultural formation. The historiography on commercial knowledge has not devoted much attention to studying what the schooling of traders actually comprised, that is to say, the skills and abilities that a trader was expected to acquire. With the exception of a

¹³ JEAN-PIERRE FILIPPINI, *Il porto di Livorno e la Toscana (1676-1814)*, Vol. 1 (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1998), 48-63. The same classificatory scheme was adopted by Lucia Frattarelli-Fischer, who describes Livorno as follows: 'It was a regional port of remarkable importance for Tuscan trade, a warehousing and trading port between northern Europe and the Mediterranean and also a market supplying various parts of Italy [...]'; LUCIA FRATTARELLI-FISCHER, "Merci e mercanti nella Livorno seicentesca," in SILVANA BALBI DE CARO, ed., *Merci e monete a Livorno in età granducale* (Milano: Silvana Editoriale, 1997), 88; COREY TAZZARA, *The Free Port of Livorno and the Transformation of the Mediterranean World 1574-1790* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 134.

few works by French and English historians, reference must still be made to now classic studies about the economic training of traders in the late Middle Ages.¹⁴

What were the educational expenses for the trainee Francesco Adami? From Terriesi's letters we learn that the school year was divided into quarterly periods; what the three-monthly fee was for Mr Gordon, Francesco's teacher, namely six pounds; or, and this is another significant aspect, what attire was required by the young Adami in order to be recognized and accepted by the business community as a credible trainee merchant:¹⁵

1673		
30 June	For a pair of silk stocking and a pair of gloves	£ -:22:-
16 July	Duty and various costs to ship 2 cases of wine and a small box of guitar chords to your house in Livorno	£ 4:18:-
14 August	To the school master for the first quarterly period and enrolment at the school	£ 7:-:-
- ditto	Costs to transfer Francesco and his belongings to the school	£ -:10:-
27 ditto	For stockings, gloves and [...] hats	£ 1:8:10
10 October	Paid the bills to repair clothing and to treat a certain ailment	£ 2:-:-
18 November	To the master of the school for the second quarterly period	£ 6:-:-
24 December	For two neckties, two hats, gloves and stockings	£ 1:05:-
	For 7 pairs of shoes	£ 1:11:6
1674		
13 January	Paid the cost (he says) of repairing clothing	£ -:10:-
20 ditto	Paid the bills for buying gloves and garters	£ -:5:-
24 ditto	Expenses for a new outfit	£ 3:10:-
31 ditto	Payment of the bills for debts accumulated by Francesco	£ [...]
10 February	Pay expenses to repay other debts and to buy gifts to take to his father, mother and sisters	£ 4:-:-

¹⁴ For a pioneering study of mercantile training, see ARMANDO SAPORI, "La cultura del mercante medievale italiano", *Rivista di Storia economica* 2 (1937) [republished in the essay collections *Studi di Storia economica medievale* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1967)] and *Les marchands italiens au moyen-âge: conférences et bibliographies* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1952).

¹⁵ Archivio Adami-Lami, Francesco Terriesi to Antonio Adami, 9 March 1674, London, document 46, archival piece 547. Image no. 1.

18 ditto	For a pair of silk stockings and a pair of boots	£ -:15:6
21 ditto	For a hat, a sword with a baldric, a pair of shoes and a pair of boots, spurs and sundry	£ 2:10:-
	For 25 Louis d'ors, and £ 2, given to him in coin to make the return journey to Livorno	£ 23:17:6
		----- £ 70:12:4
	Deducted the expenses for two cases of wine, deducting the cost of freight, duty and broken flasks	£ 3:-:-
	Remaining	£ 67:12:4

The total expenses paid by Francesco Terriesi between 30 June 1673 and 21 February 1674 in order to maintain Adami, without considering the sum received by Francesco from his father when he left Livorno, amounted to over 67 pounds, that is, around 309 eight-real Spanish dollars, equivalent, just to give an idea, to 20 months of a reasonably well-paid employee of the explorer and philosopher William Penn,¹⁶ to 120 barrels of wine¹⁷, or to 13 years and 4 months of rent for a modest dwelling in Livorno.¹⁸ Although in 1675 English merchants were paying between 350 and 400 pounds to send their children to train as agents in the Levant Company in Smirne,¹⁹ for Antonio Adami, who had many other children to support, it was a considerable investment, from which he expected a financial return that was not just satisfactory for Francesco but also sufficient to consolidate the finances of his family business in Livorno.

Giovanni Domenico Peri (1590–1666) was one of the first writers to provide a general frame of reference regarding the professional training of young men: his *Negotiante*, published at the end of the 1630s, was produced in the cultural context of

¹⁶ RICHARD S. DUNN and MARY MAPLES DUNN, eds., *The World of William Penn* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 40; JEREMY BOULTON, "Wage Labour in Seventeenth-Century London," *Economic History Review* 49 (1996), 268-90; NATASHA GLAISYER, *The Culture of Commerce in England, 1660-1720* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: Boydell Press, 2006).

¹⁷ Archivio Adami-Lami, archival piece 321, 'Havere a 20 aprile pezze 300 per barili 120 vino a lire 5 la soma', 'Quaderno di conti della cantina del porticciolo di Livorno tenuto da Antonio Adami', 20 April 1677, 2.

