

THE COST OF A MAN'S LIFE IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY NAPLES: GALLEY ROWERS ON THE EARLY MODERN MEDITERRANEAN

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ABSTRACT

Convicts made up an important segment of the labor pool in early modern Europe. This essay first focuses on a claim of compensation for the services of convict rowers on a private galley serving in the Naples fleet in the sixteenth century and follows contemporary calculations attempting to determine the "cost" of such labor. It then examines the supply side of those relations by analyzing sentences to the galleys from the 1560s to the 1660s.

The Event

On May 11, 1560, in a naval encounter at Djerba, the island "of oil and wool" off the coast of Tunisia, a Turkish fleet routed a Christian one and sank 28 of the 48 Italian ships which the King of Spain had decided to send the previous year, with some 10,000 men, on an expedition against Djerba and Tripoli.¹ Among the ships lost was a galley serving in the Naples fleet and belonging to Stefano De Mari, a Genoese merchant-banker and shipwright, scion of a family long involved in the commercial and financial life of the Kingdom.² Needless to say, the ship went down with its full complement of men who served at the oars.³

In September, 1560, De Mari purchased another galley as a replacement, complete with its crew of rowers, but soon he ran into problems which dragged on for years and whose resolution saw the intervention of the highest authorities in Naples and even in Spain, the ultimate center of power for Naples ever since the Kingdom had fallen to Spain in 1504. On the new galley were 51 convict rowers who had been serving sentences at the oar, but between October 1560 and March 1564, they had been freed and had left the ship. To make up for that loss of manpower, De Mari had initially been given 15 other rowers, and then, between December 1567 and June 1569, the remaining 36. But that, he argued, was not an adequate settlement, for he had had to hire salaried oarsmen in place of the 36 who had trickled in until 1569.

Accordingly, De Mari sought redress, claiming compensation for the wages he had paid the replacement rowers and the other expenses he had undergone in the process. Not only that. He claimed also something at first sight more impalpable. The men he had lost had been mostly Spaniards, "valiant soldiers, already experienced and seasoned rowers."⁴ The ones he had been provided with, on the other hand, had been "inhabitants of the Kingdom of Naples who had been kicked out of their homes [because of criminal convictions], who were not used to labor, and who had no experience on the galleys."

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Therefore, he went on, he should be compensated as well for the difference “in quality [*bontà*] between the two sets of rowers”.⁵

The Calculation of Cost

De Mari had apparently gone all the way to Spain to plead his case at Court,⁶ and his lobbying effort was not in vain. The *Sommaria*, Naples’ chief financial and accounting magistracy, was ordered to provide for De Mari’s compensation “according to reason and justice,” and it more than fulfilled its obligation. In intricate calculations, it determined the precise time that De Mari had been deprived of the services of each of the 36 convicts as well as the salaries and other necessary expenses for food, medicines, and clothing payable to their replacements for their terms of service.⁷ As the royal letter had expressly ordered, it took into account the effect of the death rate of rowers on De Mari’s settlement.⁸ It was told that “in healthy ships that are treated well, a dozen convicts always die [a year], but if they are experienced in galley work, it’s something less, maybe half...,” and it used the lower figure, because, it explained, “the 36 rowers in question were experienced and already accustomed to galley work”.⁹

As a result of all its efforts, the *Sommaria* concluded that it cost 16.54 ducats to keep a convict fed and clothed for a year and that, with the money due for salaries paid volunteer oarsmen and a deduction of 532 ducats for the death rate, De Mari was due 2,692 ducats—a sum that would have supplied 163 men, more than the full complement of rowers in a galley, with their rations in food and clothing for one year.¹⁰

Not only that, but in consideration of the relative inexperience of the 36 replacement rowers, the *Sommaria* ordered also that “the Magnificent Stefano” be given four men condemned to serve life sentences; they would spend the rest of their days on his galleys.¹¹ In effect, that act of largesse (or “reason and justice”) amounted to an additional grant of about 200 ducats, because, the *Sommaria* pointed out, “...we calculate that the service of a convict condemned [to the oar] is worth [*possa...vendersi*] about fifty ducats.”¹²

Early Modern Economy and Society in Microcosm

The incident related above provides a great sense of immediacy and brings the modern-day reader to grips with some of the conditions of life in the now-distant sixteenth century. It is striking because of that and no doubt also because it reflects assumptions and practices that run counter to present-day customs and sensibilities. Modern-day readers are of course acquainted with social divisions and social hierarchies, with phenomena like slavery and forced labor, though perhaps they have no direct experience with “the astonishing...contradictions,” as Braudel has rightly called them, riddling European society in early modern times.¹³

One such contradiction lay in the vast social distance separating the various actors in the 1570 *Sommaria consulta*—the powerful Stefano De Mari, the *Sommaria* person-

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nel, the wretches who were the object of their attention and who, by necessity or choice, served on the galleys.¹⁴ The distance separating the rich and powerful from the slaves and from most convict rowers was emblematic of the abyss between the highest and the lowest elements of the early modern European social order and of the “bitter despair” that, in Braudel’s words again, lay “at the heart of that society.”¹⁵

Stefano De Mari is a quintessential figure of that social order, as he is of early modern Italian business and finance. He well represented the swashbuckling Genoese businessmen who made enormous fortunes through their association with the Spanish Monarchy. That he could enlist the assistance of men at the highest circles at Court, in Madrid, in his pursuit of redress speaks eloquently of his status and power. But De Mari is an emblematic figure in other ways as well, for he embodies also the spirit of the highly developed, agile, no-holds-barred early modern Italian capitalism, intent on maximizing profit, excluding no merchandise.¹⁶

For one thing, De Mari drove a hard and rational economic bargain. He sought in fact to recoup all the losses on his investment, which he no doubt quantified as carefully as the *Sommaria* itself. True, he had been forced to persist in his claim for years, and he had needed help to cut through the bureaucratic nightmare for which affairs with officialdom in Naples were notorious.¹⁷ But that too was part and parcel of business dealings: investments often required time to mature, and assistance from political authorities or influential business friends to see them through.¹⁸

