tury, entitled “ Asso es la copia deus Rolles de Leron de jucgemens de mar.”

The parent stock of the Wisby sea laws would appear to have been a code preserved in the chancery of Lübeck, drawn up in the Old Saxon tongue, and dated 1240. This code contains amongst many others certain articles on maritime law which are identical with articles in the Gothland sea laws, Gothland being the island of which Wisby was the chief port. This collection comprises sixty- six articles, and it is now placed beyond a doubt by recent researches, especially of Professor Schlyter of Lund, that these Gothland sea laws are a compilation derived from three distinct sources,—a Lübeck, an Oléron, and an Am­sterdam source. A Saxon or Low German text of this collection was printed for the first time in L505 at Copen­hagen by Godfrey de Gemen, a native of Gouda in Holland, who is reputed to have set up the earliest printing-press in Copenhagen. This print has no title-page, and in this respect resembles the earliest known print of *The Consulate of the Sea ;* but upon a blank leaf, which occupies the place of a frontispiece in one of two copies of Godfrey de Gemen’s text, both preserved in the royal library at Copenhagen, there has been inserted with a pen in alternate lines of black and red ink the title “ Dat hogheste Gotlansche Water-Recht gedrucket to Koppenhaven Anno Domini m.d.v.,” and there has also been inserted on the first page of the text the introductory title “ Her beghynt dat hogheste Water-Recht” (here begins the supreme sea law). Professor Schlyter has discovered a MS. (No. 3123) in the royal library at Copenhagen, which is written on parchment in a hand of the 15th century, and from which it seems probable that Godfrey de Gemen mainly derived his text, as it comprises the same number of articles, containing the same matter arranged in the same order, with this minor difference, that, whilst both the MS. and the print have the simple title “ Water-Recht ” prefixed to the first article, the MS. has also a similar title prefixed to the fifteenth. Further, as this article together with those that follow it in the MS., appears to be in a handwriting different from that of the articles that precede, the fifteenth article may justly be considered as the first of a distinct series, more particularly as they are numbered in Roman characters, beginning with § 1, and such characters are continued with a single interruption down to the end of the MS. Although, however, the numeration of the articles of this second series is continuous and the handwriting of the MS. from the fifteenth to the sixty-sixth article is un­changed, the text of the series is not continuous, as the fortieth article commences with an introductory clause— “ This is the ordinance which the skippers and merchants have resolved amongst themselves as ship law.” There is no difficulty in recognizing the first division of this second series of sea laws as a Low German version of the Judg­ments of Oléron, transmitted most probably through a Flemish text. This hypothesis would account for the sub­stitution in several articles of Sluys for Bordeaux. On the other hand, the introductory clause which ushers in the fortieth article is identical with the title that is gen­erally prefixed to MSS. of the maritime Ordinances of Amsterdam, and the text of this and of the following articles down to the sixty-fifth inclusive is evidently of Dutch origin and more or less identical with Verwer’s text of the usages of Amsterdam. M. Pardessus, in his valuable *Collection de Lois Maritimes,* published in Paris before Professor Schlyter made known the result of his researches, has justly remarked that the provisions of several articles of this last division of the sea laws are inconsistent with the theory that they originated at Wisby. It may be observed that the sixty-sixth article of the MS. is a Lübeck law identical with the first article of the first

series, which is of Lübeck origin. No colophon is ap­pended to this final article in the MS. Nevertheless, Godfrey de Gemen’s edition of 1505, which breaks off in the middle of the sixty-sixth article of the MS., has the following colophon :—“ Here end the Gothland sea laws, which the community of merchants and skippers have or­dained and made at Wisby, that all men may regulate themselves by them. Printed at Copenhagen, a.d. m.d.v.” The question naturally suggests itself, To what MS. was Godfrey de Gemen indebted for this colophon, or is the alternative more probable that he devised it ? There is no known MS. of this collection of an earlier date to which an appeal can be made as an authority for this colophon ; on the contrary, the only known MSS. of which the date is earlier than Godfrey de Gemen’s print, both of which are in the library of the university of Copen­hagen, are without this colophon, and one of them, which purports to have been completed at Nyköping on the Eve of the Visitation of the Virgin in 1494, concludes with a colophon which precludes all idea that anything has been omitted by the scribe, viz., “ Here ends this book, and may God send us his grace, Amen.” We are disposed to think that Gemen himself devised this colophon. He was engaged in printing for the first time other collections of laws for the Danish Government, and, as Gothland was at that time a possession of Denmark, he may have thus dis­tinguished the sea laws from another collection, namely, of land laws. Professor Schlyter, however, believes Gemen may have borrowed it from a MS. which is lost, or at all events is not known. There is some support to this view in the fact that in the archives of the guildhall of Lübeck there is preserved a MS. of 1533 which contains a Low German version of the same collection of sea laws, with a rubric prefixed to the first article announcing them to be “ the water law or sea law, which is the oldest and highest law of Wisby,” and there are good reasons for supposing that the scribe of this MS. copied his text from a MS. other than the Copenhagen MS. The same observation will apply to a second MS. of a similar character preserved in the library of the gymnasium of Lübeck, which pur­ports to have been written in 1537. But as regards the Wisby sea laws little reliance can be placed on such rubrics or colophons as proofs of the facts recited in them, though they may be valuable as evidence of the reputed origin of the sea laws at the time when the scribe com­pleted the MS. In illustration of this view it may be stated that in the same year in which the more recent of these two MSS. purports to have been completed—namely, 1537—there was printed at Lübeck an enlarged edition of the sea laws consisting of seventy-two articles, being a Low German translation of a Dutch text, in which six additional Dutch laws had been inserted which are not found in the Copenhagen MS., nor have a place in Gemen’s text, yet to this edition is prefixed the title, “ This is the highest and oldest sea law, which the community of mer­chants and shipmasters have ordained and made at Wisby, that all persons who would be secure may regulate them­selves by it.” Further, it has an introductory clause to its thirty-seventh article—“ This is the ordinance which the community of skippers and merchants have resolved upon amongst themselves as ship law, which the men of Zea­land, Holland, Flanders hold, and with the law of Wisby, which is the oldest ship law.” At the end of the seventy- second article there follows this colophon : “ Here ends the Gothland sea law, which the community of merchants and mariners have ordained and made at Wisby, that each may regulate himself by it. All honour be to God, mdxxxvii.” Each article of this edition has prefixed to it after its particular number the word “belevinge” (judg­ment). It would thus appear that the Wisby sea laws