

Chapter Four

The internal market: supplies for food and others products

The noble Venetian merchant also managed to seize commodities that might seem trivial to us, but which were the daily fare of fruit and vegetable markets and were essential to feeding a population, such as grain, salt, olive oil, meat and wine. Many authors neglect this aspect of domestic trade, preferring to focus their research and efforts on luxury goods, drapery, silk and spices, which made up international trade. On the other hand, and we feel it is important to emphasise this, in the 15th century Venice was an industrious city, where the sound of shipwrights' hammers, the clatter of weavers' looms, the chisels of stonecutters and the cries of porters hurrying to arrive with their load of fresh water were all heard. Was the population of Venice large? Births were frequent, but death lurked, epidemics struck down the living with great regularity and, without wishing to encroach on the territory of demographers, it seems that around 1450 the population of Venice reached a low point of around 60,000 inhabitants (there would have been 110,000 to 120,000 around 1300). From 1460 onwards, the vigorous demographic recovery was jeopardised by the interminable Turkish war, which ended in a Venetian defeat and the reduction of Greek and Albanian territories, the loss of Negrepont (the large island of Evia) and northern Albania, not to mention naval losses and the death of noble officers and popular crews.

The population of Venice had to be fed, provided with the means of subsistence and work, the needy had to be helped, famine had to be warded off in the absence of epidemics against which the medicine of the time could do nothing, while the authorities began to build lazarets where merchants and sailors suspected of bringing back the plague from their voyage could be locked up and the ship and its cargo burnt. The nagging problem remained the daily supply of food in a city with no surrounding agricultural countryside, but Venice set out to conquer Terraferma, transforming its «invisible contado», colonised by monasteries and nobles into conquerable land to be distributed and developed.

One of the fundamental aspects of the Venetian government's policy was to guarantee regular supplies to the city, as insufficient bread

industrious?
An industrious works
with different ones

hospitals? / quarantines?

supplies risked deepening political divisions and social fragmentation¹.

The government created the *Officio del grano* which managed the *Camera del Frumento* (*Chamber of Wheat*), banking and financial organisation responsible for paying grain importers and supplying the public *fondachi* scattered around the city, in San Marco, Rialto or the *sestiere* of S. Croce, always on the banks of the Grand Canal, and the ovens near the Arsenal which delivered biscuit to galleys. He also instituted the *ordo frumenti*, which obliged merchants to commit, before their departure, to importing a certain quantity of grain that the Commune would buy from them at an agreed price. In this way, the Commune was able to rely on stock forecasts. It called on nearby regions, such as Emilia and Romagna or the Marche or more distant regions such as Apulia or distant regions with a long-standing reputation as granaries, such as Sicily or Thessaly and Thrace. Its ships protected it from the food shortages that ravaged so many European regions at the time.

rem The *Chamber of Wheat*, which paid suppliers and transporters, was mainly faced with outgoings (expenses), unlike the Chamber of Salt which met the same expenses but sold the salt imported by its merchants and ships to tax-farmers in neighbouring seignories. The latter always had a surplus. Salt imported from all the Mediterranean and Adriatic salt works travelled exclusively on sailing ships, armed and of large tonnage (cogs and naves) when the salt had been loaded in the Mediterranean, beyond the Otranto canal and the Ionian Islands, unarmed and of smaller tonnage (*marani* and *marciliane*²) if it was loaded in the Gulf, in the Adriatic. Salt provided the ballast for these sailing ships, and this technical requirement meant that they travelled free of charge. Similarly, in the treaties it negotiated with the urban lordships that dominated Padan traffic, Venice required them to charge tolls only on the way up and on salt, while goods destined for Venice and for export were free on the way down. This gave merchants a considerable competitive advantage. And no one has yet found a way to do without salt, whatever the price! Venetian merchants and shipowners were obliged to comply with the *salt order* and bring back the expected quantity and quality. They would receive the promised price.

However, the salt monopoly had two weaknesses. The State, aware of the wealth of the Chamber, drew on its treasury and importers, despite the advantages granted to them, despaired of being paid. On the

¹ ROMANO (1996a), p. 362.

² GLUZMAN, p. 415-421.

other hand, it balanced its purchases of fine salts from the north of the Adriatic by allowing salt producers to sell a fraction of their production on the open market abroad. Venetian merchants were able to slip through these loopholes in the monopoly and earn considerable income.

The Republic also had to import livestock and meat, dairy products and cheeses, oil and wine, fresh and drinking water, fruit and vegetables, firewood, all building materials, stone, wood, iron, clay transformed locally into bricks and tiles - in short, everything needed for daily life, which fed the constant coming and going of boats on the canals and around the town.

THE GRAIN TRADE

To avoid food shortages and other caresties when the price of bread soared, to guarantee regular supplies and keep its granaries full, the Commune issued the *ordines frumenti*, modelled on the contemporary *ordo salis*, which since the end of the 13th century (17 June 1281) had governed salt imports into Venice³.

«The *ordo frumenti* (...) combines premiums and guaranteed purchase prices to attract importing merchants and encourage them to sell to the Commune or at a fixed price (*calmierato*), to the flour *fondaco*. Merchants must decide, within three days of their arrival, whether to sell to the Commune (or to the *fondaco*) at the guaranteed price with any premium, or to sell at the market price without any premium. (...) the guaranteed prices and the premium are modulated according to the nationality - Venetian or foreign - of the merchant and the ship, the region of origin of the grain and the date of loading»⁴.

Subsequently, the merchant was asked to make a commitment to the Commune to return to Venice with grain specifying its origin and volume. The premium or donation varied according to the date of delivery to the State. Woe betide anyone who failed to honour their initial commitment! The *College of Wheat*⁵ called to order several high-ranking importers, including Bernardo Morosini who, on 27 March 1443, had promised to import 6,000 *staia* of grain, half of which he would deliver in October and the rest in November. However, not only did he only deliver 2,224 *staia*, i.e. a third of the grain expected, but he

³ HOCQUET (2012), p. 351-61.

⁴ FAUGERON, p. 185 and table 14 p. 191-8.

⁵ The College was the executive body of the Commune. When it met to decide on grain and flour, it was joined by the *Provveditori al frumento* and became the College of wheat; the same thing happened when it took measures concerning the salt trade, when it met in the presence of the *Provveditori al sale* and became known as the *College of salt* (HOCQUET (2012), p. 349-51).

also failed to respect the timetable to which he had committed himself: he delivered 1,396 *staia* in January 1445 and 828 *staia* the following April. The *Avogadori di Comun* hearing the case refused to accept these late deliveries⁶.

The indebtedness of the *Camera del frumento* to grain merchants alarmed the *Great Council* as early as 1312:

«an increasing number of merchants who donated wheat to the Commune were to receive their payment by deadlines that have now passed. They continually lay siege to the palace saying, which is true, that they are suffering serious damage»⁷.

In 1345, the *Camera del Frumento* owed the merchants 225,000 pounds (*lire di piccoli*)⁸. The debt reached 66,176 *ducats*, a considerable sum and one can understand the impatience of the merchant creditors. In reality, the Chamber managed to honour its deliveries within a reasonable delay, 8 to 9 months in the first half of the 14th century, 12 to 18 months at the end of the century, after the Chioggia War. These delays in payment worried the Senators, who feared they would discourage merchants who were in no hurry to deliver wheat to the Commune. It is true that in the 15th century the State and its representatives, the *Provveditori al frumento*, usually appointed agents to work in countries that had surpluses and were traditionally exporters, such as Apulia and Sicily. But can we still speak of merchants when the State governed all activity in a service that came under the public annone?

We have already seen the meticulous way in which Guglielmo Querini kept the accounts of his Polesine farm, what grain harvest he hoped to obtain, how much would go to the reapers, what share he would reserve for sowing and what he would get back. He was not the only businessman to take an interest in the grain trade, even though he himself had acquired a cereal property. In February 1432, Andrea Barbarigo invested part of his profits from the sale of English cloth in the grain trade and wrote to a merchant living in the Marche region to

⁶ FAUGERON has only come across the *statio* (Venetian measure of grain) in the transport of grain, with one exception, the famous text of Doge Sebastiano Ziani (second half of the 12th century) known as the «annonario law», which prohibited bakers from keeping «more than one *moggio* (i.e. four *staia*) at home, which would bring the bakers' reserves to a total - derisory - quantity of 156 *staia*!» (FAUGERON, p. 497, n. 131). Sebastiano Ziani's figure of 39 bakers in the town is actually dated to around 1465.

⁷ FAUGERON, p. 118-122, A. p. 1 19, gives the names of two patrician merchants, Marco Morosini and Marin Falier, who in July 1313 were awaiting payment for wheat imported at the end of the previous year (n. 125).

⁸ That year, a ducat was officially quoted at around 68 shillings or 3 pounds and 8 shillings.

buy 1,000 *staia* of wheat on his behalf. He sent him three ingots of silver, as his local correspondent had informed him that he could obtain wheat for 3 pounds a *staio*, whereas on the traditional market in Apulia it cost 3.5 pounds. Andrea therefore expected to make a substantial profit from his purchase order, but he was told that prices had risen to 3.75 pounds in the Marche region because demand in Bologna and Lombardy was strong. Andrea asked his correspondent to abandon the purchase of grain and turn instead to goatskins «if the price was reasonable»⁹.

On 10 September 1453, Alvise Venier, a non-noble cashier and manager of the bank Benetto Soranzo and brothers, instead of taking his books and cash to the banker's palace at the end of the working day, as was his custom. He disappeared and took refuge in Trieste, putting the bank in difficulty. Venier, in the name of the bank, he claimed, had guaranteed loans totalling 49,000 *ducats* to Donato Barisano, an importer of wheat and other grains from Apulia. The *Senate* requested his extradition and that of Barisano, who in April had already obtained a contract to supply 10,000 *staia* of wheat guaranteed by the Bernardo-Garzoni bank. The *Senate* declared the bank bankrupt, as no one in charge seemed prepared to reveal how much money had been lost in the deal, and the Senators suspected fraudulent bankruptcy. The bankruptcy had serious political and commercial consequences: the creditors used the freezing of their deposits as an excuse not to pay the forced loans, and Venice was engaged in the Lombardy wars. The «captain» of the Alexandria galleys could not pay the four months wages of the rowers, and a messenger had to be sent to assure the King of Aragon that Venice would pay cash for the 20,000 *staia* of barley being loaded onto the ships, which Venice urgently needed for its cavalry engaged on the Milanese front. On the orders of the *Avogadori di Comun* Benetto Soranzo was arrested and imprisoned, along with Venier and the guarantor of the loans granted to Barisano, but the *Senate* found the charges against the three defendants inconclusive and ordered their release. They had remained in custody for more than two months¹⁰.

Relations between importers and the State were made easier and smoother in the 1460s because the State set up an intermediary with its creditors: the various banks Soranzo fulfilled this role until 1490, when they ceased trading. The *Council of Ten* described the operation in

⁹ LANE (1996³), p. 58.

¹⁰ MUELLER (1997), pp. 200-5, gave an account of the whole affair, including the false witnesses who claimed that the loan to Barisano had been made «with the bank's money», implying with the Soranzos' agreement. However, these forgers were caught and sentenced to ride a barge down the Grand Canal to the ducal palace. One had his right hand amputated and his nose cut off, the other had his nose amputated and both were banished.

1465, the envoy of the *proveditors* bought daily in Sicily wheat which he paid for with bills of exchange drawn on the bank of Giovanni Soranzo who undertook to honour them on condition that he was reimbursed by the Chamber. Otherwise, the bills risked being protested and returned unpaid to the sellers of the grain, to the detriment of the Republic. Any money that reached the Chamber, from the *Fondaco delle Farine* or elsewhere, once paid to a previous merchant, the Lucchese Piero Guerrucci, would go to the bank, which would then honour the letters from Sicily. Bill of exchange became the standard means of paying for grain deliveries¹¹; it was based on credit, about three months for a round trip between Venice and Syracuse. L

Among the grain merchants one company, the Valier brothers, played a key role in the second half of the 15th century, but only a tiny part of their activity is known. As it is described in a case brought before the *Giudici di Petition* commercial court which pitted Matteo Valier and his former clerk, Amadori, more specifically in 67 commercial letters that Valier sent between October 1469 and August 1475 to Amadori, the plaintiff, who was claiming 300 *ducati* from him. Valier usually lived in Sicily in Syracuse his «main command centre», Palermo where he went to negotiate drafts or export licences, or near the loading ports (*caricatori*) for grain from the¹². The Valier brother's company, one of whose members lived permanently in Venice, engaged in trade centred on Crete, the gateway to the Levant and the Adriatic in a triangular trade: from Venice, it received iron, wood and drapery if bartering was not enough, it would issue a bill of exchange to Venice or, if it was dealing with small landowners, it would pay cash. The heart of her business was Sicilian grain, but she didn't hesitate to source it from Calabria and Barletta (*Puglia*). She sold this grain on the large markets in Syria or in Alexandria where its ships returned with spices, linen and cotton, flax, cotton skins, alum and even slaves which the Sicilian economy badly needed. for the — ? / not

This activity, which covered the entire eastern Mediterranean, was based on a regular exchange of information. Matteo Valier, always at his writing desk, gave his orders in writing to Amadori and entrusted his letters to the patrons of the Venetian ships cruising in the same waters as the clerk; Valier made his decisions on the basis of the information he received, so after ordering his clerk to go to the Syrian ports to sell his durum wheat, he learned from information received from Venice that in Syria the price of grain was plummeting, he wrote to Amadori to divert to Alexandria where he could obtain an extremely L

¹¹ FAUGERON, p. 122.

¹² FAUGERON, p. 452-3. The south-east of the island was the «barycentre» of the Valier brothers' company (p. 454).

Why not use
the Venetian/Italian?
Petition?

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advantageous price equivalent to one ducat per *staio*, otherwise he would sail to the Gulf of Lajas (Lajazo) after skirting the Syrian coast and seizing every opportunity to sell his cargo. When the grain sold, he would return to Alexandria to buy pepper, cinnamon, ginger, flax and, if possible, cotton and alum loaded in Syria and Lajas. Such comings and goings weighed heavily on shipping costs and therefore on the *nolis*. Valier also paid little heed to the Venetian monopoly, which reserved the spice trade for the galleys of the *muda* and, if need be, for its so-called «rata», ships¹³. It's true that he had chartered a Sicilian «nef», whose captain was Antonio Lopiscopo from Messina. On the way back, he could call at Tripoli in Libya and Tunis, he could find buyers for his flax, obtain oil, wax and hides before returning to Syracuse with alum and cotton destined for the Sicilian market.

Valier paid close attention to prices: if the price guaranteed in Venice was higher than the price demanded in Sicily, his correspondent would buy, so he had to keep an eye on prices and hurry to buy before prices rose again. He invited his associate to buy 2,000 to 2,500 *salme*¹⁴. Grain trading even with the guarantee of the State and the *Officio del grano* was no picnic. In the summer of 1474, the harvests had been excellent, and the Venetian market was saturated, Valier informed his associate in Sicily that the price per *staio* had fallen by 20 shillings and that he should buy nothing, except to send the grain to the colonies on the Ionian Sea, to Corfu and Modon. The clerk also had to pay attention to the quality and dryness of the grain, with the authorities lowering the price when the weight of the grain was increased by humidity.

Can we talk about heavy goods as grains about freights? The Senators who had most often embarked on their youth on a commercial and military career at sea knew the need to weight down a ship to the waterline by loading it with heavy products that would sink the ship and give it stability during navigation. Barley with a density of 685 to 788 g/l¹⁵ is lighter (about ¼ to nearly ½) than seawater. The *Senate*¹⁶, after having «pointed out the need for barley for its [Venice's] population and its abundance on the island of Cyprus, ordered the island's authorities that all ships landing there to load salt or other goods should send as much barley as possible to Venice. Each ship would load 1,000 *staia* of barley before taking on salt for ballast».

¹³ HOCQUET (2013), p. 321-2.

¹⁴ We follow the file compiled by FAUGERON, chapter 5-II, p. 449-65. In Sicily for grain, in the west 100 *salme generali* made 320 Venetian *staia* while in the east the *salma grande* was used, 20% higher, 100 *salme grandi* therefore made 384 Venetian *staia*, as PEGOLOTTI informs us (p. 112-113). If we accept the capacity of a *staio* as being equivalent to 83.31 litres, the *salma grande* contained 320 litres.

¹⁵ HOCQUET (1989b), p. 218.

¹⁶ ASV, SM, 11, f° 161r.

MERCHANTS AND THE MONOPOLISATION OF SALT PRODUCTION

The interest shown in salt by merchants in Venice and its area of commercial influence was reflected in attempts to monopolise salt production, either by monopolising the harvest or by acquiring salt works. There are examples of both types of activity on both shores of the Adriatic¹⁷. Private appropriation was easily reconciled with the monopolisation of production by the State, which either allowed part of the production to continue under a system of freedom, as in Piran and Pago, or else the merchants became creditors of the State, which would assign the production of its saltworks to the repayment of its debts. This was the fundamental characteristic of the Cypriot situation at the time of the Lusignans. The merchants, attracted by the profits to be made from the salt trade, sought to monopolise production where the State left the field open to their activity, by buying their harvest from the salt producers or owners, or by acquiring the salt works directly. This integrated trade, in which the merchant had salt works, salt shops and boats at his disposal, was easier to achieve when the Republic exercised political domination over the territory where the salt works were located.

THE BUSINESS OF A VENETIAN PATRICIAN

On 29 July 1401, the *Collegio* authorised the sea salt officers to sign a contract with Azo Trevisan for five years, the Venetian nobleman would export to Bologna every year 800 *moggia* of salt from Piran, a amount could be increased to 1,200 *moggia* if he so wished, at a price of 3 *ducati*, departing from Venice and payable within three months. The contract was exclusive, and the *Senate* prohibited the salt merchants of Chioggia from taking their salt to Bologna. On 16 June 1410, the noble merchant signed a new contract for 2,000 *moggia*, increasing the price to 4 *ducati* and extending the payment period for half the salt to 18 months. Trevisan enjoyed strong support from the *Senate and the Collegio*, which in 1411 allowed him to substitute 1,000 *moggia* salt from Alexandria for salt from Piran, at the same weight¹⁸ per *moggio* and at the same price. This «facility», was proof that the *Office* was scrupulously honouring its commitments to its customers. That year, there was a shortage of salt from Piran, but the contract with

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¹⁷ GRISONIC and HOCQUET, *passim*.

¹⁸ In principle, when it entered the Venice depots, the *moggio* of coarse APELLÁNIZ, salt weighed 992 kg and the same measure of 13 *staia* (1 *moggio*) of Piran (small salt) weighed 868 kg. Equalising the weights on the lighter *moggio* of Piran, the *Officio* made a surplus profit of 14.28% [HOCQUET (1992) II, p. 422, first edition, 1973].

