



Serving in the Fleet: Crews and Recruitment Issues in the Catalan-Aragonese Fleets During the War of Sicilian Vespers (1282-1302)

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Abstract

When Peter III of Aragon invaded Sicily in 1282, he had expected a swift resolution to the conflict with Charles of Anjou. Instead, the Crown of Aragon was drawn into an essentially naval conflict that spanned twenty years and required it to maintain two separate fleets to guard Catalonia and Sicily. The fleet guarding Valencia and Catalonia had the luxury of recruiting men locally who would be fighting to protect their regions. Yet despite this, because of internal politics, the commanders at one point faced open rebellion and continual recruitment problems. To man the Sicilian fleet, Roger de Loria had to recruit both Muslim and Christian crews and amphibious units from Iberia, North Africa and southern Italy, which would seem to be a volatile mixture. Yet by using incentives and strong leadership, he was able to meld the disparate groups into a deadly fighting force, demonstrating that crews of the period often had complex motivations transcending traditional political, social, and religious boundaries.

Keywords

recruitment, Sicilian Vespers, Crown of Aragon, mercenaries, Catalonia

When Peter III began to assemble his fleet in 1282 with the aim of invading Sicily, he was immediately confronted with the problem of finding sufficient numbers of men to man the ships. This problem became increasingly critical as what had seemed to be a short war dragged on, and he was forced to maintain two fleets—one to defend Sicily and one to protect the coasts of Catalonia and Valencia. If he hoped to control Sicily, Peter had to have a fleet capable of policing the water around Sicily and the nearby islands. One would assume that there would be substantially more problems recruiting for

the fleet stationed in Sicily than the one in home waters, but the evidence suggests the opposite. Admiral Roger de Loria succeeded in recruiting and leading polyglot crews composed of men of different ethnicities and religions in the Sicilian fleet; vice admirals Raymund Marquet and Berenguer Mallol had serious problems recruiting and maintaining discipline in the fleet stationed in Catalonia. The recruitment problems that confronted Marquet and Mallol, and the lack thereof encountered by Roger de Loria during the War of the Sicilian Vespers (1282-1302), stemmed from a complex mixture of politics and greed. This article examines recruitment for the home and the Sicilian fleets in order to show how Roger de Loria overcame potentially debilitating obstacles to solve his recruitment problems, while the home fleet remained plagued by these same issues.

Charles of Anjou had invaded Sicily in 1266 and proceeded methodically and ruthlessly to squeeze all the available resources out of the island. By 1282 the resentment of the Sicilian population reached the point that on Easter Sunday the people rose up and massacred the French in a bloody revolt. The sixteen years of Angevin rule had bred a deep hatred for the French, and Charles's attempts to retake the island had met with fierce resistance and little success. The Sicilians had pleaded with Pope Martin IV for protection, but his insistence that they return to the rule of Charles of Anjou forced them to search for an alternative. Meanwhile, Peter III of Aragon had already been preparing to assert his ancestral claim to the island by force and since 1281 had been assembling a Catalan-Aragonese fleet at Port Fangos under the pretext of undertaking a crusade in the Maghreb, though the real target was clearly Sicily. Peter, who had been waiting at Collo in North Africa, quickly responded when the Sicilians asked for his help in August 1282 and landed in Sicily on August 31. He received the unreserved support of the Sicilian communities and was quickly crowned king at Palermo. By October 2, he had pushed the Angevins out of Sicily and consolidated his control. This seemed to be the end of the conflict, but it soon became clear that Charles intended to continue the war.

Peter III had expected a short campaign against Charles of Anjou and so had used traditional means to man the fleet. In the fall of 1281, Peter began to issue orders to various towns throughout the Crown of Aragon to provide men and equipment for the fleet.¹ The requirement for nobles and towns to

¹ A typical order given on February 23, 1281, lists a number of towns and gives the number of men each was to provide along with the equipment they were to bring to the fleet. Barcelona, Archivo de la Corona de Aragón (hereafter ACA), reg. 44, fol. 209v.

provide men to the king was based on the *Usatges de Barcelona* in the section entitled *Princeps namque*, which was written in the twelfth century.² These statutes pertained only to the defense of Catalonia. When James I and then Peter III tried to apply these laws to what were perceived to be foreign adventures, both the towns and the nobility began to object. At the very least, they argued, the king was required to pay the men while they were in his service.³ For such a large undertaking, this was a major issue, and already by March 1282 Raymund Marquet was complaining that there were insufficient funds to recruit and pay the men.⁴ When Charles of Anjou was forced out of Sicily in October 1282, it must have seemed that the traditional methods for recruitment would be sufficient as it appeared the war would soon be over. However, it soon became apparent the Angevins were not going to give up easily, and Peter III was confronted with a potentially protracted conflict with which he and his administration were ill prepared to cope. By 1283 the Crown of Aragon was forced to maintain two separate fleets to protect Sicily and its Iberian coastline from Angevin naval assaults. The main fleet in Sicily fell under the administration of Roger de Loria as head of the reconstituted Hohenstaufen institution of the Office of the Admiral. The home fleet in Catalonia was technically under this office but in reality was controlled by local vice-admirals and paid with separate funds.

The initial response to recruitment shortfalls was to continue to rely on the feudal obligations for service to the crown. As late as March 31, 1283, Peter III was demanding the bailiff of Valencia provide three thousand men for service in the fleet in Sicily, but problems were already arising.⁵ The constant demand for personnel to serve in the fleet was becoming increasingly unpopular, and the crown was finding it difficult to pay the men. The need for men got to the point that on August 12, 1283, the king issued a decree

² Donald J. Kagay, *The Usatges of Barcelona: The Fundamental Law of Catalonia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 80.

³ María Teresa Ferrer Mallol, "La organización military en Cataluña en la Edad Media," *Revista de historia militar* 45, special number (2001), 156-7.

⁴ Rafael Galloffe and José Trenchs, "Almirantes y vicealmirantes de la Corona de Aragón (1186-1462)," *Miscellània de Textos Medievals* 5 (1989), 131, doc. 15.

⁵ "Bailio Regna Valencia. . . Dominus Rex Pater noster mandavit vobis per litteras suas pro faciende conduiti tria milla homines ad opus armate Sicilie de quibus fuerit duo millia et quadragenta remerii et quadragenta quinginta ballistarii et nonaginta nautxerii et triginta comiti et triginta gabonerii. . ." ACA, reg. 60, fol. 72v. The men were to be marshaled at the arsenal at Valencia. The letter includes an order to other bailiffs and officials not to interfere with the men going to the fleet.

asking for Muslim crossbowmen and lancers to help fight the French and promising those who enlisted "good pay."⁶ While there is little evidence of Muslims serving in the home fleet, as will be discussed, there were a substantial number in the Sicilian fleet.

