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VENETIAN MERCHANT GALLEYS, 1300–1334: PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OPERATION*

By FREDERIC C. LANE

DETAILED regulation of commerce and industry is more characteristic of the later Middle Ages than of the earlier mediaeval centuries. If we think of the whole Middle Ages as an epoch when such regulation was prevalent, it is largely because more records for the later Middle Ages are preserved. For the earlier centuries the records are less complete but they suggest there was an earlier period of free enterprise centering in the time of most rapid economic growth, the twelfth century. This freedom was not due to any social theory favoring free enterprise and probably not to deliberate intent of any kind. In large part it was due to neglect — to the lack of administrative machinery sufficient to enforce any regulation and to the inability of those claiming authority to know what was going on in time to regulate it. Because European economy was expanding rapidly attention was focused on seizing some of the innumerable opportunities, rather than on denying those opportunities to others or regulating the way they were used. Freedom may have stimulated growth; certainly growth created the opportunities which stimulated freedom.¹

In Venice, however, private enterprise was mixed with a tradition of state supremacy, and a readiness to adopt Communal management of any activity which those in power thought necessary and individual enterprise was not supplying satisfactorily. Government monopolies and direct government participation in trade were in the tradition inherited from Ptolemaic and Roman times and transmitted by Moslems and especially by the Byzantine empire. The merchants who ruled Venice were quite ready to adopt these methods through the government which they controlled. In time, direct government operation and free

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¹ A. B. Hibbert, in *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, III (Cambridge, 1963), 181 ff.

private enterprise became submerged by regulated private enterprise, but the development occurred only gradually.

Since maritime transport was basic to all Venice's other industries and to her power, it received constant attention from the governing councils of the Commune. In the measures taken by these councils one finds a distinction between the galleys which were equipped with oars and the types of ships which depended entirely on sails. The galleys used in trade, *galee da mercato*, became after 1329 subject to a particular kind of close regulation formulated in the contracts through which galleys owned by the Commune were chartered to private operators. Charter contracts of this kind proved so satisfactory that they were put up to auction nearly every year from 1329 to 1534. But before 1329, or perhaps 1325, there were no such auctions. At that time Venetian policy was fluctuating between two extremes; merchant galleys were either Communally owned and operated, or privately owned and operated with relatively little supervision. The aim of this paper is to examine the nature of private operation and direct Communal operation at the beginning of the century, and to show how they led to a sort of compromise, the annual auction for private operation of galleys built and owned by the Commune.

Before considering the details of this problem, it is useful to place it in its setting by describing in general terms the five different ways in which the various branches of the shipping industry were organized at one time or another during the whole period 1300–1500, namely: (1) *free* voyages of ships privately owned and operated; (2) *regulated* voyages of ships privately owned and operated; (3) *licensed* voyages of ships privately owned and operated; (4) voyages of Communally owned ships *auctioned* for private operation; (5) direct *Communal* operation of Communally owned vessels, which was more important than has generally been supposed.

The free voyaging — “*navigazione libera*,” as Professor Luzzatto has called it — was not exempt from all regulation.² The general codes of maritime law, such as that promulgated by Doge Ranier Zeno in 1255, specified the number of crew required for ships of various sizes and a host of other details. Every year some voyages were forbidden or encouraged because of the political situation or the grain harvests. By “free voyaging” we mean those that were planned by private individuals subject to these rules but with the times of sailing, the routes, the freight rates, and the choice of vessel determined by private agreements.

Unless provision was made for one of the other ways of organizing shipping, we may assume that free voyaging was in effect. It applied in the western Mediterranean and to any voyages into the Atlantic made before the Commune of Venice began in 1314 to subsidize and regulate galley voyages to the North Sea. During most years the shipping of the Adriatic was operated by such private

² Gino Luzzatto, *Storia economica di Venezia dal XI al XVI secolo* (Venice: Centro Internazionale delle arti e del costume, 1961), pp. 47–56, and *idem*, “*Navigazione di linea e navigazione libera nelle grandi città marinare del Medio Evo*,” in his *Studi di storia economica di Venezia* (Padua, 1954), pp. 53–57.

initiative, subject to general regulations that protected Venice's lordship of the gulf. Much trade along the coasts or from island to island in the Ionian and Aegean seas was also little guided by any governmental decisions.

While all that we would call tramp shipping was left to this free voyaging, ships serving the main lines to the Levant had less liberty. If they carried the more valuable kinds of cargo — cloth, cash, bullion, spices, and other “light wares” — they made “regulated” voyages. The times at which they might load in the Levant to come to Venice were specified by law even if the operation of the ships depended entirely on individual initiative. The loading periods and the fleets which loaded at these times were called *mudue* or *mude*. There were two *mudue* a year, in spring and fall. Their dates varied from one region to another and according to the type of vessels loaded.³ Because of the precious cargoes they carried, the government paid particular attention to protecting the galleys or round ships of the *mudue*. Sometimes the government determined the freight rates and other economic conditions for these “regulated voyages.”

When closer control seemed desirable all the vessels planning to go for a particular *mudua* were required to register in advance. Their owners had to post bond as assurance that they would actually sail. When the applicants were subject to approval by an appropriate governmental body they formed what I have called a “licensed voyage.” Since this approval was more explicitly provided for in some cases than others, it is hard to draw the line precisely between the regulated voyages and licensed voyages.⁴ Typically, the regulated voyages were open to all ships as long as they observed the rules of the *mudue*. On licensed voyages the

³ Frederic C. Lane, “Fleets and Fairs: The Functions of the Venetian Muda,” in *Scritti in onore di Armando Saporì* (Milan, 1957), I, 651–663.

⁴ As a matter of general principle it might be said that no vessel could leave Venice without the permission of the government and that all departures were registered in the sense that the law required inspection of crews and cargoes. See my “Venetian Maritime Law and Regulations: Sources and Regulatory Boards, 1250–1350,” in *Studi in onore di Amintore Fanfani* (Milan, 1962), III, 25, 37–45. It was an ancient rule that the *Consoli dei Mercanti* could require ships which had begun to accept freight to give security to guarantee their fulfillment of their obligations. *Ibid.*, and A. S. V., Capitolare dei Consoli, cap. 38, 85. They required security of ten *solidi per milliarium*, according to the copy of Zeno's code at the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., Law Division, MS. V46, a provision added to this early copy of the code and there numbered cap. clxxxvi. The same principle was extended to merchant galleys in 1303 when they were required to post security of 2000 *libre* at the ducal palace. This is my reading of Archivio di Stato di Venezia (cited hereafter as A.S.V.), Senato Misti, reg. 1, f. 186. I began this study before the publication of this surviving fragment of reg. 1 of Senato Misti and wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Signora Mirabella of the Archivio di Venezia for her aid in reading this register and other documents. It has now been published in *Le Deliberazioni del Consiglio dei Rogati (Senato) serie Mixtorum*, I: Libri I–xiv, ed. R. Cessi e P. Sambin, Monumenti Storici pubblicati dalla Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Venezie, N. S., xv (Venice, 1960). The transcript made for me by Signora Mirabella reads: “cuiuslibet galee antequam arment,” which makes better sense in the context than “cuiuslibet galee comunis, quam arment,” as one reads in *Delib. . . . dei Rogati*, I, 86, No. 309. (Where there is no conflict in readings I cite hereafter this edition by Cessi and Sambin, since it is most available.) Genoese galley masters were required to post a similar bond. — See J. M. Pardessus, *Collection de lois maritimes antérieure au dix huitième siècle* (Paris, 1828–45), IV, 439. An example of enforcement of the Venetian requirement to post bond is in A.S.V., Grazie, reg. 1, No. 438.

number of vessels was determined by the Senate. Those approved were placed under an admiral, a *capitano*, appointed by the Commune, who was instructed to lead the fleet on a specified itinerary and make sure that the ships were at all times adequately manned and armed.⁵

Whether the fleet navigated as a unit under a single command and whether it was under a unified economic management were connected but different questions. The former was a military or nautical problem; the latter a problem in business management. The records have sometimes been misinterpreted because the two have not been distinguished. “Armentur per Comune” and “armentur per divisum” were contrasting terms that meant literally “let there be armed by the Commune” and “let there be armed separately.”⁶ “Armentur” meant to man and equip — most specifically it meant to lay out the cash payments of advance wages necessary to enlist a crew. “Armentur per Comune” meant that the Arsenal would supply the ships, the state treasurers find the coins for the payroll, and government officials enroll the crew. Freights and expenses were then all for the account of the Commune. “Armentur per divisum” meant that a number of private individuals or family partnerships acting through joint ventures would furnish the vessels and enroll crews for the galleys, each of which would then be operated for the profit or loss of the individual or partnership which had “armed” it. When the ships were ready to sail, the Senate could decide to what extent they needed to keep together as one fleet.

If each galley master was planning separately how to keep down his expenses and how to obtain a full cargo, there might be difficulties in keeping the ships together as a single fleet. One way to meet these difficulties was to pool freights and expenses. These pools were most fully developed in the fourth way of organizing transportation enterprises, namely with ships Communally owned but auctioned

⁵ For a good example of a licensed fleet of cogs in 1405 see A.S.V., Senato Misti, reg. 47, f. 7; for a similar fleet of galleys in 1333 see Senato Misti, reg. 16, f. 3.

⁶ The contrast is particularly clear in the passages printed in *Deliberazioni. . . dei Rogati*, I, 58–60 (June–July 1302) which show the equivalence of “per divisum” and “cum galeis singularum personarum,” and pp. 84–85 (Dec.–Jan. 1302–3). *Per divisum* is also used to mean individually “armed” in the regulations made to prevent *armatores* from freighting wine beyond the legal limit as cargo under the pretense that it was part of the supplies for the crew. *Ibid.*, I, 327, No. 44. Authorization to arm *per comune* were generally accompanied by authorizations to spend. Such provisions had to be made months before the galleys sailed. Orders about convoys could in contrast be issued at the last moment. *Ibid.*, I, 138, No. 127. Misinterpretation of some of the resolutions I have just quoted, and of others, by applying *per divisum* to the navigation instead of to the business administration are found in Antonio Scialoja, “Un precedente medioevale dei “Pools” marittimi” in *Studi in Memoria di Bernardino Scorza* a cura della Università di Bari (Rome, 1940), p. 755, no. 6 — this study is reprinted also in Scialoja’s *Saggi di storia del diritto marittimo* (Rome, 1946); and Roberto Cessi, “Le relazioni commerciali tra Venezia et le Fiandre nel secolo XIV,” in his *Politica ed economia di Venezia nel Trecento* (Rome, 1952), reprinted from the *Archivio Veneto* (1914), pp. 92, 96, 100.

