

## Abstract for Section VI. Seafaring and Commerce

The Tucson Artifacts are metal objects with inscriptions in the Latin, Hebrew and Brythonic alphabets from the ninth century, recovered in Arizona in the years 1924-1929. They are now preserved in the Arizona Historical Society, Southern Division, in Tucson, accession 94.26.1-32. The stamp of Mesoamerican and Chinese connections is also on them. Their sheer existence provides an exciting boon to the fields of medieval history, American archeology, indigenous anthropology, geography, Judaic studies and Mesoamerican civilization. With dates ranging from 560 to 900, they provide definitive proof of sustained contact between Old and New World cultures before Columbus, for they tell the story of a forgotten Roman-styled military colony in Chichimec Toltec Northwest Mexico.

Published in January 2017, *Merchant Adventurer Kings of Rhoda: The Lost World of the Tucson Artifacts*, by medievalist Donald N. Yates, is a collection of readings translated from Latin, Greek, Arabic, Chinese, Nahuatl, Hebrew and other languages that illuminate the cultural contexts of these unique witnesses to diffusionism.

Section VI on Seafaring and Commerce (pp. 142-65) is given here in its entirety. Its contents are:

- 1 Jewish Merchants and Long-Distance Traders in the Early Middle Ages
- 2 Rhadanites
- 3 Three Kinds of Merchants
- 4 An Irish-Frankish Monk's Geographical Knowledge
- 5 The Tannin
- 6 How to Reach Canton
- 7 Toltec Commerce and Business Practices

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Correspondence address:

Donald N. Yates, Ph.D.  
dpy@dnaconsultants.com

## VI SEAFARING AND COMMERCE

The medieval Hebrew name of Brittany is “abuts the sea.” It is apparent that Phoenicians and Jews were among the distinguished seafaring peoples living in its ports, chiefly Vannes and Nantes. The live oaks of Noirmoutier and other wooded islands have always provided excellent ship-building materials, while the mineral wealth of the interior has been exploited for thousands of years. In antiquity, Brittany was part of the fabled Tin Isles (Prytania, Britannia, Cassiterides). Copper was smelted here since 2000 BCE. Metallurgical workshops and coal mines are documented from the earliest of times. Nantes was founded several centuries before Marseilles, France’s other old sea-port. It is well known that Brittany possesses the oldest and richest tin mines in Europe. A vein of the purest gem quality tin was found under the earliest levels of human habitation excavated in Nantes in the nineteenth century and linked with the Urnfield culture of 1000 BCE. Excavation around the Jardin de Plantes yielded 150 metal fragments from the Bronze Age, the ruins of Phoenician foundries on Nantes’ water courses, together with the remains of river boat cargoes that included tin, grain, salt, salted fish, hides, fabrics and miscellaneous cast metal objects. Some of the earliest gold coins were minted by the Veneti, a name many believe to be the same as Phoenician. Ancient mine workings and timbered galleries can still be visited (as in Arizona) in the region of Abbaretz-Nozay, where fallen tools still lie in some cases on the floor of the tunnels. In former times, the mines were always guarded by a private or state army because of their great value.

The perennial “brown, small-bodied, robust, agile, industrious” ethnic type of the pre-Celtic Bretons has been identified as Ligurian, or of Mediterranean origin (Anatole Le Braz).

During the decline of Rome and after its fall, Nantes continued to be mercantile, peaceful, placid and prosperous. Its shipyards, naval stores and quais were legendary. Its merchant ruling caste included Jews and secret societies that mingled, at various epochs, Mithraism, the worship of Isis, the Sun Cult, Judaism, Druidism and exotic Eastern cultures. A guild of sailors called *nautae ligerici* controlled shipping on the Loire, which connected with the Seine and Rhône and formed the crossroads of trade in France, linking the Atlantic with the

Mediterranean. The city god was Vulcan who protected metalworkers and shippers. The surveyor's level and axe of carpenters were mystic signs. There was always a decided character of syncretism with Celtic and Oriental elements and independent thinking in the corporations and social fraternities. Christianity began to encroach at the end of the third century, but many people remained adherents of paganism. After the Welsh and Cornish migrations around the sixth century, Celtic Christianity with its parishes (*plou*) and kinglets (Breton *mychtern*, Latin *rex late populum*; cf. the expressions for kings on 1A) dominated the political and religious landscape.

