



Introduction

In March 2021, as much of Europe was plunged into lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic, global television broadcasts showed the Suez Canal obstructed for six days by the grounding of the colossal four-hundred-metre-long container ship *Ever Given*. According to calculations by Lloyd's List, each passing hour it took to dislodge the obstruction incurred a toll of 400 million US dollars for the global economy. What most broadcasts did not report was that the incident necessitated the initiation of a General Average (GA) procedure.¹ GA is a significant legal framework with origins tracing back to the pre-Roman era that continues to be operational today, with minor alterations to its underlying principles. It entails the equitable allocation of unanticipated damages or losses that might arise owing to the deliberate relinquishment of portions of the vessel or cargo to preserve the entire shipment in exigent situations. Such an arrangement mandates the uniform participation of all stakeholders associated with ship and sea cargo.² It does not constitute a restitution for damages by a third party; rather, it involves the apportionment of such damages across surviving assets.

A modern-day GA does not conceptually differ significantly from a GA in past centuries, specifically in the early modern period (c. 1500 to c. 1750). This is evidence of the enduring significance of this institution, which is a prominent focal point throughout the book and will allow the reconstruction of some of the micro and macro dynamics linked to early modern European maritime shipping, trade and law. The author of the first learned legal treatise on Averages, the sixteenth-century Dutch jurist Quintin Weytsen, defined GA as follows: 'Average is the common contribution of the things found in the ship in order to make good the damage voluntarily inflicted upon items, whether belonging to merchants or to the ship, so that lives, ship and the remaining goods may escape unscathed.'³

Following an implicit mutual agreement, a sort of society was formed to share the losses faced in the positive outcome of the entire maritime

expedition. With this perspective, GA has been a crucial institution, intended as ‘a system of rules, beliefs, norms, and organizations that together generate a regularity of behaviour’.⁴ Odd as it might appear, the GA institution was centred on reciprocity and fairness within a self-contained system, rather than on commerce and growth, although commerce operated in a smoother way thanks to it.⁵ It adhered to pre-modern market logic characterized by mutualistic principles, primarily if not exclusively geared towards the social distribution of damage rather than private accumulation. Fortune remained capricious and impervious to mitigation, yet GA tempered its ruinous effects in an equitable way.

Drawing upon Addobbati’s conception of insurance, akin to GA as a risk management tool, it embodied a moral manifestation of humanity, fostering a more equitable world through communal solidarity.⁶ A GA event signifies an occasion of acknowledgement or proclamation, wherein all participants engaged in a singular voyage recognize a shared and precarious destiny constrained by finite resources. Collaboratively, they possess the capacity to safeguard their interests through voluntary sacrifice. The damage distribution mechanism guarantees that each individual obtains his rightful entitlement and creates limited ‘trust’, bringing strangers into contact and forcing them to cooperate. It is an intrinsically powerful cross-cultural agreement. It is not fortuitous that this principle is presently invoked to address the urgent challenges posed by the climate crisis.⁷

While the GA revolves around retrospective reciprocity, it diverges from the realms of moral economy and boundless trust; substantiating elements such as bills of lading and witnesses are indispensable requisites and provide modern scholars with a significant amount of social and economic data.⁸ Notwithstanding the tendency of scholars to associate reciprocity with notions of kinship, affection and gifting, while anticipating a contrary trajectory for matters of commerce and law, this book provides an illustration that intricately melds these disparate logics. This will be accomplished by centring on a specific place and time characterized by the widespread and near-daily utilization of this mechanism: the maritime Republic of Genoa in the early modern Mediterranean. This choice will allow us to touch upon Mediterranean Studies, early modern economic history, and early modern legal history.

The Mediterranean’s waters connect several regions that, together, form a wide heterogeneous area. People, commodities and law travelled in this basin and influenced each other in dynamic ways. For this reason, a focus on certain features of these dynamics allows us to build a comparative model that can be used to investigate other regions, such as those bordering the Baltic or the Caribbean Sea. In recent decades, maritime history has entered mainstream historical research. The chronological evolution of shipping has been highlighted as a medium that has allowed the emergence

of networks of global communication and exchange, paving the way for the present world economy.⁹ This growth has fostered global history studies. Globalization is a complex concept that is both a process and a result; that is why I follow Supiot's distinction between globalization and mundialization (*mondialisation*).¹⁰ According to this paradigm, the latter has concentrated more on common patterns of historical economic development, while mundialization is more closely associated with anthropology and sociology. World and global histories are, therefore, analytically different but intimately linked, because the patterns studied in world history are those which are affected by the phenomena studied in global history, and because world history is largely a reaction and is intended to constitute a corrective to global history.¹¹ These themes will resonate throughout the book, which employs both perspectives.