That *per divisum* meant private ownership and operation is evident also in the return to private enterprise after 1309. The Comune then sold its galleys for private operation. The rubrica of the Senate’s decree reads: “Armentur per divisum et dentur armare volentibus . . . *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, p. 134, No. 88. It was provided in 1312 “Quod iste galee armate specialium personarum debeant ire, stare, et redire in conserva pro sua securitate.” A.S.V., Maggior Consiglio, *Deliberazioni*, Presbiter, f. 65 t.

for private operation with special orders and privileges for the specific voyage for which they were chartered. They were governed by regulations much like those mentioned above for privately owned ships when they were licensed for specified *mudue*; but there was more assurance that the regulations concerning the use of the vessel would be observed by the galley master, as it was not really his vessel. It was his only for the one voyage and under conditions specified in the auction contract concerning the cargo, the crew, the route, and loading, and the upkeep of the vessel. The admiral, the Lords of the Arsenal, and other officials charged with enforcing these provisions were in the position of safeguarding the use of state property. The terms of the auction narrowly restricted the sphere of decision of the galley masters even as a group, and the pooling of freights limited more narrowly their range of activity as individual businessmen, but they were in posts of honor, which they had obtained by competitive bidding, and in which they were trying to make a profit for themselves and their partners.⁷

In the fifth form of organization, the galley master, *patronus*, was a salaried official chosen by the Commune and sworn to operate the galley for the Commune. He swore that he would be present whenever wares were loaded in order to record them, that he would search through the straw in the hold to make sure nothing was hidden, and would keep the hatches bolted down when he and the ship's clerk were not present. He reported on the commercial aspects of the voyage to the Doge.⁸ Under this system of direct Communal operation the crew was hired by the same officials who enrolled men for the war galleys and they received

⁷ Scialoja, *op. cit.*, Frederic Chapin Lane, *Venetian Ships and Shipbuilders of the Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1934), p. 14 note 23; *idem*, "Family Partnerships and Joint Ventures in the Venetian Republic," *Journal of Economic History*, iv (November 1944), 186–194; Jules Sottas, *Les messageries maritimes de Venise aux XIV et XV siècle* (Paris: Société d'éditions géographiques maritimes et coloniales, 1938), p. 120 ff.; Alberto Tenenti et Corrado Vivanti, "Le film d'un grand système de navigation: Les galères vénitiennes, XIV–XVI siècles," in *Annales: Économies-Sociétés-Civilisations*, xvi (1961), 83–86, a geographical pre-view of an extended study of these auctions.

⁸ The duties of a *patronus* of a communally operated galley are specified in detail in *Deliberazioni . . . dei Rogati*, i, 63–65; A.S.V. Senato Misti, reg. 1, f. 163, 18 August 1302; and in the oath of the *patronus* printed in Luigi Fincati, "Splendor e decadenza della marina mercantile di Venezia," *Rivista marittima*, 1878, part 2, pp. 165–171. Admiral Fincati says the document was communicated to him by B. Cecchetti, and was found in the Atti dei Proc. di San Marco, Amministrazione degli Istituti Pii Riuniti. Parchment copies of similar oaths for commanders of other types of vessels were generously called to my attention by the present director of the archive, Count Morozzo della Rocca, in *Miscellanea Atti diplomatici e private*, busta 7 and 9; but we could not find the original of that printed by Admiral Fincati. Its authenticity is to be inferred, however, from its similarity to these other oaths, and from the identity between many of its provisions and the clauses of the regulations of 18 August 1302, in Senato Misti. In dating the oath, the year is omitted. We have only: 10 August, thirteenth indiction. This thirteenth indiction came in 1300, 1315, and 1330. I believe the correct date is 1330, for the oath contains a clause, the reason for which will be discussed below, regarding the *patronus*' obligation for wares damaged on board. This was enacted by the Maggior Consiglio 17 June 1324. M. C., *Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio*, Fronesia, f. 135, old numbering. Direct communal operation of merchant galleys had practically ceased in 1330, but there had been occasion for drawing up the oath for the commander of such a vessel for the voyage to Romania regularly nearly each year for a decade before 1329, and in 1330, probably in August, galleys at Ragusa were empowered to load freight to come to Venice. *Delib. . . dei Rogati*, ed. Cessi e Sambin, i, 425, No. 166.

pay and rations from these armament officials or from the treasurers.⁹ Hiring and disciplining at sea was done by the *capitano*, to whom the galley-master reported.¹⁰ Freights were collected at Venice by a special group of customs officials called the *Extraordinarii*.¹¹ The *patronus* was thus an administrative officer reporting to other elements in the Communal hierarchy. Unlike the *patronus* of a privately operated galley, he had not invested any of his money to man and outfit the galley; the capital necessary for that purpose had been provided from public funds.

These five methods of organizing maritime transportation were differently applied to different types of vessels. Free voyaging was the general rule for nearly all the smaller sailing ships, at least after the thirteenth century, and also for many of the larger round ships — the cogs and caracks of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.¹² But the cogs and caracks carrying cotton and other “light wares” in the eastern Mediterranean were operated either in “regulated” voyages or in more tightly organized “licensed” fleets. Such fleets of cogs were very frequent in the first part of the fifteenth century.¹³ By that time the merchant galleys were almost all owned by the Commune and chartered by annual auctions for private operation. In the early fourteenth century, in contrast, there were a large number of merchant galleys in private hands. A few of these galleys operated under free voyaging, generally manned by a crew that was small for a galley and using relatively few oars.¹⁴ But most of the privately owned galleys were used for regulated or licensed voyages. These galley voyages of the early fourteenth century were organized much as were the regulated and licensed voyages of cogs a hundred years later. There were also in the early fourteenth century some voyages of Communally owned galleys and they were operated directly by the Commune.

Direct Communal operation was not then anything new. It was the Commune which had contracted in 1201 to furnish a huge fleet for the Fourth Crusade. In 1268 it offered to rent to Louis IX ships that it owned as well as some belonging to Venetian nobles.¹⁵ In the thirteenth century, before the development of the type of ship which came to be known as the *galea da mercato*, the Commune of Venice owned and operated some large round ships which carried wares for Venetian merchants.¹⁶ Although the evidence concerning the thirteenth century deserves

⁹ The oath above cited and that of the *ufficali al armamento* in the *Miscellanea atti* above cited, busta 9, No. 327. See also M.C., *Deliberazioni*, Fronesi, f. 155.

¹⁰ Senato Misti, reg. 1, f. 163. Initial enrollment was the responsibility of the *ufficali al armamento*.

¹¹ MC, *Avogaria di Comune*, *Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio*, Liber Magnus, f. 52 t; A.S.V., *Miscellanea Codici*, No. 131, 132.

¹² Luzzatto, *Studi*, pp. 56–57.

¹³ The examples cited above in note 5 and in my *Venetian Ships*, pp. 255–256.

¹⁴ Examples of references to such galleys, all in the 1320's, are *Avogaria di Comune*, *Deliberazioni*, del Maggior Consiglio, Brutus, ff. 52 t, 86 t; Grazie, reg. 3, f. 10; R. Predelli, *I Libri commemoriali, Regesti* (in *Monumenti storici pubblicati dalla R. Deputazione Veneta di Storia Patria*, serie prima, Documenti), 1, 270, No. 457.

¹⁵ A. Jal, *Archéologie navale* (Paris, 1840), mémoire 7.

¹⁶ The oath of a salaried *patronus navis communis* going on a voyage to Accon in 1282 has much detail concerning how he and his *socius* (a second *patronus*, I presume) should collect freights. *Misc. Atti Diplomatici e privati*, busta 7, pergamena No. 235.

more study, the methods then used appear to have been at one extreme or the other: private operation of vessels privately owned, or Communal operation of vessels Communally owned. At the opening of the fourteenth century Venetian policy was still wavering between these alternatives.

II

How to organize the galley voyages — whether by Communal management or individual initiative, and under what basic rules — was very much an open question at the beginning of the fourteenth century. It came before Venice's governing councils nearly every year in relation to one or another of the areas in which Venetian shipping was active. From this point of view there were four such areas: (1) The Adriatic. (2) The Black Sea and what was then called "Romania," approximately Constantinople and what we call Greece. (3) Egypt and "Oltremare." "Beyond the sea" (*oltremare*) meant not only Palestine but all the lands which had once been conquered by the crusaders. In practice it meant at this time Cyprus and Lajazzo, the port of the kingdom of Lesser Armenia which became of major commercial importance when the Christians lost their last port in Palestine by the Mameluke capture of Acre in 1291. (4) The West. There is justification for lumping under the heading "West" such diverse places as Tunis, Sicily, the Balearic Islands, and Atlantic ports, for in 1300 separate lines to these various areas had not been developed, although Venetian shipping was penetrating westward from the Ionian Sea.¹⁷

Immediately after the conclusion of the peace with Genoa in 1299 there was intense concern about the safety of the voyages to Apulia.¹⁸ The carefully armed fleet sent in the fall of 1300 contained both "galee comunis" and "galee specialium personarum."¹⁹ Within two years that voyage was turned over to private enterprise with plans for three convoys a year, each consisting of at least three galleys. Cash and some wares were to move only by galley.²⁰ But the plan did not work, private initiative failed to arm that many galleys. First two, then one galley was declared sufficient.²¹ Soon the route was opened to unarmed ships, and since they were not limited to specified sailing seasons, in 1306 galleys also were permitted to sail whenever they wished.²² The Adriatic was thus gradually turned over to free voyaging.

During the first decade of the fourteenth century voyages west were also left to

¹⁷ Regions beyond "capud de Porsano" (Capo Bruzzano in Calabria) were lumped together in a number of regulations concerning shipping. *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 95; p. 441, No. 4; A.S.V., Senato Misti, reg. 15, f. 100.

¹⁸ *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 7–10.

¹⁹ A.S.V., Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, Magnus et Capricornus f. 11, 15 Oct. and 23 Nov. 1300. Special provisions for the arming of galleys going to Apulia begin "Quod cercatores galearum Apuliae et specialium personarum pro utilitate Comunis et specialium personarum . . ." — which implies that there were both kinds of galleys in the fleet.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 61, No. 221. Although *ibid.*, p. 62, No. 222, might appear in conflict, in view of what follows it seems best to interpret it as a rejection of a proposal to reconsider.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 74, No. 270; p. 82, No. 296.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 80, No. 289; p. 111, No. 102; A.S.V., Avogaria di Comune, Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio, Magnus, f. 11.

private enterprise. The two other areas, Romania and Oltremare, were those in which various systems of organizing regulated convoys were tried out.

