Trade and Markets in Byzantium
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Edited by
CÉCILE MORRISON
To the memory of Angeliki Laiou—

pathbreaking leader in the study of the Byzantine economy,

inspiring and irreplaceable friend and colleague

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CONTENTS

Foreword ix

Introduction 1
CÉCILE MORRISON

Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages

ONE • Were Late Roman and Byzantine Economies Market Economies?
A Comparative Look at Historiography 13
JEAN-MICHEL CARRIÉ

TWO • Regional and Interregional Exchanges in the Eastern
Mediterranean during the Early Byzantine Period
The Evidence of Amphorae 27
DOMINIQUE PIERI

THREE • Movements and Markets in the First Millennium
Information, Containers, and Shipwrecks 51
MICHAEL MCCORMICK

FOUR • Commerce and Exchange in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries
Regional Trade and the Movement of Goods 99
JOHN F. HALDON

The Middle and Late Byzantine Periods

FIVE • Regional Networks in the Balkans in the Middle and Late Byzantine Periods 125
ANGELIKI E. LAIOU

SIX • Regional Networks in Asia Minor during the Middle Byzantine Period,
Seventh–Eleventh Centuries
An Approach 147
JOHANNES KODER

SEVEN • Business as Usual?
Archaeological Evidence for Byzantine Commercial Enterprise
at Amorium in the Seventh to Eleventh Centuries 177
CHRISTOPHER LIGHTFOOT
EIGHT • Byzantine Glazed Ceramics on the Market
An Approach 193
DEMETRA PAPANIKOLA-BAKIRTI

West and East: Local Exchanges in Neighboring Worlds

NINE • Local and Interregional Exchanges in the Lower Po Valley, Eighth–Ninth Centuries 219
SAURO GELICI

TEN • Adriatic Trade Networks in the Twelfth and Early Thirteenth Centuries 235
ROWAN W. DORIN

ELEVEN • Annual Fairs, Regional Networks, and Trade Routes in Syria, Sixth–Tenth Centuries 281
ANDRÉ BINGGELI

TWELVE • Trade and Economy in Antioch and Cilicia in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries 297
SCOTT REDFORD

THIRTEEN • Regional Exchange and the Role of the Shop in Byzantine and Early Islamic Syria-Palestine
An Archaeological View 311
ALAN WALMSLEY

Markets and the Marketplace

FOURTEEN • From polis to emporion?
Retail and Regulation in the Late Antique City 333
LUKE LAVAN

FIFTEEN • Weighing, Measuring, Paying
Exchanges in the Market and the Marketplace 379
CÉCILE MORRISON

SIXTEEN • Daily Life at the Marketplace in Late Antiquity and Byzantium 399
BRIGITTE PITARAKIS

Conclusion

SEVENTEEN • Byzantine Trade
Summary and Prospect 419
PETER TEMIN

Abbreviations 437
About the Authors 441
Index 445
This book emerged from the 2008 Spring Symposium held at Dumbarton Oaks 2–4 May. For their help in organizing the meeting, blessed by clement weather that enabled participants to fully enjoy all the graces of the gardens, I am most grateful to Polly Evans, Danica Kane, Mario Garcia, and Joe Mills, who looked to its smooth running and recording. My warm thanks to Jan Ziolkowski, Director of Dumbarton Oaks, who hosted and welcomed his first Symposium of Byzantine Studies with his characteristic elegance and openness. My special gratitude to the then Director of Byzantine Studies, Alice-Mary Talbot, who directed so graciously and efficiently this thirteenth and last Symposium of her tenure. I also thank the contributors who have taken time out of their busy schedules to participate in the colloquium, to discuss reciprocally their respective papers, and then to create this book.

After the Symposium, it was decided to include two studies of great relevance to our topic: that of Rowan Dorin, doctoral student of Angeliki Laiou, on Adriatic trade networks in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries and that of Luke Lavan on retail and regulation in the late antique city.

This is the fourth volume in the series Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Symposia and Colloquia: it was preceded by Becoming Byzantine: Children and Childhood in Byzantium, edited by Alice-Mary Talbot and Arietta Papaconstantinou (2009); The Old Testament in Byzantium, edited by Paul Magdalino and Robert Nelson (2010); and San Marco, Byzantium, and the Myths of Venice, edited by Henry Maguire and Robert Nelson (2010). Editing and producing this book proved to be a longer process than some impatient authors would have liked. The result will, I hope, compensate for their regrets. Alice-Mary Talbot and her successor, Margaret Mullett, were instrumental in preparing the papers for publication, and the Director of Publications, Kathy Sparkes, brought her special skills to the quality of illustrations and her stamina to set the book on track. Joel Kalvesmaki scrutinized the manuscript with his usual acumen. Alice Falk copy-edited the mass of papers with great patience. To all, I extend special gratefulness.

Early in the preparation of this publication, the untimely and shocking death of Angeliki Laiou, an immense loss to the whole world of Byzantine studies, stirred particular grief among all participants in the Symposium, speakers and listeners alike. This had been the last occasion on which she met her colleagues in community and delivered a paper, and the last time she attended a symposium at Dumbarton Oaks, the institution and place to which she had devoted such passionate and clear-minded energy during the years of her directorship (1989–98) and well beyond. There was not a hint of her impending illness; her presence was as imposing and her interventions as sharp and appropriate as ever.

It is just and meet that this book be dedicated to her memory as a modest token of our debt to a great historian. Without her pioneering work on the Byzantine economy, the present studies would probably not have been written or assembled.

Cécile Morrisson
Although trade is often featured in Byzantine archaeological meetings or in those offering a regional perspective, it is rarely the center of them. The symposium that took place in Dumbarton Oaks on 2–4 May 2008 and gave rise to this book was entirely devoted to trade and markets in Byzantium. It was not, however, the first colloquium with Byzantine trade as its main subject. The Oxford conference held at Somerville College on 29 May 1999 (later edited and published by Sean Kingsley and Michael Decker as *Economy and Exchange in the East Mediterranean during Late Antiquity*) may have been the first to set forth down this path—if “late antiquity” is taken as coterminous with “Byzantine”—and to signal the revived attention spurred by the accumulating wealth of new archaeological material.1 Because of its wider chronological range, the British 38th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies titled “Byzantine Trade (4th–12th c.): Recent Archaeological Work,” held in Oxford in March 2004, was advertised as the first symposium directly focused on Byzantine trade.2 Finally, another conference held in Vienna in October 2005, codirected and just published by one of our speakers, Johannes Koder—“Handelsgüter und Verkehrswege: Aspekte der Warenversorgung im östlichen Mittelmeerraum (4. bis 15. Jahrhundert)”—underscored the growing interest in the subject.3

Trade deserves special attention because, as many economic historians have shown, it plays an essential role in the economy and particularly in economic development; the famous slogan “Trade Not Aid” embraced by African leaders and Western economists nicely encapsulates the idea that growth results not from massive aid but from an increase in exports, which—as the examples of Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and now China demonstrate—leads underdeveloped economies out of poverty.4 All things being equal, the evolution of the Byzantine economy from the ninth to the twelfth century and, later, from small-scale trade to far-flung involvement in international exchanges clearly illustrates the correlation between the expansion of trade and that of the economy in general. However they interpret its

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3 E. Kislinger, J. Koder, and A. Künzler, *Handelsgüter und Verkehrswege/Aspekte der Warenversorgung im östlichen Mittelmeerraum (4. bis 15. Jahrhundert)*, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Veröffentlichungen zur Byzanzforschung 18 (Vienna, 2010). This volume appeared too late for its contents to be taken into account here.
causes and context, this expansion is now generally recognized by historians. An expanding trade relies on an efficient division of labor, about which Adam Smith said, with typical Scottish humor: “Man has almost constant occasion for the help of his brethren, and it is in vain for him to expect it from their benevolence only.”

Indeed, the permanence of interregional and international relations, defined as the exchange of commodities, information, and population at all levels, which Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell labeled “connectivity,” is a primary concern of their *Corrupting Sea* and of another magisterial book, Michael McCormick’s *Origins of the European Economy,* while receiving due consideration in the *Economic History of Byzantium,* edited by Angeliki Laiou. In her final overview, she pointed to the parallels she had drawn between the West and the Byzantine economy as supporting her “insistence on trade as a dynamic element in the medieval economy, especially in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.” In his no less monumental *Framing the Early Middle Ages,* Chris Wickham proclaimed that his final chapter, “Systems of Exchange,” was “in many ways the core of the book.” Although it may have been a later addition and a shift of thinking by an author who has reflected for many years on the transformation of the Roman world, it marks a welcome recognition of the importance of trade. The recent assessment of early and mid-Byzantine trade at the regional and international levels provided by the contributions to the Oxford 2004 symposium clearly recognized its vitality and role, even in the dark eighth century, in comparison with “non-economic exchange.”

“Trade and Markets” versus the Byzantine Market Economy

The invitation letter stated that the Symposium would “focus equally on markets and the market place.” Because of the polysemy of the term “market,” this phrase requires qualification. The Dumbarton Oaks meeting did not consider the concept of the Byzantine market, defined as an economic system of transactions to exchange goods and services, nor did it formally assess different models of the extension of the Byzantine market economy, whether constituted in a comprehensive network of relatively independent markets or in fragmented, unconnected markets within the more restrictive frame of a tributary state.

But that long-debated topic could not be passed over entirely; it is treated in the first and last chapters of this volume. In the latter, Peter Temin analyzes the Polanyian concepts of reciprocity, redistribution, and exchange and Frederic Pryor’s differentiation of exchanges and transfers, before stating the conditions in prices and individual behavior that are characteristic of a market economy. The skeptics who deny the existence of a Byzantine “market” should take note that a market economy is one in which market exchanges are the most common type of interaction—other forms of exchanges, whether reciprocal or redistributive, may take place as well, as indeed was the case in Byzantium. In the first chapter, Jean-Michel Carrié recalls the shifting fortunes of the “traditional, innocently modernist” model of late antiquity in the early twentieth century and the “primitivist” one, before offering his own characterization of the late Roman market economy. He concurs with Peter Temin in defining it as a “conglomeration of interdependent markets.” And this notion of the Byzantine economy as a network of interconnected relatively “free” markets implicitly lies behind most of the chapters in this volume.

Trade in the Debate Regarding the Ancient Economy

A short account of the various schools of thought may be of use. Broadly speaking, the “modernists” view the ancient economy as functioning, all things being equal, in ways comparable to the modern one, with differences in quantity and not quality; this idea was maintained by both Michael Rostovtzeff

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8 C. Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400–800* (Oxford, 2005), 693.
employing their categories in her reasoning. Therefore Patlagean implicitly considered her a “modernist,” in her long, nuanced review of The Economic History of Byzantium in 2004.17 Yet Laiou’s conception of the Byzantine economy was quite balanced, and she did not belong among those whom Carrié calls the traditional, innocent modernists. Before outlining Byzantine trade in the middle Byzantine period,18 she devoted an entire chapter to the non-economic forms of exchange as defined by Mauss and Polanyi,19 which Grierson highlighted in his pioneering and famous article, “Commerce in the Dark Ages.”20 For the late Roman period, readers should consult the seminal article by Richard Whittaker and his analysis of its “tied trade,” as well as the more recent assessment offered in the introduction to the Cambridge Economic History of Greco-Roman Antiquity.21

In that authoritative volume, distribution in the early Roman Empire is viewed from a more balanced perspective, which signals that the debate has subsided and a new consensus has been reached. Neville Morley, among others, recognizes that the Roman economy was “organized through market incentives or directed through requisition and compulsion” and knew a “degree of integration, of the movement of goods, people, and ideas.”22 In spite of the revival


15 Idem, Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy, c. 300–1450 (Cambridge, 1983). He strongly opposed attempts to apply economic reasoning to the interpretation of monetary developments, as in the case of the eleventh-century debasement (55).


of the old polemic provoked by Peter Bang’s recent book, the debate has progressed to the point that all participants are at least more aware of the importance for current and future investigations of two elements: on the one hand, quantification of the “performance” of the Roman economy (production, input-output, costs and benefits, population and standards of living, prices, sales, and exports), and, on the other hand, the role of structures such as institutions, technology, ecology, demography, and ideology. Though not put in the same terms, such an approach was by and large that of the Economic History of Byzantium, which provided the framework for this Symposium; we thus did not take up the debate again.

**Local, Regional, and Interregional Exchanges: The Evidence**

The purpose of bringing together historians and archaeologists was to gather further evidence and present the state of the art of research on the movement of goods—“things that travelled” in the words of David Whitehouse—within the Byzantine world on markets at various levels, especially at the regional scale. Regional trade was rather neglected in previous research, which had long been more interested in interregional and long-distance trade and the mostly prestige or luxury items it carried than in smaller regional and local markets and marketplaces. The numerous markets that make up the Byzantine market economy imply a chain of transactions in which trade takes place on varied tiers. How to classify these markets is an issue considered by several chapters. Various criteria can be used for this purpose, most notably those offered by Luuk de Ligt in his *Fairs and Markets in the Roman Empire:* type of transaction, duration, and distance. A combination of the last two, duration and distance—the latter reflecting the constraints on human travel in an ancient or medieval context—seems relatively free from dispute and has been used in this book.

**The Three Levels of Trade**

Agreement emerged in the Symposium on the following rough limits of the three tiers:

**ONE** Local, defined as a one-day transit time, or within a radius of less than about 50 kilometers (31 miles) by land or the distance of one day’s sailing, to a maximum of two or three days’ travel on foot. This is the smallest and the most difficult level to apprehend. But the diffusion of the most ordinary cooking ware generally constitutes a good proxy of a network with a 50-kilometer radius, as shown by Alain Walmisley, who uses as a marker Jerash Bowls, Palestinian Fine Ware from Jerusalem, and Red Painted Ware of Jordanian origin (possibly from Amman). Archaeology is now fortunately devoting greater attention to this kind of ordinary ceramics—witness the now regular meetings on Late Roman Coarse Wares (LRCW), published in three volumes to date—and this area of research,

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though not systematized, is also being explored in the Byzantine period.

**TWO** Above this limit and below ten days’ travel is the regional level;\(^{31}\) in terms of distance, it corresponds to a radius of 100 to 300 kilometers. Regional travel also involves professional traders, whereas local trade is still partly or mostly in the hands of the local producers themselves.\(^{32}\) For this tier, the ongoing study of unglazed coarse pottery is a promising line of research that is beginning to be investigated—for instance, in Amorion by Chris Lightfoot and his team\(^{33}\)—and still has much to tell us. In defining regional networks, we are also aided by the study of ecological conditions for agricultural and other production. As Johannes Koder highlights, the supply radius from the hinterland to urban settlements varied according to the agrarian productivity of their respective landscapes. All things being equal, local and regional trade mostly concerned everyday staples (foodstuffs) and pottery, but it also handled raw material and energy sources for crafts such as hemp, flax, leather, iron, wood, charcoal, and so on.\(^{34}\)

**THREE** Interregional trade connects two different regions that each have a radius of 100 to 300 kilometers. It is not necessarily carried over a long distance, but that is most frequently the case, for the two regions are not systematically coterminous. It is often but not always international; conversely, regional exchanges might cross over political boundaries in the middle Byzantine period, as between Byzantium and the Bulgars, or in the later period, as Scott Redford describes, between Armenian Cilicia and the Principality of Antioch, and as was the rule in the “small states” of the fragmented Byzantine world after 1204.

It should be pointed out that for maritime commerce, the distinction between the regional and interregional is more blurred, since the lower cost of transportation does not limit quantities as much as it does in terrestrial trade. Moreover, the two levels often intermingle, since commodities that travel long distances often end up in regional exchanges and vice versa, as the “intra-Adriatic port-hopping” described by Rowan Dorin illustrates.\(^{35}\)

**Sources: Archaeology, Numismatics, Texts, and Documents**

Another obvious area of agreement pertains to our various sources, and the need to combine and cross-check them. The seminal contribution of archaeology is now fully and universally recognized. In many instances, as will be seen below, it opens entirely new avenues; in others, as in the case of Comacchio described by Sauro Gelichi,\(^{36}\) it offers a welcome confirmation of the trends suggested by the study of written sources. The abundance of the material yielded by archaeology over the past fifty years, its context, and its wide distribution in themselves argue for a movement that, in the late Roman world as well as in the twelfth century and later, involved trade in a wide range of goods, from luxury items to more common commodities. Ceramics feature in many contributions of this volume: on the one hand, high-value glazed ceramics enable scholars to trace regional and interregional commerce and are a main focus of Demetra Papanikola-Bakirtzi’s and Scott Redford’s chapters; on the other hand, unpretentious and cheaper unglazed or even coarse pottery points to geographically smaller networks with a larger clientele.

The enormous progress made in the classification of amphorae and the location of their production centers, together with the analyses of their contents, enables Dominique Pieri, by plotting the varied provenances against the distribution of finds, not only to outline in detail the long-distance export and distribution of Gaza wine through the Mediterranean and to the West but also to highlight the regional imports in Beirut of Acre amphorae and Bag amphorae, as well as the local distribution of North Syrian ones, attested in Zeugma, Ruṣāfa, Apameia, and villages in the Limestone massif. “Operational” approaches to amphorae can lead to economic inferences: the implicit relation between the heavy Late Roman African amphorae of some 80 kilograms each and

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31 Koder, “Regional Networks in Asia Minor,” 147 and n. 3.
32 Laiou, “Regional Networks in the Balkans,” 126.
34 Koder, “Regional Networks in Asia Minor,” 155–58.
35 In this volume, R. Dorin, “Adriatic Trade Networks in the Twelfth and Early Thirteenth Centuries,” 264.
36 See in this volume S. Gelichi, “Local and Interregional Exchanges in the Lower Po Valley (Eighth–Ninth Centuries).”
elaborate port facilities; the ergonomic explanation of the curious shape of Aegean Kapitān 2 or Pieri’s Late Roman 9, which was easier for a single stevedore to grasp and carry; and the lightness and thinness of the walls of sixth-century globular amphorae, which made it possible to transport more content for the same tare and were better adapted to beachside or smaller-scale landings as well as to reuse.37

Although ceramics evidence has brought a revolutionary change in our perception and even has enabled us to quantify Roman and Byzantine exchanges, as Pieri emphasizes, the bias resulting from the “invisibility” of commodities transported in perishable packing (bags, skins, or textiles) or simply as a loose cargo, such as grain, lentils and other pulses, textiles, spices, furs, and the like, seems nearly insuperable for archaeological investigation, where they hardly leave any trace. The problem is addressed at length in Michael McCormick’s chapter below. The solution is often to turn to indirect evidence—primarily written documents; for example, their frequent mention of capae in the West and βουτία in the East points to the key role of wooden containers in transportation.

Some contributors to the Symposium included numismatics—an approach rarely taken before, which bears tribute to the efforts of researchers in that discipline to make its material available to and usable by nonspecialists—even if its evidence, not yet included in a geodatabase, is difficult to interpret because coins change hands so much more easily than do other materials.38 Nevertheless, when considered in aggregate and in relation to other material, whether archaeological or documentary, coin circulation can help define chronological patterns or spatial distribution, as the chapters by Lightfoot, John Haldon, and Laiou show. The latter two authors saw as paradoxical the lack of precious metal coin finds from large and active production and trade centers such as Corinth or Athens, but this phenomenon should not be surprising; indeed, it is common throughout the Byzantine world, due to the higher rate of loss of petty coinage (one is much more likely to expend effort to recover a gold or silver coin than a small one of little value). The coexistence in some particular areas of coins from various political entities sometimes points to a “currency community,” as in the case of the Antioch region and Cilicia in the thirteenth century—a community that is also made visible in a community of taste, as expressed by the motifs of the Port Saint Symeon Ware or its imitations and their standardization.

The testimony of texts on trade have been used ever since Wilhelm Heyd’s Histoire du commerce du Levant au Moyen Âge (1885–86) or Henri Pirenne’s famous Mabomet et Charlemagne (posthumously published in 1937) for their meaningful and picturesque anecdotes, but not until Michael McCormick’s Origins of the European Economy (2001) was the potential of all written sources and documents for statistical analysis fully recognized and exploited. The rich western archives, even when already the object of numerous studies, can provide new perspectives when approached from new angles, as Rowan Dorin does in his study of the regional Adriatic networks in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, before Venice had fully established her dominance of the region’s sea-lanes.

More obliquely, literary or religious texts can also yield details in the many metaphors related to commercial practice, the good and evil deeds or the risks incurred as found in Church teachings on virtuous trading, and all the allusions to market-conditioned behavior. Such metaphors also tell us that trade and markets were so common that the many topoi based on them were readily understood by churchgoers.39 Previously neglected texts, such as the Arab


almanacs and chronological treatises examined by André Binggeli, yield precious information on Bilād al-Shām’s fairs (the regular intervals at which they were held and the area from which they drew attendees); those in Filastin; those on the Damascus–Mecca route, which existed in the preceding period under Byzantine rule; and the later ones established in the Jazīra on the Euphrates axis.

Relying on this combined evidence, the essays in the first three sections of the book concur in depicting and analyzing the dynamics of local, regional, and interregional trade and that of the artisanal or manufactured products which were exchanged. The last section is devoted to the practical functioning and environment of the Byzantine marketplace.

Marketplace and Shops

The final chapters in this volume consider regulation and control of measures, weights, and payments—an essential institutional condition of the functioning of market exchange generally, and specifically an important foundation of the Byzantine economy—together with indirect taxes from the fifth to the fifteenth century. The unified system inherited from Rome, which was of great benefit in supporting market exchanges and lowering transaction costs, never disappeared even when Byzantium had to agree, from the twelfth century onward, that the privileged Italian merchant communities could use their own measures in their colonies. Brigitte Pitarakis provides a material perspective on this legal and documentary survey by bringing together representations in various media of everyday transactions and installations and the widely attested archaeological remains of measuring and weighing instruments.

Markets as physical spaces have received scarcely any attention, except in the recent studies by Luke Lavan. He offers here an in-depth and innovative study of archaeological evidence for shops and markets in late antiquity, combined with many references to the abundant literary sources. He presents an almost exhaustive survey of present knowledge of material environment for transactions, including market stalls (tables) revealed by slits cut in front of porticoes; wooden tables revealed by postholes and topos inscriptions; cellular shops, often grouped according to their trade and equipped with shelves for the display of goods, counters, and, in the case of taverns, benches or couches for customers; and specialized market buildings, whether tetragonal agorai and macella or sigma shopping plazas. In addition, he proposes a new interpretation of the legal texts (especially CTh 15) that have long been taken as a proof of the encroachment of streets and the transformation of the late antique city into a medina. The overall picture clearly supports his main argument that the “commercialization” of city centers was a sign not of urban decay but of a conscious evolution toward a new monumentality, accepted and even fostered by urban elites in the sixth century. This new urban environment obviously matched the active exchanges inferred elsewhere in the book from other sources.

The subject of shops and markets is also considered by Alan Walmsley in the last section of his chapter, which partly overlaps with Lavan’s observations and complements them: in Byzantine and early Islamic Syria and Palestine, excavations of many secondary urban centers and even big villages (Rusāfa, Palmyra, Pella, Jarash, skythopolis, Arsūf, Umm al-Raṣās, Subaytah/Shivita) provide evidence from the sixth through the eighth century for market streets and agglomerated courtyard units, often located near the church or the mosque. The continuity, renovation, and even new construction of these facilities offer yet more proof of the vigorous functioning of local exchange.

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Though it may be bold to generalize, we may draw some conclusions about points of agreement between the contributors: a widely shared focus on

41 On the importance of legal and social institutions and intangible resources for economic stability and growth in Byzantium, see A. E. Laiou and C. Morrisson, The Byzantine Economy (Cambridge, 2007), 17–22.
geographical and ecological constraints to explain the formation and limitations of regional or local markets supplying an urban center, as well as close attention to the division of labor conducive to interregional exchanges. Relying on such analysis, many essays explore the correlation between trade and urbanization, an element most typically at work in the expansion of long-distance and interregional trade in the Adriatic and the Aegean beginning in the twelfth century or even earlier, since larger cities such as Venice or Constantinople could no longer rely on their medium-range hinterland to feed their inhabitants. Whereas the growth of urban centers was both a cause and a precondition for the emergence of interregional networks, the development of rural centers (e.g., in Boeotia) entailed the expansion of regional and local networks as analyzed by Laïou and Papanikola-Bakirtzi and in other studies. When examined over the course of centuries, most regions displayed common trends, though the mid-Byzantine decline did not occur at the same date everywhere, and the subsequent recovery started in some places as early as the late eighth or early ninth century, at others only in the late tenth century.

The most striking commonality is a new vision of the so-called dark age (the long eighth century, broadly speaking). It is true that increased localization and decreased quality of production in this period cannot be doubted, as exemplified by the restricted diffusion of Sagalassos local semi-fine and coarse kitchen wares; but contributors with different emphases and approaches converged in insisting on the continuity of general settlement and economic activity in Asia Minor. They also concurred in describing the resilience of some coastal areas or islands, like Cyprus, due to the survival of long-distance trade. However limited, these long-distance relations can be traced—for example, in the wide diffusion of Crimean transport amphorae as far as Butrint and in the new centers of trade in northern Italian sites like Comacchio. Resilience also characterized certain areas of inland Anatolia, where the decline of long-distance trade, the plague, and other factors had less effect and where the presence of the army stimulated agricultural and artisanal production aimed at satisfying its needs.

At the same time, weight was given to the analysis of regional diversity and to the changing patterns of networks, such as the growing importance of the Black Sea north–south route between Amastris, Paphlagonia, and Cherson; the shift of the Adriatic trade from a north–south to a west–east emphasis; the reorientation of Halmyros trade from its earlier destination, Thessalonike, to its western hinterland; and so on. Better knowledge of common wares or new approaches to documentary analysis enabled several contributors to look for the structure of local or regional networks, stressing the role of secondary distribution centers or differentiating between regular and occasional markets. New aspects or contexts of exchanges were brought to light for the first time, such as informal markets on the beachside and retail sales on board the tramp ships themselves, probably aimed at dodging imperial taxes.

Not all topics or aspects could be addressed, and regional trade in the late Byzantine period, for which contemporaneous documents can certainly yield more information than has already been retrieved, was not thoroughly treated. Few attempts at quantification were made, despite their necessity for valid economic analysis (admittedly, their dependence on ancient and medieval documents obviously limits the precision of such efforts). One of the possible approaches to the subject suggested here relies on a renewed survey of shipwrecks, a much greater number of which are known now (ca. 309 for the Mediterranean, AD 500 to 1500) than in 1992, when Anthony Parker published his pioneering book on the subject. Michael McCormick is aware of the imperfection of this proxy measure of seaborne traffic, due to the influence of such other factors as decline in population and demand, difference in ship sizes and the cargoes transported, variations in the sinking rate caused by different knowledge and conditions of navigation, and the age of the vessel. Yet all these biases can be taken...
into account to qualify the present picture—a lower number of datable wrecks from the ninth to the fifteenth century than from antiquity, though other sources point to considerable numbers of bigger ships in the late medieval Mediterranean. Another task will be to compare assemblages of pottery production or usage, following on the pioneering attempts to quantify the frequency of late Roman sherds of a defined form (ARS) over time.\(^49\) Similarly, the already well-known comparisons of find patterns from late antique Mediterranean sites published by Michael Fulford and Clementina Panella\(^50\) could be extended to the Byzantine period, when more progress has been made in identifying ceramics and publishing sites—provided that there is enough consistency in how finds are recorded, classified, and published that the necessary geodatabases can be built. A number of hurdles, both methodological and practical (notably, unequal distribution of information) are still in the way, but a consensus on what we know, at least qualitatively, and what we do not has been achieved, and several lines of research have been proposed.

From my standpoint as the editor and a historian, such are the main points that I encourage the reader of this book to bear in mind. A genuine economic perspective is offered in Peter Temin’s assessment at the end of this book. The variety and complexity of the exchange networks analyzed by the essays in this volume, the ubiquity of coins or at least the role of money as measure of exchange, the persistence of local exchanges throughout the designated period, and the recovery of long-distance trade from its eighth-century nadir, which signals the return to economic prosperity in the eleventh and twelfth centuries—all characterize the Byzantine markets as free but regulated. It now remains to follow the paths that have been opened in the various chapters of this volume.

*Cécile Morrisson, August 2010*

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\(^49\) Wilson, "Approaches to Quantifying Roman Trade," 237–43.

It appears that regional trade has finally found its scholarly footing. For medieval economic historians, long-distance maritime trade was for many decades the center of attention, the absence of far-reaching trade networks (whether real or supposed) often being seen—à la Pirenne—as an indication of economic dormancy. In the post–World War II era, interest in the history of local trade began to move out of the shadows, though it was all too frequently sidestepped with a token nod to its ubiquity and resilience. Meanwhile, regional trade was sandwiched awkwardly between these two analytic categories, with evidence of such trade often squeezed into local or long-distance models rather than interpreted discretely. Recent scholarship, however, has begun to highlight both the economic importance of regional trade systems and their structural differentiation from both long-distance and local trade. This is especially true for the early Middle Ages. Richard Hodges’s work on the North Sea and that of Michael McCormick, Chris Wickham, and many others on the Mediterranean have brought to light considerable and persuasive evidence for the vitality of regional maritime trade systems prior to the tenth century. Their economic importance was fundamental; McCormick has described the eighth and ninth centuries as “an age of predominantly regional shipping zones,” while Wickham has similarly maintained that “most exchange, and the most important bulk exchange, took place inside rather than between regions.”

