

## tpo\_25\_passage\_2

In the late thirteenth century, northern Italian cities such as Genoa, Florence, and Venice began an economic resurgence that made them into the most important economic centers of Europe. By the seventeenth century, however, other European powers had taken over, as the Italian cities lost much of their economic might. This decline can be seen clearly in the changes that affected Venetian shipping and trade. First, Venice's intermediary functions in the Adriatic Sea, where it had dominated the business of shipping for other parties, were lost to direct trading. In the fifteenth century there was little problem recruiting sailors to row the galleys (large ships propelled by oars): guilds (business associations) were required to provide rowers, and through a draft system free citizens served compulsorily when called for. In the early sixteenth century the shortage of rowers was not serious because the demand for galleys was limited by a move to round ships (round-hulled ships with more cargo space), which required fewer rowers. But the shortage of crews proved to be a greater and greater problem, despite continuous appeal to Venice's tradition of maritime greatness. Even though sailors' wages doubled among the northern Italian cities from 1550 to 1590, this did not elicit an increased supply. The problem in shipping extended to the Arsenale, Venice's huge and powerful shipyard. Timber ran short, and it was necessary to procure it from farther and farther away. In ancient Roman times, the Italian peninsula had great forests of fir preferred for warships, but scarcity was apparent as early as the early fourteenth century. Arsenale officers first brought timber from the foothills of the Alps, then from north toward Trieste, and finally from across the Adriatic. Private shipbuilders were required to buy their oak abroad. As the costs of shipbuilding rose, Venice clung to its outdated standards while the Dutch were innovating in lighter and more easily handled ships. The step from buying foreign timber to buying foreign ships was regarded as a short one, especially when complaints were heard in the latter sixteenth century that the standards and traditions of the Arsenale were running down. Work was stretched out and done poorly. Older workers had been allowed to stop work a half hour before the regular time, and in 1601 younger workers left with them. Merchants complained that the privileges reserved for Venetian-built and -owned ships were first extended to those Venetians who bought ships from abroad and then to foreign-built and -owned vessels. Historian Frederic Lane observes that after the loss of ships in battle in the late sixteenth century, the shipbuilding industry no longer had the capacity to recover that it had displayed at the start of the century. The conventional explanation for the loss of Venetian dominance in trade is the establishment of the Portuguese direct sea route to the East, replacing the overland Silk Road from the Black Sea and the highly profitable Indian Ocean-caravan-eastern Mediterranean route to Venice. The Portuguese Vasco da Gama's voyage around southern Africa to India took place at the end of the fifteenth century, and by 1502 the trans-Arabian caravan route had been cut off by political unrest. The Venetian Council finally allowed round ships to enter the trade that was previously reserved for merchant galleys, thus reducing transport costs by one third. Prices of spices delivered by ship from the eastern Mediterranean came to equal those of spices transported by Portuguese vessels, but the increase in quantity with both routes in operation drove the price far down. Gradually, Venice's role as a storage and distribution center for spices and silk, dyes, cotton, and gold decayed, and by the early seventeenth century Venice had lost its monopoly in markets such as France and southern Germany. Venetian shipping had started to decline from about 1530-before the entry into

the Mediterranean of large volumes of Dutch and British shipping-and was clearly outclassed by the end of the century. A contemporary of Shakespeare (1564–1616) observed that the productivity of Italian shipping had declined, compared with that of the British, because of conservatism and loss of expertise. Moreover, Italian sailors were deserting and emigrating, and captains, no longer recruited from the ranks of nobles, were weak on navigation.

#### question 1

According to paragraph 2, which of the following contributed to the decline of Venetian shipping?

- A The loss of trade in the Adriatic Sea
- B The move from galleys to round ships
- C The decreased demand for galleys
- D The doubling of sailors' wages

#### question 2

All of the following are mentioned in paragraph 2 as ways that Venice provided rowers for its galleys EXCEPT

- A requiring business associations to provide sailors
- B recruiting sailors from other cities in northern Italy
- C drafting Venetian citizens into service as rowers
- D appealing to the tradition of Venice as a sea power

#### question 3

According to paragraph 3, why did the building of ships in Venetian shipyards become increasingly expensive?

- A The wages of officers and workers in the Arsenale kept rising.
- B Roman shipyards were using all the available fir trees for their warships.
- C The timber used in shipbuilding had to be brought from farther and farther away.

D Venetian standards required that shipbuilders use top-quality materials.

#### question 4

All of the following are mentioned in paragraphs 3 and 4 as contributing to the problems of the Venetian shipbuilding industry at the end of the sixteenth century EXCEPT:

A The quality of work performed in the Arsenale had declined.

B Venetian-built ships were heavy and generally inefficient.

C Arsenale shipbuilders worked more slowly.

D Only a few merchants controlled the buying and selling of most of the Venetian-built ships.

#### question 5

Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence in the passage? Incorrect choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

A The loss of ships in battle at the end of the sixteenth century showed that Venetian shipbuilders lacked the skills they had possessed at the beginning of the century.

B Venetian shipbuilding failed to quickly replace the ships lost in battle at the end of the sixteenth century as it would have done earlier in the century.