To back up his demands for money and service from towns and cities, Peter III continued his father's introduction of Roman law as a means to extend royal authority, which included levying taxes.⁷ Peter's lawyers argued, using Roman law as a basis, that the *imperium* of the king superseded the older customary laws and gave him the authority to impose new regulations and taxes. Many of the nobility and the towns objected to this direct challenge to their old *fueros* and privileges. The nobles had complained to the king at a parliament at Tarazona in 1283 that he had started the war without their consent and that they were being taxed unlawfully, but Peter chose to ignore them. The nobility saw little value in the war since there was no chance for them to increase their holdings, and they saw Peter III's continued entanglement in Sicily as an opportunity to further their interests at the Crown's expense.⁸ The nobility and citizens responded to Peter's indifference by forming the Union of Aragon and calling a general *cortes* in Zaragoza in October where a series of demands, called the *Privilegio general*, were made.⁹ The *cortes* demanded a limit to the taxes the king could impose, the removal of Catalan and foreign administrators, a return to the *fueros* of the land, and a royally summoned general *cortes* every year for consultation with the people. The nobility and towns in Valencia, seeing an opportunity to expand their freedoms, formed the Union of Valencia and demanded the same privileges from Peter.¹⁰ Both unions viewed foreigners and Catalans to be essentially

⁶ Luis Querol y Roso, *Las Milicias Valencianas desde el siglo XIII al XV* (Castellon de la Plana: [Sociedad castellonense de cultura], 1935), 188-9, doc. 8. The original document is located in ACA, reg. 46, fol. 100v.

⁷ María Isabel Falcón Pérez gives a good summary of the various taxes and monopolies employed by the Crown to raise the required funds for Peter's Sicilian excursion. "Repercusión en las ciudades y villas aragonesas de la política mediterránea de Pedro III el Grande," *XI Congreso di storia della Corona d'Aragona* 3 (1984), 101-20.

⁸ E. Sarasa Sánchez, *Sociedad y conflictos sociales en Aragón siglos XIII-XV* (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno, 1981), 34-5.

⁹ Bernard Desclot, *Llibre del Rei en Pere*, in *Les quatre grans cròniques*, ed. Ferran Soldevila (Barcelona: Editorial Selecta, 1983), chap. 130; Jerónimo Zurita, *Anales de la Corona de Aragón* (Zaragoza: Institución "Fernando el Católico," 1977), bk. 4, chap. 39.

¹⁰ Joseph O'Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1975), 388-9.

the same. By 1285 Peter III was severely restricted by the unions and was finding it difficult and expensive to recruit men for the home fleet, much less the fleet in Sicily.

The problem both fleets would encounter was that they required trained and specialized crews that were in high demand, both by the crown and by the merchant fleet. A typical galley of 116 oars carried on average eight pilots (*naulerii*), thirty crossbowmen (*ballisterii*), four boatswains (*proderii non bocantes*), a shipwright (*magistri carpinterii*), and the one hundred and sixteen rowers (*rimerii*). Experienced pilots were always in demand, and even the rowers were divided up into specialized groups of highly trained men. Archival documents mention rowers divided into *tubatores*, *proderii*, *alerii*, *spallerii*, *tercerii puppis et prore*, *cruellerii*, and *palamarii*.¹¹ All these men performed specific and important functions on the ship.¹² For example, rowers included the *palamarii*, who were divided into a *magister assiea* and a *calafatus*. The first was the “master of rigging” for the galley and responsible for the standing and running rigging. The second was the “caulker,” who was responsible for repairing leaks, replacing planking, and in general maintaining the hull. These men may have been the muscle that drove the ship, but they were far from being unskilled labor. Moreover, all the men were armed and expected to fight in boarding actions or amphibious operations.

Since a large part of the merchant fleet included merchant galleys (*llenys* and *taridas*), the rowers, besides the other crew members, could easily find

¹¹ “Item Grimaldo de Panormo comito unius galee curie de remis centum sedecim armate in Panormo. . . . Item rimeriis centum sex computatis tubatoribus duobus et proderiis non bocantibus quatuor pro solidis aleris quatuor spalleriis quatuor terciis puppis et prore octo cruelleriis quatuor proderiis octo palamariis duobus uni magistro assie et uni calafato pro honoratiis eorum mensium quatuor et dicrum decem et septem numeratorum a predicto undecimo die dicti mensis madii quinte indicionis usque per totum vicesimum secundum diem predicti mensis septembris computatis in eis diebus quinque ultra tempus quo servierunt in dicta galea pro redditu eorum a messana in panormum ultra menses duos numeratos a predicto undecimo martii in antea pro quibus de solidis eorum satisfactum est eis per symonem supradictum. Item aliis rimeriis decem de rimeriis predictae galee de solidis eorum certorum temporum notatorum in predicto quaterno qua medio tempore aliqui ipsorum propter mortem aliqui propter fugam et aliqui propter infirmitates licentiati et absentes fuerunt a serviciis galee predictae.” Archivo de la Catedral de Valencia (hereafter ACV), perg. 737. The above is for a galley armed in Palermo of 116 oars. This example is typical for other large galleys in the fleet.

¹² For a full discussion of the crews, see Lawrence V. Mott, *Sea Power in the Medieval Medi-terranean: The Catalan-Aragonese Fleet in the War of the Sicilian Vespers* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), chap. 8.

work on merchant ships. Moreover, there were decided advantages to doing so. Besides the reduced risk of maiming or death in battle, the crews in the merchant fleet had the potential to make extra money beyond their standard pay. Often crews bought shares (*loca*) in their ship and shared in the profits from a voyage. Even when the crew had no direct investment in a ship, they could request to be allotted space to bring their own goods for trade or sale without paying the lading charge.¹³ These incentives made it hard to attract men to the fleet, since the basic pay rate for the crews in the fleet or on merchantmen was the same. The catch was that neither Roger de Loria nor Raymund Marquet could easily increase the pay rate to attract men to the fleet. A large galley of 120 oars cost seventy-five ounces of gold per month to operate and approximately 75 percent of the cost went to pay the crew.¹⁴ A squadron of ten galleys would have approximately fifteen hundred men; even a moderate pay raise could have a huge impact on the operating costs. Given this, it is little wonder Marquet and Malloí were finding it difficult to attract men, especially the highly trained ones, to the fleet in 1282.