Trevisan could not be broken, and the *Office* was obliged to honour it: salt from faraway Egypt replaced that from Piran in nearby Istria. On 24 April 1413, Azo Trevisan was authorised to extend the scope of his business, transporting to Bologna as well as to Reggio and Romagna up to 1,500 *moggia* of salt from Piran at 3 *ducati* under a 10-year contract. The market exceeded the *Office's* availabilities, and it ended up supplying Trevisan with salt from Negrepoint. Venice was the only Mediterranean city to have such a complete range of salts from all sources. However, on 27 February 1414, the *Savi* of the *College* suspected that they had made a fool's bargain and referred the contract to a committee of four *councillors* who passed it on to the *Avogadori di Comun* - in this case public prosecutors and statutory auditors - and decided to suspend deliveries until these high magistrates had given their ruling. On 31 July 1414, the *College*, on the advice of the *Avogadors*, issued Trevisan with 80 *moggia* of salt from Capodistria (today : Koper in Slovenia) then 600 *moggia* of salt from Alexandria and, taking into account the cost of freight on the Venice - Alexandria route, abandoned all reference to the price of salt from Piran and raised the price of Egyptian salt to 7 *ducati* per *moggio* payable in six months. Azo Trevisan did not interrupt his shipments of salt to Bologna, and no doubt managed to pass on the increase to his Bolognese buyers.

The annual supply of 1,000 *moggia* of salt therefore ran into major difficulties. The commitment had been made in years of overproduction; years of poor harvests meant that we had to improvise and supply salt from Alexandria or Negrepoint, this was the case in 1411 and 1413. The vagaries of the weather and the salt harvest were a constant challenge to regulation, but imports of Mediterranean salt were the regulating element in a market subject to unpredictable fluctuations. And yet, as late as 1413, imports of sea salt (*sal maris*), as the Venetians called it¹⁹, had been interrupted for many years²⁰.

THE PROPER USE OF CREDIT

A Venetian patrician, whose family never played a leading role or accumulated wealth, a modest patrician one might venture, Zuan Battista Bonzi specialised at the very end of the *Quattrocento* in the wholesale and retail sale of cloth and wheat in the ports of Istria. He established himself in Capodistria or Piran to trade in three

¹⁹ Venice contrasted the salt from the Lagoon harvested in Chioggia and the «sea salt» produced in all the salt works along the shores of the Mediterranean and its tributaries, the Adriatic and the Black Sea. However, all were produced by the natural evaporation of seawater. The monopoly did not use rock salt.

²⁰ HOCQUET (2012), p. 140-1.

neCESSIties, selling clothes and grain, he also bought salt. His customers were the salt producers, whose payment he preferred to receive not in money but in salt or, failing that, in credits from the Salt Office. He rented a shop in Capodistria and acquired two other shops, one of them large. He began with a big deal, selling wheat for 1,020 pounds to three important people in Piran, one of whom, as part of the payment, gave him a debt of 630 pounds, drawn on the Office on 9 January 1483 in the name of Bernardo de B., who was not among his three debtors.

The credits issued by the Salt Office were in fact traded in public and their liberatory power - this paper was used to extinguish all sorts of debts - made these securities equivalent to scriptural money, since the private individual who held them could pay his expenses directly by giving his supplier these vouchers drawn on the Camera del sale. The transferable securities issued by this Camera enabled it to make transfers and fulfil its role as a public bank. So when Nicolò de Petrogno and Alvise de Porto, owners of salt works in Piran bought 50 *staia* of wheat from Bonzi, they became Bonzi's debtors for 410 pounds, which they transferred to Bonzi's account at the Office. The transaction avoided any transfer of funds, and Bonzi had credit in Venice, where he was indebted for several reasons, for example to the tax authorities, who demanded that he pay the *decime* or take out new loans or other private expenses.

In August 1482 Bonzi had already had his name entered among the creditors of the Salt Office after selling wheat for 304 pounds to Antonio de Porto. He also lent money, advancing small sums, and granting consumer loans to families of salt producers who were temporarily in difficulty and who undertook to repay the loan by promising a delivery of salt that the Venetian would charge them 6 livres per *moggio* «at the price at which the Signiory paid for it». Was Bonzi so honest? When he was given 5 or 10 *moggia* of salt at the price of 6 pounds, this salt was the property of the salt producers under the name of *quinto*, and was not intended for the Office but for the caravans of muleteers who had come from all over Slovenia and the Karst to Capodistria and Piran to buy salt at a price well in excess of 6 pounds. Bonzi took the place of the salt producers, buying their salt at the monopoly price and selling it at the free market price. All the ingredients were there to quickly build up an honest fortune. Bonzi had devised a coherent system, interposing himself between the salt producers and the livestock farming and caravanning communities (*Cransi* and *Mussolati*), acting as a broker and making a profit from the difference in prices between the monopoly and the open market. In fact, the Office allowed Piran's salt producers to dispose of a part of their harvest, not to cover local consumption needs, but to guarantee that the community would be supplied with the

grain it needed to feed itself. The surplus was exported to the Dominante. And it was precisely the *Cransi*, muleteers from Carniola or Carinthia and Slovenia, who brought this grain and left with the salt from the salt-makers, Bonzi became the biggest buyer of grain from the caravaners, and this grain sold to the producers or the *Dominante* (Venice) renewed his business cycle.

An account dated 20 April 1484 of debts falling due at Christmas listed 73 debtors who had received cloth and some money to be repaid by a delivery of salt. The total quantity of salt was 434 *moggia 3 stiaia*, and the average debt was less than 6 *moggia*. Converted into money based on 6 pounds per *moggio*, the average debt represented 36 pounds (5 *ducats* 20 *gros*), a sum that perhaps masked a high interest rate, although Bonzi was certain of earning a lot by selling the salt on the open market. The scale of debts ranged from a maximum of 20 *moggia* to a minimum of 1 *moggio 6 stiaia*. Two accounts drawn up on 22 March 1485 show the same patterns: the first, due in September, i.e. after the harvest, showed 15 debtors with a total debt of 144 *moggia 3 stiaia*; two salt makers had each signed up for 28 *moggia*; the second account, drawn up for the purchase of cloths, wheat and miscellaneous items listed 37 salt debtors for 246 *moggia*. Finally, between 18 October 1485 and 15 January 1486, he entered a further 55 debtors in his registers for *robe, denari rizevudi dal Z.B. Bonzi*, who had undertaken to repay him a total of 471 *moggia 8 stiaia*; the average was 8 *moggia 7 stiaia*, with the highest debt reaching 64 *moggia* and the lowest just 1 *moggio*. The average value of the debts contracted by the salt farmers was always less than 10 *moggia*, but in 1485 the salt farmers went into debt in the autumn immediately after the harvest, rather than in March and April, after a winter season that had depleted their modest income and at a time of year that required major investments to restore the salt pans.

During these three years, Bonzi accumulated debts against the people of Piran to the tune of 5,981 pounds of *piccoli* and 2,310 *moggia* of salt, or around 770 *moggia* per year: or, at 868 kg per *moggio*, an impressive 668 tonnes of salt per year. Now that's speculation done right! These 770 *moggia* in a salt production limited to 4,700 *moggia* represented more than 80% of the *quinto* salt that remained at the disposal of the owners of the salt works or the small holders. It was as if the vast majority of private individuals in Piran had entrusted a Venetian patrician with the task of marketing the share of salt reserved for the free market to the muleteers. In fact, after 1460, the restrictions had been lifted and salt production was able to expand rapidly. Bearing in mind that his share remained sufficient for him to influence prices and determine what he demanded of the muleteers as he saw fit. [The volume of his instalment sales business, after conversion of salt at the rate of 6 pounds per *moggio* and taking into account the 5,981 pounds

The absence of citations here
is striking

whose repayment was specified in money from the outset, reached a total of 19,841 livres, or 6,614 livres per year or 1,060 *ducati*, a handsome turnover before calculation - impossible - of the profits from the sale of salt²¹. At best, one can contrast the small sums borrowed by a large number of salt owners driven into debt with the affluence or wealth of their sole creditor, who had salt delivered to the free market at the price of the state monopoly by caravaneers who played a decisive role in supplying the population of Venice and Istria.

SALT MERCHANTS OR TRANSPORTERS

Among the countless Venetian merchants, was there a particular social category that built its fortune on the salt trade? Did specialised merchants derive the bulk of their earnings from salt transport, at the risk of giving an image of their city that belies the traditional view that merchants in Venice dispersed their activities «in a dustbowl of businesses»²²? Merchant's interest in salt, in Venice and its area of influence, took three different forms. Some sought to monopolise salt production, monopolise the harvest, acquire the salt works and buy back the loans issued by the *Office* to the salt producers²³. Others showed an interest in transport, insofar as salt provided ballast and the obligatory return freight, and generated revenue from state-guaranteed nolis. Transport was in fact a consequence of the maritime regulations adopted by the councils. Insofar as there was no specialisation, and the merchant was also a shipowner and banker, every merchant had some stake in the ownership of a ship. If the ship was required by maritime regulations to carry salt, all its owners were *ipso facto* salt merchants. The maritime salt trade was one of the most widespread activities of the merchant class, especially among those involved in shipping. Finally, the interest of the merchants was manifested on a third level with the passive support of the State. As the *Camera del sale* was slow to pay its suppliers, speculators were happy to intervene between the State and the merchants, taking advantage of the uncertainties of a futures market where some pretty good deals could be made, if they knew how to buy in time the debts that the salt transporters, desperate to be paid, were anxious to get rid of. Tommaso Zane was not a salt merchant, but a financier, and he built up a very profitable income from the *Chamber*.

From the end of the 13th century and throughout the 14th century, it was the merchants who, embarking goods on an armed ship, had to import salt into Venice on the return journey. The *ordo salis* required

²¹ HOCQUET (2012), p. 142-4.

²² HEERS [1966?] p.193.

²³ HOCQUET (2012), p. 497.

them to load salt in proportion to the cargo taken from Venice on the outward journey. The salt trade was then a matter for merchants. This ceased to be true afterwards: the return to Venice with salt became an obligation incumbent on the ship, provided that this vessel had the characteristics required for the maritime defence of the colonial empire and the merchant fleets: castle, mixed rigging (square sails and lateen sails), armament, presence of soldiers-crossbowmen and tonnage. At the time, it was the ship's captain and the scribe (public secretary) who supervised the loading of the salt; the merchants were no longer involved. In the *libri delle navi*, the ship was credited for imported salt. But ships and patrons were at the orders of the shipowners, the owners who hired the patron and paid him, even though this patron often held a modest fraction of the ownership of the ship he commanded. The credit was added to the vessel's assets, but it was shared between the vessel's owners. This was a very important change for the salt trade: an active trade, involving itinerant merchants accompanying their cargoes, had given way to a rentier trade in which shipowners, without ever taking an interest in the salt trade or giving any orders as a result, were credited in the Chamber's books every time their ship touched Venice on its return from a Mediterranean voyage. However, in Venice the majority of nobles in the 15th century were simultaneously involved in two interrelated types of economic activity, naval armament and maritime trade, and it is difficult to determine when the behaviour of importers changed. Naval armament required large amounts of capital, and it was prudent not to invest all one's assets in the ownership of a single ship, but to divide them between several vessels to spread the risks. Members of large families had to be *shareholders* in several companies at the same time. The 24 divisible carats ($\frac{1}{2}$ carat, $\frac{1}{3}$ carat, etc.) that made up the *nave* found buyers at the time of construction or were sold later. In the registers, the *nave* took the feminine name of the main owner, although it was baptised, as everywhere else, with the names of the saints in the calendar. Partial ownership of one or more ships therefore involved the nobles in the salt trade, without any further initiative on their part. All they had to do was comply with the laws in force and import salt in proportion to the volume of the outbound cargo in the 14th century, or the tonnage of the ship in the 15th century.

As long as the ship sailed, its owners remained salt importers. Each time the *nave Contarina* sailed, Bernardo de Muggia was credited with an amount equal to the quotient of the total value of the salt divided by the number of shares he owned, calculated in twenty-fourths. As long as the *Contarina* sailed, Bernardo and his heirs had their accounts opened at the bank of Andrea Priuli funded by payments from the *Office*. Three successive voyages in 1397 and 1398 brought him modest sums, in proportion to his share in the ship's ownership, but

regular sums. His books were credited with 160 *ducati* over three voyages. These were shared between the heirs, as the salt for the first voyage was paid for in 1401, seven or eight years after it was imported, and it took another twenty years of patience before he received 107 *ducati* for the 1398 voyages in December 1417²⁴. It was a good deal for the heirs, who were delighted with the income.

Once the credit had been entered in the ship's book, all that remained was for the ship's owners to make themselves known and declare the number of carats they owned. Although the *Consoli dei Mercanti* recorded this information when the ship was registered, the declarations were not always made without fraud, especially as the payment of the sums due was further away from the date of importation. Antonio Donà declared that his father had owned nine carats on Hieronymo Bembo's ship and received 914 *ducati*. In their absence, the offender had appropriated the six shares held by Tommaso Mocenigo and Leonardo sons of Piero Bembo²⁵. The merchants were careful to ensure that the *Camera del sale* to record each person's share. This was the advice given by Leonardo Dolfin to his son Biagio, whom he informed

«to have decided that the ship of the owner Giacomo Caxopin would be entirely loaded with salt in Cyprus in which he had a one-third share»²⁶.

no block quote

The rest of the cargo belonged to Carlo Contarini and Francesco Zorzi. The three merchants shared income and expenses. The payment of the *nolis*, set at 200 *ducati*, was the responsibility of each. Similarly, each of the three merchants, who were all present in Alexandria in the early spring of 1419, had contributed to the price of salt by paying a total of 120 *ducati* to the owner, while loading expenses, estimated at 75 *ducati*, would be paid by each of them at the rate of 25 *ducati* to Andrea Bernardo in Cyprus by means of a bill of exchange drawn on the clerks of the three merchants who remained in Venice. These letters from Leonardo Dolfin shed light on the mechanism of private salt settlements. The three merchants from Alexandria had together spent 200 *ducati* payable at the end of October to the master of the ship for his *nolis*, when they still didn't know how much salt the *nave* would be loading in Cyprus during the summer. The actual cost of loading and transporting the salt was 395 *ducati*, half of which paid for the transport itself. The *nolis* depended on the distance travelled (Cyprus-Venice), since on 4 April Dolfin did not know how much salt the ship would take

²⁴ HOCQUET (2012), p. 506.

²⁵ HOCQUET (2012), p. 506, 8 June 1490, the fraud committed by Antonio Donà had been all the easier as it involved a late payment in favour of heirs.

²⁶ HOCQUET (2012), p. 507, three letters written by Lorenzo Dolfin to Biagio Dolfin and entrusted to Giacomo Caxopin, between 18 April and 4 August 1419.

on in August. The merchants paid the nolis directly to the patron once the ship had arrived in Venice. The patron paid the crew and looked after them on board during the crossing. He could not wait ten or fifteen years for payment. The Salt Chamber was therefore indebted not to the ship and the patron, but to the merchants who had made the advances²⁷.

The Priuli, ~~Error! Bookmark not defined.~~ another prominent family, bears witness to the ongoing involvement of nobles in maritime trade. Priuli, the father, received salt when the ship owned by Zuan de Agostini returned in 1489, and again two years later when Andrea Maluxado's ship returned. In 1493, four ships imported salt, the price of which was partly credited to Priuli. The five ships that returned in 1491 and 1493 opened a credit of 1 194, s 10, g 9, p 12 or 1.945 ducati for the import of 325 *moggia* of salt from Cyprus. This massive return of ships in 1493 was followed by several others, since in 1519, when there was renewed hope that the *office* would resume payments, the three brothers Francesco, Vincenzo and Girolamo Priuli settled their accounts and divided the paternal debts between them. Each brother's share amounted to 109 pounds 11 g, 11 p²⁸, the total credit amounted to 3,274 *ducati*, in exchange for the import of 545 *moggia*.

The church of S. Salvador in Venice have a credit balance of 6,000 *ducati* with the salt office: one can rule out the possibility that it owned salt works, or shares in ships that were obliged by the regulations to import salt from Cyprus or Ibiza, any shipowner or parcel merchant becoming ipso facto a salt merchant, but I am inclined to think otherwise. The salt office was overburdened with obligations, in particular the deposit of 8,000 *ducati*, which exceeded its revenue, and was very late in paying merchants for past imports. These merchants, pressed for money, in turn sold their claims at a substantial discount to whoever had the money, and the buyer subrogated the original merchant in the books of the office, which was used to paying merchants in turn (first come, first paid). This is why the canons of the church asked to go before the merchants without the vintage (of the import) being taken into account. The Council of Ten refused, but the stubborn canons obtained the written agreement of the salt merchant-creditors, a total of twenty-five nobles from the most powerful shipping houses, who accepted the derogation. Among the many merchants, almost all of them noble, were the sons of procurators Geronimo Contarini and Lorenzo di Priuli, followed by Gritti, Pisani, Barbarigo, Gusoni, Giustinian, Donà, Dolfin, Grimani, Dandolo, Zorzi, Malipiero, Moro, Morosini and Querini. Among these 25 shipowners and salt importers,

²⁷ HOCQUET (2012), p. 502-3.

²⁸ HOCQUET (2012), p. 511.

there was perhaps just one non-noble (I wouldn't swear to it), Sebastian dal Pozzo²⁹

From an active trade requiring the initiative and presence of merchants on the major salt markets and on board their ships, the maritime salt trade had become a passive trade by the end of the 15th century, although Dolfin's letters ~~Error! Bookmark not defined.~~ still testified to the direct involvement of merchants in the salt trade. At the end of the century, the patrician landowner was content to record his credits in his books, but this patrician was not only an idle annuitant, he was also a banker and a shipowner. How many ship captains were recruited from his ranks? Look at who commanded the ships that gave credit to the bankers Pisani and Priuli! These captains had names, Trevisan, Dandolo, Pasqualigo, Moro, Sagredo and continued a centuries-old tradition.

THE LIVESTOCK AND MEAT TRADE

At the end of the 15th century, Marin Sanudo estimated the annual consumption needs of the population of the lagoon, which was supplied by the slaughterhouses (*macellai*) of Venice, at 14,000 oxen, 13,000 calves and 73,000 head of small livestock from abroad. In 1324, the Padua slaughterhouses in Cadore had 2,400 sheep and lambs confiscated³⁰. This confiscation confirms the existence of a vast market that is still awaiting its historian. The flocks were transported from the north of the Balkan peninsula and the Hungarian steppe plains by herdsmen and shepherds from semi-nomadic populations, transhumant Vlach or Morlach breeders, and reached the north of Istria in Friuli and then Venice. Treviso was the final stop on this long journey, fording the many torrential rivers of Friuli.