¹⁸ Archivio Adami-Lami, archival piece 289, 'On 15 July 1673, I, Giovanni Francesco Tesconi, declare that I have received from Signor Domenico Marzochini two eight-real dollars for a month spent in a room held in rent, and he pays me on behalf of Signor Andrea di Lorenzo Del Pace, in coin to me the aforementioned' ('A dì 15 luglio 1673, Io Giovanni Francesco Tesconi, ho ricevuto dal signore Domenico Marzochini pezze due di otto reali, quali sono per un mese trascorso di una stanza che tiene in affitto, e mi paga per conto del signore Andrea di Lorenzo Del Pace, in contanti a me suddetto in mano propria affermo'), Quaderno di Conti di Antonio Adami, 24.

¹⁹ GWILYM AMBROSE, "English Traders at Aleppo (1658-1756)," *The Economic History Review* 3/2 (1931), 247.

the urban merchant oligarchies of central and northern Italy.²⁰ The work was conceived as a synthesis between the model of education widespread among aristocratic families and the learning of a practical knowledge of trade. Lying within this dual tradition was the requirement to be familiar with ‘notary writing’, considered essential for understanding contracts, and the importance of a good knowledge of Latin. The art of ‘speaking well’ (also in foreign languages) and of ‘writing well’ were not just a mark of social distinction, but also a fundamental requirement for the merchant’s trade. Similar attention also had to be given to handwriting. These were abilities in which Italian merchant bankers were trained from the sixteenth century onwards.

Besides these basic learning components there was also ‘complete understanding of arithmetic’ – that is, a perfect mastery of the four operations – learnt from a tutor or in a specialist school.²¹

The ‘Adami letters’ exchanged between London and Livorno between 1673 and 1674 (the documentation is mutilated, however, as Antonio’s letters in reply to his son are missing) describe a notion of training apparently informed by the prescriptions of manuals. In June 1673, six months after Adami’s arrival in London, Francesco Terriesi wrote to Antonio about how he had welcomed Francesco into his home, probably in the Italian neighbourhood near Lombard Street, and then did everything to ensure Francesco was in the best possible position to acquire the skills expected of him:

My dear sir,

While I have not been punctual in acknowledging receipt of the kind letter that you wrote to me last December, I was however diligent in implementing the content of it, as I am sure your son Francesco will inform you. I welcomed him into my home upon his arrival, and accommodated him until I found a suitable arrangement for him with a Catholic gentleman, who runs a school of Latin, French and English; he [Francesco] thus has a great opportunity to improve in one of the three languages that he prefers, and to abide by the good and true religion that he received at birth and still maintains. I am however still pressing him to improve the English language, which is the sole purpose why you sent him here, and I am watching him so he does not yield to distractions whereby such a result would not be obtained. [...]²²

²⁰ GIOVANNI DOMENICO PERI, *Il Negoziante* (Genova: Nella stampa di Pier Giovanni Calenzano, 1638).

²¹ GIAN PAOLO BRIZZI, “Le marchand italien à l’école entre Renaissance et Lumières,” in FRANCO ANGIOLINI and DANIEL ROCHE, eds., *Cultures et formations négociantes dans l’Europe moderne* (Paris: Éditions de l’EHESS, 1995), 205.

²² ‘Signor Mio, se non sono stato puntuale nel’acugarli la sua cortese scrittami di dicembre passato, fui però diligente nel eseguire il contenuto come mi persuado resterà avvisata dal Francesco suo figlio, quale ricevei in mia casa al suo arrivo, e tenni sin tanto che gli trovai luogo in quelli di un galanthuomo cattolico che facendo scuola di latino, di francese e d’inglese tiene larga opportunità di profittarsi in quella delle tre lingue che gl’aggrada, e di mantenersi nella buona e vera religione, che dalli natali ha

The main reason for Francesco Adami's sojourn in England was therefore to improve his English, so that he could one day do business with the English community in Livorno with ease. Furthermore, Terriesi's programme, like the one earlier proposed by Peri, combined the study of the language of international trade with the study of the classics and of Latin.

To avoid the distractions of a large city like London, Terriesi took Francesco to Kensington, which in 1673 was still in open countryside and just three miles from the capital, where the young man seemed to have found the concentration required to learn English and the determination to make himself financially independent of his father:

[...] I can stay here in London without you having to spend a single penny for me, if, with your help, you send me the following goods, because I now have the opportunity to do business, because I am in the country three miles away from London in this village called Chinsinton [Kensington], where many fine ladies live. And with many of these ladies I have established a friendship through a lady who resides in the same house as me. These ladies come and stroll around the school every day with this lady, because here there is the largest house with a garden in this village. With the help of the master who speaks good Italian, who is most fond of me and his name is Mr Turbeville, I have for some time now been able to make myself understood in English, because since I have been in the country I have learned more in a week that I did in a month in another school [in London]. I have now been approached by a lady who has asked me, on the occasion of me writing to you now, to bring from those parts [Italy] ten small bottles of orange blossom water from Lucca, and ten more for another lady. Send me also forty small bottles of Angels' water, because if a bottle is worth a scudo down there [in Italy], here it is worth two or three scudi [...].²³

After having learnt the language of international trade, the second phase of training should consist, according to Peri, of a period of practical experience in a *banco*, or trading company, preferably one 'doing big transactions in all kinds of business'.

intenuo. Io però lo stimolo solo al presente di rendersi possessore della lingua inglese, come ch'è l'unico fine per il quale l'ha qui vostra signoria mandato, e invigilo quant'esser puole che senza distrazioni vi arrivi prima che possibil sia [...]' Archivio Adami-Lami, Francesco Terriesi to Antonio Adami, London, 3 June 1673, document 56, archival piece 473.