The *Sommaria*, for its part, also acted in rational and business-like ways, as was its mission and generally also its custom. In its handling of this affair, it comported itself as the scrupulous watchdog of the Royal Treasury, calculating to the penny, and no more, De Mari’s compensation.¹⁹ To quantify that compensation, it took into account every item relating to the “worth” of a galley rower’s life, from the clothes he wore to the official mess and medicines he was allotted, and it paid equal attention to the deductions on that “worth” —the off season time for winter, the toll that conditions at the bench took, on average, on his lifespan.²⁰

The 1570 *Sommaria* memorandum underscores clearly as well the ambiguities and contradictions engendered by the interaction between nascent political consciousness and the bustling capitalism of early modern Europe. The leasing of galleys to private contractors is a case in point. Reason of state would seem to have demanded that the galleys be run by the King’s own men, as the *Sommaria* ran the financial administration of the Kingdom of Naples at large. But the straightened circumstances of the exchequer, the quest for a mythical simplicity, and the zeal of De Mari and people of his ilk for government contracts urged instead the path of privatization. In fact, throughout the sixteenth century, the Spanish Monarchy alternated between the two courses, switching from running the galleys itself (in *administración*) to leasing them to private parties (in *asiento*).²¹ In Naples, as in Castile, the leases were indeed intended to lower the expenses of a hard-pressed exchequer and to bypass the corruption and maladministration of the royal officials themselves.²² Judging from both the Castilian and the Neapolitan experience, however, it is doubtful that they saved the Treasury any money, and they certainly did not eliminate abuses or keep the galleys in proper order.²³

Disciplining and Punishing

The 1570 *consulta*, then, is quite enlightening in both economic and cultural terms, for it highlights early modern business practices as it underscores attitudes and assumptions about human life and its social worth in those bygone times. The rowers themselves, though, figure in it as yet another commodity, to be dealt with the same dispassion that might attach to a bill of lading or to a ship's manifest. That is only to be expected, given the temper of the times, the type of negotiation De Mari was engaged in, and the *Sommaria's* very style and purpose. Fortunately, some surviving data from the largely-vanished criminal records of the city of Naples allow us to approach the convict rowers on Naples's galleys and to draw up a profile of them, albeit a tentative and still largely impersonal one.

As we saw earlier, three different sets of people served as rowers in the Neapolitan galleys, that is, volunteer oarsmen, slaves, and convicts in penal servitude. Of those, at least in the sixteenth century, convicts seem to have made up between half and three-fifths of the rowing personnel; slaves between 15% and 25% and volunteer oarsmen between 23% and 25%.²⁴

Volunteer oarsmen do not figure prominently in the documentary record, since they were men whose wretched poverty drove them to the oars, for the same two ducats a month paid without any change throughout the entire sixteenth century, despite galloping inflation.²⁵ Neither do the slaves working on galleys,²⁶ except for the occasional lapidary reminder to the effect that "the customary thing [with slaves] is to sell or put up for ransom the useless ones that for whatever reason it's not convenient to keep..." and the reports of those sales, auctions or ransom transactions.²⁷

The convict rowers fare somewhat better in the historical record, if only because they appear in the lists of men condemned to the galleys. More than slaves and volunteer rowers, though, they seem to have fired up contemporary imagination, not least because they appeared as a ready-made and appropriate labor pool for work at the oar. In Naples as in Venice and countless other ports all over the Mediterranean, in fact, sentencing criminals to the galleys came officially to be seen, in the words of the Venetian galley captain Cristoforo Da Canal, as

a work so pleasing to God, so advantageous to princes and so beneficial to the prisoners themselves...[that] it can only be of boundless profit.²⁸

Urging the Venetian Senate to equip a squadron with convict rowers in the 1540s, Da Canal had sought in fact to emphasize for the benefit of his audience the redemptive value of galley labor, arguing that it would be "a pious act, and one pleasing to God" that "certain scoundrels should be condemned to this punishment, either for life or for a term of years that they may recognize their faults and return to Christ",²⁹ no less. At the same time, though, Da Canal shrewdly pointed to the social utility of such convict labor. "In this way, too," he went on,

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the cities come to be cleansed of thieves and other evildoers who offend them and corrupt good customs, while such people, in that they bring benefits to us, become good as it were by force.³⁰

Whatever the merits of the argument from redemption which Da Canal employed, there is no question that the “thieves and other evildoers” sent to row on the galleys faced a difficult regimen indeed. For one thing, as the *Sommaria consulta* drawn up on De Mari's behalf shows, the convicts and slaves were fed poorly and, considering their arduous labor, not enough. They were in fact given about 800 grams of bread or biscuit a day, 80 grams each of chick peas and rice and about 100 grams of *fave* beans on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.³¹ About 300 grams of meat was allegedly served on Sunday when the galleys were in the harbor, and “when possible” during navigation; a fourth ration of legumes and rice replaced it on meatless Sundays. Some oil was included in the slaves' and convicts' diets, probably as dressing for the beans and rice, but, still, rough and ready calculations would put the average calorie intake at about 2,100 calories a day.³² Of course, such was the *official* diet; what convicts and slaves actually ate may well have been another matter entirely.³³

Like their colleagues in the Venetian, Spanish and French galleys, the convicts in the Naples fleet faced backbreaking work (literally so, at times), and, often as well, harsh and arbitrary treatment by overseers for any pretext and sentences lengthened beyond their given term, say, for “debts” the rowers had contracted while serving their time.³⁴ Many men became easy prey to the rigors of the bench, the poor diet and the endemic disease and died before serving all their time. Of 61 convicts listed as having died before the expiration of their terms in 1580-81, for example, about 70% did so before finishing sentences ranging from 1 to 5 years; four before one year, eleven before two, fifteen before three.³⁵

Still, for the poorest of the poor in Naples as in Spain and the Mediterranean as a whole, galley service was preferable to starvation, and many a convict did not hesitate to become a (salaried) volunteer oarsman once his sentence was over.³⁶ One document from the mid-1570s lists 120 such newly-appointed volunteers, who had served terms ranging from 1 to 7 years.³⁷ Among them was the hapless Giuseppe Pettrillo, “sent to the bench for the time that should have been served by a convict who ran away because of him.”³⁸ Pietro Pepe, for his part, had been sentenced to the galleys in Naples in 1564 for seven years because of two murders, and he had been scheduled thereafter to be sent to jail in Sicily because of yet another one. Though Pepe had run away while in Cartagena in August, 1569, he had been caught within four days and had served the rest of his sentence (apparently without any extension!). Instead of going to Sicily, though, he had somehow managed “as of February 18, 1571, [to go on] serving as a volunteer oarsman, since he had finished his term...and he has been earning pay from January 1, 1572....”³⁹