Maritime history and shipping have also been tightly linked to European imperialism, as the control of maritime routes was often a necessary requirement to secure military and political land expansion.¹² At the same time, the relationship between maritime and global history has been in play since the age of geographical discoveries: the challenge of maritime history now – which this book seeks to address – is to be 'global' without being 'imperialistic'.¹³

Studying small republican states, like Genoa, in early modern Europe – viewed in the past as alternative and secondary political systems compared to the main monarchic kingdoms – is necessary to overcome the imperialist perspective.¹⁴ Small states did not have the political and military power to control maritime routes, so they had to find ways to overcome this weakness. This was particularly true in the early modern Mediterranean region, where, despite the presence of different empires and powerful monarchies, there was no hegemonic power capable of claiming its waters.¹⁵ A key feature of the different countries and micro-regions facing the Mediterranean Sea, as theorized by Horden and Purcell, was an original mixture of fragmentation and connectivity.¹⁶ Connectivity describes the way micro-regions cohered, both internally and with one another, in the movements of people and goods or information and laws. It was the need of connectivity imposed by the growing global trade that fostered the adoption of similar standards for GA rules over time and places, starting from the Mediterranean and European seas.

Mediterranean history studies often focus on the Italian maritime republics up until the medieval period and on the relationship between Muslim and Christian countries. With the passing of time and the growing of international maritime routes prompted by geographic discoveries – the Age of Discovery, the formation of Nation States, the creation of colonial empires and so on – the Mediterranean usually retires into the background of scholars' interest as, according to Hershenzon, 'an international setting

replaced an imperial world, foreigners substituted for local actors, and an impersonal market supplanted archaic religious violence.¹⁷

Fernand Braudel's magisterial work, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, is a well-known exception, although it is more a study of the Mediterranean in the sixteenth century. Braudel does look forward to the following century, but as someone who is melancholically looking at the end of an era. The shared patterns that Braudel believed governed the daily lives of people in the sixteenth-century Mediterranean, whether they were Muslim or Christian, gave way to a more complex polyphony in the seventeenth century. Consequently, the once-unified concept of a 'shared destiny' based on religious confession fragmented into diverse national destinies. During this period, he posits the presence of a 'Northern Invasion'. According to this argument, the Dutch, the English and the French swarmed into the Mediterranean with their superior sailing ships early in the seventeenth century, and seized control of the sea's commercial, financial and maritime life.¹⁸ This picture has been endorsed by many scholars, and has been the dominant model for the seventeenth-century Mediterranean world, despite Braudel also depicting several original exceptions. It was only in the last three decades that scholars slowly but steadily questioned the idea of Mediterranean decadence and fragmentation by providing new case studies and research on this topic, that is, new Mediterranean counterpoints.

The adoption of neutrality policies, for instance, was a strategy followed by Genoa and nearby states to prosper maritime trade as a small state in the Mediterranean area, increasing its connectivity and showing how, in a context with no hegemonic power, Mediterranean countries had ample space for experimenting with original solutions to get market shares. Genoa developed into an entrepôt, a hub for maritime trade that favoured cross-cultural exchanges on a global or semi-global scale. In defining cross-cultural trade, I refer to the narrow definition embraced by Trivellato: 'The expression [cross-cultural trade] designates prolonged credit relations and business co-operation between merchants who shared implicit and explicit agreements about the rules of exchange but who, because of historical patterns beyond their control, belonged to distinct, often legally separated communities.'¹⁹ The GA institution can be considered as one such agreement. The imperative of cultivating exchanges and establishing the port of Genoa as a pivotal centre for redistributing commodities compelled Genoese statesmen and traders, often affiliated through familial networks and alliances, to embrace policies of neutrality and to promote cross-cultural agreements. It was also for these reasons that this small Republic, traditionally perceived as a weak state, managed to survive and maintain its independence amid the political and military struggles that ravaged Europe.²⁰