There was also the problem of privateers being commissioned by the local bailiffs. A rower signing up with one of these privateers not only received his pay but could look forward to a percentage of the loot left after the king received his "fifth." Following standard practice, a *naulerius* could expect two full shares of the loot, while a crossbowman would get one and each of the rowers received a half share.¹⁵ While more dangerous than sailing with the merchant fleet, work aboard a privateer offered sailors the promise of quick wealth.

Recruitment and retention of crews was no small issue. This twenty-year war would be entirely decided by naval and amphibious operations. Even the French invasion of Catalonia in 1285 was repulsed due to the Catalan-Aragonese fleet cutting off the French supplies at Las Rosas. Without the fleets, neither Catalonia nor Sicily could be adequately protected. Both Roger de Loria and vice-admirals Marquet and Malloí faced the problems of money and competition from the merchant fleet and privateers. At first glance, Roger in Sicily would seem to have had the more daunting challenge

¹³ Stanley S. Jados, *Consulat of the Sea and Related Documents* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1975), 71-3.

¹⁴ Mott, *Sea Power in the Medieval Mediterranean*, 226.

¹⁵ *Las Siete Partidas*, ed. Robert J. Burns (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 2: 492-6.

of having to recruit men from both Sicily and the Crown of Aragon, but in fact Marquet and Mallol would encounter more problems recruiting at home.

The Fleet in Sicily

The Office of the Admiral in Sicily, headed by Admiral Roger de Loria, had to confront recruitment problems caused by the unions and the lack of money. In August 1283, Peter III authorized Roger to operate a press as needed, but the rise of the unions seems to have curtailed its use.¹⁶ As with later navies that used the press as a means to fill out crews on warships, Roger began to raid merchantmen for the required personnel. This was obviously unpopular with shipowners and merchants, who in turn put pressure on the crown to stop the practice. In May 1285, Peter III ordered the admiral not to detain any of the crews of ships operated by the merchants of Barcelona. This order was followed a week later by a similar one for the admiral not to detain men from the ships of one Peter Prunariis "on account of the Sicilian fleet."¹⁷

By 1285 the political situation in the Crown of Aragon virtually assured that Roger de Loria would have to recruit his crews from Sicily or elsewhere, which in turn raised other potential problems. According to Ramon Muntaner, soon after taking Messina in August 1282, Peter III decreed that the crews of the Sicilian fleet should be both Catalan and Sicilian in composition:

And when the next day came, the king called the admiral and said, "Admiral, immediately arm twenty-five galleys, and arm them thus: that each should have a Catalan *còmit* [commander] and the other a Latin, and three Catalan *noyers* [pilots] and three Latins [i.e., Sicilians], and the same for the *proers* [boatswains], and the rowers should all be Latins, and the crossbowmen all Catalans. And thus it is ordained the fleet should be arranged, and for no reason should you change it."¹⁸

¹⁶ Francisco de Bofarull y Sans, *Antigua marina catalana* (Barcelona: Estab. tip. de hijos de J. Jepús, 1898), 66, doc. 5. The original location for the document given in the book must be a misprint, for the document is actually located in Archivo Corona de Aragon, Cancillería real, reg. 54, fol. 237r. The book lists the location as fol. 227.

¹⁷ Giuseppe La Mantia, *Codice diplomatico dei re aragonesi di Sicilia*, 2 vols. (Palermo: Riscampa Anastatica, 1990), 1: docs. 74, 77.

¹⁸ Muntaner, *Crònica*, in *Les quatre grans cròniques*, chap. 76.

This order, in fact, did become the standard for the fleet and was issued for a number of practical reasons. That the two commanders should be a Catalan and a Sicilian suggests the crown wanted to ensure control of the ships but also wanted to ensure the crews had officers on board that came from their particular group. This appears to be true of the boatswains as well. Since the officers of the galley were equally divided between “Latins” and Catalans, there could be no charge that any group on board was being unfairly treated by the officers because of their ethnicity.

Because approximately 80 percent of a galley’s crew were rowers, the above regulation for manning the fleet made sense. As we have seen, Peter III was still trying to recruit rowers from Valencia as late as 1283, but by 1285 Roger de Loria was recruiting most of these from Sicily and the surrounding islands.¹⁹ By mandating the rowers be all Sicilian, Peter was making sure not only that Valencia and Catalonia would not be drained of rowers but also, as will be discussed below, that the fleet would be manned by crews who had incentive beyond just pay. Still the need for rowers was so pressing by 1289 that Roger was recruiting men from as far away as Capri and Ischia near Naples, which was right on the doorstep of the enemy.²⁰ While some of the rowers were assigned to galleys provided by their home ports, many groups were divided up among the royal galleys at Messina and often served with men from other cities or regions. Although this might not seem remarkable today, it has to be remembered that crews of the time often had more loyalty to their cities than to their countries, and a number of Sicilian cities still had old scores to settle with each other. For example, when Charles of Anjou invaded Sicily in 1266, the citizens of Messina used the invasion as an excuse to loot and burn the city of Augusta. This type of attitude toward other cities was so prevalent throughout Sicily and Calabria that the mixing of men from

¹⁹ “Olim per diversas vices, infra eundem annum quíntedecime indictionis, solvisse et per manus diversorum commissariorum suorum solvi fecisse in diversis locis, in quaterno ipso distinctis, baiulis et iudicibus subscriptarum terrarum Sicilie, videlicet Trapani, Montis Sancti Juliani, Marsalie, Mazarie, Castri Veterani, Salem, Sacce, Calarabillocte, Curilioni, Agrigenti, Licate, Heraclie, Syracusie, Auguste, Lentimi, Cathanie, Iacii, Mascularum, Tauromeni, Cephaludi, Thermarum, Panormi, Montis Regalis et Alcamí, pro solidando in singulis terrarum ipsarum certo numero marinariorum deputatorum ad armationem predicti extolli.” La Mantia, *Codice diplomatico dei re aragonesi di Sicilia*, 1: 617, doc. 241.

²⁰ “Johanni de Yscla pro naulo cuiusdam barce sue cum qua marinairi centum viginti Insularum Procide et Capri ab eisdem Insularis usque Messanam navigatum cum predicto extolio transfererunt auri uncias duas.” Archivo Catedral de Valencia, perg. 738.

various regions could be potentially explosive. Added to this was the fact that the groups that made up the fighting body of the fleet came from areas outside the region and in part comprised Muslims.