Building on this work, Wickham has also argued that the subsequent expansion of long-distance trade was driven by the increasing internal complexity and dynamism of these early regional systems—a challenging hypothesis, at the very least. However, the excitement generated by a new appreciation of the scope and activity of these early medieval trade networks has not inspired comparable work on later centuries, even though regional trade continued to play a crucial role in the economic life of Europe and the Mediterranean. Indeed, such networks not

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The topic of this chapter was first suggested to me by Angeliki Laiou, beloved teacher and mentor, who guided its development and sharpened its arguments. I am grateful to the editor for including it in this volume dedicated to her memory, and I would also like to thank the editor for her own helpful criticisms. I owe further thanks to David Abulafia, Sauro Gelichi, Michael McCormick, and Gherardo Ortalli for their suggestions, and to Dumbarton Oaks for granting me a short-term predoctoral residency to facilitate completion of the essay.

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3. Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, 707.
4. In the 1970s, David Abulafia, Michel Balard, and others conducted pioneering research into regional trade networks in the central and late Middle Ages, but subsequent work has not advanced much beyond their early insights. See D. Abulafia, *The
only persisted into the central Middle Ages; in many cases, they flourished and transformed themselves into ever more sophisticated and interconnected systems. The foundations of regional trade may have been laid down in the eighth and ninth centuries, but much of the edifice was built in the twelfth and thirteenth.

The Adriatic Sea offers perhaps the most striking example of such growth; it is certainly the best documented. Between the early twelfth and the mid-thirteenth centuries, the region underwent profound political and economic transformations. The Venetian sphere of influence expanded so dramatically that by the late thirteenth century Venice could justifiably see itself as the “Queen of the Adriatic”; it was largely during this period that Venice established the economic dominance over the Adriatic sea-lanes that so marked the subsequent history of the region. Ancona rapidly rose to international commercial prominence, and equally rapidly reverted to purely regional importance. The Byzantine grip on the eastern Adriatic coast was loosened, and then eliminated altogether after 1204—a development that heralded major reconfigurations in the political economy of the sea and its coasts. The regional trade network both influenced and responded to these developments as commercial interconnections within the Adriatic became increasingly intense, diverse, and formalized.

The wealth of surviving written evidence also allows us to examine the dynamics of a regional trade system in considerable detail. We can follow a wide variety of bulk commodities as they move along the coasts and across the sea. We can determine ways in which the long-distance trade that had arisen from earlier intraregional networks now coexisted and connected with them. We can even glean specific knowledge about some of the people who wove these trade networks as they sailed the sea, although far more remain unknown and unknowable. The Adriatic offers insights into larger problems concerning regional trade: how did micro-ecological variations shape the development of trade networks, and what factors countered or amplified their effects? How did local, regional, and long-distance trade interact? How did dominant commercial powers engage with—or seek to control—regional trade systems, and how did neighboring communities respond? Who carried out the commerce by which such systems were created, and how did institutional factors influence their movements? What follows is an effort to answer some of these questions, via the specific historical experience of the medieval Adriatic.

Coasts, Currents, and Connectivity

Both the opportunities for commercial exchange and the mechanics of trade were intimately connected to the rhythms of the sea and the landscapes along its shores and hinterlands; they can be fully understood only within this physical context. From a geographic perspective, the Adriatic is virtually a closed sea (see fig. 10.1). Only the narrow Strait of Otranto, a 72-kilometer-wide channel between Apulia and Albania, permits access to the rest of the Mediterranean. The northern coast of the sea is generally flat and smooth, with extensive lagoons surrounding Venice and the rest of the Po Delta. The western or “Italian” coast is sandy, low-lying, and smooth, with shallow waters along most of its length. With the exception of certain areas of Molise and the Gargano Peninsula, most of the immediate hinterland is well-suited to the growing of the staple Mediterranean crops: grain, olives, and grapes. The eastern coast, by contrast, is mostly rocky and infertile, and is separated from its Balkan hinterland by the Dinaric Alps. The region has always faced a severe dearth of arable land, although the innumerable islands and inlets along the shore have provided it with a surfeit of natural harbors. As a result, its inhabitants have always been linked closely with the sea, and fish (relatively abundant here as compared with the western coast) has formed a staple of the local diet. Only at the southern edge of the eastern shore, in modern Albania, are there sizable tracts

Two Italies: Economic Relations between the Norman Kingdom of Sicily and the Northern Communes (Cambridge, 1977), and M. Balard, La Romanie Génoise, 2 vols. (Rome, 1978). The work of Angeliki Laiou is an important exception insofar as the eastern Mediterranean is concerned; see in particular her “Exchange and Trade, Seventh–Twelfth Centuries,” in EHB 2:697–770.

5 For a detailed description of the natural geography of the Adriatic, see P. Cabanes et al., Histoire de l’Adriatique (Paris, 2001), 15–21.
6 Even in places where the soil is highly fertile, such as the region immediately surrounding Ragusa (modern Dubrovnik), the terrain is often too steep to be readily cultivable.
of arable land. However, they are small in comparison with the vast plains extending inland from the Italian shore, and malarial infestations have long limited their productivity.

Both the tide and the currents in the Adriatic are fairly weak, and they were thus largely unimportant for medieval navigation. It was instead the winds that were crucial. The three principal winds in the Adriatic are the bora, a northeast wind that is particularly frequent in the upper Adriatic; the maestral, which also blows from the northeast; and the sirocco, a moist southerly wind over most of the sea, although along the upper reaches of the western coast it is often an easterly. All three winds are particularly dangerous during winter, and it is therefore not surprising that medieval mariners generally sought to avoid undertaking lengthy voyages within the Adriatic between November and February. Moreover, the direction and strength of the winds during January and February rendered travel up the Adriatic extremely difficult. If the Venetian government frequently sought to limit the maritime ventures of its citizens during the winter months (as will be discussed below), it was because the dangers of such voyages were well-known—and very real. At no point, however, was the Adriatic truly "closed" to navigation during the winter. While mariners

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8 These three are not the only winds in the Adriatic—for example, the lebic (also known as garbin) blows from the southeast, and the northerly tramontana is frequent in the southern Adriatic—but they are the most important for navigation.
understandably preferred to avoid winter sailing, commercial opportunities or political exigencies often trumped navigational concerns.9

The winds, currents, and topography of the Adriatic therefore rendered the eastern coast more conducive to medieval navigation than the Italian shore. Given the limitations of medieval ship riggings, the prevalence of easterly winds in the Adriatic considerably hampered navigation up the western shore. Moreover, the western shore was smooth and low-lying, whereas the eastern coastline (particularly Dalmatia) was rife with islands and inlets that provided refuge during storms or from pirate attacks. Furthermore, the Dinaric Alps that run along the eastern coast served as visual markers to facilitate navigation—an important concern in an era without compasses. But while the many advantages of the eastern side of the Adriatic made it the preferred route for medieval mariners, the sea-lanes along the western coast were hardly inactive. As the commercial success of Ancona and the Apulian ports attests, the Italian shore was certainly not un navigable. Nevertheless, in the absence of pressing geographical, political, or commercial considerations, most Adriatic shipping opted for the eastern route, then as now.

In an era when coastal tramping was the norm, the importance of coasts and coastlines cannot be overstated. Mediterranean shipping has almost always been conducted close to the shore, which offers smoother sailing and higher navigability than the open seas, and can also provide refuge during storms.10 However, the Adriatic offered greater ease of crossing than most of the other open spaces in the Mediterranean. The maestral winds could drive ships from west to east, and the sirocco (at least when it blew as a southerly) enabled them to sail in the reverse direction. Voyages from one coast to another could therefore be conducted with comparative ease for most of the year. This was especially true in the central Adriatic; as one moves southward, trans-Adriatic crossings become steadily more difficult. But even the Strait of Otranto could be crossed by ancient and medieval seafarers, assuming favorable winds.11

We know very little about the boats that sailed the sea-lanes of the Adriatic prior to the late Middle Ages. However, depictions of ships in mosaics and illuminated manuscripts from the period indicate that they were lateen rigged (that is, they used triangular rather than square sails) and generally had one or two masts. While the lateen rigging allowed the ships more maneuverability than their square-rigged counterparts (since they could sail more closely to the wind), the wide and shallow configurations of the hulls and keels of medieval Adriatic ships would have considerably reduced their ability to hold a course into the wind.12 The seasonal patterns of prevailing winds in the Adriatic were therefore crucially important to the rhythms and directions of seaborne commerce.

The vast majority of intra-Adriatic trade was carried out on various types of relatively small boats with rounded prows and sterns, whose names were used so interchangeably that no meaningful distinction can be made between them. Large-scale trade in the Adriatic was carried out by naves, the typical roundships of the twelfth-century Mediterranean, most of which had a carrying capacity of at least 90 tons. Venice occasionally relied on the tarida, which was lower, longer, and narrower than a roundship and had only a single deck. While the tarida had a smaller carrying capacity than the roundship, it was popular as a military supply vessel due to its greater maneuverability.13 Although galleys were vitally important for the contemporary Levant

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10 For a striking visual presentation of the importance of the coasts to Adriatic shipping, see the maps of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century pirate attacks and shipwrecks in A. Tenenti, Naufraghi, corsari e assur risi marittimi a Venezia, 1492–1689 (Paris, 1959), plates 2, 4. However, new archaeological research is providing evidence for a higher frequency of blue-water sailing than has previously been thought; see A. M. McCann, “Cosa and Deep Sea Exploration,” in The Maritime World of Ancient Rome, ed. R. L. Hohlfelder, Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome, supp. vol. 6 (Ann Arbor, Mich., 2008), 37–50.
11 Ships generally opted to sail from the Italian coast to the island of Corfu (just south of the strait) or vice versa, rather than directly across the strait itself. According to the twelfth-century Muslim geographer al-Idrīsī, the voyage from Corfu to Otranto took one day. See Géographie d’Édrisi: Traduite de l’arabe d’après deux manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale, trans. P. A. Jaubert, 2 vols. (Paris, 1836–40), 2:1.211. See also McCormick, Origins of the European Economy, 463–64.
trade, they were rarely used for Adriatic trade during this period. Because of the cost of the oar crews and their reduced carrying capacity, galleys were too expensive to be used for the transportation of bulk commodities (which made up almost the entirety of intra-Adriatic shipping). By contrast, the square-rigged cog was specifically designed for the transport of bulk commodities, and was thus among the most important ship types in the later medieval Mediterranean. However, it was a Baltic innovation and is not attested in Venetian documents until 1315.14

The limitations of medieval ships and the restrictions posed by the Adriatic wind patterns should not be overemphasized, for contemporary mariners understood and adapted to these conditions. Moreover, the dimensions of the Adriatic itself facilitated movement. A ship traveling at 4 knots (which seems to have been standard for a medium-sized vessel) could cross from Venice to Istria in under twenty-four hours. Ragusa (Dubrovnik) could be reached in a further four or five days of sailing, and under good sailing conditions a fast ship could travel from Venice to Corfu in less than nine days.15 A round-trip within the Adriatic could therefore be completed in under a month, assuming favorable winds. In an era when merchants and mariners regularly spent months sailing on the open Mediterranean, a timescale of weeks was rapid indeed. The difficulties and dangers faced by medieval Adriatic mariners were not negligible, but they were far from insuperable. In comparative terms, the medieval Adriatic was a highly navigable sea—and this navigability was an essential feature of its trade networks.

Another essential feature of these networks was the pattern of micro-ecological variation along the shores, a theme emphasized in the recent work of Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell.16 Micro-

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15 Lane, Venice, 48. The question of place-names is invariably tricky, and I have aimed for clarity over consistency. Cities and regions are thus cited in their most familiar form, with modern or medieval equivalents given as appropriate following the first mention.


17 Horden and Purcell, Corrupting Sea, 86.

18 See Cassiodorus, Variarum Libri XII 12.2.4.

19 Horden and Purcell, Corrupting Sea, 89–122; idem, “Four Years of Corruption,” 369–71.
medieval Venice and other Adriatic cities, commodity exchange was often driven by the demands of an expanding population. These demands often outstripped the productive capabilities of the surrounding region, and thus required food to be imported from further away. Moreover, urban areas offered economic institutions (markets, currency exchange, controlled weights and measures, regulated dispute adjudication, and so forth) unavailable in less-settled localities, as well as a wider variety of commercial offerings. Large cities like Ancona or Ragusa offered manufactured goods that would have been unavailable in more remote communities; similarly, those cities that enjoyed commercial ties with communities outside the Adriatic were often connected to commodity flows that bore no relation to the micro-ecologies of the cities themselves—spices and silks being only two of the most obvious examples. The presence of such exogenous commodities in the markets of certain Adriatic cities certainly helped foster trade within the sea. Thus, while micro-ecological complementarity was a very significant factor in the patterns of Adriatic exchange, it was neither a sufficient condition for exchange nor the sole economic stimulus within the sea.

Horden and Purcell’s principal goal is to demonstrate the continuing connectivity of the Mediterranean throughout recorded human history, and in this effort they succeed admirably. From the perspective of economic history, however, their methodology is not only inappropriate but dangerously misleading. It makes little provision for diachronic evolution, and is even less helpful in attempting to explain it.20 Equally problematic is the highly binary nature of their model of connectivity. Connection between two localities either occurs or does not occur; at times, the frequency and intensity of the connection seem virtually irrelevant. A one-time exchange of a given commodity between two coastal hamlets can appear as important for overall connectivity as the frequent exchanges between Ancona and Zara (Zadar). This approach risks making a single voyage appear to be of equal economic importance with centuries of commercial activity. It might (and indeed does) produce a conceptual map of the Mediterranean that is rife with linkages, but from the perspective of economic history, such a map is not especially useful. Though we cannot always securely establish the relative economic importance of individual connections between communities, we must at least acknowledge that differences existed—and that such differences had genuine economic consequences. The following analysis therefore makes use of micro-ecologies, but as a conceptual tool rather than as an overriding framework, and it seeks to be sensitive to changes over time, wherever the concentration of evidence permits.

The evidence for Adriatic trade during the period is almost entirely textual; the exchange of locally produced ceramics within the Adriatic is largely a phenomenon of the late thirteenth century and afterward, though ceramic imports from elsewhere in the Mediterranean can occasionally be used to corroborate the written record where long-distance trade is concerned. While the survival rate of twelfth- and early thirteenth-century documentary evidence is significantly lower than for subsequent centuries, a considerable amount has been preserved. The notarial documents in the Venetian archives are a particularly rich source of information. Among the hundreds of surviving commercial contracts from the period, roughly sixty refer specifically to Adriatic trade; altogether they concern more than fifty separate ventures between 1098 and 1259.21 Nearly all of them are standard colleganza contracts, or quittances thereof. In such contracts, an investor typically entrusted capital to a particular merchant for use in an overseas venture, the profits to be shared according to prior agreement.22 Both commodities and destinations often go unspecified, as such matters were regularly left to the discretion of the merchant undertaking the voyage. It is probable

20 For a penetrating critique along these lines, see W. V. Harris, “The Mediterranean and Ancient History,” in idem, ed., Rethinking the Mediterranean, 1–42, at 34–38.

21 The use of approximations here is intentional, since the notarial documents are frequently ambiguous. Almost all of the relevant contracts are printed in R. Morozzo della Rocca and A. Lombardo, eds., Documenti del commercio veneziano nei secoli XI–XIII, 2 vols. (Rome, 1940), and A. Lombardo and R. Morozzo della Rocca, eds., Nuovi documenti del commercio veneto dei secoli XI–XIII, Monumenti storici, n.s., 7 (Venice, 1953).

22 Colleganza was a Venetian name for the more common commenda. In certain cases, the recipient also invested his own funds in the venture; such a contract is usually referred to as a “bilateral colleganza.” For an illuminating study of the commercial possibilities and limitations embedded in the structure of such contracts, see J. H. Pryor, Mediterranean Commerce in the Middle Ages: A Voyage under the Contract of commenda,” Viator 14 (1983): 132–94.
that many of the extant medieval Venetian contracts that omit references to a final destination actually concerned intra-Adriatic ventures, but there is usually no means by which these can be identified.

These contracts, though often revealing, must be used with caution. To begin with, they are all concerned with the commercial activities of Venetian merchants, rarely mentioning merchants from other Adriatic communities. They are therefore highly skewed toward the experience of the lagoon city. Moreover, the selective transmission of such documents—generally due to their inclusion in testamentary bequests to churches or monasteries—limits their potential to support any meaningful quantitative analysis. Finally, they generally represent the commercial experience of the kinds of Venetian citizens who would have been making major testamentary bequests in the first place: namely, the wealthy ones. The trends in the documentation therefore cannot always be extrapolated for Venice as a whole, let alone the entire Adriatic. Fortunately, the evidence from these contracts can be corroborated and supplemented by the extant diplomatic records from throughout the Adriatic, as well as medieval chronicles, geographic surveys, travelogues, and other contemporary sources.

The Adriatic as Venetian Contado

It is appropriate, if hardly novel, to begin with Venice, for the most striking feature of the twelfth- and thirteenth-century Adriatic trade system was the rapid expansion of Venetian control. Venice had established itself as the principal city of the Adriatic well before 1100, but its early dominance was mainly political, even if the underlying impetus was economic: the security of the Adriatic as a corridor for Venetian long-distance maritime trade. Over time, however, control over commodity movement within the Adriatic became increasingly important to Venice, as the city came to depend on the resources of the sea’s coasts and hinterlands for its very existence. Just as the medieval Italian communes sought to establish a monopoly over the economic life of their surrounding countryside (contado), so too did Venice increasingly attempt—with considerable if not absolute success—to control intra-Adriatic shipping. Of course, while the city may have risen from the waves, it was hardly independent from the nearby mainland. Much of its food supply originated in the lands bordering the Venetian lagoon, and, as surnames such as Trevisiano (“from Treviso”) attest, so too did much of the city’s population. Moreover, just as many noble families in Genoa, Pisa, and elsewhere owned considerable landholdings in their city’s contado, many Venetian patrician clans possessed estates on the mainland. As early as 829, a Venetian doge is recorded as having possessed extensive lands near the shores of the lagoon and around Treviso. This pattern certainly continued into the period under question and became de rigueur for the Venetian upper classes in subsequent centuries. In many respects, therefore, the mainland surrounding the Venetian lagoon played the role of a typical contado.

Yet the Adriatic came to replicate many aspects of a contado as well. Although it would be incorrect to suggest that the Adriatic was the Venetian contado (for, if nothing else, this equation marginalizes the role of the surrounding terra ferma and ignores many of the politico-juridical elements of a typical contado), medieval Venice gradually came to rely on the Adriatic to fulfill many of the conventional functions of an agricultural hinterland. As discussed above, exchange in the medieval Adriatic was generally prompted either by demand that could be satisfied by a complementary micro-ecology within the region or by an urban center’s inability to supply itself adequately from its immediate surroundings. In the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, the city of Venice epitomized both conditions. Only with respect to fish and salt was it fully self-sufficient, and much of its salt was imported from Chioggia on the southeastern edge of the lagoon. Furthermore, by the twelfth century the productive capabilities of the nearby terra ferma were decidedly

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24 The nature of the medieval contado has been much disputed in Italian historiography; a balanced overview may be found in G. Chtelolini, “The Italian City State and Its Territory,” in City States in Classical Antiquity and Medieval Italy, ed. A. Molho, K. Raaflaub, and J. Emlen (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1991), 589–602. The classic account of the economic role of the contado (with an emphasis on the Tuscan communes) is E. Fiumi, “Sui rapporti economici tra città e contado nell’età comunale,” Archivio Storico Italiano 114 (1956): 18–68; for more recent approaches, see the essays collected in T. Dean and C. Wickham, eds., City and Countryside in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy: Essays Presented to Philip Jones (London, 1990).
insufficient to meet the growing Venetian demand for a wide range of commodities, and Venice therefore turned to the Adriatic to make up the shortfall. The phrase “intra culfum,” which occurs repeatedly in contemporary Venetian documents, was more than a navigational criterion used by the Venetian government: it was a linguistic reflection of a perception of the Adriatic as a discrete geographical and economic unit, and one that Venice would seek increasingly to dominate.

One of the principal economic functions of a contado was to provide the metropole with a steady flow of immigrants. The Adriatic likewise proved a continual source of population inflow for Venice and of manpower for its industries, with Ragusans and Apulians captaining Venetian ships, and Dalmatian sailors regularly serving aboard the city’s galleys (particularly from the early fourteenth century onward). In the later Middle Ages, and likely in earlier centuries as well, many residents of Venice hailed from the eastern coast of the Adriatic. However, the most critical economic role of a contado was not the supplying of men but the production of staple commodities—primarily grain, oil, and salt, as well as wine, wood, and other foodstuffs. For much of Venice’s early history, the city’s immediate surroundings were presumably able to adequately satisfy its demand for basic staple goods. Venice was particularly well supplied with salt; the shallow waters of the lagoon were distinctly suited to the establishment of saltworks, and by the eleventh century nearby Chioggia was already the site of a thriving salt industry. Timber was available nearby, for the heavy forests of the upper Adriatic (particularly in Istria) had not yet been depleted by centuries of overexploitation. Venice was also blessed with an abundance of fish, for the surrounding lagoons were among the most productive fishing zones anywhere in the Mediterranean. Thus, even in times of crop failures, Venetians could at least fall back on fish to sustain themselves. Yet fish was never the mainstay of the local diet. For medieval Venice, as for the Mediterranean world in general, the staple diet was based on grain—whether wheat, barley, or other crops. As the city’s population expanded in the twelfth century, reaching an estimated 80,000 inhabitants by the year 1200, Venice began to seek foodstuffs from coastal communities throughout the Adriatic (see fig. 10.2). For the next four centuries, grain imported from within the Adriatic would be a crucial element of the Venetian diet, and in the later Middle Ages such imports made up the majority of the city’s grain supply. Only toward the end of the sixteenth century did grain production in the Veneto expand sufficiently that it was possible for local sources to outstrip maritime imports.

In general, it was cities on the Italian coast that came to serve as the principal supply centers for the staple food commodities that Venice lacked. The inhospitable micro-ecologies of the eastern Adriatic shore, with its rocky coastline and mountainous hinterland, could barely provide enough food for its own inhabitants, let alone an exportable surplus. The lone exception was Albania, which provided Venice with grain from the early thirteenth century onward, and possibly earlier. But Albanian grain was considered to be of inferior quality (at least by later writers), and the surviving documentation suggests accordingly that Albanian grain was sought primarily during times of widespread scarcity, rather than as usual practice. It is possi-

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25 See Lane, *Vénice*, 20, 168.
27 The lagoons were particularly productive in comparison to Mediterranean fishing overall, although the scarcity of fish in the Mediterranean has been exaggerated by Braudel and subsequent historians. For a more balanced interpretation of fish yields in the Mediterranean, see Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, 190–91.
28 Ibid., 201.
29 Lane, *Vénice*, 18.
32 In 1210, Michael Doukas granted the Venetians the freedom to export grain from the Despotate of Epirus; see G. L. T. Tafel and G. M. Thomas, eds., *Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig*, 3 vols. (Vienna, 1866–57), no. 224.
ble that Albania was also a source of wine and oil, since the area around Durazzo (Durrës) is known to have had vineyards and olive orchards during the period, but unfortunately the surviving commercial documents concerning voyages to Durazzo make no reference to the ships’ cargoes.34 The establishment of the Venetian-controlled Duchy of Durazzo following the Fourth Crusade played a major role in securing the city’s access to Albanian foodstuffs; of the seven surviving contracts that specifically mention Durazzo as a final destination (as opposed to merely a port of transit), all but one date from the years of the duchy.35 Evidence of Venetian trade with Albania largely drops off after 1213 (when Venice lost control of Durazzo), although trade may have continued intermittently over the succeeding decades. Venice still seems to have turned its attention toward the southeastern Adriatic when alternative sources of grain proved insufficient; a report of an attack by Istrien pirates on a ship returning from Durazzo in 1227 (in the midst of a severe famine in Venice) suggests that the Albanian grain market remained open to Venetian traders.36

Throughout the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the predominant sources of staple commodities

35 DCV, nos. 503, 507; NDCV, nos. 60, 61, 69, 71; and L. Frizziro, ed., San Maffio di Mazzorbo e Santa Margherita di Tor-
for Venice lay on the western shores of the Adriatic.37 Much of the grain, oil, and wine that was transported to the city originated near the communities along the central and southern Italian coast, for the microecologies of their surrounding regions were generally conducive to the cultivation of wheat, olives, and grapes. Commercial relations between Venice and these regions dated back centuries, but starting in the mid-twelfth century these relations became increasingly regular. They also became increasingly regulated, especially after a severe famine from 1224 to 1227 prompted Venice to focus diplomatic efforts on securing its access to staple foodstuffs from within the Adriatic.

Unfortunately, there are no surviving private commercial documents concerning Venetian trade with central Italy prior to the very end of the twelfth century, so specific features of this commerce must be inferred largely from the diplomatic record. The earliest relevant treaty is from 1141: in it Fano, a small maritime community in the Marches, offered its submission to the doge and Commune of Venice in return for promises of military support against its nearby rivals.38 Venice promised that citizens of Fano—and merchants in particular—would be safe, secure, and treated as Venetians within Venetian territory. The reciprocal promises from Fano to Venice did not single out merchants, but gave corresponding assurances of security and parity between citizens of the two cities, as well as additional legal privileges to Venetians involved in disputes with Fanese citizens. The revenue from weights and measures used by foreign merchants was to be given to Venice. Fano also promised to pay an annual tribute of one millarium of oil to the church of San Marco and an additional centenarium of oil per year to the ducal camera.39 Unlike all subsequent treaties between Venice and the coastal cities of central Italy, the 1141 treaty with Fano is primarily a political and military agreement, in which commercial factors are mentioned only summarily. However, the apparent dominance of noncommercial elements is misleading. The submission of Fano was not part of a larger pattern of Venetian territorial acquisitions in central Italy, nor was Fano a significant port, or even a valuable strategic site.40 What, then, did Venice stand to gain by involving itself in the regional squabbles of the Marches? Gino Luzzatto has suggested that Venice sought to establish its tutelage over some cities in order to counter the independent power of Ancona in the central Adriatic, but this hypothesis is undermined by the absence of sustained Venetian efforts to establish a presence in the region beyond this isolated instance.41 Yet it is possible that Venice’s interest in Fano was predominantly commercial. Even if the bulk of the treaty’s text deals with politico-military affairs, all of the clauses concerning these affairs come after those that concern trade. Moreover, the specific concessions offered to the Venetians in Fano would have been attractive primarily to merchants. For-

38 A. B. Langeli, ed., Il patto con Fano, 1141 (Venice, 1995).
39 The millarium, as a measurement for oil, had a capacity of 610 liters; the centenarium, naturally, had one-tenth of that capacity. Modern equivalents for weights and measures are adapted from A. Schaube, Handelsgeschichte der romanischen Völker des Mittelmeergebiets bis zum Ende der Kreuzzüge (Munich, 1906), 415–16; F. C. Lane, Venetian Ships and Shipbuilders of the Renaissance (Baltimore, 1914), 145–46; J.-C. Hocquet, “Métrologie du sel et l’histoire comparée en Méditerranée,” AnnalesESC 29 (1974): 393–414; and Rösch, Venedig und das Reich, 203.
40 Admittedly, Venice’s 1141 treaty with Fano was followed by a series of treaties with Istrilian cities (see Langeli, Fano, 15). However, while control of the Istrilian peninsula was clearly necessary to Venetian security, control over Fano was not (nor, at any rate, did possession of a minor beachhead in the Marches offer any real security).
41 Luzzatto, “I più antichi trattati,” 5. Attilio Langeli, the most recent editor of the treaty, adopts a more bluntly imperialist interpretation. Although he rightly notes that Venice “conquistò una piazza, non un territorio” (Langeli, Fano, 15), he does suggest that the submission of Fano gave Venice control over a maritime city that was important for control of the Adriatic. This considerably overstates the strategic importance of Fano.
eign weights and measures were penalized in favor of Venetian ones, which both facilitated Venetian trade and improved the terms of trade for Venetian merchants. More importantly, Venetians involved in legal disputes with the Fanese were to be tried by a Venetian judge (in curia illius vestri missi), rather than in a local Fanese court. This requirement offered clear advantages for merchants, especially since they were most likely to be interacting closely with the Fanese in circumstances that might lend themselves to legal disputes. Furthermore, the selection of oil for the city’s tribute indicates that Fano’s position as a source of staple commodities was not overlooked in the drafting of the treaty. Control over Fano did not offer Venice access to a major harbor, or the ability to dominate Adriatic shipping lines—but it did provide Venice a secure source for the agricultural products of the Marches. The trade with Fano was evidently important enough to merit the city’s active protection; in 1141 (the same year as the treaty was signed), Venice warned Ancona not to restrict Venetian trade with either Fano or nearby Pesaro, which suggests that Venice’s commercial interests in Fano were already well established and a major concern at the time the treaty was concluded. It therefore seems likely that the treaty was prompted by stronger commercial interests (at least on the Venetian side) than has been previously suggested.