The Cornish, Armorican and Galician mining districts were all connected, managed by the same Brythonic-speaking international cartel. Britons and Bretons seem to have sailed all over the world, for the alphabet peculiar to these adventurers, ogam, has been reported in Africa, Central Asia, Mesopotamia, Japan and North America (Pellech).

## 1. Jewish Merchants and Long-Distance Traders in the Early Middle Ages

*Belgian medievalist Henri Pirenne thought a clash of civilizations sealed the end of the Roman Empire and shifted the axis of world trade and wealth accumulation from the Roman Lake of antiquity (Mediterranean) to the Caliphate centered on Iraq and Syria in the Middle East. This paradigmatic change occurred between the seventh and ninth centuries, the same period represented by the Tucson Artifacts and their creators, "Romani" from Brittany and France. The rising tide of Islam was turned back at the cost of stagnation and backwardness in Western Europe. In the land called Romania by Pirenne, local structures and infrastructures decayed with nothing to replace them from the barbarian intruders, money disappeared, and an agrarian, increasingly feudalized Europe developed. Only a small number of Syrian and Jewish merchants in Roman cities like Narbonne and Lyon who could negotiate the new international borders kept open the flow of Eastern luxuries to the West and propped up the shattered economy. It was a bold thesis for the 1920s, but one that seems to have stood the test of time for its perceptiveness, mass of details and cogent historical argument (see Bonnie Effros, "The Enduring Attraction of the Pirenne Thesis"). Incidentally, Pirenne did not arrive at his final views until a Jewish scholar had brought to his attention the famous text mentioning the Rhadanites. Baron summed up the new order when he wrote, "The uniformity of Jewish law and the Jewish administration of justice throughout the world also gave an easy advantage to the Jewish international trader over his Gentile competitor.... A Jew from Baghdad could easily draw up a contract with a coreligionist from Marseilles, using exactly the same terminology and knowing that, by bringing the contracting party before the Jewish court of either city, he could obtain full justice" (p. 323). Pirenne does emphasize the credit system of Jewish traders. Henri Pirenne, Mohammed and Charlemagne (Mineola: Dover, 2001). This work is out of copyright and so I have quoted liberally from it. Footnotes are omitted.*

THE CONTINUATION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN CIVILIZATION IN THE WEST AFTER THE GERMANIC INVASIONS

*"Romania" before the Germans*

Of all the features of that wonderful human structure, the Roman Empire, the most striking, and also the most essential, was its Mediterranean character. . . . Life was concentrated on the shores of the great lake. . . . The last great city of the North was Lyons. Trier owed its greatness only to its rank of temporary capital. All the other cities of importance—Carthage, Alexandria, Naples, Antioch—were on or near the sea.

Constantinople, the new capital, was before all a maritime city... a great emporium, a manufacturing city, and an important naval base. . . . Syria was the terminus of the routes by which the Empire was in communication with India and China, while by way of the Black Sea it was in touch with the North.

The West depended on Constantinople for manufactured articles and *objets de luxe*.

The Syrians, or those who were known as such (including Jews), were the pilots and traders of the Eastern Seas. It was in their bottoms that papyrus, spices, ivory, and wines of quality found their way even to Britain. Precious fabrics were brought from Egypt, and also herbs for the ascetics (bitter herbs, eaten by Jews during Passover). There were colonies of Syrians everywhere. The port of Marseilles was half Greek.