Wealthier convicts may not have fared better while at the bench, but they did have options unavailable to their poorer colleagues, like providing a slave to take their place and finish their sentences. After serving two years of their five-year term for falsity, for

example, Giovan Thomase and Francesco Brunello, offered two slaves to replace them at the bench *for life*. The slaves, the Brunellos argued, “would be of more service to His Majesty, since they [themselves] are useless and are not of service....” Their petition was approved.⁴⁰ Similarly, Mico Ampelone, who had shot at one of his “enemies” in the city of Naples and whose death sentence had been commuted to life on the galleys, served only from 1576 to 1580. He then petitioned to be substituted by a slave, because “he [was] broken in the intestines on his right side and wounded in the left leg owing to a sword thrust he received on the galleys...”. Besides, he had missed, and he had killed no one.... His request, too, was granted.⁴¹

**Crimes and Punishments:
The Long-Term View, From Below**

In all this, of course, the convicts are mute: they do not have their own “voice,” and they are literally reduced to objects, what the Romans called “tools that speak.” Still the data from the criminal courts in Naples does cast some light on their plight, and it allows us to answer questions about the crimes that were punished with galley terms and the sentences meted out to convicts from roughly the mid-sixteenth century to roughly the mid-seventeenth.

Table I provides the data for some galley sentences passed in Naples at five points from 1562 to 1669 — 30 in 1562, 120 in 1584, 72 in 1667, 174 in 1668 and 125 in 1669.⁴²

As Table I shows, a basic conservatism marked the adjudication of those sentences. The mean for them did rise from 5.47 years in 1562 to 5.97 years in 1584 and 7.00 years in the 1660s, and both the median and the mode rose between 1562 and 1584 (from

**TABLE I. GALLEY SENTENCES IN NAPLES, 1562-1669,
EXCLUSIVE OF DEATH AND LIFETERM SENTENCES**

<u>Year</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>Mode</u>	<u>Range</u>
1561-62	30	5.47	5.0	3	3--10
1584	120	5.97	6.0	7	1--10
1666-67	72	5.89	5.0	3	3--12
1666-69	408	7.00	5.0	3	2--35

5.00 to 6.00 for the median and from 3 to 7 for the mode). In the 1660s, however, both the median and the mode were identical to those of the 1560s.⁴³ The data can be summarized as in Table II, below.

Table II reinforces the trend pointed out by Table I, that is, the essential stability of sentences, though with the appearance of longer terms than meted out earlier in the series. These are small for 1666-67 (4%), but considerable for 1667-69 (16%).⁴⁴

A related phenomenon that the data illustrates clear is the substantial decrease in both life and death sentences from 1562 to 1667.

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TABLE II. TERMS OF SENTENCES, 1562-1669

<u>Range of Term (Years)</u>	<u>1561-62</u>	<u>1584</u>	<u>1666-67</u>	<u>1667-69</u>
1-5	20 (67%)	58 (48%)	38 (53%)	188 (56%)
6-10	10 (33%)	62 (52%)	31 (43%)	94 (28%)
11-19	-----	-----	3 (4%)	3 (9%)
20 +	-----	-----	-----	24 (7%)
TOTALS	30	120	72	336

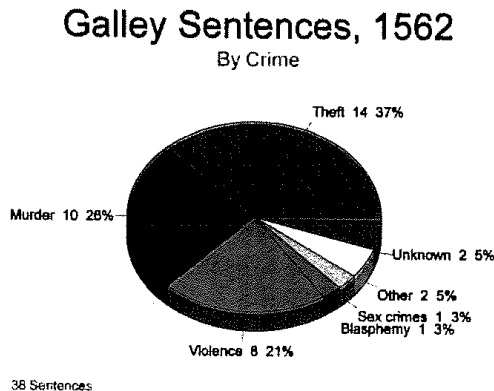
As Table III shows, life sentences accounted for 16% of the totals in 1562, 14% in 1584 and 2% in the 1667.⁴⁵ As far as galley service is concerned, outright death sentences are of course moot, but they too seem greatly to have been reduced. The trend for the latter, in fact, parallels the situation in Venice, where between the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, for some crimes at least, capital punishment was no longer meted out.⁴⁶

TABLE III. LIFE AND DEATH SENTENCES, 1562-1667

	<u>1562</u>	<u>1584</u>	<u>1667</u>
Life Sentences	8 (16%)	22 (14%)	2 (2%)
Death Sentences	11 (22%)	74 (32%)	7 (9%)

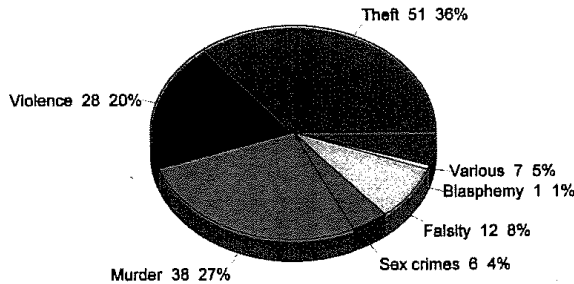
If conservatism seems to have been the hallmark of galley sentences inflicted over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in an analogous manner, and not surprisingly, a substantial stability marked the types of crime punished with galley terms in the same period, with murder and theft accounting for the lion's share of them—from about two-thirds to about nine-tenths. Figure I shows the data in comparable chart form for three of the points in the data series.⁴⁷

FIGURE I. CRIMES PUNISHED BY GALLEY SENTENCES, 1562, 1584, 1667



Galley Sentences, 1584

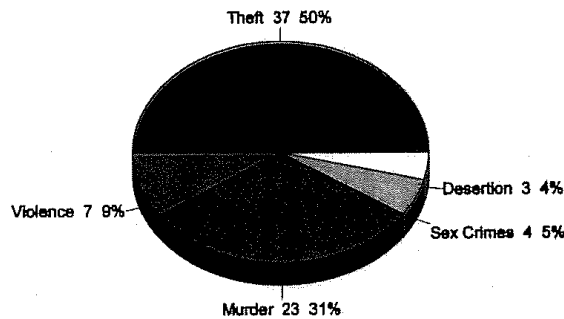
By Crime



143 Sentences

Galley Sentences, 1667

By Crime



74 Sentences

The charts in Figure II show a basic continuity coupled with some impressive changes in the crimes punished from 1562 to 1667. The incidence of murder remained nearly constant, between 23% and 26% in the three years in the data. Sex crimes did as well, ranging between three and five percent of the totals, as did blasphemy, represented in 1562 and 1584 (1% in each case).

