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AnIsl 48.2 (), p. 249-268

Daniel Crecelius

Recruiting Egyptian Oarsmen for Ottoman Ships in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries

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DANIEL CRECELIUS*

Recruiting Egyptian Oarsmen for Ottoman Ships in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries

♦ **ABSTRACT**

This study is based on six documents from the *šarī'a* court of Rašīd from the years 1598 and 1632 relating to the recruitment of oarsmen for service on Ottoman galleys. The documents confirm that the recruitment process was well organized. The authorities recruited free men, not slaves, who came from all regions of Egypt and abroad, employed them only for seasonal campaigns, and paid them a standard wage. This data conforms closely with information published by İdris Bostan on the recruitment of oarsmen by the Ottoman central government for its naval campaigns of 1660-1661 in the Mediterranean Sea.

Keywords: Mediterranean – Rašīd – Ottoman Navy – Galleys – Oarsmen – Recruitment

♦ **RÉSUMÉ**

Cet article s'appuie sur six documents des registres du tribunal *šarī'i* de Rosette pour 1598 et 1632, traitant du recrutement de rameurs pour les galères ottomanes. Ils confirment que la procédure de recrutement était bien organisée. Les autorités recrutaient des hommes libres et non des esclaves, qui venaient de toutes les régions d'Égypte et de l'extérieur, les employaient seulement pour des campagnes saisonnières, et leur versaient un salaire fixe. Ces informations recourent celles publiées par İdris Bostan sur le recrutement de rameurs par le pouvoir central pour ses campagnes navales de 1660-1661 en Méditerranée.

Mots-clés : Méditerranée – Rosette – flotte ottomane – galères – rameurs – recrutement

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AMONG the provisions made by the Ottoman sultans for the administration and defense of Egypt following the conquest of the former Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt and Syria in 1516-17 was the creation of three small naval squadrons in the ports of Alexandria, Damiette, and Suez. Each was commanded by an Ottoman captain holding the rank of *sancakbeyi* who not only commanded the squadron, but also administered the port that was the home base for his small naval force. The expenses for the squadrons were supported by tax farms that were assigned to the *sancakbeyis* who held the posts of captains.¹ In addition, some expenses for the squadrons were included in the annual budget for this important province.²

None of the three ports provided a secure harbor or adequate ship-building facilities for the creation and maintenance of large fleets, so the squadrons remained small and were used mainly for coastal defense and the protection of the sizable maritime trade between Egypt and ports of the Levant coast and the Ottoman Empire's central lands. Although the Egyptian squadrons were not under the direct command of the Grand Admiral in Istanbul, when needed, vessels of these squadrons could be called for service with the imperial fleet during summer campaigns, just as commercial vessels might be armed and pressed into service by the government.³ Egypt became a breadbasket for the empire as well as the province through which the important trade of Asia passed into the Ottoman world. Soon the sea route between Egypt and the central Ottoman ports became the most important maritime corridor in the empire, transporting the valuable agricultural products of Egypt, such as rice, sugar, spices, including coffee, from the east, materials for the military, and abundant taxes. Once the strategically located island of Rhodes had been wrested from the Knights of St. John in 1522, the squadrons harbored at Rhodes and Alexandria were, for the most part, sufficient to screen the Arab provinces of the Eastern Mediterranean from Christian attacks and to protect the sea route between Egypt and the central lands of the empire.⁴

Among the most important activities in the Egyptian ports was shipbuilding, for the empire required a very large number of both warships and commercial vessels. Although lack of forests in Egypt required the import of wood to build the ships of the squadrons, the skills to build these ships and the manpower to power them were available locally.⁵ But each of Egypt's ports

1. See Shaw, *The Financial and Administrative Organization*, p. 26. All three squadrons were originally under the command of a single *sancakbeyi*, but after 1560, because of the importance of the Red Sea and Indian trade to Egypt and the Ottomans, the squadron at Suez was assigned to a separate *sancakbeyi*. See Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650*, p. 301.

2. The only complete budget for Ottoman Egypt yet found has been edited and published by Shaw, *The Budget of Ottoman Egypt*.

3. Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650*, p. 302.

4. Imber, "The Navy of Suleyman the Magnificent," pp. 256-257, cites a report by Andrea Dandolo in 1562 noting that the Ottomans kept thirty or forty ships in the water as the guard squadrons for Rhodes and Alexandria.

5. The lack of sufficient supplies of wood was a major concern in Egypt. Throughout the Ottoman centuries Egypt imported large quantities of this item, mainly from Turkish forests in Anatolia and the Balkans. Mikhail, *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt*, p. 99, remarks that wood in Egypt was so expensive that, although some ships were constructed by rich merchants, "shipbuilding was most often undertaken by the Ottoman administration of Egypt itself." He notes, for instance, that in 1719 the government allocated 91,500 *paras*

had noticeable deficiencies besides a lack of timber. Alexandria's harbor, the most important on Egypt's Mediterranean coast, could not provide a safe anchorage from the fierce gales and high waves that in winter season lashed the city's shore. Rašīd (Rosette), which for administrative purposes was attached to the larger port of Alexandria, and Dumyāt (Damiette) could not accommodate large ships because of the bars that existed at the point where the two branches of the Nile on which these inland ports are situated entered the Mediterranean Sea. Suez, without water or wood, essentially shut down during the season when the winds blew from the north, but it played an important role in the annual pilgrimage and in Egypt's commerce with the trading ports of the Red Sea and Asia.⁶ It was also to play an important role in the empire's expansion towards the south in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as the Ottomans established themselves in Yemen and Abyssinia and attempted to defend the region against the predations of the Portuguese.⁷ The dramatic expansion of the trade in coffee, which Egypt imported in vast quantities from the Red Sea region for both local consumption and transshipment to numerous Ottoman ports, also gave impetus to Ottoman naval activity in the Red Sea in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁸

The sixteenth century was a period of intense struggle for naval supremacy in the Mediterranean Sea as Ottoman, Hapsburg, and Venetian fleets attacked and counter-attacked across Mediterranean waters.⁹ While the struggle was intense in the middle and western Mediterranean region, the Ottomans were able to provide relative protection from the fleets of hostile naval powers for their eastern Mediterranean provinces, but they could not always defend against the predations of opportunistic pirate ships from lesser Christian powers.

for the construction of 40 ships in the port of Rašīd and in that same year the sultan appointed an official to oversee the construction of another 12 ships in Rašīd for 10,500 *paras*. See p. 99, note 59. The *para*, known also as the *akçe* and as the *nişf fiḍḍa* in Egypt, was a small silver coin used as the basic coin of account in the Ottoman Empire. Also in 1719 a *firman* affirms that a group of Turkish merchants/captains had constructed a fleet of 30 galleons to carry trade between Egypt and the central Ottoman Empire. See Winter, "A Statute for the Mercantile Fleet," pp. 118-122. It should be noted that ships built in Rašīd and Damiette were by definition smaller ones because of the bars that cut the two ports from the sea. The unavailability of wood at Suez meant that ships built for service in the Red Sea were sometimes constructed on the Nile River, disassembled, and carried by camels to Suez where they were reassembled.