As well as these Syrians, the Jews were to be found in all the cities, living in small communities. They were sailors, brokers, bankers. . . .

The Roman Empire continued to be Roman, just as the United States of North America, despite immigration, have remained Anglo-Saxon.

*Mundus senescit* (the world grows old), we read, at the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, in the chronicle of the pseudo-Fredegarius. And we have only to run through Gregory of Tours to find, on every page, the traces of the grossest moral decadence: drunkenness, debauchery, cupidity, adultery, murder, abominable acts of cruelty, and a perfidy which prevailed from top to bottom of the social order.... All the Visigoth kings, with rare exceptions, died by the assassins' knife.

The court of the Merovingians was a brothel; Fredegond was a frightful termagant. Theodahat has his wife assassinated. Men were always lying in wait for their enemies, and an almost incredible amorality was universal. The story of Gondebaud is characteristic. Drunkenness seems to have been the usual condition of all. Women got their lovers to murder their husbands. Everybody could be purchased for gold; and all this without distinction of race, for the Romans were as bad as the Germans. The clergy themselves—even the monks—were corrupt...among the people piety did not rise above the level of a crude thaumaturgy (magical superstition). . . . [The Vandals] were effeminate, living in luxurious villas and spending much time at the baths. The poems written under Huneric and Thrasamund are full of priapic allusions.

In short, "Romania," though somewhat diminished in the North, still survived as a whole. It had, of course, altered greatly for the worse. In every domain of life, in the arts, literature and science, the regression is manifest. *Pereunte . . . liberalium cultura litterarum* (the cultivation of educated writing perishing as we speak), as Gregory of Tours very truly says. "Romania" survived by virtue of its inertia. There was nothing to take its place, and no one protested against it.

Nearly all if not all the king's agents were recruited among the Gallo-Romans (Romani).

The influence of the Syrians was greatly increasing in Rome, and they were becoming numerous in the city; there were even to be several Syrian Popes. . . . The sea, which the Byzantines continued to control, spread their influence in all directions. And the civilization of the period was found beside the sea, both in the West and in the East.

### THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SITUATION AFTER THE INVASIONS AND THE MEDITERRANEAN NAVIGATION

#### *Personal Property and the Soil*

In Provence, during the Merovingian epoch, the system of tenure was entirely Roman. Here, it seems, there were only small estates, exploited by colonists (peasants).

There were still plenty of slaves. As we shall presently see, they were mostly alien Barbarians, Anglo-Saxon or others, prisoners of war.

#### *Navigation in the East. Syrians and Jews*

The Syrians were then the great maritime carriers, as the Dutch were to be in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It was in Syrian vessels that the spices of the East and the industrial products of the great Oriental cities—Antioch, Damascus, Alexandria, etc.—were exported. The Syrians were to be found in all the ports of the Mediterranean, but they also penetrated inland.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> century there were large numbers of Orientals (including Jews) in Southern Gaul. The life of Saint Caesar, Bishop of Arles (d. 542), states that he composed hymns in Greek and Latin for the people. There were also many in the North, since Gregory of Tours speaks of the Greek merchants of Orleans. . . .

But in addition to those merchants, who travelled to and fro, there were many who had settled in Gaul. They are mentioned in many inscriptions. There is one in the chapel of Saint Eloi in Eure, near the mouth of the Seine. The Syrian to whom it related was doubtless trading with Britain. . . .

The population of Narbonne in 589 consisted of Goths (Visigoths), Romans (Gallo-Romans), Jews, Greeks and Syrians. . . .

There were also Egyptian influences at work in Gaul. . . .

But the Syrians and the Greeks were not the only Orientals in the West. There were also the Jews, who were almost as numerous. They too had penetrated everywhere before the invasions, and there they remained after the invasions. . . .