²³ '[...] io posso stare qui in Londra senza volere darvi un quattrino di spesa se è con l'aiuto vostro di mandarmi questa seguente robba perché io hora ho l'occasione di potere fare questa cosa, perché io stando in campagna lontano dalla città 3 miglia che questo castello è nominato Chinsinton il quale ci sta una mana di signore grande et massimamente io havendo preso amicizia con di molte di queste signore per via di un miledi che sta nella medesima nostra casa che tutto il giorno vengano qui nella squola a spasso da questa signora che vi è il più gran giardino e casa che sia in questo castello e con l'aiuto del maestro che parla bene itagliano il quale ha di molto affetto a me et il nome si chiama mister Turbeville et da me stesso che io mi fo intendere da un inghilese perché da impò in qua che questo maestro qui che sto in campagna io ho imparato più in una settimane che se io fussi stato in un'altra squola un mese, hora in questo punto è stata qui da me una signora il quale mi dice che con l'occasione che io scrivo io li facessi venire di coteste parti 10 fiaschettini aqua di fior d'aranci di Lucca e 10 per un'altra signora aqua di angioili me ne manderete sino in 40 fiaschettini perché se costagiù vagliano uno scudo il fiaschetto qua vagliano 2 o 3 scudi [...]' Archivio Adami-Lami, Francesco Adami to Antonio Adami, Kensington, 21 August 1673, document 30, archival piece 530.

Being in a company with a broad and diverse range of operations would in fact permit the trainee to acquire a more complete technical training. The model proposed by Peri envisaged a programme of work that combined principles of education and basic rules of behaviour: the duty of the trainee (copying correspondence, sorting letters according to their origin and destination, helping with the bookkeeping) was to assimilate the fundamental notions through the repetition of trading practices.

Unfortunately for Francesco, it was precisely in 1673 that Charles II passed the Test Act prohibiting Catholics from occupying public offices. The political climate became so feverish that, as Francesco noted in a letter to his father, not even a merchant like Terresi was able to find him a *sequola* (a seat, a figurative term denoting a job) in a trading company so he could gain some practical experience:

[...] three or four days ago I heard some news that disturbed everyone in the house, as we are all Catholic; I saw the master enter the house and say, in a melancholy tone: ‘My dear boys, you need to know that parliament has stripped me of my post and ordered me to leave. At this point, however, you can all go home to your friends and fathers and find another school, because I will have to leave if I don’t want to die.’ The master has gone to France, and I find myself a guest in the house of Signor Terresi until I find a work position, though it will be hard to find one because I am a Catholic in this country [...] ²⁴

Following the thread of the first letters exchanged between London and Livorno, in which Francesco was trying to carve out a space for himself in an important foreign trading market that he did not adequately know, asking his father Antonio for luxury goods (wine, oil, violin string, silk hosiery) to trade and sell in England, one might imagine a trainee employed in a trading company as portrayed in a seventeenth-century manual. Francesco seemed in fact to be busy acquiring a mastery of the basics of company management in an international mercantile setting: on the one hand, learning to write letters and record commercial correspondence; on the other, learning to keep accounts books and ledgers. This was because, to be successful in business, it was necessary above all else to acquire a much more complex know-how through practical and real-life experience of the profession. ²⁵

²⁴ [...] è stato tre o quattro giorni sentendo una nuova che ha disturbato tutti di casa per essere tutti cattolici; che per vedere venire il maestro a casa malinconico e dicendosi in questa forma ‘Cari figlioli voi haverete a sapere come il parlamento mi ha levato la sequola e dandomi hordine che io vagghi via in questo punto però tutti quanti potrete andare a casa tutti i vostri amici e padri e trovare un’altra sequola perché bisogna che io vadi via’. Se non voglio morire, et il maestro andatosene in Francia et io ritrovandomi a casa il signore Terresi alloggiato tanto che mi trovi una sequola che si dura fatica a trovarle perché io son cattolico di questo paese [...].’ Archivio Adami-Lami, Francesco Adami to Antonio Adami, London, 1 August 1673, archival piece 457, document 29.