As long as Venice remained at war with the Byzantine empire, which had not been included in the peace made with Genoa in 1299, operation by the Commune was preferred in that area. In 1301 Venice also had reason to fear the Sicilian fleets off Greece.²³ Early in that year, the Senate decided that ten to twenty galleys, as many as could be made ready, should be armed to go to the Levant. Part were privately armed, part armed by the Commune, but they were all under orders of the admirals appointed by the government.²⁴ Three galleys were to remain in the Adriatic, three to go to Crete, Cyprus, and Armenia for trade, and the rest were to turn northward in the Aegean to pillage the lands of the Byzantine emperor. When the fleet from Armenia was returning in May, the other squadrons were ordered to go into the Ionian sea to protect it from possible attack by the Sicilians, and to provide additional transportation for wares which had accumulated at Crete and Modon for shipment to Venice.²⁵

The spring fleet being safely back in the Adriatic, the Senate debated for several days in July 1301 how the fall voyage should be organized. Some Senators favored finding five or six private galleys which would be operated by their merchant owners, but the final decision was that six be outfitted by the Commune.²⁶ Before they left in October or November, a seventh was added to take care of the large amount of merchandise that had been presented for loading.²⁷ All went as far as Crete, whence three or four went on to Lajazzo. Although the possibility of diverting these galleys for a raid on Constantinople was considered, this was in effect a purely commercial voyage. All the galleys, except possibly one, were nevertheless operated directly by the Commune.²⁸

When the time came to prepare the spring and fall fleets of 1302, the Senate again rejected proposals that galleys be armed “per speciales personas” or “per divisum” and voted instead for arming “per Comune.”²⁹ The fleet of twelve galleys leaving in April 1302 had a combined military and commercial assignment. Four vessels were to be detached at Monemvasia to go to Cyprus and Armenia.

²³ Paolo Sambin, “La politica mediterranea di Venezia alla fine della guerra del Vespro,” *Atti del Reale Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti*, civ (1944–45), parte 2, pp. 972–993.

²⁴ Both private and public galleys are referred to in a resolution which seems to apply to this fleet. A.S.V., Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, Magnus et Capricornus, f. 13 t. Private operators received loans from the Bailo of Negroponte. *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 10, No. 47. The Commune pawned salt in order to have the cash for “arming” its galleys. *Ibid.*, p. 14, No. 57. “Galee nostri Comunis” are also mentioned in *ibid.*, p. 11, Nos. 48, 49.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 14, No. 56; pp. 17, 18, 21–25; p. 32, No. 113; p. 34, No. 117.

²⁶ *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 35–36; A.S.V., Senato Misti, reg. 1, f. 131 t. Scialoja, in *Mem. Scorza*, pp. 755–756, interpreted this as an unsuccessful effort to find private operators who were ready to go.

²⁷ *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 43, No. 159.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 40, No. 143, 148; A.S.V., Senato Misti, reg. 1, f. 140; Sambin, *op. cit.*, p. 983. The galley which Marino Morosini had recently built to replace one seized by Sicilians was proposed for the voyage, to sail in convoy but be privately operated. A proposal concerning how freights would be distributed in that case was defeated. *Delib. dei Rogati*, p. 36, No. 128, *Regesti, Libri Commemoriali*, ed. Predelli, Vol. I, Lib. 1, Nos. 44–46.

²⁹ *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 48, Nos. 172, 173; p. 59, Nos. 211, 213.

The others were to wage war in the Aegean, but at least one of these was to load merchants and their wares from Greek ports on the return voyage.³⁰ In the fall of 1302 a new fleet was outfitted for trade to “Oltremare” and for this fleet the Senate drew up detailed rules regarding the duties of a salaried galley master.³¹ Meanwhile, the galleys making raids in the Aegean carried the war into the Dardenelles and were so successful that the Byzantine emperor sued for a truce.³²

After peace was restored in 1303, Communal operation was discontinued for a few years; but it was resumed in 1305 for the fleet going to Cyprus and Egypt.³³ Alexandria had been added to the termini of the eastern voyages after appeals to the Pope for permission.³⁴ Then, after Venice in 1306 entered into a league with Charles of Valois for the restoration of the Latin empire, all galley voyages eastward became governmentally operated.³⁵ Again the movement of the galleys were guided by three objectives: to pass around Greece safely in spite of the threat of Sicilian fleets, to plunder profitably Byzantine territories in the Aegean, and to trade with Greece, Cyprus, Armenia, and Egypt.

The complication of achieving all of these three objectives is presented especially clearly in 1308 because that is one of the few years for which we have the record of the letters sent by the Doge and his Council. These letters give a glimpse of many aspects of Communal operation. There were as many as five admirals commanding various fleets, all of which had been armed directly by the Commune, and the Ducal Council strove to keep all five informed and acting in concert. They were ordered to gather at Modon and decide whether the dangers were sufficient to justify restricting commercial operations by keeping the fleet together. It was assumed that almost certainly a fleet would be sent to Oltremare but it was not to visit any of the Syrian ports which were under the Mameluke sultan unless it numbered as many as seven vessels. If the galleys did separate and some went to Egypt, the *Capitano Generale* was to accompany them with three of his war galleys and was authorized to take men off other ships to be sure that his own were well armed. It was easier to make such a provision when all the crews were in the pay of the Commune, whether on trading galleys or war galleys. These fleets were to be supplied with biscuits by the Duke of Crete at such a price that there would be neither gain nor loss. How they were financed is indicated by

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 50–52, No. 183.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 59, No. 213; pp. 63–65, Nos. 226, 227; p. 70, No. 248; and see above, note 8. As in 1301, merchants going to Negroponte were to be disembarked at Patras. Later there was debate whether a galley being sent in the fall to Constantinople to carry the ambassador to negotiate peace should be allowed to carry merchandise. *Ibid.*, pp. 79–80.

³² *Cronica Justiniana* (Bibl. Naz. Marciana, Venice, MS. Lat., Cl. X, Cod. 237) f. 60 t; Sambin, *op. cit.*, p. 985.

³³ *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 112–114, Nos. 119, 121, 123, 129, 131, 135; I, 117–120, Nos. 177–180, 194–195, 197.

³⁴ Sambin, *op. cit.*, pp. 994–995; *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 104, and the text of one of these decrees preserved in the Capitolare Vicedominorum Ternarie (Bibl. Naz. Marciana, Venice, MS. Lat., Cl. V, Cod. 6) f. 33 t.

³⁵ On the league, Camillo Manfroni, *Storia della marina italiana dal trattato di Ninfeo alla caduta de Constantinopoli*, Part 1 (Leghorn, 1902), pp. 229–230. On private galleys going to the Black Sea in 1305 and 1306 see *Delib. dei Rogati*, pp. 107–108; 115–116, and p. 118, Nos. 180, 183, 185.

the orders to the *capitani* going to Alexandria and Cyprus to pay out of the freights they would collect overseas 400 *bizanti* and 600 *sarazenati* respectively to specified merchants, evidently men from whom the Commune had borrowed the money spent in Venice on outfitting and wages. The balance from collection of freights was to be invested in pepper for the return voyage. The *capitano* going to Alexandria was also instructed to buy various drugs desired by Gualtieri, a state-salaried physician. On their return these galleys were to load in Crete and southern Greece the wares ready there for shipment to Venice. This merchandise could also be loaded by some of the galleys which had been employed meanwhile in purely military operations in the Aegean and Ionian Seas.³⁶

Military demands or threats produced a fair number of other instances of Communal operation during the first two decades of the fourteenth century³⁷ but private operation became the general rule after 1302. Under the provisions made in 1303, privately owned galleys were operated in the Levant on “regulated” voyages.

The loading periods of the privately operated galleys, their *mudue*, were regulated somewhat differently from those of the round ships which made similar voyages. In both spring and fall galleys were allowed to load at a later date than were round ships.³⁸ No unarmed galley could load just before or just after the fully armed galleys.³⁹ Coin and specified kinds of valuable merchandise, such as western cloth, could be carried only on the galleys, and if “light wares” of any kind

³⁶ *Lettere di Collegio, 1308–1310*, ed. G. Giomo, in *Miscellanea di Storia Veneta*, ser. 3, t. 1, pp. 271–382, Nos. 16, 35–55, 64. That the payments were for drafts which the Council had sold in Venice to merchants willing to take payment overseas is suggested by the wording, “satisfacere creditoribus . . . et debent recipere suam solutionem dies xv postquam vos applicueritis in Cypro.” Nos. 39, 40.

³⁷ As explained in note 50, there are difficulties in dating some of the references to fleets. Although the following references to Communal operation 1308–1318 may not, therefore, in all cases be assigned to the right years, they seem worth noting:

In 1311–13 to Oltremare and Egypt without detail as to years, see *Delib. dei Rogati*, p. 135, Nos. 96–97; p. 138, No. 127 and compare the edition of the rubriche by Giomo in *Archivio Veneto*, xvii (1879), 260.

In 1313 all galleys were taken over briefly by the Commune. See A.S.V., *Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni*, Presbiter, f. 104.

In 1315 and 1316, voyage unspecified. *Ibid.*, Clericus Civicus, f. 20; *Delib. dei Rogati*, p. 162, No. 183; p. 164, No. 205.

In 1318 galleys which had been on patrol “ad custodiam nostrorum” were ordered on their return to load wares offered at Valona and ports along the way to Venice. A.S.V., *Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni*, Clericus Civicus, f. 36.

In 1318 galleys of the Commune to Negroponte and Constantinople. *Ibid.*, p. 185; Nos. 95–96.

³⁸ The spring loading period in regions beyond Crete was, for example: for galleys, 1 April to 15 May; for *naves*, 15 March–15 April. *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, pp. 85–86, No. 308; p. 93, No. 318.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 104, No. 11. The round ships are referred to as “disarmate” because they were without oars and with much smaller crews than the galleys. At the beginning of the fourteenth century some galleys were operated as “unarmed,” but to do so they had to have special permission if they had crews of more than twenty-five. On the other hand, more than sixty men certainly were necessary to make a galley “armed,” and the standard under Venetian law was 180. *Ibid.*, p. 129, No. 25; p. 138, No. 130; p. 362, No. 38; A.S.V., *Grazie*, reg. 3, f. 10; M.C., *Deliberazioni*, Clericus Civicus, f. 11 t. My references to “galleys” always mean armed galley unless otherwise specified.

were imported to Venice on round ships they were subject to a duty of five percent which was not paid by wares imported on the galleys.⁴⁰

The advantages given to operators of galleys were counterbalanced by many obligations, some in favor of the crews, but even more in favor of the shippers. The galley masters were forced to act as common carriers. They were required to load all merchandise presented as long as they had space; refusal to accept wares was subject to a fine of five *libre* per bale or ten *libre* for each *kantar* refused. The galley masters could not charge freights higher than those which had been fixed for the Communally operated galleys. They were supposed not to favor themselves or their partners over other shippers in any way such as by allowing more weight of heavy freight with each bale of cloth. As had been the case when the galleys were operated by the Commune, the galley master had to provide passage for each merchant who shipped as many as ten bales or paid as much as twenty *solidi grossorum* of freight, allowing him space two feet in breadth and permitting him to bring on board without extra charge a quilt and mattress (not weighing more than thirty *libre* between them), a casket, a valise, and arms for himself and his servant.⁴¹

While these provisions remind us that many merchants still traveled with their wares, they may give an exaggerated impression of how much that was the case. Even if much trade was already organized by resident merchants who shipped wares to agents resident overseas, as seems likely, the galleys were still important as passenger ships. Many merchants moving their base from one city to another preferred galleys to round ships, not only because the galley voyage was safer but because it was more interesting. The galleys stopped at more trading centers along the way and so gave better opportunities to meet people and see the sights.