6. Mikhail, *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt*, p. 100, notes that in 1725 the Ottomans had to send wood to Suez from Istanbul to build three galleons meant to transport grains to the Ḥaramayn.

7. On the Ottoman push into the Red Sea and Indian Ocean to combat the Portuguese, see, among others, Aḥmad, *al-Baḥr al-aḥmar*; Bacqué-Grammont, Kroell, *Mamlouks, Ottomans et Portugais*. Several squadrons, ranging in size from 10 to 20 vessels sailed from Suez to extend Ottoman hegemony over the Arabian and African coasts and to combat the Portuguese. In 1565 a squadron left Suez for Aden to protect merchants coming from India against the Portuguese. Although their small vessels could not stand up to either the Portuguese *carracks* or the open Indian Ocean, they did succeed in barring the Portuguese from the Red Sea. See Imber, "The Navy of Suleyman the Magnificent," pp. 215, 224.

8. On Egypt's connections with the Asian and Red Sea trade, particularly with the new trade in coffee, see, for instance, Tuchscherer (ed.), *Le commerce du café*, and Hanna, *Making Big Money*.

9. On the naval conflict in the Mediterranean Sea in the sixteenth century, see, among others, Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier*; Hess, "The Ottoman Conquest of Egypt (1517)"; Bacqué-Grammont, Veinstein (eds.), *Les Ottomans en Méditerranée*; and Imber, "The Navy of Suleyman the Magnificent," pp. 224-225, 269-272.

Egypt was therefore not drawn so deeply into the struggle for Mediterranean supremacy and its small squadrons were used mainly for defense of its coastal areas and for the protection of merchant shipping in eastern Mediterranean waters.¹⁰ The great Ottoman fleets that challenged the Spanish and Venetian fleets were built, and manned, in the chief Ottoman arsenals near the imperial capital of Istanbul.¹¹ To date, we know little about shipbuilding in Egypt before the revival of the Egyptian shipbuilding industry by Muḥammad ‘Alī Pasha in the early nineteenth century.

The ships of the sixteenth century were oared vessels that might have one or more small lateen sails, but above all relied upon manpower for speed and limited maneuverability. Although fleets of the sixteenth century included a number of different sized ships serving various purposes, such as carrying supplies of food and water, ammunition, or even horses, it was the oared galley that was the standard warship of all Mediterranean navies at the time. This narrow vessel was usually five to eight times as long as it was broad, having twenty-four to twenty-six banks of oars on either side, with usually three oarsmen (*kürekciye*) to each bank. Until the middle of the sixteenth century each oarsman had pulled a single oar, but by the second half of that century the oarsmen on a single bench pulled a single oar.¹²

It has been suggested that Venetian galleys were faster under oars than Ottoman ones, but that Muslim galleys (including the North African corsairs) were faster than the heavier ships of Spain.¹³ A major change in naval warfare occurred in the fifteenth century when artillery was added. As Venetian guns were smaller and lighter than those carried by the ships of Spain, Venetian galleys remained lighter and easier to row.¹⁴ The Ottomans used their galleys mainly to transport troops and guns to be employed in siege warfare. Nevertheless, the differences among the Spanish, Venetian and Ottoman galleys used in sixteenth century Mediterranean naval warfare remained slight.¹⁵ At the time, galleys fired only from the prow, but after the destruction of much of their fleet at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571, the Ottomans began to build a larger ship, the *galleass*, which was a converted merchant ship riding higher in the water and capable of carrying more guns and men. These heavier ships carried as many as 24 cannons

10. On Ottoman maritime commerce, see Panzac, *La Marine ottomane*, and Panzac, *La caravane maritime*. Towards the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century, Egyptian-Ottoman commercial shipping was exposed to predation by pirate ships from Malta, Tuscany and Sicily. As late as the eighteenth century merchant shipping in the eastern Mediterranean region was still threatened by Christian pirates. The abovementioned *firman* of 1719 laid out a set of regulations for the merchant ships that sailed from Egyptian ports. Among the regulations was that these ships should never leave port in squadrons of less than three ships and that, whenever possible, they should extend protection to other merchant ships of the empire sailing those eastern waters. See Winter, “A Statute for the Mercantile Fleet,” pp. 119-122.

11. Imber, “The Navy of Suleyman the Magnificent,” p. 215ff, discusses the shipyards and dockyards of the empire spread around the coasts of the central empire, but is silent on Egyptian sites.

12. Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650*, pp. 288-289. Imber has a useful chapter on the composition of Ottoman fleets in this study. See Chapter Eight, p. 287-317.

13. Guilmartin, *Gunpowder*, pp. 204-205.

14. Guilmartin, *Gunpowder*, p. 211.

15. Guilmartin, *Gunpowder*, pp. 217-219.

and could fire broadsides.¹⁶ Despite the addition of artillery to the ships, the Ottoman galley remained basically unchanged from the fifteenth century until it was replaced by the sailing vessel in the last third of the seventeenth century.

In combat, the galley transported soldiers as well as the sailors required to maneuver the vessel and direct the oarsmen. In addition, therefore, to the approximately 150-200 oarsmen propelling the galley and a crew of 25-30 sailors, a contingent of around 60 fighting men was on board the ship.¹⁷ After the Battle of Lepanto, however, the number of fighting men was increased to 150 on imperial ships. The *galleass*, which appeared after 1571 could carry a crew of as many as 600 men, but appeared among the squadrons in only small numbers.¹⁸

In 1660, in the aftermath of stunning naval reversals, and on the eve of the transition to the age of sail, the Ottomans had only 56 galleys available for service at sea. Fortunately, we have a full accounting of the manner in which the oarsmen were mustered for service for the summer campaign of that year, for the empire had long-established systems for assembling all the men necessary to build and man its warships that put to sea.¹⁹

For several good reasons the Ottomans preferred freemen to slaves to propel their galleys.²⁰ The freeman was usually more committed to the battle, less likely to slack-off or escape when the opportunity arose, was cheaper than a slave to maintain since he was released from duty when the campaign was over, and was often expected to join the battle on land by serving duty as a soldier. It is reported for the sixteenth century that Azabs, members of one of the two most important military corps of the Ottoman Empire, were frequently taken on as oarsmen because they could leave their oars and join the battle when troops were landed to attack an enemy's fortified position, but we find a large number of Janissaries, not Azabs, mentioned in the 1660 statistics.²¹ In time of necessity, when the muster didn't produce the required number of oarsmen, volunteers were recruited for service; convicts and/or foreign slaves might also be conscripted.

16. Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650*, pp. 290-291. The Ottomans only introduced galleons, sailing ships, after 1650.

17. Guilmartin, *Gunpowder*, p. 112.

18. Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650*, p. 312, citing Katib Çelebi for the year 1656.

19. See Bostan, *Osmanlı Bahriye Teşkilâtı*. For a description of this muster I have relied on Panzac, "The Manning of the Ottoman Navy," which is based on Bostan's work.

20. Yet Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650*, p. 272, cites a *firman* from Istanbul in 1564 ordering that oarsmen for the ships of a squadron leaving Suez for the south be raised from prisoners not meriting capital punishment. In his "Reconstruction", p. 99, Imber notes the unusually high number of criminals and conscripts to fill the quota of approximately 20,000 oarsmen required by the fleet that year.

21. Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower*, p. 217, n. 25 and Guilmartin, *Gunpowder*, p. 112, mention Azabs specifically, while Panzac, "The Manning of the Ottoman Navy," p. 44, cites the large number of Janissaries, found by Bostan, who were recruited for the campaign of 1660. Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650*, p. 303, verifies that in 1572 the admiral of the rebuilt Ottoman fleet was ordered specifically to recruit 342 Azabs for service with the fleet. But in "Reconstruction", Imber refers to the 3,000 Janissaries who were drafted for service that year. By 1660 Janissaries had mostly replaced Azabs on the ships.

A total of 12,391 oarsmen, or an average of 221 oarsmen per galley, were assembled for the 1660 naval campaign. Of these, only 835 (6.73%) were convicts, while 93.27% were freemen.²² Among the latter would be Christians of the empire who volunteered for service and received the usual salary.²³ Of the total oarsmen for 1660, 35.8% (4441 oarsmen), mainly Greek Christians of the empire, were volunteers. A range of taxes, most in the form of a levy on designated households or communities, supported the recruitment and pay for these men.

The main cost for the oarsmen for the 1660 campaign was borne by the Anatolian provinces of the empire. Those provinces nearest the sea were obliged to furnish a required number of oarsmen. Usually, one oarsman was levied from one household while a designated number of other households was required to pay for his salary and expenses.²⁴ For this campaign the inner Anatolian provinces, those furthest from the shore, were assessed 28 million *akçes*. Other provinces and districts were required to contribute 5,068 oarsmen.²⁵

The *ahl al-dimma*, the non-Muslim inhabitants of the empire, and the guilds of Istanbul were assessed the *bedel*, a tax paid in lieu of service. For the campaign of 1660 the Jews were charged a sum to support 150 oarsmen. The Greeks were assessed for 125 oarsmen, and the Armenians for 100 oarsmen; the guilds of Istanbul had to pay for the support of 869 oarsmen. Altogether, Istanbul supported 1244 oarsmen, or 10% of the total for the campaign of 1660.²⁶

Of the oarsmen recruited for this campaign, 71.4% came from the coastal provinces of western Anatolia, the usual region from which oarsmen were mustered at that time.²⁷ In addition to the oarsmen, each galley included 4-5 gunners to fire the 3-5 guns a galley carried. A total of 1,975 Janissaries was also assigned, roughly 35 Janissaries per galley, for this campaign, and 500 armored soldiers, or 8-10 per galley. An Ottoman galley thus carried about 300 men in the mid-seventeenth century (220 oarsmen, 30 sailors and 50 soldiers).²⁸

22. Christian fleets, on the other hand, employed almost exclusively convicts and slaves as oarsmen. One case of an apparent Azab and his brother in Egypt being convicted for crimes in 1592 and sentenced to service as oarsmen on imperial galleys can be found in Crecelius, Badr, "The Usurpation of *Waqf* Revenues," pp. 265-268. Imber's studies cite numerous examples across the years of both criminals and slaves being drafted for service in the galleys.

23. Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650*, p. 306, remarks that in the sixteenth century Muslim oarsmen received payment for their service of 106 *akçe* per month, while non-Muslims received 80 *akçes*.

24. Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower*, p. 216, n. 14, cites the usual statistic of four households paying for the support of one oarsmen levied from a fifth household, but Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650*, p. 306, observes that this ratio varied according to the size of the fleet and the size of the area where the government made the levy. He notes that in 1551, before the Tripoli campaign, the Treasury levied one oarsman per 23 households. In 1570-1571, for the invasion of Cyprus, the rate was one in fifteen households and, as the Ottomans tried to rebuild their fleet after their defeat at Lepanto, it was one in seven or eight households.

25. Panzac, "The Manning of the Ottoman Navy," pp. 43-44.

26. Panzac, "The Manning of the Ottoman Navy," p. 44.

27. Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650*, p. 306, mentions that oarsmen were levied from a much wider range of districts, including Albania, for the campaign against Chios in 1566.

28. Panzac, "The Manning of the Ottoman Navy," pp. 43-44. Brummett, *Ottoman Seapower*, p. 226, n. 103, citing Pepper, Adams, *Firearms and Fortifications*, p. 30, assumes the average galley carried a complement of 300 men, although she notes that Pepper and Adams use a figure of only 150 oarsmen per ship.

It is in this context that we review five documents from the *šarī'a* court of Rašīd from the year 1598 and another from the year 1632.²⁹ While showing many similarities to the muster of oarsmen for imperial ships in the empire's central regions, the methods for the muster of oarsmen for imperial ships in Egypt also differed in some significant ways. For instance, the levy of rowers on villages, so vital in the Aegean region, was unknown in Egypt. The first document of the group of five certifies that eight *muqaddimūn* (sing. *muqaddim*)³⁰ received from the sheikh of the guild (*ṭā'ifa*) of *muqaddimūn*, Sheikh Muḥammad, the son of the deceased al-Nūrī 'Alī, the sum of 1269 *sultānī* gold dinars³¹ to recruit 141 able oarsmen to serve on a small galley (*ağriba*)³² of the empire that would depart from the port of Alexandria for the summer season.³³ The table below provides the names of the eight *muqaddimūn* and summarizes the number of oarsmen each was to bring forward within one month and the amount of payment each received.³⁴ Each recruit was to receive nine dinars for his summer service, but the documents recording the names of the oarsmen indicate that many received an advance on this sum, for oarsmen were often recruited one or two months prior to their actual departure. The total of 141 oarsmen to be recruited would appear to be close to a full complement of oarsmen on an Egyptian galley.

Name of <i>Muqaddim</i>	Number of Oarsmen	Amount of Dinars Received
Ğawdat ibn Šarīf al-Dīn ibn Mūsā	46	414
Mūsā ibn Maṣṣūr al-Dandarāwī	16	144
Ḥusayn, known as Falayfīl, ibn Ḥusayn	20	180
Nūr al-Dīn ibn Maṣṣūr and 'Abd al-Ğawwād ibn 'Umar	16	144
Aḥmad Šihāb al-Dīn, known as al-Idfāwī	13	117
Salīm ibn 'Ubayd from 'Izbat al-Rūs	13	117
Aḥmad ibn 'Āmir, known as al-Tābīf	17	153
Totals	141	1269

Table 1.

29. The data from these documents was collected some years ago with the help of Professor Ḥamza 'Abd al-'Azīz Badr of Suhāğ University, Egypt.

30. The *muqaddimūn*, who were organized into their own guild, played an important role in Egyptian ports. They might have skills of their own, such as carpenters or caulkers, used in shipbuilding, but in their capacity as *muqaddimūn* were responsible for recruiting the men of various skills required to build, load, provision, or, as in this case, row the government's ships.

31. A useful discussion of the monies, both local and foreign, in circulation in Ottoman Egypt is provided by Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants* I, pp. 17-52.

32. Darwīš al-Naḥīlī describes the *ağriba* (*akrib*; pl. *akārib*) extremely briefly as a small, but fast, ship of war. See al-Naḥīlī, *al-Sufun al-islamiyya*, p. 7.

33. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Sulaymān cites a case from the court of Damietta from the year 1586 in which 80 oarsmen were dispatched from Damietta to Rašīd; their pay was only 100 *nişfiddas* each. He remarks that the courts of Damietta, Rašīd, Alexandria and Būlāq contain numerous cases relating to the recruitment of sailors/oarsmen in which their names and salaries are recorded. See *al-Milāḥa al-nīliyya*, pp. 19-35.

34. See Dār al-Waṭā'iq al-Qawmiyya (Cairo), Maḥkamat Rašīd, *Siğill* 24 (1006/1598), pp. 205-206, Item 685.

The first thing one notices in this group of eight *muqaddimūn* is that at least two seem to come from Upper Egypt (al-Dandarāwī and al-Idfāwī). As we shall see below, 15% of the total of oarsmen recruited by the *muqaddimūn* whose place of origin can be determined are also of Upper Egyptian (Ṣaʿīdī) origin.

The judge (*qāḍī*) of the port and the *muqaddimūn* played key roles in finding the required number of oarsmen and delivering them for service on the ship(s). Once the captain of the port issued his request for men to serve as oarsmen for his ship(s), he delivered to the judge the sum of money, whether from his own tax farm or from the government's budget, sufficient for the salaries and support of the oarsmen for their summer service. The judge in turn gave this sum to the sheikh of the *ṭāʾifa* (guild) of *muqaddimūn*. The *muqaddimūn* were apportioned a specific sum of money by the guild sheikh dependent on the number of oarsmen they were assigned to recruit for service. The *muqaddimūn* located the oarsmen, agreed to pay them in advance, and delivered to the judge a list of the names of each oarsman and the amount of money the oarsman had been prepaid for his service. The judge kept a faithful account of all these transactions, giving a copy to the captain of the port and inserting into the register of his court a copy of all these dealings.

As Table Two shows, the *muqaddim* Ḥusayn, known as Falayfil, ibn Ḥusayn produced sixteen oarsmen whose pay was listed.³⁵ He apparently had four more oarsmen (see Table One) to recruit since he had been given money for 20 oarsmen.

Name of Oarsman	Pay in dinars	Advance in dinars (d) & <i>niṣf fiḍḍa</i> (n)
ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Ḥāḡḡ Aḥmad al-Imbābī	9	5 d; 15 n
ʿAlī ibn Ḥiḡāzī ibn Ḥalīl al-Miṣrī, from Ḥārat Fawwāla	9	2 d
Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥāḡḡ Aḥmad, known as al-Ḥalabī	9	2 d, 23 n
ʿAlī ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Hindī	9	1 d
Manṣūr ibn Ḥusam al-Dīn al-Abū Tiḡī	9	1 d
Muḥammad ibn Dirqub (?) ibn Maḡīd al-Bilbaysī	9	2 d; 12 n
Salīm ibn Ṣabbūr al-Ġirḡāwī, known as Ibn al-Ṣaʿīd	9	
ʿAbdallāh ibn Yūnis al-Ḥarṣī, known as Ibn Ḥalīfa	9	1 d
Salāma ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥāḡḡ Muḥammad	9	
Sulṭān ibn Salāma ibn Aḥmad ibn (?) from Ḥārat al-Fawwālin	9	6 d
Qāʾid ibn al-Ḥāḡḡ Ḥasan ibn Ḥiḡāzī al-Qamrinī	9	5 d
ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Quraynī, known as al-Ṭawīl	9	
Muḥammad ibn Mubārak al-Ṣabbāsī, known as Ibn al-Ġaʿīd	9	7 d
al-Ḥāḡḡ ʿAbd al-ʿĀṭī ibn Ḥasan al-Baṣṭī from Ḥārat al-Muqass	9	5 d; 10 n
His retainer (<i>tābiʿ</i>) Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Bāqī ibn (?)	9	
Ḥamīs ibn Ġumʿa ibn Sirāḡ al-Dīn, known as Ibn ʿUmar	9	
Totals	144	

Table 2.

35. Dār al-Waṭāʾiq al-Qawmiyya (Cairo), Maḥkamat Raṣīd, *Siḡill* 24, p. 206, Item 686.

The *muqaddim* Aḥmad ibn Šihāb al-Dīn al-Faraskūrī, known as al-Idfāwī, produced only five of the 13 oarsmen whom he had been given money to recruit (see Table One). He noted the commitment of 45 dinars and cited the advances to his five recruits as follows.³⁶

Name of Oarsman	Pay in dinars	Advance in dinars (d) & <i>niṣf fiḍḍa</i> (n)
Muḥammad ibn Zunful al-ʿAḡīrī	9	100 n
Salīm ibn Sulaymān	9	3 d; 5 n
Salīm ibn Ḥamdān ibn ʿAbdallāh from al-Manufiyya	9	4 ½ d
Ḥāmid ibn Aḥmad ibn Ibrahīm al-Rašīdī, known as Ibn Murtaḍā	9	
Ḥiḍr ibn Sulaymān ibn Ziyāda	9	6 d
Totals	45	

Table 3.

Another lengthy list of 59 oarsmen is recorded along with the other documents, but the *muqaddim* who produced them is not one of the eight *muqaddimūn* listed in Table One. He is, rather, the *muqaddim* Sayyid al-Nāšīrī Muḥammad, the son of the deceased al-Nūrī Muḥammad, the sheikh of the *ṭāʾifa* of *muqaddimūn al-baḥḥāra* in Lower Egypt, and is cited as one of the caulkers (*ḥalfiḡiyya*) in the arsenal of Alexandria. He committed for the 59 recruits the sum of 520 ½ dinars for their service on this imperial mission. Their names and payments are listed in Table 4.³⁷

Name of Oarsman	Pay in dinars	Advance in dinars (d) & <i>niṣf fiḍḍa</i> (n)
Ibrahīm ibn Ibrahīm, known as Kinnīš and Ibn Rifīʿa	9	2 d
ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Basīṭī, from Ḥaṭṭ Ḥurunfiš in Cairo	9	
Fāris Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Miṣrī, from Bāb al-Šaʿriyya	9	1.5 d
Badīr ibn Diyāb ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Imbābī	9	3 d
Salīm ibn Ḥalaf ibn ʿĀmīra al-Laqqānī and his retainer Aḥmad ibn Abī ʿAṭiyya ibn Muḥammad from Safiḥa	9	2 d
ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ṭībī	9	
ʿAbd al-Karīm ibn Salīm ibn al-Ḥāḡḡ Yaḥyā al-Bahdānī, known as Abū Ṭabīḥ	9	2.5 d
Muḥammad Kirisla ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Abīḡī	9	2 d
Manšūr ibn Ḥāḡḡ Ramaḍān ibn al-Ḥāḡḡ Aḥmad al-Nahrāwī	9	6 d
Marʿī ibn Ismaʿīl ibn Yūnis from al-Ġumayra	9	4 d

Table 4.