Murder sentences covered a whole variety of crimes, from “premeditated,” to “cruel” or “treacherous” murder (a category probably describing the murder of a relative), to the occasional killing of a wife or relative “because of honor.”⁴⁸ The median sentence in the data went from 10 years in 1562 to 7 in both 1584 and 1667, with a range of 3 to 12 in 1562 and of 3 to 10 in 1667; the mode from 10 in 1562 to 7 in both 1584 and 1667.

A great deal of variety and a decreasing harshness, then, marked the trend in murder sentences. In 1584, for example, Prospero Polito was given 4 years, Aniello Valentino 5 and Ferrante Romano 7, all for premeditated murder.⁴⁹ Vito Antonio Criscuolo received 7 years for “treacherous murder,” and Persio Cortese 10 for “uxoricide,” but Giovan Pietro Romano earned a life sentence for “murders with the quality of assassination,”

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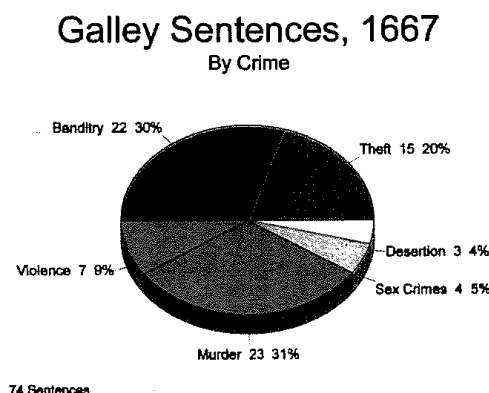
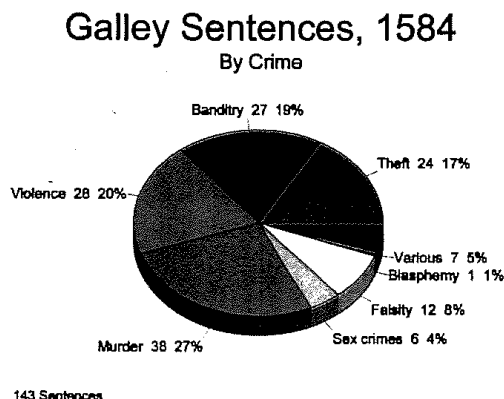
implying perhaps that he was a hired killer.⁵⁰ In 1667, Francesco Magni and Giovanni Sicari were given 5 years each “for having cruelly killed with knives Paulo Carcione,” Camillo Corsaro 12 years for “having cruelly and treacherously killed with a knife Apollonia Corsaro” and Franco Delle Donne 12 years “for having mortally and with malice aforethought wounded with a knife Domenico Langella, who died of it, and for having treacherously killed Santa Di Donna.” Marco Sica, though, received only three years “for having treacherously killed with an arquebus Aniello Sica.”⁵¹

Sex crimes also seem to have remained more or less constant between 1562 and 1667, and the punishments for them, like those for murder, also became less severe. In 1562, Giovan Pietro Barzama, from Messina, the lone sex offender in that year's list, was given the death sentence for “the nefarious vice,” that is, heterosexual or homosexual sodomy or even pedophilia. In 1584, 7 people received death sentences for sex crimes, three again for “the nefarious vice,” one for “theft of a woman” and three others for “adultery committed at night, by force” or gang rape. Five other people, on the other hand, received galley sentences ranging from ten years for “the nefarious vice” to seven for “a violent kiss,” and five years each for adultery, bigamy and the “theft of women.”

In 1667, on the other hand, no death sentences were meted out for sex crimes. Of the four sex offenders that year, Giulio Nicoletta received four years for “having violently kissed Beatrice Verrengia, a virgin of marriageable age.”⁵² In what might have been a marriage attempt gone awry,⁵³ Jacovo Izzo was given 7 years for “having eloped with, and raped, Apollonia Iannocciello, a virgin of marriageable age,” though Izzo's case was no doubt made more serious by assault and robbery in a house and kidnap of a man there.⁵⁴ Gioseppe Gatto from Calabria was sentenced to three years “for violence against the person of the child (*figliuolo*) Aniello Ponticello, so as to know him carnally,” while Gioseppe Di Donato fully earned his eight years “for having violently committed the nefarious vice against the person of Gioseppe Ripa, a seven-year-old child.”⁵⁵

By contrast to the essential stability in the incidence of murder and sex offenses, crimes relating to theft show a marked stability between 1562 and 1584 (37% and 36%, respectively), but they rose to 50% in 1667.⁵⁶ That statistic is one fraught with meaning for both the economic and social history of Southern Italy in the early modern period. If the sentences for “theft” are broken down into their component elements, which the data permits for 1584 and 1667, in fact, it is quite clear that more than half of prosecutions for “theft” in 1580 pertained to crimes of banditry in various forms, and that nearly 80% did in 1667.⁵⁷ Figure II shows that breakdown.

FIGURE II. SENTENCES FOR BANDITRY, 1584 AND 1667



The median sentence for banditry in the data fits that movement as it reflects the rulers' concern about growing rural lawlessness. It in fact went from 4.5 years in 1584, with a range from 2 to 10 years, to 5 years in 1667, with a range from 3 to 12 years.⁵⁸ The increasing length of galley terms for convicted bandits coexists with a decrease in the number of death sentences meted out to them. In 1666-67, in fact, only six people were condemned to death for banditry; from 1666 to 1669, it would seem, only 37 capital sentences were meted, 36 of which were for banditry.⁵⁹ The lone exception was Domenico Imperato, who was also given a death sentence, though not for banditry. He had killed his uncle "because he was preventing him from committing adultery with his aunt," but what may have sealed his fate was the fact that he had apparently committed "several thefts, even involving sacrilege."⁶⁰

As the last example above clearly suggests, a variety of factors affected the severity of sentences, despite the general trend toward decreasing harshness noted above for most categories of offense except banditry. Recidivism or the multiplicity of some crimes was certainly one such factor, as Ascanio Forfora learned when he was sentenced to life in 1584 for "violence, attempted nefarious vice and theft on public road."⁶¹ So were aggravating circumstances, like the sacrilege in Imperato's case or, again in 1584, Aniello