As a rule, round ships did not sail together in convoys, but galleys were under definite obligation to do so. They were ordered to keep together as far as Coron and to wait a day along the way for any of their number wishing to unload at Corfu or Chiarenza. After they passed around Morea and spread out to different ports, there were to be at least two convoying each other whenever that was possible. On their return they were expected to come together again at Coron or Modon into a single “caravan.”⁴²

A main burden of sailing in convoy was the obligation to wait for other ships, since each day of operation cost the operators heavily in pay and food for nearly 200 men, as well as uncalculable amounts in business lost. Thus in 1303 a partnership headed by Marco Barbo and Andrea da Mosto objected violently to having to await at Negroponte, which was as far as they intended to go, for the arrival of a galley operated by a partnership headed by Marco Contarini and Marco Moro-

⁴⁰ Avog. di Com., Delib. del M.C., Magnus, f. 8 t, 6, 39 t; M.C., Deliberazioni Magnus et Capricornus, f. 41; *Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio di Venezia*, ed. R. Cessi, in *Atti delle Assemblée Costituzionali Italiane*, II (R. Accademia dei Lincei, Bologna, 1931), 72; Senato Misti, reg. 15–16 copia, f. 97. *Delib. dei Rogati*, pp. 85–86; p. 93, No. 318.

⁴¹ *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 87–91.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 85, No. 307 for galleys to Oltremare, and Avog. Com., Delib. dei M.C., Magnus, f. 9 t. for extension of the rule to galleys going to Alexandria or the Byzantine Empire.

sini, which was going to Thessalonica. Special arbiters appointed by the Doge settled the dispute by ordering the one galley to wait for the other, but these judges recognized that the galley of Cà Barbo might suffer heavy loss because the galley of Cà Contarini delayed at Thessalonica, and therefore they required the latter to pay a sort of “demurrage fee,” namely twenty-five *solidos grossorum* for each day that the Barbo galley had to wait after it was ready to sail. The *Baiulo* and his council at Negroponte were to certify the day when the Barbo galley was really ready to sail and the day when the Contarini galley arrived.⁴³

Whenever ships sailed in convoy they were under single command, that of a *capitano*. If no other provision was made, the galley masters took turns acting as *capitano*.⁴⁴ The primary functions of this official were nautical and military; he issued the orders to sail or anchor and to attack or avoid engagement if another fleet was encountered. He was also charged with enforcing the special rules made for the safety of the ships under his command,⁴⁵ but the duty of inspecting to see that the number of crew, their arms, their rations, the reserve of provisions, and the conditions of loading were according to the legal requirements fell mainly on various officials in Venice, on the rectors in Venetian colonies, and on some of the merchant passengers generally called the “navigatori.” For example, the regulations in 1303 provided that two merchants on each galley be chosen overseas by the rectors to check the ship’s stores and the daily rations given the crew. They were to keep the crew at full strength by hiring additional seamen as needed. Even when a galley was sailing alone and there was no *capitano*, such “navigatori” were appointed by the merchants and the galley master.⁴⁶

The authority of the *capitano* over the vessels thrown together in convoy on the regulated voyages may have been slight or sparingly exercised. Certainly there are more records about inspections by officials in Venice and about the committees of merchant passengers than about these admirals of the regulated fleets.⁴⁷ In 1319 we hear of a galley of Cà Contarini at Corfu which was supposed to be part of a convoy commanded by Fantin Dandolo, an experienced admiral. Nevertheless

⁴³ A.S.V., Libri Commemorativi, reg. 1, f. 37; summarized in Predelli’s *Regesti*, vol. I, Lib. 1, No. 128.

⁴⁴ In 1303 the Senate voted that the Doge and Council should appoint a *capitano* of every galley. *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 85, No. 305. Since a galley commander was called *patronus* or *comitus*, I interpret this resolution as an affirmation of the principle that every armed galley should be under the jurisdiction of some government-appointed official, and the Ducal Council was responsible.

⁴⁵ In both Zeno’s Code of 1255, cap. lxxiii, lxxv, lxxvi, and in the forms for the commissions given *capitani* by the Doge, A.S.V., Senato, Commissioni, reg. 4, it is evident that the *capitano* was responsible above all for the safety of the galleys.

⁴⁶ *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 87–91; p. 115, No. 78; *Delib. del M.C.*, ed. Cessi, III, 153. On the inspecting officials at Venice, see my contribution to the *Studi in onore di A. Fanfani*, III, 31–50.

⁴⁷ On inspections of merchant galleys in Venice see A.S.V., Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, Magnus et Capricornus, f. 11, 13 t, 41; Clericus Civicus, f. 97, and on the rectors overseas, *ibid.*, f. 98. Also, *Grazie*, I, Nos. 55, 95, 185. In later *Grazie*, to be sure (A.S.V., reg. 3) there are condemnations of *patroni* made because of violations reported by the *capitani*, but these are in the 1330’s, when even the galleys going to Armenia can be considered a licensed fleet, and after a new regulation made in 1329 tightened the *capitano*’s control of the collection of freights by forbidding a *patronus* to load any wares without having a specific permit, a *boletta*, from the *capitano*.

the Contarini galley decided on its own to attack a Corfiote vessel. The parties damaged also ignored the admiral. They asked and obtained reparation from an agent of the Contarini partnership.⁴⁸

In spite of the mass of legislation applying generally to “regulated voyages,” each individual galley had considerable freedom in deciding questions connected with a specific voyage. The general rules having been laid down, the owners of a galley could decide for themselves without any further action by the Senate whether they would send their vessel on a spring or fall voyage, or both. They could pick their ports of call and change their routes subject only to the contracts they had made with shippers. The obligation to go in convoy applied only in case there was another galley going to the same ports at the same season. Each galley was competing with others in trying to keep down expenses, obtain customers, and make a profit — in short each was a separate business venture.

On the licensed voyage there was more collective action. One way to overcome the difficulties of operating many galleys together as a single fleet was to pool all freights and expenses. Eventually such pooling was required by law for both licensed and auctioned fleets, but it probably began by private agreements, as was certainly the case in this same period among the Genoese, whose laws also required that galleys wait for each other so that two at least might sail in convoy.⁴⁹ Pooling freights was made easier when specified “licensed” vessels were given by the Senate a monopoly for a season of a particular voyage.

The first examples of such licensed voyages appear to be those to Flanders. Although the Venetians may have sent ships to the North Sea earlier, 1315 is the first date at which we can feel sure that Venetian galleys made the voyage as an organized fleet.⁵⁰ Because of difficulties with the routes through Lombardy and Germany, the Commune was willing in 1314 to give much encouragement to

⁴⁸ A.S.V., Libri Commemoriali, reg. 2, f. 93, summarized in Predelli's *Regesti*, Vol. I, Lib. 2, No. 171.

⁴⁹ Renée Doehaerd, “Les galères génoises dans la Manche et la mer du nord à la fin du XIII et au début du XIV siècle,” in *Bulletin de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome*, xix (1938), Doc. xx, xxiii; Pardessus, *op. cit.*, iv, 496, 501; Scialoja, *op. cit.*, in his *Saggi*, pp. 255–256.

⁵⁰ Roberto Cessi, in his “Le relazioni commerciali tra Venezia e le Fiandre nel secolo XIV (cited above in note 6), p. 80, accepted 1313 as the date of the first Senatorial enactment concerning a voyage to Flanders. This date, and 1314 for the actual voyage, was that decided on by A. Schaube, “Die Anfänge der venetianischen Galeerenfahrten nach Nordsee,” *Historische Zeitschrift*, Third Series, v (1908), 30. Schaube inferred dates from the paging of the rubrics as then published by Giomo, and to confirm these dates he used Giomo's “Regesto di alcune deliberazioni del Senato Misti,” in *Archivio Veneto*, xxix (1885), 403 ff., and xxx (1886), 179 ff., in which he cited Nos. 303 and 304 as evidence of dates in Misti, iv, but ignored Nos. 305 and 306, which show that entries in that volume were not all in chronological order. Cessi also ignores this uncertainty in his recent edition of these rubrics but he now places the crucial rubric under the date November 1314, *Delib. dei Rogati*, i, 152, No. 72, and puts later references to the departure of these galleys under 1315. His new dating seems more consistent with such indications as I can find elsewhere, as in the Deliberazioni of the Maggior Consiglio, about later voyages. It leaves us no evidence for earlier years and none for 1316 except that there was a resolution throwing the voyage open to anyone who would post bond assuring that he would go through with it. *Ibid.*, i, 164, No. 206. I know no evidence whether any went, but the sea route received additional stimulus from the fact that the king of France banned Flemings from the fairs of Champagne in 1315. Doehaerd, *op. cit.*, pp. 8–9. Also, famine in northwest Europe drew grain ships from the Mediterranean in 1316. Schaube, “Die Anfänge,” pp. 46–47.

entrepreneurs who would open an alternate route to western markets and “French” woolens.⁵¹ Those who would register and post bond as assurance that they would actually make the voyage were offered in return an outright subsidy of twelve or fifteen *libre grossorum* a month and were loaned 10,000 *libre* to help them meet the large advance wage payments necessary to recruit a crew. They had to load wares at freight rates fixed by the government. No minimum or maximum number of galleys going was fixed by the Senate; probably it had reason to believe that two or three galleys would announce for the voyage.⁵²

In 1317 and 1318 private operators of Flanders were given a new form of subsidy, the use of state-owned galleys, rent free. The leader of the Atlantic enterprise at this point seems to have been Dardi Bembo. A proposal that he and Michele Dolfin made in 1317 for operating the galleys was accepted. Their fleet was given the right to export Cretan wine as well as spices and silks, and to bring back French cloth, but it had no legal assurance of monopoly.⁵³ The command of the outbound fleet was entrusted by the Senate to Gabriel Dandolo, who was going as ambassador to negotiate privileges at Bruges, but on the return voyage Dardi Bembo was in command, as we hear because of an episode at Majorca. On the outward voyage, the three galleys took with them three Greek slaves “liberated” from the Majorcans — stolen, so the latter claimed. When the galleys stopped at Majorca on the way back, Bembo refused to give up the three greeks. Instead, so said the Majorcans, his galleys carried off five more.⁵⁴

For 1318 new galleys were ordered. The government gave the contract for their construction to Dardi Bembo, Gabriel Dandolo, and Michele Dolfin, and then entrusted their operation to Dardi Bembo, Gabriel Dandolo, and Andriolo Baseio. The galleys were constructed larger than the measures stipulated, able to carry more cargo, but Bembo and his associates were voted a pardon of that offense by the Great Council.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Cessi, pp. 78–79, and Schaube, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

⁵² *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, pp. 152–153, Nos. 73, 74, 79.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, I, p. 167, No. 250; p. 170, Nos. 283, 284; p. 172, No. 309; M.C., *Deliberazioni*, Clericus Civicus, f. 54.

⁵⁴ Predelli, *Libri Commemorativi, Regesti*, Vol. I, Lib. 2, No. 219, and in A.S.V., reg. 2, f. 86 t. Schaube, p. 50, places the incident at Majorca a year later.