Obtaining the *naucleri* (pilots) initially proved troublesome for the fleet and required the Office of the Admiral to use a graduated pay scale depending on the experience of the pilot. Whether the fleet followed the king's directive precisely is unknown, but the fleet accounts show that Sicilian *naucleri* were actively recruited from all over Sicily for the fleet to supplement the Catalan pilots.²¹ Considering that the *naucleri* needed an intimate knowledge of the various locales where the fleet might put in, it is not surprising that the admiral wanted both Catalan and Sicilian pilots on board, since the operational theater of the fleet included the entire western Mediterranean. But this in turn required broad recruitment activity both in Sicily and in the Crown of Aragon.

The Catalan-Aragonese fleet in Sicily relied predominantly on Catalonia to provide the crossbowmen for the fleet, and the accounts repeatedly note that when "Latin" (Sicilian) crossbowmen were recruited it was "due to a lack of" available Catalan ones.²² These men were recruited from towns throughout Catalonia and Valencia and were veterans of conflicts with Castile and Granada. More importantly, they had the reputation of being some of the deadliest archers in the Mediterranean.²³ The Office of the Admiral thought enough of them to pay them at the same rate as the pilots and to ransom

²¹ "Item naucleriis viginti duobus de Messana pro solidis eorum eiusdem mensis augusti, ad rationem de tarenis viginti pro quolibet eorum, pro mense predicto: uncias quatuordecim et tarenos viginti. Item naucleriis duobus de Messana pro solidis eorum, eiusdem mensis, ad rationem de tarenis quindecim pro quolibet eorum per mensem, unciam unam. Item naucleriis quatuor de Syracusia conductis pro supplemento naucleriorum de Catalonia, pro solidis eorum mensium duorum, a primo dicti mensis augusti in antea numeratorum, ad rationem de tarenis quindecim pro quolibet eorum per mensem, uncias quatuor." La Mantia, *Codice diplomatico dei re aragonesi di Sicilia*, 1: 556, doc. 222.

²² "[P]ro armacione subscriptarum galearum quatragesimi galionorum duorum et vaccetarum quinque Regii extolii armatarum per eundem ammiratum pro predicta curia ad extalium... pro qualibet ipsorum (galearum) de remis centum viginti per mensem in quorum qualibet iuxta convencionem predictam, dictus ammiratus deputerat tenebatur comiros duos nauclerios octo balistarios catalanos vel latinos in defectu balistariorum catalanorum qui haberi non posserat triginta..." ACV, perg. 738. This is just one example of where the accounts note that Latin, or Sicilian, crossbowmen can be recruited only when the fleet is "in defectu" of Catalan ones.

²³ For a good, if somewhat biased, view of the Catalan crossbowmen, see Muntaner, *Crònica*, chap. 130.

them back if they were captured by the Angevins. In 1286 the fleet paid the considerable sum of one ounce of gold per man to liberate ten Catalan cross-bowmen who were being held as prisoners by the Angevins.²⁴ These men were highly prized, and Roger de Loria had to compete not only with the Catalan and Aragonese nobility but the fleet in Catalonia as well for their services.

The other three groups that made up the Catalan-Aragonese fleet in Sicily were unique to that fleet in several ways. First, they composed the backbone of an amphibious force that the Catalonia fleet did not have, and, second, they were all mercenaries. Probably the most celebrated group was the *almogavars*. They were light infantry used by the fleet as marines, both in naval combat and amphibious operations. This group was made up of men from along the frontiers with Granada and Castile who made their living as raiders or as mercenaries. They were tough and highly effective but were also notoriously difficult to control.²⁵ Roger's predecessor, Jaime Perez, had been removed from the office in part because he could not control them during a raid in 1282 in which they butchered hostages, including the Count of Alençon. A second group, also problematic, was the *stipendarii* who were companies of mercenary knights wearing chain mail and riding destriers carrying heavy barding. Some of these knights were performing their feudal service without pay, some were provided by towns under a contract with the fleet, and others were clearly mercenaries working for the highest bidder.

The last group of mercenaries was the *janetii*, who are perhaps the most intriguing. The *janetii* were light cavalry composed predominantly of Muslims, though there were some Christians in each company.²⁶ They were not

²⁴ "Pro redemptione et liberatione balistariorum catalanorum decem, qui per hostes nostros in Tropea carceri tenebantur, et post liberationem eorum cum nostro extolio navigaverunt usque Neapolim et abinde redierunt in Siciliam: uncias decem." La Mantia, *Codice diplomatico dei re aragonesi di Sicilia*. 1: 619, doc. 241.

²⁵ Paul N. Morris, "We Have Met Devils! The Almogavars of James I and Peter III of Catalonia-Aragon," *Anistoriton* 4 (2000), available at <http://www.anistor.co.hol.gr/english/index.htm>.

²⁶ "Item subscriptis janettis videlicet: Chamet Benmusa auri unciam unam. Mansur Beniamar auri unciam unam. Musea Tigerii auri unciam unam. Yhaye auri unciam unam. Musea Benethamer auri unciam unam. Sayt Bensaca auri unciam unam. Aly Bensayt auri unciam unam. Dommirano Tigerii auri unciam unam. Chamet Benmansur auri unciam unam. Alamanno de Roda auri unciam unam. Michaeli de Agues auri uncias duas." ACV, perg. 738. As can be seen in this entry, the *janeti* were predominantly Muslim, but there were a few Christian riders as well.

only recruited from Valencia, as previously noted, but from North Africa as well.²⁷ It was not uncommon for Muslim mercenaries to be hired by Christian rulers in Spain, but placing them in the confined quarters of a fleet was another proposition. These groups of approximately 20 men would have been packed, along with their horses, on specialized galleys called *galeae aperte in puppa* (galleys open in the stern), which could unload horse and rider directly onto a beach. These Muslim riders would have been in tight quarters surrounded by a crew of some 140 Christians. This mixture of men from all over the western Mediterranean basin would seem to be a recipe for internal conflict within the fleet. Yet despite this, there do not seem to have been any problems or at least none that appear in the chronicles or fleet accounts. On the contrary, the crews and mercenaries formed a cohesive unit that consistently outfought their Angevin counterparts. Moreover, records show the mercenaries repeatedly renewed their contracts with the fleet.