Faugeron analysed the situation in Treviso and used two customs registers which, 20 years apart, covered one year (August 1445-18 August 1446) and then 16 months (October 1467-February 1469). The changes are considerable: in 1445-46, the market was still dominated by butchers, professionals in the sector, who made 227 livestock transports (72% of the total), and one of them, Matteo di Feleto, made 141 journeys alone, during which he transported 4,609 cattle and 20,130 castrates (sheep). Of the 357 cattle transports recorded in the second register, 309 were carried out by three noblemen, not because the animals came from their landed estates on the farmland, but because

²⁹ JESTAZ, p. 252. On the composition of the patriciate in the 15th century, GULLINO, p. 399-401.

³⁰ HOCQUET ~~Error! Bookmark not defined.~~ (1997), p. 547.

they had bought the *dazio* (indirect tax) of the butchery at auction, which also gave them the opportunity to supply the butchery and the butcher's shops (*luganeher*) and to control them, as much as to say that these characters were tax farmers, financiers, and worked in a monopoly situation on a closed market. The three noblemen were Nicolò Donà, Catarino Zen and Alessandro Contarini. They were responsible for 87% of transport. The other 36 usually made do with a single shipment (29 cases). The three noble farmers who were exclusively interested in beef cattle and *castrati* transported 36,662 animals to the Venetian slaughterhouses, representing 94.6% of all livestock. The most active of these businessmen was undoubtedly Donà, who delivered 603 lambs, 3,925 oxen, 10,745 castrati, 65 kids and just 32 pigs³¹. The Venetian patricians were not averse to taking an interest in a necessary but trivial trade, as soon as it provided an opportunity to make money, and the tax farms generated a high income for the private individuals who invested in them.

TIMBER MERCHANTS

Venice also had an urgent need for wood of all kinds and in large quantities: firewood for domestic and industrial use, for glassworks, soap factories and forges; shipbuilding wood for private yards and for the Arsenal; moat wood for coopers; timber for joiners, cabinetmakers and carpenters or bakers; wood for house and palace construction; scaffolding; and wood for ovens and for cooking food. Logs and bundles, firewood and staves, oak and pine, elm and larch were all needed. The councils took numerous measures to ensure a regular supply of wood to the city and a constant renewal of the resource. Fortunately, Venice and the Veneto region were surrounded by wooded mountains³². Nevertheless, towards the middle of the 15th century, measures had to be coordinated to deal with the threats to supplies, and this task was entrusted to a new magistracy created in 1464, the *Provveditori sopra legne e boschi*. The name and the order of the words indicate that the main concern was a shortage of firewood (*legne*), as the clearing of land to meet human needs had wiped out all the nearby forests (*boschi*)³³. It was also necessary to regulate flows on the rivers

³¹ FAUGERON, pp. 385 and 440-9. See in particular the statistical tables included in these pages.

³² For their iconography of forests, the transport of felled trees, sawmills and floating, and woodworking, CANIATO **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.** (1993), M-F. TIEPOLO (1987).

³³ *Erant infinita nemora, destructa et radicata e a paucis tempore citra sunt ville de novo facte et agriculturae devolvuntur terrae*, noted the College in 1475 [quoted by BRAUNSTEIN (1988), p. 766]. The A. also points out that «paradoxically, it was the

| 7

between the various users: timber merchants and floats downstream on the one hand, and merchants, exporters and boatmen in all directions on the other.

Marco Corner, who was a magistrate at the *Giustizia vecchia* before being promoted to *Savio alle acque*, made a trip in March 1442 to inspect the waterways that flowed down from the Friuli mountains and into the Lagoon. In his report to the Seignior (1442), he denounced the carelessness and selfishness of landowners who were using the canals to store wood or had set up sawmills and mills along the water without any concern for the flow³⁴.

In 1434, for example, the Ruzini brothers placed an order with a Bavarian based in Treviso for their warehouse in Canareggio, for around twenty beams and larch trunks 10 feet long, from which they would cut 5 to 10 piles and hundreds of battens. If the order was not fulfilled on time, the Ruzini would turn to other suppliers and claim damages from the German. In 1417, a Venetian timber merchant, Moretus Zucato, had set up a company with two German Jews and sought to recover the debts owed to the said company, from Chioggia to Belluno. On 31 May 1414, two inhabitants of S. Maria Formosa, Raimondo de Valcamonica and his nephew Martin, who ran the timber trading business for which they were drawing up a balance cloth, renewed their partnership and the nephew was given 5,200 *ducats*, half of which immediately and the rest by way of bequest. The nephew was well inspired; the uncle died a few days later. Martin continued to manage and joined forces with a German merchant and a carpenter to place an order with Bassano for 6 masts³⁵.

Noble families were not averse to taking an interest in the timber trade, such as the Contarini and Morosini, the Muazzo and Pasqualigo or the Trevisan and others. Girolamo Morosini had a regular supplier in Cadore who bought him a sawmill on the Cison river and softwood trunks, 400 in 1470 and 1473. In exchange, this trusted man bought wine, cloth, cheese and salted pork from the Venetian patrician who owned farmland. Giovanni Pasqualigo is even more representative of the mentality of the Venetian businessman, as he juxtaposed the ownership of silver-lead mines and foundries in Alto Cadore with the timber trade, imposed leonine contracts on his suppliers who were «unable to keep up with the pace or present the required qualities», and seized their assets, especially sawmills and timber depots, because they

congestion of the access roads to Venice more than the inevitable deforestation of its surroundings that posed formidable supply problems» (p. 769).

³⁴ BRAUNSTEIN (1988), p. 769-70.

³⁵ BRAUNSTEIN (1988), p. 777-81.

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were unable to pay off their debts³⁶. Pasqualigo did excellent business in this way!

THE CORNER AND THE IRON TRADE

Iron saw its uses multiply over the course of the century, particularly at the Arsenal which was called upon to defend its colonial empire threatened by Ottoman expansion. Venetian Terraferma produced little iron, except in Valcamonica, and the metallurgists of Brescia had acquired a solid reputation that extended beyond the borders of the State. Venice imported the iron it needed from the Austrian provinces of Styria and Carinthia via Villach, Venzone, Gemona and the «canal del ferro», near the Tarvis pass, which led to Vienna and Salzburg with whose masters the Republic often clashed, especially when it conquered the patriarchate of Aquileia (Friuli), a route used by German merchants bringing iron to Venice along the Tagliamento valley route. The ore was purified and worked in the forges of the upper Friuli, which took advantage of the strength and abundance of the torrents flowing down from the Alps and the mountain forests. The iron was exchanged for wheat, salt or wine.

In times of war, Venice feared it would run out of iron and restricted its exports, subject to a licence; in the middle of the war, Fantin Michiel, a relative of iron merchant Piero Michiel, proposed its abolition (1413). Venice's reserves, with the iron expected soon, would exceed 1,000 *milliari* (nearly 500 tonnes). The merchant Piero Michiel could count on the support of other iron merchants, *ser* Bulgaro Vitturi and Zorzi Corner. But Zorzi Corner defended the higher interests of the State against his colleagues, who presented themselves as defenders of customs duties and experts in metallurgy (1418). Zorzi Corner, Andrea's son, was doing business with the community of Gemona; on 11 March 1415, envoys acknowledged that he owed 385 *ducati* 11 shillings, which he had advanced, and that this debt would be paid to him in «ferro longo de Villacho, bon et marchandantevole», at 12 *ducati* per thousand, by 31 May at the latest. While Corner had not received this iron, the community would prohibit any export. If Gemona was unable to deliver all the iron by the set date, Zorzi would be reimbursed by bill of exchange. Zorzi went further, advancing the money for the delivery of 40 *milliari* of iron by the end of July, and the community entrusted Antonio Rizo with the execution of these clauses³⁷.

³⁶ BRAUNSTEIN (1988), pp. 785-7; BRAUNSTEIN (1965), pp. 582-5 on the affairs of Giovanni Pasqualigo

³⁷ BRAUNSTEIN (1966), pp. 296-8, has published and commented on this delivery contract.

In 1450, Marco Corner whose role in supplying Venice with wood we have already seen, obtained from the Seignior for himself and his heirs the privilege of prospecting in the Serravalle and Belluno mountains and in Cadore, but to no avail. In 1460, the Senate granted the privilege to the German Thomas Prifeger, who took over the conCESSION with 12 men. Marco Corner and his associates, Marin Memmo and Girolamo Malipiero who were also patricians, protested, but the Senate confirmed his decision. In 1465, one of Prifeger's German partners sold his share to Giovanni Pasqualigo whose family had thus entered «the colonisation of farmland». ~~The conCESSION was~~ extended to include rights of use over the forests (afforestation of the mine, construction of industrial buildings, wood for furnaces) and rivers³⁸.

The patricians did not neglect any sector of activity, even the most common - trivial, we might say, but food is a basic need - and expected profits that would round out their capital.

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proofreading

³⁸ BRAUNSTEIN (1965), pp. 543, 581 and 552.

Chapter five

NAVIGATION, SHIPS, AND FREIGHT

My affairs are not entrusted to a single fund
 Nor to a single place, and all my property is not subject
 At random this year :
 Merchandise doesn't make me sad.
 My entire fortune is at sea
 And I have neither money nor conveniences
 To have some on the spot.
 See what my credit can do in Venice
 (SHAKESPEARE, *The merchant of Venice*, act I, scene 1)

There was a close bond between the two types of ship, to which Venice entrusted the prosperity of its trade and the solidity of its defence. In fact, both types of ship frequented the same distant ports and loaded goods at the same terminals, which marked the end of the long sea routes that carried products from faraway Asia, Black Africa and Northern Europe. Solidarity, we said: The galleys (such was the commercial name of the *galera* dedicated to defence) were long and low on the water, highly manoeuvrable, powered by latin and triangular sail or by a large crew of rowers, travelling in convoys of three or four, taking on the lightest and most expensive goods, weighed to the «milliaire» (one thousand light pounds), went down in history under the name of «muda», although it is not clear whether the term refers to the convoy or to the time of year when the galleys were allowed to load; The navi (naval vessels) sailed under complex mixed sails spread over several masts, high above the water. Their tonnage was very large, measured in the fifteenth century in «botti» in Venice, and they loaded the heaviest and most voluminous goods, such as grain, salt, wine and cotton. They sailed alone or in concert to help each other, taking what the galleys could not load because of lack of space and which the merchants had nevertheless paid for. This share was called «rata». Only the richest merchants, the shipowners and their companies, were allowed to have such large, armed vessels built in private yards, sometimes located on their land on the banks of a river. The State prohibited them from owning galleys, but only these nobles could

compete in auctions when the public Arsenal put these ships up for hire. Galleys and ships were named after the noble families who were the main owners or bidders: the *Foscara* was owned by the Foscari, the *Dandola* by a Dandolo and the *Tiepolo* by a Tiepolo. Non-noble citizens whose wealth allowed them to buy shares in the ship could slip into the society thus formed, and were welcomed by the patricians eager to raise the capital required for a long maritime venture.

Venice had found a compromise between two opposing concepts for the management of commercial convoys: the private outfitting of galleys by commercial companies or complete management by the State. It invented a mixed formula: the galleys built by the Arsenal were leased bareboat for one voyage to private companies, which were responsible for fitting them out, maintaining them and running them commercially. The galley company became one of the pillars of the state-run trade and played an essential role in commerce by taking charge of the search for freight. The priority given to safeguarding the *mude* system favoured customs revenues and aimed to maintain the Arsenal. The Arsenal's finances suffered from the situation in the Middle East, as it relied heavily on revenues from trade with Muslim countries. The Arsenal used public funds to finance the construction of much-needed galleys for the Levant, for the benefit of certain politically influential cartels¹.

Venetian merchants and sailors, aided by auxiliary navies such as the Cretan ships that Giacomo Badoer made great use of, frequented the western seas, the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. They left navigation in the Red Sea and the Baltic to others, including Arabs, Dutch and Hanseatic ships. Widely represented in Alexandria and Beirut or in Bruges and London, they also had access to products from southern Asia and northern Europe. The merchants who were most present belonged to the patriciate and it is easier to follow their business and their movements, which leads us to favour galleys, not *naves*, the rowing vessels that transported the most valuable commodities, spices, wool, drapery and metals, rather than ships with complex sails, even though the galley most often deployed its Latin sails. All of them were subject to bad weather at sea, and journey times were distressingly slow², the danger came from storms and fog, or from men, pirates and

¹ APELLÁNIZ (2009a), p. 162.

² The Ragusa merchant Benedetto Cotrugli who made his career in Italy, examines «the characteristics that a port must have to be considered a good port; navigation and the ships of the Ancients; modern galleys: their structure and qualities, their sails, the rowers; the officers on board and their hierarchy; the enlistment of sailors; the skills of officers and the moral and physical qualities required to exercise command properly; sails and shrouds; the different types of ships, their measurements; the winds and their names; the use of the compass; weather forecasts in seafaring tradition and the proverbs

privateers on the lookout for catches that could be sold to others with little regard for the origin of the goods on offer. If the galley was better represented than the nave, this was also due to the role of the State, which was more inclined to protect and legislate on its own ships, the galleys made available to merchants, than on private ships, which were nonetheless obliged to return from their voyages with products over which the State had a jealously managed monopoly.

SHIPPING AND METEOROLOGY

How did freight and spices arrive to Muslim countries, to Alexandria or the Syrian coast? «*Karimi*» merchants have aroused the curiosity of historians, and ASHTOR saw them as a merchant guild, a trust that would have monopolised the distant trade of the Levant.³ However, as early as 1958, Goitein had discovered that these merchants

«traded with Yemen (and) took the route of the great Egyptian south, following the river as far as Qûs, then reaching, after two or three weeks in the desert, the port of Aydhâb, from where they could reach Aden after a long crossing»⁴.

This crossing was subject to prevailing and seasonal winds and *karim* «was the name given to (the) season from June to October during which ships travelled between Aydhâb and Aden». To take advantage of the northerly winds, the ships left Aydhâb at the end of June at the latest and returned from Aden in October or November to supply the markets of Cairo and Alexandria. The *karim* or Egyptian season briefly overlapped with the Indian season, which brought spices from Calicut in the spring.

Along this long sea⁵ and land route, the *karimi* merchant paid various fees and taxes: sea freight for transport by boat in the Red Sea, caravan hire fees in the desert, caravanserai fees in the stopover towns and in Fustat-Cairo, taxes and customs levied in the ports and by the authorities or the sultan. Some merchants went as far as Alexandria where they set up their networks and warehouses, whose activity became more feverish with the arrival of spices from the south, in autumn and especially in winter. The Venetians were aware of this

that illustrate them; seasickness and its remedies; the nautical chart and its use; a method for checking the route; the Mediterranean portulan» (quoted by FALCHETTA, p. 59-60). How many merchants had read this art of navigation around 1470?

³ ASHTOR (1983), p. 52, a group of merchants who would have controlled all international trade.

⁴ Cited by VALLET (2011), p. 217 and map p. 218. *Citing?*

⁵ BALARD (2023) focuses on the production and transport of spices from Asia to the Mediterranean (p. 68-91).

seasonal nature, and their convoy of galleys set sail for Alexandria in October.

However, the region of Aydhâb region experienced some unrest in the middle of the 14th century and merchants, frightened by the lack of security, stopped using this port and the route leading to it. They retreated to other ports further north, which offered them both greater tranquillity and the advantage of shortening the route across the desert; these ports were al-Qusayr on the African shore and al-Tor in Sinai, Gedda offered a stopover on this maritime route that skirted the Arabian Peninsula⁶. Shipping also changed its means of transport, adopting the small tonnage (*jilab* or *dhows*) which, in coastal navigation, took advantage of the coastal winds in all seasons. These dhows brought to Gedda the essential supplies for the mass of pilgrims who flocked to the Prophet's tomb in Mecca and grain from Yemen or spices from India. From there, they accompanied the caravans of pilgrims heading north to Damascus, Aleppo and Beirut or west towards Cairo and Alexandria. As the pilgrimage was dependent on the Muslim lunar calendar, Beirut and Alexandria were supplied at times that varied from year to year, which did not favour the seasonal regularity of the Venetian *muda*, but encouraged merchants to maintain permanent settlements in the ports of the Mamlūk state. Fortunately, the Aydhâb route had regained some strength and the Alexandria market was thus supplied twice a year, which helped to equalise prices. In 1395, the Egyptian port exported 849 *sporte* of pepper and Beirut almost as much, 822 *sporte*⁷.

LOCAL AND INTERNAL NAVIGATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Navigation was not limited to joining a port of departure and a port of arrival, and on the route to Sicily there were stops at Candia then Modon, the merchant loaded up, disembarked and waited for a favourable wind before setting off again. Such a voyage, for which a cargo first had to be assembled, which often took a whole month, frequently lasted half a year. The delays began when the ship was boarded and continued after arrival in port. It was necessary to find a boat or lighter and porters to bring 5 cloths and 1 coupon from Pera to the house where Giacomo Badoer lived and also needed porters and a boat to carry 2 boxes of indigo to the galley. Piero Antonio spent 500 «*aspres*», on 16 October 1438 to load the wool onto three boats that

⁶ BALARD (2023), p. 90-92.

⁷ This paragraph owes much to VALLET, 2011, *passim*. The *sporta* is a large-capacity measure used in the East [Hocquet (1993) p. 860-2]

would carry it to a Greek shipowner's *ship* chartered by Aldrovandin di Zusti, but the patron, instead of waiting at Gallipoli, had gone to the Dardanelles, where the boats went. The Constantinople-Trebizond route was used to transport grain, Byzantium was at the crossroads of some of the «granaries», of the eastern Mediterranean. A *griparia* from Corfu loaded 140 *moggia* of wheat at Agatopoli for Trebizond. In the opposite direction, millet was brought to Constantinople. On 15 July 1437, the *griparia* of Chiriacho Sachi shipped 492 *pisomiari*, the Trebizond measure, of millet or 26 *moggia* (from Constantinople), for a nolis of 60 *aspres per moggio*, or *perperi* 141 carats 18.

In the Black Sea Badoer also established regular relations with the two northern ports of Crimea and the Sea of Azov, the furthest points in the East of the navigation of the Italian republics. The inland waterways of the Russian rivers brought products from the steppes, and caravans took turns along the endless trails that had led Venetian merchants to Cathay. The account book only shows us the ships that carried Badoer's goods. These oriental markets sold the Venetians wax, furs, some spices, numerous slaves, caviar and fish glue, and bought metals, iron wire, copper, cloth, canvas and grain from him. On the spot, Badoer maintained close relations with two factors, Andrea da Chale from Caffa and Francesco Corner in Tana⁸.

⁸ While Caffa was a Genoese colony, the Venetians were more powerful in Tana (BERNDEI VEINSTEIN (1976), DOUMERC (1988), DOUMERC (1989)).