Venice’s 1141 warning to Ancona highlights two additional features of its commercial relations with central Italy. The first is that a substantial proportion of Venice’s trade with the region was conducted via relatively small coastal communities, such as Pesaro and Fano. These cities were not insignificant; indeed, they were evidently important enough that highborn Venetians were willing to serve as podestà in their local governments. But they were hardly comparable in size or economic importance to Ancona or the major Apulian ports. The surviving commercial documents bear witness to this pattern of Venetian involvement. In the eight contracts that mention a specific destination along the central Italian coast, three mention Ancona, while Pesaro, Fano, Ortona, Ravenna, Pescara, and Rimini are each mentioned once. The individual amounts invested in these ventures are lower than usual for intra-Adriatic commerce; half of the contracts are for amounts below £50, and none are for more than £100. Given that the journey from Venice to central Italy was fairly short, and that the cargo holds were generally filled with bulk commodities, this phenomenon is not surprising. Voyages to nearby cities were less costly than voyages to distant ones, and Venice was not importing shiploads of high-value luxury commodities from the cities along the central Italian coast.

The warning to Ancona is also indicative of Venice’s stormy relationship with its Adriatic neighbor. Ancona was the only other Adriatic city to enjoy a significant international commercial presence, which enabled it to exercise considerable control over the surrounding region. Having ruthlessly crushed all prior Adriatic competitors (such as Comacchio, which was razed to the ground in 946), Venice was hardly about to tolerate Anconitan ambitions. As a result, Venice and Ancona spent much of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries alternating between open (and usually inconclusive) warfare and tenuous peace. Despite the intermittent hostilities, commercial ties remained strong. In 1152, Venice even granted Anconitans full commercial rights in Venice and Venetian territories—although these were rescinded upon the outbreak of war two decades later. Yet even without a formal agreement, trade between the two cities continued to flourish; as mentioned above, Ancona appears as a destination in the surviving Venetian contracts more often than any other central Italian coastal city. No specific commodity information survives prior to the mid-thirteenth century.
century (aside from a single reference to the export of wine), but here, as elsewhere, the commerce was almost certainly dominated by the principal agricultural products of the micro-ecologies along the Italian coast: grain, oil, and wine.

The other major source of Venetian foodstuffs lay further south, in Apulia. The region was rich in agricultural products, with venerable olive orchards around Bari, vineyards near Trani, and grain predominating in the areas below the Gargano Peninsula.50 Venetians already had active settlements in Apulia during the early twelfth century, and these settlements grew in importance during the period;50 by 1237, Venice had consuls in Trani and Barletta (as permitted by a privilege from Manfred of Sicily).51 The earliest formalization of economic relations between Venice and Apulia occurred in 1139, when Roger II of Sicily signed a commercial treaty (now lost) with the Venetians.52 In 1154, another treaty was signed between Venice and Roger’s successor; unfortunately, this too is lost.53 By 1166, Venetian trade with southern Italy had evidently grown significant enough that Doge Vitale II Michiel refused to provide the Byzantines with Venice’s usual assistance against the Normans for fear of risking good relations with Apulia.54 The first treaty for which the text has survived dates to 1175, when William II of Sicily reduced by one-half the tolls levied on Venetian ships entering Apulian ports and promised royal protection to all Venetian ships (except corsairs and those in the service of the Byzantine emperor).55 Then, in 1199, the civic authorities of Brindisi signed a friendship agreement with two representatives of the Venetian fleet, promising to exclude Pisan and Genoese corsairs from the city’s port.56 Private documents also indicate that Venetian trade with Apulia was flourishing during the period in question. There are nine surviving Venetian contracts concerning voyages to Apulia between the mid-twelfth and early thirteenth century, more than for any other destination within the Adriatic.57 One contract, from November 1190, concerns an investment of £374, the largest recorded for an intra-Adriatic voyage prior to the late 1220s;58 all save the earliest (from 1159) are for amounts between £50 and £200 (that is, within the normal range). As was true of loads originating on the central Italo-Adriatic coast, no details on the cargoes of the ships traveling from Apulia to Venice are available prior to the 1220s, but once again they almost certainly comprised the same staple agricultural goods (grain, oil, and wine) that were the region’s principal export commodities.

Although Venice’s trading relations with the central and southern Italo-Adriatic coast had been somewhat formalized by the diplomatic agreements discussed above, the treaty provisions were fairly broad and the treaties themselves few in number. Thus these relations remained very flexible and largely unregulated during the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. There were no specific restrictions on the import or export of commodities, nor

49 Martin, La Pouille, 400.
50 DCV, no. 41; and see Abulafia, The Two Italies, 78.
52 PRV 1:7. An earlier treaty between Venice and Bari, dating to 1112, does not include any specifically commercial clauses beyond the standard reciprocal promises to protect the other city’s citizens.
53 PRV 1:7. This treaty is mentioned in Andrea Dandolo, Chronica per extensum descripta, in Rerum Italicarum Scriptores, vol. 12, pt. 1, fasc. 3, ed. E. Pastorello (Bologna, 1939), 245–46.
54 Dandolo, Chronica, 249. As there are no other surviving references to this event, the reliability of Dandolo’s account has been disputed; see F. Chalandon, Jean II Comnène (1118–1143) et Manuel I Comnène (1143–1180), 2 vols. (Paris, 1912), 2:386.
55 PRV, no. 3. The reciprocal treaty, offering privileges to Apulians (and all Sicilian subjects) in Venetian territories, has not survived.
57 These documents are DCV, nos. 116, 391, 397, 410, 444, 569; and NDCV, nos. 48, 49, 61. The 1159 contract involves an investment of £20 veronensis, which would have been worth roughly £40 venetialium. During most of the twelfth century, Veronese currency (which was coined by the official imperial mint at Verona) was the standard coinage in Venice; only after 1185 did Venetian coinage become prevalent. See F. C. Lane and R. C. Mueller, Money and Banking in Medieval and Renaissance Venice, vol. 1, Coins and Money of Account (Baltimore, 1985), 107–8. Several surviving contracts were also drawn up by Venetians in Apulia, but do not necessarily concern intra-Adriatic trade; one such contract is mentioned in DCV, nos. 281, 283.
58 DCV, no. 391.
did either signatory seek to establish a monopoly position within the other’s markets. But the limitations of this system became strikingly apparent between 1224 and 1227, when Venice (along with much of northern Italy) was faced with a severe famine. The Venetian government immediately took steps to secure the city’s food supply. In July 1224, it began offering subsidies to private merchants for grain imported from the upper and mid-Adriatic; these subsidies were frequently renewed in the following years. Such measures were evidently insufficient, particularly since (as the documentary record attests) the upper and mid-Adriatic had little surplus to offer—not a single surviving contract from the famine years mentions a city in Dalmatia or on the central Italian coast as a destination for Venetian merchants. An isolated reference to a 1227 commercial voyage from Durazzo suggests that Albanian grain may have provided some relief during the famine, but it was on southern Italy that Venice focused most of its hopes, sending galleys to Apulia to collect every available scrap of foodstuffs. In 1226, Frederick II of Sicily intervened in Venice’s favor, greatly reducing the restrictions on the export of grain and other foodstuffs from Apulian ports. Not surprisingly, the effects of Frederick’s action were striking. Venetian merchants and government representatives rushed to southern Italy to purchase grain in massive quantities. Four contracts for voyages from Venice to Apulia survive from 1226 alone, as well as repeated references in the contemporary proceedings of the Venetian government proceedings — not a single surviving contract from the famine years mentions a city in Dalmatia or on the central Italian coast as a destination for Venetian merchants. An isolated reference to a 1227 commercial voyage from Durazzo suggests that Albanian grain may have provided some relief during the famine, but it was on southern Italy that Venice focused most of its hopes, sending galleys to Apulia to collect every available scrap of foodstuffs.

Evidence from the Liber Comunis indicates that trading activity between Venice and the cities of the central Italo-Adriatic coast did not cease entirely. However, the evidence for active exchange is sparse, and commerce with these regions certainly seems to have decreased considerably from earlier periods. See, for example, Plegii et Pagatores, no. 188, in DMCV 1:109; and Precepta, Iuramenta, Interdicta, no. 120, in DMCV 1:174; and Precepta, Iuramenta, Interdicta, no. 109, in DMCV 1:189.

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full commercial access in the allied territories and exemptions from tolls.\(^6\) Then, in July 1228, Venice allied itself with Cingoli, another Marchigian city slightly further inland.\(^6\) Meanwhile, the doge had declared that all Venetians could trade goods anywhere on the western coast of the Adriatic above the Gargano Peninsula except for Ancona and its territory, and that Anconitan goods could not be transported anywhere but to Venice unless they had been produced in the Gargano, in which case they could also be taken to Acre.\(^7\) Although the latter restrictions were immediately denounced by the papacy (which was then in league with Ancona) and went largely unenforced, they were nevertheless a fore-shadowing of future Venetian dominance over Ancona’s commercial liberties.

In general, most of the Venetian treaties with the coastal Italian cities were focused on securing Venice’s free access to the cities’ grain and staple commodity supplies. In a 1234 commercial treaty with Ravenna, Venice agreed to pay tax on the export of wine and grain from Ravenna in return for the latter’s commitment not to sell any surplus grain, wine, meat, oil, cheese, or figs to any city other than Venice. Ravenna could, however, continue to import these commodities from the Marches and Apulia to satisfy local needs.\(^7\) According to Venice’s 1239 treaty with Recanati, for example, Venice gained the right to export grain and all other commodities in unlimited quantities, as well as full liberty to enter within the city walls after the payment of the appropriate duties (which were limited to a maximum of eight denarii per soma of any merchandise).\(^7\) In 1260, Venice signed a treaty with Fermo after a short period of hostilities between the two cities. Venice could export unlimited quantities of wine and grain, although Fermo reserved the right to ban the export of the latter if prices rose above 10 solidi per starium (a high price indeed).\(^7\) The common theme among all of the treaties signed with coastal cities in Romagna and the Marches is Venice’s free access to the agricultural produce of the co-signatories. Venice’s inability to feed itself had become painfully self-evident, and the city’s government was determined to minimize the possibility of future shortfalls by strengthening relations with the producers of basic foodstuffs—and, where possible, establishing limitations on their movement within the upper Adriatic.

Ancona was the only sizable community on the central Italian coast that continually managed to rebuff Venetian efforts to either control its trade or restrict its commercial freedoms during the first half of the thirteenth century. Venice frequently responded by banning its merchants from traveling to Ancona at all; at the height of the famine, the city’s government declared that any Venetian who went to Ancona without a special ducal permit would have to forfeit his entire cargo and pay a fine of £30 12s.\(^7\) Even in a 1264 treaty between the two cities, in which Ancona was forced to considerably curtail its international commerce following a crushing Venetian victory, Venice was unable to compel Ancona to fall in line with its increasing monopolization of intra-Adriatic staple commodity movement. Ancona was allowed to import foodstuffs and other goods from throughout the Adriatic and trade these same goods freely within the sea, although it could not sell salt or cotton in the northern Adriatic. The city was also allowed to import 2,000 amphorae of wine and 100 miliaria of oil from northern Italy each year (including Ferrara, Bologna, and Lombardy).\(^7\) Venice, on top of eliminating its only contemporary Adriatic rival for long-distance maritime trade, received full commercial rights in Ancona—except, tellingly, it could neither export grain from its rival nor import wine or salt to it.\(^7\) Viewed from the perspective of Venetian control over long-distance trade, the treaty was a decisive triumph—at least on paper.\(^7\) In light of Venice’s ongoing efforts to establish a complete monopoly over the Adriatic trade of staple commodities, however, it was a marked setback.\(^7\)

\(^6\) VCM, no. 7.
\(^6\) Ibid., no. 9.
\(^7\) Consilia et Ordinamenta, no. 97, in DMVC 1:197–98. The reference to the Gargano suggests that wood may have been an important element in Anconitan trade with Acre.
\(^7\) Pasolini, “Venezia e Ravenna,” 226.
\(^7\) VCM, no. 10. The capacity of the soma depended on the specific merchandise.
\(^7\) Ibid., no. 11. Venetian commercial relations with Fermo were already well established in the first half of the thirteenth century; see DCV, nos. 694, 707, 745.

\(^74\) Consilia et Ordinamenta, no. 4, in DMVC 1:166.
\(^75\) The Venetian amphora had a capacity of 600 liters.
\(^76\) VCM, no. 12; R. Cessi, La repubblica di Venezia e il problema adriatico (Naples, 1953), 69–72.
\(^77\) Ancona openly flouted the treaty restrictions on international commerce, prompting a resumption of open warfare a decade later. See VCM, 16–18.
\(^78\) This setback is even more pronounced if one accepts David Abulafia’s interpretation of the Venetian-Anconitan rivalry,
If Venice was not powerful enough to completely control Ancona’s intra-Adriatic commerce, it was certainly not powerful enough to impose its economic program on the Kingdom of Sicily. Therefore, the commercial side of Venice’s diplomatic efforts in southern Italy was directed principally toward securing the city’s access to Apulian grain, and only minimally toward regulating the flow of staple goods in the Adriatic. A 1232 treaty between Venice and Frederick II of Sicily opened the ports of the kingdom to Venetian traders but did not exempt them from duties. Frederick’s subjects were allowed to bring goods to Venice, but only if they were produced within the kingdom itself.\(^79\) A 1257 treaty between Venice and Frederick’s son Manfred renewed most of the conditions of the 1232 agreement, while also establishing that the duties paid by the Venetians on grain would be lower than those paid by Manfred’s own subjects. Again, merchants from southern Italy were welcome to bring domestically produced commodities to Venice, but nothing else.\(^80\) However, they were banned from carrying salt north of Zara or Ancona; they could not bring salt even to Venice. This prohibition stemmed from the Venetian desire to maintain control of the salt commerce in the upper Adriatic. Venice sought to keep all channels open insofar as the grain supply was concerned, but it was well supplied with salt from non-Apulian sources, and therefore could safely afford to shut out southern Italian merchants in the interests of preserving its monopoly. Thus, while the treaties that Venice signed with the Kingdom of Sicily are markedly less stringent than those with the cities of central Italy, they are still distinguished by Venice’s overall concern with both securing its access to staple foodstuffs and regulating their movement where feasible.

\(^79\) PRV, no. 4.

\(^80\) Ibid., no. 6.

The demand for grain also prompted Venice to establish a muda system for Puglia in the thirteenth century. The muda was a particularly Venetian commercial institution, in which the government proclaimed a specific period for the loading or unloading of goods in either Venice or a foreign territory. A fleet of ships, often (though not always) outfitted privately, then traveled in convoy to its destination.\(^81\) The most famous was the semiannual Levantine muda, in which Venetian ships sailed to Constantinople, Alexandria, or Acre in spring or autumn, then returned together in time for a specific unloading period. The advantages to this system lay not only in the security of convoy travel but also in the price stability that it created, since the purchasing and selling of certain kinds of bulk merchandise were confined to specific—and well-publicized—periods of time. This latter feature made the muda system highly attractive for the grain trade, in which major price fluctuations could either lead to significant social disruption or force the city’s government to provide expensive subsidies. Moreover, convoys offered vital protection to the grain-laden ships during periods of widespread famine. Unlike the Levantine muda, the Apulian muda occurred only when grain supplies seemed dangerously low. However, Venetians residing in Apulia were allowed to send shipments of grain to the mother city whenever they wished, even when the muda was imposed.\(^82\) Although little information survives concerning the thirteenth-century Apulian muda, it was yet another means by which Venice sought to control the movement of staple commodities within the Adriatic.

Foodstuffs were not the only commodities that Venetian merchants sought in the Apulian ports; cotton and wool were also important exports for southern Italy. Although Venice imported its highest-quality textile materials from elsewhere in the Mediterranean, the Apulian ports were certainly exporting wool by the late twelfth century and the intra-Adriatic cotton trade was active by


the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. By the mid-thirteenth century, Venice was actively regulating the cotton trade in the upper Adriatic; in the 1257 Venetian treaty with Manfred of Sicily, the latter’s subjects were banned from transporting cotton north of Zara or Ancona (the same restriction that applied to salt). Similarly, Venice’s 1264 treaty with Ancona banned the latter from reexporting cotton from southern Italy to anywhere else in the Adriatic. While none of the surviving Venetian commercial contracts specifically mention Apulian wool or cotton, the treaty provisions suggest that intra-Adriatic exchange of these commodities was sufficiently active to warrant Venice’s imposition of restrictions on their movement.

Despite the existence of numerous treaty provisions limiting the freedom of non-Venetian participants in the grain, salt, and cotton trade, Venice was not yet powerful enough to fully impose its restrictive economic program on the entire Adriatic. However, it could quite easily establish and enforce restrictions on the activities of its own citizens. A series of official Venetian proceedings that survived for the mid-1220s reveal that navigation restrictions were frequently imposed during the winter months, since, as mentioned earlier, the sailing conditions in the Adriatic in winter were unpredictable and often dangerous. In November 1224, for example, the doge declared that Venetians could not sail south of Siponto on the western coast of the Adriatic, or south of Ragusa on the eastern coast, without ducal permission; this order was renewed in October 1226 and March 1228. In February 1227, the doge banned Venetians from sailing south of Ravenna or Zara; one year later, a similar order was issued with the boundaries shifted to Senigallia (in the Marches) and Istria. In later decades, foodstuffs were subjected to special restrictions at any time of year. In May 1251, Venetians were banned henceforth from carrying food to any Adriatic port except Venice (as had been the case during the 1224–27 famine). In May 1253, a similar order was issued, but this time the limits applied only to the upper Adriatic (north of Romagna), and exceptions were made for cities with special ducal privileges. These decrees ensured that Venetian ships carrying staple foodstuffs could not be diverted to other destinations by the promise of higher prices, a change that might have endangered the city’s food supply. For obvious reasons, Venice was also concerned about food being exported outside the Adriatic; such activity was accordingly banned in June 1256.

In the mid-thirteenth century, the intra-Adriatic trade in salt also became an issue of concern for Venice. Until that point, Venice had been well supplied by the flourishing saltworks in neighboring Chioggia, though some restrictions had been established in order to protect its supply. Beginning in 1184, for example, a ducal seal was required to export Chioggian salt outside the lagoon, and in 1228 Venetians were banned from transporting salt south of Ravenna or Quarnar (just south of Istria). But in general, control of the salt trade was of minimal immediate concern to Venice during the twelfth and early thirteenth century. However, beginning around 1232 the rapid collapse of the Chioggian salt industry (due in part to debilitating Venetian tax policies, which effectively privileged Cervian salt over local Chioggian production) forced Venice to seek other sources from which to supply itself.

Fortunately, the Adriatic Sea was comparatively rich in salt. Within the upper Adriatic, the other major source was Cervia, which had been under the control of Ravenna throughout the preceding centuries. Venice aggressively sought to control first the commerce of Cervian salt within the upper Adriatic, sending galleys into the port of Badareno (through which Ravenna accessed the Adriatic) in 1234 to prevent Ravenna from shipping Cervian salt northward. As Chioggian production declined, Venice fought for control of Cervia itself. From 1243

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84 PRV, no. 6.
85 VCM, no. 12; Cessi, Il problema adriatico, 69–72.
86 Plegii et Ordinamenta, no. 8, in DMCV 1:132; and Consilia et Ordinamenta, nos. 8, 83, in DMCV 1:137, 193. In the latter two cases, the southern boundary along the Italian coast was fixed at Leuca and Tronto (in the Abruzzo), respectively.
87 Consilia et Ordinamenta, nos. 29, 80, in DMCV 1:172, 192.
88 Liber Comunis, 14 May 1251: “De illis qui carrigant victualia infra culum,” in DMCV 2:44.
89 Liber Comunis, 5 March 1255: “De non portandis victualibus et mercibus, nisi Venecias, etcetera,” in DMCV 2:46.
90 Liber Comunis, 14 May 1251: “De illis qui carrigant victualia infra culum,” in DMCV 2:49.
to 1248, and then again from 1252 to 1254, Venice actually wrested it from Ravenna. In 1261, the feuding cities signed a treaty by which Ravenna ceded an annual volume of Cervian salt to Venice. The coast between Ravenna and the Gargano Peninsula had almost no domestic salt industry in the Middle Ages, but south of the Gargano, the sandy littorals of Apulia lent themselves to the production of this staple good. However, their output was largely reserved for consumption within the Kingdom of Sicily—and there was enough salt elsewhere in the Adriatic that Venice saw little point in seeking access to Apulia’s production. As mentioned above, Venice did include a provision in the treaty of 1257 banning Manfred’s subjects from transporting salt north of Zara or Ancona. The provision suggests that Venice was willing to forgo access to the product itself, rather than renounce its right to control the movement of salt within the upper Adriatic. The eastern shores of the Adriatic rarely figured into Venice’s system of provisioning itself, given the region’s general paucity of arable land. But the numerous archipelagoes along the coast harbored countless saltworks, and there were major ones as well on the island of Pag and around Zara. The latter sites were already producing abundant salt in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and were probably a source of salt for Venice starting in the mid-thirteenth. Strict Venetian control over the Adriatic salt trade did not begin until the late thirteenth century; as of 1272, Venetians entering into the Adriatic with salt from the Mediterranean (particularly Ibiza, Sardinia, and Cyprus) could unload it only in Venice, and in 1281 the Great Council required all Venetian merchants to import salt on the return trip of each voyage. However, the developments in the first half of the century—namely, the decline of nearby saltworks and Venice’s increasing concern with commodity movement in the Adriatic—laid the groundwork for what was to become one of the Venetian state’s most absolute monopolies.

The importance of the Adriatic region as a source of Venetian manpower has already been noted. Much of the population inflow was the product of voluntary immigration, but part of it stemmed from the urban demand for domestic slaves. Though domestic slavery may not have been a widespread phenomenon in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Venice itself, Venetian participation in the slave trade was considerable. In the early Middle Ages, the bulk of the slaves passing through Venice were supplied from Carolingian conquests and raids; in later centuries, by contrast, they were drawn from the Balkans, which emerged as one of the principal sources of slaves in the high and late medieval Mediterranean world. In each of the attested cases of urban Venetian domestic servitude from the period, the slave concerned was of Balkan descent. In 1125, for example, the heirs of Pietro Stagnario noted the manumission of Dobramiro, their father’s former slave, who was of Croatian origin. In 1199, Bratemiro, a slave ex genere Slavorum, was sold to a certain Domenico of Chioggia. In 1211, Giacomo della Scala made provisions in his will for the freeing of Draga, a female slave whose name implies a Balkan origin. The regular (if infrequent) appearance of Balkan slaves in the surviving Venetian commercial contracts suggests that while the slave trade was perhaps not yet as vigorous as it would become at the very end of the thirteenth century, nor as fundamental as it had been during the early Middle Ages, it was nevertheless an important component of Venetian economic exchange with the eastern Adriatic coast during the period in question.

To what extent was the movement of slaves and other commodities to and from Venice carried out by the Venetians themselves? The surviving documentation suggests that it was generally Venetian

92 Hocquet, Le sel et la fortune de Venise, 1:172–73.
93 PRV, no. 6.
94 Hocquet, Le sel et la fortune de Venise, 1:169.
96 Given the difficulty of establishing a clear dividing line between slavery and servitude in the High Middle Ages, I use the terms “slaves” and “slavery” throughout.
97 Venetian involvement in the slave trade was nothing new; Michael McCormick has recently argued that the slave trade in fact formed the basis of early Venetian prosperity (McCormick, Origins of the European Economy, 765–77).
98 In the early Middle Ages, the Balkans were also a major source of slaves for the Byzantine Empire and its slave trade; see Y. Rotman, Les esclaves et l’esclavage de la Méditerranée antique à la Méditerranée médiévale, VI–XI siècles (Paris, 2004), 97.
99 DCV, no. 49.
100 DCV, nos. 442, 535.

Adriatic Trade Networks in the Twelfth and Early Thirteenth Centuries
merchants and sailors who carried them from Adriatic communities to Venice itself, rather than waiting for the commodities to be brought to the Rialto by others. This is not surprising; in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Venetian merchant marine dwarfed that of the Adriatic cities, and Venice was the commercial city par excellence. But while Venetians undoubtedly dominated their city’s intra-Adriatic trade routes (and, indeed, its trade routes in general), non-Venetians also played an active role. Admittedly, the extent of non-Venetian participation in Venice’s overall intra-Adriatic trade is difficult to gauge; little relevant documentation survives that might illuminate its scale. Consequently, we have no way of knowing how much of the southern Italian grain was carried to the lagoon city on Apulian ships rather than Venetian ones, or how often Ragusan slave traders brought their wares to Venice rather than waiting for Venetian merchants to come to the Dalmatian markets, and so on.

Although we do not know what proportion of Venice’s intra-Adriatic trade was accounted for by non-Venetian participants, it was far from negligible. All of Venice’s treaties with the cities along the central Italian coast allowed the co-signatories permission to trade freely (or very nearly so) in Venice. Both the 1232 and 1257 treaties between Venice and the Kingdom of Sicily specifically allowed southern Italian merchants to bring domestically produced goods to Venice (although the latter treaty excluded salt and cotton). Even Venice’s 1264 treaty with Ancona, which greatly restricted the latter’s commercial freedoms, still allowed Ancona to bring goods produced within the Adriatic to Venice (again excepting salt and cotton). Essentially, the Venetian need for staple foodstuffs outweighed the city’s desire to completely control the movement of those commodities within the Adriatic. The availability of grain on the Rialto was more important than the allegiance of the ships on which it was transported. Dalmatian merchants came to Venice, too, and they settled in the city in large numbers. In Ragusa’s 1205 treaty with Venice, its merchants were exempted from taxes on Balkan commodities that they brought to Venice, though the treaty severely limited their ability to import goods to Venice from beyond the Adriatic and banned them from engaging in commerce with foreign traders during their visit to Venice. From the mid-twelfth century onward, Venice massively expanded its control over the economic life of the Adriatic. Commercial ties were formalized, navigation restrictions were imposed, and commodity movements were monopolized. The city’s efforts were not motivated by Venetian interests in the Levant, nor by a virulent strain of civic imperialism—though these factors undoubtedly colored the developments. Rather, they were a direct and rational response to well-founded concerns about Venice’s ability to sustain itself. Other parts of the Adriatic could provide what the city’s immediate surroundings could not, and an intensification of intra-Adriatic commercial exchange was the natural result. But while Venice was dependent on the Adriatic for its survival, the communities engaged in the supplying of Venice also depended on the city for their economic livelihoods. The relationship between a city and its contado was never unidirectional, and the Venetian experience was no exception. If the coastal cities of the Adriatic gradually accepted Venetian restrictions over their commercial freedom in return for a guaranteed market for their wares, it was not always a case of weaker powers being subjugated by a dominant power; rather, it was often an acknowledgment that the expansion of trade could bring mutual rewards.

**Commercial Exchange within the Adriatic**

The influence of Venice was felt throughout the Adriatic, but not all sea routes led inexorably toward the lagoon city. Because the sea was navigable, intra-Adriatic trade was conducted both laterally (that is, along a given coast) and transversally (between opposing coasts). Of course, some voyages involved both lateral and transverse trade: a Dalmatian ship might cross the Adriatic to southern Italy and stop at several Apulian ports to buy grain before return-

102 PRV, nos. 4, 6.
103 VCM, no. 12.

104 The text is now lost, although its provisions have been re-created from later treaties; see S. M. Stuard, “Ragusa and the Silver Trade: Ragusan Trade with the Balkan Interior, 1205–1358” (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1971), 26–27.
105 In some cases, like the 1142 treaty with Fano, Venice also offered its protection to the co-signatory—but during the period such cases were rare outside the upper Adriatic.
ing to the eastern coast. However, such a voyage served the same redistributive function—namely, moving grain from the west coast to the east coast—regardless of how many Apulian ports the Dalmatian ship visited during its trip. From the regional perspective of commodity exchange, the movement of grain from Apulia to Dalmatia is the crucial factor; it is unimportant whether such grain was purchased in one port or many. From the perspective of the grain merchants in medieval Brindisi or Otranto, in contrast, such port-hopping was vitally important. Attention to such movements would be equally crucial for a close examination of short-distance maritime trade routes or of the individual activity of Adriatic ports. But in order to avoid burying the large patterns of intra-Adriatic commodity exchange beneath a bewildering array of detail, the analysis below will focus primarily on broad movements of commodities within the Adriatic—either along the same shore or across to the opposing one—rather than the specific itineraries by which individual vessels orchestrated this movement.