⁵⁵ M.C., *Deliberazioni*, Clericus Civicus, f. 133 t (14 Jan. 1317/8) for the government buying of the galleys; *ibid.*, f. 140 (28 March 1318) for the sale of that of Ca’Dolfin; *ibid.*, f. 144 t (5 April 1318) for the pardon. It refers to galleys “*quas comune dedit eis pro viagio Flandriae quas fieri fecit ad mensuras galee Francisco Barbo . . .*” The three accused pleaded successfully that it was not possible to make two galleys alike in all their measures, which shows they were held responsible for the construction. Perhaps they had to pay rent of 10 *libre grossorum* a month, for a rubric which Cessi dates December 1317 provides for accepting the offer of Marino Zeno and supplying him with a galley at that rent if he needs it. *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 185, No. 89. Cessi in “*Le Relazioni commerciali*,” p. 87, following Schaube, pp. 49–50, interprets this as applying to the Flemish voyage. The word “Flanders” does not appear in the rubric itself, however; it was inserted by the editors because of the heading under which the rubric appears. But from that context it could equally well apply to a special galley going to Marseilles or Aigues-Mortes. See Giomo’s edition in *Archivio Veneto*, XIX, 93. Schaube also mistakenly applies to the Flemish galleys the decision to have the Senate elect two *patroni*. See *op. cit.*, p. 51. They were I believe for the two “*gallee comunis*” going to Negroponte. See above note 37. He believed there were two fleets in 1318, one of two galleys going to Bruges, the other of three galleys

So successful was this venture that there seemed no need of subsidy to keep the voyage going in 1319, except that the Commune paid high for the passage of a new ambassador to Flanders.⁵⁶ The commune having sold off in November 1318 the galleys that had made the voyage that year, five new galleys, which went heavily armed, were provided by private operators who again included Bembo.⁵⁷ The fleet called at Southampton and there a fight developed between its crew and the townsmen which led to the interruption of all calls at English ports for the next five or six years.⁵⁸

The voyage continued with Bruges or Antwerp as terminus. When the political situation made the selection of port difficult it was left to a council of the galley masters and the *capitano*, or to the merchants, galley masters, and *capitano*, sometimes represented by an elected group called the Council of XII. Inevitably the operators of this fleet had to be given more independent discretionary powers than were allotted to fleet commanders in the Levant, where there were many other Venetian officials nearby. The *capitano* of the Flemish fleet appears to have been rather an agent of the whole body of merchants and “armatores” than an agent of the Senate.⁵⁹ He commanded a rather powerful force, for in fixing the size of the fleet in 1322 and 1327 the Senate required that they be “at least six,”⁶⁰ carrying more than 1200 armed men.

While the Flemish voyage was thus developing under private initiative and management, the Black Sea voyage was also expanded but under Communal management. An important new eastern terminus for the voyage was obtained by a treaty with the emperor of Trebizond in 1319.⁶¹ Although for several years previously fleets going to the Black Sea had been under private operation, the fleet sent out in the spring of 1320 to take advantage of the new treaty was operated by the Commune.⁶²

to Antwerp. *Ibid.*, pp. 51–52. Because of the uncertainty over the dates of the items referred to in the rubrics, my account is guided as far as possible by the indications of the “Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio.” Flemish sources record the arrival in Antwerp in May 1318; see Schaube, “Die Anfänge,” p. 50.

⁵⁶ *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 199, Nos. 265–266; p. 204, Nos. 317, 319, 320; p. 205, Nos. 324, 327, 331. A.S.V., Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, Fronesis, f. 15 t.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Fronesis, copia, f. 9 on the sale. There are two conflicting rubrics for the Senate’s action about these galleys, both referring to Lib. V, f. 88 of the lost registers of the Senate. See Giomo’s edition in *Archivio Veneto*, xvii, 267, and xviii, 53. Only one of these two rubrics is printed in the *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 198. Bembo’s interest appears from the provision that “illis di Ca Bembo et Tingo et sociis” be paid 10 *libre grossorum* out of the customs collected from the galleys. This was about two-thirds of the passage money for the ambassador, assuming, as I do, that the latter had been expressed in *libre ad grossos*. *Delib. dei Rogati*, p. 205, No. 324, 327; p. 211, No. 406.

⁵⁸ Schaube, “Die Anfänge,” pp. 53–56; Alwyn A. Ruddock, *Italian Merchants and Shipping in Southampton*, Southampton Records Series (Oxford, 1951), pp. 25, 141–2.

⁵⁹ *Delib. dei Rogati*, I 232, Nos. 137, 140, 143; p. 334, No. 117; p. 366, No. 78.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 240, No. 229; p. 327, No. 41.

⁶¹ Wilhelm Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du levant au moyen âge* (2 vols., Paris, 1885), II, 100–102.

⁶² The Senate proposed that the Commune construct galleys and transfer them in some way not specified to private operators. M.C., Fronesis, ff. 26 t, 31; *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 213, No. 421. That plan must have fallen through since the Senate later voted that the Commune arm itself 4 galleys *Ibid.*, pp. 214–215, Nos. 437, 450, 451.

In the 1320's the galley voyages settled into a pattern which held with few changes for about a decade. A demand for such stabilization had been vigorously voiced in the preamble to a decree passed by the Great Council in March 1321.

Because of the continual changes and variations that are made in outfitting galleys, the merchants and men of Venice cannot tell with any assurance what to do, with one thing being ordered one day and changed the next, which results in much evil and danger to the land, and the men of Venice either do not dare make their investments (*facere facta sua*) or if they make them are much disappointed because of later changes, to their great damage and with grave danger to all those on voyage because the galleys do not return in due season to Venice but are navigating in Winter.

Accordingly, the Great Council ordered the Senate to elect five *savii*, later called the *Savii ai Ordini*, whose duty it was by 8 December to draw up in writing the arrangements to be made for the following year in regard to arming galleys (*ordinum galearum armatarum*), and they and the Ducal Councillors, the Doge and the Capi of the Quarantia were to make the necessary motions in the Senate and vote on them before the end of December so that the merchants would know what they could count on.⁶³ Thus were the Senate and its steering committees instructed to act as a planning body for the Venetian mercantile and shipping community.

The five *Savii ai Ordini* were told to plan concerning spring and fall *mudue* to Romania and Oltremare. In 1321 and 1322 merchant galleys were sent for both *mudue*; but after 1323 we hear of galleys only for the fall *mudua*. The fall fleets included more than twice as many ships, however, as when two fleets a year were sent. In 1328, for example, ten went to the Black Sea and eight to Oltremare.⁶⁴

Broadly speaking, we can say that the three fleets of merchant galleys sent out every year during the 1320's operated each under a different system: the galleys to Cyprus and Armenia made "regulated" voyages; those to Flanders were licensed fleets, those to Romania and the Black Sea were operated directly by the Commune. (See the Appendix for detail.) There were then a total of about twenty-five merchant galleys leaving on these three routes, while other galleys more or less armed and acting as cargo and passenger ships sailed around the Adriatic, to Tunis and other ports in Barbary, and to southern France. Being less regulated, these "free" voyages of galleys, like those of the many round ships of the time, are less well recorded.⁶⁵

⁶³ M.C., Fronesis, ff. 58 t – 59.

⁶⁴ See notes to Table I.

⁶⁵ A glimpse into the variety of shipping is provided by measures taken when alarming news was received in August 1315. The Great Council ordered all unarmed ships leaving that fall to sail together in convoy with the galleys. But large ships were given permission to leave separately on the grounds that they could not very well travel in convoy with the small. Nine were named: a "cocha" going to Tunis, a "banzonus" waiting outside the port, a vessel going to the Marches for horses, an unarmed galley going to Ragusa with a cargo of wood, and the "naves magnas" of Ca' Pentolo, Ca' Pisani, Ca' Capello, Ca' Viadro and of Ser Onustade Trevisano. The number of small ships left was still so large as to make such an unwieldy convoy that the admiral in charge, Fantin Dandolo, was given permission to split it up if he wished. A.S.V., Maggior Consiglio, Clericus Civicus, ff. 11 t, 12, 14 t.

III

When the alternatives of Communal or private operation were presented to the Senate or were thrashed over by two or three Councillors as they drafted a proposal, many appeals to general principles or particular interests must have been tossed back and forth. No chronicler and no official record has left even a hint of the oratory. The medievalist may regret having no Hansard, but even if he had full records of debates he would discount them heavily as does a modern student of the *Congressional Record*, and seek “real explanations” rather in the circumstances of the case.

Military demands or threats explain nearly all the instances of Communal operation, 1305–1320. Indeed, the need for military action was so frequent and unpredictable that it alone might seem sufficient reason to make Communal action the general rule. Direct governmental operation had other advantages also. These appear in the regulations concerning crews and cargo. Although there were such regulations for both Communally and privately operated galleys, the latter are more detailed, revealing more fear of violations.⁶⁶ A galley master named by owners might be tempted to hire at cut rates seamen who lacked some of the arms they were supposed to have. The salaried master, on the other hand, one elected and reporting to the Doge and Council, had every motive to wish his galley as proudly armed as possible. As an official of the state he could be forbidden to trade on his own account and would then have no wares of his own competing for space with the wares of other merchants. It was easier under Communal operation to assure that the galleys treated all shippers alike and fulfilled their duties as common carriers.

If to all these considerations is added the general principle that governments do not readily give up functions they have taken over, it will seem surprising indeed that Communal operation was ever abandoned. But there was in Venice no separation between a class of business executives and a class of government bureaucrats. The same individuals operated the fleets whether they did so separately (“per divisum”) or by common action (“per comune”), on behalf of private partnerships or on behalf of the Commune. Dardi Bembo, the leading entrepreneur of the galleys of Flanders just after 1315, was sent to France as ambassador in the 1320’s to assure rights of trade and in 1327 was the admiral of the fleet going to Romania.⁶⁷ In 1333 a Marino Capello was the head of a private partnership which undertook to operate seven of the eight galleys sent to Flanders that year. Then he was named by the state the admiral of the fleet.⁶⁸ The profit of its merchants was professedly the aim of Venetian policy. In the early years of the century when the Senate was debating whether galleys should be armed sepa-

⁶⁶ Compare the regulations for Communally operated galleys cited above in note 8, and those for privately operated galleys in *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 87–91, and also in the provisions made later for auctioning state-owned galleys for private operation, collected in Senato, Commissioni, reg. 4. formulari.

⁶⁷ *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 302, No. 42, p. 343, No. 207; A.S.V., Avog. di Comune, Delib. M.C., Brutus, f. 72 t; 81 and 81 t.

⁶⁸ Senato Misti, reg. 16, copia, ff. 90–91, 132.

rately or communally, it enjoined an *ad hoc* planning committee to consider ways and means “quod nostri mercatores vadant ad lucrandum.” On this principle they decided that year in favor of Communal operation.⁶⁹ Later, Communal operation was abandoned, partly in order to increase private profits and partly because of administrative difficulties which developed when the Commune itself operated the ships.