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Valentino's decision to commit murder "at night, with gunshots and theft..." which earned him ten years in the galleys, or Battista Police's murder of none other than his mother, which sent him to the galleys for life.⁶²

To tell the truth, to a modern-day observer, some sentences may seem perplexing or idiosyncratic. A good case in point seems that of Vincenzo Di Laurenza, sentenced in 1584 to row for three years for having stolen "some sheets." True, sheets, like beds, were commodities important enough in early modern Naples that they regularly appeared in notarial documents such as marriage contracts.⁶³ Di Laurenza's sentence, though, was the same as Donato Antonio Fischetto's, accused, tortured and convicted, without confession, of highway robbery; it was the same as that meted out to Giovan Lonardo Marrone, Giovan Battista Scorziello, and Pietro de lo Sapio for allegedly having had dealings with bandits.⁶⁴

Still, those sentences were clearly differentiated from those of others in 1584, like Paulo de Joanne, Scipione de Frecciento, Liberato Di Meo, Giesemundo Auciello, and Berardino and Sebastiano Di Manna, all of whom were given life sentences for highway robbery.⁶⁵ Eighteen men of the 74 appealing a death sentence in 1584 had in turn been condemned for various acts of banditry.⁶⁶

In 1576, Philip II granted Stefano De Mari a lifetime pension for 968 ducats, enough to feed and clothe some 59 convict rowers for a year,

in consideration of his services and of some losses he incurred while serving His Majesty with his galleys, and in compensation for a sum of money His Majesty owed him.⁶⁷

Back to the Past: Economy and Society Once Again

It is perhaps fitting that this paper, which began by relating a curious incident in which the highest accounting and financial magistracy in Naples dissected the "cost" of a convict's life on a galley so as to compensate Stefano De Mari for his loss at Djerba, should close with mention of De Mari's lifetime pension and with references to banditry in the Kingdom of Naples.

This is not by any means crudely to suggest that the one was directly related to the other, but the juxtaposition does illuminate some of the glaring disparities in early modern Europe. The increasing harshness with which Neapolitan criminal officials, like their colleagues all over the Mediterranean, sought to stem the tide of banditry in the later seventeenth century was the visceral response of a society riddled with economic disparities and social dysfunctions and unprepared to deal with the challenges and threats thereby bred. That reaction, in Naples as elsewhere, of course assured that the galleys kept receiving new recruits for their crews of rowers. That was no doubt secondary to the declaration of war on the countryside, but the decrease in death sentences coupled with the increase in galley terms for banditry strongly suggests that social warfare and longer galley terms went hand in hand.

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It is indeed quite clear that banditry was a social and economic phenomenon of the greatest importance for the history of Southern Italy in early modern times, impressive already in the sixteenth century and gaining momentum from the later part of that century into the next.⁶⁸ And it is clear as well that the reaction to banditry, in Italy and elsewhere in Europe, was no less than social warfare, yet another of the onslaughts of cities and empires on the hinterlands and their inhabitants.⁶⁹

In any case, the social phenomenon of banditry is a marker for the terrible economic dislocations that ravaged Southern Italy in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Those dislocations were part and parcel of the tidal shift in economic fortunes which historians have termed “the crisis of the seventeenth century.”⁷⁰ They were part and parcel as well of the subjection of Southern Italy to Spain and the near-permanent warfare, at home and abroad, that Spain’s policies entailed. Economic misery and the social misfortunes which were its handmaidens were conditioning factors for many of the galley sentences here explored. They too were part and parcel of the burden of Empire that weighed on Southern Italy far beyond the end of Spanish domination.

ABBREVIATIONS

AGS:	Archivo General, Simancas
ASDN:	Archivio Storico Diocesano, Naples
ASN:	Archivio di Stato, Naples
RCSC:	<i>Regia Camera della Sommaria</i> . Consulte
ASP:	Archivio di Stato, Palermo
BLL:	British Library, London
BNP:	Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris
f., ff.	folio, folios
leg.	legajo
n. d.	no date
Prot.	Protocollo

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Notes

1. F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), vol. 2, 973-987 (978).

2. On De Mari and other Genoese merchant-bankers in sixteenth-century Naples, cf. A. Calabria, “Finanzieri genovesi nel Regno di Napoli nel Cinquecento,” *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 1989, 578-613.

3. The incident is reconstructed from a memorandum (*consulta*) in ASN. RCSC, vol. 3, ff. 167r-180v, 10/19/1570. The document states that “on each galley there are 144 convicts” (f. 170r) and uses that figure in its calculations. On galleys generally, cf. P. Bamford, *Fighting Ships and Prisons. The Mediterranean Galleys of France in the Age of Louis XIV* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, n.d.); M. Bourdet-Pléville, *Justice in Chains* (London: Hale, 1960); R. Gardiner, *The Age of the Galley. Mediterranean Oared Vessels Since Pre-Classical Times* (London: Brassey’s, 1995); M. Vigjié, *Les galériens du roi, 1661-1715* (Paris: Fayard, 1985); A. Zysberg, *Les galériens. Vies et destins de 60000 forçats sur les galères de France, 1680-1748* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987).

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4. ASN. *RCSC*, vol. 3, f. 167r.

5. *Ibid.*, ff. 167r-v.

6. *Ibid.*, f. 167v.

7. It adjusted as well for slack winter time, officially from October 15 to March 14, when the volunteer oarsmen were let go, only to be rehired at the beginning of the new sailing season. According to the report the *Sommaria* received, though, partly because of warmer winters, De Mari's galleys were in operation all year long or wintered outside Naples for five years, so the rowers had been at their work and had received their salaries and upkeep. Outside Naples De Mari "would not have been able to recruit rowers as easily as here" (*Ibid.*, f. 171v).

8. *Ibid.* f. 168v.

9. *Ibid.*, f. 172v, 173v.

10. Of the 16.54 ducats' annual cost, food took up 10.04 ducats; clothing, 5.4 ducats, and various medicines for sick rowers an additional, or 1.1 ducats. The precise settlement figures were: 3,214.10 2/3; 523.37; 2691.83 ducats.

11. *Ibid.*, f. 169v.