Much of the lateral commercial traffic along the western coast was occasioned by the simple inability of major urban centers to supply themselves with sufficient basic foodstuffs from their immediate surroundings. Venice was not the only Adriatic city that expanded beyond the productive capabilities of its hinterland; Ravenna, for example, faced a similar problem. In its 1234 treaty with Venice, it insisted on maintaining its freedom to import food from Apulia and the Marches—a stipulation which clearly implies that Ravenna was unable to consistently supply its food needs from the surrounding countryside. Ancona was an even larger urban center, and the city’s demand for foodstuffs was a particularly important engine of lateral exchange on the western coast. Free access to Adriatic grain was so vital that the papacy (which had declared the city to be a papal protectorate) regularly intervened in Adriatic affairs in order to secure the Anconitan food supply. In 1245, Pope Innocent IV declared that the citizens of Ancona were free to trade throughout Apulia and the Kingdom of Sicily, though since both regions were under imperial rather than papal control, his proclamation had no practical effect. Even under the crushing terms of the city’s 1264 treaty with Venice, Ancona managed to preserve its right to import agricultural goods from anywhere on the Italo-Adriatic coast. Given Venice’s increasing monopolization of intra-Adriatic staple commodity movement, Ancona’s preservation of this commercial freedom was no mean feat, and the clause is a testament to the critical importance of the western Adriatic coast to the Anconitan food supply.

There were also communities along both coasts with specific needs that could often be satisfied only by nearby urban centers, which enjoyed a density of skilled labor (for manufactured goods) or a concentration of capital (for long-distance trade). For example, the monks of S. Maria di Tremiti, a Benedictine monastery on the small island of San Nicola off the Gargano Peninsula, turned to Anconitan markets to provide commodities that were unavailable in their tiny archipelago. A surviving pagina recordationis from 1128 indicates that cheese was produced on the Tremiti islands, but gives no hint as to the Anconitan goods that induced the monks to sail from their monastery to the great port city in the first place. Perhaps they sought more varied foodstuffs than the ecology of the archipelago could sustain, or perhaps they came for more specialized merchandise—wax for their candles, incense for their services, tools for their workers—all of which would have been available in the markets of Ancona. Similar circumstances probably animated the harbors of countless other Adriatic port cities on both the eastern and western coasts, although the surviving documentary evidence for such activity is unfortunately scarce.

106 Such a route is attested in an early medieval vita of St. Leucius, in which the saint travels aboard a Dalmatian ship in order to travel from Otranto to Brindisi. It is probable that this segment formed part of a larger trading voyage from Dalmatia to Apulia and back again. See Vita S. Leucii, AASS Jan. I, XI, 672.

107 Contemporaries were well aware of the consequences of local shortfalls, particularly where port cities were concerned. As one Anconitan chronicler noted ca. 1200, “civitates que sunt in insula Anconae sunt multo plus plures instar portorum quam Anconae et mercatores,” Boncompagno da Signa, Liber de obsidione Aquae, in RIS 6, pt. 3, ed. G. C. Zimolo (Bologna, 1939), 17.


109 A. Theiner, ed., Codex diplomaticus dominii temporalis S. Sedis, 3 vols. (Rome, 1861–65), no. 210. A year later, the pope insisted on Anconitan commercial privileges in Durazzo—but the city’s Epirote rulers seem to have ignored this as well (ibid., no. 227).

110 FCM, no. 12.

In other cases, the patterns of exchange along the western Adriatic coast were less firmly established, with the dynamics of supply and demand varying from month to month and year to year. Such is the case with the commercial relationship between Fermo and Termoli during the early thirteenth century. The terms of a 1225 treaty between the two cities indicate that trading links had been active for some time; indeed, the treaty was an attempt to rectify the ill will that had arisen after the cities had imposed sanctions on each other’s merchants. The commodities specifically named in the treaty include wool, linen, iron, wax, pepper, salt, oil, vegetables, meat, cheese, animals, and eels, but the treaty itself is unconcerned with the directional flow of the goods. Fermo, of course, lay in a fertile agricultural region, with sufficient supplies of grain, oil, and wine that its output would be actively sequestered by Venice in the mid-thirteenth century, as mentioned earlier. It was also an active fishing port; even today, fish and eels are mainstays of the local diet. Termoli, by contrast, was backed by a mountainous hinterland for which it was the principal port. Subsistence farming and shepherding seem to have been the surrounding region’s principal economic activities, though there was some grain production in the area. It is probable that Termoli often offered wool in exchange for the agricultural produce of Fermo, but the trade dynamics of salt, linen, wax, iron, and pepper are unclear (though the latter two were presumably imported from elsewhere). Given that most other contemporary treaties are considerably more explicit about the directionality of commodity movement, the ambiguity in the Fermo-Termoli treaty seems quite deliberate—a reminder that even if the broad movements of goods within the Adriatic often adhered to enduring and predictable patterns, smaller-scale exchanges between neighboring cities and regions were much more mutable.

On the eastern side of the Adriatic, the relative unity of the micro-ecologies along the Dalmatian coast limited the opportunities for large-scale lateral exchange. Moreover, because the Dalmatian terrain was hardly conducive to agricultural production, urban-based demand could not prompt lateral exchange in the same way that it did on the western shore. Only further south, in Albania, did significant opportunities present themselves for commerce between communities along the eastern shore. While Venice apparently dominated the export market for Albanian grain, there was nevertheless a sizable Ragusan presence in Durazzo during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The Ragusans became particularly active in the Albanian port after the Venetian-controlled Duchy of Durazzo collapsed in 1213, since they faced no local hostility (unlike their Venetian competitors) and their presence was actively encouraged by Durazzo’s new overlords, the despot of Epiros. The Ragusans had already been granted commercial privileges in the despotate in 1206, in return for a promise to import horses and armaments. According to these privileges, Ragusan merchants were exempted from the kommerkion (the traditional Byzantine commercial duty of 5 percent ad valorem); the despot renounced the right of the fisc, and Ragusans could not be collectively penalized for grievances committed by an individual Ragusan merchant. Once Durazzo fell to the Despotate of Epiros in 1213, Ragusans would...

112 W. Hagemann, “Un trattato del 1225 tra Fermo e Termoli finora sconosciuto,” in Studi in onore di Riccardo Filangieri (Naples, 1959), 175–88, at 184–87. The treaty also notes that the trade could be carried out either by land or by sea, although the mountainous terrain of the region around Termoli probably rendered the maritime route more attractive to medieval merchants.

113 Although wine was the principal export commodity of Fermo in the later thirteenth century, it is not mentioned in the treaty, perhaps because the civic government wished to maintain stricter controls on its trade.


115 No medieval saltworks are attested in the vicinity of either city; see Hoqueut, Le sel et la fortune de Venise, 194–96.


118 Ducellier, Façade maritime, 186. The Duchy of Durazzo was established by Venice in 1205 following the Fourth Crusade, and was directly administered by the Venetian government for the next decade.

119 F. Miklosich and J. Müller, eds., Acta et diplomata graeca mediæ aevi sacra et profana, vol. 3 (Vienna, 1865), no. 11. For the kommerkion, see H. Antoniadis-Bibicou, Recherches sur les dou-
have enjoyed these privileges in Durazzo as well. Later treaties in 1234 and 1237 extended these privileges even further, assuring Ragusan merchants of protection from pirate attacks and of the protection of their property should they die within the despotate.120

The Ragusans came to Durazzo seeking salt, and evidently in great quantities.121 The many lagoons along the Albanian coast (particularly north of Durazzo) rendered the region ideal for the production of the staple, and with Venice able to provision itself from saltworks in the upper Adriatic, Ragusa evidently faced little competition. The Dalmatian city’s interest in the Albanian saltworks is striking: every surviving Ragusan contract for trade in Durazzo in the thirteenth century concerns the purchase of salt. The quantities involved were substantial—Ragusans seem to have bought more than one hundred tons of salt from Durazzo in 1243, and almost six hundred tons in 1248.122 The intensity of this commerce is somewhat surprising, since the Dalmatian coastline was itself highly conducive to salt production. However, the level of Ragusan interest in Albanian salt clearly suggests that either local production was inadequate or that the commercial privileges that the city enjoyed in the despotate were generous enough to compensate for the longer transport distance. Moreover, Ragusa was supplying not merely its own needs but also those of its Balkan hinterland. Although Balkan demand was somewhat sated by the salt mines in Bosnia and Hungary, Ragusa nevertheless served an important intermediary function for the transit of Albanian salt.123

Salt was one of the very few commodities produced throughout the Adriatic. As it was produced on both the western and eastern coasts, it was usually traded laterally (since coastal tramping was generally preferred to trans-Adriatic crossings whenever possible). Only in the upper Adriatic, where most of the salt came from the major production centers of the northwestern coast, was there an active transverse trade. The movement of the salt was largely controlled by Venice; in 1182, for example, a treaty between Venice and Capodistria required all salt entering Istria to pass through Capodistria, and it also had to carry the seal of the Venetian doge unless it was being used for personal consumption.124 Consequently, Venice was able to exercise a large degree of regulatory control over the regional commerce of salt. In the twelfth century, the Chioggian saltworks were the main suppliers for the upper Adriatic, just as for Venice itself. Thereafter, however, Cervian salt became more and more common in Istria. It seems to have circulated fairly freely until the mid-thirteenth century, when Venice was finally able to establish controls on its movement.125 The eastern coast also had abundant saltworks during the period, particularly in the region around Pag, an island in the Dalmatian archipelago near Zara. Pag was already producing abundant salt in the eleventh century, and it continued to be a major source of Adriatic salt for centuries thereafter. Much of its production was purchased by Zaratin merchants, who then redirected it into the Balkan hinterland. Indeed, the profits from the salt trade with Pag were so crucial to Zara’s economic livelihood that by cutting off Zara’s access to the saltworks of Pag, Venice was able to hasten the end of Zaratin resistance to Venetian rule in the late thirteenth century.126

The central and southern Italo-Adriatic coast also witnessed a lively lateral salt trade during the period. The Apulian coast had considerable saltworks, especially in the area around Siponto (immediately south of the Gargano Peninsula), and Cervia supplied the coast and interior of Romagna. But the regions in between—namely, the Marches and Abruzzo—had no domestic salt industry, and thus relied on imports.127 Given that salt was generally too bulky to be carried overland in high volumes

120 Hocquet, Le sel et la fortune de Venise, nos. 14, 15.
123 Hocquet, Le sel et la fortune de Venise, 1:688–69.
124 Ibid., 1:279.
125 Hocquet, Le sel et la fortune de Venise, 1:94–96.
for any significant distance, maritime transportation was the preferred mechanism of redistribution (with inland waterways playing an additional, and integral, distributive role). Unfortunately, no commercial contracts survive that might illuminate the details of this trade, though its existence is confirmed by the recurring references to the importation of salt in contemporary treaties from the cities in the region.128

Until the late thirteenth century, the salt commerce in the Adriatic was conducted almost entirely laterally, from Apulia to Ancona, or from Durazzo to Dalmatia, and so forth. Only in the upper parts of the sea, between Chioggia and Istria, was there an active transverse salt trade (and there the crossing might almost be considered lateral). While salt may have been transported from one coast to another in other parts of the Adriatic, no such exchanges are attested before the second half of the thirteenth century. In June 1262 the procurator of the Venetian count of Ragusa purchased 12,000 modii ragusini of salt from three Apulian ports, and there is no reason to believe that the transaction was unusual.129 Twenty-five years later, in a 1288 treaty between Ancona and Zara, the exchange of salt between the two coasts was discussed extensively; the Zara-tine saltworks were evidently poised to supply much of the demand in Ancona and its surrounding region.130 But in general this was a late thirteenth-century phenomenon, and in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, salt was rarely traded between the eastern and western shores.

The lateral nature of the salt trade was largely paralleled by the contemporary timber trade. Like salt, wood was not confined to any one region or coast in the Adriatic. A major axis ran from Durazzo to Ragusa, which grew in importance as Ragusan shipbuilding developed in the later Middle Ages.131 The northern Adriatic was largely self-sufficient; the Istrian forests had ample supplies to furnish both Venetian needs and the demands of other communities in the upper Adriatic. Further south on the Italian shore, the Gargano Peninsula was a vital source of sturdy timber for communities along both the central and southern Italian coast. Like the salt trade, the timber trade seems to have been almost entirely confined to individual coasts during the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. Only in the later Middle Ages, as local forests began to be exhausted and local shipbuilding industries grew (particularly in Ragusa), did the timber trade expand to connect the opposing shores.132

While salt and timber were largely traded along a particular coast, a considerable proportion of intra-Adriatic trade was conducted transversally, that is, between the eastern and western coasts. Such commerce was facilitated by the favorable navigation conditions for trans-Adriatic trade, particularly in the central Adriatic. Though it is impossible to determine from the surviving records whether trans-Adriatic trade outweighed lateral trade in either the value or the quantity of the goods exchanged, there is no question that it involved the greater variety of commodities. Most lateral trade was prompted by the inability of local regions to fully satisfy the ever-increasing demands of urban centers, rather than by micro-ecological complementarity. Ancona imported foodstuffs from Apulia not because the Marches were not suitable for the cultivation of grain, but because the Marches could not produce grain in sufficient quantities. The cargoes of the ships sailing on the trans-Adriatic trade routes, by contrast, were dominated by commodities that could be produced solely (or almost solely) on the opposite coast.

The importance of such trans-Adriatic trade is suggested by the contemporary Ragusan diplomatic record (see fig. 10.3). Notwithstanding Ragusa’s spectacular commercial success during the later Middle Ages, in earlier centuries its economic circumstances were similar to those of the other Dalmatian coastal cities. Its rich archives therefore offer a means of indirectly examining the commercial experience of the neighboring urban centers in general, as well as understanding the trade networks of Ragusa itself. By 1260, Ragusa had established commercial treaties with a dozen communities on the western Adriatic coast (excluding Venice). By comparison, there are only two Ragusan commercial treaties in which

128 See, for example, the Fermo-Termoli treaty mentioned above (Hagemann, “Fermo e Termoli,” 184–87); see also the 1264 treaty between Ancona and Venice (VCM, no. 12), in which the former retained the right to control its own salt imports.
129 T. Smičiklas, ed., Codex Diplomaticus Regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae (Zagreb, 1904–), vol. 5, nos. 731, 754 (hereafter cited as CDS). The Ragusan modius had approximately one-tenth the capacity of the Venetian modius.
130 CDS, vol. 6, no. 526.
131 Ducellier, “Côte albanaise,” 201.
132 Braudel, Mediterranean, 141–42.
the co-signatory is another Dalmatian city (both date from the mid-thirteenth century), plus a treaty with Rovinj, on the Istrian Peninsula.\(^{133}\) Admittedly, Ragusa also received commercial privileges in Albania in the thirteenth century, as mentioned earlier. But even if the market of Durazzo was a popular destination for Ragusan merchants, the enormous effort that Ragusa invested in its relations with the cities on the opposite shore underscores the crucial importance of the Italian coast to its trade network. The city’s political allegiance to Venice ensured that economic relations between them were close, but the treaties spanned the entire Italian coast, from Ravenna to Corsano (at the mouth of the Adriatic), and the co-signatories ranged in size from great ports like Ancona and Bari to tiny communities like S. Elpidio a Mare, near Fermo. Almost all of the surviving treaties offer assurances of personal security for merchants and sailors, as well as broad promises of reciprocal freedom of maritime trade. Some, such as Ragusa’s 1203 treaty with Termoli, expressly exempted Ragusan merchants from duties in the port of the co-signatory.\(^{134}\) Others, like Ragusa’s 1148 treaty with Molfetta and its 1211 treaty with Bisceglie, provided for reciprocal exemptions.\(^{135}\) In every instance, however, the treaty was signed not in Ragusa but in the territory of the co-signatory. The uniformity of this trend indicates that Ragusan proactiveness was the driving force behind these

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133 Most of the treaty texts are reproduced in CDS, vols. 1–5; and in J. Radonić, ed., Acta et diplomata Ragusina, vol. 1 (Belgrade, 1935), hereafter cited as ADR. The original text of Ragusa’s treaty with Molfetta was lost in the late twelfth century; its provisions are known from the document concerning the treaty’s renewal in 1208. For Ragusa’s 1188 treaty with Rovinj, see S. Ljubić, ed., Listine o odnosajih izmedju Jurnogo Slavenstva i Mletanske Republike od godine 960 do 1469 (Zagreb, 1868–91), 1134. The two commercial treaties with other Dalmatian cities are with Almissa (in 1245) and Kotor (in 1257); see ADR, nos. 26, 33.

134 ADR, no. 14.

135 Ibid., nos. 15, 16.
agreements, for it was Ragusa that sent its ambassadors up and down the Italo-Adriatic coast in search of commercial privileges. Moreover, the existence of treaties in which Ragusa was exempted from duties in the other city’s port, but not vice versa, suggests that the exchange was largely conducted by Ragusan vessels sailing to the western coast, rather than Italian ships sailing to Dalmatia.

The earliest known Ragusan treaty with another Adriatic city dates from 1148, and concerns reciprocal trading privileges with the Apulian port of Molfetta. Only two other commercial agreements survive from before the very end of the twelfth century; in 1188 Ragusa signed treaties with both Rovinj (Rovigno) and Ravenna. The turn of the twelfth century saw a marked increase in Ragusa’s formal trading ties with other Adriatic communities, with six treaties signed between 1199 and 1210, and a further twelve signed between 1211 and 1252. But while it is tempting to thus see the early thirteenth century as a period of explosive growth for Ragusa’s commerce in the Adriatic, the individual treaties were usually responses to existing trading relationships, not vehicles for initial contact. The text of Ragusa’s 1201 treaty with Monopoli, for example, includes a warm greeting that implies existing ties between the two cities. Consequently, it is likely that commercial relations with Monopoli had been established earlier, and that the treaty merely marked a new step in the evolution of the trading relationship. It is thus probable that the expansion of Ragusa’s intra-Adriatic activity was a phenomenon of the late twelfth century, or possibly even earlier.

Though the chronology of Ragusa’s commercial expansion in the Adriatic is impossible to pinpoint precisely, the intensity of its interest in the Italian coast is indisputable. At first glance, however, the general absence of Ragusan commercial relations with other Dalmatian cities—especially Zara and Split—is striking. In the twelfth century, at least, Byzantine suzerainty over most of the eastern coast may have obviated the need for formal treats between the communities that lay along it. But no such political unity existed in the thirteenth century—and yet there are only two surviving commercial treaties between Ragusa and other Dalmatian cities, and none before 1245. It is thus unlikely that the apparent Ragusan disinterest in eastern Adriatic communities is the result of a skewed documentary record. Rather, it reflects the simple consequences of the similar micro-ecologies along the Dalmatian coast—and the complementary micro-ecology of the opposite shore. It is therefore not surprising that the trading patterns of other communities that shared Ragusa’s micro-ecology demonstrated a similar east–west, rather than lateral, dynamic. Ragusa may be the best documented of the medieval Dalmatian cities, but it was by no means the only one that was actively engaged in commerce with the opposite shore. Split was certainly trading with the Apulian towns by the mid-twelfth century; in 1160, a merchant from Split was selling merchandise in Terlizzi, near Bari. In the late twelfth century, Kotor (Cattaro) is known to have had particularly close relations with Bari. By 1195, Kotor had officially subjected itself to the ecclesiastical authority of the metropolitan of Bari; that same year its merchants were exempted from duties in Bari by a privilege from the Empress Constance, which spurred further activity in Bari and the surrounding region over the succeeding decades. While there are no surviving commercial agreements between the Apulian ports and either Zara, Trogir (Traù), or Split, it is highly probable that all three also maintained active economic ties with southern Italy, especially in light of ceramic evidence from the thirteenth century.

137 Italian ships did, however, visit Dalmatia, as evidenced by Ragusa’s efforts ca. 1190 to protect Apulian shipping from the attacks of the Cazichi pirates. See ADR, no. 8.
138 For Rovinj, see Ljubić, Listine o odnosajih izmedju, 114; for Ravenna, see CDS, vol. 2, no. 14.
139 ADR, no. 12; and see Abulafia, “Dalmatian Ragusa,” 416.
140 F. Carabellesi, ed., Codice diplomatico barese, vol. 1, Le pergamene della cattedrale di Terlizzi (971–1300) (Bari, 1899), no. 87; and Martin, La Poulle, 458.
142 See D. Whitehouse, “Apulia,” in La ceramica medievale nel Mediterraneo occidentale: Siena, 8–12 ottobre 1984; Faenza, 13 ottobre 1984 (Florence, 1986), 575–86, at 579. However, large-scale ceramic imports from southern Italy to Split (and elsewhere in Dalmatia) are largely a product of the late thirteenth century, when Apulian ceramic production itself became more developed; see J. Bauer, “The Medieval Glazed Pottery,” in Diocletian’s
In some cases, formal agreements may simply have been lost during the upheavals of succeeding centuries; it is also possible that no treaties ever existed, and that trade was conducted without formal concessions. And in some cases, privileges in the Italian cities were acquired indirectly—thereby eliminating the need for separate agreements. In 1257, for example, a treaty between Venice and Manfred of Sicily included Zaratines among the beneficiaries of the concessions that were being extended; when the treaty was reconfirmed two years later, the privileges were extended to Ragusan merchants as well. The cities of the Marches were also popular destinations for the merchants of the major Dalmatian communities. Commercial ties between Fermo and Split almost certainly antedated the thirteenth century, since in a document from 1200, Fermo reminded Split of the preexisting treaty of friendship between them. In 1236, Ancona and Trogir also signed a treaty; while it did not include specifically commercial provisions, the general assurances of protection of each other’s citizens were presumably aimed at facilitating trade. For Dalmatia, as for Venice, the great appeal of the western Adriatic coast stemmed from its agricultural surpluses. Most of the eastern coast between Istria and Albania is too mountainous or infertile to sustain much cultivation of wheat or olives, and north of Split the relatively harsh climate contributes to the absence of widespread agriculture. Consequently, the Dalmatian cities relied heavily on imports of wheat and oil, particularly as their populations increased beyond the productive capabilities of their hinterlands. In 1573, when a visitor to Ragusa remarked that in the city “Il ne se mange ung seul grain de bled qu’il ne faille aller chercher à cinq cents mil d’icy,” he was simply noting a perennial feature of Dalmatian urban life. It is no coincidence that Ragusa’s earliest surviving intra-Adriatic commercial treaty is with Molfetta, the center of Apulian oil production. The crucial importance of the trade in foodstuffs from Italy to the eastern coast is revealed by the surviving commercial contracts from late thirteenth-century Dalmatia, many of which specifically refer to imports of Apulian grain. Much of the grain and oil was probably consumed in the Dalmatian cities themselves, although some of it was transported overland to Serbia.

The western coast offered other commodities as well, even if these were never as important as the staple foodstuffs in the overall patterns of exchange. Wine was the principal export commodity of Fermo, and since Fermo had commercial ties with both Split and Ragusa in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, it seems probable that wine filled at least part of the cargo holds of the ships setting forth toward the eastern coast. Furthermore, in light of Ragusa’s continual efforts to acquire Albanian salt in the early thirteenth century, it is possible that its merchants also looked for salt in Ravennan and Apulian markets, both of which offered the mineral in abundance. But the presence of saltworks both elsewhere in the Dalmatian archipelago and along the western Adriatic coast makes it unlikely that salt represented a major component of the east–west Adriatic trade during the period. A 1292 treaty between Ragusa and Ancona also discusses the export of silk and rope cordage from the latter city. Although the agreement dates from the very end of the thirteenth century, it is highly probable that luxury and manufactured goods played a role in the exports from the Italian ports in earlier decades, too, especially given the limited international trade network of the Dalmatian cities and their relatively small size (at least compared to major urban centers like Ancona).

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148 Martin, La Pouille, 438.
151 VCM, 15.
152 ADR, nos. 44, 45.
The eastern coast probably imported textiles, too, particularly from southern Italy. The intra-Adriatic textile trade, which would prove so lucrative and important in later centuries, begins to appear regularly in the documentary record around the mid-thirteenth century.\(^{153}\) A limited textile industry existed in Dalmatia and its Balkan hinterland, but domestic production of both the primary materials and the finished products evidently proved insufficient to meet rising local demand.\(^{154}\) It therefore turned to the western coast to make up the shortfall. Although no surviving commercial contracts refer to the movement of textiles between the western and eastern shores, provisions for the regulation of the cotton trade in surviving Venetian treaties indicate some experience in the import and export of textiles. In 1257, as mentioned above, Venice banned the subjects of Manfred of Sicily from exporting cotton north of Ancona or Zara.\(^{155}\) Yet they remained free to sell their cotton in Albania, much of Dalmatia, and the southern half of the Italo-Adriatic coast—and they surely exploited this freedom. A few years later, in 1264, Venice banned Ancona from reexporting cotton from southern Italy to Dalmatia or any Italian coastal city north of Rimini.\(^{156}\) From these provisions, it can be deduced that the cotton trade was already active in the Adriatic in the mid-thirteenth century (and probably earlier), although in the second half of the century the movement of cotton in the northern Adriatic was evidently heavily controlled by Venice.

What did the eastern coast offer in return for these imports? Unlike the Italian coast, which produced an abundance of agricultural products that could be traded, the Dalmatian coast had few commercial resources. Dalmatia was well forested, but again there is no evidence that timber was transported across the Adriatic during this period. Salt was also widely produced, but in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the production of Dalmatian saltworks was often insufficient to satisfy even local demand, let alone be sold to the opposite shore, and the shortfall only increased in later periods. The region did produce wine, which was certainly exported westward during the late thirteenth century and possibly earlier as well, but there is no evidence to suggest that this trade was particularly active or lucrative at this time.\(^{157}\) Given the Dalmatian coast’s limited production of exportable commodities, most of the exports of the Dalmatian ports originated in the Balkan hinterland, and Dalmatian traders served as middlemen. Animal products—principally leather, hides, and fur pelts—seem to have been particularly common; they were specifically mentioned in the 1292 Ragusa-Ancona treaty and reappear frequently in later documentation.\(^{158}\) Wax was also an important export commodity in the late thirteenth century, and probably earlier as well.\(^{159}\) As Ragusa was an exporter of horses and armaments to Albania, it is possible that these commodities were a component of its trade with the Italian coastal cities. The Dalmatian shipbuilding industry may also have served as a source of export commodities, since in 1160 a certain Sabbato of Split sold a small boat to an Apulian for 9½ perperi.\(^{160}\) Unfortunately, the document does not indicate whether the ship was originally made in Dalmatia or was acquired elsewhere by Sabbato.\(^{161}\)

The bulk of Dalmatian imports, however, were paid for through the export of Balkan slaves, whose importance has already been mentioned. In Apulia, references to slaves ex genere Sclavorum begin in the mid-eleventh century, and continue through to the later Middle Ages.\(^{162}\) In 1121, a certain Pietro of Bari purchased a female slave and her child, both

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\(^{153}\) For the medieval textile trade, see M. F. Mazzaoui, *The Italian Cotton Industry in the Later Middle Ages, 1100–1600* (Cambridge, 1981); and for the later Middle Ages, J.-K. Nam, *Le commerce du coton en Méditerranée à la fin du Moyen Âge* (Leiden, 2007).


\(^{156}\) *PRV*, no. 6.

\(^{157}\) In the 1292 treaty between Ancona and Ragusa, the Anconians are permitted to both import and export wine to and from Ragusa, suggesting that Dalmatian wine production was of interest to Italian traders. See *ADR*, no. 44.

\(^{158}\) *ADR*, no. 44.

\(^{159}\) In 1197, for example, 301 pounds of wax were sold at Ragusa to Venetian traders (Dubrovnik Archives, *Diversa Cancellaria*, III, fol. 75b; cited in Stuard, “Ragusa and the Silver Trade,” 175).

\(^{156}\) Codice diplomatico barese, vol. 3, no. 87.

\(^{157}\) In the 1292 treaty between Ancona and Ragusa, the Anconians are permitted to both import and export wine to and from Ragusa, suggesting that Dalmatian wine production was of interest to Italian traders. See *ADR*, no. 44.

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\(^{162}\) Martin, *La Pouille*, 437.
ever approached the level of the trans-Adriatic slave trade, given that the merchants in most of the Dalmatian ports had fairly easy access into the Balkan hinterland and could thus avoid the use of intermediaries if they so chose.