A number of such difficulties appear in connection with the voyages to Constantinople in the 1320's. If the Commune was the operator, it had to supply the working capital. The burdensome expenditure was not the cost of the galleys themselves but the cash outlay to enroll a crew.⁷⁰ This enrollment was called “ponere bancum,” meaning literally to place a bench or table. In the Piazzetta, along the water front between the arcade of the ducal palace and the two columns, shipmasters were accustomed to set up tables with money on them and give out advance wage payments to seamen who signed on.⁷¹ For the Communal galleys it was the paymasters from the *Ufficiali al Armamento* or the Treasury who set up tables. When the commune was sending a fleet like those going to the Black Sea in the 1320's, they had to have money bags containing at least 100,000 of the large silver pennies called *grossi*. That would enable them to pay 1,000 men for fifty days at the rate of two *grossi* a day. Finding this amount of cash was not always easy. In 1308, as we have seen, the state had borrowed from private parties with promise of repayment at the eastern terminus.⁷² One suspects that that could be a costly method. In 1320, funds not being found elsewhere to finance the spring voyage, the Great Council ordered that the necessary amount be taken from the wheat office, which at this time was acting as a kind of bank, receiving large deposits on which it paid interest at about ten per cent, and using the funds not only to buy wheat but for other investments.⁷³ The loan from the Wheat Office was to be repaid from the freights collected by the galleys and if they did not suffice the Commune assumed the obligation of making up the difference. The same method was authorized again for the fall voyages.⁷⁴

A new source of financing was tried in 1323. It was a standing rule of Venetian public finance that all receipts above a certain sum should be deposited by the Treasurers with the *Procuratori di San Marco*, there to be kept for paying the interest on the public debt and retiring the debt. When more was accumulated there than was immediately needed to pay the interest, it might be borrowed. (Originally only the *Ufficiali super Auro* could borrow from the *grossi* thus de-

⁶⁹ *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 35, No. 123, 125.

⁷⁰ Cf. the relative costs of galleys and operating expenses in claims. A.S.V., Libri Commemoriali, reg. 2, f. 154 (mentioned in Predelli's register, I, 263, No. 422).

⁷¹ The scene is described in Nani's manuscript, Biblioteca Universitaria, Padova, M.S. 161, vol. I, f. 231. On rates of pay see my note “Salaires et régime alimentaire des marins au début du xiv siècle,” *Annales XVII* (1963), 133–138.

⁷² See above, note 36.

⁷³ On the Wheat Office see Gino Luzzatto, *I prestiti della Repubblica di Venezia* (Accademia dei Lincei, Rome, *Documenti finanziari della Repubblica di Venezia* editi dalla Commissione per gli Atti delle Assemblée Costituzionale Italiana, serie III, Vol. I, Parte 1, 1929), pp. lxxv–lxxviii notes.

⁷⁴ A.S.V., M.C., Deliberazioni, Fronesi, f. 30 t, f. 46.

deposited. They could use them to buy gold which, when coined, could be used to repay the *Procurati*.⁷⁵ But practically speaking the coin could be borrowed by anyone to whom the Great Council instructed the *Officiales super Auro* to loan it.) In June 1323 a special commission of three nobles was appointed to get the galleys off and were empowered to borrow 10,000 *libre* from this source.⁷⁶ (10,000 *libre ad grossos* is about 385 *libre grossorum*, which is a little less than 107,000 *grossi*.) It was tapped again in 1324.⁷⁷ During the next couple of years there seems to have been no difficulty finding the funds, but in the spring of 1327 the Great Council authorized the borrowing of more than 16,000 *libre* from the *Procuratori* or from the Wheat Office.⁷⁸ In addition to both these sources, borrowing of 5,000 *libre* from a fund for dredging and drainage was authorized in 1328.⁷⁹ Money was really hard to find that year. The Wheat Office did not have enough capital from private sources to fulfill its basic function of buying the grain needed to maintain a reserve. A forced loan was used to replenish its capital, and this operation was repeated in 1329.⁸⁰ But in that year the paymasters could use for war galleys all the funds they borrowed to recruit crews. By turning over to private individuals the operation of the galleys going to the Black Sea, the Commune had turned over to them also the problem of finding the cash with which to enroll a crew.

No doubt the Venetian Commune could have raised the capital to finance the voyages of the merchant galleys without placing any strain on its credit. It could have done so either by forced loans through long-term bonds or by more expensive short-term loans. But that would not have been in accord with the fiscal policy which the nobles ruling the Commune were following in those years. Between 1313 and 1334 the funded public debt was reduced by something like one third or one half the large sum to which it had risen in 1313 because of the war of Ferrara. This reduction drove up the price of government bonds so high that they yielded their purchasers only 5.5 percent in 1323 and again in 1333. By such bonds the government could probably have raised capital more cheaply than could private operators. But to do so would have conflicted with the prevailing policy of reducing the financial burdens on the treasury, keeping high the price of government bonds, and leaving in the hands of private citizens a large amount of capital for their economic activities.⁸¹

Another kind of difficulty in Communal operation arose in connection with the hiring and disciplining of the crews. They were hired by the Naval Paymasters,

⁷⁵ Luzzatto, *Prestiti*, Doc. 25; Roberto Cessi, *Problemi monetari veneziani*, in Ser. IV of the *Documenti finanziari* above cited, Doc. 44.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, Doc. 81; Fronesius, f. 110.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 135 t.

⁷⁸ M.C. Deliberazioni, Spiritus, f. 14; Avog. di Com., Delib. del Maggior Consiglio, Brutus, f. 53 t, 66 t.

⁷⁹ Brutus, f. 82 t, 83 t, 84. Not all so borrowed was for merchant galleys; some was “pro ponendo banchum pro armatis maris,” but the *libre* 5000 from the “denari depositi paludum et ageris possint accipi mutuo pro armata Trapesonde.”

⁸⁰ Brutus, ff. 87, 101–102, 97 t, 99, 106, 107.

⁸¹ Luzzatto, *I prestiti*, pp. lxxiii, cxxviii. From various data given by Luzzatto, I estimate that the debt was reduced from 2.8 million *lire a grossi* in 1313 to 1.8 million in 1334.

who were nobles serving in this office for a term of three or four years. They received little regular salary but were allowed to keep part of the penalties which they collected from enlisted crewmen who did not fulfill their obligation.⁸² The “take” of the paymasters was raised from six pennies in the pound to twelve pennies in 1314, and by 1328 they had arranged, perhaps without explicit authorization, to take twenty-seven pennies in the pound on fines, sixteen pennies as fee from each man they enrolled, and twenty-eight pennies out of the settlement of additional wages or of loans to be repaid at the end of the voyage. Their salaries were raised and these fees cut in half, but in 1329 they were still making collections which the *Advocatores Communis* claimed were illegal and the paymasters insisted on trying to take, saying that they were customary.⁸³

All the crew, even the oarsmen, were of course freemen, not slaves, and the penalties for jumping ship had hitherto been pecuniary. Fines, however, no longer seemed sufficient in 1329 and judges were ordered to impose jail sentences.⁸⁴ Many seamen were imprisoned for debt, either because they accepted loans from ship captains beyond their capacity to repay, or because they failed to report at the times when their ships were due to sail, or for some other reason. But good seamen were relatively scarce in Venice in the 1320's. Since filling out the crews was difficult, men in prison were released in order that they might serve at the oar. There was thus a kind of debt slavery for many of the poorer members of the crew.⁸⁵

The eagerness of the paymasters to collect their “cut” made them push claims against seamen even in cases where the Great Council was willing to grant pardon. For example, one sailor in service with the fleet on patrol contracted to go on the next voyage of merchant galleys to the Black Sea. When he failed to report it was because the vessel on which he was serving meanwhile had been taken by the Genoese.⁸⁶ Nevertheless the paymasters attempted to collect the fine to which he was liable.

A private shipmaster might have arranged a compromise in such a case, perhaps by agreeing with the seaman that what he had received as advance wages should be deducted from his pay on some other later voyage under the same master. With seamen scarce but bound by debts, labor contracts could be most effectively concluded and enforced by ship captains who had future voyages in mind and could make workable compromises between present debts and future services. The paymasters were too tightly bound by regulations and by their

⁸² A.S.V., Compilazione leggi, busta 24. A fourteenth-century copy of the oath demanded of these officials is in Misc. atti diplomatici e privati, Busta 9, Pergamena 327. Although Senato Misti, I, ff. 163–164 refers to the *Camerlenghi* as paying the crew, the *pagatores* are mentioned as performing this function for Communal galleys in M.C., Deliberazioni, Fronesi, f. 155.

⁸³ M.C., Deliberazioni, Presbiter, copia, f. 292; Avog. Com., Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio, Brutus, f. 82; Compilazioni leggi, busta 24.

⁸⁴ M.C., Deliberazioni, Spiritus, f. 37, incorporated in the Venetian statutes, Lib. VI, cap. 69.

⁸⁵ On the shortage see the plea of the *patroni* in Grazie, reg. 3, f. 60, and the many permits to hire in Dalmatia, e.g., M.C., Spiritus, f. 48. On recruiting from the prisons, see *ibid.*, f. 45 t, and *Capitolare dei Signori di Notte*, ed. F. Nani Mocenigo (Venice, 1877), Nos. 113, 243, 266.

⁸⁶ Avog. Com., Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio, Brutus, f. 67; Grazie, reg. 3, f. 23.

personal interests in imposing and collecting penalties. Moreover, the paymasters did not sail with the galleys. Recruitment was probably easier for the private galley master who was himself going to command the vessel so that the crews knew under whom they would be serving.

In addition to financing the voyage and recruiting and disciplining the crew, the private operator relieved the government of many worries concerning the collection of freights. Under Communal operation the individual galley master had no personal interest in how much was collected, although if he found wares smuggled aboard under the straw in the hold he received one quarter of their value as his reward.⁸⁷ His task of commanding the crew could be made easier by winking at their stowing something extra here and there, besides the chest or sack which each had a right to bring aboard. Just when communal operation was being abandoned there were complaints that the galleys from Romania and the Black Sea were carrying in this way much merchandise which paid no freight.⁸⁸

The complaint came from the *Extraordinarii*, officials created in 1302 expressly to collect the freights from the Communally operated galleys.⁸⁹ When they had not much business of that kind, the *Extraordinarii* busied themselves with such varied duties as the Feast of the Marys, the repair of the breakwater at the Lido, and the distribution of the reparations collected from the Byzantine emperor.⁹⁰ Their office gained more maritime importance about 1320–1321, however, when the Commune undertook operation directly of the galleys of Romania.⁹¹ They collected the freights paid in Venice and the *patroni* then had to load the wares for which they issued a receipt, a *bulleta*.⁹² If freight was paid overseas, it was collected by the *capitano*, who issued the *bulleta* for the loading or unloading.⁹³ Although the *patroni* were strictly charged with keeping a record of all wares loaded, they were not personally concerned with collecting the freights, and being salaried officials they had no personal interest in seeing to it that all freights were paid.⁹⁴

A crisis in freight collections occurred in 1321 as a result of measures taken to drive out of circulation underweight *grossi*. All government offices were ordered in October 1321 not to accept any payments except in full weight *grossi*. It then proved impossible to collect customs duties or the freights on the galleys of Romania. To keep goods moving and business going, the *Extraordinarii* were instructed in November to make out bills to the merchants and release their wares

⁸⁷ The reward is not in the regulations of 1302, printed in *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 87–91, but in the oath printed by Fincati, cited above note 8.