## MERCHANT ADVENTURER KINGS OF RHODA

The Law of the Visigoths stated that [Jews] were living under the Roman law. . . . Thanks to Gregory of Tours, we are most fully informed in respect of Gaul. There were Jews in Clermont, Paris, Orleans, Tours, Bourges, Bordeaux and Arles. Their center was Marseilles. It was there that they took refuges when they were persecuted. . . .

Even if they were disliked by the people, they were not at first molested by the authorities.

...

Certain Jews were sailors, or at all events shipowners; others owned land which was cultivated by colonists or *originarii*; others again were physicians. But the immense majority were engaged in commerce, and above all in lending money at interest. Many of them were slave-merchants; for example, at Narbonne. Some were engaged in maritime commerce. Gregory of Tours mentions several who sold spices at Tours at unduly high prices, with the complicity of the bishop. In Paris, the Jew Priscus, *familiaris* of King Chilperic, furnished him with spices, unless indeed he was his banker, for certainly the word *species* which Gregory employs seems, in a certain passage, to denote money (metals). The *Gesta Dagoberti* speaks of a *negotiator*, Salomon, who was a Jew. But many of the Jews—doubtless the majority—were engaged in banking, and of these a large number seem to have been very wealthy. . . .

While navigation was especially active in the Mediterranean, Bordeaux and Nantes were likewise busy ports, whose vessels crossed the Atlantic to the British Isles—from which they brought Saxon slaves—and to Galicia. . . . Gaul had several ports on the Mediterranean. In addition to Marseilles, there were Fos, Narbonne, Agde, and Nice. . . .

There are numbers of texts which tell us that silk was worn by the men as frequently as by the women. And where could this silk have come from, if not from the East? It was brought from China. . . .

The luxuries of the table were also supplied by the East. Gregory speaks of the wines of Syria which were exported from Gaza. They were to be found everywhere, and in great quantities. . . .

..

The really important branch of Oriental commerce, by which it was actually related to everyday life, was the importation of spices. One cannot insist too strongly on the importance of this trade. The Roman Empire had received all sorts of spices from India, China, Arabia. It was the trade in spices that built up the prosperity of Palmyra and Apamea. Pliny the Elder estimates that the Empire spent every year at least one hundred millions of our francs (about \$150 million) on spices imported from India and China and Arabia. Their diffusion throughout the Roman Empire was not interrupted by the invasions. They continued, after the invasions, as before them, to form a constituent of the everyday diet. . . .

[Chilperic II] gave [the monastery of Corbie in 716] an authorization to levy [take away] merchandise from the *cellarium fisci* [royal supplies] of Fos [Marseilles, the busiest international trade port on the Mediterranean for Gaul/France until destroyed by Muslim raiders from Spain shortly thereafter]. In [the diploma] I find the following list:

10,000 pounds of oil.

## SEAFARING AND COMMERCE

30 hogsheads of *garum* (a kind of condiment).  
30 pounds of pepper.  
150 pounds of cumin.  
2 pounds of cloves.  
1 pound of cinnamon.  
2 pounds of nard (incense, perfume).  
30 pounds of *costum* (an aromatic herb).  
50 pounds of dates.  
100 pounds of figs.  
100 pounds of almonds.  
30 pounds of pistachios.  
100 pounds of olives.  
50 pounds of *hidrio* (a kind of spice).  
150 pounds of chick-peas.  
20 pounds of rice.  
10 pounds of *auro pimento*.  
20 skins (*seoda*—skins dressed with oil?).  
10 skins of Cordova leather.  
50 quires of papyrus.

The permission granted to the monks does not specify any particular date: they could go to the cellar when they wished. . . .

Papyrus was another thing that came from the East, and of which great quantities were consumed. Egypt has the monopoly of furnishing the whole Empire with the writing material in general use . . . it was a necessary constituent of social life. The juridical and administrative life of the Empire, the very functioning of the State, necessitated the practice of the art, and the same may be said of social relations. The merchants had their clerks, *mercenarii literati* (mercantile secretaries). Masses of papyrus must have been required. . . .