36. Dār al-Waṭāʾiq al-Qawmiyya (Cairo), Maḥkamat Rašīd, *Siḡill* 24, p. 206, Item 687.

37. Dār al-Waṭāʾiq al-Qawmiyya (Cairo), Maḥkamat Rašīd, *Siḡill* 24, pp. 206-208, Item 690.

Name of Oarsman	Pay in dinars	Advance in dinars (d) & <i>nişf fidḍa</i> (n)
Aḥmad ibn ‘Abdallāh from Qūṣ	9	2 d
Muḥammad Falayfil ibn Šukr ibn ‘Alī al-Burullusī	9	
Mu‘arrif ibn Šayḥ Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān from al-Ra‘isiyya in the Ša‘id	9	2.5 d
Salīm ibn al-Ḥāḡḡ Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Samanūdi	9	2 d
Šihāta ibn al-Ḥāḡḡ Ramaḍān al-Nahrāwī, the brother of Maṣṣūr al-Siyānī (see six lines above)	9	1.5 d
Šihāb al-Dīn ibn Ḥayr al-Dīn ibn Ḥalil ibn ‘Abdallāh from Rawḍa in Cairo	9	2 d
Al-Ḥāḡḡ Aḥmad ibn Sulaymān ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Manzalī and his retainer Qāsim ibn Šihāta ibn Maṣṣūr al-Ḥamawī	9	1 d
‘Abd al-Nabī ibn ‘Īsā ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Maḥallāwī, known as Qarāquṣ	9	3 d
Yūnis ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Fuwwī al-Ḥabbāb	9	2 d
Amīr Ḥāḡḡ ibn Mar‘ī ibn ‘Abdallāh and his brother Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad al-Ṭabbāḥ	9	2.5 d
Muḥammad ibn Abi ‘Āmir ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Šabširi al-Ṭaḥḥān	9	1 d
Muḥammad ibn Abi ‘Āmir ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Šabširi al-Ṭaḥḥān	9	4 d
Al-Ḥāḡḡ Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Šayḥ Ibrahīm al-Daḥmīsī	9	1 d
Ibrahīm al-Ḥūli Ġālī al-Ḥinnāwī ibn Abi Šālih from Šaṭṭūra in the Ša‘id and his colleague (<i>rafiq</i>)	9	1.5 d
‘Abdallāh ibn al-Ḥāḡḡ Maṣṣūr ibn ‘Abdallāh, known as Ibn Ġābirī al-Šaṭṭī	9	1.5 d
Abū al-Ḥayr ibn al-Ḥāḡḡ ‘Alī ibn Abū al-Ḥayr al-Damsīsī	9	1 d
his father, al-Ḥāḡḡ ibn ‘Alī al-Damsīsī	9	3.5 d
Šams al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd al-Ġalil ibn ‘Alam al-Dīn al-Naḡḡārī	9	5 d
Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Mazārī	9	8 d
Yūsuf al-Muhtadi ibn ‘Abdallāh ibn Aslan	9	1 d
Yūnis ibn Qāsim ibn ‘Āfiya, known as Ibn Wišš	9	2 d
‘Alī ibn ‘Assul ibn ‘Abdallāh ibn Kāfūr al-Maš‘aliyya	9	
Ḥalifa Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥulakī al-Ša‘idī	9	3 d
Al-Ḥāḡḡ Šihāta ibn Sirāḡ from al-Mu‘assara, known as al-Ġammāl and his retainer Šihāta ibn Šihāb al-Dīn from al-Maḥalla al-Kubrā, and Šihāb al-Dīn Ibn ‘Abd al-Razzāq ibn Ramaḍān al-Ḥawankī and Muḥammad ibn Nāšir al-Dīn from Minyat al-Muršid, known as al-Fuwwī	9	3 d
Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, known as Baḡ’, from Maḥallat al-Marḥūm	9	6.5 d
Muṣṭafā ibn ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Bannā	9	2 d
Sulaymān ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥalid al-Qallinī	9	3 d
Šihāb al-Dīn ibn Aḥmad ibn Māḍī al-Imbābī, known as al-Ġazzār	9	1 d
Salīm ibn Salīm from Warrāq al-Ḥaḍar in Ġiza province	9	5.5 d
Aḥmad ibn ‘Abdallāh ibn ‘Alī from Šabās al-Šuhadā’	9	7 d; 30 n
‘Alī ibn Sulaymān from Abi Durra in al-Buḥayra, known as al-Šā‘ir	9	
Muṣṭafā ibn Dā‘ūd ibn Šayḥ ‘Abd al-Raḥīm from al-Maḥalla al-Kubrā	9	
Šihāb al-Dīn ibn Aḥmad ibn Naṣr al-Dīn from al-Manzala	9	5.5 d

Table 4.

Name of Oarsman	Pay in dinars	Advance in dinars (d) & <i>niṣf fiḍḍa</i> (n)
Šihāta ibn Ḥaṭṭāb, known as al-ʿAwr (one eyed), who is the retainer of ʿAds Barġūṭa	9	4 d
Al-Ḥāġġ Aḥmad Abū Ġaziyya ibn Aḥmad ibn Šihāta al-Ġuhaynī	9	6.5 d
ʿĪsā ibn al-Ḥāġġ Muḥammad from Dayrūt	9	
Muḥammad ibn Sirāġ al-Dīn from Šubrā Ḥalqūn in Sukkiyya	9	1 d
ʿĀmir ibn Ḥasan ibn ʿAyn al-Ġazal al-Damanhūrī al-Qawwās	9	6 d
Šihāta ibn ʿAlī ibn Šihāta from Minyat al-Hārūn	6	
Sulaymān ibn Muḥammad al-Alwāhī, known as Hudayfa and as Falayfil	9	5 d
Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm, known as Ibn Ḥamida al-Alwayḥī	9	3.5 d
Sulaymān ibn ʿAlī ibn Yūsuf al-Burullusī	5.5	
Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Ġizī, known as al-Aqraʿ	5.25	
Totals	520.75	136.5 d; 30 n

Table 4.

In the fifth document the *muqaddim* Aḥmad ibn ʿĀmir, known as al-Tābīʿ, vouches that he had received 180 dinars to recruit 20 oarsmen, yet in the document summarized in Table One he acknowledged receiving only 153 dinars to recruit 17 oarsmen.³⁸ The 20 oarsmen, who acknowledged receiving their pay in advance, are listed in Table 5.

Name of Oarsman	Pay in dinars	Advance in dinars (d) & <i>niṣf fiḍḍa</i> (n)
Ġumʿa ibn Salāma al-Šāmī	9	6 d; 28 n
Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī al-Kurdī al-Ḥirbaytī	9	2.25 d
Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Manzalī, known as al-Humayn Mattī	9	5 d
Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥāġġ Muḥammad al-Dumyāṭī	9	3.5 d
ʿĀmir ibn al-Šayḥ Marʿī ibn al-Ḥāġġ Muḥammad al-Bahġūrī al-Šaʿīdī and Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥāġġ Muḥammad al-Manšūrī	9	1.5 d
Yūsuf ibn Sulaymān al-Damanhūrī	9	8 d
ʿAlī ibn ʿAwf ibn Muḥammad al-Danī from Minyat Abī ʿAbdallāh	9	1 d
ʿĀmir ibn Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Šawrī	9	
Murād ibn Ġuwaylī al-Manzalī, from al-Šubūl	9	9 d
Timraz ibn Aḥmad ibn Šihāb al-Dīn al-Miṣrī, from al-Ḥusayniyya	9	2 d; 30 n
Ḥiġāzī ibn al-Ḥāġġ ʿAlī Ḥadid al-Dumyāṭī	9	13 d
Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Dāʿim al-Skandarī	9	16 n
Salāma ibn ʿAbd al-Nabī al-Bašratī, from al-Manzala	9	1 d; 30 n
Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī Sayf al-Dīn al-ʿAqqāwī	9	

Table 5.