Shipments to	Value in <i>perperi</i> of exports	galley s	naves	galeasses, <i>griparie</i> , <i>beleiner</i>	Total
Gallipoli	420				
Alexandria	4,990		4		4
Beirut/Rhodes	1,566		2	1	3
Caffa	1,165	1	6	1	8
Modon (stopover)			2	2	4
Majorca			2		2
Sicily	1,539		1		1
Rodosto and Greece	557		1	barca	2
Trebizond, Simisso	2,637	1	2		3
Candia, term travel	614		22		22
Candia, stopover		1	13		13
Venice		14	19	3	36
total		17	74	8	98

Tab. 4: Badoer sea freight shipments]

The voyages were *pasazi*, «passages», which also performed a courier service: the owner Polo Querini was ordered to stop off at Modon to deliver goods to Duodo who would load them for Venice *sul primo pasazo*. Ser Piero Soranzo received 900 gold *ducats* for exchange to be paid in Venice to him shipped by the galleys under the command of *misser Zorzi Soranzo e per altri pasazi*. On 26 Nov 1438, Badoer had 1 *fardo* of silk shipped by the *griparia* of the master Dimitri Tofilacto in Modon to Marco Abati who would transfer it to the Venetian galleys for his brother Jeronimo in Venice. These few cases illustrate the rationality of Venetian imperial construction, which had seized upon ports of call that it made profitable in the service of navigation and maritime trade, and which served as logistical relays and counters where goods whose destination did not coincide with the route taken by the vessel, and which would continue their journey on another ship were deposited. In this respect, *mude* scheduling was a precious asset. Merchants organised all transfers of goods, couriers and foreign exchange to another place, depending on the movement of ships on the common trunk of the Venice-Levant axis marked by the three major ports of call of Candia, Modon and Corfu. There, at these crossroads,

the maritime routes diverged, from Candia in the three directions of the Levant, from Modon towards Candia or the Ponant⁹.

SAILING THE WATERS OF THE PONANT

The Venetian trading system was highly varied, based on the sale of spices, a harvested product, wine¹⁰ and cotton to Bruges and London, luxury goods, silks, brocades and damasks, mining products (alum) or industrial products (soap and paper), and the purchase of Flemish fabrics or woollen cloths and English wool and metals, products of proto-industrialisation. Some of the textile products were sold en route to Muslim customers. The imbalance in trade between Venice and England led to an active movement of bills of exchange between Venice and London¹¹. Venetian firms used to sell spices and other luxury goods in Bruges¹², the market for these products in north-western Europe, and English cloth took their place when the galleys returned to Venice. «The Italians then transferred the profits they made in Bruges across the Channel by bill of exchange to finance their purchases in England»¹³, as evidenced by the influx of bills of exchange to London to pay off this structural deficit. Galleys leased to Venetian shipowners for transport to Flanders and England the products imported from the Levant returned from the Mamlūk countries, from Beirut and Alexandria, they were at the heart of a circular economy in which Venice was the centre, the intermediary between the East and the Far West. The city favoured galleys despite their exorbitant cost (large workforce), because the Arsenal which built and hired them was the bulwark of the colonial empire and of Venice itself against any danger from the sea. These galleys or *trading galleys* sailed equally well in the waters of the Levant and Ponant, and were the same ships that, on their return from Alexandria, set sail for Bruges and London, whereas until now the

sometimes you have long
vowel, sometimes not

←
57

⁹ HOCQUET (2010b), ASHTOR (1983a).

¹⁰ RUDDOCK (1951), p. 54, notes, along with other English historians, that the wine brought by the Italians to Southampton was of little value around 1400, as the English were then masters of Aquitaine and preferred to import wine from Bordeaux and Gascony on English ships. This possession of the French coast also favoured their relations with the Iberian Peninsula.

¹¹ G. NORDIO (2006), p. 386.

¹² CIRIACONO (1996), p. 544; MELIS (1972), p. 188, doc. 29 and p. 316, doc. 94, have published lists of goods landed in London on 7 March 1430 and in 1441, together with their value. All the spices are here with sugar, cotton and silk, woad and alum, rice and dates, malvasia and sultanas (source: Lorenzo Dolfin's *commissaria*).

¹³ P. CLARKE (2006), p. 279-80; BOLTON and GUIDI BRUSCOLI (2008), p. 369, point out that the directors of Bank Borromei accepted losses in Bruges for profits in London and Italy, where wool and drapery were eventually sold.

emphasis was on the smaller size of the galleys assigned to the calmer waters of the Mediterranean.

Giovanni Foscarini's two registers are «galley books», the contents of which were intended to be copied onto the «ledger», that has not yet survived. They bear witness to the solidarity that united Venice's ruling class thanks to its network of family alliances and the exercise of a power that placed the State and its most solid institutions, the Councils, the Arsenal and its galleys, at the service of the merchant nobility, as illustrated by the law and its many amendments, which laid down the meticulous provision of ships from the Arsenal on the Ponant and Atlantic routes.]

Rework

THE AUCTION CONTRACT FOR THE FLANDERS GALLEYS

«25 November (1334)

That for the Flanders voyage be armed¹⁴ by private individuals with eight galleys, no more and no less. Those who wish to arm for this voyage must appear and be registered with the «great court», within eight days, giving a guarantee to carry out this voyage according to custom. And those who register for the said voyage may have new galleys built to the measurements of those currently on the voyage, i.e. to the measurements of those that were made in accordance with the measurements deposited with the *Officio del Levante*, notwithstanding the recent Council concerning the measurements of the Flanders galleys. With the condition that the said galleys are able to transport 280 *milliari* of a light weight of goods, each of which will be required to carry at least 120 *milliari* of a light weight. It is understood that yarnscotton, processed leather, rock alum, finished products, fustians, sultanas and powdered sugar are heavyweight products¹⁵ which will be presented to them by the merchants or

¹⁴ D. STÖCKLY (1995) reduces armament to the weapons carried on board the galley, citing «the obligation for nochers, caulkers and axe-masters to embark with their weapons and to have crossbowmen, the captain's responsibility for storing weapons, the ban on carrying weapons on board and when ashore to avoid scandal, and (finally) the order to store weapons in the storeroom so that they were always to hand» (p. 66). The weapons are in fact only a small part of the ship's armament. However, the A. specifies (p. 163) that «patrons going to London add anchors and thick ropes to the armament of the Flanders galleys». Fitting out a ship refers to the action of equipping a vessel and making it ready for sea. The fitting out of a vessel consists of equipping it with everything necessary for its type of navigation; this term also designates the totality of objects with which a vessel is equipped. These items are listed on the fitting-out sheets. In the case of galleys, outfitting included masts, antennae, sails, anchors, rudder and oars, etc., which D. Stöckly prefers to call «equipment» (p. 86).

¹⁵ It should be noted that «light goods» or «light weights» meant goods weighed at the light pound of 300 grams and «heavy goods» or «heavy weights» meant goods

others up to three days before the end of the loading period. They are obliged to take and load light goods in excess of the quantity specified above in place of heavy goods, for which reason they are authorised to unload as much heavy goods as is necessary to take on board the light goods, on pain of a fine of twice the nolis. If the said galleys do not take on board 120 *milliari* (one *milliaro* = 1,000 pounds = 300 kg) of light goods, they will incur a penalty of 20 shillings of *grossi* (10 *ducati*) for each *milliaro* (missing). Of this fine, the officers of the Levant will receive a third, the accuser from whom the truth is learned will receive a third, which will be credited to him, and the Commune will receive a third. And if no one can be found to arm these eight galleys, then no galley will be armed this year for Flanders.

That for the said voyage eight galleys be armed as stated, but if those willing to arm 8 galleys are not found, only six or seven will be found to arm for this voyage as stated. If there are 8 or 7 of them, they are obliged to take 120 *milliari* of light goods. But if there are only six, each galley must carry 144 *milliari* of light goods. It must be understood that in the *milliari* of light goods, sugar powder may not exceed 40 *milliari* (Adopted).

The following amendments were sucCESSIvELY adopted.

(A Senator) approved the proposed text, but with the proviso that sugar powder should not be counted among the light goods that galleys must carry (adopted).

The galleys must load all goods except those in the chests¹⁶ until 8 April next and leave on 13 April under the penalties, restrictions and conditions already voted and adopted for both loading and departure. They will remain in Flanders in port for 45 to 50 days, depending on what the captain decides. If they sail well, and if the 50 days are completed before 25 August, they may stay until 25 August as the captain sees fit for the benefit of the galleys and the goods. Let the said galleys have a captain in accordance with custom and all the orders taken up to now for this voyage, the liberties and franchises not revoked remain in force (adopted).

Brocades and cloths in gold thread made in Venice will be weighed to pay the nolis as spices are weighed. (adopted).

On the return journey, these galleys will be able to take up to 70 *milliari* pounds of ballast (33.5 tonnes) of iron, lead, copper, tin and

weighed at the pound of 478 grams, which was 60% heavier. All the galley's cargo, even goods weighed at the heavy weight, was valued at the light pound.

¹⁶ The term «avere di capsà» refers to the boxes placed under the galley's central gangway and made available to the crew (portages).

other metals, and they will be able to return with 80,000 pounds (heavyweight) of these metals (adopted).

Just as the galleys of Flanders can lift to Majorca large goods and chest goods from our merchants and foreigners, on their way to Flanders as well as on their return from these countries, in the same way they can load all these goods in Sicily (adopted).

The Flanders galleys must have 200 paid men, including 180 rowers and 12 crossbowmen. All must be entered in the logbook as rowers. They were obliged to row and received their pay from the galley (adopted).

To those who register for the voyage to Flanders and would like to have new galleys built, that they be given wood from the Commune, estimated according to the needs of the construction of these galleys, but if the Council is against (adopted).

That the term of office of the *Savi agli ordini* be extended until mid-December (adopted).

November 25, the nobleman *ser* Francesco Venier has obtained to arm a galley for the voyage to Flanders under the conditions adopted above (adopted). His guarantor is *ser* Nicolò Venier his brother.

November 27, the nobleman *ser* Marino Cappello has obtained to arm the above-mentioned galleys for the voyage. Guarantees for the execution of this voyage are provided by *ser* Francesco Polani for two galleys, *ser* Nicolò Barbarigo for one, and *ser* Nicolò Gradenigo son of *ser* Bertuccio for one, *ser* Marco Grimani for two, *ser* Andreolo Loredan son of Antonio, for one».

? We started cautiously, in 1313, with small galleys («in light measure»); ten years later, we adopted large galleys as for the Orient and the Arsenal built new galleys, the number of which varied. In 1318, two galleys were still being used, but the number soon increased to four, six and even eight and nine galleys (in 1329, 1332-33 and 1335). These galleys sailed to Bruges and Antwerp, the convoy left Venice in the spring, preferably in March or April, sometimes at the beginning of May. The stay in Flanders could be extended but was normally limited to 40 days. At the start of these journeys, the State promised a subsidy of 15 pounds of *grossi* (150 *ducats*) per month, soon reduced to 12 pounds, and in 1374 transformed the subsidy into a repayable loan of 250 *ducats* (25 pounds of *grossi*) for which it did not specify the duration or frequency (journey or month). The nolis in 1313 were set at 15 pounds for 400 livres of light goods, at 2% for spices and silk, precious stones and metals, 3% for *grana*, 20 shillings of *grossi* (10 *ducats*) per *milliario* of alum and heavyweight or for a bale of 10 cloths,

30 shillings of *grossi* for a bale of 500 pounds of wool. These fees were reduced by 1/3 for *large galleys*¹⁷. Merchants embarked with their scales or steelyard (*cum suis trapuntis*), their cases, suitcases and weapons. The maximum load for each galley was set at 70 *milliari a peso sottile* (around 21 tonnes) of heavy goods, including alum, and 200 *milliari* of wool and cloths. The ballast consisted of metals: 80 *milliari* of iron, lead, copper and tin. Customs duties amounted to 2.5% for leather, cotton yarn and furs, but canvas and fabrics used to make sails entered Venice duty-free, while amber, a luxury product often re-exported to the Levant was subject to an import duty of 25 shillings of *grossi* per thousand. These low duties protected Venetian craftsmen (furriers, cobblers and weavers) and encouraged their expansion through maritime trade (exemption for canvas for ships sails). The loading of 20 *milliari* of cloth was soon authorised with a nolis of 30 shillings of *grossi* per thousandth. Cretan wines were highly prized in northern Europe, and galleys carried 21 *amphorae* of them.

The ballast was soon reduced, limited to 20 *milliari*, while the cargo of light goods was increased to 280 *milliari* or, alternatively, 100 *milliari* of light goods were supplemented by 80 *milliari* of goods weighed by heavy weight which the patrons were authorised to supplement in Majorca or beyond with heavy goods, saffron and alum or expensive products that they locked up in chests (*l'havere casselle*).

¹⁷ CESSI (1952c), p. 82.

JOURNEY TIMES (1521-1522)

Journey	Time	Comments
Pola-Otranto Otrante	5-9 August 10-19/VIII	Galées left Venice 4 days apart The stay was prolonged: the loading of the wines was slowed down by the festivities (15 August) and the <i>tramontana</i> (heavy seas), which prevented us from going ashore.
Otranto-Messina Messina	20-28/ VIII 29/VIII - 8/IX	In Messina, the three galleys loaded the wines from the <i>nave Faliera</i> .
Messina-Palermo Palermo	8-10/IX 10 -18/IX	
Palermo-Cadiz Cadiz- Cascais	18/IX - 12/X 8/XI - 28 XI	Favourable wind (<i>cum prospero vento</i>) Bad weather forced the galleys to return to Cascais, Lisbon's outer harbour on two occasions.
Cascais-Laredo	28 XI - 10/ XII	Favourable wind until Cape Finisterre, then westerly and northerly winds (<i>mistral</i>), 6 days of rain and gusts. Antonio Donà's <i>Permarina</i> galley got lost and docked in San Sebastian
Laredo	10-22/XII	The port was not suitable for wintering, and the fine weather prompted him to leave for Southampton without waiting for the galley held in San Sebastian (equipment confiscated).
Laredo-Plymouth Plymouth-Southampton	22-27/XII arrival on 3/II/1522	

Tab. 5: Journey time for a galley on the Venice-Bruges route

The outward journey took almost 6 months, with 79 days at sea from Pola to Plymouth. The galleys had to contend with bad weather¹⁸, sketchy if not completely inadequate port facilities and an inability to provide shelter for the winter; despite the use of scientific devices (the compass), one of them got lost and arrived in San Sebastian instead of Southampton. This was almost thirty years after Columbus had crossed the Atlantic.

why not just say compass?
Or what other devices?

GALLEYS OR COG

To protect the shipping of galleys, the government banned overland trade¹⁹ (Germany) of English wool except in winter, and encouraged the loading of lamb skins in the ports of the Balearic Islands and in Cadiz²⁰ of goods destined for Venice, which replaced the goods from Flanders unloaded in that port. The galley was loaded with 280 *milliari ad pondus subtile*, including at least 120 *milliari of havere subtili* (cotton yarn, tanned leather, alum, ground products, futaines, sultanas and sugar powder, all goods classified as «heavy», were excluded).

In 1347, the auction price was set at 50 pounds of *grossi*, but this amount, considered too high, discouraged bidders, none of whom came forward, and it was reduced to 20 pounds; the load set at 125 *milliari* was also reduced (96 *milliari*) and the *nolis* were increased from 1 shilling of *grossi* to 3 shillings on the outward journey and 4 shillings on the return; on 3 March it was necessary to reduce the load to 72 *milliari*. The wanderings continued, the construction of 2 galleys with an impressive tonnage was undertaken: 400 *milliari ad grossos* (a

¹⁸ DOUMERC (1991), p. 364 believes that technical advances in the art of navigation, and above all the compass, made it possible to set sail even in winter and when the weather was overcast, which speeded up the rotation of convoys. According to TUCCI (1974), p. 124, a convoy of galleys left Southampton on 18 June 1505, but bad weather forced it to take refuge on the Isle of Wight.

¹⁹ BRAUNSTEIN (2016) has given pride of place to Bruges and Antwerp. Particular mention should be made of p. 37 (transalpine routes through the passes and valleys linking the Veneto with Nuremberg and Augsburg), 238-9, 242-6 (the business, particularly the fur trade, of the Lubecker merchants Veckinchusen established with their clerks and associates in both Venice and Bruges) and 464-5 (the lexical importance of the *Livre des Mestiers brugeois*) for Bruges and 245-9 and 345-8 for Antwerp. LANE (1996²), p. 59-60: as long as the war between France and England or while the Genoese race revived, Venice resorted to the German route in all seasons: in 1432 and 1433, English cloth arrived in Bruges, where it was taken over by German carriers, notably the firm of Johann Keller from Memmingen, who consigned the goods to Venice. Barbarigo intended to pay for the English cloth with the sale of goatskins transported by the same firm to Vettor Cappello in Bruges, without using bills of exchange.

²⁰ GONZALES AREVALO (2020), p. 24-5 has published a list, based mainly on the Morosini Chronicle, of ships belonging to Venetians which on their way to Flanders called at a port in the Bay of Cadiz.

tonnage of 191 tonnes)²¹; on 30 December 1356, the project was revisited: the Arsenal would build 5 galleys, including 2 of the Alexandria type, their load would be reduced to 60 *milliari*, the nolis for spices on the outward journey was increased from 35 to 44 %; on the return journey, the galleys had loaded an excess of wool, the ballast (tin, copper, other metals) was set at 60 *milliari* for a cargo of 180 *milliari* of light goods²². The *Senate* also encouraged the construction of 500-*milliari* ships, «which our city greatly needs», for the transport of wheat from the East²³. After 5 years at sea, the galleys, deemed too old, were decommissioned. They were used for another year or two, but «it was no longer safe to sail these ships»²⁴.

Remark;
Carve up.

The smallest, assigned to navigation in Romania and the Black Sea had a carrying capacity of 300/320 *milliari* of heavy pounds (*Senate*, January 26, 1440), the largest, 450/460 *milliari* (1455), were used for all the other lines. The Flanders galleys measured :

deck length	118.5 feet	41,119 m
width in the middle	17.5 feet	6,073 m
bottom width	10 feet	3,470 m
centre height	8 feet $\frac{1}{3}$ minus 2 fingers	2,705 m

Tab. 6: Flanders galley measurements

On deck, between the two rows of rower's benches, the lidded caissons held the prize goods, the *havere capsae*. These caissons of equal height formed the *corsia* that ran from bow to stern²⁵.

Galleys were not the only Venetian ships to ply the maritime routes of the Atlantic Ponant. Their limited cargo capacity meant that their owners had to leave a greater or lesser proportion of the goods destined for foreign markets ashore. The State would then authorise a sailing vessel (cog or nave) with a much greater loading capacity to take on the remainder of the goods left in the warehouses or on the quays. The Venetian cog owned by Nicolò Rosso and crewed by 35 men was captured in 1403 at the Cadiz port of call²⁶ by a Genoese privateer who

²¹ SACERDOTI, p. 83 (n. 17): according to the law of 24 December 1356, these were pounds of heavy weight.