[Records] prove the existence of extremely active navigation on the Tyrrhenian Sea, to the East and to the coast of Africa. Carthage seems to have been a sort of half-way station for the Oriental trade. There was also a coasting trade along the shores of Italy, Provence, and Spain. People traveling to Rome from the North embarked at Marseilles for Porto (the Jewish quarter), at the mouth of the Tiber. Travelers going to Constantinople went by sea. . . .

### *Inland Commerce*

Samo (Jewish name). . . arrived in the country of the Wends at the head of a troop of merchant adventurers, in 623-624. . . these merchants went into the country of the Wends as the Varangians of the 9<sup>th</sup> century entered Russia, in order to raid the country for slaves, and also, doubtless, in order to bring back furs. . .

Samo was not the only merchant of this character, for on becoming king of the Wends he

had some Frankish merchants massacred, which led to war between him and Dagobert. His accession to the monarchy is a striking point of similarity between him and the Varangians . . . . Although Fredegarius called Samo *negucians* (businessman), and his companions *neguciantes* (businessmen), we cannot regard him as a professional merchant, but very definitely as an adventurer. . . .

Many merchants were engaged in the slave-trade. They seem to have been principally Jews . . . there is mention of Jewish slave-merchants at Narbonne and in Naples. . . there seems no doubt that the ships which brought spices, silk, and papyrus to the West carried slaves to the East as the return cargo. . . .

The (Breton) bishops engaged in commerce at Nantes. Bishop Felix enlarged the port. . . .

The collection of . . . taxes was still possible because the king had at his disposal agents who were able to read and write, the *telonearii* (customs agents). They doubtless farmed the taxes, and this is probably why the Jews, despite the disapproval of the Councils, were granted the right of collecting them (and minting coins to render proceeds to the treasury). (Note: We have such a collector in the *negotiator Salomon*, assuredly a Jew, who was Dagobert's *Hofliferant* [court purveyor or commissary], and to whom Dagobert ceded the tolls collected at one of the gates of Paris.)

In the great seaports there were magazines or warehouses (*cellaria*), and officials stationed in the ports, as we learn from the laws of Theodoric. . . .

When at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century the Cross replaced the Victory on the Imperial coins, the mints of Marseilles, and then the other mints, followed this example. . . .

#### ***Money and the Monetary Circulation***

Gold alone was the official currency. The monetary system of the Barbarians was that of Rome. The Carolingian system, which was silver monometallism, was that of the Middle Ages (after the 8<sup>th</sup> century). . . .

Among the Franks, there was a mint in the palace and others in various cities. But the coins were struck . . . by an enormous number of *monetarii* (moneymen). No doubt this diversity in the coinage resulted from the method of collecting the impost.

"It was convenient to authorize the collector of a particular tax, the farmer of a salt-pan, the steward of a royal domain, the treasurer of a monastery, etc. to receive in payment, at need, prestations in kind, foreign or ancient coins, or metals by weight, and to render the amount of his receipts or the revenues of his farming in coins minted on the spot, and bearing a signature which served as a guarantee of their standard and value, and a place-name which recorded their place of origin. . . ."

The moneymen were not public officials. Very rare after Pippin's reign, they finally disappeared in 781. . . .

There was a very considerable stock of gold in the West; and yet there were no gold mines, and we cannot suppose that much gold can have been derived from auriferous sands and gravels. . . .

## SEAFARING AND COMMERCE

Gold must have been pouring into the country. What brought it? Obviously commerce. The Law of the Visigoths proves that they did so. Gregory of Tours shows us the king buying gold in Constantinople, and his account of a shipwreck off Agde (near Narbonne) proves that gold was carried by sea. . . .

