Review of William D. Paden, Two Medieval Occitan Toll Registers from Tarascon
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ized communities, which were well integrated into the urban economy, foreigners consisted of domestic slaves, servants, artisans, apprentices, sailors, and many other sorts of people who were escaping from wars and persecutions or trying to find their fortune in one of the most important metropolises of the world.

The encounters, connections, and relations of those foreigners with the Venetians and between them are the thread running through the three parts of Orlando’s book. Marriage was certainly the most powerful means of integration, and foreigners made an intense use of it; sometimes even too intense, as a frequent reason to ask for a separation from bed and board (divorce and remarriage being forbidden in Catholic religion) was the existence of a previous marriage contracted in the original homeland, sometimes followed by other marriages contracted during the migration. The situation was of course complicated when the spouses did not have the same religion: interfaith marriages were not recognized by the church, apart from those between Catholics and Orthodox, after the Council of Florence (1439). However, the Council of Trent (1545–63) imposed an even more rigid discipline on that matter, requiring the conversion to the Catholic faith of the “heretic” spouse (whether Orthodox, Muslim, Jewish, Lutheran, or any other religion or denomination). As in other matters concerning religion, Venice chose a more tolerant attitude than that of the church, and mixed marriages between Catholics and Orthodox were never stigmatized in the lagoon.

People of various origins, speaking other languages, professing different religions, and wearing strange clothes lived and worked side by side; they learned from each other and reciprocally adopted each others’ rituals and habits. A certain degree of “openness” was a political and economic necessity in early modern Venice, even if we should not underestimate the expressions of intolerance, prejudices, and manifestations of violence against those who were perceived as “other” because of their language, religion, and habits in Venetian society, especially when it was stressed by war or by economic or political crisis.

Using various sources, mostly from ecclesiastical courts, Orlando highlights the complexity (“migratory complexity,” 17) and peculiarity of the Venetian model, which represented an “alternative” (517) to the one proposed, and imposed, by the Council of Trent. That alternative model, based on the principle “Venetians first, and then Christians,” was certainly a pragmatic one, but it was also completely against the mainstream: should we invoke the concept of a progressive “autonomization of the political reason” (borrowing a phrase from Olivier Christin, La paix de religion: L’autonomisation de la raison politique au XVIe siècle [Paris, 1997]) in the case of Venice? Certainly, Orlando’s new research raises important issues, stimulating reflection on the history of phenomena that are topical for our present world.

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Tarascon, an inland seaport on the banks of the Rhône in southwestern Provence, was once a prominent city. Between the thirteenth and the fifteenth century, Tarascon was ruled by the counts of Provence, who were also, often nominal, kings of Sicily with extensive Mediterranean interests. The city profited from Mediterranean ships and barges passing upstream to Avignon and further into France, while the presence of a royal court ensured that the considerable comital cut of 75 percent of Tarascon’s toll revenues would not go astray.

From this period date the two toll registers, written in Occitan, that William D. Paden has magisterially edited and translated in this book. The two documents in question are Tarascon,
Archives municipales, MS AA9 (Livre rouge), fols. 3–17, and Chicago, Newberry Library/ Northwestern University, MS 1 (Newberry Vault Case MS 220), which was jointly acquired by the Newberry Library and Northwestern University in 2011. Paden persuasively dates the tabular Tarascon, Archives municipales, manuscript to the early fourteenth century and the Chicago prose codex, with somewhat less certainty, to the early fifteenth century.

Paden’s book features an in-depth introduction covering all aspects of the two manuscripts and their political and economic contexts, including their codicological description and palaeographical features, content and layout, and purpose and accuracy, in addition to sections on Tarascon, shipping, commerce, bookkeeping, commodities, toll keepers, and economic background, to name some. The introduction is followed by the actual texts of the two manuscripts, where each codex is first edited and then translated. An invaluable eighty-page glossary of often technical Occitan terms for locations, commodities, and units forms the next section of this book. This glossary is followed by a list of English names of the commodities contained in the glossary, much to the delight of those economic historians and students of Mediterranean trade who have little or no Occitan. The final part of the book features five brief numerical appendices on salt in small and large hogshead measures and on the evolution of tolls at Tarascon.

Whereas the book’s title may suggest a certain narrowness of interest, *Two Medieval Occitan Toll Registers from Tarascon* is much more than an edition and translation of two sober documents. The introduction has real value as an introduction not only to the manuscripts under discussion but also as an introduction to trade and economic activity in late medieval Provence, just as the glossary and the editions themselves constitute a rich area for future research on technical and commercial vocabularies in Occitan. Students of all aspects of Mediterranean trade will surely profit from Paden’s book. The two toll registers document just how connected Provence and France were to the mercantile networks of the Christian and Muslim Mediterranean: while salt clearly predominates, Tarascon saw pass through its gates (and kept precise track of) alum from Aleppo; tin from Cornwall; apes and skins of camels and lions from Africa; indigo from India; and saffron, cinnamon, and cloves from East Asia. Most rewardingly for cultural historians, Paden offers a number of promising trajectories for important areas of research. Here, the two Tarascon registers shed new light on medieval Europe’s often-overlooked trade in Muslim slaves, who are grouped in one of the registers among large animals: “a Saracen slave, male or female . . . between horses and mastiffs” (36). There is even an illuminating section on the mutual indebtedness of the lyricism of the troubadours of Provence and the mundane language of doubly-entry toll keeping.

Paden brings his considerable erudition and literary expertise to bear on texts otherwise doomed to languish in obscurity. *Two Medieval Occitan Toll Registers from Tarascon* balances its learning with accessibility and broad insights that will reward not only scholars of Occitan, Provence, and France, but will also benefit those interested in medieval Mediterranean culture and European trade networks.

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Anatolia dwells at the meeting point of East and West and is regarded as the motherland of two civilizations, Byzantine and Ottoman. According to the standard textbook account, the Ottomans took over control from the Byzantines in the year 1453. Yet, when it comes *Speculum* 92/4 (October 2017)