A key element in Genoese political strategy was its alliance with Spain in 1528, after more than a century of foreign occupation and internal turmoil.²¹ In the following decades, the Genoese granted loans – the so-called *Asientos* – to the Spanish Empire and, in return, obtained formal and informal privileges that allowed them to become profitably involved in trade and finance operations in the territories under Spain's authority. Braudel, according to whom the Republic's independence and trade policies also rested on this alliance, referred to the period 1557–1627 as the Age of the Genoese:²²

For three-quarters of a century, 'the Genoese experience' enabled the merchant-bankers of Genoa, through their handling of capital and credit, to call the tune of European payments and transactions. This is worth studying in itself, for it must surely have been the most extraordinary example of convergence and concentration the European world-economy had yet witnessed, as it re-oriented itself around an almost invisible focus. For the focal point of the whole system was not even the city of Genoa itself, but a handful of banker-financiers. And this is only one of the paradoxes surrounding the strange city of Genoa which, thought apparently so cursed by date, tended both before and after its 'age of glory' to gravitate towards the summit of world business. To me Genoa seems always to have been, in every age, the capitalist city par excellence.²³

Braudel and other scholars have highlighted the role of the Genoese patriate as a leading player in European economy and finance. The importance of Genoa as a pole of jurisprudential production and activity should also not be underestimated; some of the most well-known early modern European jurists, such as Carlo Targa and Giuseppe Casaregi, operated there.²⁴

The Republic had an oligarchic government ruled by the main patrician families, who often had multiple commercial and financial interests. They were the state's political and economic elite, and also at the forefront of international finance, being actively involved in commercial transactions and in the state's maritime policies and regulations.²⁵

The availability of money, speculative attitude and, above all, the reliance on maritime trade to import foodstuffs for the population's consumption and raw materials for the manufacturing sector, made the shipping sector and its regulations vital. The ruling class carefully looked after port management, its maintenance and the expansion of its infrastructure through long-term investment strategies. For these reasons, the Republic and its port were selected as an observation point for the Mediterranean world at a time of swift changes, that is, the years from the end of the sixteenth century to the end of the seventeenth century.

The specific features of the maritime sector and of the Genoese Republic presented so far created a complex scenario that did not encourage past historians to compare Genoa with other port cities. According to the Milanese writer and diplomat Count Giuseppe Gorani (1740–1819), Genoa was ‘the most envied, the most denigrated and the least known’ among all the maritime republics.²⁶ Grendi, one of the foremost historians on Genoa in the early modern period and among the founders of Italian microhistory, meaningfully employed the expression ‘an historiography without masters’ to describe the historic literature on early modern Genoa. The publications of well-known scholars such as Braudel, Spooner and others during the second half of the twentieth century partly reinvigorated the field, although Genoa was often presented through its exemplified peculiar features. For a long time, such visible studies on Genoese medieval commercial expansion and interest in the financial sector masked the importance of maritime trade and its regulation during the early modern period. In the 1990s, the studies of Epstein and Greif on the role of Genoa during the European commercial revolution – milestones in the historical literature – probably contributed to the overshadowing of the role the Republic played in the following centuries.²⁷ Still, in 1988, the *Annales* journal described Genoa as ‘the least popular – and most difficult to understand – of Italian trading cities.’²⁸ According to Fusaro, there is a real ‘historiographical schizophrenia regarding [early modern] Genoa, on the one hand hailed as the cradle of global financial capitalism and on the other described as a “failed state”’.²⁹ Felloni, a well-known Genoese scholar, observed in 1986 how the historical reconstruction of early modern Genoese maritime trade was still a work in progress.³⁰ Even in 2008, Tabak referred to the ‘withdrawal of Genoese merchants from commerce from 1557’, as if from that date they were no longer involved in this sector at all.³¹ In fact, almost all Genoese businessmen were at that time simultaneously operating in finance, trade and other activities, a situation defined by Scammell as an early example of free enterprise.³²

Despite the bias mentioned above, between the 1980s and the 1990s a rich tradition of local Genoese historians – like Grendi, Felloni, Doria, Massa and others – tried to unpuzzle Genoese economic activities during the early modern period, with partial success.³³ Their studies stimulated further research that is reflected today in the work of younger Genoese early modern and economic historians, such as Piccinno, Zanini, Calcagno and Lo Basso. The latter group created a research centre (Fernand Braudel NavLab) that looks at the development of maritime and naval history of Genoa and the Mediterranean area.³⁴