Those who engaged in this money trade were mostly Jews. We have already mentioned that there were Jews among the collectors of the market tolls, and it even seems that there must have been a great many of them, since the Councils protested concerning their number. There were also Jews among the moneyers, and we find the names of some of them on the coins which they struck. Their clientele, like that of the money-lenders in general, must have been very considerable. In addition to the tax-collectors, it must also have included the *locators* of the domains of the Church, who likewise farmed their offices. Commerce also must have depended largely on credit. . . .

All the features of the old economic life were there: the preponderance of Oriental navigation, the importation of Oriental products, the organization of the ports, of the *tonlieu* (customs, tolls) and the impost (state tax), the circulation and the minting of money, the lending of money at interest, the absence of small markets, and the persistence of a constant commercial activity in the cities, where there were merchants by profession.

## INTELLECTUAL LIFE AFTER THE INVASIONS

A class of professional merchants engaged in long-distance trade could not have carried on their business without a minimum of education. . . .

The Roman cursive was retained, in the form of the very small cursive which it assumed in the 5<sup>th</sup> century; it was a rapid script, a business hand, and not a calligraphy. It was from this that the Merovingian, Visigothic and Lombard scripts derived, which were formerly called national scripts, but wrongly, for strictly speaking they were merely the continuation of the Roman cursive, perpetuated by the agents of the administration, the governmental offices, and the merchants.

The cursive writing thoroughly suited the living but decadent language of the period. In everyday life the Latin tongue was even more bastardized than in the literature; it had become a language full of inaccuracies and solecisms, ungrammatical, but nonetheless an authentic Latin. It was what the scholars called "rustic Latin." But they countenanced it and employed it, especially in Gaul, because it was the popular tongue, spoken by all. And the administration followed their example. It was doubtless this Latin that was taught in the little schools. There is not a single text that tells us, as certain texts of the 8<sup>th</sup> century will tell us, that in church the people could no longer understand the priest. Here again the language was, so to speak, barbarized, but there was nothing Germanic about this barbarization. The language survived, and it was this language that constituted, well into the 8<sup>th</sup> century, the unity of "Romania."

*Thus far, Pirenne proves that the Barbarians (Goths, Franks, Lombards, etc.) destroyed nothing*

## MERCHANT ADVENTURER KINGS OF RHODA

*except possibly the shell of the Roman state; "the language, the currency, writing (papyrus), weights and measures, the kinds of foodstuffs in common use, the social classes, the religion—the role of Arianism has been exaggerated—art, the law, the administration, the taxes, the economic organization" were all retained. Next, however, he describes the rise of Islam and a period from 650 to 750 when all these Roman institutions were destroyed in Western Europe, when the language degenerated, the currency became debased, writing ceased, the old foodstuffs and spices were unavailable, and trade became mostly local. Southern France was ruined.*

### THE EXPANSION OF ISLAM IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Under these circumstances the only persons who were still engaged in commerce were the Jews. They were numerous everywhere. The Arabs neither drove them out nor massacred them, and the Christians had not changed their attitude to them. They therefore constituted the only class to make its living by trading. At the same time, thanks to the contacts which they maintained among themselves, they constituted the only economic link which survived between Islam and Christendom, or, one may say, between East and West. . . .

The coast from the Gulf of Lyons and the Riviera to the mouth of the Tiber, ravaged by war and the pirates, whom the Christians, having no fleet, were powerless to resist, was now merely a solitude and a prey to piracy. The ports and the cities were deserted. The link with the Orient was severed, and there was no communication with the Saracen coasts. There was nothing but death. . . .