²² CESSI (1952c), p. 149-54.

²³ CESSI (1952c), p. 161.

²⁴ CESSI (1952c), note 348.

²⁵ SACERDOTI (1962), p. 83 (n. 17) and p. 85; good description of the galley, STAHL (2009)

²⁶ GONZALES AREVALO (2020), p. 29, according to the Morosini chronicle, Nicolò Rosso's ship was captured at night by the crews of two Genoese cogs returning from Flanders. The Venetian was carrying 40,000 *ducati* worth of spices and sugar and 10,000 *ducati* worth of cotton. The Genoese capture was in retaliation for the capture

took the ship to Bruges where he sold the ship's equipment and part of the cargo. Thanks to two agreements signed between Venice and Genoa to return the ships, crews and cargoes, we know the damage inflicted on the cog (700 gold florins) and its lost cargo (12,053 *ducati*), which does not include the goods recovered by their owners. The Venetian cog was carrying ginger *colli*, silk *fardelli*, bales of silk cloth, brocades and gold cloths, rhubarb and saffron, glass barrels, 6,000 pounds of long Ceylon cinnamon, 5,500 pounds of *semenzina*, 15,000 pounds of ginger, 1,000 pounds of cardamom, 6,000 pounds of fragrant thyme, 23 bales of paper, 15 tonnes of saltpetre belonging to two shippers, one with 9 barrels, the other with 15 barrels, and 6,000 sponges. The doctor Andrea de Musolini had also loaded 62 barrels of malvasia and Andrea de Forcis 6 sacks of cotton. The cog was loaded with 31 different types of merchandise, not counting the various types (silks were counted as one type of merchandise, whether drapery, damask, brocade, gold thread drapery, etc.). Thirty-six people reported a loss of goods in the affair, including some citizens and above all leading noble families, Contarini, Donà, Falier, Bembo, Bragadin, Corner, Michiel, Morosini, Mocenigo, Querini, Soranzo, Trevisan, Zeno and Zustinian. The Contarini family included Bertuccio, Bartolomeo, Giovanni, Piero et Ruggiero, the Morosini were just two, Bernardo and Nicolò, but Nicolò had loaded five different products (borax, cardamom, ginger, rhubarb and pepper)²⁷.

A CONVOY OF GALLEYS

The galley performed a courier service on 10 August 1521, in Otranto 2 *schirazi* loaded with wine (around 500 *botti* of malvasia) arrived, one for the procurator Alvise Pisani, the other for the patron Pietro Donà, which they began loading the next day. On 19 August, 480 *botti* of Malvasia and 80 *miara* of oil had been loaded. In Messina where the convoy had arrived on 28 August, it had found the nave *Faliera*, which had arrived 15 days earlier, with 150 *botti* of wine,

of three galleys by Carlo Zen off Modon. The same author gives another example of a Genoese capture: Silvestro Polo's ship and its varied cargo in 1455 (rice, almonds, dates, oil, etc.) in other words, agricultural products harvested or processed in Andalusia). On Genoese catches in 1403-1404, table p. 211 in GONZALES AREVALO and VIDAL.

²⁷ BRAUNSTEIN (1987), pp. 123, 128-9 et *passim*. It is difficult to determine whether the goods listed are those lost by the shippers or whether they are those recorded by customs on departure, in which case they would be the ship's entire cargo. What is important is to note that the goods loaded on the two types of ship are identical. On the damage inflicted on one of Balbi's cogs by another Genoese privateer, LANE (1996²), p. 48, Andrea Barbarigo had not insured his goods and his book recorded the loss of some foodstuffs.

which the galleys could not take, so they were loaded onto a *barza* which would sail alongside the galleys. A letter from Palermo informed the captain that at the Falagnana (?) there were 5 *fuste* of Turks, 5 others had gone to Barbary with 130 slaves and 20,000 *ducati* worth of booty. There were also 20 *navi* loaded with wheat destined for Spain where there was famine. According to the captain, wheat cost 1.5 Venetian *ducati* per *stajo*. At Southampton on 8 February 1522, he had loaded 850 bales of wool, 1,000 pieces of pewter²⁸, cloth and kerseys in large quantities. The trouble began, as the English held the galleys in port for almost a year and a half. On 23 June 1523, while the galleys were still being held by the English in Southampton, captain Priuli who had retired to St. Edward's Abbey, announced to the Doge that his galleys had finally loaded 900 bales of wool, 1,800 ingots of tin and a small amount of little cloth (*pochissime panine*). To obey the orders he had received, he had not taken on board the kerseys of the Ragusans (there were many of these *kerseys* of mediocre quality). The return journey began on 1 July 1523. On 28 April 1532, the *Council of Ten* had written to him to return in a straight line without touching any port, but when he arrived in the Gulf (the Adriatic, Gulf of Venice), he could let the *gallioti* go ashore (*dar scala*), but

«he would not call at Ragusa, the island of Mezzo or La Meleda in order to avoid the unloading there of goods belonging to foreigners and which would be taken to places outside our domain»²⁹.

black or no?

CAPITAL AND MERCHANTS ABOARD THE *FOSCARA*

ON BEHALF OF GIOVANNI FOSCARI

Giovanni Foscari, who had twice won the auction for a galley, was his ship's biggest shipper. On his first voyage, he took 8 *colli* of ginger and 3 of pepper, 6 boxes of cinnamon, 5 barrels of cloves, a total of 11,909 pounds (weight) of spices, to which we can probably add 14 sacks of walnuts, a black vegetable dye weighing 3,109 pounds, making a total of 15,018 pounds of products from the Orient. The wine from Candia, a Venetian colony, made up a large part of this shipment. There were various types of wine, contained in 4 *botti*, 46 *bigonzi*, 3 *quartes*

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²⁸ Pewter in its various forms - crockery, statues, ingots, etc. - was used as ballast for galleys [H. BRADLEY (1992), p. 186]. In 1440, the Contarini, Bertuccio and Tomà, bought some for £ 340, Federico Corner and Carlo Contarini bought £ 420 worth the same year and another £ 150 the following year.

²⁹ «Our domain» refers to the Venetian State, which wanted to avoid competition. Fr. ORTALLI (2005), p. 151-15111.

and 100 *caratelli*, totalling more than 150 tons³⁰. Finally, he also loaded a product of Venetian craftsmanship, coloured damask, of which there were almost 100 fathoms. Foscari gave no indication of the value of these goods, i.e. the purchase price agreed to acquire these various products, or the identity of the merchant selling the goods he was taking to Flanders. He was content to display the merchandise with a laconic «per farne nota», so as «not to forget», to whom the ginger or cinnamon belonged. For his second trip, he took the precaution of packing a bag with 900 gold *ducats*, spices such as ginger (7 bales and 2 cases), 14 bales of pepper, 1 barrel of mace, ~~scaps~~ (*gARBELature*) of small pepper, cloves, mace and broken walnuts, for which he counted a nolis equal to 2,000 pounds-weight, making a total of almost 20,000 pounds of spices. The wines of Candia were not absent, Foscari took 8 *botti* and 220 *caratelli*. He rounded off his cargo with a bulky but light product, sponges (120 pounds of *sponze*).

ON BEHALF OF OTHERS

Giovanni Foscari had also loaded goods onto his galley on behalf of other merchants who had placed their trust in him to negotiate the best possible sale in one of the ports where the galley would be calling. During the first of his two voyages, he took on board 5 cases of cinnamon and 4 *colli* of *semenzina* entrusted to him by Vettor Soranzo, 225 fathoms of coloured damask and a parcel of malaguettes belonging to Nicolò Querini, cinnamon again, 3 boxes, whose owners were the brothers of Antonio Loredan, mace (one barrel) and gold thread (24 *cinnamon*) from Francesco Foscarini. The other goods belonged to the Gritti family, especially Triadan and company, who had 9 *colli* of nutmeg, 5 *colli* of ginger and 77 bags of cotton on board while Lucà, son of Triadan, was content to carry 174.5 pounds of *gARBELatura* of various spices, a poor-quality by-product made from ginger, cloves, mace, little pepper and walnut fragments. On the eve of his second voyage, his friends once again brought him goods: Piero Soranzo asked him to sell 11,111 pounds of galle di Puglia, Nicolò da Molin entrusted him with 2 bales of pepper, Lucà Gritti from Triadan with 3 cases of cinnamon and, in partnership with Andrea Diedo, nearly 30,000 pounds (heavy weight) of soap, Triadan was content this time with 4 parcels of *verzi*, and his son Lucà with 3 cases of cinnamon. ~~Alvise Foscari, Giovanni's brother, modestly loaded 346 pounds of *gARBELatura* with various spices, but he formed a company with the Priuli. The Priuli~~

³⁰ The barrel is not a unit of measurement, but a wooden container used to hold liquids, and we have therefore grouped *botti*, *bigonzi*, *quartes* and *caratelli* under this term.

family took the lion's share: Francesco Priuli from Zuane loaded 101 bags of cotton, 23 boxes of cotton yarn and 130 pounds of *scamonia*; Piero and Antonio Priuli and co. loaded 4 boxes of cinnamon, gARBELatura pepper (261 pounds), 20 pieces of *rubini* tied together, and in association with Alvise Foscari, they entrusted another 50 bags of cotton, long pepper, *zedoaria*, raw or prepared *turbiti* (an expensive product sold to Flemish merchants at 45 *grossi* of Flanders per pound); Marco Priuli had 1 parcel of long pepper and 79 pounds of *benzui* on board, as did Andrea Cappello, Zuan Morosini 2 boxes of cinnamon and 1 barrel of mace, Marco Michiel owned 42 canelle of gold thread³¹, Antonio Zustinian entrusted the galley with transporting 7 barrels of ammonia salt and *zanbelloti*, Homobon Gritti³² preferred a luxury item, a gilded canopy³³. Foscari took 27,000 pounds of spices on his first voyage and 39,000 pounds on his second, an increase of 44.44%³⁴. The long Turkish war that broke out in 1463 had, at least initially, little impact on the oriental spice trade in Venice, because the city continued to develop its commercial relations with Alexandria, the great port of the Mamlūk state, which also controlled Syrian ports and was a rival of the Ottoman sultan. Noble friends had also entrusted Foscari with merchandise loaded at ports of call in Sicily to sell to Flemish or English clients. Foscari owed them all.

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All the goods loaded onto the *Foscara* galley belonged to this merchant-merchant or to his relatives and close friends, nobles whom he approached in the councils of the Republic and who, after having helped finance the operation by buying carats from the galley, had entrusted him with merchandise to sell to Flemish or English customers or to ports of call on the long maritime route between Venice and Bruges. His account books recorded his business, nothing but his business, but among these were the *nolis* or freights, i.e. the cost of transport paid by the shippers to the shipowner who rented them space on his ship. These *nolis* constituted revenue for the shipowner and as such were duly recorded.

When Foscari imported goods to Bruges, he incurred various expenses. On 13 July 1463, his galley left Venice with 8 *colli* of ginger weighing 5,295 pounds and 7 ounces net (the Venetian weight at the

³¹ LANE (1996²) p. 57 points out that gold thread was also imported from Constantinople by the galleys of Romania.

³² H. BRADLEY (1992), p. 37, mentions Homobon Gritti as a wool merchant and creditor to the king. By mid-century, Angelo Donà (was he Venetian?) was the main exporter of English wool.

³³ The baldachin or canopy a religious object, was used for processions. It sheltered the clergy and enhanced their pomp.

³⁴ According to S. MONTEMEZZO (2013), who consulted the master's theses by G. NORDIO reproduced in BARILE (2006) and ROLDO (2004-2005) edited by MUELLER.

time) worth 664 *ducati* 12 *gros*. The *nolis*, set at 4 *ducati* per thousand pounds, was 21 *ducati* 3 *gros*. The galley docked in the outer harbour, at L'Écluse, and the levies, based on the bundle or *collo*, began: bringing the merchandise to Bruges, the «*hôtellage*», or «*hostise*», storage in a warehouse called a «*zelier*», (we recognise our modern cellar), a tip to the *gARBELador*, shipping by weight and weighing (the merchandise is then converted to Bruges weight), brokerage and the Bruges *cotimo*, a customs tax of 3 Flemish *gros* (*grf*) per Flemish pound on goods valued at 144 pounds to pay for the work and subsistence of the Venetian consul in Bruges, in total 3 pounds of Flanders, 1 s 4 gr, which made, at 48 *grf* per *ducat*, 15 *ducati* 8 *grossi*. Foscarei added his commission (2%) and calculated that his ginger was worth 723 *ducati* 6 *grossi*. When Giovanni Foscarei imported goods to Bruges to sell, he weighed them and never failed to invoice his customer for the costs incurred. The cotton from Triadan's Gritti Co. was sold, partly in Bruges and partly in Southampton. In both ports it was weighed, and in Bruges, where 22,352 pounds of cotton were sold, Giovanni Foscarei paid 1 Flemish pound for the weighing. The fabrics were not weighed, but measured and this service also had to be paid for: In Southampton, the measurer was paid 2 shillings 11 pence for measuring 215 fathoms of damask, i.e. 16 ¼ *dst* per cent.

FREIGHTS

EXPENDITURE

Giovanni Foscarei recorded an initial summary of the costs incurred during the navigation. At Parenzo in Istria, on 20 July, he recruited 22 rowers and advanced them 4 months wages (these men received a monthly salary of 14 *grossi* 9/10). He also paid 4 months wages to the chaplain, the fisherman responsible for supplying the officer's table and the indispensable pilot, who received 5 *ducati*. He also paid 2 *burchi* who had brought ballast, probably stones or sand. A month later, he was in Palermo (19 August), on 2 September he bought wood for the cooking, on the 18th in Cadiz he paid 81 *cantars* and 34 pounds (8,134 pounds-weight) for biscuit and fresh bread which cost him 83 *ducati* and 18 *grossi*, at Cape Saint-Vincent he bought another 10 *cantars* of biscuit and sent the *scrivan* to Lisbon to order bread. On 20 October he reached Brittany and bought fresh bread for the *chiourme* (28 *ducati*). The local authorities levied an anchorage fee and a tax to issue a safe-conduct. In Sandwich (*Sentuzi*, one of the Five Ports, so the convoy skirted the English coast before reaching the Flemish port) he stayed from 7 November to 7 December, paying a pilot to enter and leave the port, before which he had provided himself with biscuits and bread. On

2 January, he entered L'Écluse (Sluys), Bruges outer harbour and generously offered his guests 5 *caratelli* (17 ½ *ducati*) of wine. He had spent 417 *ducati* and 20 *grossi* on this trip.

Among the expenses to come, salaries took first place: in Bruges, 4 months wages had to be paid to the *homo de conseio*, the maistrance, the sailors who worked on the masts, antennae, sails, anchors and ropes, 23 crossbowmen and 145 rowers, for a total of 1,331 *ducati* 20 *grossi*. The galley needed to be overhauled, so it was refitted at L'Écluse and suet, *oakum* (*chena*) and pitch were purchased. A boat (*scutta*) was hired to carry goods bought in town to the galley. Also in Bruges, he bought 4 dozen spears, ropes and fittings, rented a house, and bought 403 *cantars* of biscuit and 69,567 loaves of fresh bread for the chiourme from the baker Rigo.

After purchasing oars, oakum and pitch for the longboat, bonuses for the crew, and gifts such as cheeses given in London, the total cost of the galley in Southampton was 2,930 *ducati*; on 19 August 1468, another 4 months wages had to be paid in this English port. The number of crossbowmen remained the same, but the number of rowers had fallen to 136. On 15 September, the galley arrived in Cadiz and the patron sent someone to San Lorenzo Barani to buy a tiller.

The voyage continued without a hitch, with Foscari religiously making an offering to the church at each port of call, particularly Oran, paying port dues and the salaries of eight sailors, the carpenter, the caulker and the *remes* (oar repairer), the crossbowmen and 147 rowers³⁵. He also paid 16 months wages to the *sescalco*, the steward in charge of supplies, who was paid 2 *ducati* a month, the pilot, the sounder, the sworn master and the comite, whose voice and even whip set the pace for the rowers. In total, he had spent 5,632 *ducati* 20 *grossi* on the galley since the start, more than the *nolis* collected. An important item in the galley's expenditure, was the provisions or commissions credited to the shipowner, 520 *ducati*, in other words the shipowner had deducted almost 10% of the expenses incurred for the navigation.

RECIPES

Giovanni Foscari collected freights (known in the Mediterranean as *noli/nolis*) for all goods loaded on his galleys, which represented both the cost of renting space on the ship and the cost of transporting the

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³⁵ H. BRADLEY (1992), p. 134-5, estimates Giacomo Corner's expenditure on his galley at £907 6s 8d. for his galley in 1441-42. This cost included the payment of customs duties on spices, wool and drapery, expenses for packing, cartage, weighing, brokerage and sorting, pilotage and rents, food and drink for himself and his servants for 5 months 8 days, and wages (£486, the largest item on the bill) paid to 305 men. These expenses were added to the value of the purchases.

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goods to their destination. Merchants wishing to export their goods on galleys bound for Flanders had to present them for customs inspection at least three days before departure³⁶. The officers in charge of this control paid the shipowner the nolis minus the export tax. For the second voyage, Giovanni Foscari credited in Pola the sum of 210 *ducati* and 9 gros, brought to him by Zuan Corner the nobleman at the stern of the galley, i.e. the nolis of the goods loaded in Venice by Foscari's friends and by the shipowner, whose initial destination was Bruges. However, during the voyage, the galley completed the cargo at each port of call. At Messina he loaded silk belonging to twelve different merchants and malaguettes belonging to a thirteenth merchant. Did these men accompany their precious commodity? When they arrived in Bruges, they all paid the nolis. They paid a total of 249 *ducati* 3 *gr.* more than the merchants who had loaded in Venice. Those who had sold their goods in Bruges were quits, but the merchants, Venetian or foreign, who would then continue the journey to London in the hope of selling their unsold merchandise, particularly cotton and yarns, for which the Priuli were asked on 19 May to pay 908 *ducati* 17 *gr.*, or those who had bought in Bruges had to pay a nolis for this new journey. Silk from Sicily The merchant Francesco Beltrame had sold his malaguettes and was leaving Bruges with alum, followed by a newcomer, Lorenzo Agostini, who was carrying 235 *caratelli* of alum. To transport this product, which was essential to the wool, glass and dyeing industries³⁷, these two merchants paid 640 *ducati* 21 *gr.*, an enormous sum, 27% of which was paid by Beltrame, who therefore loaded 64 *caratelli*. It is remarkable that Agostini's load of alum alone took the place of the wine transported on the outward journey by Giovanni Foscari.