Only recently, Genoese history has also been compared and analysed through the same lens as that used on other Italian early modern states. Authors like Kirk, Fusaro and Tazzara focused on the importance of eco-

nomic policies implemented by the states of Genoa, Tuscany and Venice in a changing maritime world, and in doing so tried to build bridges among very different early modern states and historiographies.³⁵ Together, their studies contributed to nuance the idea of Mediterranean decadence. Their argument is that northern Europeans were just one group among many in the complex of commercial activity in the seventeenth century.³⁶ They were not in a position to impose their will on the marketplace, nor was anyone else. The result was a fairly equal but also anarchic commercial world, in which Genoa played an essential part, where conventional distinctions such as local vs foreigners are superfluous.

Renewed interest in the maritime and economic history of empires during the early modern period further helped foster studies on republican Genoa. In this historiography, the Republic – because of its close relationship with the Spanish Empire – has come to be recognized as one of the principal hubs of that world, and the Genoese merchants and financiers as some of its most important bonding agents.

According to Tabak, ‘even though the [Mediterranean] basin’s landscape was predominantly silhouetted by the two world-conquering empires of the sixteenth century [Habsburg Empire and Ottoman Empire], . . . imperial pomp and grandeur need not overshadow the constitutive role the ‘empire-building cities’ assumed in the shaping of the Mediterranean world.’³⁷ Genoa was one such city, whose trading and financial power allowed the Castilian throne to expand its territorial holdings across the Atlantic. A recent and important contribution in this field came from García-Montón, who analysed the *Asiento* slave trade handled by two Genoese entrepreneurs in the Spanish territories between the 1650s and the 1680s.³⁸ García-Montón’s book exemplifies the importance of the ‘Azienda Genova,’ a label conceived by Doria that will resonate throughout the book.³⁹ The strength of the ‘Azienda Genova’ lay in the ability of a homogeneous group – with an endogamy rate among the nobles of 80–85% – which was made up of Genoese living both in Genoa and abroad to elaborate a solid corporate business strategy, articulated over time in appropriate sub-global strategies.

These latest publications have focused on specific aspects or individuals linked to Genoese history; as recognized by Calcagno in 2015, Genoa still lacks a granular approach to its shipping and seaborne trade in relation to the operations of its mercantile class and their commercial activities.⁴⁰ According to Fusaro, ‘however revisionist one might strive to be, it is undeniable that the centre of the European economy had indeed shifted away from Italy towards the north of Europe, though it is interesting to note how this revisionist approach has primarily focused on manufacturing, neglecting commerce.’⁴¹ Historiography has relied mainly on fiscal sources to reconstruct maritime traffic trends. Doria, who analysed the annual revenue from *bollo* and anchorage port taxes collected between 1550 and 1797,

identified some general trends of port traffic and specific phases of growth, crisis or stagnation (1576–1637; 1638–1681; 1682–1751), without providing data on a micro scale.⁴²

Grendi recalled the need to carry out in-depth studies into notarial sources to build serial analysis of voyage records related to vessels entering the port of Genoa, but this is not an easy task.⁴³ Bitossi defined the wealth of notarial sources in Genoa as a ‘complicated abundance’, hard to approach systematically.⁴⁴ This book fills the gap by focusing on a micro scale that shows the effects of the macro dynamics characterizing the seventeenth-century Mediterranean by exploiting a different and understudied source: Average procedures.

The GA, as mentioned, is a legal instrument that aims to share risks in a maritime voyage among shipowners and cargo owners. The GA principle is based on the redistribution of voluntary unforeseen expenses that occur to ship or cargo from loading to unloading. For this reason, GA can be referred to as a tool of mutual protection.⁴⁵

Conversely, when damage occurred due to force majeure during the early modern period, it fell under the Particular Average (PA) institution.⁴⁶ In early modern Genoa, both procedures were handled by the same magistracy and could occur simultaneously during a voyage. For example, a shipmaster during navigation may throw goods overboard to lighten the ship and escape a storm (a GA event). If, however, after escaping the storm a wave should wet and damage part of the cargo, a PA event would follow. The two procedures were therefore closely linked but conceptually different.⁴⁷