12. *Ibid.*, ff. 179v-180r. Contrast that amount with the proceeds from the sale of eight "useless" slaves, below, n. 27. On the other hand, in 1563 the Court on Spain paid De Mari's countryman Antonio Doria 100 (Spanish or 120.05 Neapolitan) ducats each for 239 slaves "which he gave to His Majesty for the service of His galleys..." (AGS. *Secretarías Provinciales*, leg. 3, f. 71r).

13. Braudel, *The Mediterranean...*, vol. 2, 756.

14. That is, slaves, convicts and volunteer oarsmen.

15. Braudel, vol. 2, 756.

16. This is a reflection of Italian economic development dating back to the Middle Ages. Cf. Braudel vol. 1, *passim*, and *Civilization and Capitalism 15th-18th Centuries*, 3 vols. (New York: Harper & Row, 1981-84).

17. For some examples involving the settling of financial accounts from 1574 to 1596, cf. ASN. *RCSC*, vols. 4, ff. 16v-19v; 5, ff. 65r-70v, 104-106r; 7, f. 192v; 10, ff. 98r-100v, 101r-105v; 11, ff. 67r-v, 76r-78r; 13/I, ff. 5v-8v, 151r-v, 155r-157r, 239r-243r, 358r-363.

18. The Genoese were masters at lobbying important officials and currying their favor, when they did not actually suborn them. Cf. Calabria, "Finanzieri genovesi...", *passim*. No evidence of undue influence appears in the 1570 *consulta*, though the settlement was rather favorable to de Mari and though one of the officials providing the *Sommaria* with information, the *veedor* Francesco Morrillo, was later accused of fraud in matters relating to galley accounting and supply (cf. below, n. 23).

19. Commenting on a claim by another Genoese shipwright, Bendinello Sauli, in 1583, the *Sommaria* allegedly "was very surprised that the Castilian accountants reckon interest...to private galley owners not just day by day and month by month, before service is rendered, but that they turn that very same interest into capital, against all civil and canon law...so that there will be no end to such interest payments...this does very serious...damage, which must receive suitable remedy." (BLL. Ms. Additional 28395, ff. 1r-3r, 2/18/1583).

20. In concluding its memorandum, the *Sommaria* stated that it had taken that into account the difference in the cost of feeding volunteer oarsmen and convicts (the latter received less than the volunteers, and technically De Mari owed the Court some money on that account) "...because there is little difference between one and the other" (ASN. *RCSC*, vol. 3, ff. 180r-v).

21. I.A.A. Thompson, *War and Government in Habsburg Spain 1560-1620* (London: The Athlone Press, 1976), esp. Part III.

22. For an example of the maneuvering required to pay for some galley expenses in Naples, cf. ASN. *RCSC*, vol. 9, ff. 10r-11r, 1/16/1591 and esp. *Ibid.*, vol. 11, ff. 23r-24r, 4/5/1591.

23. Inspection lists for 1579-1582, when the Naples galleys were held in *asiento*, found rowers' clothing missing various parts, like sleeves. (AGS. *Visitas de Italia*, leg. 336/3, # 6, "Lista de li vesti defectivi..."). Another muster showed that the 26 galleys held out in *asiento* in 1587 were missing 207 officers and other personnel, or 16% of the total, and they did not carry their full complement of rowers (164 were missing, 173 were ill and 84 "useless" [BLL. Ms. Additional 28398, ff. 153r, 149r, 151r; 4/15/1587]). In 1572, none other than the Marquis of Santa Cruz, who ran the Neapolitan galleys, sold 230 slaves for 22,770 ducats, but had them entered in the records as having died. In 1578, he put up for ransom about 40 slaves, "persons of quality and high ransom," received about 200-300 ducats per slave, but gave the treasury only 50 or 60. One of his officials,

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Francesco Morillo, followed suit. He had “a large quantity” of slaves registered as volunteer oarsmen and took their pay and rations; he had “more [medicinal] things add[ed] in the registers than were given” and split the proceeds with an apothecary accomplice. One of Morillo’s accountants, in turn, provided no winter clothing to rowers in a galley for three years, falsified the records and pocketed the money (BLL. Ms. Additional 28395, ff. 76r-v, 78r-79r, 80r-v). Morillo was one of the officials who provided the *Sommaria* with technical information about the De Mari claim in 1570 (ASN. RCSC, vol. 3, f. 170v-173r).

24. A “Relatione di quanto costa in corpo di Galera,” (BNP. Manuscrits Italiens 2052, n.d.) states that a galley had 164 oarsmen (82 convicts, 41 slaves, 41 volunteers). That same total, 164, can be reconstructed from a muster list dated 4/15/1587 (BLL. Ms. Additional 28398, f. 149r), which, however, reports different ratios of rowers (in 26 galleys, 2,393 convicts, 592 slaves and 890 volunteers, or 62%, 15% and 23%, respectively).

25. For the occasional mention of volunteer oarsmen, cf. AGS. *Visitas de Italia*, leg. 336/3, passim.

26. Domestic slaves do appear in the Neapolitan sources, such as notarial records for sales, or parish registers, where their offspring’s baptisms were recorded. For examples, cf. ASN. *Giustizia*. Notaio Alfonso Fontana. Prot. 4, scheda 47/202, 3/30/1542: the sale of “a white Trojan [“teucrum,” probably Anatolian] slave by the name of Bibo, alias Joanne Augustino, about 22 years old,” for 50 ducats of silver; Ibid., Prot. 5, scheda 47/203, ff. 51v-52v, 11/7/1542: the sale “of a black slave by the name of Joannicho, about thirty years old...” sold by Ferdinando Maresca to Joannes Baptista Saidia for 40 gold *scudi*. For an example from the baptismal records, cf. ASDN. *Battesimi. San Giovanni Maggiore*, vol. 1 (5/1550-4/1560), f. 30r (baptism of a child of a slave, born out of wedlock, “whose master’s name I don’t know” [“del patrone non ho nome”]).