Travel and business did not end in Southampton. In Cadiz on 15 September, Foscari received a nolis of 63 *ducati* 8 *gr* for 11 bales of cloth. Entering the Mediterranean, the galley was engaged in coastal trade. At Malaga for cloth loaded in England and in Cadiz, it received 117 *ducati* and for cotton taken in this port 40 *ducati* 12 *gr.*

In Oran, he sold the Marchion cloth and cloths loaded in Cadiz and at Bougie (Bechalla) enough goods taken from Malaga for a nolis of 77

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³⁶ CESSI (1952c), p. 113. This provision does not appear to have been changed. These customs officers («Extraordinaries») ensured compliance with the regulations concerning the division between «subtle» and «gross» assets, and the load, which could not exceed the marks (waterline) on the ship. They were also authorised to collect the nolis and ensured that the goods belonged to Venetians, not foreigners.

³⁷ Alum was transported to Bruges from the alum producers in Phocaea (a Genoese monopoly that ended when the Ottomans conquered the western shores of Anatolia around 1455) or from Tolfa and Civit  Vecchia, in Papal territory (initially a Medici monopoly). From Bruges, the alum essential to the textile industry could then be shipped to England.

ducati, after which the galley reached Tunis where the cloth was unloaded from the Genoese, who paid 600 *ducati* of nolis on 17 October, a very high price which could indicate that the cloth had been loaded in England. He also unloaded goods belonging to the Moors, the Muslims of the Nasrid kingdom and the Maghreb who paid a nolis of 258 *ducati* 18 *gr* for goods loaded at Málaga and Oran. On 14 November, on his return to Venice, he claimed the nolis from the Venetian noble merchants, Andrea Diedo and Lucà Gritti for the soap (there were more than 32,000 pounds, *peso grosso*) loaded on 15 August at Southampton, to the Pisani (4 bales of cloth), to Andrea Malipiero (cloth loaded in Syracuse), and finally to Antonio de Rizardo, also for drapery taken in Tunis and Syracuse.

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The nolis brought him the princely sum of 3,113 *ducati*. But throughout the voyage, he had incurred expenses for his galley, which also carried passengers from Venice to Palermo and took others from Palermo to Majorca who paid a total of 45 *ducati*.

Venetian galleys loaded goods belonging to foreigners. The galley of Giovanni Cappello (or John Capell as the English wrote) took goods from the Genoese Spinelli, Centurione and Cataneo in 1445. The value of these goods was far behind that of the Venetians Marco Barbarigo or Andrea and Federico Corner who had loaded their goods onto Marco Priuli's galley, part of the same convoy. But London merchants such as William Estfeld and Richard Quatermayns had pepper, indigo, sugar and silk for more than £300 *st.* on the *Priula* and cloves and pepper for at least £150 *st.* on the *Cappella*. These two English importing merchants were farmers of the customs taxes known as «tunnage and poundage», which weighed on trade, and Estfeld had accommodated the Contarini family. Few English merchants could claim such privileges³⁸. Some did not pay nolis because their goods were considered «portage»³⁹ and this represented large sums, up to 500 and 600 pounds *st.* and even 2,000 pounds when the beneficiary was a relative of the owner, such as Francesco Balbi on Piero Balbi's galley. Venetians living in London made use of this facility, Giovanni Marcanova charged 400 pounds on one galley and 250 pounds on the other. In reality, the portage was divided between the members of the crew; Francesco Balbi's portage was divided between nine men⁴⁰.

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From its inception, the voyage from Flanders by convoy of galleys saw its departure date and objective uncertain. From 1318 to 1357,

³⁸ H. BRADLEY ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED. (1992), p. 8 0-81.

³⁹ On the nature of portages, see HOCQUET (1981), p. 160-1.

⁴⁰ H. BRADLEY (1992), p. 85-6.

during the deliberations that preceded the decision to send, the number of galleys to participate and the bids, ~~the Senate~~ hesitated over the term of the navigation and wisely opted for a division of the galleys, half of which would go to Bruges, the other half to Brabant and Antwerp. in 1324, it even seems that the final destination of all the galleys was not Bruges but Antwerp. The Venetians were therefore aware that the port of Scheldt and Brabant, which was destined for a great future, already had several advantages in the first half of the 14th century, both in terms of demand for oriental products and the supply of goods from the north. Bruges or Antwerp was therefore the end of the outward journey, and the Venetians, loyal to Bruges, did not neglect either Brabant or Antwerp⁴¹. Several events contributed to their choice: the installation of the English cloth stage in 1421 does not seem to have been a determining factor; more important was the arrival of German merchants with silver and cotton fustians⁴² in the 1460s, but the decisive event in 1498 was the transfer of the Portuguese spice market to the Brabant town⁴³. On the return journey, the galleys gathered in Southampton as the voyage continued through southern England, which offered its ports, wool drapery and metals. The departure dates to face the capricious weather of the Atlantic, with its storms and heavy swells, were set in the spring, after the return to Venice of the galleys from Beirut and Alexandria. In 1313, when the voyage was inaugurated, the departure date was set for the first half of March, then extended to the whole month of March; in 1324, the departure date was pushed back to the end of April and even the beginning of May; in 1347, the departure date originally set for 25 April was pushed back to 2 May, and the same was done in 1357⁴⁴. Giovanni Foscari left Venice only between 11 and

⁴¹ The great floods of 1375-76 and 1404 had opened up the Western Scheldt to large sailing ships, and Antwerp benefited from the influx of English merchants who flocked to the various fairs held there and in Bergen-op-Zoom [BOLTON and GUIDI BRUSCOLI (2008), p. 363].

⁴² BOLTON and GUIDI BRUSCOLI (2008), p. 372 and the table on p. 373.

⁴³ GUICCIARDINI (1567), p. 83-84, wrote: «The second factor in the rise of this city, so large, rich and famous (this is Antwerp, which had benefited from the existence of two free fairs of six weeks each, at Whitsun and in the autumn. which was the first cause of the expansion) began in 1503 or 4 when the Portuguese, a short time before, by means of a marvellous and astonishing navigation and equipment, occupied Calicut (...) and began to bring spices and drugs from India to Portugal, and then from Portugal to the fairs of that country». While Bartolomeu Dias passed the Cape of Good Hope and entered the Indian Ocean in 1488, Vasco da Gama, on the strength of his predecessor's experience, reached India and returned to Lisbon in July 1499 [MOLLAT (1984), p. 61].

⁴⁴ CESSI (1952c), p. 80. DOUMERC (19 85), p. 605-623, DOUMERC (1991), p. 373, argues that the delay of the *mude* in the second half of the 15th century was already a sign of the decline of Venice and the shift in the interests of the merchant nobility

13 July 1463 for the first of his two journeys, and on 19 July 1467⁴⁵. This uncertain departure took place during the spring, and the prolongation of the war with the Turks could have postponed it until early summer. and its financial solidity, they were not unaware of the commercial and traffic advantages offered by the neighbouring port of Brabant.

These voyages, which took place in the second half of the 15th century, showed that the use of the galleys to which Venice remained faithful was very costly, that the most influential Venetian patriciate reserved for itself the gains and profits from this trade, and that the goods imported by the ports of north-western Europe consisted mainly of a wide variety of spices or products required by the nascent textile industry (alum and dyes). In exchange, the northern world supplied its metals, wool and drapery, and Antwerp was already offering an alternative to Bruges, while Venetian vessels were frequent visitors to Southampton.

MARITIME SAFETY AND INSURANCE

The perils of the sea and of men were commonplace for sailors, and for merchants too, while theft was a benign form of damage: 83 black sheep's fleeces were stolen from the *scrivan* of the Zuan Contarini *nave*. In 1432, the Genoese Pietro Spinola seized the nave *Miana*, on which Andrea Barbarigo's clerk had taken on board a large cargo of Syrian cotton. He had already reported a similar misadventure when Barbarigo loaded goods onto the *cocca Balba*, which had been captured by a Genoese privateer on the Flanders route in 1430⁴⁶. Privateering was common in the Mediterranean, even if it did not reach at the end of the Middle Ages the heights that it later attained when became the fastest way to procure slaves and rowers⁴⁷.

Only one shipwreck appears in Badoer's account book, which, on 18 January 1440, charged Zorzi Zorzi, the Venetian baile *perperi* 6 car. 10 to rescue the *galioi* of the galley of Tadio Giustinian which had been shipwrecked and broken. It was a rescue issued to deal with an emergency, as the money would have to be returned to Venice. One way of protecting himself was to pass on the risk to others by taking out marine insurance⁴⁸. Among Badoer's financial activities, marine insurance occupied a prominent place, with the merchant Badoer acting

towards agricultural property in *Terraferma*. The departure of trading galleys to northern Europe was subject to fluctuations from the outset.

⁴⁵ ROLDO (2004-2005), p. 31 and 34.

⁴⁶ LANE (1996³), p. 48 and 56.

⁴⁷ HOCQUET (2022), p. 197-203.

⁴⁸ VALLET (1999), p. 111.

as an insurer collecting premiums, an operation that testified both to the widespread use of marine insurance in the first half of the Quattrocento and to the opportunities for profit that a Venetian merchant, too often portrayed as a timid small-time earner, scorned by the agents of the powerful Florentine companies or by the bolder Genoese financiers, was sure to seize. On 22 September 1438, Badoer had already collected premiums totalling perperi 314 car. 16 after concluding marine insurance contracts with 10 partners.

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Badoer insured either the vessel, or the goods loaded, or the vessel and its cargo (~~body and goods~~)⁴⁹. The insured parties were therefore either the shipowners for the vessel, or the merchants for the goods loaded, or both. Premium rates varied, from 3% to 19% for the longest route with a return, and the sum insured was variable, always rounded off, and did not represent the value of the goods, but a fixed sum. Finally, about maritime activities, in addition to the vitality of certain routes, such as the port of Ancona and its ships, or local trafficking, merchant and capitalist solidarity was an undeniable reality. Badoer agreed to ensure Italian merchants who were active competitors of the Venetians. The internationalisation of capital escaped the attention of those who merely consulted the official registers of the *Senate* or the *Council of Ten* in Venice, where the prevailing protectionist sentiment inspired the priority fight against competition. Far from the protectionist policy of the metropolis, merchants forged links that were favourable to business.

The operation was sometimes complex, such as the one carried out on 10 December 1437 by Nofri da Chalzi from Messina who, at Badoer's request, ensured various Italian, Genoese and Florentine merchants on the Florentine galley for a total of 1,250 *perperi*, with Giacomo also granting him insurance of 320 *perperi* on the *nave* belonging to the Venetian nobleman Giacomo Marcello (*nave Marzella*) at 6%. Insurance rates were higher on ships than on galleys, which were considered safer. This contract was the only one to withstand a claim that resulted in compensation: on 1^{er} December 1438, the insurer paid 325 *perperi*, exchange rate, to *ser* Nofri da Chalzi, for his insurance of 100 *ducati* for four slaves taken on board the ship by Badoer and captured by the lord of Metelin (Lesbos). In other words, the register showed that the ship was insured, but the goods were also insured, since the loss, an act of piracy, seems to have affected only four slaves who had set sail for Sicily. The event bears witness to the frenetic search for slaves and labour in this calamitous world ravaged by hunger,

⁴⁹ The insurance contracts taken out by Badoer and his factors in distant places are grouped together in c. 22 (contracts from 12 October 1436 to 22 September 1438) and c. 320 (contracts from 16 April 1439 to 23 October).

war and epidemics. When it came to marine insurance, Badoer also knew how to be prudent by excluding certain risks. An insurance contract dated 5 March 1439 for a cargo of wheat on a *griparia* contains a restrictive clause⁵⁰: Turkish perils were excluded from the risks and the insurance did not run until the ship had been protected from the Turkish privateering.

⁵⁰LUZZATTO (1954), p. 176-7, has also published this letter in Venetian.

Chapter six

The Orient and its riches: the Colonial Empire

«Grandissima parte de questa (terra) la qual è habitata saria incognita, se la mercadantia et marinarezza de'Veneziani non l'havesse aperta», (Giosaphat Barbaro, merchant, consul in Tana and ambassador to Persia circa 1472-73).

Following the Fourth Crusade, which it had helped to divert towards the Christian city of Constantinople, Venice had seized a colonial empire made up of islands and promontories that were highly profitable for its shipping and that served as relays to the Eastern Mediterranean. Until its capture by the Ottomans, Constantinople remained the capital of a Byzantine empire that was becoming increasingly narrow and eroded by the Ottoman advance, but it remained an active centre of international trade, with links stretching from the northern ports on the Black Sea to Alexandria. After seizing the city, the Ottomans closed the straits and turned their efforts against the Venetian possessions in the Aegean and mainland Greece. Venice retained Crete, but having lost Euboea (Negrepont), it found considerable compensation in having Cyprus handed over to it, where its businessmen played an active role alongside the penniless Lusignan sovereigns. Venice remained present in the East, and one commodity offered a not inconsiderable source of profit: slaves, so useful in providing labour for colonial plantations or in forming a military force in the service of Muslim rulers (Mamluks and Janissaries). The colonies also supplied their own produce and gave access to the Eastern courts, which were hungry for luxury goods.

Venetian merchants preferred to sail to the East, whose products were in great demand in the West. Spices, pepper, ginger, cloves, cinnamon, etc, enhanced the taste of food, others were believed to have medicinal and purgative properties (rhubarb, semenzina), or were intended for the clothing of ordinary people (cotton, fustians) or for courtly society (silk and silks), for decoration (gems), for dyeing (kermes or indigo) and for ornament (lacquers and brazilwood). Many of these products came from faraway Asia, and both Arabs and Venetians played the key role of intermediaries, Alexandria and Beirut

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were the ports where the goods passed from hand to hand, and the Arabs who had obtained them from Indian traffickers sold them to the Latins.

However, not all products reached Venice or Italy. The Venetians also interposed themselves between Alexandria and the Constantinopolitan market, which they supplied thanks to the colonial empire they had built up. Crete fulfilled a dual function: it contributed to supplying Venice and, situated halfway between the two major ports, it made its ships and sailors available to merchants. Cyprus could have played the same role, but the Venetians had excellent relations with the Mamlūks who ruled both Egypt and Syria. Its penniless kings turned to the credit of the wealthy Venetians, who had placed the island and its riches, particularly sugar and salt, under their protection. Among these creditors, the Corner came first, they were followed by many others until Venice forced the widowed queen, Catherine Corner to abdicate and annexed the island, the last bastion of the Franks in the East and territorial compensation for the losses suffered in the face of a new and powerful enemy, the Ottoman Empire.

VENETIAN MERCHANTS IN CONSTANTINOPLE

Among the slaves from the Black Sea, the Russians played a major role in Constantinople, from where they were taken to Crete. Other slaves arrived directly from Tana and Caffa, from Gallipoli or Chio⁵¹. Among the 593 slaves who arrived in Crete during the first half of the 15th century were 204 Russians (1/3 of the total), 130 Bulgarians (22%), 80 Tatars and 42 Abkhazians. The others came from the Balkan peninsula or were not identified.

The stay of the Venetian notary Giacomo della Torre in Constantinople (1415-16) coincided with Francesco Foscarini's «bailat»⁵². Of the 232 deeds recorded in his Constantinopolitan minute book, 60% concerned the purchase and sale of slaves. Among the 177 «heads», were 140 female slaves including 103 Bulgarians (nearly 60% of the total) - the Turkish advance into the Balkans increased the influx of slaves from the peninsula to the markets⁵³ - and 89 female slaves were aged between 15 and 25, the most expensive age. Prices were high, exceeding 100 *perperi* and often reaching 150/160 *perperi*⁵⁴.

Many purchases were for one head (110 cases), two heads (15) and three or more heads (10 cases). The three largest transactions (5 heads

⁵¹ SOPRACASA (2014), pp. 92-93.

⁵² SOPRACASA (2014), has published a protocol by the notary Giacomo della Torre, consisting of 257 deeds executed in Damascus (nos. 1-25, 17.12/1411-14.10/1413) and then in Constantinople (5.11/1414-16.10/1416).

¹⁷ SOPRACASA (2014), p. 57-60.

⁵⁴ SOPRACASA (2014), p. 64.

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each) saw Cretans in the role of buyers, ^{with} a Jew, a Turk (both from Scutari/Üsküdar on the Bosphorus), and a Cretan as seller. The most active merchant was Bernat de Serinyà from Barcelona, who bought a dozen slaves in all. Another Catalan, Père Matoses, sold six Bulgarians in the spring and August of 1416. A burgher from Pera sold sixteen Bulgarian slaves between January and July 1416 that had belonged to Turks, unless he was trading on behalf of Turks⁵⁵.

During the voyages whose purpose was to trade slaves which were exported to countries looking for large numbers of free labour, there were always unpleasant surprises: one of the two slave-trading voyages resulted in a net loss 1439, Badoer received *perperi* 18 for an insured capital of *perperi* 200 at 9%, through a transfer from Piero Cappello to the bank of Tomà Spinola for the insurance premium paid by Zuan Mocenigo from Modon and Alvixe Falier on slaves taken on board by the two merchants on the ship commissioned by the master Zuan Bonifatio. The insurance covered the voyage from Phoccea to arrival in Sicily. The slave trade was a very big business. In 1438, it justified the creation of the first company for the voyage to Majorca at the instigation of two merchants, Zuan Mozenigo took 12 carats, the young Alvise Falier and his masters 6 carats, Alesandro Zen 4 carats and Badoer 2 carats. The two first-named operators would receive $\frac{1}{4}$ of the profits as provision and remuneration for their services during the voyage and at destination. For his 2 carats, Badoer placed 13 slaves, Zuan Mozenigo 150 slaves and 400 *cantars* of cotton. Alessandro Zen placed 19 slaves and 100 *cantars* of cotton, and Alvise Falier placed 100 *cantars* of cotton and 700 *cantars* of rock alum. The slaves sold by Badoer were generally aged between 20 and 25, with 2 aged 30. On 22 January 1439, Badoer joined a second company, also known as the «Catalonia voyage», (*viazo de Chatelogna*), with Aldrovandin de Zusti ($\frac{1}{2}$ share), Domenego da Cà'Pesaro ($\frac{1}{5}$), Marco Balanzan ($\frac{3}{20}$) and Badoer (also $\frac{3}{20}$) to transport 164 slaves (worth *perperi* 17,048), 1,300 *cantars* of rock alum, 200 *cantars* of *sorta* alum, 601 *cantars* of cotton, 100 *cantars* of copper, goods worth almost *perperi* 41,000, with money of 460 *ducats*, on the *nave Justiniana*. These ships were large tonnage, even very large tonnage, but you can imagine the hundreds of slaves from the Russian plain or the valleys of the Caucasus chained in steerage to prevent them from escaping at port or rebelling against an unfair fate, with alum, cotton and copper providing the rest of the cargo or ballast. Rarely had it been observed that Venetian ships and merchants in the Mediterranean foreshadowed the slave traders of the centuries to come.