²⁵ GIORGIO DORIA, “Conoscenza del mercato e sistema informativo: il know-how dei mercanti-finanzieri genovesi nei secoli XVI e XVII,” in ALDO DE MADDALENA and HERMANN KELLENBENZ, eds., *La repubblica internazionale del denaro tra XV e XVII secolo* (Bologna: Annali dell’Istituto storico italo germanico, 1986), 57-121, now in Id., *Nobiltà e investimenti a Genova in Età moderna* (Genova: Istituto di

The hidden reality of Francesco's traineeship

The 'Adami letters' reveal how the inclinations and behaviour of Francesco Adami, which ran counter to the behaviour prescribed in seventeenth-century manuals, ultimately dashed all the expectations that his father Antonio and his mentor Francesco Terriesi had of him. During his year in London, despite the enthusiastic letter sent to his father, Francesco squandered all his money in parties and hunting trips in the English countryside, and he did not study and work as he should have done (or how his father hoped he would). The first alarming warning arrived six months after Francesco's arrival, from Terriesi himself, who attempted to tactfully inform his friend Antonio about his son's behaviour in London:

[...] But to tell you the truth, I do not note the progress which, after all this time that he [Francesco] has been here, he should have made, and I begin to lend credence to the complaints about [his] lack of attention about which his master often informs me. I would like you to stimulate him to learn the language [English] with all speed by telling him that you are in need of his help, and summon him back [to Livorno] as soon as possible, because it seems to me that the indolence in which he lives in such a liberal country as this could relax him further and excessively, and what little he will learn will not outweigh the harm that ensues. At first, he did nothing other than ask me for money, but I reproached him harshly, while where he lives he lacks nothing regarding his board, and as for clothing I provide for all his requests [...]²⁶

Terriesi's advice was therefore to summon Francesco back home to Livorno as soon as possible, so he could better concentrate on the family business, away from the expensive pleasures in which he had frequently indulged in London. But in the four letters that Francesco sent to his father between January and September, excluding the first one in which he described the long voyage to England and the initial amazement at finding himself in a city so much bigger than Livorno (it was his first trip outside of Tuscany) during a terrible political campaign against the Catholic community and the war against the Dutch republic, he seemed to have developed a certain enthusiasm, not just for learning English but also for business affairs. As he demonstrated in his letter of 8 September 1673, in which he offered his father some trading opportunities involving the export of goods from London and the import of

Storia Economica, 1995), 91–155. DONALD J. HARRELD, "An Education in Commerce: Transmitting Business Information in Early Modern Europe," in Jari Ojala and Leos Müller, eds., *Information flows. New Approaches in the Historical Study of Business Information* (Helsinki: SKS, 2007).

²⁶[...] Ma per dirli la verità, non scorgovi quel progresso che in tanto tempo che qui si ritrova, doveria havere fatto, e comincio a prestar credito alle querele di poc'attenzione che sovente me ne porge il suo maestro. Vorrei io, che vostra signoria lo stimolasse ad apprendere la lingua con la celerità possibile figurandoli havere bisogno di servirsene, e che se lo ritirasse per subito ch'esser possa, perché parmi che l'ozio in che se ne vive, possa in questo paese di libertà relassarli in guisa il suo naturale, che non possi quello apprendere, bilanciar lo scapito che facesse. Non mi faceva egli in principio che richiesta di danari, ma havendoneli io aspramente ripreso, mentre dove habita non gli manca la cosa minima attenente il vitto, e per quell'attien al vestito lo tengo io di tutto provisto, non m'inquieta più tanto [...].'
Archivio Adami-Lami, Francesco Terriesi to Antonio Adami, London, 3 June 1673, Archival piece 473, letter no. 56.

foods, drinks and precious goods from Italy, including perfume and strings for musical instruments:

[...] With my previous letters, you will have understood my desire that you send me all the goods I requested. These are things on which we can profit, and I can save you the expenses you are incurring to keep me here, learning how to trade, as you promised me before my departure; and I would like a detailed account of all the goods you send me in order to work out the earnings and send you the profit, so you can again send me what I order. It would be a pleasure then to hear that you have embarked the goods, that is, oil, wine, perfumed water of Lucca, thin guitar and violin chords, [...] hoping to acquit myself well during the period in which I will live away from home, if you give me the possibility to do so. And of all the goods requested, send me larger quantities of wine, oil, barrels of anchovies, because these goods sell better than other items. Conversely, if you need goods from this country, you can send me the order, because despite my little knowledge of the language I will be able to serve you[...]²⁷

Most of the letters Francesco wrote to his father in the first ten months of his stay in London had the same enthusiastic tone. It seemed as if, despite initial difficulties arising from his lack of knowledge of English and the completely different habits and customs, that he had managed to complete his traineeship abroad in accordance with the ideal model presented in manuals. In reality though, it was just an extended lie that lasted for ten months. Of the recommendations made by Peri in his manual for would-be merchants, Francesco had not followed a single one. His confession to his father arrived in Livorno two months after the letter of September 1673. Perhaps the truth was brought to light by Francesco Terriesi, after having received negative comments from the teachers about Francesco's moral and scholastic conduct, as the young man's whole focus was on enjoying life, sumptuous meals and other forms of entertainment. Or perhaps the truth emerged because Francesco was no longer able to keep up the lie. He was probably also put under pressure by Terriesi's Catholic acquaintances to confess the truth to his father about what he had done (or not done) in England during his long stay there:

²⁷[...] con altre mia haverà sentito il mio desiderio che vostra signoria mandi tutto quello li ho hordinato sendo cose che vi è da guadagniare, et risparmiarvi le spese che qui per me potessi fare, et apprendere il modo del negotio havendomi vostra signoria così promesso havanti la mia partenza e di tutto quello che mi manderà ne desiderò minutamente il conto per poter sapere l'utile et a vostra signoria rimettere il denaro acciò che di novo porsì mandare quello li hordinerò sentirò dunque volentieri le habbia caricate cioè l'olio, vino, acqua di Lucca di odore, corde di chitarra e violini sottile massimamente, [...] sperando darvi sengni di voler fare bene nel tempo che starò fuori di casa se mi darete animo di farlo e di tutte queste cose mandi la maggior parte vino, olio, barili di acciughe che questi si vendano meglio dell'altre cose, e all'incontro li bisogna mercanzie di questo Paese hordini pure che con un poco di lingua che ho posso servirvi [...].’ Archivio Adami-Lami, Francesco Adami to Antonio Adami, 8 September 1673, Archival piece 509, letter no. 33.

My most dear Father,

Wishing to conceal my faults would make you even more vexed with me; and with trembling hand and languishing spirit I must inform you that Signor Francesco Terresi is very angry with me, and he is right, not having obeyed his good advice because I allowed myself to be swayed by my tiny brain and I have attended more to pleasures than to the little money I had available, having spent, or it would be better to say, dissipated 55 [pieces of eight] which I spent in eating and drinking to excess, because I did not honestly content myself but yielded somewhat to the vice of gluttony and got into the habit of going hunting. These are all my shortcomings, and as an effect of these I neglected school, which has further angered Signor Terresi, and considering the errors I have made and the condition in which I find myself, it would be better for me, and for you, that you tell me to return because I do not love the country nor the customs and the qualities of the people, and not the language either. This is by way of saying that it is impossible to live in these parts, and I beg you to forgive me, and with the most heartfelt affection I ask for forgiveness, promising you that if I remain under your protective care I will be obedient to your smallest indication, regretting that I have not brought back any profit to you by having been in these parts, just incurring expenses. Here being all my grief, I ask for your patience and to excuse my youthful errors. The chords are unusable because they are still wet, so instruct me what I must do. Here I find no opportunity to make money, and if I said I had sold the goods you sent me I would be lying, this not being true either. I beg you, forgive me [...].²⁸

Francesco's letter of confession, though structured according to well-worn epistolary conventions (with a greeting and introduction in a tone offering a foretaste of what was to come, alerting the reader what to expect, followed by a description of the facts, a plea for paternal indulgence and a final greeting²⁹), provide a glimpse both of

²⁸ 'Carissimo signore Padre, il volere occultare i miei mancamenti sarebbe maggiormente iritarvi contro di me; e con la man tremante e con lo spirito languente li fo sapere come questo signore Francesco Terresi è molto addirato contro di me e con gran ragione non havendo io ubbidito a i suoi buoni documenti ma si bene lasciatomi trasportare dal mio poco cervello e curato più li spassi che il poco denaro, havendo speso o per meglio dire mandato male da [...] 55 i quali ho speso in mangiare e bere di supelffluo non essendomi contentato dell'onesto ma tirato un poco al vizio di gola e presomi il passo nell'andare a caccia sendo questi tutti i miei mancamenti et a questo effetto ho tralasciato la scuola il che maggiormente ha messo in collera il signore Terresi e considerando io all'errore commesso e nel grado che mi trovo, meglio sarà per me e per voi che mi mandate a ripigliare non hamando il paese né i costumi ne le qualità delle persone ne tampoco il linguaggio, questo fa dire che impossibile il vivere in queste parti pregandovi a perdonarmi e con il più vivo affetto del cuore vi domando perdoni promettendovi che se verrò sotto la vostra custodia sarò ubbidiente ad ogni vostro minimo cenno dolendomi il non avere riportato a voi frutto alcuno nel venire in queste parti ma si bene aggravatovi in ispese sendo tutto il mio dolore che fa haver pazienza e condonare la gioventù, le corde sono ancora in essere per essere fradice, però ordinatemi quello che debbo fare non trovando qui denaro di sorte alcuna e se dissi averle vendute dissi male non sendo vero che anco in questo vi prego perdonarmi [...].' Archivio Adami-Lami, Francesco Adami to Antonio Adami, 27 November 1673, Archival piece 547, letter no. 3.