*Part Two, Chapter Two describes the seizure of power by the first Carolingians (Pepin and Charlemagne) and state-building by the Franks. But Charlemagne does not become a Mediterranean power and he never has a fleet. "In reality, each of the two Empires ignored the other." To the South it is a sophisticated Muslim world, to the North the primitive Christian state of the Franks, Anglo-Saxons and other Germanic peoples. Chapter III (the last) is devoted to the short-lived empire of Charlemagne and his successors (778-900) that sets the tone for the Christian Middle Ages.*

### THE BEGINNINGS OF THE MIDDLE AGES

#### **Economic and Social Organization**

Before the 8<sup>th</sup> century what existed was the continuation of the ancient Mediterranean economy. After the 8<sup>th</sup> century there was a complete break with this economy. The sea was closed. Commerce had disappeared. We perceive an Empire whose only wealth was the soil, and in which the circulation of merchandise was reduced to the minimum. So far from perceiving any progress, we see that there was regression. Those parts of Gaul which had been the busiest (Provence, for instance) were now the poorest. The South had been the bustling and progressive region; now it was the North which impressed its character upon the period.

## SEAFARING AND COMMERCE

A certain importance may be attributed to Nantes, which was burned (by the Normans) in 843, and whose boatmen carried on a certain amount of trade with the region of the Loire.

If we consider that in the Carolingian epoch the minting of gold had ceased, that lending money at interest was prohibited, that there was no longer a class of professional merchants, that Oriental products (papyrus, spices, silk) were no longer imported, that the circulation of money was reduced to the minimum, that laymen could no longer read or write, that the taxes were no longer organized, and that the towns were merely fortresses, we can say without hesitation that we are confronted with a civilization which had retrogressed to the purely agricultural stage; which no longer needed commerce, credit, and regular exchange for the maintenance of the social fabric. . . .

Under Charles Martel everything was mercilessly sacrificed to military necessity. The Church was plundered . . . he burned the cities of the Midi . . . The merchants of the cities were dispersed. The clergy itself had lapsed into a state of barbarism, ignorance, and immorality. . . .

Wholesale commerce had disappeared. . . .

After Charles, who had at least an effective defensive policy, the State was helpless. In 838 Marseilles was invaded. In 842 and 850 the Arabs penetrated as far as Arles. In 852 they took Barcelona. The coast was now defenseless against attack. . . they even controlled the passes of the Alps. . . .

International trade was dead after the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. The only trade that had managed to survive was the hawking of articles of value of Eastern origin, and this was carried on by the Jews. . . .

We have already seen that the importation of papyrus, spices, and silks into "Francia" had ceased. There was no commercial intercourse between "Francia" and Islam. . . .

The class of wealthy merchants had disappeared . . . there were still occasional merchants; there have been such in all ages; but they did not constitute a class of merchants . . . Above all, there were men who followed the armies in search of profit. Some ventured to the frontiers, where they sold arms to the enemy, or they engaged in barter with the Barbarians. But this was the trafficking of adventurers, not to be regarded as a normal economic activity. . . .

As a general thing, then, there were no merchants by profession in the Carolingian epoch.

*Negotiatores* (tradesmen) properly so called . . . "the specialists, the professionals," were almost exclusively Jews. . . To convince ourselves of this we have only to read the capitularies, in which the word *Judaeus* (Jew) is constantly coupled with the word *mercator* (merchant). These Jews evidently continued to engage in the activities of their co-religionists, who, as we have seen, were dispersed through the whole of the Mediterranean basin before the invasion of Islam. (We find that in the 9<sup>th</sup> century there were Jews in Narbonne and Vienne, and above all in Lyons, and perhaps elsewhere in the Midi.) But they carried them on under somewhat different conditions. . . .

They enjoyed the protection of the sovereign, who granted them exemption from the *tonlieu*. Louis the Pious promulgated a capitulary in their favor (it has not been preserved), which declared that they must be prosecuted only *secundum legem eorum* (several personality of the law). . . the king regarded them as indispensable.

The Carolingians, for that matter, very frequently made use of them. The ambassadors who they sent to Haroun-al-Raschid were Jews, and we have already seen that there were Jews among the merchants of the palace established at Aix-la-Chapelle.

Louis the Pious took into his service the Jew Abraham of Saragossa, to whom he accorded special protection, and who served him faithfully in his palace. We do not find that any Christian merchant was so favored.

