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Santa Cruz Workshop Paper Abstract

This workshop paper is a chapter of my forthcoming manuscript, *Trade and Religious Boundaries in the Medieval Maghrib: Genoese Merchants, their Products, and Islamic Law*. In this particular chapter, I examine the evidence for a Muslim presence in thirteenth-century Genoa, as revealed mostly through analysis of the city's abundant notarial cartularies. Existing historiography would limit the Muslim presence in northern Italy to enslaved people and a small number of temporary visitors, but I argue that the evidence could support a more sustained presence of merchants and professionals in key roles. In addition to drawing attention to the details of this elusive community, the chapter includes a close reading of one particularly important document: an inventory of the property belonging to "Acigio the Saracen", who died at Genoa in early 1271. Commissioned by the city government to produce the inventory of the estate (possibly because no will or next of kin could be found), a Genoese notary itemized and characterized Acigio's possessions, revealing a modest household composed of both Genoese and Maghribi goods and clothing. Although uncertainties remain about the document and the legal conventions under which it was produced, it provides rare and valuable testimony about the material culture of Muslim merchants in Christian space. The chapter, in dialogue with scholars of material merchant culture such as Elizabeth Lambourn, Daniel Smail, and Laura Morreale, proposes a new interpretation of the Muslim presence in late medieval Genoa and the objects associated with a mobile, mercantile culture of the Mediterranean.