Felloni was the first Genoese historian to highlight the potential of Average sources to overcome the complexity of early modern shipping history. He believed that the serial processing of such sources would have allowed for a synthesis, similar to that envisaged by Grendi.⁴⁸ His research was a starting point, with no follow up for a long time. It was only in 2011 that Piccinno published a new paper on maritime Averages, and in 2017, Fusaro obtained an ERC grant precisely on European Averages and sea-borne trade.⁴⁹

The volume issued from Fusaro’s ERC research, edited by herself, Ad-dobbati and Piccinno, provides a sort of anthology on GA and its multiple economic, political, cultural and legal aspects.⁵⁰ It is a compendium of the different approaches that could be used towards this particular source and the main topics connected to it. I have followed this approach by referring to GA procedures to study the legal mechanisms that were sustaining trade, and their political use, while I have exploited information from both GA and PA procedures to study the maritime flows and their evolution over time as far as commodities, shipmasters’ nationalities and routes are concerned. By entering the large number of Averages proce-

dures I had at my disposal – 1,193 in total – into the online database of the *AveTransRisk* ERC project (ATR), my approach became a quantitative one.⁵¹

A standard Average procedure drafted in the early modern period consisted mainly of a report and damage apportionment calculation. The report was a transcription of the voyage's route and accident(s) that occurred during navigation, which led to the Average event. It was narrated by the shipmaster before the authorities in the first port where he stopped after the accident. The calculation was an estimate of the value of the vessel, cargo and, if certain conditions were met, freight. These values were complemented by the calculation of damage to the vessel, cargo and all administrative and unforeseen expenses. The ratio between damages and contributing values provides the contributing ratio to be paid by each party involved in proportion to their assets. Such contributing ratio could constitute a more or less significant transaction cost borne by merchants and shipowners. According to supporters of the New Institutional Economics, early modern trade owed its success to the capacity of institutions to shape them through establishing standard costs, or adopting rules favourable to traders to inspire mercantile confidence, as was the case with GA rules in Genoa.⁵²

Average reports have a wealth and breadth of information that fiscal sources do not. A procedure may consist of a single sheet containing only the shipmaster's report without a calculation, or of a rich dossier containing several attached documents, court cases and petitions produced by the parties involved. Moreover, because GA is a mutual institution, the documents do not present systematic underestimates of the values of ships and cargo, which usually bias fiscal sources. The reports, as well as the calculations, were read before competent magistracy in the presence of the parties involved. Litigations seem rare and were mainly related to errors in assessment and exceptional circumstances rather than to problems with the procedure itself.⁵³

Average procedures were under the jurisdiction of specific Genoese magistracies, which signed and drafted shipmasters' reports, even foreigners, without excessive administrative manipulation. This offered merchants and shipowners an *ex-post* risk management tool that covered a wide variety of maritime risks by sharing or shifting damages in an equitable manner. The documents revolved around maritime voyages operating between different early modern states amid storms and other dangers. Broadly speaking, their structures were similar across Europe. While acknowledging Genoa's significant role, it is important to note that this pan-European perspective enabled me to maintain a general, western-Mediterranean outlook, diverging from the Genoa-centric focus which is so apparent in the analyses of Grendi and Doria.

The structure of this book, consisting of four chapters, explores the intricacies of early modern maritime trade and the methodological nuances associated with Average sources, while avoiding excessive Genoa-centrism.

Chapter 1 analyses the functioning of the oligarchic Republic and its port. This is an interesting observatory because of the wide ramifications that Genoese businessmen had on a European – and partially extra-European – level. Average procedures have strong institutional connotations. Understanding the mechanisms underlying the Republic's economic policies, with particular reference to maritime trade, is necessary to understand Genoa's role, that of its port in the European arena and why GA was so important for trade. Powerful patricians who managed port magistracies were the same as those who dealt with Average rules and their ordinary management. Analysis of the port's infrastructural and administrative organizations also highlights the importance of the maritime sector.⁵⁴ Sample Average procedures were used to highlight specific elements linked to navigation and mooring in the port of Genoa.