²⁹ CAROLYN P. JAMES and JESSICA O'LEARY, 'Letter-writing and emotions', in SUSAN BROOMHALL and ANDREW LYNCH, eds., *The Routledge History of Emotions in Europe, 1100-1700* (London: Routledge, 2019), 256-268; GARY SCHNEIDER, *The Culture of Epistolarity: Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England, 1500-1700* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2005); JAMES DAYBELL, *The Material Letter: Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practices of Letter-Writing in Early Modern England*,

the writer's emotive state – a mixture of shame, embarrassment and fear – but also his emotional strategy: to ensure that his father's indulgence outweighed his shock at being let down, his disappointment and resentment, by way of a marked, plaintive exhibition – albeit late, opportunistic and partial – of youthful worthlessness and irresponsibility and an undertaking to make amends in the future if his father forgave him. The rhetorical and almost theatrical stylistic features employed in this letter reveal familiarity with expressive and educative means of managing and manipulating the sense of guilt that were common in circles powerfully conditioned by clerical discipline,³⁰ like the small town of Empoli where he had grown up together with his aunts Maria Jacopa Adami, Margherita and Vittoria Fortunata Tronci, nuns in the convent of the Santissima Annunziata, and other relatives who had been in religious life since childhood.³¹

Francesco's period of training in England ended then with his confession and the deep disappointment of his mentor Francesco Terriesi, who would have liked to have seen greater diligence and constancy in his studies. Adami left London on 22 February 1675, feeling very relieved, as we learn from his last letter to his father:

My most dear father,

In compliance with your orders I am preparing to return home, and my departure is due next Thursday, which will be the first of March in the Gregorian calendar, but I don't know whether I will arrive in time to attend my sister's taking of monastic vows, unless she postpones them. I depart very willingly, not so much to see you all as to leave this country, which I consider to be intrinsically contrary to me; and if I have not made the progress you would have expected of me, I attribute it above all to the poverty of my spirit, which has not granted me greater talents[...]³²

1580–1635 (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2012); CAROL POSTER and LINDA C. MITCHELL, eds., *Letter-Writing Manuals and Instructions from Antiquity to the Present* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2007); JAMES DAYBELL and PETER HINDS, eds., *Material Readings of Early Modern Culture, 1580-1730: Texts and Social Practices* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2010).

³⁰ WOLFGANG REINHARD, "Disciplinamento sociale, confessionalizzazione, modernizzazione. Un discorso storiografico," in PAOLO PRODI, ed., *Disciplina dell'anima, disciplina del corpo e disciplina della società tra medioevo ed età moderna* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1994), 101-123.

³¹ Francesco grew up with various brothers, sisters and cousins who entered religious life, including his brother Fra Anton Francesco, his sisters Rosalba, Felice Costante and Costanza Maria, all nuns in the convent of the Santissima Annunziata in Empoli, and his cousins Anna Fortunata Adami (also a nun in the convent of the Santissima Annunziata), Orazio Maria Adami and Jacopo Antonio Adami (an observant Minim friar, who also died from the plague in Acre in 1702). These cousins were three children of Antonio Adami's elder brother and partner, Jacopo (1618-1676), the chamberlain of Portoferraio.

³² 'Carissimo signore padre, in ordine a suoi comandi mi vado allestendo per far ritorno alla patria, e giovedì prossimo che saremo al primo di marzo a codesto stile seguirà la mia partenza, ma non so se sarò in tempo opportuno per vedere il vestimento di mia sorella mentre però da lei non ne venga rattenuto rescutione, io mi parto volentierissimo non tanto per rivedere lor signori quanto per escire di questo paese totalmente a me contrario del genio, se non averò fatto quei progressi che erano dediti della sua volontà l'attribuisco alla povertà del mio spirito che non mi ha reso valevole di talenti

Antonio Adami forgave the prodigal son and allowed him to return to Livorno and to work in the family businesses. Between 1674 and 1685 Francesco assisted his father in running the vineyards on the rented Medici estates, and held the post of deputy superintendent of the Misericordia di Livorno, until the family's fluctuating economic fortunes forced him to leave home and his father's business in order to seek fortune abroad. His long journey towards the Levant, from which he would never return, began in Venice in 1686, without money or protection.

Concluding remarks

Francesco Adami's traineeship in London is just one example taken from a network of young traders about which we still do not know enough. His first formative experience was also unusual in a context, that of seventeenth-century Livorno, that saw a large influx of traders, but where the professional training of young men took place above all 'on site', and was conducted either in the family business or in another company operating in the same commercial market, as happened a few years later to his young brother Domenico, who became a trainee in the trading company of Pier Antonio Guadagni.

Obviously, his social condition and relative lack of cultural capital prevented him from accessing the kind of knowledge outlined in teaching materials like Peri's, directed at the Genoese merchant aristocracy. Tuscan traders viewed training as a period of technical instruction, a necessarily progressive absorbing of professional knowledge that involved the trainee in the business affairs of the company that took him in and trained him. This initial phase was necessary in order to start to build a professional reputation, and an opportunity to meet potential trading partners, become familiar with local business customs and the urban topography. The exchanges – both cultural and of people – between the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and England, exemplified by the traineeship of Francesco Adami, is just one example from a dense network attributable to the greater mobility of traders during the early modern age.³³

The subsequent events in the extraordinary life of this obscure Tuscan merchant – initiated into the arts of trade due to his father's ambitions for social ascent – and his younger brother Domenico, who also became involved in trade with the Levant, will be analysed in later studies, as the perusal and deciphering of the Adami-Lami Archive continues. On the basis of a preliminary reading of many private documents, it can already be anticipated that, despite the failure of his experience in London and his impatience with English culture and customs,

maggiori[...].? Archivio Adami-Lami, Francesco Adami to Antonio Adami, Archival piece 547, letter no. 43.