38. Dār al-Waṭāʾiq al-Qawmiyya (Cairo), Maḥkamat Rašīd, *Siġill* 24, page 208, Item 691. One often finds discrepancies in the figures of accounts recorded in the court's *siġillāt*.

Name of Oarsman	Pay in dinars	Advance in dinars (d) & <i>nişf fidḍa</i> (n)
Nūr ibn Ḥusām al-Dīn, from Dayr Suwada in the Şaʿīd	9	
ʿAbd al-Razzāq ibn ʿAlī ʿAliwa from al-Maḥariyya in Manzala	9	
Şumayyas ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ʿAḡayna al-Baramūnī	9	7 d
Ḥusayn ibn Dāʿūd al-Muhtadī al-Miṣrī from Bayn al-Sūrayn	9	5 d
Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr al-Şāmī al-Ḥalabī	9	
Totals	180	80.25 d; 88 n

Table 5.

The total number of oarsmen the *muqaddimūn* recruited was thus 129. Would they be given more time to produce the remaining *kürekiye*? Would these required oarsmen be taken from the jails of Egypt's Mediterranean ports, or would they be conscripted? It is unclear how the remaining 12 oarsmen were to be assembled.³⁹

The budget for Egypt in 1596-97 cited a salary of 500,000 *osmanis* and 294,400 *paras* for Hizir Bey, *mir liva*, the captain of the port of Suez, 506,500 *osmanis* and 220,199 *paras* for Hasan Bey, *mir liva*, the captain of the port of Damiette, and 500,000 *osmanis* and 294,704 *paras* for Mehmet Bey, *mir liva*, the captain of the port of Alexandria.⁴⁰ These sums, however, were salaries for their membership in the *dīwān*, or governing council, of Cairo and were in addition to the revenues from the tax farms each held. In addition, Hasan Bey was assigned 5,125 *osmanis* from the budget to pay for oarsmen in his personal galley. The sum of 170,550 *osmanis* was assigned in the same budget to pay the wages of oarsmen serving with the fleet in Alexandria and Rašīd for the year 1005/1596-7.⁴¹ Given this relatively small sum, it would appear that the Ottoman Empire operated only a small number of warships from Egypt. It is obvious, however, that Alexandria was the primary harbor for the empire's fighting ships in Egypt. To meet expenses relating to the visit of ships of the imperial ships to Egypt, the authorities were also permitted to collect a special tax, the *mali-i kürekiye* (oarsmen tax) from many of the villages near the sea since they were the chief beneficiaries of the protection afforded by the Mediterranean squadrons. This tax amounted to 40 *paras* for every 25,000 *paras* of land tax.⁴²

The Rašīd court also records in the year 1632 the recruitment of oarsmen for service in the galliot of Mustafa Bey, the *amīr al-liwā al-şarīf al-sultānī* for Alexandria and Rašīd, for that year's

39. Sulaymān discusses the use of forced labor in "al-Suḥra fi Miṣr".

40. See Shaw, *The Budget of Ottoman Egypt*, pp. 136-137. Each of these captains/*sancakbeyi* also held urban *muqātaʿāt* (tax farms), but not the customs of their ports, to help pay for the expenses of governing and defending their ports and maintaining and provisioning their squadrons. The *osmani* is the Ottoman *akçe* and the *para* is the Egyptian *nişf fidḍa*.

41. Shaw, *The Budget of Ottoman Egypt*, pp. 176-179. Assuming a standard pay of 20 *akçe* (10 *nişf fidḍa*) per day for each oarsman, this sum would only support 94 oarsmen for a three month period of service.

42. Shaw, *The Budget of Ottoman Egypt*, p. 187.

season.⁴³ He received the money to pay for the oarsmen in the *dīwān* of Alexandria from the *amīr* Amr Allāh Agha ‘Alaylī in the presence of Sheikh Ḥalīfa, the son of the deceased *muqaddim* ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, a member of the *ṭā’ifa* (of *muqaddimīn*) of Suez. Sheikh Ḥalīfa was assigned responsibility for distributing the wages to the oarsmen who would be brought forward by the *muqaddim* Mannā’ Abū ‘Alī al-Rifā‘ī and his colleague (*rafiq*), the *muqaddim* Dirāz ibn Muḥammad al-Zaydī. For this service, each oarsman was to receive 10 *qurūš* (each *qirš* = 30 *nişf fidḍa*), or 300 *nişf fidḍa*, which would seem to indicate a rather short mission for Mustafa Bey, especially since it comes a little late in the season. The twenty-six oarsmen, their wages and advances, are cited in Table 6.

Name of Oarsman Recruited in 1632	Pay in <i>qurūš</i>	Advance in <i>qurūš</i>
‘Alī ibn Aḥmad al-Sandalǧī and his son ‘Abdallāh	10	
Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Biršamī	10	1
Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥāǧǧ Sulaymān al-ǧallād	10	2
‘Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Fuwwī	10	1.5
Sulaymān ibn Aḥmad al-Hāšimī	10	
‘Abd al-Raḥīm ibn Muḥammad al-Miṣrī	10	
Sulaymān ibn Muḥammad Abī al-‘Uqba Isma‘īl al-Sandalūnī	10	
‘Abd al-Karīm ibn Muḥammad al-Badawī al-ǧazzālī	10	2
Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Rašīdī	10	1
Ḥiǧāzī ibn Budayr al-Rašīdī	10	
Šiḥāta ibn Maṣṣūr al-Mallāḥ	10	
Maṣṣūr ibn Muḥammad al-‘Ifiṣ	10	
Aḥmad ibn Sālīm al-Qahwaǧī al-Mu‘addawī	10	
Muḥammad ibn Šihāb al-Dīn al-Miṣrī	10	2
Šihāb al-Dīn ibn Aḥmad al-‘Abadī	10	
Ḥamīs ibn ‘Alī al-Ša‘īdī	10	
‘Aṭā Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Ša‘īdī	10	
‘Alī ibn Aḥmad al-Qaffāš	10	
Maṣṣūr ibn Maṣṣūr al-Mirhāwī	10	2
‘Izz al-‘Arab ibn Zaydān al-Dalamī	10	
‘Āmir ibn Aḥmad from Azbakiyya	10	
ǧamīl ibn ‘Aṭā Allāh al-Ša‘īdī	10	
‘Alī ibn ‘Ašūr al-Qilfaṭ (caulker)	10	
‘Alī ibn Ibrahīm, known as Ibn al-Miṣriyya al-Rašīdī	10	1
Aḥmad ibn Badr, from Ṭaṭā	10	
Totals	260	12.5

Table 6.