Note 55?

awkwardly written; rework

The demographic catastrophes of the late Middle Ages, the scarcity of labour decimated by recurring epidemics, and the rising wages demanded by scarcer workers meant that the gaps had to be filled and almost forced labour had to be used, particularly for work in the fields on the plantations of Sicily or on Majorca⁵⁶.

In the companies of Majorca and Catalonia the partners also hired other merchants through a system of cross-shareholdings. Giacomo Badoer was associated with Antonio Contarini for the blue cloth from Brescia, Falier worked with his patrons Francesco Balbi and Bernardo Zane while Zuan Mocenigo also represented Marin Zen and Jeronimo Marcello. The company's capital amounted to 34,716 *perperes* with one carat worth 1/24 of this capital, or 1,446 *perp* ½. The capital was invested in merchandise, and Badoer initially tried to include in his share the coarse fabrics used to dress the slaves. But Alessandro Zen forced him to withdraw these goods from his capital contribution. To invest 2 carats (division of the cargo into fixed shares) or 2,893 *perperi* 2 carats (here the divisional currency of the *perpere*), Badoer added 1,495 *perperi* 14 carats. Sandro Zen was unable to load all his cotton into the ship in Phoecea in July 1438, he left 49 *cantars* of it in the care of Pantalon Guardato, to whom Badoer, with the agreement of Francesco de Clothieri, gave the order to send the outstanding cotton to Dionixio de Giovanni in Ancona by Benvenuto's ship. In the Catalonia company, the capital reached 40,912 *perperi* and Badoer calculated his 3 carats at 6,103 *perperi*. The ship returned from its voyage with cloths from Majorca and oil from Sicily, a return freight well valued.

When it came to buying and selling slaves the Turks acted as sellers and suppliers⁵⁷. As early as the 15th century, they played this role and controlled numerous markets scattered across their territory: seven Turkish sellers operated in the capital itself, which bears witness to the economic proximity that existed between Byzantium and the Ottoman Sultanate at the time. A letter from the «baile» Marco Querini (1441) refers to the purchase of 38 slaves by the Cretan Giorgio Foscolo in equal partnership (*pro e dano per mitade*) with Nicolò Crussari, 26 of whom were bought at auction in Pera. Foscolo had spent 1,980 *hyperpères* on the slaves, including clothes, cloth for making shirts, food and biscuits. The slaves were loaded onto Crussari's boat for Syracuse. Foscolo had invested 36 and a half per cents more in the business than his companion, i.e. 1,014 *perperi*⁵⁸.

⁵⁶ On Sicily BRESC (1986), and Majorca SIMON (1991). The maintenance of the slave was the responsibility of the master (housing, food, clothing) if he wanted to safeguard the labour power of his workers.

⁵⁷ SOPRACASA (2014), p. 71. CONSTANTELOS (1986).

⁵⁸ SOPRACASA (2014), p. 75, n. 75, has edited the document included in the baile's letter.

The notary Odorico Tabarino, active in Venice during the years 1429–40, recorded 320 slave transactions, the majority of which took place in 1436–38. Many of the slaves were female (251 out of 320), of all ages (from 2 to 30). Sales of women over the age of 30 were rare⁵⁹. As far as prices are concerned, it is important to bear in mind the different markets: in Tana, the average export price in 1359–60 was stable at 18/19 ducats, with women costing one ducat more; in Venice, the import market in 1434–1443, the average price was 44.8 *ducati*, with women costing 2 *ducati* more than the average. The highest price was recorded for female slaves aged between 13 and 24. Between Tana and Venice, the cost of transport came into play: patrons could indulge in abuses. The *Senate* intervened on 30 April 1423 to set the cost of transporting a «head», to Tana–Venice at 4.5 *ducati*, plus an equal amount for food. The price in Venice was therefore 9 *ducati* higher than in Tana⁶⁰. This fare was reduced by two *ducati* if the ship came from Constantinople.⁶¹ In 1427, the *Senate* authorised 400 slaves from Tana to disembark in Istria; in 1444, it protested to the Genoese authorities because in the port of Chio the Genoese had attacked a ship and confiscated the 95 slaves on board. Andrea Barbarigo's ledger recorded that in 1430 «a great market of heads», took place. The treaty of 15 January 1454 signed with the Turks prohibited the Venetians from transporting Muslim slaves⁶².

18-19

A letter from his Venetian agent to Francesco Datini informed him of the arrival in Venice of three cogs carrying 306 slaves of both sexes, valued at 70/75 *ducati* per head⁶³. ~~In two years, between 1366 and 1368, the Council of Forty granted 156 Venetians a licence to buy or sell slaves outside the city: 200 slaves (145 women and 55 men) accompanied their masters to the cities of Terraferma, Treviso and Padua, to Milan, Bologna, Florence, Genoa. In April 1368, feeling overwhelmed and having better things to do, the Council delegated the issuing of licences to the «quarter chiefs», (*capi sestiere*)⁶⁴.~~

Would Venice have obtained 50,000 *ducati* from the taxation of slaves imported by the city, which deducted 5% from the price of each

⁵⁹ QUIRINI-POPLAWSKA (2018), p. 283.

⁶⁰ KARPOV (2014), p. 10.

⁶¹ SOPRACASA (2014), p. 87, n. 99, edited the Senators' deliberation.

⁶² SKRŽINSKAJA (1968), p. 36–38.

⁶³ MCKEE (2007), p. 354, LANE, p. 133, «slaves were exported from the Black Sea mainly in 'cogs'. On these sailing ships, in 1381, the number of slaves on board increased from 3 to 4 for each member of the crew, and as a 400-ton vessel (the size of the ships going to Tana) had a crew of 50 men, it could take on board grain and 200 slaves».

⁶⁴ MCKEE (2007), p. 355.

slave. At a rate of 5 *ducati* per head (note that the average price would then be 100 *ducati*, more than double the prices recorded by Krekić and Karpov which was around 40/42 *ducati*, but it would be necessary to determine whether the tax was paid once or twice (on import and re-export), Lazari calculated that between 1414 and 1423, 10,000 slaves were exported from Venice, an average of 1,000 a year⁶⁵. Would there have been a «low number of slaves in Venetian families at the end of the 14th century»⁶⁶ when the Council of Forty granted permission to 156 residents accompanied by 200 slaves to travel outside Venice.

Critica per Barisa Krekić?

On 29 May 1472, the captain of a Venetian caravel sold a young unbaptised slave, Ali d'Alger, aged twelve, at Southampton to the scriyan of the noble owner Dardi Zustinian for 25 English crowns. The purchaser of this slave «could sell, give, alienate and *do as his thing*»⁶⁷. The slave was a commodity like any other, and slaves served all levels of society. Many Venetians practised what was to become the «slave trade», and we have seen an ageing senator, Guglielmo Querini, become a shipowner by buying a ship to procure negroes on the Barbary coasts, which he would resell at a profit.

?

The Venetians bought slaves with Christian names and freed them after their death under certain conditions. In his youth, Biagio Dolfin lived with his mother and two slaves, and in his will he bequeathed two slaves, a black man and a woman called Nastasie, to his wife and his nephew, his heir. He freed them *ab omni vinculo servitutis* on condition that one served his nephew for 4 years or if this one wished (why talk about emancipation?), while the other, a white slave, served the widow for 6 years. On 20 March 1419, he bought the Christian slave Mubâraka from a Coptic priest for 27 besants, and his nephew Lorenzo also bought a young black Christian slave aged 11 who bore the Arabic name of Firaz. The buyer of a slave ran risks: the ship's captain could exchange a healthy slave for a less robust and less valuable one. The buyer protected himself by requesting that the slave being transported be branded to distinguish her from the Saracen slaves arriving on the same ship⁶⁸. Biagio gave his relative a detailed description of the young slave who was missing two teeth from her upper jaw, to which his distant cousin replied that slaves should be entrusted to trusted shipmasters, as he had received a slave who was missing a tooth from her lower jaw.

⁶⁵ LAZARI (1862) does not indicate his source on p. 469.

⁶⁶ MCKEE (2008) p. 317.

⁶⁷ L. GRECO (1997), p. 15-16 (doc. 15).

⁶⁸ Farly meter qualche signal là dove ve parera siché la sia cognosuda, se altro saraine fosse cargada in su la dita nave.

Nicolò also advised his cousin to dress the young slave warmly so that she did not fall ill during the crossing⁶⁹.

THE CANDIOTE CROSSROADS

Crete was a Venetian colony and, as soon as it had been conquered - a long and difficult process following the crusade of 1204, which had seen Constantinople fall into Latin hands - Venice set about colonising the island by establishing fiefs of knights and foot soldiers (*sergenterie* and *cavalarie*) entrusted to Venetians willing to contribute to the defence and development of the island. The island played an important redistribution role in traffic organised along three routes leading to Alexandria, Constantinople and Venice. Many ships coming from the African port would leave all the cargo destined for what was once again the capital of the Byzantine Empire, reconquered by the Greeks, on the island before setting sail for Venice or a port on the Ponant. Jani Modiano's nave dropped anchor in the straits of the Sea of Marmara with a *collo* of sails brought to Candia by the galleys heading for Alexandria. In the same direction, the nave commanded by Xeno Murari from Chania raised anchor on 22 April 1437 with 63 *cantars* 77 *rotoli* of copper for Zacharia Contarini in Alexandria, she delivered the copper to Marco Filomati in Candia, who then sent it on to its destination. In March 1439, Badoer granted an insurance policy to Agnolo de Marin for goods shipped on Xeno Murari's *nave* to Chio. Relations between Constantinople and Alexandria were rarely direct, and passed through the Candian intermediary, requiring both a break in the load and a change of vessel, as if the route between the two cities consisted of two segments whose articulation played into the hands of the Venetians and their Romaner clients. Venetian merchants had set up trading posts at the various ports of call and seemed to prefer for certain ship captains who had won their confidence. On 10 December 1437, Zacharia Contarini, who had a permanent base in the Egyptian port, sent a bale of paper via Nicolò Pulachi's ship. On 16 August 1438, Nicolò Pulachi loaded nearly 50 *cantars* of copper for Marco Filomati in Candia, who would send it to Marin Grimani to Alexandria by galleys, on 18 February 1439, Andrea da Chale, Badoer's ordinary correspondent in Caffa entrusted Nicholò Pulachi in this port with an exchange of 50 *perperi* for his partner in Constantinople; on 27 June 1439, this same patron, who was decidedly very active on the roads to the Levant had transported a bale of paper to Caffa, on 13 April 1439, he was to receive 37 *perperi* for alum, of which he would take 10 *cantars* to Candia «a so pericholo e spexe, a *perperi* 3 carats 18 el

⁶⁹ G. CHRIST (2012), p. 126-7 and 133-4.

canter». He would consign the alum to Marco Filomati and was authorised to draw more alum from Marogna⁷⁰ at the same price, to be sent to Venice to Giacomo's brother. Marco Filomati loaded the various products offered to him, and the merchants recognised his ability to deal on their behalf by buying alum. He sailed from Caffa to Candia, calling at Constantinople to deliver his goods, and always had return freight available. Badoer entrusted the transport of his goods to other shipmasters, Lion Sguro, Michali Sguro, Nicolò Tariano, Antonio Torsiello, Todaro Vatazi, Vergizi Manoli and finally Polo Querini.

For the ship's master, a sure way of increasing his earnings was to become associated with the commercial venture. So the carrier became a merchant: Todaro Vatazi on 4 Dec 1436 loaded copper for the voyage from Messina and Syracuse, a total of 49 *cantars* 16 *rotoli* in 25 *chofe* for Nofri da Chalzi; Badoer associated him with the outward and return journey for $\frac{1}{3}$ in accordance with the principles of organisation of maritime trade and contracts binding partners in the *societas maris*, and therefore for $\frac{1}{3}$ of the copper. The boss, who owed Badoer *perperi* 281 in this respect, tried a twisted trick: normally he would have had to pay for the purchase of the third of the copper a provision which Badoer had not debited to his account because the copper, he thought, would not have to pay *nolis*, but the boss put the *nolis* to his account and Badoer entered the provision in Vatazi's account, i.e. at 1%, *perperi* 2 *car* 20, a mere trifle; Vatazi also entered a company for Sicilian products sent from Messina by Nofri da Chalzi, *oripel*, a copper or brass leaf imitating gold leaf, and sugar paid for by the banker Chaloiani Sofianos. He had a $\frac{2}{9}$ share in the *oripel*. No trade was overlooked, and any offer of a participation was welcome, with a return on the capital invested.

These patrons, entrusted with missions of trust, carried mail, business letters, accounts and bills of exchange. Todaro Vatazi forwarded an account from Piero Soranzo channelled through Modon and on the same journey other accounts from Piero Michiel, Giacomo Corner and Francesco Zorzi. Vatazi was a merchant as well as a ship's captain. He was involved in a few companies, and on 13 November 1436, with Costantin Vatazi he was a wax seller for 970 *perperi* charged to his account on the books of the banker Carlo Cappello. On 15 October 1437, he collected the *nolis* of 169 *botti* of wine at *ducati* 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ per bundle, 15 bags and 3 *caratelli* of soap, 2 *caratelli* of tartar, 9 *botti* of oil, 2 *botti* of *oripel*, 26 *miera* of sugar, all goods brought from a trip to Messina. In all, he would receive *ducati* 525 $\frac{1}{2}$ of *nolis*, at *perperi* 3 *car* 5 *per* ducat, *perperi* 1686. A fine load!

The Sicilian sugar company (26 *miera*, or *milliara*) brought together *ser* Piero Michiel and *ser* Marin Barbo for $\frac{1}{2}$, for $\frac{1}{4}$ Todaro Vatazi and

⁷⁰ JACOBY (2005b).

CAPP?
But in italics
most places.
I think better not.

Are there English terms
which can be used?
Even if not, would it
be better to use the
(italics)

for the last quarter, Giacomo Badoer and Todaro Vatazi, the former named for $\frac{2}{3}$ of said $\frac{1}{4}$ and Todaro for $\frac{1}{3}$ of said $\frac{1}{4}$. This was not the only company that brought together Badoer and Vatazi, who had already taken part, as we have already mentioned, in the import of Sicilian *oripel* for a joint third, shipped to them by one of Badoer's regular factors, Nofri da Chalzi, who contributed $\frac{1}{3}$ of the total, with the remaining third belonging to Todaro Rali *e chonpagni per raxon de la nave*, in other words, acting patron of the ship. A ship whose captain was a Candian did not mean that it belonged to the island's bourgeoisie; Venetian shipowners entrusted the command of their vessels to a captain from Candia whose reputation as a seafarer was well known. But when the captain and other ship's masters came from the island, it is clear that there was merchant capital on the island that sought to be employed at sea and in maritime trade. The same is true of other ships also commanded by candioters. The island's position on Venetian shipping routes had significant economic repercussions.

< quarter

The Barbarigo family had relatives on the island who were interested in selling the products of their farms in Venice⁷¹, grain, wine, cheese, and kermes, and they acted as intermediaries in this trade. In exchange, Andrea sent fabrics to the island, which a cousin sold. It was useful to have friends and relations on the island to whom to recommend merchants going to Syria, Egypt or the ports of the Black Sea. Their cousins had more extensive estates⁷², the Barbarigo brothers inherited a property, sold it and invested the money in larger commercial ventures⁷³.

In the second half of the 15th century, brothers Lorenzo and Marco Bembo, sons of Girolamo and Caterina Barbarigo, formed a company in which Lorenzo was the resident partner in Venice and Marco the itinerant partner. In 1476-1477 Marco Bembo was in Southampton then in London after which he returned to Venice before setting sail for Crete. In the spring of 1479, a few months after the Venetian Dario had succeeded in concluding the peace treaty that put an end to the sixteen-year war with Mehmed II, the two brothers organised a trip to Constantinople which they hoped would lead to a resumption of fruitful exchanges. To prepare for this forthcoming trip, Marco had high hopes

RSM

⁷¹ The Venetians who settled on the island used the labour and services of slaves and the Barbarigo did not escape this exploitation of forced labour [HOCQUET (2022), p. 49-54.

⁷² Nicolò Barbarigo and his younger brother Alvise inherited from their cousins in Crete. Nicolò's share amounted to 10,700 *ducats* for two inheritances, bringing his total estate to 15,200 *ducats*, where commercial investments accounted for only 1,275 *ducats*, or less than 8.5% [LANE (1996²), p. 29]. His younger brother died without an heir in 1462, so the elder son combined the two inheritances.

⁷³ LANE (1996²), p. 18-9.

of exporting wine from the island and the family estates, and he planned to set up a warehouse in the capital of the new Empire with 600 to 800 barrels of wine, from which he hoped to make a profit of 1,500 to 2,000 *ducati*. He knew that the plague was ravaging the island and that the shortage of workers would jeopardise the grape harvest, and that the poor quality of the next harvest would lead to a sharp rise in prices. The epidemic had other consequences: those who could had deserted the towns and taken refuge in the countryside, while those who had remained in the capital, Candia, were confined to their homes and business was slow. Marco managed to sell a little of what he had brought with him by agreeing to payment facilities such as selling on credit, but collecting his debts would delay his arrival in Constantinople, although he was counting on the help of a relative of his, the camerling of Crete, Tomà Bembo. He informed his brother of the goods that he could find in Constantinople and that were expected in Crete: salted meats, skins, grain and barrels staves, but he himself stayed behind and sent young clerks and their servants to Constantinople, advising them to contact the new Venetian ambassador, Benedetto Trevisan, as soon as they arrived. He had chartered a ship for Constantinople and asked his factors to sell the Romanian voyage galleys before they arrived. whose abundant supply would cause prices to fall. Fortunately, the galleys would be delayed by the *scirocco*; for the time being, his brother informed him, they had not yet left Parenzo. The clerk left Candia with soap, tin, woollen and silk cloth and wine. In exchange, in the absence of cash, he could barter and acquire wax, silk, kermes and *boldroni* (hides with their fleeces).

Marco Bembo had high hopes for the arrival of the recently elected «baile», Battista Gritti, who brought with him the painter Gentile Bellini, who had been commissioned to paint the Sultan's portrait; Battista had married a Bembo woman, Elisabetta, a cousin of the two brothers, in 1456. The galleys that had left Modon on 15 October were due to call at Chio but would then be delayed by the north wind, the *bora*⁷⁴. The plague had worsened in Candia and the pilots that Marco had approached died one after the other, further delaying the departure of the ship, which in turn encountered the *bora* off the coast of Chio. Ports of call were tricky, as people knew that the ship was coming from Candia, where a serious epidemic was raging. Marco chose to take the overland route to Brousse then Constantinople. His journey lasted ten days and he arrived in Constantinople on 11 December, one day before his ship, whose surviving crew had disposed of the plague victims by throwing the corpses overboard.