C Frederic Lane noted that Venice lost ships in battle at the end of the sixteenth century, showing that Venetian shipbuilding was no longer known for its reliability.

D Venetian shipbuilding had been known for its high quality of work at the beginning of the sixteenth century, but toward the end of the century Venetian ships were poorer in quality.

#### question 6

Why does the author mention "Vasco da Gama's voyage around southern Africa

to India" in the passage?

- A To indicate how the Portuguese came to challenge Venetian dominance of trade with the East
- B To explain why political troubles resulted in the closing of the usual routes to India
- C To prove that Venetians could not sail round ships as efficiently as sailors from other countries did
- D To show that Venetian reliance on round ships rather than galleys proved to be a weakness

question 7

Which of the following can be inferred from paragraph 6 about the Venetian Council' s decision concerning the use of round ships?

- A It resulted in a return to profitable trading in luxury goods for Venetian merchants.
- B Ultimately it did not restore the superiority in the spice trade that Venice had enjoyed earlier.
- C It eventually enabled Venetian merchants to increase the quantity and price of the spices they sold in Europe.
- D It meant a long-awaited improvement in the fortunes of the shipbuilding industry in Venice.

question 8

According to paragraph 6, in the sixteenth century the price of spices declined because

- A France and Germany established monopolies and dictated prices
- B Venetian merchant galleys competed with Venetian round ships for the spice trade
- C more spices were available because both the Venetians and the Portuguese were importing them
- D increased demand for silk, dyes, cotton, and gold meant that people had less

money to spend on spices

## question 9

Look at the four squares [ ] that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage.

In the late thirteenth century, northern Italian cities such as Genoa, Florence, and Venice began an economic resurgence that made them into the most important economic centers of Europe. By the seventeenth century, however, other European powers had taken over, as the Italian cities lost much of their economic might. This decline can be seen clearly in the changes that affected Venetian shipping and trade. First, Venice's intermediary functions in the Adriatic Sea, where it had dominated the business of shipping for other parties, were lost to direct trading. In the fifteenth century there was little problem recruiting sailors to row the galleys (large ships propelled by oars): guilds (business associations) were required to provide rowers, and through a draft system free citizens served compulsorily when called for. [ ] In the early sixteenth century the shortage of rowers was not serious because the demand for galleys was limited by a move to round ships (round-hulled ships with more cargo space), which required fewer rowers. [ ] But the shortage of crews proved to be a greater and greater problem, despite continuous appeal to Venice's tradition of maritime greatness. [ ] Even though sailors' wages doubled among the northern Italian cities from 1550 to 1590, this did not elicit an increased supply. [ ] The problem in shipping extended to the Arsenale, Venice's huge and powerful shipyard. Timber ran short, and it was necessary to procure it from farther and farther away. In ancient Roman times, the Italian peninsula had great forests of fir preferred for warships, but scarcity was apparent as early as the early fourteenth century. Arsenale officers first brought timber from the foothills of the Alps, then from north toward Trieste, and finally from across the Adriatic. Private shipbuilders were required to buy their oak abroad. As the costs of shipbuilding rose, Venice clung to its outdated standards while the Dutch were innovating in lighter and more easily handled ships. The step from buying foreign timber to buying foreign ships was regarded as a short one, especially when complaints were heard in the latter sixteenth century that the standards and traditions of the Arsenale were running down. Work was stretched out and done poorly. Older workers had been allowed to stop work a half hour before the regular time, and in 1601 younger workers left with them. Merchants complained that the privileges reserved for Venetian-built and -owned ships were first extended to those Venetians who bought ships from abroad and then to foreign-built and -owned vessels. Historian Frederic Lane observes that after the loss of ships in battle in the late sixteenth century, the shipbuilding industry no longer had the capacity to recover that it had displayed at the start of the century. The conventional explanation for the loss of Venetian dominance in trade is the establishment of the Portuguese direct sea route to the East, replacing the overland Silk Road from the Black Sea and the highly profitable Indian Ocean-caravan-eastern Mediterranean route to Venice. The Portuguese Vasco da Gama's voyage around southern Africa to India took place at the end of the fifteenth century, and by 1502 the trans-Arabian caravan route had been cut off by political unrest. The Venetian Council finally allowed round

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### question 10

Directions: An introductory sentence for a brief summary of the passage is provided below. Complete the summary by selecting the THREE answer choices that express the most important ideas in the passage. Some sentences do not belong in the summary because they express ideas that are not presented in the passage or are minor ideas in the passage. This question is worth 2 points.

- A. Venetian ships were famous for carrying large cargoes of spices and luxury goods around the world in fast, oar-driven galleys.
- B. Venetian round ships bringing spices and silk from the East helped drive prices down so that ordinary people could afford to buy them.
- C. A shortage of timber for building the traditional galleys and a lack of sailors to row them meant a loss of Venetian shipping business.
- D. Venice failed to keep up with improvements in ship design, and the cost of shipbuilding rose as quality and efficiency declined.
- E. The Venetian Council made sure that Venetian-built and -owned ships kept special privileges in transporting luxury goods in and out of Venice.
- F. The Portuguese direct sea route to the East adversely affected Venetian trade, and Venice fell behind the Dutch and the British in the quality of their ships and sailing skills.