In fact, the fleet had no recorded incidences of riots or open rebellion by the crews or mercenaries, even when pay was in arrears. In part, the lack of problems was due to the leadership of Roger de Loria and his reputation as a successful commander. Roger had taken command of the fleet in 1283 after Jaime Perez, the natural son of the king, had been quietly removed from office on account of incompetence. From the very start, Roger proved to be an aggressive and competent commander, winning decisive battles at Malta in 1283 and at Naples in 1284. Moreover, he was gaining the reputation for winning battles even when substantially outnumbered. Also, at least according to all the chronicles, Roger tended to lead from the front. His reputation as a cunning commander and his willingness to lead by example undoubtedly had a strong effect on the fleet's morale. After his crushing of the French fleet off Las Formigueras in Catalonia in 1285, his reputation as a courageous and skillful commander was cemented. From the chronicles it is clear he was popular with the crews, but he also ran a tight ship and could be ruthless when it was called for. In one case, he ordered the mutilation of a rower who had taken the enlistment money and then deserted.²⁸

²⁷ In this case, the crown paid for the wives and children of the mercenaries to be moved from North Africa to Sicily: "Filiis Bedebus sarracenis et sociis eorum quas pro redonendis uxotibus et filiis eorum pro nauo vasselli in quo de partibus barbarie in Sicilia transfretaxunt et pro expensis eorum quas eis de gratia dictus dominus rex dari providit auri uncias novem." Archivo Catedral de Valencia, perg. 738.

²⁸ Here, eighteen rowers deserted, but only the one who could not pay back the money had his ears mutilated. "Item rimeriis Catalanis decem et octo conductis per predictum

The ability of a commander to motivate crews was important, for life in the fleet could be hard. The men were often gone from home for up to four months and forced to live in cramped conditions aboard the galleys. Even when the galleys made landfall, the crews and officers were required to sleep on board unless given permission by the admiral to do otherwise. Moreover, as noted, even the rowers were expected to fight; they were issued iron caps, cuirasses, and short swords. Medieval naval battles usually devolved into vicious hand-to-hand boarding battles, and the loser could expect little mercy. Although the Battle of Malta in 1283 was a stunning victory for the fleet over the Angevins, the fleet still lost 288 men, or approximately 10 percent of the crews.²⁹ However, if one was under the command of incompetent officers, the situation could be substantially worse, as it was for the approximately 4,500 Angevins who lost their lives in the same battle.

Even when not in combat, simply operating a large galley could be strenuous work, particularly in the hot summer sun of the Mediterranean. Food for all the members of the fleet was an important issue, especially for the rowers. Proof of this is in the type and amount of food that was being provided to the crews. Besides consuming up to four liters per day of water, the rowers required a caloric intake sufficient to sustain their high level of activity. The meal was divided into the *potu* (drink), the *panatica* (biscuit), and the *companagius* (cheese, meat, and *salsa*).³⁰ The average crewman received a ration of salt meat, cheese, chickpeas, horse bean, olive oil, red or white wine, and the ubiquitous biscuit. The salt meat and beans were mixed with spices, brine, onions, and garlic to make a *salsa* common to medieval fleets.³¹ The biscuit would be broken up and mixed with the *salsa* to form gruel. From the

ammiratum ad navigandum cum predictis galeis custodie ad servicia curie supradicta qui recepta pecunia solidorum suorum aufugerunt a Civitate messane et inveniri non potuerunt ut servierunt in galeis eisdem ni tam unus ipsorum cui predictus ammiratus propter predictam fugam manduit et fecit mutulari aures nulla apud eum inventa pecunia ex qua satisfaceri posset curie de solidis solutus ei per curiam et qui ecciam non potueret inveniri fideiussores ab eis recepti et in dicto quaterno notati. . . ." ACV, perg. 737.

²⁹ Mott, "The Battle of Malta: Prelude to Disaster," in *The Circle of War in the Middle Ages*, ed. Donald Kagay and L. J. Andrew Villalon (New York: Boydell and Brewer Publishing, 1999), 163.

³⁰ "[N]ecnon quantitas biscotti pro panatica, casei et carniū sallatarum pro companagio, vini pro potu. . ." ACV, perg. 738.

³¹ "[S]pecierum [spices] pro salsa cicerorum [chickpeas] fabarum [horsebean] alleorum [garlic] cepearum [onion] et salis [salt, saltwater]. . ." ACV, perg. 738. This same mixture would continue to be used on Spanish ships up through the eighteenth century.

fleet accounts, it is clear the men were receiving a daily allowance of over four thousand calories, a good indication of the strenuous work that was required of them. It may have been monotonous, but from a dietary standpoint it provided the calories and nutrients necessary to sustain the crews.³²

While in general the composition of the crew diet was typical of other Christian medieval fleets, it appears concessions were made by the Office of the Admiral to the Muslims serving in the fleet. The most common source of protein in a medieval galley crew's diet was salt pork. However, the Catalan-Aragonese fleets in Sicily used less than 50 percent of the salt meat consumed by either the Angevin or Venetian crews but more than double the amount of cheese, another source of protein.³³ Moreover, the use of salt pork seems to have been restricted to castles garrisoned by the Office of the Admiral, while the fleet itself was issued salt beef. Such provisions appear to be an effort by the Office of the Admiral to accommodate the dietary requirements of the Muslim mercenaries.

Even though the fleet went to great lengths to make service palatable, recruitment sometimes fell short, particularly for crossbowmen. Fleet regulations required that thirty crossbowmen be assigned to galleys of 112 oars or larger, though ships sailed with as few as twenty-two.³⁴ Competition with the Catalonia fleet for the services of these highly valued units may account for the shortfall. However, except for the occasional shortage of Catalan crossbowmen during a major mustering of the fleet, such as in 1289, Roger de Loria seems to have had little trouble recruiting men, due in large part to

³² For a full discussion of the food issued to the fleet, see Mott, *Sea Power in the Medieval Mediterranean*, 215-24.

³³ Mott, *Sea Power in the Medieval Mediterranean*, 216, table 1.

³⁴ Normally the ships had a full complement of crossbowmen, but occasionally, as in the following examples, they fell short. A galley of 116 oars armed in April 1290, short by eight men: "Predictis comitis duobus, naucleriis octo, balistariis Catalanis viginti duobus, rimeriis centum sedecim et proderiis quatuor nonbocantibus deputatis in eadem galea in qua dictus Johannes de Grilliaco ad partes predictas ultramarinas ut predictur navigavit..." ACV, perg. 738. Two galleys armed in June 1292, the first short by one man and the second short by four men: "Item Millanuro de Panormo comito unius galee curie de remis centum sedecim armate in panormo de numero novem galearum curie predictarum naucleriis octo et balistariis sex de numero balistariorum viginti novem deputatorum in galea predicta pro solidis eorum..." ACV, perg. 737. "Item Guillelmo de Lardito et Raymundo Sallitruppo comitis alius galee curie de remis centum sedecim armate in Melacis naucleriis septem ex numero naucleritorum dicte galee qua reliquo ipsorum interfecto in conflictu terre Grisolie nichil de suis solidis extitit exolutum balistariis quinque de numero balistariorum dicte galee qua reliquis balistariis viginti uno deputatis in eadem galea..." ACV, perg. 737.

the fact that the Office of the Admiral went to a great deal of trouble to ensure there was sufficient enticement.