⁸⁸ Avog. Com., Deliberazione del Maggior Consiglio, Brutus, f. 112 t.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, Magnus, f. 52 t.

⁹⁰ Fourteenth-century copies of their *capitolari* are in A.S.V., Misc. Codici, Nos. 131 and 132.

⁹¹ Cod. 131, cap. xxviii; Avog. Com., Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio, Neptunus, f. 167.

⁹² M.C., Deliberazioni, Fronesi, f. 101 t; Spiritus, f. 14; Codici Brera, No. 132, f. 5 cap. 3 (1320).

⁹³ Although not stated explicitly in the regulations of 1302 nor in the galley master's oath printed by Fincati (note 8 above), it is spelled out in the captain's commissions at the end of the century, and is implied by the passages in the *Lettere di Collegio* cited above, note 36.

⁹⁴ Fincati, *loc. cit.*, and Senato Misti, I, ff. 163–5.

to them on the receipt of good and sufficient security.⁹⁵ This gave legal status to a method which we find described later but which had probably begun between private operators and shippers earlier. Bankers pledged the necessary amounts so that shippers could receive their wares, sell them, and receive payments by transfers on the books of the bank.⁹⁶ But of course other kinds of security, gold coin, or other valuables could also be accepted by the tax-collecting and freight-collecting officials. In Venice's general practice of farming taxes salaried officials computed the amount of the tax and received the security. The tax farmer's function was to pass on the adequacy of the security offered and arrange to collect on it if necessary. Without such a tax farmer the customs yielded less.⁹⁷ A private operator of a merchant galley could fulfill the same function even if the computation of the freight bill and the exaction of the security was the responsibility of the *Extraordinarii*.

The allotment of damages because of goods lost or spoiled was closely connected with the collection of freights and was also handled through the *Extraordinarii*. If the loss was the result of a storm, the shipper might claim recompense from the "general average" levied on other shippers. If the loss was due to proved negligence, compensation could be sought from the ship operator, in this case the Commune. But who would be in court to represent the Commune in such a suit or in case a claim was made on the ship in allotting the general average? In February 1324 claims were being made against the Commune because of damage to bales on one of the galleys of Trebizond, and the *Extraordinarii* were told to represent the interest of the Commune. But in June the *patroni* chosen to command the galleys going that year were required to respond in court for the Commune, and to pay personally if any wares were lost or damaged because not loaded where they should have been. Only in case the *patronus* was blameless would the Commune pay for the damaged wares.⁹⁸

The financing, the recruitment of the crew, and the collection of the freights—all three created difficulties under Communal operation. These difficulties were overcome when the galleys of Romania and the Black Sea were shifted in 1329 from Communal to private operation under an arrangement which was subsequently applied in its basic features to all the merchant galleys. Communally owned galleys were chartered to those *armatores* who would bid highest for the right to arm and operate them for the year.

⁹⁵ Misc. Codici, 131, cap 27; M.C. Deliberazioni, Fronesis, f. 81 t, 82 t.

⁹⁶ Described in the Senatorial decree of 3 November 1342 printed in full in Scialoja, *op. cit.*, p. 758 n.

⁹⁷ *Bilanci Generali (Documenti finanziari della Repubblica di Venezia, series ii., Commissione per la pubblicazione dei documenti finanziari della Repubblica di Venezia: Academia dei Lincei, Rome), Vol. 1, Part 1, p. xliii.*

⁹⁸ M.C. Deliberazioni, Fronesis, ff. 127, 135 (old numbering) and the oath printed by Fincati, *op. cit.*, paragraph 14. In April 1329 the Maggior Consiglio voted to pay 45 *libre grossorum* partly out of charity but also "pro omnibus que tangere possit comune" as a result of a whole galley having had to be ransomed from the Turks after it ran aground. Avog. Com., Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio, Brutus, f. 102. I presume the ransom was being collected from a general average levied on the whole fleet as is more clearly the case in a similar accident in 1325–6. M.C. Deliberazione, Spiritus, ff. 1 t, 2.

This auctioning of Communal galleys for private operation secured some of the benefits of both systems previously in use. The private partnership which bid in the charter for the year undertook to find the big outlays of cash needed to man and outfit the galley, just as private operators were already doing for the voyages to Flanders and Armenia. In hiring crews the galley masters could be more flexible than the Naval Paymasters in making advances and loans, in exacting or waiving fines, or in doing whatever seemed practical to secure men. And since they were members and agents of profit-seeking partnerships, the galley masters had a strong personal interest in seeing that all the goods on board paid freight.

On the other hand, the recording of freights and the actual handling of payments was still in the hands of the *Extraordinarii*, and this was probably an advantage. It gave assurance to shippers that the galley masters would not play favorites by collecting lower freights from some than from others. Certainly it put the government in a position to pay out of the freights collected according to the order of priority it might establish among the creditors of the galleys, and to distribute the balance among the members of the partnership operating the galleys. First priority was naturally given to the Commune itself, which took whatever had been bid for the galley and a certain amount for wear and tear on rigging and fixings.⁹⁹

Another advantage of the new system of auctioning galleys established in 1329 was that it avoided the frequent transfer of galleys from public to private hands and vice versa by sale. This overcame the discontent caused during the previous decades by the Commune's buying and selling according to the evaluation put on the vessel by experts, presumably by the Lords of the Arsenal.¹⁰⁰ In a few cases we have the full record of their estimate,¹⁰¹ and there were many others of which we hear only indirectly. Sales were often made with more than a year in which to pay, and when payment proved difficult the debtor could be granted an extension as a special favor by vote of the *Maggior Consiglio*.¹⁰² There must have been suspicion of abuses in the sales of new galleys, for the *Maggior Consiglio* complained of such sales a number of times and increased the safeguards. After 1323 any sale on term of a galley or of equipment was illegal unless the galley had already made five voyages, or the sale was voted by all six of the Ducal Councillors and by three-fourths of the *Maggior Consiglio*.¹⁰³

There were no comparable restrictions on the acquisition of privately built

⁹⁹ Misc. Cod., 131, cap. 37; the auctions recorded in Senato Misti, reg. 15 et seq.; and *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 284, No. 16.

¹⁰⁰ *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 120, No. 211; p. 134, No. 88; p. 135, No. 93; A.S.V., M.C. Deliberazioni, Presbiter, f. 79 t, 110 t; Clericus Civicus, f. 133 t, 140; Avog. Com., Delib. del M.C., Magnus, f. 4.

¹⁰¹ A.S.V., Libri Commemorativi, reg. 1, ff. 158, 162. The "corpo" and "coredi" were estimated separately. The galleys of Cà Loredano here referred to were first bought by the Comune (*Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 135, No. 98) and then sold back to the original owners under the provision probably of 1312 (*ibid.*, p. 137, No. 115) so that the date Predelli guessed for the estimates (they are Lib. 1, No. 464, in his *Regesti*) needs to be changed.

¹⁰² M.C. Deliberazioni, Presbiter, ff. 73, 79, 110; Clericus Civicus, f. 38; Avog. Com., Deliberazioni del M.C., Brutus, f. 46, 97 t; *Grazie*, I, No. 435.

¹⁰³ Avog. Com., Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio, Magnus, f. 13; Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, Fronesius, ff. 109, 134 t.

galleys by the Commune. Presumably it was done frequently when galleys were needed for the war fleets and we have seen that it was done in 1317 in order to charter the galleys on favorable terms for the voyage to Flanders.¹⁰⁴ The Commune recognized an obligation to buy privately owned galleys in case it did not permit them to operate, for some assurance of this sort was needed if private building was to be encouraged.¹⁰⁵

By 1330 the government was no longer interested in having galleys privately built. Since the end of the Second Genoese War the Communal arsenal had tripled its size by the addition of the *Arsenale Nuovo*. The Commune was then equipped to maintain and outfit a large fleet of its own.¹⁰⁶

Accordingly the auctioning of Communal galleys for private operation was extended in 1331 and 1332 to the voyage to Cyprus and Armenia.¹⁰⁷ The state was then supplying about fifteen galleys each year for commercial voyages. For a while the government still showed consideration for the owners of private galleys. In 1333, when no galleys were licensed for Flanders, those that had made that western voyage the previous year were invited to register for a licensed voyage to Cyprus and Armenia.¹⁰⁸ The Flemish voyage itself was not transformed from a licensed private voyage into a privately operated fleet of Communally owned galleys until more than a decade later.¹⁰⁹

How and why state-owned galleys, privately operated, finally replaced all the privately-owned licensed fleets is a story beyond the scope of this paper. By carrying the story to 1330 we have reached the point at which the Venetian aristocracy had devised to its satisfaction a means of dispensing with direct Communal operation. The auctioning of merchant galleys enabled Venice to retain most of the benefits of private operation while concentrating the construction and possession of these vessels in the hands of the Commune.

One may ask at this point why the Venetians did not adopt an obvious alternative way of dispensing with Communal operation. Why did they not do as the Genoese did and turn over to private enterprise not only the operation of the galleys but also their construction and ownership? Of course the galleys which were used for long-distance trade were at this time also the foundation of the war fleet. Both Venice and Genoa restricted the size of the galleys in order that they should not be too large and unwieldy to serve as good warships.¹¹⁰ Famous Genoese ad-

¹⁰⁴ M.C. Clericus Civicus, f. 133 t, 140; above note 55.

¹⁰⁵ *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 116, No. 159; p. 135, No. 93; p. 276, Nos. 381–383. In his “Relazioni commerciali,” *Politica ed Economia*, p. 99, Cessi gives this rubric a different interpretation which seems to be based on reading “elevare” as if it were equivalent of “armare.”

¹⁰⁶ Lane, *Venetian Ships*, pp. 130–131.

¹⁰⁷ *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 433, Nos. 251, 253; p. 448, No. 95, p. 427, No. 186; A.S.V., Senato Misti, reg. 15, ff. 3, 7, 13.

¹⁰⁸ A.S.V., Senato Misti, reg. 16, f. 3.

¹⁰⁹ Scialoja, in *Memoria Scorza* above cited, p. 786.