In both antiquity and the later Middle Ages, the most important of the Dalmatian export commodities were derived from the rich Balkan ore deposits. From the late thirteenth century onward, silver, lead, copper, and other precious metals were extracted in enormous quantities from the great Serbian and Bosnian mines and transported overland to the Dalmatian coast to be exported to the Adriatic and the Levant. The economic importance of these commodities became even more critical as the Bosnian slave trade declined in the fourteenth century. But metal and mineral exports probably played a minimal role in the Dalmatian economy of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. There are no textual references to Balkan mining activity prior to 1254 (when the mines at Brskovo in northern Montenegro are first attested) and there are no references to Bosnian mines before the mid-fourteenth century. Since the documentary references rarely pinpoint the start of mining activity at a given site, the textual evidence almost always postdates the initial activity—especially since many of the mines seem to be fairly active by the time they are first mentioned. But it is impossible to determine the extent to which mining was already under way during this period. Admittedly, the rise in documentation of Balkan mining closely parallels the rise in medieval Balkan documentation in general. Prior to the late thirteenth century, local sources are extremely rare; thereafter both the archival materials and the references to mining become plentiful. It thus might seem reasonable to assume that mining

ex genere sclavorum, for 56 miliareni de ramesinis, and in 1283 a female slave in Barletta is described in the same way. These references, together with considerable other evidence for Balkan slaves in Apulia, suggest the presence of an active slave trade between the eastern and western Adriatic coasts. In Ragusa, for example, 236 slaves (mostly domestic) are recorded as having been exchanged between November 1280 and January 1284; since the total urban population of the city was under 4,000, the slave population was evidently a very significant component—even granting that some of the slaves may have been sold to non-Ragusans. Given that Ragusa was the principal Adriatic outlet for Balkan slaves, it is not surprising that the city drew wrathful condemnations from the rulers of the afflicted populations. In 1253, Prince Cenomir of Bosnia addressed a complaint to Ragusa in which he expressed his deep concern for the safety of his rural subjects, who lacked protection from the foreign traders who regularly captured and enslaved them. But despite such protests, the slave trade was too profitable for it to be readily abandoned by Dalmatian merchants. Ragusan documents from the 1280s suggest that a female slave cost on average 10 hyperpera—more than the residence of a skilled artisan. The medieval slave trade was lucrative indeed. There is also evidence for a lateral slave trade along the Dalmatian coast, not simply from east to west across the Adriatic. A 1279 treaty between Ragusa and Kotor provided for matching duties on slaves exchanged between the two ports, which suggests that in the later thirteenth century, at least, an intra-Dalmatian market for slaves had developed. However, it is unlikely that the slave trade along the eastern coast

167 Stuard, “To Town to Serve,” 47.
168 *ADR*, no. 41.
170 This decline was due to competition from Genoese slave traders in the Black Sea, a decrease in the persecution of the Bosnian Bogomils (who had been a major source of the slaves), and the efforts of Bosnian rulers, who became steadily more capable of protecting their subjects from slave raiders (Stuard, “Ragusa and the Silver Trade,” 191–94).
171 Kovačević, “Mines d’or,” 249.
activity in the Balkans was already under way in the twelfth or early thirteenth century (if not earlier) and that documentary references simply have not survived, a position adopted by many scholars of Balkan mining.\textsuperscript{172} Nevertheless, the absence of any mention of metals in the surviving treaties pertaining to Dalmatian communities is troubling. Admittedly, exports of silver and gold may have been in effect hidden in the coinage used for commercial transactions, but specific provisions relating to the exchange of gold and silver were often included in other contemporary treaties, such as the 1232 treaty between Venice and the Kingdom of Sicily.\textsuperscript{173} Nor is lead or copper mentioned in the extant diplomatic record, although significant exports of both commodities are well attested in later documentation. Moreover, when the Ragusan notarial charters first become plentiful (around 1278) the slave trade is clearly thriving, while mining activity seems to be of lesser importance (though rapidly expanding).\textsuperscript{174} Consequently, though some Balkan mining activity was presumably under way in the early to mid-thirteenth century, and possibly even in the twelfth century as well, it was almost certainly on a small scale. Thus the precious metal ores that would prove so critical to intra-Adriatic trade in later centuries were probably not a major component of the Dalmatian export commodities during this period.\textsuperscript{175}

While Dalmatia enjoyed vibrant commercial links with the Italian coast, the trans-Adriatic commercial activity of Albania is almost impossible to determine with any certainty due to the lack of sources. However, it is unlikely that east–west exchange in the southern Adriatic was particularly active during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Unlike the Dalmatian city-states, whose microecologies were highly complementary with those along the western coast, Albania had ample domestic supplies of agricultural staples. It had no need to import salt, for the saltworks around Durazzo provided surpluses for export to other Adriatic markets. In addition, it had access to the Balkan hinterland, with its supplies of animal products and slaves. In times of scarcity, Albania no doubt imported foodstuffs from southern Italy, and it may have also turned to other coastal cities in the Adriatic for manufactured or luxury commodities. But what trade did occur was probably sporadic, for the structural features that inspired the vibrant east–west exchange elsewhere in the Adriatic were largely absent in Albania. Moreover, navigation across the lower Adriatic was considerably more difficult than in the central and upper parts of the sea, as a result of both the strong currents in the Strait of Otranto and the unfavorable wind patterns; this would have further discouraged east–west commerce.

Thus far, the discussion of intra-Adriatic exchange has focused on the redistribution that arose from commercial operations. But there was another important and regular mechanism by which commodities were moved throughout the Adriatic: piracy. Though medieval pirates operated outside formalized structures of commerce, they nevertheless served a redistributive function that was in many ways analogous to conventional trade. However, one cannot discuss pirates as a discrete class of individuals, for many of those who engaged in acts of piracy did not treat it as a trade. Rather, it was simply one of the various means by which commodities could be acquired. In periods of famine, for example, ships carrying foodstuffs regularly had their cargoes seized by desperate communities. The merchants aboard sometimes received compensation for their losses—but not always. Piracy should be usually understood—at least from an economic perspective—as one among several mechanisms of exchange and redistribution in the medieval Adriatic, practiced by a variety of different individuals depending on the circumstances.\textsuperscript{176}

Some individuals and groups did engage in piracy as a regular means of sustenance, however, and might be appropriately labeled “pirates” in the conventional sense of the term. Almost all of them were based in the islands along the eastern coast of

\textsuperscript{173} PRV, no. 4.
\textsuperscript{174} Stuard, “Ragusa and the Silver Trade,” 191–93.
\textsuperscript{175} I therefore disagree with David Abulafia, who argues that silver was the most important Dalmatian export commodity during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. See Abulafia, “Dalmatian Ragusa,” 417; and idem, “East and West: Comments on the Commerce of the City of Ancona in the Middle Ages,” Atti e memorie della Società dalmata di storia patria 26 (1997): 49–66, at 52.

\textsuperscript{176} Adriatic piracy of a slightly later period is discussed in I. B. Katele, “Captains and Corsairs: Venice and Piracy, 1261–1381” (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1986).
the Adriatic, which provided a multitude of concealed harbors and defensible positions along the main shipping routes. In the year 1000, Doge Pietro II Orseolo of Venice famously waged yet another major offensive against the Narentani pirates, who were based in the Dalmatian archipelago and had been obstructions to Adriaic shipping. Over the course of the campaign, Orseolo not only crushed the pirates but also elicited widespread acceptance of Venetian suzerainty in the region. Yet it was not long before the pirates returned to prey on Adriatic shipping, and pirate attacks are recurring theme in contemporary annals. In April 1224, Leonardo Simeticulo, a Venetian merchant, was attacked by Dalmatian pirates while traveling from Ancona to Pescara, and all his merchandise (including cloth, iron, and copper) was stolen. A few years later, in September 1227, Vitale Caraciacacone and several other merchants from Venice and Chioggia lost an estimated £1,233 worth of merchandise after they were beset by Istrian pirates while returning to Venice from Durazzo. And of course, Venetian vessels were not the only ones that were attacked. In 1224, the coast around Ancona was repeatedly ravaged by pirates from Almissa and Split (perhaps the same who attacked Leonardo Simeticulo), and Ancona responded by confiscating the property of all the citizens of Split within its territory. Two years earlier, Pope Honorius II had gone so far as to send a papal delegate to Dalmatia to preach a crusade against the Almissan pirates, but his efforts failed entirely.

Given the very real threat of piracy, various efforts were undertaken in order to provide protection for commercial shipping. In the thirteenth century, Venice regularly dispatched fleets to police the Adriatic, a practice that later developed into a permanent institution. During the 1224–27 famine, Venice sent its grain fleets in convoys with military escorts so that the desperately needed foodstuffs would not be intercepted. Since pirates were often supported by local governments (whether overtly or not), some cities turned to diplomacy to protect their maritime commerce. In 1201, for example, Bari promised to keep the local Apulian pirates from attacking Ragusan vessels; this may have been a response to Ragusan efforts a decade earlier that forced the Cazichi pirates (based in Dalmatia) to cease their attacks on Apulian waters from Dalmatian pirates. In 1245, Ragusa reached an agreement with the Almissan pirates to halt attacks on the city’s shipping, presumably in return for a large payment. And of course, Venice regularly launched military strikes against major pirate strongholds, though even its most concerted efforts were unable to eradicate the threat altogether. But if pirates posed a continual threat to Adriatic shipping, it was because there was shipping for them to prey on. And the shipping was not only Venetian—it was Apulian, Ragusan, Anconian, Zaratine, and more. The east–west regional relationships that had been established in the twelfth century multiplied and diversified with increasing rapidity from the early thirteenth century onward, and lateral ties proliferated as well. The complementarity of micro-ecologies enabled this exchange to occur; the increasing demand driven by the expanding urban centers necessitated it.

The Adriatic as Conduit and Corridor

It is important not to make too firm a division between regional and long-distance trade, for the two were vitally interwoven. While the great galleys and roundships that sailed through the Strait of Otranto toward eastern Mediterranean markets were vastly outnumbered by the countless smaller vessels that sailed up and down the Adriatic coasts, the commodities and profits from the long-distance trade networks were fed into the regional trade system, and vice versa. Venice’s grain purchases in Apulia were funded by the profits of its luxury trade.

177 For references to earlier Venetian anti-piracy campaigns, see McCormick, Origins of the European Economy, 518.
178 Precepta, lustramenta, Interdicta, no. 52, in DMCV 1:60.
179 Consilia et Ordinamenti, no. 70, in DMCV 1:189.
180 Lozzi, “Repubblica marinara,” 45.
183 Luzzatto, Storia economica di Venezia, 36–37; and see Precepta, lustramenta, Interdicta, no. 109, in DMCV 1:189.
184 ADR, no. 8.
186 CDS, vol. 4, no. 233.
with the Levant, and the same was true for Ragusan hides or Cervian salt. The commodities purchased in the markets outside the Adriatic often served to drive exchange within it, just as the coinage used by Venetian merchants to purchase southern Italian wheat would have been used by Apulian merchants to pay for their own acquisitions in the markets of the East.

It was not only the extra-Adriatic commodities themselves that spurred intra-Adriatic exchange. The simple mechanics of medieval navigation were equally important. Because ships had to stop regularly to stock up on food and fresh water, the merchants aboard could engage in small-scale trade in each port they visited. Whether this involved selling pepper in Bari en route to Ancona or purchasing furs in Ragusa en route to Venice, the merchants who engaged in long-distance trade were not so narrowly focused as to ignore commercial opportunities available on the Adriatic leg of their journey. Many of the surviving Venetian colleganza contracts specify that the merchant is to stop in Apulia or Durazzo on his way to a Levantine destination. More often, this would have been simply left to the discretion of the merchant, for the standard terms of such contracts gave the merchants considerable freedom of action within the overall framework of a specified voyage. This intra-Adriatic port-hopping may also have served as an additional generator of local exchange, since increased activity along the shores of the Adriatic would have lowered transportation costs for nonluxury and bulk commodities. We lack information on contemporary shipping rates, but the structure of medieval shipping itself suggests that such a reduction would be a plausible consequence of increased maritime commercial activity. This trend would have been reinforced by the need for ballast in larger ships; given that most returned from the Levant carrying high-value, low-weight commodities, the addition of bulky staple commodities (like grain or salt) would have weighed down, and thereby stabilized, the ship. The Venetian galley convoys were something of an exception to this interaction of long-distance and regional trade systems in the Adriatic, for they rarely stopped in Adriatic ports for commercial reasons.187 However, as the surviv-

ing contracts for Venetian trade attest, a significant proportion of Venice’s long-distance maritime commerce occurred outside of such galley convoys.

Since an understanding of this commerce is crucial to an understanding of the Adriatic trade system in general, it is to Venice—the dominant commercial center of first the Adriatic and then the eastern Mediterranean—that we now turn our attention. From the earliest days of its existence, Venice had been economically linked to Constantinople, and trade with the city on the Bosporus remained the foundation of Venice’s commercial preeminence during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The generous provisions of the chrysobull issued by Alexios I in 1082 gradually enabled Venice to dominate much of the Constantinopolitan commerce, and the massive Venetian quarter in the Byzantine capital was a striking indication of the onetime colony’s rise to prominence.188 And the frequency and value of the commercial interactions between the two cities seem to have increased steadily during the twelfth century, with the exception of a few instances of open hostility—particularly in the years immediately following 1171, when Manuel I suddenly expelled the Venetians from the empire and confiscated their goods. The Fourth Crusade in 1204 led to a partial collapse of the Byzantine economy, but the powerful Venetian presence in Constantinople itself, as well as the establishment of Venetian bases throughout the Aegean, ensured that the sea-lanes connecting the two cities remained active commercial passageways.189 Of course, the Venetian ships sailing through the Strait of Otranto were not headed only for Constantinople; they could also be found at commercial emporia throughout the eastern and western Mediterranean. Occasionally they sailed in search of bulk commodities—Thessaly and Sicily both sold

187 On the basis of this observation, Josip Tadić suggests that the major long-distance trade routes along the western coast of the Balkans in the Middle Ages had almost no influence on the economic life of the region—but this conclusion ignores not only the role of broad commodity movements but also the fact that not all of Venice’s long-distance shipping took place in regulated galley convoys during the period. See his “La côte occidentale des Balkans et ses liaisons maritimes et continentales (XI–XVIe siècles),” in Navigazioni mediterranee e connessioni continentali (secoli XI–XVI), ed. R. Ragosta (Naples, 1982), 103–4.
grain to Venice during the twelfth century—but the great galley convoys that set forth from the port of S. Nicolò di Lido in Venice were generally in pursuit of luxury goods: spices, silks, gems, high-quality manufactured goods, and the like.

As noted above, the geographic and navigational conditions of the Adriatic were such that the eastern shores were preferred for voyages whose final destination lay outside the Adriatic. Even when the ships were to stop in Apulia before continuing their journeys, it is likely that they sailed down the eastern coast and then crossed westward to Apulia, rather than sailing down the western coast for the entire journey. Given the importance of the Dalmatian and Albanian coasts to Venice’s commercial interests, the city’s ongoing efforts to control key points along the eastern Adriatic shore are easily understood. So long as the entire coastline was in Byzantine hands, and Veneto-Byzantine relations remained friendly, Venice was assured of safe passage along the eastern littoral (aside from the constant—and significant—threat from piracy). But as effective Byzantine control over the region weakened during the twelfth century, Venice began to intervene more and more frequently in local politics in order to guarantee that the coastal harbors and shipping lanes remained open to its vessels. The existence of hostile cities, like Zara, not only irked Venice by flouting the commercial system that it sought to impose in the Adriatic but also posed a very real threat to the unimpeded movement of Venetian ships along Venice’s principal axis of long-distance maritime commerce. Venice was unwilling to tolerate such a threat. The conquest of Zara by the armies of the Fourth Crusade is the most notorious of Venetian defiance in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but the incident was by no means isolated.

Control over the eastern coast—or at least freedom of navigation along its length—would have been largely meaningless were the Strait of Otranto not also open to Venetian vessels. Until the eleventh century, this had not been a serious concern, for Byzantium controlled both sides of the strait. But the Norman expansion in southern Italy during the late eleventh century transformed the political dynamics of the narrow sea passage. Venice accordingly helped the Byzantines resist the Norman efforts to acquire a foothold in Albania in 1081. In 1155, Venice assisted with the fleeting Byzantine reconquest of several Apulian coastal cities (which were promptly retaken by the Normans). For a few years following the Fourth Crusade in 1204, Venice itself controlled much of the eastern side of the strait, and in later centuries the city assiduously strove to secure its freedom of movement. But in general, the Strait of Otranto lay outside direct Venetian domination during the period concerned—an acceptable state of affairs, so long as its two sides were not both dominated by a hostile power. Indeed, Venetian diplomatic efforts during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were strikingly successful at maintaining open relations with the powers that controlled the strait, even when those same powers were warring with each other. Given the importance to Venetian prosperity of free passage in and out of the Adriatic, failure to maintain these relations would have been catastrophic.

Venice was not the only Adriatic city that had long been active along the major trade routes of the medieval Mediterranean. In Apulia, the city of Brindisi had played host to foreign merchants for more than a thousand years before settlers first established themselves on the islands of the Venetian lagoon. Along with Bari, Otranto, Trani, and other Apulian ports, Brindisi continued to be involved in Mediterranean commerce in the Middle Ages. The participation of these cities was a product both of their hinterland’s agricultural wealth and of their privileged geographic position on the protruding heel of Apulia.

190 For Thessaly, see al-Idrīsī, Géographie d’Édrisi, 1:291, 296; and Benjamin of Tudela, The World of Benjamin of Tudela: A Medieval Mediterranean Travelogue, ed. S. Benjamin (Madison, N.J., 1995), 123–25. For Sicily, see D. Abulafia, “Pisan Commercial Colonies and Consulates in Twelfth-Century Sicily,” English Historical Review 93 (1978): 68–81, at 69–71. However, the Venetians did not import salt from outside the Adriatic until the last quarter of the thirteenth century; see Hocquet, Le sel et la fortune de Venise, 198.

191 See DCV, nos. 31, 437, 847.

192 In 1495 and 1528, Venice occupied the major Apulian ports, and considered another invasion in 1580. But as Braudel rightly noted, it was neither the Apulian ports nor even the Balkan coast that dominated the entrance to the Adriatic, but the island of Corfu just south of the Strait of Otranto—which Venice conquered in 1536 and held until the end of the Venetian Republic in 1797 (see Braudel, Mediterranean, 116–17). Modon and Coron (Koroni), the “Eyes of the Republic” on the western coast of the Peloponnesse, were also crucial to the security of Venetian shipping routes to the Levant.

of the Italian peninsula. Yet while the eleventh century was a period of great expansion for the Apulian ports, their involvement in twelfth- and thirteenth-century long-distance trade networks was mainly passive—they welcomed the ships of many, but sent forth few of their own.194 Greeks, Sicilians, and others sailed up through the Strait of Otranto toward the nearly continuous line of ports along the southeastern Italian coast. Amalfitans, for example, were present in Bari in sufficient numbers during the twelfth century to merit special mention in an 1132 treaty between Roger II of Sicily and the city.195 These visitors were drawn by the fertile offerings of the Apulian plateau, which provided the ports with abundant supplies of grain, oil, and wine; in return, they often brought manufactured goods and Levantine luxuries. These exchanges kept the region’s ports busy during the period. Al-Idrīsī, a Muslim geographer writing in the mid-twelfth century, described the port of Otranto as having “flourishing markets where much commerce is done” and Trani as having “a very well-known market.”196 Long-distance maritime trade was never a central pillar of the Apulian economy; the region’s economy was overwhelmingly agrarian, and it does not appear to have been highly commercialized during this period.197 But surpluses were evidently common enough to attract foreign merchants to the Apulian ports, and the ensuing exchange played an important, if not fundamental, role in the region’s economic system.

Apulian ships and sailors were not entirely absent from the sea-lanes of the Mediterranean. They were certainly active in Alexandria in the mid-twelfth century, since Apulian merchants are mentioned in the contemporary account of Benjamin of Tudela, a rabbi who traveled extensively throughout the eastern Mediterranean. He noted, in addition, that Trani was “an important commercial center, rich from its trade with the East,” and that Otranto was “a port flourishing from the trade with the East and especially with Palestine.”198 The sailors of Bari, who had gained international fame after stealing the body of St. Nicholas from Myra in 1087, seem to have been the most active of their Apulian neighbors during the early twelfth century. Bari’s maritime preeminence was shattered, however, after the city resisted the accession of William I to the throne of Sicily and in 1156 was razed to the ground in retribution. By the thirteenth century, Brindisi had returned to its ancient prominence as the most commercially active port in Apulia, with especially close trade connections with Sicily. In a letter sent from Frederick II to one of his admirals in 1240, the city was referred to as “caput terrarum maritimorum Apulie.”199 Brindisi certainly had trading relations with Egypt during the early thirteenth century, since in 1227, a citizen of Trani who was then residing in Brindisi invested money and merchandise in a ship bound for Alexandria.200 Perhaps the city’s merchants were active in the Syrian trade as well; it seems likely that other Apulian ports were involved in the Levant trade too, though probably to a lesser extent. In May 1197, for example, Henry VI Hohenstaufen granted the Teutonic Knights of St. Mary in Jerusalem the right to establish a hospital in Barletta, thereby strengthening the city’s ties to the eastern Mediterranean.201 Staple foodstuffs were undoubtedly the principal export commodities, as was always the case for Apulia, but the near-absence of commercial evidence leaves the rest of the cargoes, as well as their destinations, to the realm of sheer speculation.

Ragusa also seems to have been involved in long-distance Mediterranean commerce during the

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196 Al-Idrīsī, Géographie d’Edrisi, 2:120, 264. Not all of the port activity was commercial—the Sicilian navy used the Apulian ports (especially the southernmost ones), as did many of the western European pilgrims traveling to and from the Holy Land in the twelfth century. But this activity served to supplement, not supplant, the commercial functions of the ports.

197 J.-M. Martin’s characterization of Apulia as having “une agriculture de subsistance” (La Pouille, 442–45) seems overly restrictive, however, given the export activity of the Apulian ports.


period, although here again solid evidence is lacking.\textsuperscript{202} The city’s archives provide ample evidence of Ragusan activity in the Levant beginning in the late thirteenth century, but the paucity of earlier documentation obscures its origins. Despite sporadic Venetian efforts to hinder Ragusa’s mercantile ambitions, the Dalmatian city seems to have maintained a Mediterranean presence from the twelfth century onward. The city’s merchants were certainly active in the Ionian Sea in the early thirteenth century; both Epiros and Corfu offered Ragusa commercial privileges, and Ragusan merchants are recorded in Modon in 1242.\textsuperscript{203} Ragusan ships may have also been present in the Aegean, since in the early thirteenth century the despot of Epiros repeatedly offered his protection to Ragusan merchants and exempted them from the kommerkion in his territory (which extended from Albania to the Aegean).\textsuperscript{204} Unfortunately, no evidence survives to indicate whether Ragusan merchants subsequently traveled to the eastern parts of the despotate either by sea or via the overland route through the Balkans.

The chronicle of Benjamin of Tudela also hints at Ragusan involvement in the contemporary Levant trade. In listing the geographic origins of the merchants operating in Alexandria during his visit there, he cites “Rakuvia,” which may refer to Ragusa.\textsuperscript{205} A treaty of 1169 between Pisa and Ragusa promised Pisan protection for Ragusans in Constantinople, which suggests that their presence in the Byzantine capital was already established in the 1160s.\textsuperscript{206} Three commercial agreements between Venice and Ragusa from the early and mid-thirteenth century give additional evidence for Ragusan involvement in long-distance commerce at this time. These agreements specified the duties to be imposed on merchandise brought from Romania, Egypt, Tunis, and the Barbary Coast and carried to Venice aboard Ragusan vessels.\textsuperscript{207} The very precise wording of these treaties suggests that the Dalmatian city’s commercial presence beyond the Strait of Otranto, if not already well established, was certainly being felt. Unfortunately, we have no concrete evidence as to the specific cargoes of the Ragusan ships—nor do we know whether the ships of other Mediterranean powers sailed to the city.\textsuperscript{208} In later periods, Ragusan cargo holds frequently carried silver, lead, copper, timber, and hides and other animal products to the Levant. They probably did so in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as well, but at present this cannot be affirmed with any degree of certainty. Despite the scarce documentation, however, the wide array of circumstantial evidence strongly suggests that Ragusan merchants were indeed involved in long-distance maritime trade during this period.\textsuperscript{209} The most active of all Venice’s Adriatic competitors on the long-distance maritime trade routes was the “ancient and celebrated” city of Ancona.\textsuperscript{210} The twelfth and thirteenth centuries witnessed the city’s first rise to international commercial prominence, which began to fade only after Venice finally succeeded in imposing a humiliating treaty on its competitor in 1264. So famous was its port, which had first been expanded under Trajan, that it became the subject of a medieval mariner’s expression: “Unus Petrus in Roma, una turris in Cremona, unus portus in Ancona.”\textsuperscript{211} In the late twelfth century, Ancona enjoyed a particularly close commercial relationship with Constantinople. This was a relatively new phenomenon—the Anconitans do not seem have had regular economic ties with the Byzantine capital prior to

the need to specifically outlaw it. See Ljubić, Listine o odnosoj izmedju, 1:111, 1:194.

208 Ceramic evidence from Split clearly demonstrates close Dalmatian commercial ties with the wider Mediterranean, but whether the ceramics were brought there by Dalmatian merchants, or arrived as cargoes on the ships of Venetians or others, cannot be determined. See H. Zglav-Martinac, Ulomak do ulomka: Prilog procuqavanju keramike XIII.–XVIII. stoljeća iz Dnklecijanove palače u Splitu (Split, 2004), esp. 113–23.

209 This differs markedly from the position taken by Jorjo Tadić, who argued that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Ragusan ships navigated almost exclusively in the Adriatic and Ionian seas, and that no evidence survives to indicate that the cities along the eastern Adriatic coast had any maritime commercial relations with territories beyond these seas (Tadić, “Côte occidentale,” 102). In my opinion, this argument discounts too easily the evidence from the Venetian-Ragusan treaties.

210 Al-Idrīsī, Géographie d’Édrīsī, 2:266.

211 M. Natalucci, “Ancona, Repubblica marinara,” in Federico Barbarossa, Ancona, e le Marche, 18–40, at 28; the origin of the expression is unattributed.
150—but it developed rapidly.\textsuperscript{212} Moreover, Anconitan activity not only served to counterpoint deteriorating Byzantine-Venetian relations but may well have been inspired by the rising hostilities between Venice and its former overlord. In 1157, according to the Byzantine court historian John Kinnamos, Manuel I Komnenos recognized the Venetians’ nation as malicious and stubborn, and thought it very important to lay claim to Ancona. Thereby he might to a large extent humble the Venetians’ pride and from there very easily wage wars in Italy.\textsuperscript{213} Accordingly, Manuel sent money to Ancona to promote his (ultimately unsuccessful) efforts to reconquer the lost Byzantine territories in Italy. Two decades later, he sent more money to the city to help it in its struggle against Frederick Barbarossa, and he seems to have extended trading privileges to the Anconitans as well.\textsuperscript{214} The effect of Manuel’s political intervention was striking: supposedly the Anconitans spontaneously accepted Byzantine overlordship and received “the same civic rights enjoyed by Roman [i.e., Byzantine] citizens.”\textsuperscript{215} These developments all helped strengthen the economic ties between Ancona and Byzantium, and by the late twelfth century, Anconitans seem to have had their own church, colony, and consul in Constantinople.\textsuperscript{216}

Given that al-Idrīsī in the mid-twelfth century described Ancona as “one of the greatest cities of the Christian world,” it seems likely that the city already maintained a certain commercial presence in the Mediterranean before it adopted Byzantine suzerainty.\textsuperscript{217} However, the profits from the ensuing trade with Constantinople no doubt increased the capital available for other long-distance ventures, and it is certain that during the succeeding century Ancona’s Mediterranean activity increased markedly. Anconitan ships sailed not only to the Bosporus but also to other Levantine destinations.\textsuperscript{218} According to the Anconitan chronicler Boncompagno da Signa (writing ca. 1200), many of Ancona’s citizens were away conducting business in Alexandria, Constantinople, and the Byzantine Empire during the German siege of the city in 1173–74.\textsuperscript{219} In 1231, some of the city’s merchants were thrown into jail in Alexandria, and the pope had to intervene with the sultan to seek their release.\textsuperscript{220} In 1257, the city founded a colony at Acre.\textsuperscript{221} Even if there are no surviving Anconitan notarial sources from before the fourteenth century, the presence of the city’s merchants in the great trading cities of the Levant clearly indicates Ancona’s involvement in the spice and luxury trade. Moreover, not only was Ancona’s port the finest on the central Italo-Adriatic coast, but it also lay at the end of the road leading across the Apennines to northwestern Italy. The city was therefore able to sell the luxuries of the East to the inhabitants of the prosperous Tuscan city-states. Just as Venice’s Mediterranean commerce relied on access to transalpine and northern Italian markets, so too did Ancona’s long-distance maritime trade depend on its access to markets across the Apennines.

