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, 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 Visby. 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 Gotland sea laws, which the community of merchants and skippers have ordained and made at Visby, 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 Gotland 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 Visby,” 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 Visby 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 Visby, 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 snip law, which the men of Zeeland, Holland, Flanders hold, and with the law of Visby, which is the oldest ship law.” At the end of the seventy-second article there follows this colophon: “Here ends the Gotland sea law, which the community of merchants and mariners have ordained and made at Visby, 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 Visby sea laws have fared like the Oléron sea laws: they have gathered bulk with increasing years.

The question remains to be answered, How did this collection of sea laws acquire the title of the “ Visby sea laws ” outside the Baltic ? for under such title they were received in Scotland in the 16th century, as may be inferred from extracts from them cited in Sir James Balfour’s *System of the more Ancient Laws of Scotland,* which, although not printed till 1754, was completed before his death in 1583. The text of the Visby sea laws generally current in England is an English translation of a French text which Cleirac published in 1641 in his *Us et coustumes de la mer,* and is an abbreviated, and in many respects mutilated, version of the original sea laws. This inquiry, however, would open a new chapter on the subject of the northern sea laws, and the civilizing influence which the merchants of Visby exercised in the 13th century through their factories at Novgorod, linking thereby the trade of the Baltic to that of the Black Sea. (T. T.)

See Pardessus, *Collection de lois maritimes antérieures au XVIIIe siècle* (6 vols., Paris, 1828-1845); Schlyter, *Wisby* *Stadslag och Sjoratt,* being vol. viii. of the *Corpus Juris Sueco-Gοtorum Antiqui* (Lund, 1853); and *The Black Book of the Admiralty,* ed. by Sir Travers Twiss (4 vols., London, 1871-1876). An exhaustively

critical edition of the Rhodian sea law (given in vol. i. of Pardessus) by W. Ashburner, appeared in 1909 (Oxford, University Press). It contains valuable material not only on the Rhodian sea law, but on the various other sea laws in force on the Mediterranean coast.

SEAL-FISHERIES. Seals of all descriptions (see Seal)— whether belonging to the typical family *Phocidae,* or true seals, or to the *Otariidae,* or sea-lions and sea-bears—are of great commercial value. Whereas, however, the true seals and the sea-lions are hunted only for the sake of their hides and blubber, the sea-bears are sought on account of their valuable “ seal­skin ” (see Carnivora; also Fur). Walruses (*Odobaenidae)* are hunted not only for their hides and blubber but also for the ivory of their tusks, which is, however, far less valuable than elephant-ivory. Among the more important species of sea- bears or fur-seals, which yield commercial “ seal-skin,” may be mentioned *Otaria (Arctocephalus) australis* of South America and the adjacent islands, including the Galapagos group and Tierra-del-Fuego; *O*. (*A*.) *antarctica* or *pusïlla* of South Africa and the Crozets; *O*. (*A*.) *gazella* of Kerguelen Island; and *O.* (*A*.) *Forsteri* of the coasts of New Zealand and South-Western Australia. This group was widely distributed over the pelagic islands of the southern hemisphere, but is now practically extinct in the greater part of its habitat, although remnants of im- portance exist on Lobos Island in the mouth of the river Plata in Uruguay, and on the islands off Cape Horn, both of which now receive protection from government. A second group is represented by *Otaria (Callorhinus) ursina* of the Commander Islands and Pribiloff Islands in Bering Sea, Robben Island and the Kurile Islands, Sea of Okhotsk, and other parts of the North Pacific; the forms from the. different islands having received distinct specific names.

Of the southern herds little authentic information exists, but the records for the northern herds are fairly complete. At the period of its maximum development, 1870 to 1880, the herd of the Pribiloff Islands numbered about 2½ million animals; that of the Commander Islands about one-half as many. The herd in the Sea of Okhotsk is one of minor importance, numbering in 1897 less than 1000 animals on Robben Island. All these herds became greatly reduced, and in 1896-1897 numbered in all not more than 600,000 animals. The typical adult male or bull (*sikatch)* of the second group attains maturity about the seventh year, and weighs from 400 to 500 lb. It is 6 ft. in length, with a girth of 4½ ft. The fur is blackish or dark brown, with long yellowish-white hairs, especially long and firm on the back of the neck, forming the so-called “ wig ” or mane. The animal stands erect and runs or “ lollops ” along the ground when on land. The adult female, or cow (*matka),* is much smaller, averaging about 80 lb in weight, with length and girth in proportion. The fur is of varying shades of brown; she bears her first young at the age of three years.

The breeding-grounds are boulder-strewn beaches or rocky hill slopes near the shore. On these the sea-bears congregate in close-set masses called “ rookeries.” The unit of rookery life is the family group, or “ harem,” each bull collecting as many females as he can control. The number ranges from 1 to 100 or more, averaging about 30. The bulls reach the islands early in May and take up their places. The cows begin to arrive the first week in June. The number on the rookeries from day to day grows steadily to a climax about the middle of July, when about one-half are present, the number actually on the ground diminishing to about one-fourth at and after the close of the breeding season with the end of July. The single young, or pup (*kotik),* weighing 10 to 12 lb and jet black in colour, is born within six to forty-eight hours after the arrival of the cow. Within a week the latter is served by the bull, and by the end of another week she goes to sea to feed, returning at gradually lengthening intervals through the summer to nourish her young, left in the meantime to care for itself on the rookeries. The bulls, having fasted since their arrival in May, go away in August to feed. The pups learn to swim at the age of a month or six weeks, and in November, with the approach of winter, swim away with their mothers to the south. The winter migration of the