sea contained in *The Book of the Consulate of the Sea* (see Con­sulate of the Sea) was held in high repute in the Levant, directed on her return that a record should be made of the judgments of the maritime court of the island of Oléron (at that time a peculiar court of the duchy of Guienne), in order that they might serve as law amongst the mariners of the Western Sea. He states further that Richard I. of England, on his return from the Holy Land, brought back with him a roll of those judgments, which he published in England and ordained to be observed as law. Though R. G. Marsden doubts the story of Richard I. having brought back *La Leye Olyroun* to England, the general outline of Cleirac’s account accords with a memorandum on the famous roll of 12 Edw. III., “De Superioritate Maris Angliae ” (for many years preserved in the archives of the Tower of London, now deposited in the Public Record Office). According to this memorandum, the king’s justiciaries were instructed to declare and uphold the laws and statutes made by the kings of England, in order to maintain peace and justice amongst the people of every nation passing through the sea of England. .

The earliest version of these Oléron sea laws comprised certain customs of the sea which were observed in the wine and the oil trade, as carried on between the ports of Guienne and those of Brittany, Normandy, England and Flanders. No English trans­lation seems to have been made before the *Rutter of the Sea,* printed in London by Thomas Petyt in 1536, in which they are styled “ the Lawes of ye Yle of Auleron and ye Judgementes of ye See.” French was, in fact, a tongue familiar to the English high court of admiralty down to the reign of Henry VI. A Flemish text however, appears to have been made in the latter part of the 14th century, the *Purple Book of Bruges,* preserved in the archives of Bruges, in a handwriting somewhat later than that of the *Liber Memorandorum.* Prefixed to this Flemish version is the title, “ Dit es de Coppie van den Rollen van Oleron van den Vonnesse van der Zee.” Certain changes, however, have been made in the *Purple Book of Bruges* in the names of the ports mentioned in the original Gascon text. For instance, Sluys is in several places substituted for Bordeaux, just as in the *Rutter of the Sea* London replaces Bordeaux. That these sea laws were administered in the Flemish maritime courts may be inferred from two facts. First, a Flemish transla­tion of them was made for the use of the maritime tribunal of Damme, which was the chief Flemish entrepôt of the wine trade in the 13th century. The text of this translation has been published by Adriaen Verwer under the title of the *Judgments of Damme.* In the second place, there is preserved in the archives of the senate of Danzig, where there was a maritime court of old, an early manuscript of the 15th century, containing a Flemish reproduction of the Judgments of Oléron headed “ Dit is Twater Recht in Vlaenderen.” So far there can be no doubt that the Judgments of Oléron were received as sea laws in Flanders as well as in England in the 14th century. Further inquiry can trace them as they followed the course of the wine trade in the North Sea and the Baltic Sea. Boxhorn, in his *Chronyk van Zeelande,* has published a Dutch version of them, which van Leeuwcn has reproduced in his *Batavia Illustrate,* under the title of the *Laws of West-Capell* in Zealand. Verwer has also published a Dutch text of them in his *Nederlant's See-Rechten*, accompanied by certain customs of Amsterdam, of which other MSS. exist, in which those customs are described as usages of Stavoren, or as usages of Enkhuizen, both ports of active commerce in the 15th century. Of these customs of Amsterdam, or, as they were more generally styled, “ Ordin­ances of Amsterdam,” further mention is made below.

A new and enlarged collection of sea laws, purporting to be an extract of the ancient laws of Oléron, made its appearance in the latter part of the 15th century in *Le Grant routier de la mer,* printed at Poitiers in France by Jan de Marnef, at the sign of the Pelican. The title-page is without a date, but the dedication, which purports to be addressed by its author, Pierre Garcie, *alias* Ferrande, to his godson, is dated from St Gilles on the last day of May 1483. It contains forty-seven articles, of which the first twenty-two are identical with articles of the “ Judgments of the Sea,” in the *Liber Memorandorum,* the remaining articles being evidently of more recent origin. A black-letter edition of this work in French, without

a date, is preserved in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and to the last article this colophon is appended: “ Ces choses précédentes sont extraictes du très utille et profittable Roolle Doloyron par le diet Pierre Garcie alias Ferrande. An English translation is printed in the appendix to *A View of the Admiral Jurisdiction,* published in 1661 by Dr John Godolphin, in which the laws are described as “ an Extract of the Ancient Laws of Oléron rendered into English out of Garsias alias Ferrand.” Although this new text had the recom­mendation of an advocate who had filled the office of judge of the Admiralty Court during the Commonwealth and been appointed king’s advocate-general by Charles II., it seems to have been suρer- seded in a short time by Cleirac’s *Us et coustumes de la mer,* to which was appended the following clause of authentication: “ Tes- moin le Seel de l'Isle d’Oléron, estably aux contracts de la dite Isle, le jour du Mardy apres la Feste Sainet André l’an mille deux cens soixant-six.” Cleirac does not inform us from what source or under what circumstances he procured his text, nor on what authority he has adopted in certain articles readings at variance with those of Garcie, whilst he retains the same number of articles, to wit, forty-seven. The clause of authentication cannot be accepted as a warranty above suspicion, as the identical clause of authentication with the same date is appended to the early Norman and Breton versions of the rolls, which contain only twenty-six articles. Cleirac’s version, however, owing probably to the superior style in which it was edited, and to the importance of the other treatises on maritime matters which Cleirac had brought together for the first time in a single volume, seems to have obtained a preference in England over Garcie's text, as it was received in the High Court of Admiralty during the judgeship of Sir Leoline Jenkyns, and an English trans- lation of it was introduced into the English translation of the *Black Book of the Admiralty* made by John Bedford, the deputy registrar of the High Court. It seems to have been Bedford’s intention to print this translation under the title of “Sea Laws”; but the manuscript passed into the hands of Sir Leoline Jenkyns, who gave it to the College of Advocates in 1685. The *Black Book* itself, which was missing for a long time from the Admiralty registry, was discovered in the 19th century and replaced in the archives of the Admiralty Court. Of these two versions of the sea laws of Oléron the earlier obtained a world-wide reception, for it was translated into Castilian *(Fuero de Layron)* by order of King Alphonso X., and a Gascon text of it is still preserved in the archives of Leghorn, apparently in a handwriting of the 15th century, entitled “ Asso es la copia deus Rolles de Leron de juegemens de mar.”

The parent stock of the Visby 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 Gotland sea laws. This collection comprises sixty-six articles, and it is now placed beyond a doubt by modern researches, especially of Professor Schlyter of Lund, that these Gotland sea laws are a compilation derived from three distinct sources—a Lübeck, an OJéron and an Amsterdam source. A Saxon or Low German text of this collection was printed for the first time in 1505 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 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