

Pratica della Mercatura. Baldelli Boni, writing some forty years ago, says that the manuscript could no longer be found in the Riccardiana. However it is to be found there now and I have examined it. It is a handsome paper folio, purporting to have been transcribed by the hand of Filippo di Nicolaio di Frescobaldi at Florence in the year 1471, and bears the No. 2441 in the collection.

Nothing is known of the author, Francesco Balducci Pegolotti, except what is gathered from his own book. From it we learn that he was a factor in the service of the Company of the Bardi of Florence. In various incidental statements also he lets us know that he was at Antwerp in their service from 1315 (and probably earlier) to 1317, when he was transferred to London;¹ and that he was employed in Cyprus from May 1324 to August 1327, for at those and intermediate dates he made sundry applications to the King of Cyprus for the reduction of duties payable by his countrymen, who had previously been liable to heavier duties than the Pisans, and had consequently been obliged to employ their agency. Balducci, indignant at the conduct of the Pisans, who treated the Florentines, he says, "like Jews or slaves of theirs," made these successful efforts to get rid of this obligation.²

In 1335 the author was still at Cyprus, or had returned thither, and obtained in that year from the King of Lesser Armenia a grant of privileges to the company which he served for their trade at Aiazza or Aias, the port of that kingdom on the Gulf of Scanderoon.³

¹ *Pegolotti*, p. 257.

² P. 71.

³ P. 45. Aiazza, or Aias, the ancient Ægæ, opposite Issus, is mentioned several times by Marco Polo as *Laias*. Whilst Persia was in the hands of the Mongols a great part of the Indian trade came by Baghdad to Tabriz, and thence by the route detailed in Pegolotti's chapter vi to Aiazza for shipment. The port was in the hands of the Christian princes called the Kings of Little Armenia, whose dynasty was founded in the mountains of Cilicia in the year 1080, by Rupen, a kinsman of the last King of Armenia Proper of the race of the Bagratidæ. Rupen's ninth successor, Leon II, got the title of king from Pope Celestine III and the Emperor Henry VI in the end of the twelfth century, and the line continued till 1342. The kingdom endured thirty-three years longer under