The standard practice in Catalonia and Valencia for recruitment for the home fleet was to set up a "tabula" or recruitment table in a town, sometimes with a band to draw attention to it. Individuals who were interested would be signed up and given two or three months pay in advance. Men who were signed up in this manner were responsible for mustering at a specified location, usually at Barcelona, and at their own expense. Likewise, when the fleet decommissioned at the end of the season, the men had to arrange their own transportation home.

However, in recruiting for the Sicily fleet, Roger de Loria seems to have gone directly to the towns and negotiated with them for the service of their men. He signed a "conventio" with them that not only stipulated the pay of the men but also the length of service and arrangements for their return home. A "conventio" might be made with a group of men from several towns. In some cases, it was for rowers, as in the case of the men from Capri, but it could be for mounted knights or crossbowmen. A good example of some of the conditions in a "pact" with the Office of the Admiral is a "conventio" from 1291 for 170 crossbowmen. They were fed and given half-pay while they were transported to Sicily and then similarly given half pay and food by the fleet while they waited to return home to Tortosa. They were then transported home in two galleys at the fleet's expense.³⁵ The advantage was that Roger could obtain a large body of men at one time and could negotiate the terms of service. For the towns and the men, there was the advantage of being able to get some concessions from the Office of the Admiral that they would not normally have received if they had simply signed up at a typical recruitment table. Why the home fleet did not follow this practice is unknown, but it may have been just too expensive. The crown also might have felt the men were so close to the traditional mustering points of Barcelona, Tortosa, and Valencia that there was simply no need for this extra step.

³⁵ This entry is just part of the overall accounting of the pact the fleet signed with men from Tortosa and the surrounding areas. "Item balistariis centum septuaginta duobus de numero balistariorum predictorum pro victu eorum dierum octo numeratorum a vicesimo tercio die dicti mensis septembris usque per totum mensem eundem quibus morati sunt in Messana post dissolutum extolium supradictum expectantes recessum galearum duarum infrascriptarum cum quibus ad partes Catalonie sunt prefecti iuxta pactum et conventionem habitam inter ammiratum predictum et balistarios supradictos ad rationem de granos tribus pro quolibet eorum per diem auri uncias sex raras viginti sex et granos octo." ACV, perg. 737.

The crown took other steps to encourage enlistment in the fleet. As early as 1286, Alfonso II ordered the debts that recruits owed be paid for up to two years, as in one case of the knights and foot soldiers who signed on with Bernard of Serriano for service in Sicily.³⁶ In the case of the mercenaries, they were kept on retainer and received half-pay when they were not actually being employed by the fleet. This was partly to keep them ready for service in the fleet but also to ensure they did not become a problem for the locals due to a lack of funds.

Unlike the crown in Catalonia and Valencia, the Office of the Admiral in Sicily could afford to take extraordinary steps with regard to recruitment because of the old Hohenstaufen fleet tax, still being assessed by the government. The fleet tax was steadily raised during the course of the war, up to 80 percent in 1289 alone; unlike Aragon or Valencia, however, Sicily experienced no protests. This alone is a good indication of the esteem and importance of the fleet among the general population. The office also received income from port and custom taxes. Finally, as we will see, the Office of the Admiral could resort to other revenue enhancement techniques that not only provided money for the fleet but also proved to be a strong recruitment inducement.

The Catalonia Fleet

The fleet in Catalonia at first glance seemed to have fewer problems to contend with concerning crews than the Office of the Admiral in Sicily. Fleets were recruited locally and did not have to worry about transporting men great distances to mustering points. The men could look forward to operating near their homes and not having to endure extended periods at sea like the Sicilian fleet. However, the crown had its own set of problems within the Crown of Aragon, particularly with the provinces of Valencia and Aragon. Like Roger de Loria, by 1284 vice-admirals Raymund Marquet and Beranguer Mallol could no longer depend on obligatory service to fill out the crews and had to set up recruitment tables to attract men to service. The

³⁶ "Fuit concessum elonganientum omnibus illis tam militibus quam peditibus qui vadant cum Bernardo de Sarriano ad partes Sicilie super solutione debitorum suorum usque ad duos annos iuxta formam assuetam. Datum Barchinone Quarto kalendas Aprilis Anno Domini millesimo ducentesimo octuagesimo sexto." Archivo Corona de Aragon, Cancilleria real, reg. 66, fol. 25r.

issues the fleet in Catalonia was facing can be seen in the order for the arming of ten galleys and the recruitment of men for them issued on February 24, 1284.³⁷ In the order, Marquet and MalloI were to have three new galleys built and were to arm an additional seven. One Arnald de Bartida was to set up a recruitment table and recruit men from Barcelona and Valencia to man these galleys, including *sarracani*. This order and the previously mentioned 1283 one demonstrate the crown had an ongoing policy of recruiting from the Muslim community, though how many Muslims actually joined the home fleet is unknown.

One of the important aspects of the order is that it mentions that the money to pay for the crews and the galleys came from a loan given by the "Jews of Catalonia." Unlike the fleet in Sicily which was supported by the old Hohenstaufen fleet tax and income from raiding and slaving, the crown had to rely on loans and the general tax called the *bovatge* in Catalonia and Aragon to pay for the home fleet, putting a strain on royal finances.³⁸ Imposing a new tax to support the fleet, similar to the fleet tax in Sicily, was totally out of the question. Even in Catalonia the crown had to make concessions just to receive support. In an order to arm six galleys under Marquet and MalloI in 1289, the crown agreed to pay for two, but the city of Barcelona had to pay for the other four. While this saved the crown money, it obviously gave the city a certain amount of political leverage. In return for the payment, the crown exempted the city and all the inhabitants from any other military demands, be they for personal service or for materials.³⁹

It is clear that by 1286 there were some serious problems with recruitment and discipline as evidenced by a series of orders issued in that year. Instead of paying the debts of some of the men, the crown simply excused nobles and men of all ranks in their service from paying debts while in service of the fleet and prohibited the seizing of goods belonging to them by officials for any reason.⁴⁰ This move was certainly a strong inducement for men to join the

³⁷ ACA, reg. 56, fol. 7r.

³⁸ Mott, *Sea Power in the Medieval Mediterranean*, 36-7.