Chapter 2, before dealing with the development of Average rules, analyses the financing and risk management tools available to maritime trade operators in Genoa. Providing a broader picture on the legal instruments available, and their functioning, is necessary for building a general framework to study the maritime world and the economic transactions that have occurred there. These processes are closely intertwined. A legal system, after all, is made from a set of rules and social structures. Over the years, Average rules have partially stimulated 'international rules' that have been promoted by different states. According to Pohlmann, the validity of international compilations of rules, like the *Consolat de Mar*, the *Rolls of Oléron* and the *Laws of Wisbuy*, that dealt with, among other things, GA, was at the heart of European maritime law.⁵⁵ The spread of laws drafted in different European countries outside of their original boundaries was among the earliest forms of globalization. It was already an integral part of the first, late fifteenth-century explorations, so substantially predated any form of economic globalizing forces.⁵⁶ Some scholars contend that such sets of laws, or at least parts of them, were spontaneously developed as universal and autonomous a-national legal systems by merchants, without regard to, and independent of, states, leading to the so-called *lex mercatoria*.⁵⁷ Here is where the history of legal interactions within the early modern Mediterranean becomes central to global history, especially for a key city in the elaboration of international law, such as Genoa. Genoese GA rules proved to be the output of deep rethinking and appropriation of existing Average rules. It was an original mixture of fragmentation and connectivity, a distinctive feature of Mediterranean micro-regions. Law contributed to the creation of a Mediterranean, maybe European, connectivity, where strangers abided by the same rules and located that connectivity in an institution. A cer-

tain degree of fragmentation remained, but as stated by Fusaro, ‘the early modern Mediterranean was the laboratory for a dialogue between different legal systems which has an extreme relevance over the *longue durée*’.⁵⁸ GA rules are an example of this dialogue.

Chapter 3 focuses on the micro analysis of the practical application of GA rules. In contrast to the evolutionary perspective described in Chapter 2, it draws attention to the coexistence of strategies, exceptions and constraints that actors could resort to in their everyday businesses. I have selected exemplary case studies that, owing to their complexity or peculiarity, lie on the borderline of the regulations previously examined. In spite of the statutory provisions and the interpretations of the jurists of the time, these cases elude an immediate attempt to classify them into the main categories of Average events. They allow a qualitative analysis of Average management and early modern maritime shipping and reveal a variety of original and atypical situations that hindered claims to the completeness of the legal world and reflected the complexity of early modern shipping.

The rules and peculiar procedures analysed in chapters 2 and 3 did not occur in a vacuum. A macro analysis is necessary and can be put in place thanks to the processing of data, sorted into twenty-one sample years chosen approximately every decade.⁵⁹ The last chapter uses information extracted from Average procedures as a lens to investigate maritime trade calling at the port of Genoa between 1590 and 1700. Despite changing GA rules, this procedure remained a widespread one in Genoa, and such sources can reveal a lot about maritime shipping and trade. They allow us to investigate phenomena such as the role of cabotage trade and the port of Genoa as a Mediterranean redistributive hub for local and global commodities, or, for example, the role of Northern shipping at the time of the Northern Invasion. According to the results of this analysis, Northern vessels were just one category of ships among others, strongly embedded in Mediterranean trade dynamics and usually sailing on behalf of Mediterranean merchants. Even when Northern vessels monopolized some Mediterranean routes, such as those from Sicily to Genoa, freights were usually paid by Mediterranean merchants and the monopoly didn’t last for long. Merchants also prospered by loading commodities together with partners from other centres (like Genoa and Livorno, along with London or Marseilles) or belonging to different religious communities (like Livornese Jews): another living example of the ‘familiarity of strangers’ studied by Trivellato. Early modern Italy has been described by some scholars as a pier dividing the internal sea into two halves, reflecting two informal spheres of influence, of which the western one was under Genoese ‘control’.⁶⁰ Throughout the analysis, a geographical specialization clearly emerged, but I have looked at the growing degree of interconnectedness between seaports in the Italian Peninsula during the seventeenth century.⁶¹ The period spanning from the

latter part of the sixteenth century to the close of the seventeenth century – a time predating the emergence of the nation-state and the formulation of distinctly ‘national’ commercial strategies – witnessed a markedly greater confluence of nationalities and vested interests within the Mediterranean, a phenomenon surpassing the dynamics observed in the subsequent eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

This epoch draws intriguing parallels with the contemporary landscape of international maritime trade, wherein profound structural, legislative and governance transformations are being ushered in by technological advancements (akin to the adoption of novel construction methods in that era and present-day developments such as containerization, the considerable enlargement of vessel dimensions, modern communication tools, and more) as well as by the entry of new maritime powers (comparable to the English and Dutch in the past and the current spread of Chinese influence).⁶² This analysis takes into account the wide, albeit fragmentary, historiography of Genoese maritime trade and aims to be part of the broader historiographic framework relating to seventeenth-century Mediterranean commerce. Genoa will play a key role in this reconstruction, which also takes into account routes linking northern Europe, the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean regions.