Ancona’s commercial interests in the Balkans, together with the city’s economic ties to the Tuscan city-states, also serve as a reminder that the long-distance trade routes in the Adriatic ran not only north–south through the sea but also east–west. The trade routes between Ancona and northwestern Italy were mirrored on the other side of the Adriatic by

\textsuperscript{214} Abulafia, “Ancona, Byzantium and the Adriatic,” 195–216.
\textsuperscript{215} Choniates, Historia, 102.
\textsuperscript{217} Al-Idrīsī, Geographie d’Édrisī, 2:153. Al-Idrīsī’s description counters the argument of Zimolo, the editor of Boncompagno da Signa’s chronicle in the Rerum Italicarum Scriptores, who saw Manuel’s privileges as providing the initial impetus for Anconitan merchants to trade abroad. While they no doubt facilitated

the growth of Anconitan maritime trade, al-Idrīsī’s remark suggests that Ancona was already a city of more than purely regional importance by the mid-twelfth century. See Boncompagno da Signa, Liber de obidione Ancone, 12 n. 2; and Abulafia, “Ancona, Byzantium and the Adriatic,” 205.
\textsuperscript{219} Boncompagno da Signa, Liber de obidione Ancone, 17.
\textsuperscript{220} C. Baronio (Baronio), ed., Annales ecclesiastici ab anno 1198 . . . . 15 vols. (Lucca, 1747–56), vol. 2, a. 1231, no. 56.
\textsuperscript{221} S. Paoli, ed., Codice diplomatico del Sacro militare ordine geroulimano oggi di Malta . . . , 2 vols. (Lucca, 1733–37), vol. 1, no. 132.
the routes running from the Dalmatian city-states into the central Balkans or down the eastern coast and thence overland to northern Greece and Constantinople. Consequently, a vigorous trade flourished between the shores of the central Adriatic. As discussed earlier, slaves were probably the major export of the Balkan heartland, and the trade in timber may have been significant as well.\(^{222}\) Ancona managed to control much of the transport traffic across the Adriatic, a traffic so lucrative that, according to David Abulafia, it may have even been the foundation of the city’s economic prosperity in the late twelfth century,\(^{223}\) though firm evidence of this is lacking. Regardless of its importance in relation to the city’s long-distance maritime commerce, in absolute terms it brought considerable wealth to the city’s coffers.

Pisa was a particularly active participant in this trans-Adriatic trade network.\(^{224}\) As mentioned above, the Tuscan commune signed a treaty with Ragusa in 1169;\(^{225}\) while no evidence of commerce survives to prove that Pisans visited Ragusa with any regularity, Pisan activity elsewhere in the region suggests that the treaty with Ragusa was part of a larger Dalmatian program. In 1188, Pisa signed a treaty with Zara that exempted its citizens from all duties if they arrived by land. If they arrived by sea, the Pisans had to pay four romanati, unless they were trading wine or salt, in which case the duty was reduced to two romanati.\(^{226}\) The inclusion of this provision suggests that both wine and salt were important commodities along the trade route.

From the perspective of long-distance trade, however, the principal appeal of the Dalmatian ports was their relatively easy access to the overland route to Constantinople, which ran roughly along the ancient Via Egnatia from Durazzo to Thessalonike and then on to Constantinople. It is not surprising, therefore, that we find Ragusans present in Durazzo from at least from the mid-twelfth century onward.\(^{227}\) The overland route was well-known in the period, and al-Idriši’s Geography described it at length.\(^{228}\) On the western endpoint, the city of Durazzo, whose position as a mercantile crossroads once drew the praise of Catullus,\(^{229}\) was a thriving commercial center in the twelfth century. Al-Idriši described Durazzo as “a flourishing city, abundant in resources, home to numerous markets and in a prosperous position.”\(^{230}\) Despite al-Idriši’s remark, the city’s wealth came not from any abundance in natural resources—the surviving documentation makes almost no reference to the exchange of local products—but rather from its participation in the transit trade.

It is in this context that we should understand the provision in the Pisan-Ragusan treaty of 1169 offering protection for Ragusan merchants in Constantinople, and the importance of the overland route can be seen in the effects of 1204 on Italian activity in Dalmatia.\(^{231}\) The breakup of the Byzantine Empire naturally led to the political fragmentation of the territories along the Via Egnatia, and without the security offered by unbroken Byzantine control, the trade route temporarily fell into disuse. The Pisan presence in Dalmatia disappeared entirely in the decades following 1204, and resumed only gradually later in the thirteenth century.\(^{232}\) By the 1230s the trade route’s revival may have begun, since the protection afforded to Ragusans in the Despotate of Epiros in 1234 was possibly intended

\(^{222}\) Abulafia, “East and West,” 52. If mining activity was in fact under way in the twelfth- and early thirteenth-century Balkans, then silver and other metals were no doubt an important component of this trade; however, as discussed above (261–62), this is unlikely to have been the case.

\(^{223}\) Abulafia, “Ancona, Byzantium and the Adriatic,” 206.

\(^{224}\) Florence was evidently not directly involved in this trade, however; there is no evidence of Florentines in Zara before 1299, or in Split before 1357. Florentine-Ragusan relations were probably established in the early fourteenth century, though the earliest evidence of them is much later. See A. Fradelli, “Pisani e fiorentini in Dalmazia,” Atti e memorie della Società Dalmata di Storia Patria 51 (2002): 181–209.

\(^{225}\) ADR, no. 8.

\(^{226}\) CDS, vol. 2, no. 209. For the use of romanati as a unit of account in the eleventh- and twelfth-century Adriatic, see DOC 3.158–59.

\(^{227}\) Duccellet, Façade maritime, 75.


\(^{229}\) Catullus, Carmina 56.15.

\(^{230}\) Al-Idriši, Géographie d’Édrisi, 2:120.

\(^{231}\) ADR, no. 8. David Abulafia argues that “the Pisan treaty must be seen in the context of Pisan attempts to inherit in the Greek Empire rights enjoyed until lately by the Venetians” (“Dalmatian Ragusa,” 445). Although this may have been part of the Pisan strategy, this interpretation overlooks subsequent Pisan activity in Zara, and also places too little emphasis on the commercial potential of the overland route to Constantinople through the Balkans.

\(^{232}\) Fradelli, “Pisani e fiorentini,” 179–84.
to aid overland as well as maritime traffic. Similarly, Anconitan treaties with Trogir in 1216 and Zara in 1258 may have been prompted by a resurgent interest in the economic potential of the dormant route. However, the instability brought on by the post-1204 political disunity prevented the route from ever again reaching its twelfth-century peak.

Not surprisingly, it was the Venetians, not the Dalmatians, who dominated the overland route to and from Constantinople during much of the period. According to Anna Komnena, Durazzo already had a substantial Italian (primarily Venetian) community in the late eleventh century. The Venetians’ presence in Durazzo was largely a consequence of Alexios I’s chrysobull in 1082, which gave them a church and allowed them to own property in the city. As mentioned above, Venetian ships regularly stopped at Durazzo on the way to the Levant, but many Venetians also traveled to Durazzo overland from Greece or Constantinople. In March 1161, Filippo di Albiola received 200 perperi auri for a journey that he was to make overland from Constantinople to Durazzo, and then by sea to Venice. The same itinerary (in reverse) was specified in an 1183 contract concerning a voyage by Pietro da Molin. Two years later Pietro Morosini traveled from Thebes overland to Durazzo and then sailed up to Venice. Since Morosini’s starting point was Thebes, a major center of silk production, it seems quite probable that he was carrying silk, a hypothesis supported by the fact that he was specifically instructed to travel overland (and therefore could not have been transporting bulk merchandise). Indeed, the appeal of the overland route to Durazzo lay precisely in the security it afforded the transport of high-value, low-weight goods like silk.

But all this changed following the Fourth Crusade. Venice’s establishment in 1205 of the Duchy of Durazzo, a colony directly administered by the Venetian government, temporarily increased the importance of the city as a stopping point for Venetian vessels traveling to and from the Levant. Following the collapse of the Venetian duchy in 1213, Ragusan merchants became a significant presence in Durazzo. But no evidence survives to suggest that the overland route to Thessaly and Constantinople continued to be much used in the following decades. Henceforth, the axis of Durazzo’s trade ran north–south rather than east–west.

The transformations wrought by extra-Adriatic developments on the intra-Adriatic trade networks of Albania and Dalmatia serve as an important reminder of the interconnections between regional and long-distance commerce. Just as Venetian victories in the Bosporus reconfigured the commercial function of Albania, so Venetian victories in the Adriatic largely eliminated the Anconitan presence in the Levant. The medieval Adriatic was tightly linked to the rest of the Mediterranean world, and developments in one had consequences for the other. But whereas regional trade generally followed a course toward increasing intensity and complexity during this period, the long-distance activities of the Adriatic cities show a less uniform trend. Some, like Venice, continued along a path of expansion on which they had already embarked in the preceding centuries. The Apulian ports, by contrast, seem to have stalled after their eleventh-century flourishing. Ragusa and Ancona both emerged on the international markets—but while the thirteenth century marked the first glimmerings of greatness for one, it marked a temporary end to Mediterranean commercial prominence for the other.

The Human Adriatic: Patterns of Social Participation

Who were the people who created and sustained these trade networks? In general, we do not know, our ignorance the lamentable consequence of a historical record that privileges large-scale commerce and the elites who were usually responsible for it. The world of small-scale mariners is hidden behind the heavy veil of the intervening centuries, although its effects are visible in the very existence of cities like Venice and Ragusa, which relied so heavily on the maritime imports brought to their harbors by these caboteurs, whose presence can be detected indirectly.

233 Krekić, Dubrovnik, no. 3.
235 Anna Komnena, Alexiadis libri XV, 65.
237 DCV, nos. 350–349, 353.
For example, thousands of twelfth- and thirteenth-century contracts concerning the saltworks of the Venetian lagoon do survive, and while these deal overwhelmingly with questions of ownership and management, the salt that was actually produced was almost certainly transported and sold throughout the upper Adriatic not by the great merchants of the Rialto (for it goes virtually unmentioned in their extant documents) but by small-scale traders. For many such traders, commerce formed only part of their activities. In the medieval Mediterranean, as in modern times, individuals regularly took on multiple roles. Those who carried out the cabotage along the shores of the Adriatic were not necessarily professional merchants, earning their living solely by acting as middlemen between other parties. Some, especially in Dalmatia, would have also been fishermen; elsewhere, some might have been farmers; others still might have themselves gathered the salt that was to fill their cargo holds. Some, evidently, were even monks; the aforementioned pagina recordatio from 1128 indicates that the monks of S. Maria di Tremiti were able to travel to Ancona with their famuli for trading purposes without being subject to the usual taxes, so long as they gave one meal and two wheels of cheese to the Anconitan authorities. Unfortunately, this fleeting reference tells us nothing about what commodities they bought or sold (other than perhaps cheese), nor how often they made the journey. However, it does serve as a testament to the polyactivity of some of the individuals who engaged in small-scale Adriatic commerce. They were traders, certainly, but much else besides.

Between July 1409 and February 1410, the burchio made forty trips to the ports around Fano—primarily to Senigallia, but to Ancona and to smaller ports such as Casebruciate and Cesano as well. Though the burchio was most often used to bring firewood from Senigallia to Fano, it also carried grain, salt, wine, and horses to other destinations. From the register, we can also determine the origins of many of the men involved in these journeys. Of the twenty-seven voyages for which the patronus (who served as both captain and trader) is named, twenty-four were captained by men from the Marches (most of whom served multiple times over the ten-month period); of the remaining three, one was captured by Nicolo da Lacroma of Ragusa and two by Tommaso de Drogasse of Zara. Among the fourteen named sailors, however, only two were from the Italian peninsula—the other twelve were all Dalmatians (a striking testament to the region’s maritime expertise). While these voyages were carried out much later than the period in question, they are broadly representative of the cabotage that animated the Adriatic shores throughout the medieval period: local traders carrying relatively small quantities of staple commodities and making regular journeys to nearby communities.

Whereas the absence of documentary evidence conceals the identities of the medieval Adriatic caboteurs, the Venetian archives offer an altogether happier outlook for an investigation into the identities of the large-scale merchant-mariners (at least those based in Venice), their investors, and the nauclerii who captained the ships used for this trade. These occupational divisions are necessarily arbitrary, since the boundaries between them were often blurred. The same men might serve as investors for one venture and traders for another, and many

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239 See S. Petini, ed., Chioggia medioevale: Documenti dal secolo XI al XV (3 vols. [Venice, 2006]). Interesting light is shed by Consilia et Ordinamenta, no. 104, in DMCV 1:200, which threatens salt traders who contravene Venetian shipping restrictions with the loss of their “platem seu baream”—that is, small flat-bottomed boats with limited carrying capacity.

240 Petrucci, S. Maria di Tremiti, no. 96.

241 S. Anselmi, “Per la storia economica del piccolo cabotaggio: L’attività di un burchio adriatico (1409–1410),” Nuova rivista storica 62 (1978): 321–48. The register was compiled by Antonio de Andriuccio da Saxoferato on behalf of the Malatesta (who owned both the farms and the burchio concerned). Although Antonio compiled at least thirteen volumes, only the volume from 1409–10 has survived.

242 All, except those from Ragusa, are identified as schiavo.

243 The term nauclus is usually, though inadequately, translated as “shipmaster.” This term is used particularly by F. C. Lane, although he employed others as well; compare his “Venetian Seamen in the Nautical Revolution of the Middle Ages,” in Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo XV, ed. A. Pertusi (Florence, 1975), 403–29, at 408—where nauclus is translated as “sailing master”—with his Venice, a Maritime Republic (Baltimore, 1975), 50—where he uses the more standard “shipmaster.”
mariners engaged in trade themselves. The documentation provides less insight into the many intermediaries whose active involvement was so crucial to the development of sophisticated trade networks: the sailors who sailed the ware-laden ships, the dockworkers who loaded and unloaded the boats, the innkeepers who so often brokered the exchanges, and a host of others.244 But though the analysis that follows here focuses primarily on the men—and they were mostly men—who were most directly involved in the trade, it is with due awareness of the less visible human infrastructure that underpinned their activities.

We turn first to the great Venetian merchants, the individuals who both invested in and carried out the large-scale intra-Adriatic trade described in the extant commercial contracts. Their identities emerge most clearly because it was they who gathered together before the Rialto notaries to set down the terms of their ventures, and whose bequests to Venetian churches and monasteries enabled their personal documents to survive through the centuries. One important observation is that the individuals who were active in the Adriatic—whether making or accepting investments—were generally the same individuals who were active in the waters beyond the Strait of Otranto. Of the thirty merchants named in the intra-Adriatic contracts for whom at least two records of separate voyages (to any destination) survive, twenty-three were engaged in the Levant trade as well. From a purely economic standpoint, this is not surprising. The navigation conditions of the Mediterranean and technical limitations of medieval ships prevented Venetian merchants from making two return voyages to the Levant in a single year, but under favorable conditions they could travel to the Levant and back, and subsequently make a second round-trip within the Adriatic.245 This strategy was adopted by a certain Marco Tiepolo in 1190: in March he set sail to Messina (only a short journey from the mouth of the Adriatic), then returned to Venice, then set sail again in August for Constanti-

... presumably returning the following spring.246 There were, of course, some merchants who apparently confined most of their efforts within the Adriatic. Between 1235 and 1253, for example, Gabriele Marignoni invested in nine recorded commercial ventures. Of the six contracts for which the destination is specified, five are limited to locations within the Adriatic (Ancona, Zara, and Fermo), while the sixth—for a voyage by land or sea to Hungary (Ungaria)—may also have been carried out within the sea.247 The contracts also suggest that involvement in intra-Adriatic trade was not limited to a single social class; members of prominent ducal families appear alongside men of more modest means. Roughly one-fifth of the individuals mentioned in the intra-Adriatic contracts bear surnames of great Venetian clans: Badoer, Contarini, Falier, Michiel, Morosini, and the like. There is no discernible relationship between the size of the investment and the social status of the investor, and patrician investors do not seem to have consistently invested either more or less in individual contracts than did their nonpatrician counterparts. Nor did the patricians limit themselves merely to financing these voyages and leaving the active trading to others; around 1190, Domenico Corner journeyed to Apulia, and three decades later Domenico Gradenigo twice did the same.248 Individuals often played both roles—financing some voyages, and accepting investments for others—just they did in the general Mediterranean trade. In August 1198, for example, Domenico Aldino invested £50 in another Venetian merchant’s voyage to Apulia; two years later, he accepted £50 for a voyage to Ancona and Dalmatia.249 The absence of a hierarchy of trading destinations in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Venice—at least as expressed by the social status of the merchants involved—is mirrored by the contemporary Genoese

244 Their importance has recently been highlighted by K. L. Reyerson, The Art of the Deal: Intermediaries of Trade in Medieval Montpellier (Leiden, 2002), esp. chap. 3. See also C. M. de la Roncière, Firenze e le sue campagne nel Trecento: Mercanti, produzione, traffici (Florence, 2005).
246 DCV, nos. 577, 388.
247 DCV, nos. 694, 707, 711, 709, 715, 745. For Marignoni’s other ventures, see DCV, nos. 701, 809, 810. This specialization seems to have accelerated markedly in the thirteenth century, likely as a result of increasing commercial opportunities within the Adriatic; see my remarks in “Les activités économiques des familles vénitiennes dans l’Adriatique, 12e–13e siècles,” in Réseaux familiaux à la fin de l’Antiquité et au Moyen Âge, ed. B. Caseau (Paris, forthcoming).
248 DCV, nos. 191, 197, 669, 631.
249 See DCV, no. 450; and San Maffio di Mazzorbo, no. 48.
Viadro and Ziani families maintained close relations during Tommaso’s lifetime. In several cases, members of the Viadro family served as witnesses for the Ziani’s commercial contracts, and the Ziani made several investments in Tommaso Viadro’s commercial activities: Pietro Ziani (later doge) invested £152 in one of his voyages to Syria, and in 1209 the Dogressa Maria Ziani gave £130 to Viadro in a maritime loan. Such familial involvement was the norm in Venice; on at least two occasions Viadro was involved in commercial transactions with his brothers, and he was also given his sister’s dowry to invest by her husband. Despite his distinguished lineage, Viadro seems to have preferred maritime commerce to politics—a choice also made by his nephew Domenico Gradenigo. It was his older brother Stefano who took on whatever familial political obligations may have been expected. Stefano served as podestà first of Chioggia and then of Pola in the early 1220s—another indication of the family’s prominence in early thirteenth-century Venice, and possibly another reflection of their close ties to the Ziani, since Pietro had by then been elected doge.

Tommaso Viadro’s surviving commercial contracts concern at least sixteen separate voyages, of which at least seven were conducted exclusively within the Adriatic. Like most Venetians who traded within the Adriatic, Viadro was also active in the Levant; indeed, his name first appears in a June 1197 contract in which it is noted that he received £100 from Filippo Marcello the previous August
denote a more general familial relationship, it is possible that Giacomina and Pietro were merely cousins. Regardless, the Viadro and Ziani families enjoyed close ties. See I. Fees, Reichtum und Macht in mittelalterlichen Venedig: Die Familie Ziani (Tübingen, 1988), 41–42.

254 NDCV, nos. 54, 73. See also Fees, Reichtum und Macht, 42 n. 191. The involvement of Venetian doges in trade was widely accepted until the 1270s; thereafter, they faced steadily increasing restrictions on their commercial activities. See L. Bucanger Robert, “Domenico Gradenigo: A Thirteenth-Century Venetian Merchant,” in Medieval and Renaissance Venice, ed. T. Madden and E. Kittell (Chicago, 1999), 27–48, at 35.

255 San Maffio di Mazzorbo, no. 12; and Fonti Viadro, February 1216. In the first instance (July 1207), Viadro and his two brothers (Giacomo and Stefano) received in colleganza his sister’s dowry from Viadro’s sister and her husband Rainiero Vitturo. In the second, Viadro received £135 and 35 perperi auri from his brother Stefano in October 1218, while they were both in Candia.

256 Chioggia medioevale, nos. 418, 419; NDCV, no. 81.
to be invested in copper and sold in Alexandria. The Viadro documents provide strong evidence of patrician involvement in intra-Adriatic trade—his investors included members of the Badoer, Corner, and da Molin families—and of course Viadro himself possessed a distinguished lineage. Moreover, the investments made in his journeys also align closely with the general pattern in the Venetian documentation. The average investment per contract in Viadro’s Adriatic ventures is £93, close to the general intra-Adriatic average of £102.265 Similarly, most of Viadro’s contracts (eleven out of fourteen) fall between £50 and £150, though the general evidence points to a higher frequency of small investments (see figs. 10.4 and 10.5). Not surprisingly, the average investment in Viadro’s Adriatic ventures is lower than the average investment in his Levantine ones (£113).266 In both duration and expense, voyages to the Levant were considerably more demanding than those within the Adriatic. But here again, there is no significant difference between the amounts invested by members of high-ranking Venetian families and those from less exalted backgrounds. The largest recorded investment in his Adriatic ventures (£200) is from Domenico Aldoino, a member of an established but not particularly prominent Venetian family; the lowest (£38) is from Pietro da Molin, scion of a powerful patrician clan.267 Given the low survival rate of contemporary documentation, there is no way to prove conclusively that Viadro was “typical” of Venetian merchants trading in the Adriatic. However, his own commercial activities (activity in both the Levant and the Adriatic), the socioeconomic dynamic of the investors that he attracted (both patrician and nonpatrician), and the size of the investments that he received (generally £50 to £200) do make Viadro’s career appear broadly representative of Venetian upper-class mercantile involvement in the Adriatic.

The surviving contracts frequently specify the identity of the naucerus for the voyage; he essentially served as the captain of the ship during this period, though authority was partially shared with the merchants on board (particularly so far as changes of des-
Adriatic Trade Networks in the Twelfth and Early Thirteenth Centuries

destination were concerned). Unlike the capitani and comiti of the Levantine galleys, the intra-Adriatic naucleri do not appear to have hailed from patrician families. Moreover, many of the naucleri mentioned in the surviving Venetian contracts bear distinctly non-Venetian surnames, and in some cases their non-Venetian origins (for example, Ragusa) are explicitly stated, suggesting that the naucleri on Venetian ships hailed from throughout the Adriatic.

The evidence also suggests that the naucleri themselves regularly engaged in trade. In 1159, a certain Manolesso Lipefina lent £20 veronensium to Giovanni Russo for a journey to Apulia on which Russo himself was the nauclerus. Another nauclerus, Bartolomeo Fazio, made four recorded trading voyages to ports in the upper Adriatic between 1198 and 1201, receiving small investments for each trip. This coupling of the roles of merchant and nauclerus was certainly not unique to the Adriatic; in one seventh-century Byzantine hagiographic text, the terms naukleroi and emporoi are even used interchangeably.

168 In DCV, no. 409, the nauclerus, Samarico Lombardo, is from Apulia. In DCV, no. 619, the nauclerus, Blasio di Bistino, is from Ragusa.
169 DCV, nos. 461, 626.

268 In DCV, no. 409, the nauclerus, Samarico Lombardo, is from Apulia. In DCV, no. 619, the nauclerus, Blasio di Bistino, is from Ragusa.
269 DCV, nos. 461, 626.

268 In DCV, no. 409, the nauclerus, Samarico Lombardo, is from Apulia. In DCV, no. 619, the nauclerus, Blasio di Bistino, is from Ragusa.
269 DCV, nos. 461, 626.

DCV, no. 136. For the use of Veronese currency in twelfth-century Venice, see above, note 57.
271 DCV, nos. 448, 449, 453, 543.
272 Laiou, “Exchange and Trade,” 706; the text concerned is the Miracles of St. Demetrios. The ancient Roman use of nauclerus is just as problematic as the medieval usage and offers few insights; see the extended discussion in J. Rougé, Recherches
to captains carrying goods for their own trading purposes, it appears that naucleri-traders were a regular feature of Islamic shipping along the southern Mediterranean shore.\(^\text{273}\) In the late thirteenth century, the Cretan merchants of Greek origin who engaged in maritime trade generally served as both trader and sailor, and the same seems to have been true of Greek merchants active in the Black Sea grain trade in the late fourteenth century.\(^\text{274}\) Most tellingly, both the Rhodian Sea Law and the Venetian maritime code promulgated by Doge Rainier Zeno in 1255 specifically discuss the quantities of merchandise that mariners could bring aboard their ships for trading purposes.\(^\text{275}\) It is not surprising, therefore, that we find the naucleri of the medieval Adriatic also engaging in small-scale trade.\(^\text{276}\)

It is unclear whether the naucleri owned the boats that they themselves captained; comparative evidence from elsewhere in the Mediterranean shows a variety of practices. Most of the Greek merchants mentioned in the extant fourteenth-century notarial records from the Black Sea were also sailors or owners of small boats, and many seem to have been joint sailor-owners.\(^\text{277}\) However, evidence from the Cairo Genizah suggests that this vertical integration of commerce and shipping was not universal in the Mediterranean. In the eleventh century, at least, the men who owned the ships used for commercial ventures along the southern shores of the Mediterranean were usually distinct from those who sailed them. For example, one boat was named after its captain, Ibn al-Iskandar, but owned by two other men.\(^\text{278}\) In general, the ships were owned by government officials (ranging from the sultan himself to Muslim judges) and, above all, by merchants (particularly those belonging to large business houses).\(^\text{279}\) In contemporary Genoa, ship ownership and management were concentrated in a single individual insofar as small ships were concerned.\(^\text{280}\) Starting in the mid-twelfth century, however, the trend toward fractional ownership of vessels meant that large ships rarely belonged to any single individual, let alone the nauclerus. Even in recorded cases of single ownership, the owner and nauclerus appear to have been distinct, as in an 1198 voyage from Genoa to Catalonia aboard a ship belonging to the Genoese merchant Ugolino da Levanto in which the nauclerus was a certain Salvo of Savona.\(^\text{281}\)

Into which paradigm, therefore, did the naucleri of the medieval Adriatic fall? Three pieces of evidence suggest that while some Adriatic naucleri may indeed have owned their ships, those cases cannot be generalized. First, the early fifteenth-century burchio mentioned above was owned by the Malatesta clan, who chartered it out to various captains.\(^\text{282}\) Thus, the naucleri of the later medieval Adriatic were not necessarily the owners of the ships on which they sailed. Second, according to the Venetian maritime code promulgated by Doge Rainier Zeno in 1255, the nauclerus was to fulfill entirely separate functions from

\(\text{sur l’organisation du commerce maritime en Méditerranée sous l’empire romain (Paris, 1966), 229–58.} \)
\(\text{273 S. D. Goitein, A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza, 6 vols. (Berkeley, 1967–93), i:311.} \)
\(\text{275 Rhodian Sea Law, 3.12 (referring specifically to naukléroi), in Νέος Πολιτω} \!
\text{νικός Ναυτικός—The Rhodian Sea Law, ed. W. Ashburner (Oxford, 1909), 102–3; 155 Zeno Code, Article 50, in R. Predelli and A. Saccordi, eds., Gli statuti marittimi veneziani fino al 1255 (Venice, 1991), 122–23. Although the Zeno Code refers to “mercatores et marinarii” and not specifically to “naucleri,” the broad phrasing of the statute suggests that naucleri were encompassed within its provisions.} \)
\(\text{276 The occupational pattern of sailor-trader may not have been the rule in the medieval Mediterranean. According to E. H. Byrne, twelfth- and thirteenth-century Genoese naucleri apparently did not engage actively in trade, drawing their profits instead from the sailing and management of their ships; see Genoese Shipping in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries (Cambridge, Mass., 1910), 12. However, given the frequency with which naucleri seem to have engaged in trade elsewhere in the medieval Mediterranean, I have some reservations about the categorical certainty of Byrne’s conclusion. To be sure, the Venetians might have simply adopted the Byzantine custom of dual occupations, but it seems more likely that the commercial activities of Genoese naucleri are simply underrepresented in the surviving records.} \)
\(\text{277 Laiou-Thomadakis, “Byzantine Economy,” 196–97; and eadem, “Greek Merchant,” 107.} \)
\(\text{278 Goitein, Mediterranean Society, 1309.} \)
\(\text{279 Ibid., 310–11. Goitein suggests that some of the shipowners may have been skippers (i.e., naucleri) by calling, but no instances are recorded among the 148 boats that he examined. See also A. L. Udovitch, “Time, the Sea and Society: Duration of Commercial Voyages on the Southern Shores of the Mediterranean during the High Middle Ages,” in La navigazione mediterranea nell’alto medioevo (Spoleto, 1978), 503–63, at 519–20.} \)
\(\text{280 Byrne, Genoese Shipping, 12.} \)
\(\text{281 J. E. Eierman et al., eds., Bonvillano (1158), Notai liguri dei secoli XII e XIII 3 (Genoa, 1939), no. 35.} \)
\(\text{282 See Anselmi, “Piccolo cabotaggio,” 521–48.} \)
the patronus (who both owned the ship and oversaw the shipping expedition); indeed, the nauclerus was to report on certain contraventions of the code perpetrated by the patronus. This clearly suggests a division between the naucleri and the shipowners, at least in the mid-thirteenth century. However, the provisions in the code that concern naucleri generally refer only to ships with a carrying capacity of more than 200 migliaia, which would have exempted most of the ships active in the Adriatic. Moreover, though naucleri appear in almost every one of the surviving intra-Adriatic contracts, they are mentioned only rarely within the code overall, which assigned to them a considerably more limited role than their frequency in the extant documentation would suggest. The provisions of the code therefore seem to bear little relationship to the reality of intra-Adriatic shipping. Yet if separate ownership and captaining of the ships was de rigueur in Venice’s long-distance trade, it seems probable that such a division was at least not unusual within the confines of the Adriatic. Finally, we know that in Venice from the eleventh century onward, ownership of a ship was often divided among multiple investors, as in Genoa and elsewhere in the Mediterranean, and some naucleri did indeed own shares. Overall, it seems safe to assume that some of the Adriatic naucleri owned their own ships (especially when the ships were small), as was the case in contemporary Genoa, while many others either owned them only in part or else were hired by shipowners to manage the ships on their behalf.