³⁹ Antonio de Capmany y de Monpalau, *Memorias históricas sobre la marina, comercio y artes de la antigua ciudad de Barcelona*, 4 vols. (Barcelona: Cámara oficial de comercio y navegación de Barcelona, 1961), 2: doc. 44.

⁴⁰ A good example is the order from the king to officials that Berenguer de Entença or the men in his service should not be obligated to pay any debts while they are in the king's service in the fleet (November 4, 1286): "Universis officialibus. Cum nobilis vir Berengarius de Entença vadat in servitio nostra in presens viaticum quod facturi sumus concedente Domino. Mandamus vobis quatenus dictum nobilem nec milites aut alios qui secum iverint

fleet, especially if they were being pursued by their creditors. These orders, issued in Barcelona and Tarragona, were clearly meant for the Catalonia fleet, since the bulk of the men recruited for the fleet in Sicily came from Sicily. These tactics flag the issue of who was being recruited, for men running from creditors or local bailiffs might not be the most disciplined recruits.

The above inducements do not seem to have solved the problem and may have created others as suggested in the order issued by Alfonso III on December 21, 1286:

To Raymund Marquet and Berenguer Mallol: We wish and even say to you and order for the guidance concerning the expedition of our fleet and other ships of ours, accordingly that you or others of yours may make ready said fleet and ships and proceed toward departure and gather all of the men of the same fleet, [and] the same men are held to yield obedience to your orders in all things as if from us [and] you and others of yours may punish men of the same fleet and ships who are disobedient or rebellious and even over the same execute corporal justice if it may be necessary just as we ourselves can in person.⁴¹

It was highly unusual in that Alfonso III had to state specifically that all the men serving in the fleet were to obey the orders of Raymund Marquet and Berenguer Mallol "as if they were ours," that the admirals had the right to punish all who were "disobedient and rebellious," and that they could use any "corporal justice" if necessary with full royal authority. The normal appointments for admirals and vice-admirals invariably stated that they were to have "criminal and civil justice as much on the sea as on the land," which was a clear statement of their authority.⁴² Based on tradition going back to the start of the thirteenth century, there was technically no need for a specific order even to state the authority. There is no evidence in the chronicles of turmoil in the Catalonia fleet, but the fact that Alfonso III had to reiterate the admirals' authority and particularly define their right to corporal punishment is a clear indication that not all was right with the fleet. The fact that the king

in predicto nostro servitio nec debitores aut fideiussores pro eis obligatos ad solutionem debitorum suorum dum in nostro servitio fuerint minime compellatis. Datum Terrachone secundo nones Novembris Anno Domini millesimo ducentesimo octuagesimo sexto." ACA, reg. 66, fol. 245v.

⁴¹ Gallofre and Trenchs, "Almirantes y vicealmirantes de la Corona de Aragón (1186-1462)," 133, doc. 18.

⁴² Examples of this exact phrase can be seen in the appointment of Peter Ferrando in 1263, Conrad of Lancia in 1278, and Roger de Loria in 1283. See Marqués de Laurencin, *Los Almirantes de Aragón* (Madrid: Fortanet, 1919), 17, 19, 24.

found no need to issue a similar order for Roger de Loria and the fleet in Sicily suggests this was a local and unusual situation. None of this is to suggest Marquet or Mallol were incompetent commanders. On the contrary, they were highly successful during the whole course of their careers and highly respected. The nature of the problems is unknown, but they seem to have been outside of Marquet and Mallol's direct control. There appears to have been another outbreak of problems in 1289, when Marquet or Mallol was given full authority to deal with rebels in the fleet.⁴³

But why were Marquet and Mallol encountering problems with discipline within the Catalonia fleet, while Roger was not, despite having polyglot crews that would seem to be a recipe for disaster? Food could not have been the issue. Both fleets were provided with essentially the same diet previously discussed. Moreover, the men in the Catalonia fleet were probably not at sea for extended periods like the Sicilian fleet. While the Catalonia fleet was responsible for protecting the littoral of Catalonia and Valencia, it had the option of putting in at a number of ports along the coast where it could obtain fresh supplies and water. Moreover, the Catalonia fleet was not nearly as heavily engaged with the enemy as the units in Sicily. The Sicilian fleet was frequently engaged in operations in Italy or North Africa that could extend to three months or more.

Pay and Politics

One of the issues affecting recruitment may have been the pay scale, or, better stated, the opportunity for enrichment. Here too the Catalan and Sicilian arrangements differed. At the start of the war, men recruited to go to Sicily were paid 8 *tareni* (192 *denarii*), which seems to have been the going rate for rowers in the Crown of Aragon at the start of the war. By 1292 there had been a pay increase, and the rowers in Sicily were receiving 10 *tareni* per month. Interestingly, in the Catalonia fleet, the pay for rowers had risen to the equivalent of nearly 13 *tareni* (310 *denarii*) during the same time period.⁴⁴ This was a substantial increase of nearly 62 percent and suggests that the crown, despite a tight budget, was forced to raise pay simply to keep the

⁴³ Gallofre and Trenchs, "Almirantes y vicealmirantes de la Corona de Aragón (1186-1462)," 135.

⁴⁴ The actual amount the rowers for a twenty-oared *vaccetta* were receiving per month was 310 *denarii*, which was the actual coin used to pay the men. Based on the exchange rate of the time, that works out to be 12 *tareni* and 18 *granos*, which was substantially above the

benches full. The need to raise the pay was the result of having to compete not only with the merchant fleet for crews but also with the numerous licensed privateers that were being armed at that time under the authority of the local bailiffs. And significantly, the Catalonia fleet was not involved in any important raiding, so the crews had little to look forward to compared to their counterparts sailing with the privateers. To attract men to the fleet, the crown had to raise the pay to compensate somewhat for this discrepancy in potential profits.

Roger de Loria, on the other hand, did not have to deal with this problem. Life in the Sicilian fleet could be hard and pay was modest, but the crews also knew they had a commander with a reputation for leading successful and profitable raids in Italy and North Africa. From the very start, Roger allowed his crews to profit from their battles. Following the Battle of Malta on June 8, 1283, Roger allowed his men to loot the Provençal galleys and to keep all the loot, though admittedly this was because pay for the fleet was overdue.⁴⁵ However, the fleet was not insolvent for long, and from 1286 to 1287 the fleet gathered 6,604 ounces of gold from raiding alone.⁴⁶ Technically, the men were not entitled to any loot collected by the fleet, but there is no doubt that Roger shared the spoils. A case in point is the raids in 1292 in the Adriatic and Aegean in which the seized cargo and merchandise was auctioned off, and the 443 ounces of gold from the proceeds were given to the crews.⁴⁷ It seems clear that while the men of the Sicilian fleet were getting paid less than their counterparts in Catalonia, they could expect to earn substantial money on the side.