³³ MARIA FUSARO, BERNARD ALLAIRE, RICHARD J. BLAKEMORE, TIJL VANNESTE, eds., *Law, Labour and Empire: Comparative Perspectives on Seafarers, c. 1500-1800* (Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan, 2015); RICHARD J. BLAKEMORE, "Pieces of Eight, Pieces of Eight: Seafarers' Earnings and the Venture Economy of Early Modern Seafaring," *Economic History Review* 70/4 (2017): 1153-84.

Francesco Adami ended up being appointed vice-consul of the English Nation in ‘Sidon, Acre, Haifa, Jaffa’ by Henry Hastings³⁴ in 1699 and pursued his career on the fringes of, but still as a part of, the Levant Company.³⁵

The position appeared to be a prestigious one, perhaps offered to him as a result of fortuitous circumstances more than because of any particular merits.³⁶ Indeed, the Levant Company did not have any representatives in that part of Palestine (the closest was in Tripoli, Lebanon) due to a heavy presence of French traders.³⁷ The only merchant in that area who had close dealings with English traders based in Aleppo, and especially with the Vernon firm – run by George, Henry and Thomas Vernon,³⁸ and one of the most important trading companies in the city – was Francesco Adami, who, having worked for the Vernons for a long time, established a small trading company together with a French partner. Francesco accepted the post imagining that there would be great financial benefits, given that one percent of the consular tax levied on goods loaded onto English ships was due to the vice-consul.

His expectations were soon dashed, because, to avoid paying the taxes, foreign traders preferred to load their goods onto French ships or under a different name. Francesco was left with the institutional obligations entailed by his position, such as implementing directives from Aleppo or paying from his own pocket for

³⁴ The merchant Henry Hastings was the English consul in Aleppo between 1689 and 1701. See ALFRED C. WOOD, *A History of the Levant Company* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1964), 218.

³⁵ The Levant Company was established in 1581 when Queen Elizabeth I granted a charter to Sir Edward Osbourne and Richard Staper to form what was originally called the Company of Merchants of the Levant. In its original form it was a joint-stock company and controlled English trade between Venice and the Near East. Its power in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries derived from the new charters of 1606 and 1661, which gave practically exclusive trading rights between England and the Ottoman Empire to all merchants who were part of the company. During the reigns of William III (1689-1702) and Anne (1702-1714), England gained control of the principal foreign trading areas and made its Levant maritime routes secure. But during the first half of the eighteenth century, competition with the East India Company and changes in demand in the Ottoman and English markets led to the decline of the company, which was definitively disbanded in 1825. MORGAN EPSTEIN, *The Early History of the Levant Company* (London: George Routledge, 1908); DESPINA VLAMI, *Trading with the Ottomans: The Levant Company in the Middle East* (London-New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015).

³⁶ Archivio Adami-Lami, ‘Henrico Hastings per la sua Majestà della Gran Brettagnia e console della Soria e Palestina’ to Francesco Adami, 12 July 1699, Archival piece 527, no. 2.

³⁷ This is partially borne out by Henry Maundrell (1665-1701), chaplain of the Levant Company from 1695: ‘At Tripoli we repos’d a full week, being very generously entertain’d by Mr Francis Hastings the Consul, and Mr John Fisher Merchant; Theirs being the only English House in Tripoli’. HENRY MAUNDRELL, *A Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem: at Easter, A.D. 1697* (Oxford: Printed at the Theater, 1703), 25; SIMON E. MILLS, *A Commerce of Knowledge: Trade, Religion, and Scholarship between England and the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1760* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 185.

³⁸ The Vernon family of Sudbury and Hilton was an influential noble family involved in the commerce of the Levant Company. They ran one of the most important trading companies in Aleppo between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The brothers Henry, George and Thomas Vernon employed Francesco Adami from 1692 to 1696, and then supported the opening of his company in Acre in 1696. See BERNARD BURKE, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry of Great Britain & Ireland*, Vol. 2 (London: H. Colburn, 1847), 1478.

costly gifts for representatives of Ottoman institutions in order to incentivize English commercial relations along the coast of Palestine. Greatly frustrated, he carried out his duties until his death from the plague in Acre in 1702.

Microhistoric analysis of the documents left by Francesco Adami, especially of the kind most sensitive to the spatial turn taking account of the connections running through the lives and the mobility of actors through different countries and cultures,³⁹ paints a picture of a fascinating and troubled global existence. The study of the impressive mass of documents left by this merchant – who was born in Empoli, grew up in Livorno and spent much of his life trading in the eastern Mediterranean before dying of the plague in Palestine – of which only a taste is offered here, could contribute to closing the gap that separates the investigation of the social networks and global lives of diplomats or missionaries from the less well-known one focusing on maritime workers.⁴⁰

³⁹ CHRISTIAN G. DE VITO, “History Without Scale: The Micro-Spatial Perspective,” *Past & Present* 242, Issue Supplement 14 (November 2019): 348-72; FRANCESCA TRIVELLATO, “Is There a Future for Italian Microhistory in the Age of Global History?,” *California Italian Studies* 2/1 (2011).