As mentioned, I have based my quantitative analysis on 1,193 Genoese Average procedures uploaded in the Open Access ATR database. This database is one of the main outputs of the Fusaro ERC database. Despite the fact that the documents come from different archival series and time periods, they follow the same structure: a procedure drawn up in 1590 is essentially identical to one produced a century later. Terminology, units of measurement, currencies and dates are standardized throughout.

The conclusion evaluates the role of Average sources in shedding light on both early modern shipping and European legal development. The analysis aims to trace a new path of investigation in Genoese maritime trade during the seventeenth century by reinforcing or challenging what we know so far. It will offer new avenues for further research that draw from maritime, legal and global history.

Notes

1. Lloyd's values the canal's westbound traffic at roughly 5.1 billion dollars a day and eastbound traffic at around 4.5 billion dollars a day. See La Rocco, 'Suez Canal Blockage'.
2. On the contemporary application of this principle see Kruit, *General Average*.
3. Weitsen, *Tractatus de Avariis*, 1. Translation from Addobbati, Fusaro and Piccinno, *General Average*, 5–6.
4. Greif, *Institutions*, 30.

5. It is true, however, that avoiding the loss of profit through a successful risk management institution makes the possibility of growth more likely and can still be seen as a tool for the pursuit of profit.
6. Addobbati, *Commercio, Rischio, Guerra*, 7–13.
7. See, as an example, the chapters written by Maria Fusaro and Dario Mantovani in Demonstant et al., *Le Changement Climatique*.
8. On the problematic concept of moral economy and its implications, see Fontaine, *The Moral Economy*.
9. Fusaro, 'Maritime History', 274.
10. de Vries, 'The Limits', 711; Supiot, *Mondialisation ou globalisation*, 9–14.
11. On a broader discussion of these two concepts see Fusaro, 'The Global Relevance', 1–13; Fusaro, 'Maritime History', 267–282.
12. This is true especially if we consider maritime studies on the British Empire. O'Hara, "'The Sea is Swinging into View'", 1109–1134.
13. Fusaro, 'Maritime History', 276. See, as an example of a new kind of imperial, global and maritime history, Strootman, van den Eijnde and van Wijk, *Empires of the Sea*.
14. Holenstein, Maissen and Prak, *The Republican Alternative*.
15. Fusaro, *Political Economies*, 89.
16. On a detailed analysis of their concept of connectivity see Horden and Purcell, 'Mediterranean Connectivity', 211–224.
17. Hershenzon, *The Captive Sea*, 6.
18. See Greene, 'Beyond the Northern Invasion', 42 and the bibliography cited in footnote 2.
19. Trivellato, *The Familiarity*, 1–2.
20. Fusaro, *Political Economies*, 92.
21. Pacini, "'Poiché gli Stati non Sono Portatili . . .'", 443–456.
22. Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism*, III, 157.
23. Ibid.
24. See Fortunati, 'La Cultura Giuridica'. For more information on these two jurists see Chapter 2.
25. See Bitossi, *Il Governo dei Magnifici*.
26. Quotation in Assereto, 'Dall'Amministrazione Patrizia', 95.
27. See, as an example, Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*; Greif, 'On the Political Foundations'.
28. In the section 'Le Choix des Annales', *Annales* 43(1) (1988), unnumbered page.
29. Fusaro, *Political Economies*, 92 and bibliography quoted therein.
30. Felloni, 'La Storiografia Marittima', 865. For a later analysis on this topic see Massa, 'La Repubblica di Genova', 11–20.
31. Tabak, *The Waning*, 7.
32. Scammell, *The World Encompassed*, 155.
33. Piergiovanni and Savelli, for example, popularized Genoese medieval and early modern history in the European context from a legal history perspective. Grendi wrote a series of essays that are still indispensable reference points and will be extensively cited throughout this book.
34. On the activities of the NavLab see <https://sites.google.com/site/navlabstoriagenova/>. Retrieved 28 March 2023.
35. Kirk, in particular, focused on the evolution of Genoa's maritime and naval policies during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and their impact on the Republic's