27. ASP. *Regio Patrimonio. Consulte*, vol. 7, 4/7/1592, f. 5r. A report for the sale of some “useless” galley slaves is in ASN. RCSC, vol. 14, ff. 323r-325r (2/11/1595). Eight “useless” Muslim slaves were auctioned off for 323 ducats; two others had Viceroyal papers for their redemption, including “Monat from Anatolia...called ‘the ant’...who is paralyzed and can’t get up.” Eight others who could not be sold were sent back to the galleys. Later, the *Sommaria* sought to ascertain “whether said eight slaves who had not been sold were still alive or dead.” One of them, Cazun, from Algiers, “old and ill with syphilis [*infranzesato*]” had died; the remaining seven were auctioned in front of the *Vicaria*. But since the only offer was for 30.55 ducats for them all, “...it has not seemed convenient to sell and free said number of slaves for such a low price, and said sale was not effected, and we had them returned to their galleys...” After further discussion, “considering that said seven slaves are lame and crippled, that they mean expense for the Royal Court and that they are a hindrance to the others who are in service... (the *Sommaria* concluded), if [he] likes, Your Excellency [the Viceroy] could order that they be given their freedom.” (f. 325v). This suggestion is not to be misunderstood as compassion. Rather, those men—alternately “old, blind and crazy, and of no use at all” or “crippled in both legs,” “crippled in his feet,” “blind in the right eye, and can’t see much from the left,” “very old and sick with chills,” “consumptive and full of wounds,” “old, broken in his intestines, and useless”—were turned out to die (cf. Ruth Pike, *Penal Servitude in Early Modern Spain* [Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983]), 11.

28. Quoted in D. Chambers and B. Pullan, eds., *Venice A Documentary History. 1450-1630* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 99-101 (101). On Da Canal, cf. A. Tenenti, *Cristoforo da Canal; la marine vénitienne avant Lépante* (Paris: SEVPEN, 1962).

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid., 101. Da Canal’s message was not lost on the Venetian Senate, and though initially rejected, his plan was put into practice starting in 1545 (Ibid., 99, note 9). The rhetoric Da Canal employed was part of a contemporary tradition extolling punishments and scourges. A pamphlet from 1602, for example, waxed lyrical on the “benefits” of hunger, stating: “Hunger lays bare the foresight of princes.; it shows off the charity of the rich [and] stimulates the ingenuity of the poor...; it induces fear, so people don’t offend God...; it maintains humility and prevents arrogance...” (G. B. Segni, *Trattato sopra la carestia e fame, sue cause, accidenti, provvisioni, reggimenti* [Bologna, 1602]; quoted in D. Zanetti, *Problemi alimentari di una economia preindustriale* [Turin: Boringhieri, 1964]), 14-15).

31. For the convicts’ fare (and clothing), cf. the *Sommaria*’s 1570 consulted cited above (ASN. RCSC, vol. 3, ff. 172r-v). A very similar account is in AGS. *Visitas de Italia*, leg. 336/3, “Si certifica...” (11/21/1573), which describes the convicts’ fare in more detail and the volunteers’ and ship officials’ as well. The measures are expressed in Neapolitan ounces (26.73 grams each); they are 30 for bread, 3 for rice and chick peas and 4 for *fava* beans. (Rice and chick peas are not listed in the *Sommaria*’s 1570 memorandum, but they are included in the diet calculations in the text).

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32. Wine was allegedly served only to sick convicts and slaves. Volunteer oarsmen and other galley personnel allegedly ate better, with tuna, sardines, wine, cheese, fatback, oil and vinegar mentioned as part of their diets. Those men supposedly received also an allowance for vegetables. AGS, *Visitas de Italia*, leg 336/3, "Si certifica...". (11/21/1573).

33. For an example of reduced rations, cf. BLL. Ms. Additional 28395, ff. 80r-v.

34. For the Spanish rowers, cf. Pike, ch. 1; for the French, Zysberg, *passim*, esp. chs. 2-5; for the Venetians, Andrea Viario, "La pena della galera. La condizione dei condannati a bordo delle galere veneziane," in Cozzi, *Stato, società...*, 377-430.

35. Four people had died before serving terms of one year; 11 of 2; 15 of 3; 5 of 4; 9 of 5; 2 of 6; 4 of 7; 6 of 10; 5 of lifeterm. AGS. *Visitas de Italia*, leg. 336/4, "Notamentos de muerte," for 1580-81.

36. Pike, 16-17.

37. AGS. *Visitas de Italia*, leg. 336/4, "Notamentos de libertad dada..." from 1575 on. Twenty men had finished terms of one year; 30 of 2; 27 of 3; 9 of 4; 25 of 5; 2 of 6 and 7 of 7.

38. *Ibid.*

39. AGS. *Visitas de Italia*, leg. 336/3, "Nel libro primero de assenti de forzati..."

40. 1/11/1580. AGS. *Visitas de Italia*, leg. 336/3, "Los retrospectos..."

41. AGS. *Visitas de Italia*, leg. 336/3, "El supliante..." 1/1/1580. Other examples are in BLL. Ms. Additional 20924, f. 160r (2/29/1668) and ASN. *RCSC*, vol. 11, ff. 108r-v, 6/(sic) 1592.

42. For the sources used to discuss sentences, cf. AGS. *Visitas de Italia*, leg. 7/21, "Die secundo Maij 1561," ff. 24r-31v (1561-62); *Ibid.*, leg. 24/2, ff. 443r-462v (1584) and BLL. Ms. Additional 20924, ff. 128r-169r (varying records for 1666-1669). The data must be approached with some caution; it represents five points, three of which are stacked together in the last years of an entire century. Three records (for 1562, 1584 and 1667) report the names of the convicts, their crimes and their sentences. The one for 1584, however, lists the convicts being held in the *Vicaria's* jail as they awaited appeals for their sentences; some had been waiting for nearly two years. Those for 1668 and 1669 do not specify the crimes committed.

43. What accounts for the increase in the mean between the 1580s and the 1660s are 24 sentences ranging from 20 to 35 years inflicted between April, 1667 and March, 1669 (N=24; 20 years: 18; 25 years: 1; 30 Years: 3; 35 years: 2). If those sentences were factored out, however, the mean would stand at 6.02 years; the median and the mode would remain unchanged, at 5 and 3 years, respectively (or, N=384; Mean= 6.0208; Median 5.0000; Mode= 3). Those twenty-four sentences must, for now, remain a puzzle. The documents recording them (for April, 1667 to March, 1669), in fact, provide only the name of the condemned and the term inflicted, but not the offense. The sentences passed from April, 1666 to March, 1667 are in the only list from the 1660s series to specify the crime as well as the term and the name of the convicts. At this point, it is not possible to determine whether the 24 harsher sentences represent a blip or a reversal in a long-term trend. No pertinent information about them appears in the *Sommaria's consulte* for the years in question (ASN. *RCSC*, vols. 62-65).