43. Dār al-Waṭā‘iq al-Qawmiyya (Cairo), Maḥkamat Rašīd, *Siǧill* 50, p. 40, Item 98, 21 Muḥarram 1042/8 August 1632.

Although the documents in the court registers are seldom written clearly, it has been possible, with some confidence, to identify the town, or region, of origin for 80 of the 129 oarsmen who volunteered for the 1598 sailing.⁴⁴ Not surprisingly, 50 oarsmen, or 62.5% of the 80, are from towns and villages of the Delta region, an area stretching from the seaside regions (Rašid, Manzala, for example) to the area around al-Manšūra north of Cairo. But 30 oarsmen, or 37.5% of the total identified by place of origin, are not from this Delta region. Five oarsmen (6.25%) appear to be from Syria.⁴⁵ It is not surprising to find them in Rašid or other of Egypt's coastal towns at this time, for Egypt's Mediterranean ports were connected to virtually all the ports in the eastern Mediterranean area under Ottoman control. In addition to the limited number of warships based in Egypt's Mediterranean harbors, hundreds of merchant galleys left these ports annually and these also required a considerable number of oarsmen. We can thus assume that Egypt's coastal ports had a floating population that was searching for work on the many ships, both military and commercial, that departed these harbors. The pay was good by the standards of the day and the risks of facing combat were relatively small.

Another 13 oarsmen (16.25%) came from Cairo and its vicinity, while 12 oarsmen (15%) were of Upper Egyptian origin. These figures give some indication of the mobility of Egyptian society as well as the cosmopolitan social mix in Egypt's port cities at the end of the sixteenth century. We are familiar with merchants and scholars travelling throughout the Islamic world in search of profits and knowledge, but we seldom find evidence of members of the lower social orders, other than pilgrims, undertaking extensive journeys. The lists of oarsmen indicate that many of the volunteers had made the pilgrimage to Mecca or were the sons of pilgrims, assuming that the sobriquet "*al-Ḥāḡḡ*" indicates a true pilgrim and not just a casual honorific. This group of oarsmen appears to have, therefore, broad travel experience. Many came from districts in Upper Egypt far from the sea in search of employment. While our documents do not indicate if any of the oarsmen had previous experience at sea, it can be assumed that most of them were at least familiar with oars, for they came from towns on the Nile or its canals

44. To help with this identification of the oarsmen's home towns, I have relied on their *nisbas* or the specific information attached to their names in the *siḡillāt*. I consulted Ramzī's multi volume *al-Qāmūs al-ḡuḡrāfi*, to identify the regions in which home villages of the oarsmen are found. I am also indebted to Professor 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Sulaymān of the Damiette Faculty of Arts in Manšūra University for vetting the lists of foreign, Cairene, Ṣa'īdī, and Delta oarsmen that I created. A *nisba* is not always reliable in indicating one's place of origin since we do not always know its true connotation. For instance, the name of 'Alī ibn 'Abdallāh al-Hindī (see Table Two) was excluded from the list of foreign oarsmen I assembled because he might have acquired that *nisba* for any number of reasons. It is also possible that someone with the name al-Idfawī could be a generation or more removed from that town, but in the interest of trying to identify regional origins of the oarsmen cited in the six documents I have taken most *nisbas* at face value. This could affect my statistics, but in many instances the court register clearly records that an oarsman is "from" the Ṣa'īd, "from" Ḥaṭṭ Ḥurunfiš, or "from" al-Manšūra. I have appended my lists of oarsmen by region at the end of this study. The overall conclusions of this analysis seem unaffected by possible small statistical deviations.

45. Although North Africans were well established in Egypt, especially in commerce, they do not seem to be among the recruits for service on these ships. On the extensive Maghribi presence in Egypt, see 'Abd al-Raḥīm, «al-Maḡribiyya fī ta'riḥ Mišr».

and probably had pulled oars on river craft. Those coming from coastal towns such as Rašid, Dumyāt, Burullus or Manzala probably had previous experience at sea.

The backgrounds of the oarsmen are varied. We find several who are retainers (*tābi'*), suggesting they are tied to a “master” in some form of legal relationship, or to a “patron”, yet they receive the same standard pay as everyone else. Fathers and sons also volunteered for service, as did several brothers and colleagues (*rafiq*). Some of the oarsmen are identified as having other skills, such as cook (*ṭabbāḥ*), camel driver (*ḡammāl*), butcher (*ḡazzār*), basket-maker (*qaffāṣ*) or archer (*qawwās*), indicating they had a lower middle class standing.

The process of recruitment and payment for the 26 oarsmen assembled for service on Mustafa Bey's galliot in the late summer of 1632 appears to be the same as it was in 1598, with payment in *qurūṣ* instead of dinars. Likewise, the distribution of places of origin of the oarsmen for Mustafa Bey's galliot is similar to that of the oarsmen recruited in 1598. We find that the 26 oarsmen came from the Delta region (especially from Rašid), Cairo and Upper Egypt, but none this time from abroad. We do not find non-Muslims or North Africans among the oarsmen in the two galleys, nor are there any apparent criminals. Slaves were almost never used as rowers in Egypt.

The analysis of the origins of the oarsmen recruited in 1598 and 1632 indicates that the ships' complements came from villages and towns spread throughout Egypt, from Cairo and Upper Egypt as well as from the Delta, and included in 1598 a small percentage of Syrians. The oarsmen were free-born Muslims who volunteered for seasonal service and who received their pay in advance, as was the custom. Egypt's need for oarsmen was much less than the requirements of the imperial navy in Aegean waters where many more galleys had to be outfitted and many more warriors and oarsmen had to be mustered. In the central Ottoman lands the sultans had established a broad array of tax farms and levies to provide the men and material sufficient to support the fleet's annual campaigns. Among these was the levy of men from the households of specific districts and from other households or communities to pay for and support each oarsman. This system was unknown in Egypt.

In both the central lands and in Egypt recruitment was well organized and was supervised by an appropriate *qāḏī* who kept precise records of all transactions pertaining to the recruitment. He received from the treasury the money sufficient to pay the oarsmen in advance, and distributed it through intermediaries to the men who were mustered. He forwarded to the captains of the ships complete lists of the names of the rowers and their pay, notified the government of this information, and finally recorded a copy of all this information in his court's day-book, or *siḡill*. In Egypt the *qāḏī* passed to the sheikh of the guild (*ṭā'ifa*) of *muqaddimīn* the money he had been assigned by the administration to produce the necessary number of oarsmen. The guild sheikh in turn distributed to his individual guild-members the necessary amount to cover the salaries of the oarsmen each was assigned to bring forward. We do not know how large the membership of this guild was.

The authorities preferred to recruit free men, not slaves or criminals, though in times of necessity this might be done, employed them only for seasonal campaigns, and paid them a standard wage in advance for their service. To save the expense of maintaining them when

the ships were not at sea and their service was not needed, the oarsmen were released from duty at the end of the campaigning season. They appear to have been of lower social standing and perhaps found the pay offered by the government for their service as oarsmen to be worth the risk of possible combat. The six documents reported in this study thus provide some insight into the well organized recruitment of Egyptian oarsmen for service on Ottoman galleys harbored in Egypt's Mediterranean ports around the end of the sixteenth century and the early decades of the seventeenth century. It is to be hoped that more documents of this type will be reported in the future to shed additional light on the organization of the various skilled groups working in the shipyards and on the ships, on the process of recruitment and upon the oarsmen themselves.