- foreign policy, with a focus on the free port and the status of Genoa as an entrepôt. Kirk, *Genoa and the Sea*.
36. Greene, 'Beyond the Northern Invasion,' 52.
 37. Tabak, *The Waning*, 34.
 38. García-Montón, *Genoese Entrepreneurship*. This was the contextualization that I followed in Iodice and Piccinno, 'Whatever the Cost'. Another example – worth in itself for the problematic it raises, albeit part of the historiography criticized it – is Dauverd, *Imperial Ambition*.
 39. See Doria, *Nobiltà e Investimenti*, 91–156.
 40. Calcagno, 'Uno dei "Tirreni"', 82–83.
 41. Fusaro, *Political Economies*, 90.
 42. Doria, 'La Gestione del Porto', 173–183.
 43. The data analysed by Grendi are still useful and widely exploited when providing overall indications of trade, but they do not specify the economic relations underlying vessels' activities, the routes they followed and the cargo they carried. Grendi, 'I Nordici e il Traffico', 23.
 44. Bitossi, *Il Governo dei Magnifici*, 22.
 45. From a practical point of view, it is one of the most important, but also one of the most complicated topics in maritime law. According to Yancey, former president of the US Average Adjusters Association, this institution is characterized by 'the most esoteric obscurities'. Buglass, *General Average*, ix.
 46. This expression refers to damages that befall only the owner of the damaged goods or ship. As the damage was due to unforeseen circumstances without a voluntary sacrifice, it did not produce a common benefit.
 47. Information from the GA procedures will be integrated with information from PA only when reconstructing trade flows calling at the port of Genoa. When referring to both institutions, I will use the expression 'maritime Average'.
 48. Felloni, 'Una Fonte Inesplorata', 843–860.
 49. Piccinno, 'Rischi di Viaggio', 159–179; ERC project *Average-Transaction Costs and Risk Management during the First Globalization (Sixteenth–Eighteenth Centuries)* (grant agreement n. 724544). Retrieved 30 January 2023 from <https://history.oxeter.ac.uk/research/centres/maritime/research/avetransrisk/>. Fusaro's ERC research resulted in a collective volume and four Ph.D. theses. Each thesis deals with the GA concept from a different perspective. Dreijer investigated the development of different typologies of Averages in the Low Countries between the medieval and the early modern period. See Dreijer, *The Power and Pains*. Wade focused on the French marine insurance industry under Louis XIV, among which Averages played a relevant role. See Wade, *Privilege, Economy and State*. Dyble emphasized GA as a business practice in the Tuscan free port of Livorno. See Dyble, *General Average in the Free Port*.
 50. Addobbati, Fusaro and Piccinno, *General Average*.
 51. On ATR and the sources I inputted there, see the first paragraph of Chapter 4.
 52. North defined transaction costs as 'all the costs of human beings interacting with each other'. They are the costs of specifying and enforcing the contracts that underlie exchange and therefore comprise all the costs of political and economic organization. D. North, 'Transaction Costs, Institutions', 24. The concept was pioneered by Oliver Williamson. See Williamson, 'The Economics of Organization', 548–577. Pre-modern maritime trade was particularly sensitive to transaction costs. Transaction costs for repeated ventures remained high if maritime risks were not mit-

- igated, and sudden capital shocks instigated by maritime losses could trigger bankruptcies, creating a risk-averse commercial culture. See North, 'Transaction Costs, Institutions', 7.
53. On these aspects see Felloni, 'Una Fonte Inesplorata', 846.
 54. The port was a shelter for vessels, a provider of facilities and services for trade and a source of tax revenue for the state. See Cavaciocchi, *I Porti come Impresa Economica*; Sirago, 'Il Sistema Portuale Italiano'.
 55. Pohlmann, 'Die Quellen des Handelsrechts', 801–834.
 56. Fusaro, 'The Global Relevance', 3 and bibliography quoted therein.
 57. See Piergiorgio, *From Lex Mercatoria*; Toth, *The Lex Mercatoria*.
 58. Fusaro, 'The Global Relevance', 1.
 59. See Table 4.1 in Chapter 4.
 60. Fusaro, 'After Braudel', 2. On the theorization of the Genoese and Venetian areas of influence see Tabak, *The Waning*, 33–83. On the medieval conflicts between Genoa and Venice for Mediterranean hegemony see Musarra, *Il Grifo*.
 61. Fusaro, *Political Economies*, 90.
 62. Fusaro, 'The Global Relevance', 6.