⁴⁰ COLIN HEYWOOD, “The English in the Mediterranean, 1600-1630: A Post-Braudelian Perspective on the “Northern Invasion?,” in MARIA FUSARO, COLIN HEYWOOD, MOHAMED-SALAH OMRI, eds, *Trade and Cultural Exchange in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (London-New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 23-44: 25; Id., “Microhistory / Maritime History: Aspects of British Presence in the Western Mediterranean in the Early Modern Period,” in ALBRECHT FUESS and BERNARD HEYBERGER, eds, *La frontière méditerranéenne du XVe au XVIIe siècle. Échanges, circulations et affrontements* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 83-111.



Fig. 1. The principal space of the Adami Gallery, Palazzo Adami-Lami, Florence.



Fig. 2. A glance of the Adami-Lami Archive, Palazzo Adami-Lami, Florence.



Fig. 3. The bookcase no. 1 of the Adami-Lami Archive, Palazzo Adami-Lami, Florence.

Carissimo Padre
 Io vi do noua del mio arriuo in Londra il quale
 arriuamo domenica il giorno uentidua di gennaio
 il che fecamo in giorni 39 et ~~in~~ ~~una~~ ~~naue~~
 di qua ci mettiamo ancora di piu ~~giorni~~ ~~in~~ ~~una~~ ~~naue~~
 a Londra ~~ci menamo giorni 6 il quale s'ho auuam~~
 a fare in 12 ~~ore~~ ~~il~~ ~~tempo~~ cattuo ci sabbai
 meno tutto questo tempo e stettamo quattro giorni al
 fondo ~~il~~ ~~cattuo~~ ~~tempo~~ e ci manco tre o quattro
 uolte ~~de~~ ~~ere~~ non uioltemo ~~acqua~~ ~~e~~ ~~entrau~~
 dentro a botte e non sapedamo nessuno quello che
 ci haueuamo a fare io n' facemo alio che pregare
 Dio piacendo alla sua diuina uolonta ~~siemo~~
 giunti doue siamo destinati et un bagam beuo
 che ci haueuamo andare noi ando alla trauiera
 dioci uolte ~~al~~ ~~itua~~ ~~che~~ trouamo questa naue
 che andaua a Londra a dirittura ed ha uera
 a messa notte entra in casa di ~~St~~ ~~francesco~~
 Terresi e la mattina mi leua e non feci
 dua parti de ~~due~~ ~~la~~ ~~me~~ ~~na~~ ~~de~~ ~~che~~ ~~il~~ ~~fr~~
~~non~~ ~~ho~~ ~~potere~~ ~~medem~~ ~~la~~ ~~messa~~ ~~de~~ ~~u~~
~~in~~ ~~et~~ ~~hora~~ ~~de~~ ~~ci~~ ~~era~~ ~~di~~ ~~mette~~ ~~mi~~ ~~con~~ ~~un~~ ~~meta~~

Fig. 4. The first letter written by Francesco Adami from London. Francesco Adami to Antonio Adami. Archivio Adami-Lami, Archivalpiece 547, letter 4, London, 23 January 1673.

1674	May 30-	un paio calzeate di seta & un paio guanti	£	12: -
	1	Mag. Gio. & p. a Luca de' fidi e mand. Casa 2 Cape vino & una capotta corde da chitara	£	4: 28: -
	14	Mag. al merc. delle scotch & il p. & cont.	£	3: -
		- Datto spese d'andar colà & mandare lui per con sua arca	£	15: -
	27	Datto un calzeate guanti & lau. di cappelli	£	1: 8: 10
	10	Datto mag. cont. & p. per un vestito & farsi curare con un m. d.	£	2: -
	18	Mag. al merc. delle scotch & il p. & guanti	£	8: -
	24	Datto due crumatoe due cappelli guanti & calzeate	£	2: 05: -
		- Datto un paio di scarpe	£	1: 22: 6
1674	29	Gen. pagate cont. di p. & d'uscire vestiti	£	1: 10: -
	20	Datto pagate cont. di comprare guanti & giartiere	£	1: 5: -
	24	Datto un paio di un altro m. d.	£	6: 10: -
	31	Datto pagate cont. di pagare i debiti vecchi	£	1: -
	10	Feb. pagate cont. di pagare altri debiti & comprare l'elentaria da portare a suo padre, sore & sorelle	£	4: -
	18	Datto un paio calzeate di seta & un paio bottoni	£	1: 15: 0
	21	Datto un paio di scarpe & un paio di scarpe & un paio di scarpe & un paio di scarpe & un paio di scarpe	£	2: 10: -
		- Datto un paio di scarpe & un paio di scarpe & un paio di scarpe & un paio di scarpe & un paio di scarpe	£	2: 15: 6
		il viaggio di ritorno a Livorno	£	2: 15: 6
			£	7: 0: 12: 4
		Si debbono valutare di due Cape vino, Datto solo	£	3: -
		di p. & p. & fiaschi d'otti & scomi	£	3: -
		Restano	£	6: 7: 12: 4

Fig. 5. Expense list drawn up by Francesco Terriesi. Archivio Adami-Lami, Francesco Terriesi to Antonio Adami. Archival piece 547, letter 46, London, 9 March 1674.