44. Terms ranging from one to five years made up more than two-thirds of sentences in 1561, slightly less than half in 1584, slightly over half in 1666-67 and nearly three-fifths of sentences between 1667-69. Terms ranging from six to ten years accounted for a third of the sentences in 1561, slightly over half in 1584, about two-fifths in 1666-67 and somewhat less than a third between 1667-69.

45. In the mid-sixteenth century, the rhetoric concerning life sentences could be quite harsh. A 1558 bann had threatened butchers who hid meat so as not sell it at the set price with "the punishment of whipping and of life on the galleys," no less. All meat, the bann went on, was to be sold "...in the shops and public places designated for such purpose; [it was] not to be hidden and sold in underhanded and secret ways, as has been said above; which penalty we want to be carried out without any exception whatsoever." (AGS. *Visitas de Italia*, leg. 21, 11/5/1558). For the Venetian evidence, cf. G. Martini, *Il "Vizio Nefando" nella Venezia del Seicento. Aspetti sociali e repressione di giustizia* (Rome: Jouvence, 1988).

46. Cf. Martini, 56-74.

47. The last point in the series is the only seventeenth-century list to specify the crime committed.

48. BLL. Ms. Additional 20924, f. 135.

49. AGS. *Visitas de Italia*, leg. 24/2, ff. 459r, 454v.

50. *Ibid.*, ff. 456r, 456v, 454r.

51. BLL. Ms. Additional 20924, ff. 131r, 133v, 132v.

52. *Ibid.*, f. 131v.

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53. That is, elope with a young woman, have sex with her, presenting the bride's family with a *fait accompli*, so as to force their assent to the nuptials.

54. *Ibid.*, f. 132r.

55. *Ibid.*, ff. 132v and 129r, respectively.

56. Violent behavior appears to have remained stable between 1562 and 1584, around 20-21%, and then to have greatly declined, to 9% in 1667. It may well be that in the last record some of those offenses (bearing forbidden arms, shooting off guns, inflicting wounds) became subsumed into acts of banditry, or at least, into sentences for bandit behavior.

57. In the data for 1562, two incidents of banditry can clearly be determined; three others are possibilities.

58. 1584, N=29; 1667, N=29, mean=6.0, median 5.0, mode 7

59. It is difficult precisely to tabulate death sentences for the 1660s, because of the four documents reporting them two are not dated and one is not usable so. One list tersely states that Francesco Calabria and seven other bandits were hanged "from the month of April, 1667 to the present [unspecified] day." (BLL. Ms. Additional 20924, f. 161r) Another reports that twelve men and one woman suffered the same fate from April, 1668 to May, 1669 (*Ibid.*, f. 163r); another, undated, reports that the heads were cut off from ten alleged bandits sent to Naples (*Ibid.*, ff. 136r-137r). The fourth document (*Ibid.*, f. 135r-v) is most likely an appendix to the list of sentences for 1666-67.

60. *Ibid.*, f. 135v.

61. AGS. *Visitas de Italia*, leg. 24/2, f. 457r.

62. *Ibid.*, ff. 456r, 461r.

63. For Di Laurenza, AGS. *Visitas de Italia*, leg. 24/2, f. 456r. For references to sheets in marriage contracts, cf. ASN. *Giustizia*. Notaio Alfonso Fontana, Prot. 22, ff. 587v (3/7/1580), 607v (4/5/1581).

64. AGS. *Visitas de Italia*, leg. 24/2, f. 462r, 455r. On appeal, De lo Sapio had seen his term reduced from seven to five and then to three years (f. 460r).

65. For De Joanne, *Ibid.*, f. 458r; for Frecciato, f. 454r; for Di Meo and the Di Mannas, f. 453v; for Auciello, f. 451v.

66. *Ibid.*, ff. 444r-450r.

67. AGS. *Secretarías Provinciales*, leg. 3, unfol., ("Su Mag.d ha hecho mrd..."), 10/30/1576. The pension was for 800 Castilian ducats. Its value in Neapolitan currency was calculated in an affidavit dated 11/5/1576, signed in Madrid by the Genoese financiers Niccolò Grimaldi, Baldassar Cattaneo, Ettore Piccamiglio, Agostino Spinola, Antonio Serra and Bernabò Centurione (*Ibid.*, leg. 3, unfol., ["Nos que aqui bajo firmamos..."]).

68. Banditry was nothing new in the later sixteenth century, in Naples or elsewhere (cf. Braudel, *The Mediterranean...*, passim and 734-754. According to a 1550 despatch by a Florentine resident in Naples, Viceroy Toledo (1532-1553) had allegedly had 18,000 bandits hanged between 1532 and 1550 (Cited in F. Nicolini, *Aspetti della vita italo-spagnuola nel Cinque e Seicento* [Naples: Guida, 1934], 262 and n. 1). An anti-banditry police corps was set up in the Kingdom in 1550; by 1600, the special tax levied to pay for it yielded 21,404 ducats (Calabria, *The Cost of Empire*, 14-16, 135). From June, 1590 to the beginning of January, 1592, in the provinces of Abruzzo Citra and Ultra alone, a special military expedition was employed in the repression of banditry, because the Abruzzi were "belabored by the large number of bandits..." and other measures "had not been able to put a remedy to it, and the number of said bandits was nonetheless increasing..." The campaign cost the Abruzzi 86,519.40 ducats, or more than four times the yield from the Kingdom-wide anti-banditry tax in 1600. Of that amount, 55,752 ducats were to be made good by the Court while the remainder, 30,767 ducats, was to be apportioned on the hearth taxes of the two provinces, in addition, of course, to the regular tax for the anti-banditry police. (ASN. *RCSC*, vol.14, ff. 121r-128r, 6/28/1594). Cf. also R. Villari *La rivolta antispannola a Napoli. Le origini (1585-1647)* (Bari: Laterza, 1967), passim.

69. Braudel, *The Mediterranean...*, 734-756 and Eric Hobsbawm, *Bandits* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1969), passim.

70. Cf. T. Aston, ed., *Crisis in Europe 1560-1660* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965); G. Parker and L. M. Smith, eds., *The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).