Roger was well aware of the profits of raiding and used the attraction of booty in his speeches to the fleet, as in the one recorded by Bartholomaeus de Neocastro given to the fleet before it set out to raid Gerba in 1284. In the

10 *aveni* paid in the Sicilian fleet. La Mantia, *Codice diplomatico dei re aragonesi di Sicilia*, 2: 44, doc. 31. For exchange rates and pay in the Sicilian fleet see: Mott, *Sea Power in the Medieval Mediterranean* 183, app. 1.

⁴⁵ Both Desclot and Muntaner agree the sailors were allowed to loot the galleys, but only Muntaner states the men were allowed to keep all the spoils. The account states that the sailors turned over spoils worth twenty ounces of gold. Considering that between eight and fourteen Provençal galleys were captured, the amount appears small and suggests that the twenty ounces represents the amount left after the crews had been paid. See La Mantia, *Codice diplomatico dei re aragonesi di Sicilia*, 1: 546, doc. 222; Muntaner, *Crònica*, chap. 83; and Desclot, *Llibre del Rei en Pere*, chap. 114.

⁴⁶ Mott, *Sea Power in the Medieval Mediterranean*, 126.

⁴⁷ Mott, *Sea Power in the Medieval Mediterranean*, 257.

speech, Roger reminded the men of their past successes, how they defeated enemies of the king, and especially the booty they had obtained from them. He then went on to note that by raiding Gerba they would be doing God's work and receive "immense fame," but also he emphasized the "silver, goods and spoils" they would gain.⁴⁸ The speech clearly shows the crews were sharing in the plunder, and this potential for loot was undoubtedly a strong incentive for the crossbowmen and mercenaries of Iberia to join the fleet in Sicily. But his "for God, country, and some loot" speech shows he was appealing to more than just the greed of men to motivate them.

Another important reason Roger de Loria did not have to contend with the same problems as his counterparts in Catalonia undoubtedly had to do with politics. While local politics and rivalries played an important part in the loyalties of the various groups in the fleet, these were overridden for the Sicilians and others in Calabria by their complete and unreserved hatred for the Angevins. They could tolerate a number of solutions to the war, but having the Angevins back in control was not one of them. The fleet was seen as the only real defense against this larger opponent, and service in it was more than an issue of employment. Roger even ran into trouble with the Sicilians when he was perceived not to be utilizing the fleet properly to protect the island. In 1287 he was accused by some Sicilian nobles of using the fleet in operations far from Sicily simply to enrich himself through "piracy." This charge was particularly ill founded, for Roger was acting directly under the orders of Alfonso III and most of the proceeds from raiding did not go to Roger but to fund the fleet. Roger defended himself by listing his accomplishments and ridiculing his accusers for sleeping in bed at home while he was out risking his life on the sea and in battle. Roger was able to silence his critics, but the incident shows the importance of the fleet to the Sicilians and their sensitivity about how it was used.⁴⁹ For the Sicilians, service in the fleet was seen as more than just as a livelihood. Because the vast majority of the crews were made up of rowers from Sicily and the surrounding islands, recruitment for the fleet by the Office of the Admiral was far easier than it was in Catalonia and Valencia.

⁴⁸ Neocastro, *Historia Sicula*, in *Cronisti e Scrittori Sincroni Napoletani*, ed. Giuseppe del Re, 2 vols. (Naples: Iride, 1845), 2: chap. 83. Since Neocastro was an officer of the curia and in Messina, it is quite probable that this is an accurate firsthand account of the speech Roger gave to the fleet.

⁴⁹ Neocastro, who was member of the court, gives a detailed description of the incident. Neocastro, *Historia Sicula*, 2: chap. 110.

For the Crown of Aragon, the situation in Iberia was almost reversed. The formation of the Unions of Valencia and of Aragon had actually heightened regional differences. When France invaded Catalonia in 1285, the unions and the nobility of the provinces of Valencia and Aragon actually withheld support to the point that Peter III could not muster an army sufficient to oppose the French in any serious manner. Catalonia was saved only by the arrival of Roger de Loria and the Sicilian fleet in the waters off Catalonia which severed the French supply lines and forced their retreat. Undoubtedly the crews recruited from Catalonia were motivated by a desire to protect Catalonia from French invaders, but the same might not to be said for the men recruited in Valencia, which may have led to difficulties within the fleet by the end of 1286. For many in Valencia and Aragon, the war was seen as being a profitless exercise from which the provinces were receiving little or no benefit. The crown recruited heavily from Valencia for both fleets, but it could not rely on loyalty to motivate these men. The above, coupled with the lack of fringe benefits crews could expect to receive from raiding, forced the Crown of Aragon to take a number of extraordinary steps to encourage enlistment. The crown may have had to lower its standards in recruiting for the home fleet, which in turn resulted in discipline problems.

The War of the Sicilian Vespers caused the Crown of Aragon to recruit for two separate fleets for an extended period of time, beyond the normal system of feudal obligations. Paradoxically, the evidence suggests that the Crown of Aragon experienced far fewer problems manning the fleet in distant Sicily than the one mustered to protect the home waters. The issues facing the crown in recruiting for both fleets show that motivations for crews could be a complex mixture of politics and greed. At first glance, the mixture of Muslims and Christians from North Africa, Iberia, Sicily, and Calabria would seem to have been a volatile mixture just waiting to tear the Sicilian fleet apart. These problems were mitigated by Roger de Loria's reputation and commanding presence that contributed to recruitment and morale in the fleet. Roger had a clear understanding of what was motivating the crews, as indicated in the speeches he made to the fleet. He seems to have used a combination of politics and self-interest to attract and retain crews. But none of these attractions would have helped if the crews had no faith in his leadership. By 1292 Roger de Loria had welded his polyglot crews into a fighting force that was terrorizing its opponents. In contrast, despite having competent commanders in Raymund Marquet and Berenguer Mallol, the home fleet appears to have had difficulty finding crews because of the political strife between the crown and the provinces. In turn, the crown had to resort to

unorthodox methods to obtain crews which thereby afflicted the home fleet with discipline problems. While being rather homogeneous in composition, the home fleet clearly had discipline issues between 1286 and 1289. A study of recruitment issues facing the two fleets demonstrates that crews of the period often had complex motivations transcending traditional political, social, and religious boundaries. The result, depending on the circumstances, could either hamper a fleet or create a deadly fighting unit.