

but they were swift and suitable for the purposes for which they were required. The war fleet and the mercantile marine, as at Venice, were interchangeable, and ships which in peace time served for commercial purposes were converted into warships simply by increasing the number of armed men, strengthening the bulwarks, and providing them with engines of war.

Shipbuilding from the earliest days of the Republic formed an important industry. The timber was obtained from the forests of Monte Sergio, now, alas, disappeared, and from those of Lagosta and Meleda, of which traces still remain, as well as from Bosnia. The iron came from the interior, and was manufactured at Venice or locally, the canvas from Ancona and the Marche, pitch from Dalmatia, cordage from Ragusa itself. So jealous was the Republic of the shipbuilding industry, that no native builder (*calafato* or *marangone*) might lend his services to foreigners, under which heading the Slaves were included. In later times an exception was made in favour of the Turks. The harbour of Ragusa, which is too small for large modern steamers—these always land passengers and goods at Gravosa—in the Middle Ages was ever busy with arriving and departing ships, and the arsenal hands were always engaged in building or repairing craft of all kinds. Other shipping yards existed at the Isola di Mezzo, at Malfi, on Giuppana, and later at Stagno, Slano, and Ragusavecchia. The Ragusan vessels were famed throughout Illyria, and the Republic was frequently requested to lend some to this or that Slave potentate, to the Hungarians, and sometimes to the Venetians themselves.