The patterns of Venetian social involvement in the Adriatic trade reveal many parallels with the city’s general trade in the Mediterranean: there was considerable overlap in the merchants involved, the amounts invested fell generally within the same range, and some of the naucleri active in the Adriatic also captained ships bound for the Levant. But in one respect, Venice’s pattern of intra-Adriatic mercantile involvement differed strikingly from its involvement in the wider Mediterranean: the participation of women. In only two of the roughly sixty surviving Venetian contracts concerning intra-Adriatic trade between 1100 and 1260 is a woman an active participant. By contrast, more than one-eighth of all Venetian commercial contracts from the same period involve women in some capacity. Active female involvement in the Mediterranean trade in general was certainly not an exclusively Venetian phenomenon; of the 4,500 extant Genoese colleganza contracts recorded between 1155 and 1216, nearly one-quarter of them involve women acting either for themselves or on behalf of a family member. How then can the comparative under-representation of women in intra-Adriatic trade be explained? The two surviving contracts offer little guidance: one consists of a sea loan of £400 (one of the smallest recorded amounts); the other, a quittance for a colleganza for £400 (one of the largest). The woman in the former case bears an uncommon surname and loaned money to a nauclerus-trader. In the latter case, the woman was the widow of a member of an established (if not especially prominent) Venetian family; she was acting on behalf of her late husband in concluding an earlier transaction with a patrician merchant. Is it possible that most female investors were attracted by the greater state control over the Levant trade, with its systems of mude and convoys? Did the higher potential returns from the commerce of luxury goods appeal to them, despite the higher risk? Unfortunately, unless new sources are discovered that add to the paucity of existing material, these questions must remain unanswered.

A Connected Sea

The portrait of the Adriatic sketched in the preceding pages shows a region moving toward ever-greater commercial integration, though against a background of considerable international upheaval and steadily increasing Venetian control of commodity movement within the sea. The commodity exchange that animated its shores had multiple
interdependent causes; in the Adriatic, as in the medieval Mediterranean more generally, no one factor was sufficient to drive exchange. Concentrated (and growing) urban demand for staple commodities had to be matched by surplus production elsewhere within the sea. Regions with complementary micro-ecologies had to be accessible by navigable sea-lanes. Hinterlands had to be connected to the seaports by secure overland routes. The medieval Adriatic was an exemplar of this model. The grain and oil production of the western Adriatic coast and Albania fed the citizens of Venice, Ancona, Ragusa, and other large coastal centers. Salt from Durazzo could be easily transported along the coast to Ragusa; grain from the Marches could be easily carried across the central Adriatic to Dalmatia. Slaves and hides could be carried from the Balkan interior to Zara through passes in the Dinaric Alps, to be exchanged for staple foodstuffs and manufactured goods that would then be carried back across the mountain passes.

Intra-Adriatic trade was predominantly bulk trade, and in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the movement of bulk goods within the sea generally adhered to broad patterns. While salt and timber moved in many directions within the sea (though usually laterally), the chief agricultural commodities—especially grain and oil—moved from south to north and from west to east. Perhaps this is not surprising—the Apulian plateau and Po plain were more conducive to the cultivation of wheat and olives than were the Veneto marshes or the mountainous Dalmatian coast. But neither can the direction of movement be taken for granted. As the sixth-century letter of Cassiodorus to the tribuni maritimorum indicates, there was a time when communities along the western shore sought staple foodstuffs—wine, oil, and wheat—from the eastern coast.\(^{289}\) Local production possibilities were vitally important, but other factors also stimulated the exchange of commodities and influenced the directions of this exchange: demand patterns, navigational trends, and political factors all helped shape the trade networks within the sea. Furthermore, bulk commodities were not the only cargoes traveling along the Adriatic sea-lanes, for luxury goods from the Levant were frequently carried through the Strait of Otranto—and prior to 1204, overland through the southern Balkans to the eastern Adriatic coast as well. The influx of these commodities into the Adriatic region, together with structural features of medieval long-distance shipping, ensured that extra-Adriatic commerce was not an isolated phenomenon but rather was closely intertwined with local and regional trade networks.

Long-distance trade not only influenced the workings of the regional trade networks but also profoundly shaped their growth. It was above all the expansion of Venetian control over commodity movements within the Adriatic, particularly from the second quarter of the thirteenth century onward, that transformed an accumulation of individual commercial linkages into a truly integrated system. The expansion of this control came after Venice had already established its supremacy in the long-distance trade of the eastern Mediterranean. The prosperity and growth engendered by Venetian success outside the Adriatic greatly amplified the lagoon city’s function as a demand center for commodities within the sea, and Venice’s need to ensure secure access to these commodities drove the monopolistic program that so defined the Adriatic trade system by the mid-thirteenth century. Yet though Venetian dominance of regional trade within the Adriatic was supported by its dominance of long-distance trade in the eastern Mediterranean, the two were nevertheless separate achievements. Regional preeminence was hardly an automatic by-product of Levantine hegemony; it had to be negotiated, fought for, and defended in its own right. Indeed, while the city’s nodal position between the eastern Mediterranean and northwestern Europe may have facilitated its success in long-distance trade, its position at the head of the lagoon rendered it less able to supervise Adriatic trade than could cities further south, such as Ancona or Split. Although the thirteenth century saw the limits of Venetian control inching ever further southward, the comparative weakness of this control in the southern portions of the sea is underscored by the vigorous non-Venetian activity there; it is no coincidence that Dalmatian diplomatic and commercial activity was more intense in Apulia than along more northern stretches of the western Adriatic coast.

Other aspects of the Adriatic trade system remain to be explored. The role played by coastal hinterlands is still insufficiently understood, though the importance of the Serbian mountains or the grain fields on the Apulian plateau is clear. Simi-
larly, fluvial and terrestrial connections in the Adriatic region have made only brief appearances in the preceding pages, even though goods were not always transported by sea; overland and river routes were also important conduits of exchange along the shores of the medieval Adriatic, and they require much more research. And, as often mentioned, we know little about the caboteurs, or the sailors who rigged and sailed the roundships and taride, or even the merchants who hailed from Ragusa, Brindisi, or anywhere except Venice. Only echoes of their activities are left behind, in the historical traces of the commercial linkages that they helped forge. None of these medieval merchants and mariners, none of these captains and caboteurs, none of the countless men—and, occasionally, women—who traveled the sea-lanes of the Adriatic thought in terms of “microecologies” or “connectivity.” But in responding to economic opportunities and braving the unpredictable seas, they collectively created vibrant trade networks that continued to flourish long after they had vanished from memory.

In the succeeding decades and centuries, Venice expanded its control over commodity movement to the very mouth of the Adriatic and beyond. The textile trade expanded enormously, with Tuscan cloth being carried to Ancona for export to Dalmatia and the Levant. Balkan metals replaced Balkan slaves as the chief export of the Dalmatian coast. Venice began to seek out staple foodstuffs from beyond the Strait of Otranto: grain from Thessaly and the Black Sea; salt from Ibiza, Sardinia, and Cyprus. Overland trade routes through the western Balkans were revived, leading to an enormous expansion of regional commercial activity. The Apulian ports declined further, while Ragusa underwent a dramatic rise to Mediterranean prominence. But the economic integration of the Adriatic, the fundamental achievement of the trade networks that had developed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, continued unabated. The linkages that had been established among regions and between coasts proved too strong to be permanently severed by political upheavals, religious turmoil, or linguistic barriers. More than eight hundred years have passed since Tommaso Viadro set out for Brindisi and Durazzo, and since the monks of the Tremiti islands brought their wheels of cheese to Ancona. But the commercial ties that these voyages forged and the connectivity they exemplified have remained defining features of the Adriatic ever since.

290 Their importance in the northern Adriatic is ably discussed in Rösch, Venedig und das Reich, 31–46.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>AASOR</td>
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<td>CMG</td>
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<td>DenkWien</td>
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<td><strong>GCS</strong></td>
<td>Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten [drei] Jahrhunderte</td>
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<td>Institute of Nautical Archaeology</td>
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<td><strong>NZ</strong></td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<td>ÖJh</td>
<td><em>Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts in Wien</em></td>
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INDEX

Page numbers in bold indicate illustrative material.

'Abd al-Malik, 287, 320
Abū Nuwās, 289
Abulafia, David, 235–36n4, 248–49n78, 262n175, 269
Abydos, cargo inspectors in, 54, 64–65
accounting practices: shopkeepers’ accounts, stone tablet with, 326–29, 329, 433; Vienna accounting papyri, 22–23
adaeratio, 15
Adamnan, 290n67
Adrianople, 134
Adriano, 134
Adriatic trade networks in twelfth and thirteenth centuries, 6, 8, 235–79; ceramics, 238, 267n208; coastal geography, tides, currents, and wind factors, 236–40; documentary evidence for, 240–41, 246; extra-Adriatic trade, 263–70, 278; individuals involved in, 270–77, 279; intra-Adriatic trade, non-Venetian, 252–63, 278; lateral versus trans-Adriatic, 256–58, 261; map, 237; micro-ecological variation, theory of, 239–40, 246, 254, 279; Ōtranto, Strait of, 236, 265; overland route to Constantinople and, 269–70, 279; pirates and piracy, 262–63; ships sailing Adriatic, 238–39; Venice, Adriatic as contado for, 241–52, 243, 278, 279. See also specific Adriatic coastal settlements and trade goods
Aegean, as shipping zone, 77
Aegean Kapitān amphorae, 6
Aegean Ware, 142n107, 143, 144, 207, 308
Aelianos (Syrian martyr), annual fair associated with, 288, 289
Actius of Amida, 93n211
African oil gathered for export at Carthage, 53n16, 61, 65
African Red Slip (ARS) Ware, 9, 73, 106, 190, 368, 370, 375, 376
Africana 2D Grande amphorae, 62, 62
agorai, 343, 344, 344–46, 348–49, 370–72
agrarian activity: on Adriatic coast, 236–37; in Asia Minor, 155–57, 157, 158; in Cappadocia, 118; grain supply requirements for nonproducers, 174
Albania, Adriatic trade of. See Adriatic trade networks in twelfth and thirteenth centuries
Aldoino, Domenico, 272, 274
Alexppo: annual fair at, 285, 288, 290, 292, 295; Norman Principality of Antioch and, 299, 300n4, 309n29
Alexander of Tralles, 36
Alexandria, 81–82, 284, 359
Alexios I Komnenos (emperor), 132, 137, 145, 180, 264, 270, 299, 392
Alfred the Great (king of Wessex), 58
Alinda, 166n90
Amalric, annual fairs as evidence of Syrian annual fairs in Islamic period, 283–85
Almissan pirates, 263
Almyros, 138, 139
Amastris, 8
Ambrosiani, Björn, 58n40
‘Ammān, annual fair at, 286, 288, 289, 290, 292, 293, 314n20
Ammianus Marcellinus, 295n107
Amorion (Amorium), 5, 177–91
Arab sack of 838, recovery following, 179–80, 180; Army of the Anatolics in, 179; belt buckles from, 118; books and literacy in, 188, 188–89; as capital of theme of Anatolikon, 178, 179; ceramic evidence from, 104, 105, 106; ceramics found at, 189, 190, 190; coin evidence from, 109n39, 110, 180–82, 181; construction work, artisans and supplies required for, 189–90; de-urbanization of seventh century and, 177, 183–84; documentary evidence on, 117; inland setting, importance of, 177–78, 182–83; Mantzikert, decline after Battle of (1071), 180; maritime trade, distortions caused by focus on, 177, 184, 190; medicinal plants from, 188; metalwork and jewelry found at, 190–91, 191; new construction in seventh century, 178–79, 179; regional networks in Asia Minor
Amorion, continued
and, 168, 168–69, 169, 177–78; silk and luxury leather goods found at, 187–88; spolia, use of, 189; weight with protective inscription from, 422n146; wine-making in, 184–87, 185–87; amphorae, 5–6, 8, 27–49, 60–77; and, Amorion, paucity of, 186; barrels versus, 73, 74–76, 91–94, 186; chain of transactions evidenced by, 61; changes in local and regional exchange in seventh and eighth centuries, 107; from church workshops, 45, 46; from Comacchio and Northern Italy in eighth century, 225, 228–31, 229, 230; as commercial packaging with marketing implications, 43; concept of market economy and evidence from, 19; contents of, 36, 43–44, 61; distribution patterns, economic significance of, 68; diversity and proliferation of, 30, 31, 34, 43; Dumbarton Oaks, cover, 309; eastern Mediterranean trade dynamism, as evidence of, 28–36, 32–35; economic significance of specific amphorae and their cargoes, 64–65; as imitative or forged packaging, 47–48, 48, 69; as liquid measures, 414–16; means and agents of exchange, 39–42; modern economic theory and, 43; operational approach to studying, 61–64, 62, 63; overland shipment of, 69–73, 70–72, 120–21; painted inscriptions on, 40, 41, 42, 44, 45, 46; Persian wars and Arab Muslim conquests affecting production and export of, 31, 32; production of, 45–47; relative values and volumes of contents, assessing, 77; size, shape, capacity, and tare weight, significance of, 8, 32, 34, 42–43, 61–64, 62, 63, 65–68, 91; standardization issues, 42–43; storage, organization, and sale of contents at receiving end, 66–67, 67, 68; transfer of contents into, 65–66, 69; typological classification of, 28–29, 29–31; western centers of production, decline of, 31; wine trade and, 36–39. See also specific types anaglypha aśeṁia, 196
Anastasius I (emperor), 150
Anastasius Bibliothecarius, 127n14
Anatolia, 177–91; environment of, 177–78; livestock from, 53, 102, 182–83; manpower, as source of, 182; map, 178; numismatic evidence from, 110; resilience of, 8; Sagalassos pottery in, 106; urban life, change and continuity in, 99. See also specific sites
Anazarbos, 169–71, 170, 301, 401
Anchialos, 128
Ankya, 179
Andrew the Fool, Life of, 403–4, 407
Andriake inscription on official annona, 105
Andriake inscription on official weights and measures, 383–85
Andronikos II (emperor), 393, 394–95
Anemourion, 104, 377
Anna Komnena, 162n73, 270
Anfis parapet, 70
Anfis, 357, 359, 360, 402, 403
Apameia, 5, 319, 356, 399n2, 401, 407n50
Aphrodias, 339, 340–41, 344
Apollinarios, amphorae of, 41–42, 42
apothekai, lead seals of, 112, 112–14, 113, 115, 14809
apoptoica devices on weighing instruments, 422–23, 423, 424
Appianus archive, 22
Apulia: extra-Adriatic trade, 265–64, 265–66; intra-Adriatic trade, non-Venetian, 253, 255, 256, 258n142, 263; Venice, trade with, 244n17, 246–47, 249–51
Aqaba, amphorae from, 28, 30, 46, 47, 48
Aquileia, 75, 92n108, 93
Arab Muslim conquests: agrarian and pastoral activity, effects on, 118; Amorion, 838 sack of, 179; amphorae, production and export of, 31, 32; dissolution of Mediterranean community and, 148–49; Hattin, Battle of (1187), 305; Syrian trade networks, shift in, 295–96 (See also Syria, annual fairs in; Syria-Palestine, Byzantine and early Islamic, regional exchange in); textual evidence for trade and markets during, 117
Arabic, adoption of, in Syria-Palestine, 328–29
Arabic Gospel of the Infancy of the Savior, 365
Antioch, Norman Principality of, 5, 6, 297–309; archaeological evidence of geographic/political disjunction in, 305–9; Byzantine Duchy of Antioch, modeled on, 297; Cilicia rather than southern territories, geographic and economic links to, 5, 6, 297, 299, 300–305; Italian merchants and, 304–9; maps of region, 298, 299; port cities of Port Saint Symeon and Laodikeia, 297–99, 300, 304–5; thirteenth-century commercial boom, 105
Antonio de Andriuccio da Saxoferrato, 27n1241
Antony and The Children: a preface, 65n76, 96
Apianus, 112
Aphraates, 344
Aphraates, 177–78
el-Ḥusn, 253
Aqaba, amphorae from, 28, 30, 46, 47, 48
Aquileia, 75, 92n108, 93
Arab Muslim conquests: agrarian and pastoral activity, effects on, 118; Amorion, 838 sack of, 179; amphorae, production and export of, 31, 32; dissolution of Mediterranean community and, 148–49; Hattin, Battle of (1187), 305; Syrian trade networks, shift in, 295–96 (See also Syria, annual fairs in; Syria-Palestine, Byzantine and early Islamic, regional exchange in); textual evidence for trade and markets during, 117
Arabic, adoption of, in Syria-Palestine, 328–29
Arabic Gospel of the Infancy of the Savior, 365
Arcadius (emperor), 15, 385, 386
archaeological sources of information about trade and markets, 5–6
Arculf, 287, 313
Argos, 141
Aristotle, 379
Armenian Cilicia. See Cilicia
Army of the Anatolians, in Amorion, 179
Arnobius the Elder, 74n114
ARS (African Red Slip) Ware, 9, 73, 106, 190, 168, 370, 375, 376
Art, Epiros, Blachernitissa narthex painting, 404–6, 405
St. Artemios, Miracles of, 423–24
Asdracha, C., 131n39
Asia Minor, regional networks in, 8, 147–75; agrarian productivity, 155–57, 157, 148; central and eastern Asia Minor, 166–70, 166–71; ceramic evidence of, 104, 105, 107, 108; combining concrete information with theoretical models, 171–73, 172, 173; documentary evidence of, 117; map, 149; monetization of economy, 147; names of sites, Byzantine and modern, 175; numismatic evidence of, 109, 110, 111; roads in, 118–19, 120, 152–55, 153–55, 157, 162, 167, 167–68, 171; settlement size, population density, and chronology, 149–51, 151, 152, 171–73, 173, 174; western Asia Minor, 158–66, 169–62, 164, 165. See also specific sites
Asinou, Cyprus, Panaghia Phorbiotissa in, 426
Askalon (Asqalân): amphorae made at, 47; annual fair at, 287, 288, 289, 292, 294; camel-shaped bottle from, 70–71, 71; shipwrecks off, 81n168; wine from, 36–37
astrological charts and shipwreck evidence, 80
al-Áthîr al-Bäqiyya ‘an al-Qurîn al-Khâliyya (“Chronology of Ancient Nations” of al-Birûnî”), 283–84
Athena, weights and statues representing, 418, 420–22, 422
Athens, 441n40, 110, 111, 138–40, 142, 350
Attaleiates, 391n76, 392
Augenti, Andrea, 66n78
Augustine of Hippo, 76, 78, 350, 352, 164–65
Augustus Caesar (emperor), 383
Aurelius Symmachus, 346
Ausonius, 56
autarkia or self-sufficiency, 3, 21–22, 24, 122, 138, 147, 148
Autun (Augustodunum), 18
Aylward, William, 159
Badoer, Giancomo, 392–93, 397, 405–6
Bag amphorae, 5, 38, 38, 44n38, 64
Bahariya, 68
Bahira, 291
Baird, Jennifer, 349
Balard, Michel, 235–36, 301n8
Baldini Lippolis, Isabella, 333, 334n8
Ballet, Pascale, 47
Balzaretti, Ross, 220
Bang, Peter, 4, 13
Bari, 258, 265, 266
Barletta, 266
barrels: as bathing vessels, 93; as transport containers, 73, 74–76, 91–94, 186
barter economy, 22–23
Basil I (emperor), 145
Basil II (emperor), 157
basket earrings from Amorion, 191
Bawit, amphorae from, 47, 48
Baybars (Mamluk sultan), 306
Baysan. See Skythopolis
beach markets, 53, 87–89, 89
beasts of burden, 120, 151, 313, 401
Beersheba, 69
Beirut: amphorae found in, 5, 30, 32, 36, 47; physical shops and marketplaces in, 349, 350, 352, 358, 359
Bell, Gertrude, 313–14
belt buckles, distribution patterns of, 118
Benjamin of Tudela, 137, 139n86, 140, 266, 267, 304n14
Beryozovo, silver bowl from, 196
biblical statements regarding weighing and measuring, 387n42, 416, 417
Bilad al-Shâm, annual fairs of. See Syria, annual fairs in
Binggeli, André, 7, 281, 435, 441
Birka, Sweden, as trading center, 78
Birsuba, 69, 72
al-Birûnî, 283–86, 289–92, 294
Bisceglie, 357
Bitthynia, 117, 118, 162, 184
Blachernitissa narthex painting (Arta, Epiros), 404–6, 405
black glaze ceramic, 18
black markets, 52, 89
Black Sea: evidence for trade via, 107, 114–15; north-south trade route, 8; sailor-traders of, 276; shipping zone, 77; slave trade in, 261n170, 302
Blackman, M. James, 213, 308
bladders or skins used for transport of goods, 65, 120, 187, 401
Blanco, Deodatus, 275
Blasios of Amorion, 138n69
Boeotia, 8, 138, 141–42
Boğazköy, 118
Bogomils, as slaves, 261n170
Boncompagni da Signa, 253n107, 268
Bosporos (Kerch), 107
Brusko, 261
Brindisi, 253, 265, 266, 275
Bresson, Alain, 26
Brand, Charles, 148
Bouras, Charalambos, 142
Bosporos (Kerch), 107
Booth, Ian, 152
Bonifay, Michel, 62n61, 66n80, 69n85, 73n108, 77n139
Book of the Prefect: Asia Minor, regional networks in, 155–56; Balkans, regional networks in, 126, 128, 139; daily life in the marketplace, 400, 407; evidence of markets and trade in, 52, 87n189; market economy, concept of, 21; physical shops and marketplaces, 333, 349; weighing and measuring, 389, 391, 407, 422
Bücher, Karl, 13n4
Bruhns, Hinnerk, 24
Brskovo, 261
Brindisi, 253, 265, 266, 275
Bresson, Alain, 26
Brand, Charles, 148
Bouras, Charalambos, 142
Bosporos (Kerch), 107
Booth, Ian, 152
Bonifay, Michel, 62n61, 66n80, 69n85, 73n108, 77n139
Book of the Prefect: Asia Minor, regional networks in, 155–56; Balkans, regional networks in, 126, 128, 139; daily life in the marketplace, 400, 407; evidence of markets and trade in, 52, 87n189; market economy, concept of, 21; physical shops and marketplaces, 333, 349; weighing and measuring, 389, 391, 407, 422
Bücher, Karl, 13n4
Bruhns, Hinnerk, 24
Bücher, Karl, 13n4
Byzantine glaze ceramics, 193–216; Byzantine coarse ware, 188
Byzantine glaze ceramics, 193–216; common tableware from thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, 204–12, 215–16; from Constantinople, tenth to thirteenth centuries, 194–98, 195–97, 214; from Constantinople, thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, 207–8; from Corinth, 197–200, 199, 201, 214; Cypriot tablewares, twelfth to fifteenth centuries, 212–14, 213, 214, 216; demands of market, meeting, 214–16; elite tableware from tenth to thirteenth centuries, 194–205, 214–15; emergence of lead glazing technique, 194; Italian majolica workshops compared, 215; from Kastellorizo shipwreck, 203–5, 203, 204, 207, 214; metal vessels, based on, 196, 196–97, 197, 199, 200–201, 202; metal vessels, departure from, 203; from Pelagoneses-Alonnesos shipwreck, 200–201, 201, 214; from Pergamon, 211–12; relief decoration on, 195–96, 196; from Serres, 209–10, 210, 215; from Thessalonike, 208, 208–9, 209, 215; from Thrace, 211, 212, 215; tripod stilts, use of, 205, 207, 213, 215. See also specific types and classifications
Ca’ Vendramin Calergi, 231
Çadı Camurlu, cistern at, 167
Caunos, 162, 166n90
Caraciacanape, Vitale, 263
Caria, 162, 166n90
Carthage: olive oil gathered for export at, 53n16, 61, 65, 73n105; physical shops and marketplaces in, 334n8, 350, 352, 353, 362
Caria, 162, 166n90
Carrière, Jean-Michel, 2, 3, 13, 429, 436, 441
Carthage: olive oil gathered for export at, 53n16, 61, 65, 73n105; physical shops and marketplaces in, 334n8, 350, 352, 353, 362
Casana, J., 303n12
Cassiodorus, 348, 363, 387n42
Cassi, 166, 166n90
Cassius Dio, 383n23
Çatal Höyük, 303n12
Cato the Elder, 336
Caunos, sekoma from, 411–12
caviar, Byzantine consumption of, 411–12
carriages, 120
Cappadocia, agricultural and pastoral activity in, 118
Cappadocia, agricultural and pastoral activity in, 118
Capo Granitola 4 wreck, 82n169
Capodistria, 255
Capodistria, 255
Capodistria, 255
Cappadocia, agricultural and pastoral activity in, 118
Caraciacanape, Vitale, 265
Caria, 162, 166n90
Carrié, Jean-Michel, 2, 3, 13, 429, 436, 441
Carthage: olive oil gathered for export at, 53n16, 61, 65, 73n105; physical shops and marketplaces in, 334n8, 350, 352, 353, 362
Casana, J., 303n12
Cassiodorus, 348, 363, 387n42
Cassius Dio, 383n23
Çatal Höyük, 303n12
Cato the Elder, 336
Caunos, sekoma from, 411–12
caviar, Byzantine consumption of, 405
Cazichi pirates, 263
Central Greek Painted Ware, 105
Central Place Theory of land use and development, 171
Central Place Theory of land use and development, 171
ceramics: Adriatic, 258, 267n208; from Amorion, 189, 190; in Antioch, 304; Balkans, regional networks in, 136, 137, 141–45, 141–46; changes in local and regional exchange in seventh and eighth centuries, evidence for, 103–8; Comacchio, unglazed ware from, 227, 228; comparative find studies, need for, 91; Nonan-

448 INDEX
boom, 305; unitary material culture of, 306

cities. See urban areas and trade
civil basilicas, 341–42, 343, 367–68
Classe, storehouse at, 66–67, 67, 68

cloth and clothing. See textile and

clothing production and trade
coins: from Amorion, 180–82,
constans II (emperor), 110, 180,

Constance (empress), 258

Constance weights, 417–19, 418, 419

constantine: amphorae from
eastern Mediterranean and rise
of, 49; Ancona, trade relationship
with, 267–68; Balkans, regional
networks in, 127, 128–29, 136, 140, 146; ceramic evidence for trade with, 107, 108; glazed
ceramics of tenth to thirteenth
centuries from, 194–98, 195–97,
214; glazed ceramics of thirteenth
to fourteenth centuries from, 207–8; Hodegetria icon process in, Blachernitissa
narthex painting of, Arta, Epiros,
404–6, 405; market buildings in,
341, 342, 344, 346; overland
trade routes from Dalmatian
ports to, 269–70, 279; physical
shops and shopping in, 349, 350,
352, 353, 355, 361, 362, 364; regulation of public behavior in, 339–40; road network in Asia Minor
and, 152, 153, 157; Rome, as separate
market from, 59; shipwreck evidence regarding importance
relative to Rome, 85–86; short-
distance deliveries by ship in
and around, 77; street encroach-
ments, removal of, 336; as super-
market, 53; Venetian trade with,
264–65; water supply of, 5401; wine consumption in, 54

constantinopolitan glazed white
ware, 104, 106, 107, 136–37, 141,
146, 194–98, 195, 200

constantinopolitan petal ware,
190

constantinopolitan polychrome
ware, 136–37, 141, 146, 196–97,
197, 198

consumer cities versus producer cities,
as historiographical concept,
24

corfu, 238n11, 239, 265n192, 267

corinth: Balkans, regional net-
works in, 127, 138–45; Byzantine
glazed ceramics from, 197–200,
199, 201, 214; changes in local
and regional exchange in seventh
and eighth centuries, 104, 110,
111; physical shops and market-
places, 146; weighing instru-
ments and weights from, 409, 418, 421