⁷⁴ SOPRACASA (2017), accessed 5 (§1-16) and 6 May 2020 (§17-36).

camerlingo?
administrative position?

Chios

which one?

Unable to find customers in Constantinople where «if you want to achieve something, you can't just stay there, you have to go to the surrounding areas», Marco prospected the empire and sent one of his clerks to Brousse with cloths from Brescia, Bergamo, Essex or bastards, of 100 spans, silk and paper, from which he expected some 150,000 «aspres», (3,000 *ducats*). On the spot, the clerk could buy *strava* silk (from Strava, now Asterabad), camelots and carpets, kermes and lacquer. From Thessaloniki, wool, wheat, barrel staves and metals such as iron and lead would be welcome. The family spirit was strongest, and Marco regretted not having his nephews, Giovanni and Alvis Malipiero, the sons of his sister Maddalena, whom he would have sent, one to Brousse and the other to Tana. They were supposed to be more docile than the clerks Marco was obliged to trust.

CYPRUS AND THE CORNER

In 1362, Fantin Corner in Famagusta, together with his brothers Federico and Marco sons of Bellelo of S. Lucà, lent money to Jacobello Corner. Fantin managed the family business and had dealings with Ca'Lion he was also a friend of the King of Cyprus. In 1365, he sent goods worth 67,800 *ducats* to Venice with the *mude* of September. The capital of the Corner-Lion company was then valued by the *Petition* Judges at 83,275 *ducats*. In 1371, Federico Corner, Fantin's brother, bought from the heirs of Marco Soranzo for 800 *ducats* of nutmeg. He had obtained a monopoly from the King of Cyprus on the salt extracted from the island, which in 1392 produced 260,000 *moggia* (measure of Cyprus), sold at an average price of 50 *besants* per thousand, for a total of around 4,000 *ducats*, from which 1/5 should be deducted for extraction costs. The Corner family also had sugar cane plantations⁷⁵. He concentrated Venetian colonial activity on the island in their own hands, an almost exclusively commercial activity for which Fantin, in partnership with Vito Lion, lived in Famagusta for 4 or 5 years.

falls? Enj?

When Peter I of Lusignan came to the West in 1361 to beg for help against the Turks and to find allies, he stayed in Federico's palace, who lent him 60,000 *ducats* to fight the ~~Infidel~~. Federico became the banker of the Lusignans and agreed with his brothers to pay an annual pension of 5,000 florins to Guy de Lusignan's widow, Marie d'Enghien. This sum would be returned to them in Cyprus. As a reward, he was awarded various trinkets (the title of Knight of the Sword, the addition of the king's arms to his blazon) and above all the farm (*casal*) of Piskopi, with tax immunity for the land and the men who worked there. This «casal», bathed by the perennial river Kouris and equipped with mills,

de

⁷⁵ LUZZATTO (1954a), p 135-6.

produced grain, oil, cotton, wine and above all sugar cane. Most of the workforce was made up of slaves. The river provided the water for irrigation and the hydraulic power needed to press the cane. The Corner family supplied the finished product in the form of sugar loaves or powdered sugar. They ordered two large copper boilers weighing 1,000 pounds for refining from a Venetian bell maker. Federico's heir, Giovanni invested 5,000 to 6,000 *ducats* in Piskopi every year. Even when the Venetians found it extremely difficult to hold on to the island, which was being fought over by the Genoese, the Corner family was able to continue operating their «casal», and exporting sugar to Venice. To pay off his debts, James I of Lusignan, who had regained possession of his island, without Famagusta and its customs, which remained in Genoese hands, handed over to his creditors the production of the saltworks, estimated at 300,000 *moggia* and sold at 36 *ducats* per thousand⁷⁶.

The kings of Cyprus led an existence of drudgery, alternately favouring the Genoese or the Venetians, who had placed the small kingdom under the control of powerful creditors, the *Maona* of Genoa or the Corner family. These numerous and wealthy individuals were represented on the Venetian councils, where they formed a lobby driven since the 14th century by the powerful family. By the middle of the century, it was necessary to investigate the actions of a *conventicula* and appoint *sapientes super conventiculas* (*savi* on agreements). According to their report, Venetians and foreigners were buying salt or sugar powder from the Lusignans with whom they concluded a deal whereby these princes would not agree to sell these products to other merchants who would export them to Venice. These well-connected merchants therefore monopolised these two products in order to drive up prices. But the mechanism behind this monopoly was far more complex. The hoarders sold salt and sugar to merchants and ship captains at the same price as the king would have done, but in small quantities to obtain better prices for the other goods that the shortage of sugar and salt would force them to load to fill the ships. The Senate did not prohibit the practice of making agreements with the king, it recommended that salt and sugar not be sold at a higher price than that agreed by the sovereign, but it strongly urged, on pain of a fine of 1,000 livres, to

«supply salt and sugar in sufficient quantities, as requested by merchants and patrons who wanted to load their vessels».

In the wake of the Peace of Turin, Venice entrusted Federico Corner a mission of conciliation between the king and the Genoese to

⁷⁶ LUZZATTO (1954b), p 118-23.

Mahona? fresh acceptable
the need for salt

Rem

English term?

? the black gold?

reestablish peace. Venice offered to act as guarantor and pay a third of the 600,000 *ducati* deposit to guarantee the execution of the treaty. The all-powerful Federico died, leaving his heirs in a dire financial situation because he had been unable to refuse to lend money to the prince. The king, who had given him letters of payment in salt (*litteras pacamenti salis*), would have repaid him with his salt production. As the loans had been large and repeated, Federico had secured a monopoly on salt exports for a long lease, but when he died, he was on the verge of ruin. To raise cash, his heirs sold the goods to Venetian patricians. Domenico Contarini, Marco Morosini and Giovanni Michiel. Michiel double-crossed his compatriots and had the king give him all the salt produced on the island in 1393, i.e. 260,000 *moggia* because he felt it was everyone's duty to ensure that his debts were honoured. The judges of the Commercial Court (*Giudici di petition*) dismissed the plaintiff's claims. By 1399, the royal debts were close to being extinguished, and the conCESSION held by Federico's heir was about to come to an end.

The issue of indebtedness was a constant preoccupation of the Frankish monarchy of Cyprus: indebtedness to private individuals and to the Seignior were mixed indiscriminately, with the Seignior never hesitating to support private individuals and defend private interests. The State had become the property of a narrow syndicate of great noble merchants whose interests, despite rivalries and quarrels, coincided on another level. The administration of the salt works, to which many Venetian ships had access, was handed over to private lenders. Business was conducted between Venetians, under the patronage of the State, which was responsible for maintaining a balance between the various patrician groups involved in the business. The Corner family was succeeded by the Michiel family. Angelo Michiel had loaned 5,000 *ducati* to the king, who hired him to manage the saltworks before taking over his property in 1439. After the Corner and Michiel families, other patricians, Priamo and Andrea da Lezze took over the San Lazzaro saltworks and on 3 November 1461 bought the lease from James II for an annual rent of 500 *ducati*. On 15 August 1466, James II took over the saltworks, despite having received the rent for the current year and an advance of 200 *ducati* for 1467. The king appropriated 20,000 *moggia* of salt from the 1466 harvest and 135 *moggia* from the remaining harvest of 1465. The Signoria protested against this arbitrary action and demanded that the king pay the 9,000 gold *ducati* owed to the da Lezze and Ermolao Pisani their associate. The king was ordered by the *Senate* to pay the equivalent of 2,000 *ducati* in salt each year, at the rate of 18 *ducati* per thousand measures taken to the embarkation beach. This reimbursement took effect in 1469 and the nobles of ca'da Lezze and ca'Pisani received the first instalment of 1,000 *ducati*, but the king died and unrest broke out. In 1481, Venice, acting as master of the

And uses about

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Signoria

whole island, subrogated the deceased king and the *Senate* mandated the *Salt Office* to pay the heirs of the two families 8,000 *ducati*, as there was no longer any question of making repayments «in as much salt», now that saltworks production had come under the direct monopoly of the Republic⁷⁷.

Relations between Venice and the Sultan were not without clouds, and the Sultan took the annexation of the Kingdom of Cyprus, which was dependent on him, very badly by the Republic, which had forced the abdication of Queen Catherine Corner, widow of Jacques II de Lusignan :

«There is nothing that can better guarantee the safety of our galleys which are about to leave for the Levant and the merchandise on board, than to calm the Sultan's mind, which is irritated by the events in Cyprus. we need to send him someone who can calm his nerves»⁷⁸.

SLAVE BUYERS AND SLAVE LABOUR

Constantinople played an important role «in the slave trade as a market and crossroads of maritime and commercial routes, a role it assumed well before the 15th century»⁷⁹, and in this trade Venetian merchants, especially Cretans, but also Venetians living in the island colony, played a predominant role. The Venetians needed slaves to run their houses, and these were domestic slaves, but they also entrusted them with agricultural work on their colonial farms in Romania, especially in Crete. We have seen that even when Cyprus was independent under a Frankish dynasty, the Venetian nobles were able to set up large farms growing cotton and sugarcane, two cultivations that required a lot of labour. Venetian merchants obtained slaves from the markets north of the Black Sea in Caffa and especially Tana. They also dealt with the Tartars, who carried out profitable raids on the populations living on the plains of Russia and Poland-Lithuania, or sold their ~~EXCESSIVELY~~ large numbers of children, whom they were unable to feed. After Constantinople, when the Ottomans conquered the northern shores of the Black Sea and took control of the Italian colonies,

⁷⁷ HOCQUET (2012), p. 126-31.

⁷⁸ ROSSI (1988), p. 13 and 245. The law presented on 22 August 1489 by the councillors of the *Minor Consiglio* and the Savi of the *Collegio* was rejected by the Senators at first reading. The Savi were not discouraged, however, as they were acting «for the good and preservation of the capital of the nobles, citizens and our merchants». They reintroduced the law the following year and it was adopted at third reading (*ibidem*, p. 18-19). The ambassador appointed was Pietro Diedo who, after a long administrative, diplomatic and military career, was then *Savio* of the Council.

⁷⁹ SOPRACASA (2014), p. 67.

Genoa's Caffa and, further north, the Venetian Tana, they banned foreign merchants from entering, but the slave trade did not cease and Istanbul remained an important market for traffickers. The other major source of white slavery was the Caucasus, known to Russians as «Circassia», whose slaves reached the shores of the Mediterranean via the long road from Tabriz and Laiaş. It is difficult to keep track of this trade, as the Mamlūks who ruled Egypt and Syria were pagan slaves of Turkish origin brought up in the Muslim religion, trained in the profession of arms and then freed, forming a military-political caste that governed the countries for three centuries. It does not seem that Venetian merchants contributed to the trade in children that renewed the Mamlūk ranks⁸⁰. They had better things to do and were buoyed by the hope of greater gains by supplying slaves to the Christian islands of the western Mediterranean, Sicily and the Balearic Islands. Giacomo Badoer's account book draws spectacular attention to the slave trade in the Mediterranean during the Quattrocento⁸¹. Venetian nobles did not hesitate to become slave traders engaged in vast and highly profitable operations.

Slaves, whose trade generated profits, were treated like merchandise. They had no rights and could not testify in court, let alone make accusations, because their word was not reliable and no one believed them. In court, he was represented by his master, who was accountable for his actions and punished him. Slaves, who had no legal personality, were excluded from the village community and from the use of communal land, considered to be the «land of the free». They were not free to move about as they pleased or to choose their residence⁸². The discovery and exploitation of new archival sources encouraged Alessio SOPRACASA to rectify Verlinden's premature opinion. During the first half of the 15th century, the trade in slaves from Constantinople and Romania to Crete did not slow down, on the contrary⁸³.

Cyprus was also one of the places where slave shipments were sent. Transactions involving slaves were not even recorded, so common were they, by the royal officers who legalised the deeds of sale. Slaves were used as a substitute for money in commercial contracts or as collateral for loans. At the beginning of the 15th century, a successful raid enabled the King of Cyprus to capture 1,500 Saracens, who were used in his

⁸⁰ HOCQUET (2021), *passim*.

⁸¹ BALARD (1997).

⁸² S. VICTOR (2019), p. 51-54.

⁸³ SOPRACASA (2014), p. 88. From the *Duca di Candia* series, *Actorum* B. 11-11 bis, SOPRACASA has derived a statistic that covers not half a century but only 66 months in 18 different years (from 1403 to 1463), and he has retained only the slaves whose ethnicity he could decipher.

identity Emanuel Piloti

sugar plantations because «he had a great need for labourers to work the land to make sugar», writes Piloti. Sugar production was both a rural and an industrial activity, providing high incomes especially when it was carried out by forced labour. In town, the Latins also owned slaves, either for their domestic needs or to help in the workshop⁸⁴.

Among the slave buyers in Cyprus, Trebizond and Tana⁸⁵ in the middle of the 14th century and at the beginning of the following century, there were around fifteen merchants with noble family names who settled in Cyprus as merchants, most often domiciled in Famagusta or Tana: the largest buyer was the nobleman Marco Morosini (5 purchases, including 3 Greek, one Vlach and one Tatar, for prices ranging from 90 at auction to 160 silver besants from Cyprus), followed by Simon Giustinian, Pietro Loredan and Benedetto Soranzo who each bought two young women for between 120 and 160 besants, by two Grimani, Giorgio and Jacopo. Pietro Loredan bought a 15-year-old Tatar slave from his brother in Rialto, then came with one slave each other Venetian merchants from noble families, including Andrea Donà, Simonetto Michiel, Alban Cappello, Antonio da Molin and Vettor Dolfin, but Piero Bon who is not called «noble», but «discretus vir», did not fall into this category. He was a merchant based in Famagusta, while others were craftsmen, such as Bartoleo, a maker of boxes and chests (*cassolarius*), or grocers (*speziali*) and doctors. Some buyers were simply passing through, like Giovanni Steno who commanded a «cog», or Leonardo de Bay, *scrivan* of the *Morosina* galley, an official position that required to keep a record of all goods loaded or landed from the galley. Among the biggest buyers were the nobles who held official positions and represented the State, such as the Venetian baile (ambassador) to the Khan of Tartary. The baile Giovanni Barbarigo bought 3 slaves, two women, one of whom was Bulgarian, and a boy, and the ambassador Pietro Loredan who had previously been consul in Tana, purchased five Circassian, Tatar, Russian and Zyge slaves before setting off on his new journey. Perhaps he needed interpreters in the countries he travelled through, but he paid little attention to gender or age. Four of the slaves he bought were between 12 and 20 years old, while one woman was 35. Who were the sellers? Certainly a dozen Venetians, some of whom belonged to noble families, Bernardo Zorzi, Marco Querini and Feto Semitecolo, and seven Genoese merchants, including Egidio Doria, Ansaldo and Elione Spinola, all gave up a head; a Venetian, probably long established in Tana, Iacobo Foscarini had

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cf. elsewhere

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⁸⁴ ARBEL (1993).

⁸⁵ The notary Moretto Bon [DE'COLLI (1963)] was active in Trebizond in autumn 1404 (23 September-December) and in Tana (late June 1407-mid May 1408). He drew up 20 deeds to which Venetians were party because they had bought or freed.

earned himself the nickname *Zarcasto*, the «Circassian». Another Italian, Roberto de' Conti, who sold an 18-year-old Tatar to the ambassador, claimed to be from Circassia and lived in Tana. There was also a doctor, a priest, craftsmen and Jews who were burghers of Famagusta (Mossayt son of Abran and Missaut son of David), Italian merchants from Ancona, Pisa or Belluno, Ferrara and Carpi. In Tana, there were Muslim sellers known as «Saracens», called by our Venetian notary Congo, Amuxa, Magmet and Zindi. Some who had bought a slave sold another or freed him, as Marco Morosini did who, after buying the Greek girl Anna for 120 besants from the Venetian from Famagusta, Antonio Babin, in February 1370, freed her a few months later. Of the transactions involving Venetians, twelve slaves were freed, but Feto Semitecolo, who freed two slaves, asked one of them to serve him for another year. One way of regaining lost freedom was to buy back slaves (of which there were four), with the family contributing: Demetrio Cuticha from Negrepont bought his nephew Nicola, whom the notary also called Michel, from Famagusta for 140 besants, and the uncle freed him on condition that the nephew agreed to pay back the money he had spent for his redemption; similarly, Polo Colona, a blacksmith from Negrepont, bought his daughter Maria for 130 besants in order to obtain her release. In Tana, the situation was different and four young slaves who had converted and been given Christian names (Martha, Magdalena, Agnes) were freed by their Venetian masters. Of all the men who bought slaves, many were merchants, which does not mean that they were slave traders; their acquisition was usually limited to one individual whom they kept at their service when they needed help.

Note: This chapter seems better and much clearer, but I cannot go on marking the same copy-editing items. The drift of my suggestions is clear: spell out abbreviations, English or Italian over French names or words, limit the use of italics, esp. re Italian et items in English, spell out more numbers to avoid the profusion of Arabic numerals, correct up long sentences difficult to follow

Chapter Seven

The Orient : Greeks, Jews and Mamluks

Often on foot on the roads, with the dangers of the rivers,
the dangers of the bandits,
the dangers coming from my brethren of race,
the dangers coming from the pagans, the dangers of the city,
the dangers of the desert, the dangers of the sea,
the dangers of the false brothers
(Epistle to the Corinthians, 2, 11, 26).

As long as it had the means to do so, and as long as events did not thwart its objectives, Venice sent its convoys of galleys to the various ports along the routes from distant Asia, which were the terminals of these routes. At the beginning of the century, its galleys reached Constantinople and Tana, Beirut and Alexandria. When, in the middle of the century, the Ottoman Turks seized Constantinople and closed the straits, the Venetians strengthened their links with Alexandria and Damascus, which were dominated by other Turks, the Mamluks, adversaries of the Ottomans. In the second half of the century, Venetian merchants focused their trade to the east on the Venice-Alexandria or Venice-Beirut routes, meaning that they favoured the maritime route from south-east Asia to the Red Sea, where caravans took over to the Muslim ports of the eastern Mediterranean.

Venice maintained regular trade relations with the Mamluks who governed Egypt and Syria, despite some difficulties that have obscured our understanding. In fact, despite playing a similar role as intermediaries on the very long route that brought spices from south-east Asia to north-west Europe, the two Mediterranean ports protected by the Lagoon or for one of them by the salty lake Mareotis were condemned to get along. Differences in religion and customs created difficulties, as we shall see with the consumption of wine and alcoholic beverages. Maintaining a colony of foreign merchants in Muslim towns also imposed financial burdens covered by the administration and the revenue from the *cotimo*. Arab and Venetian merchants had conflicting interests, which were exacerbated by each other's speculation, but the sultan endeavoured to calm the conflicts because he derived maximum