¹¹⁰ Hence the penalty from which Bembo received pardon, as noted above. Venetian limits: Avog. Com., Magnus, f. 7 t; *Regesti dei Libri Commemorativi*, ed. Predelli, vol. I, reg. 2, No. 135. Genoese limits, Pardessus, *op. cit.*, IV, 445, interpreted by Jal, *op. cit.*, I, 251–278. In the Venetian records there is no clear evidence before 1318 of a differentiation between galleys designed for trade and those

mirals and ship operators, such as Benedetto Zaccaria, armed their own galleys for the service of their Commune in time of war or to serve foreign princes.¹¹¹

Obviously galleys had both a military and a commercial value. It would be difficult to decide which was in that age preferable economically: for the galleys to be owned by the managers of their mercantile voyages and to be rented to the government when military needs were dominant, as at Genoa; or, as at Venice, for the galleys to be owned by the state which wanted them for military purposes and to be rented for mercantile uses when they were not needed for war. But there was a political as well as an economic aspect to these alternatives. Genoa provided an example of how private ownership and private management in the military establishment made it easier for factions to tear the state apart. The lesson may well have been evident to the Venetians at the time. The private fleets which the Zaccaria, Grimaldi, and Doria used for trade, war, piracy, and rebellion had no counterparts at Venice. In wartime the Venetian Commune took ownership of the ships in its fleets, and it decided to become the owner in time of peace of the galleys used in trade — at first only in part but later more and more extensively until these vessels became a government monopoly. Communal ownership of galleys expressed the solidarity of the Venetian nobility and strengthened that solidarity. The system of annual auctions, combining advantages of private operation with Communal control and ownership, was a vital element in giving to the Venetian government the efficiency and stability which distinguished it from so many other Italian city-states of the fourteenth century.

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designed for war or patrol. In the 1330's three types were distinguished: light galleys for patrolling the gulf, galleys of the measures of Flanders, and those of the measures of Romania, Trebizond or Alexandria. Giomo, "Rubriche" in *Archivio Veneto*, xvii, 259, 262; xix, 100; *Delib. dei Rogati* 1, 372, No. 162. Concerning the enlargement of galleys about 1290 permitting more cargo and three men to an oar, see my note "From Biremes to Triremes at Venice," *The Mariner's Mirror*, XLIX (Feb. 1963), 48–50. I felt justified in using "Merchant Galleys" in the title of this paper because, even when considering those not distinguished in structure from war galleys, I have dealt with their use by merchants.

¹¹¹ Renée Doehaerd, *Les Relations commerciales entre Gènes, la Belgique et l'Outremont d'après les archives notariales génoises aux XIII et XIV siècles* (Études d'Histoire économique et sociale, Institut Historique Belge de Rome, II, Brussels and Rome, 1941), I, 148, 224–226, 233; Roberto S. Lopez, *Storia delle colonie genovesi nel Mediterraneo* (Bologna, 1938), pp. 44, 49, 50, 52, 58, 62; *idem*, *Genova Marinara nel Ducento: Benedetto Zaccaria ammiraglio e mercante* (Messina, 1933), pp. 29–30.

(For Appendix, please turn the page)

APPENDIX

MERCHANT GALLEY FLEETS 1320–1334

Year	Number of Galleys and Type of Operation, by Destination					
	Oltremare		Flanders		Romania and Black Sea	
	No.	Operation	No.	Operation	No.	Operation
1320	—	Regulated	—	Licensed	—	Communal
1321	—	Regulated	—	Licensed	—	Communal
1322	—	Regulated	—	Licensed	—	Communal
1323	—	Communal	—	Licensed	—	Communal
1324	—	Regulated	—	Licensed	—	Communal
1325	—	Regulated	—	Licensed	—	Auctioned
1326	—	Regulated?	—	Licensed	—	Communal
1327	—	Licensed	—	Licensed	—	Communal
1328	8	Licensed	4	Licensed	10	Communal
1329	8	Licensed?	8	Licensed	—	Auctioned
1330	7 or 8	Licensed		None	8	Auctioned
1331	8	Auctioned	7	Licensed but cancelled	6	Auctioned
1332	7–9	Auctioned	9	Licensed	8–10	Auctioned
1333	6–7	Licensed		None	10	Auctioned
1334	8	Auctioned	8	Licensed	10	Auctioned

NOTES TO TABLE

The series of surviving registers of the *Deliberazioni* of the Senate begins in 1332. From that year on a complete tabulation of the galley voyages planned has been made by A. Tenenti, and C. Vivanti, *op. cit.* in *Annales* (1961). In attempting to tabulate the earlier voyages some help is found in the *Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio*, but one must rely mainly on the *Rubriche* for the lost registers of the senatorial *Deliberazioni*. They are difficult to use for this purpose even in the new edition by R. Cessi and P. Sambin. The entries in this ancient index are only headings and sometimes give a misleading impression of the action taken. The entries can be dated only by inferences from the page references and there is no assurance that all items were in chronological order, See note 50 above and my review in *SPECULUM*, xxxviii, 1 (January 1963). Some rubrics have several page references, some none. For these reasons a year by year tabulation before 1320 would be excessively full of gaps or guesses and even for later years some of the interpretations embodied in the table are doubtful.

1320. To Constantinople and Black Sea, Communal. *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 214, No. 437; p. 225, No. 58; M.C., *Deliberazioni*, Fronesis, ff. 31, 34 t. To Flanders and probably to Oltremare (Cyprus and/or Armenia), private. *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 220, Nos. 3, 4.
1321. Black Sea voyages, Communal. Spring fleet, Fronesis f. 53 t°, 54 (in Nov. 1302); f. 56; *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 227, No. 74. Fall fleet, Fronesis, f. 62 t°, 73. To Flanders and Oltramare, private. *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 237, No. 191, pp. 228–9, Nos. 86–96.
1322. Black Sea Communal Spring fleet. Fronesis, f. 84; *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 242, No. 245, and 250–251, Nos. 37–39, 82, 65. Fall fleet planned but cancelled. *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 252, Nos. 65, 74, 77, 79, 95. Flanders private, *ibid.*, I, 240, No. 229. Lack of provision regarding Oltremare implies that galleys went there privately operated.
1323. One muda Communal to Romania and Cyprus leaving in May. *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 263, No. 210, pp. 270, 273, Nos. 295, 338. Private to Flanders, p. 267, No. 260.

1324. One muda only planned. *Ibid.*, p. 277, No. 389. Communal to Trebizond, *ibid.*, p. 272, No. 327, p. 278 No. 403, p. 288, Nos. 62, 63. Private to Cyprus, *ibid.*, p. 289, No. 78, p. 293, No. 128. Private to Antwerp, *ibid.*, p. 276, No. 382, p. 283, No. 4. Avog. Com. Brutus f. 17.
1325. All privately operated. To Provence, *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 302–303, Nos. 40, 43, 46, 47; p. 307, No. 101. To Flanders, *ibid.*, p. 300, No. 11. To Cyprus, *ibid.*, p. 296, No. 165, p. 302, No. 44. To Trebizond, auctioned; *ibid.*, p. 300, No. 21, p. 304, No. 74, 76; M.C. Deliberazioni, Fronesis, f. 162.
1326. Return to Communal operation to Trebizond. M.C. Spiritus, f. 2 t; *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 309, Nos. 130, 133; p. 313, No. 178. To Flanders, *ibid.*, p. 312, Nos. 164, 166; p. 315, No. 205; to Armenia, p. 313, No. 177.
1327. Private to Flanders, *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 327, No. 41, 43 with the formula “volentes armare . . . faciant se scribi,” which clearly shows private ownership as well as operation, altho Cessi in *Arch. Ven.* 1914 p. 38, speaks of an auction. Also, p. 334–335, Nos. 117, 118, 121, 122, 130; p. 343 No. 207, Dardi Bembo, Cap. Communal to Constantinople, *ibid.*, p. 332, No. 91; Avog. Com. Brutus, f. 59 t°; Armenia, “volentes armare faciant se scribi” *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 328, Nos. 53–55.
1328. Fall voyages: To Armenia, 8 galleys *per divisum*, *ibid.*, p. 361, No. 32. To Black Sea, 10 galleys *per comune*, *ibid.*, p. 361, No. 30; pp. 364–365, No. 57, 70. Private operation to Flanders was voted down first but later approved for 4 galleys. *ibid.*, pp. 360–361, Nos. 21, 33; p. 363, Nos. 39–40, 54, p. 365, No. 76. They were still out in the early months of 1329, *ibid.*, p. 374, Nos. 181–182.
1329. One Communal galley taking merchandise to Crete, *ibid.*, p. 375–381, Nos. 196, 197, 201, 209, 251, 258. To Flanders 8 galleys “compareant armare volentes,” *ibid.*, pp. 374–376, Nos. 178, 179, 185–193. To Cyprus and Armenia, 8 galleys, “per speciales personas,” *ibid.*, pp. 383, No. 286; p. 388, No. 10; p. 396, No. 114. To Black Sea, Communal galleys chartered for private operation, *ibid.*, p. 378, No. 228, p. 382, Nos. 266, 267; p. 394, No. 95; p. 397, No. 127. The patrolling fleet of the Capitano Culfi was used to take to Sicily cash with which to buy wheat and was ordered when he returned to Venice to disarm to bring any merchandise left at Coron or ports between Coron and Venice for which no room had been found either in the galleys of Constantinople or those of Cyprus. *Ibid.*, p. 382, Nos. 269, 272.
1330. To Cyprus and Armenia, 7 or 8 galleys “per armatores . . . probati,” *ibid.*, p. 404–405. To Trebizond, 8 galleys, “dentur per Comune ad naulum volentibus armare . . . per incantum,” *ibid.*, p. 409, No. 283–284. pp. 423–424, none to Tana. Communal galleys from Ragusa, *ibid.*, p. 425, No. 166.
1331. To Cyprus and Armenia, 8 galleys or more, “armentur per speciales personas que galee accipiantur a Comuni,” *ibid.*, p. 433, Nos. 251 & 253, cf. p. 427, No. 186. To Black Sea, 6 “galleys que tollantur a Comuni,” p. 433, Nos. 251, 252; p. 448, No. 88, of which two to Tana, p. 454, No. 162. On extra galleys as convoy and finding crews, *ibid.*, p. 446, No. 63, p. 448, No. 94; p. 449, No. 105, p. 456, No. 197, and Maggior Consiglio, Spiritus, f. 48. For the voyage to Flanders it was voted late in 1330 to send 7 galleys or more of the *armatores* registering, but early in 1331 they were ordered not to sail (*Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 432, Nos. 240, 241; p. 435, No. 276; p. 442, No. 8).
1332. To Cyprus, 7 galleys auctioned, *ibid.*, p. 468, Nos. 340, 341, p. 469, No. 355 and A.S.V. Senato Misti, reg. 15, f. 3. To Constantinople 8 galleys, *ibid.*, Misti, reg. 15, f. 3. and *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 467, No. 335, p. 469, No. 356. Permission to hire 1,000 of the crew in Dalmatia. M. C. Spiritus, f. 59 t°. To Flanders, 9 galleys or more, *Delib. dei Rogati*, I, 461, Nos. 255–256; Schaube, “Die Anfänge,” *Hist. Zs.* (1908), p. 71–73.
1333. A.S.V., Senato Misti, reg. 16, f. 3; Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, Spiritus, f. 64,
1334. A.S.V., Senato Misti, reg. 16, copia, ff. 95, 97–8, 104, 105.