Corippus (Flavius Cresconius
Corippus), 37, 54n17, 187

Corner, Domenico, 272

Cosyns, Peter, 326

cotton trade in Adriatic, 249–50,
260

cotyaeum, 184

counterfeiting coins, 388, 391

craft associations, Roman versus
medieval, 21

credit and credit instruments, 102,
112, 327

cretan merchants, 276

crimean transport amphorae, 8

Crnomir of Bosnia, 261

crow, James, 54n21

cuban, 54n21

crusades: First Crusade, 134,
304n14, 305, 308n27; Second
Crusade, 134, 298; Third
Crusade, 150n18, 152, 134, 301;
Fourth Crusade, 243, 264, 265,
270, 421n40; Almissan pirates,
preaching of crusade against, 263;
Antioch, Norman Principality of,
298–300, 301, 304–6, 308n27;
Asia Minor, regional networks
in, 149; Byzantine glazed ceramics and, 212, 213, 214, 216; distinctive
material culture, crusader
states’ lack of, 306; Hattin, Battle
of (1187), 305; Syrian annual fairs
and, 286, 291

cuba, non-market economy in, 433
currency. See monetization of economy; coins

Cyprus: amphorae from, 46; Byzan-
tine glazed ceramics from, 212–
14, 215, 214, 216; changes in local
and regional exchange in seventh
and eighth centuries, 8, 105, 108,
111, 116; Red Slip Ware, Cypriot,
104, 105, 107; weighing and mea-
uring in, 394

cyrene, 343, 344, 350

Cyril (constantine), Apostle to the
Slavs, 59–60

Cyril (Constantine), Apostle to the
Slavs, 136, 157n50, 166n90,
166n90, 189n59, 401

Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus
(emperor), 136, 157n50, 166n90,
189n59, 401

Constantine (Cyril, Apostle to the
Slavs), 419

Constantine weights, 417–19, 418,
centuries, 114–18; on Northern Italy in eighth century, 220–22, 223; of physical shops and marketplaces, 340. See also specific texts and documents

dolia, 74, 76, 358, 374

Domencio de Chioggia, 251

Domergue, Claude, 17

Dominian (emperor), 336

Donatus of Uzalis, 57–58, 76n131

Dor G shipwreck, 409

Dorin, Rowan W., 5, 6, 235, 441

Doughty, C. M., 313

Dramont E wreck, 42, 43n34

Dressel 20 amphorae, 67, 91n203

Ducellier, Alain, 274n262

Dumát al-Jandal, annual fair of, 281

Dumbarton Oaks amphora, 309

Duncan-Jones, Richard P., 414

Dunn, Archibald, 140

Dura-Europos, 349

Durak, Koray, 126


Durliat, Jean, 20

Eberulf of Tours, 37

economic concepts of trade and markets, 429–36 economy, Byzantine. See market economy, concept of; trade and markets in Byzantium

Edessa, 140

Edwards, Robert, 301n7, 306n21

Egypt: Adriatic trade with, 266, 267n120; Antioch’s economic links to, 300; imitative amphorae from, 47–48, 48; Serapeion, official weights and measures kept in, 383

Eirene (empress), 117, 127–28

Eisner, Robert, 432–33

El Mahrine, 73n105, 73n109

Elaborate Incised Ware, 207–8, 208, 215

Elaiussa Sebaste, 345

Eleutheropolis, 286, 293, 294

Elousa, 69, 72

Emesa, 339, 340, 341, 349, 351, 355, 357, 360, 362

Empereur, Jean-Yves, 46

emperors and empresses, weights in shape of busts of, 417–21, 418–21

Das Eparchenbuch, 87–88n189, 130n55, 191

Ephesos: annual fair at, 116, 121; city walls, 162–61n81; physical shops and marketplaces, 353, 354, 355, 356, 358, 359, 361; road network in Asia Minor and, 152, 153, 157

Epiphanius of Salamis, 286, 287n40, 293, 414

Epiros: Despotate, in Adriatic trade, 254, 255n121, 267, 269–70; monastery of Molvdoskepasti at, 210; procession of Hodegetria icon in Constantinople, Blachernitissa narthex painting of, Arta, 404–6, 405. See also Durazzo

Erdkamp, Paul, 24

ergastería, 347–50

Eski Manyas, 161, 162

estate economy and market economy, 21–23, 102–3

Euchaita, 105, 106, 116, 121, 185n42

Euripos, 139, 140, 141

evidence for trade and markets in Byzantium, 5–7, 51–98; amphorae, 60–77 (See also amphorae); archaeological sources, 5–6; barrels as transport containers, 73, 74–76, 91–94, 186; ceramics (See ceramics); documentation (See documentary evidence); “market,” polysemantic meanings of, 51–54, 97; mental disposition towards markets and modes of economic behavior, 54–60; ships and shipwrecks, 77–97 (See also maritime trade; shipwrecks) exchange, as economic function, 429–30

Expositio totius mundi, 56–57, 64n70, 87

Expulsion of the Merchants from Rome, 271

Expedition of the Franks from the Temple, depictions of, 406, 406–7

fairs. See annual fairs or markets; Syria, annual fairs in

Fano, 244–45, 252n105, 271

Farmer’s Law, 93

Fazio, Bartolomeo, 275

Fees, Irmgard, 273n153

Fermo, 248, 254, 259
Last Judgment scenes, swindlers portrayed in, 425–26
Late Roman (LR) 1 amphorae, 19, 29, 31, 32, 41, 41, 42, 45–46, 46, 47–48, 48, 48, 64–65, 66n78, 68n82, 77n139, 80n163, 82n170
Late Roman (LR) 2 amphorae, 19, 29, 34, 66n78, 68n82, 96, 97n130, 228n33
Late Roman (LR) 3 amphorae, 29, 34n12, 77n131
Late Roman (LR) 4 amphorae, 19, 29, 32, 34, 42, 47, 64, 68n82–83, 69n88, 71, 77n139
Late Roman (LR) 7 amphorae, 29, 45, 46, 48
Late Roman (LR) 9 amphorae, 6, 63
Late Roman (LR) 13 amphorae, 65n76
Late Roman coarse wares (LR CW), 4
Lavan, Luke, 7, 333, 442
Lazaros of Galesion, 187n46
Lead glazing technique in Byzantium, emergence of, 194
lead seals. See seals
LeFebre, Jacques, 148
Lemerle, Paul, 133n37
Lemaître, Jacques, 148
Lemire, Elise, 74n18
Lemire, Luke, 7, 333, 442
Lemire, Luke, 7, 333, 442
Lex Rhodia (Rhodian Sea Law), 94, 96, 276
Libanius, 340, 341, 348, 353, 359, 363, 364, 402
Libanius, 340, 341, 348, 353, 359, 363, 364, 402
Liber Comunis, 247, 250n88–90
Liber Syro-Romanus, 335
Liber Veronensis, 93
Lightfoot, Christopher, 5, 6, 109n39, 177, 435, 442
Limestone massif, villages of, 5
Limyra, 107, 161n88
Lipefina, Manolesso, 275
literacy and books in Amorion, 188, 188–89
liturgical wine, 37, 415, 416
Liutprand Capitulary, 220–21, 231
local exchange: changes in seventh and eighth centuries, 99–122 (See also changes in local and regional exchange in seventh and eighth centuries); defining, 4–5, 99, 147, 434; fairs, local, 189
Location theory of land use and development, 171
Longobards in Northern Italy. See Northern Italy in eighth century
Lopadion, 161
Louis the Pious (Frankish ruler), 58, 227n32
Lower Po Valley. See Northern Italy in eighth century LR amphorae. See entries at Late Roman
Lunt, Horace, 59n49
Macaluso, Paul, 391n76
majolica workshops of Italy compared to Byzantine glazed ceramics, 215
Malatesta family, 271, 276
Martel, Filippo, 273
Marcus Aurelius (emperor), 227n32
Marcus Aurelius (emperor), 355
Marignoni, Gabriele, 385
Mark the Deacon, 531n16
market economy, concept of, 2–4, 13–16; conceptual awareness of market prices and economic processes, 15–17, 54–60; criteria for, 14–15; economic life in absence of, 433; estate economy and, 21–23; low-cost artifacts and raw materials, trade in, 17–19; modern economic theory and, 429–30; “modernist,” “primitivist,” and “anti-primitivist” views of, 2–3, 13–14, 125, 429; monetized versus “natural” or barter system, 22–23; moral restraints on commerce, absence of, 17; professional craft associations, Roman versus medieval, 21; state intervention in economy, 20–21; technological innovation for commercial purposes, existence of, 17–19; unified currency market and regionally integrated commercial markets, 16; world-empire versus world-economy, 14, 21
marketplaces. See agora, physical shops and marketplaces
St. Markianos, Life of, 387
Marlèvre, Elise, 74n18
Marmara Coast, wines of, 73, 77
Marseille, 30–31, 77, 87
Martin, J.-M., 266n197
al-Marzūq, 283–88, 290n68
Maslama, 165
Maurice, Strategikon, 76
Mauricius Tiberius (emperor), 227n32
Mauss, Marcel, 3
Maximinus (emperor), 75
Maximian (emperor), 23
Maximins (emperor), 75
Maximus of Hispania (usurper), 96
Martin, J.-M., 266n197
Mecca, 281
Measles Ware, 143
measuring goods. See weighing and measuring
Mecca, 281
medicine: Amorion, medicinal plants from, 188; wine, medicinal use of, 36–37
Mefalsim, 69
Megalepsychia Hunt, Yakto mosaic depicting, 140, 149, 150, 153, 157, 359, 360, 402, 403
Megaw, A. H. S., 205
Melenkon, 210
Melitopolis, 162
Mesembria, 110, 126, 128
metal, ore, and mineral trade, Adriatic, 261–62, 279
metalwork: Amorion, found at, 190–91, 191; Byzantine glazed ceramics based on, 196, 196–97
metalwork, continued
197, 199, 200–201, 202; Byzantine glazed ceramics departing from, 205
Metcalfe, Michael, 305, 318
Methone, Tang marbled ware vessel found at, 102
metron, 415–16, 416
Meyer, Eduard, 13n4
Mikrokos, 150–51, 389, 406–7
Monica (mother of Augustine of Hippo), 76
Monochrome Glazed Ware, 231n41, 304n14
Monopolis, 358
Monte Testaccio, Rome, amphora dump at, 67
Morel, Jean-Paul, 18, 25
Morelli, Federico, 22, 26
Morgan, Charles H., II, 143
Morley, Neville, 3, 434
Morosini, Pietro, 270
Morrison, Cécile, ix, 9, 379, 429, 434–16, 442
Moselle Valley, wines of, 73
Mosynopolis, 130, 133, 211, 212
Mouchasos the camel driver, 401
Mount Athos, Protaton church, Expulsion of the Merchants from the Temple, 406
Mount Ganos, 73, 77
muda, 249
Muhammad’s encounter with Bahira at Syriam fair, 291
al-Muqaddasi, 292, 293, 294
murex shells, 140
Muslims: Seljuk Turks, arrival of, 149, 180. See also Arab Muslim conquests
Mysia, 159, 159–61
Nag Hammadi, camel-shaped bottle from, 70–71, 71
Nahal Bohu, 69
Narentari pirates, 263
“natural” or barter economy, 22–23
Neapolitan, 68
Nessana papyri, 316n27
Nicaea, Lake of, agrarian productivity of land around, 156–57
Nicaea, Second Council of (787), 115–16
Nicholas, “metretes of the Phylax,” 389
Nicolo da Lacroma of Ragusa, 271
Niewöhner, Philipp, 151n28, 165, 173
Nikephoros I (emperor), 115, 292
Nikephoros II Phokas (emperor), 180
Nikephoros (patriarch of Constantinople), 163
Niš, xestes from, 412–13
Nonantola, excavation of monastery of, 232, 233
Normans, in Mediterranean, 137, 246, 265, 397. See also Antioc, Norman Principality of; Sicily
North Syrian (Gaza wine) amphorae, 5, 14, 67–68, 68n85, 69, 326
Northern Italy in eighth century, 219–33; amphorae, 225, 228–31, 229, 230; documentary and archaeological evidence regarding, 220–22, 223; Nonantola, excavation of monastery of, 232, 233; trade relations of, 220–22, 230–33; Venice, eventual flourishing of, 219–20, 231, 232–33. See also Comacchio
Notker the Stammerer, 60n53
numismatics. See coins
Odo of Cluny, 59n4.4
Odoacer (king of Italy), 66
Othere (Scandinavian trader), 58n8
Oikonomides, Nicolas, 128n18, 148n9, 395, 405
oil. See olive oil
Olbia ships, 84n176
Old English Orosius, 58n13–39
olive oil: African oil gathered for export at Carthage, 53n16, 61, 65; in bladders, 65, 120; ceramic industries and production of, 73; Chian amphorae, flavored oils transported in; 61; liquid measures for, 412–16, 413, 415, 416; from Sparta, 138, 139, 143
Orbikos the camel driver, Kissufim mosaic pavement, 71–72, 72
Oribasius, 37
Orseolo, Pietro II (doge of Venice), 265
Ostia: modius, depiction of, 411n79; physical shops and marketplaces, 334, 342, 345, 346, 349, 353, 357, 358, 359, 361, 362, 364; wine amphorae, decline in, 92
Otranto, 105, 253, 266
Otranto, Strait of, 256, 265
overland trade; amphorae, shipment of, 69–73, 70–72, 120–21; in Bal-
kans, 118–19, 119, 127–28, 135–37; changes in local and regional exchange in seventh and eighth centuries, 118–21, 119, 120; Constantinople, overland route from Dalmatian ports to, 269–70, 279; inland sites, importance of, 177–78, 182–83; pack animals and wheeled vehicles, 120, 135, 315, 401. See also roads

Oxyrhynchos papyri, 16, 19, 21

Pacatus, 380
pack animals, 120, 135, 313, 401
Pag, island of, 251, 255

Painted Fine Sgraffito Ware, 142, 200

Pakourianos, Gregory, estates of, 130–35, 132

Palace Ware, 316, 316–17

Palaia, 162

Palace Ware, 316, 316–17

Panella, Clementina, 9

Palestinian Fine Ware, 4, 315, 315–16

Palladas, 379

Palestine. See Syria-Palestine

Palestinian Fine Ware, 4, 315, 315–16

Palud, La, shipwreck, 409–10

Panidos, 134

Panicula, 379

Panels, 134

Papanikola-Bakirtzi, Demetra, 5, 8

Parastaseis syntomoi chronikai, 190

Parthas, 389

Phocas (emperor), 110, 419

Phyllis (patriarch of Constantinople), 60, 78


Piccolpasso, Cipriano, 214

Picon, Maurice, 18, 25, 46

Pier, Dominique, 4–6, 27, 62–63, 64, 91n203, 433, 435, 442–43

Pietro di Bari, 260–61

pirates and piracy, Adriatic, 262–63

Pirenne, Henri, 3, 6, 87, 219, 235, 294–95n100

Pisa, 267, 269

Pisidian Antioch, 358, 359, 360, 361, 383

Pitarakis, Brigitte, 7, 379, 383, 389, 398, 435, 443

Pithoi, 76, 186

plague: fourteenth century, 84, 89, 90; Justinianic, 8, 73n100, 90, 101, 151, 158, 169

Plain-Glazed Ware, 212

Plain-Sgraffito Ware, 212

Po Valley plain. See Northern Italy in eighth century

Poimanenon, 161–62, 162

Polanyi, Karl, 3, 429, 430

Pompeii, 75, 316, 341

population density in Asia Minor, 149–51, 351, 352, 171–73, 173, 174

Porphyrius of Gaza, 351, 16

Port Saint Symeon, 297–99, 300, 304, 305, 309

Port Saint Symeon Ware, 214

post markets, 53–54

Potter, Timothy W., 336
	pottery. See ceramics

Preslav, 129

Prerestlivatiza, 129

prices and pricing: conceptual awareness of market prices in Roman world, 15–17, 58–59, 430; Diocletian, Price Edict of, 23, 69, 71, 77; Expositio totius mundi on, 56–57; increases and decreases in, 52; modern economic theory and, 430–32; primitivist view of Byzantine trade and markets, 2–3, 15–14, 125, 429

Pringle, Denys, 213, 306

Procopius, 118n79

Index 455
producer cities versus consumer cities, as historiographical concept, 24
professional craft associations, Roman versus medieval, 21
prostitution, association of taverns with, 364
Protaton church, Mount Athos, Expulsion of the Merchants from the Temple, 406
Pryor, Frederic, 2, 429–30
Psello, 380
Pseudo-Fulgencius of Ruspe, 53n13
Pseudo-Lucian, 117n67
Pseudo-Macarius/Symeon, 52n13
Protochoprodromos, 405n41
Puglia, 249
Purcell, Nicholas, 2, 239–40
al-Qazwini, 284, 285, 286
Ragusa: extra-Adriatic trade, 264, 266–67, 269, 270; inter-Adriatic trade, non-Venetian, 254–63
Rackham, Roger, 220, 246, 266, 303
Radeke, Klaus, 163
restaurants, 357, 364, 402
retail shops. See physical shops and marketplaces
Rhodes, wrecks off, 81, 83
Rhodian Sea Law (Lex Rhodia), 94, 96, 276
Rhosos (Cilicia), amphorae produced at, 46
Ribe, Denmark, beach market in, 35n11
Rice, David Talbot, 194
Riley, John A., 28, 29
Riley-Smith, Jonathan, 305, 306
Rocks, amphorae, 138
Rome: barrels used for maritime imports to, 75–76, 92; Constantinople, as separate market from, 59; Ephesus as traditional connector to, 152; official weights and measures kept in temples of, 383; physical shops and marketplaces in, 341, 342, 350, 351, 355; shipwreck evidence regarding importance relative to Constantinople, 85–86; wheat prices and distance from, 430–32, 431
Rossano Gospels, 340, 419–20n128
Rostovzeff, Michael, 2–3
Roueché, Charlotte, 333, 339
Rovinj, 257, 258
Ruṣāfa (Sergiopolis), 5, 7, 289n61, 304, 321, 322
Russell, James, 174
Russo, Giovanni, 275
Sabbato of Split, 260
Sacra Parallela manuscript (Paris. gr. 923), 416, 417
Sagalassos: continuation of monumentalized main avenues in, 334; decline in seventh century, 151n28, 183; local semifine and coarse kitchen wares, 8, 106, 108; physical shops and marketplaces in, 316–19, 337, 342, 349, 351–53, 355, 357, 359–62
sailor-trader, combined occupation of, 275–77
Saint-Gervais 2 wreck, 96
Saliou, Catherine, 335, 340
Salvo of Savona, 276
San Salvatore a Brescia, 220
Sanders, Guy D. K., 143
Santamaria, Claude, 43n14
Saqqara, amphorae from, 47, 48
Saraçhan, 108, 111, 229
Saraçhan 61/Günemin 3 type amphorae, 118
Saradi, Helen, 333, 335
Sardinia, wrecks off, 83, 84n176
Sardis: amphorae from, 34n12
inscription at, 21; physical shops at, 355, 355–58, 402n29, 408
Sasanids. See Persian wars
Sauguet, Jean, 333
Scalia, Giacomo della, 251
Schiaveno, Aldo, 18
seals: of borreiarion, 129; of kommeriarion and apothekai, 112, 112–14, 113, 115, 128, 148n9, 150, 189; on weighing instruments, 388–90
Second Crusade, 134, 298
sekomata (measuring tables), 411–12, 412
Seleucia Pieria, amphorae produced at, 46
self-sufficiency or autarkeia, 3, 21–22, 24, 122, 138, 147, 148
Seljuk Turks, arrival of, 149, 180
Selymbria, 134
Serapeion, 383
Serçe Liman wreck, 80n165, 95, 410
Sergiopolis (Ruṣāfa), 5, 7, 289n61, 304, 321, 322
Serres, Byzantine glazed ceramics from, 209–10, 210, 215
Severian of Gabala, 78
Sgraffito Ware: from Antioch, 394n14; Fine, 142, 143, 144, 145, 198–99, 199, 200, 201, 207, 212; Incised, 142, 143, 144, 145, 203, 204, 205–4, 206, 212, 213; locally made, 143; Painted Fine, 142, 201; Plain-Sgraffito Ware, 212; Red, 144n122
Shatzman, I., 72n104
shipbuilding industry, Adriatic, 260
shipwrecks, 77–97; amphorae 304n14; Red, 144n122
Skyllitzes, John, 129n122, 389n61, 390
Skythopolis (Baysan): annual fair, 294; coins and ceramic finds, 314, 315, 318, 320, 321; physical shops and marketplaces, 7, 322, 325, 326, 328, 334, 344, 346, 349, 350, 353–57, 359, 360, 361, 364
slave trade: Adriatic, 251–52, 260–61; in eastern Mediterranean, 261n170, 302
Slavic robbers in the Balkans, 127n13, 135
Slip-Painted Ware, 142, 143, 203, 212
Smith, Adam, 2, 379
Sombart, Werner, 24
Sparta, 138, 139, 141, 143, 144, 200
Spatheia, 42, 43n34
Sravikion, 130, 133
standing Caliph coins, 320
state intervention in economy, 20–21
staterae, 382
steelworks, 381–82, 407–10; amphorae, weighing of, 45, 87; with apotropaic devices, 423; as archaeological finds, 408–10; beachside markets, use at, 53, 87–89; defined and described, 407–8; illustrations of, 381, 382, 408, 410, 411; shipboard use of, 87–89
Stephanos Byzantinos, 162n73
Stephen, St., Miracles of, 57n137
Stephen of Dioclea, 129n26
Stern, Edna, 213
stillatanae, 15
Subayta/Shivata, 7, 69, 123–24
Sulaymān b. Abd al-Malik, 286
Sullechrum, 68
superregional exchange. See interregional exchange
supply and demand. See demand
Svetoslav (Russian prince), 129
swindlers. See fraud and cheating
Symeon the Fool, Life of, 339, 341, 356, 357, 360, 363, 365, 391n69, 401, 402
Symeon Stylites, 355
Synesius, 81n168
Syria, annual fairs in, 6–7, 281–96; almanacs as evidence of fairs in Islamic period, 283–85; Christian saints’ days and festivals, origins in, 286, 287–89; commodities exchanged at, 292; baij and, 281; list of, 285–87; map of antique and medieval fairs, 282; Muhammad’s encounter with Bahira at, 291; pre-Islamic cycle of, 281–83, 284; range, scope, timing, and duration, 289–93; timing of, 290; trade networks and, 293–96. See also specific towns and fairs
Syria-Palestine, Byzantine and early Islamic, regional exchange in, 311–10; Arabic language, adoption of, 328–29; ceramics, 312n8, 313–17, 314–17, 321; coins, 312n8, 317–21, 319–21, 326, 327, 330; map of area, 313; operation of shops, 325–29, 329; physical shops and markets, 321–29, 324, 325, 327, 328
tabernae, 347–50
Tadić, Jorjo, 264n187, 267n209
Tafur, Pero, 404
T’ang marbled ware vessel found at Methone, 102
taverns, 7, 350, 357, 359, 364, 402–4
taxation: border duties, 313n11; in cash rather than kind, 129; fairs, abolition of taxes during, 290; private collection system, 22;
Third Crusade, 1301–28, 134, 301

Third Crusade, 1301–28, 134, 301

Thrace: Balkans, regional networks in, 127–35, 145; Byzantine glazed ceramics from, 211, 212, 215

Tiberias Hoard, 191

Tiberius, 201, 201

topos inscriptions, 334, 338–40

Tor, Deborah, 72n103

Touratsoglou, Ioannis, 137

Troy, Deborah, 72n103

Tralleis, 349, 350, 353

Trani, 246, 265, 266, 275

transfer, as economic function, 430

transmarini negotiatores, 246

Trapani, 246, 265, 266, 275

transregional exchange.

transport of goods, 401; barrels, 73, 125; pack animals, 120, 151, 313, 401; skins used for, 65, 120, 187, 401; wheeled vehicles, 120, 151, 313, 401. See also amphorae; maritime trade; overland trade

transregional exchange. See interregional exchange

Tremittis, monks of, 253, 271

Trier, 36, 87

tripod stilts used in making glazed ceramics, 205, 207, 213, 215

Triscina 3 wreck, 82n169

Trogir, 258, 259, 270

Tyché of Constantinople, weights attributed to seventh century, 99, 171–73, 173, 177, 183–84; grain supply requirements for nonproducers, 174; location and distribution of shops, 351–52. See also specific cities and towns

Thessalonike, glazed ceramics from, 211, 212, 215

Thessalonike, Balkans, regional networks in, 127–35, 145; Byzantine glazed ceramics from, 211, 212, 215

Thietmar, 291, 292

Thessalonike: Balkans, regional network in, 127–35, 145; Byzantine glazed ceramics from, 211, 212, 215

Thietmar, 291, 292

Thick and thin markets, 432

Thier, 36, 87

Thesalonike, glazed ceramics from, 211, 212, 215

Thigneica, 346
Vera, Domenico, 20
Verina (empress), 420
Veroe, 128, 130
Veronese currency as standard coinage of Venice, 246n57
Via Egnatia, 118n79, 119, 127, 211, 269
Via Militaris/Via Regia, 127, 128, 133
Via Nova, 293
Via Sebaste, 167, 167–68
Via Nova, 293
Via Sebaste, 167, 167–68
Viadro, Tommaso, and Viadro family, 273–75, 275, 279
Vienna accounting papyri, 22–23
Vienna Dioscurides, 359
vinum populi Romani, 15
Vitruvius, 341, 349
von Thuenen, Johann Heinrich, 171
Vorderstrasse, Tasha, 303n12, 305
Vroom, Joanita, 142
Vryonis, Speros, 21
Waelkens, Marc, 336
Waksman, Sylvie-Yona, 205–6, 213
a-l-Walīd I (caliph), 322
Wallerstein, Immanuel, 13n4, 14
Ward-Perkins, Bryan, 333
Wartburg, Marie-Louise, 213
water power, 17, 130, 303, 304n14
Wax seals. See seals
Weber, Max, 24
Weber, Max, 24
weighing and measuring, 7, 379–98, 407–26; amphorae and jars used for, 414–16, 415, 416; balance scales, 382–83, 384, 407–10, 411, 416, 417, 423, 424; biblical statements regarding, 387n42, 416, 417; counterfeiting coins, 388, 391; decoration of weighing instruments, 416–23, 418–24; dry and liquid measures, 410–16; in early Byzantine period (fourth to sixth centuries), 380–89; fraudulent (See fraud and cheating); international trade affecting, 392–94; in late Byzantine period, 392–97; metron, 415–16, 416; in middle Byzantine period (Leo VI to twelfth century), 389–92; modios, 410–11, 416, 417; money changers, 387, 391, 406–7; official controls on, 383–87, 389–91, 394; sekomata (measuring tables), 411–12, 412; staterae, 382; taxes associated with, 392, 394–97; in traditional images of merchants, 379, 380; tria auge-tia (standard weights with busts of emperors), 385, 386; weighing instruments, 381–83, 407–10 (See also steelyards); wine and oil, liquid measures for, 412–16, 413, 415, 416; xestai, 41, 54n21, 64, 384, 412–16, 417
wheeled vehicles, 120, 151, 313, 401
Whitehouse, David, 4
Wickham, Chris, 2, 233, 235, 311
Wickham, Chris, 2, 233, 235, 311
Whitaker, Örjan, 17
Wilkinson, Tony J., 303ni2
William I of Sicily, 266
William II of Sicily, 246
William of Tyre, 302n9, 304n14
Wilson, Andrew, 341
wine: Adriatic trade in, 259; aged wines, market for, 371n6; Amorion, winemaking in, 184–87, 185–87; amphorae mainly used for, 36–39 (See also amphorae); in bladders or skins, 65, 120, 187, 401; from Gaza, 5, 36–38, 53–54, 64–65, 77, 87; liquid measures for, 412–16, 413, 415, 416; litur-
gical, 37, 415, 416; port markets for, 53–54
winepresses, 69, 73, 184, 185
wood. See timber and wood
wool trade in Adriatic, 249–50
Woolf, Gregg, 13n4, 14, 20–21
Woolley, Sir Leonard, 306
world-empire versus world-economy, 14, 21
Worp, Klaas, 69n86
Xanthos, 130, 133
Xanthos, 358
xestai, 41, 54n21, 64, 384, 412–16, 417
Yakto mosaic, 340, 349, 350, 355, 357, 359, 360, 402, 403
al-Yaqūbī, 281n2
Yassi Ada shipwreck, 65, 79, 80n163, 85, 90, 96n223, 128n33, 381, 409
Yenikapi, ships found at, 77, 79, 84n176, 91n102, 409, 421n139
Zaccaria, Giacomo, 274
Zara, 240, 251, 258, 259, 265, 269, 270
Zeno, Rainier (doge of Venice), 245n44, 276–77
Zeugma, 5
Zeuxippus Ware, 142n107, 205–7, 206, 211, 212
Ziani family, 273
Ziani, Pietro (doge of Venice), 273
Zimolo, 268n217
Zonaras, John, 389n61
Zorzi, Pietro, 274n259
Zuckerman, Constantin, 414
zygostatai, 383, 386, 389