APPENDIX

Foreign Oarsmen

Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥāḡḡ Aḥmad al-Ḥalabī
 Qāsim ibn Šihāta ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥamawī
 Ğum'a ibn Salāma al-Šāmī
 Muḥammad ibn 'Alī Sayf al-Dīn al-'Aqqāwī
 Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr al-Šāmī al-Ḥalabī

Oarsmen from Cairo and Vicinity

'Abdallāh ibn al-Ḥāḡḡ Aḥmad al-Imbābī
 'Alī ibn Ḥiḡāzī ibn Ḥalīl al-Miṣrī, from Ḥārat Fawwāla
 Sulṭān ibn Salāma ibn Aḥmad from Ḥārat Fawwālīn
 Al-Ḥāḡḡ 'Abd al-'Āṭī ibn Ḥasan al-Basīṭī, from Ḥārat Muqaṣṣ and
 His retainer (*tābi'*) Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Bāqī ibn (?)
 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Basīṭī from Ḥaṭṭ Ḥurunfiš in al-Qāhira
 Fāris Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abdallāh al-Miṣrī, from Bāb al-Ša'riyya
 Badīr ibn Diyāb ibn 'Abdallāh al-Imbābī
 Šihāb al-Dīn ibn Ḥayr al-Dīn ibn Ḥalīl ibn 'Abdallāh from Rawḍa
 Šihāb al-Dīn ibn Aḥmad ibn Mādī al-Imbābī
 Salīm ibn Salīm from Warrāq al-Ḥaḍar in Ğīza
 Timraz ibn Aḥmad ibn Šihāb al-Dīn al-Miṣrī from al-Ḥusayniyya
 Ḥusām ibn Dā'ūd al-Muhtadī al-Miṣrī, from Bayn al-Sūrayn

Oarsmen from Upper Egypt

Manşūr ibn Ḥusam al-Abū Tīġī
 Salīm ibn Şabbūr al-Ġirġāwī, known as Ibn al-Şaʿīd
 Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdallāh from Qūş
 Muʿarrif ibn Şayḥ Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Raʿīsiyya in the Şaʿīd
 Ibrahīm al-Ḥūlī Ġālī al-Ḥinnāwī ibn Abī Şāliḥ from Şaṭṭūra in the Şaʿīd and his
 Colleague (*rafiq*) ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Ḥāġġ Manşūr ibn ʿAbdallāh, known as
 Ibn Ġābir al-Şaftī
 Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Mazārī
 Ḥalifa Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥulakī al-Şaʿīdī
 ʿĪsā ibn al-Ḥāġġ Muḥammad from Dayrūt
 ʿĀmir ibn al-Şayḥ Marʿī ibn al-Ḥāġġ Muḥammad al-Bahġūrī al-Şaʿīdī
 Nūr ibn Ḥusām al-Dīn from Dayr Suwayda in the Şaʿīd
 Al-Ḥāġġ Aḥmad Abū Ġaziyya ibn Aḥmad ibn Şihāta al-Ġuhaynī

Oarsmen from the Delta Region

Salīm ibn al-Ḥāġġ Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Samannūdī
 Muḥammad ibn Maġīd al-Bilbaysī
 Qāʿid ibn al-Ḥāġġ Ḥasan ibn Ḥiġāzī al-Qamrinī
 ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Quraynī
 Muḥammad ibn Mubārak al-Şabāsī
 Ḥāmid ibn Aḥmad ibn Ibrahīm al-Rašīdī
 Salīm ibn Ḥalaf ibn ʿĀmirī al-Laqqānī and his
 Retainer, Aḥmad ibn Abī ʿAṭiyya ibn Muḥammad, from Safiḥa
 Manşūr ibn Ḥāġġ Ramaḍān ibn al-Ḥāġġ Aḥmad al-Nahrāwī
 Marʿī ibn Ismaʿīl ibn Yūnus from Ġumayra
 Muḥammad Falayfil ibn Şukr ibn ʿAlī al-Burullusī
 Şihāta ibn al-Ḥāġġ Ramaḍān al-Nahrāwī
 Al-Ḥāġġ Aḥmad ibn Sulaymān ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Manzalī
 Yūnus ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Fuwwī al-Ḥabbāb
 Muḥammad ibn Abū ʿĀmir ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Şabšīrī
 Al-Ḥāġġ Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Şayḥ Ibrahīm al-Daḥmīsī
 Al-Ḥāġġ Şihāta ibn Sirāġ al-Ġummah from Maʿsara and his
 Retainer Şihāta ibn Şihāb al-Dīn from al-Maḥalla al-Kubrā
 Şihāb al-Dīn ibn ʿAbd al-Rizq ibn Ramaḍān al-Ḥawankī and
 Muḥammad ibn Nāşir al-Dīn from Minyat al-Murşid, known as al-Fuwwī
 Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, known as al-Baġʿ, from Maḥallat al-Marḥūm
 Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿAlī from Şabās al-Şuhadāʾ
 ʿAlī ibn Sulaymān from Abī Durra in al-Buḥayra

Muṣṭafā ibn Dā'ūd ibn Šayḥ 'Abd al-Raḥīm from al-Maḥalla al-Kubrā
 Šihāb al-Dīn ibn Aḥmad ibn Naṣr al-Dīn from al-Manzala
 Muḥammad ibn Sirāğ al-Dīn from Šubrā Ḥalqūn in Sukkiyya
 'Āmir ibn Ḥasan ibn 'Ayn al-Ġazal al-Damanhūrī
 Šihāta ibn 'Alī ibn Šihāta from Minyat al-Hārūn
 Sulaymān ibn 'Alī ibn Yūsuf al-Burullusī
 Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Manzalī
 Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥāğğ Muḥammad al-Dumyātī
 Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥāğğ Muḥammad al-Manṣūrī
 Yūsuf ibn Sulaymān al-Damanhūrī
 'Alī ibn 'Awf ibn Muḥammad al-Danī from Minyat 'Abdallāh
 Ḥiğāzī ibn al-Ḥāğğ 'Alī Ḥadīd al-Dumyātī
 Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Dā'im al-Skandarī
 Salāma ibn 'Abd al-Nabī al-Basratī from al-Manzala
 'Abd al-Razzāq ibn 'Alī 'Aliwa from Maṭariyya in Manzala
 'Abd al-Nabī ibn 'Īsā ibn 'Abdallāh al-Mahdawī, known as Qarāquṣ
 Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn 'Abdallāh al-Mazārī
 Sulaymān ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥālid al-Qallīnī
 'Āmir ibn Aḥmad ibn Ibrahīm al-Šawrī
 Abū al-Ḥayr ibn al-Ḥāğğ 'Alī ibn Abū al-Ḥayr al-Damsīsī and
 his father, al-Ḥāğğ ibn 'Alī al-Damsīsī
 Muḥammad ibn Zunful al-'Ağīrī
 'Abdallāh ibn Yūnus al-Ḥaršī, known as Ibn Ḥalīfa
 Šams al-Dīn ibn 'Abd al-Ġalīl ibn 'Alam al-Dīn al-Nağğārī
 Ḥasan ibn 'Alī al-Kurdī al-Ḥirbaytī
 Salīm ibn Ḥamdān ibn 'Abdallāh from Manūfiyya

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