About 825 Louis the Pious granted a privilege to David Davitis, and Joseph, and their co-religionists, resident in Lyons. They were exempted from the *tonlieu* and other dues imposed on traffic and placed under the protection of the Emperor (*sub mundeburdo et defensione*). They were allowed to live in accordance with their own faith, to perform their religious offices in the palace, to engage Christians *ad opera sua facienda* (to be their servants and employees), to buy foreign slaves and to sell them within the Empire, and to exchange goods and otherwise trade with whom they pleased, and therefore, if the need arose, with foreigners.

What we have learned of the Jews from the *Formulae* (form letters for officials) is confirmed by what Agobard says of them in his opuscles, which were written between 822 and 830. He angrily emphasizes the wealth of the Jews, the credit which they enjoyed at the palace, the charters which the Emperor sent to Lyons by the hands of his *missi* (delegates), and the clemency of these *missi* toward the Jews. The Jews, he says, were supplying wine to the councilors of the Emperor; the relatives of the princes and the wives of the palatines (palace officials, courtiers) sent presents and clothing to the Jewish women; and new synagogues were being built (at Lyons, at least). This is almost the voice of an anti-Semite speaking of the Jewish "barons." Here, incontestably, we are dealing with great merchants who were indispensable. They were even allowed to employ Christian servants. They could own land; we have proof of this in respect of the "pays de Narbonne," where they owned estates which were cultivated by Christians, for the Jews did not live in the country. As early as 768-772 we find the Pope (Stephen II or III; see IV.2) complaining of this state of affairs. They also possessed estates and vineyards at Lyons, at Vienne in Provence, and in the suburbs of the cities. These they doubtless acquired in order to invest their profits.

The commerce in which they were engaged was generally wholesale trade; what is more, it was foreign trade. It was through them that the Occidental world still kept in touch with the Orient. The intermediary was no longer the sea but Spain; and through Spain the Jews were in touch with the powers of Musulman Africa and Baghdad. Ibn-Kordadbeh, in the *Book of Routes* (857-874), mentions the Radamite [sic] Jews, who "speak Persian, Roman, Arab, and the Frankish, Spanish, and Slav languages. They voyage from the Occident to the Orient, and from the Orient to the Occident, now by land and by sea (see VI.2) . . . It is possible some may have come by way of the Danube, but undoubtedly the majority traveled through Spain.

## SEAFARING AND COMMERCE

Theodulf's verses (a Carolingian with Spanish ties) relating to the wealth of the Orient doubtless referred to the goods imported by the Jews. Spain is further mentioned in the text of a *Formula* of Louis the Pious, with reference to the Jew Abraham of Saragossa, and what we know of the merchants of Verdun shows us that they too were in communication with Spain. Also we know that Jews imported textiles from Byzantium and the East into the kingdom of Leon. The Jews, therefore, were the purveyors of spices (including incense for ecclesiastical use) and costly fabrics (including vestments for clergy and church tapistries). But we see from Agobard's texts that they also dealt in wine. And on the banks of the Danube (and in Nantes and Bordeaux and other places) they traded in salt. In the 10<sup>th</sup> century the Jews possessed salt works near Nuremberg. They also traded in arms (mostly swords), and exploited the treasuries of the churches (i.e., sold them if pawned). . . .

Lastly, it must be added that the Jews also traded in silver (metals), concerning which branch of commerce we have little information. . . .

The goods in which they traded were precisely those which a text of 806 (a capitulary of Charlemagne) mentions as constituting the speciality of the *mercatores*: gold (*aurum*), silver (*argentum*), [gems (*gemmae*), arms (*arma*), vestments], slaves, and spices [exotic merchandise which properly pertain to *negotiatores* or traveling salesmen]. . . .

Since the Jews were allowed to employ Christians, many of their agents must have passed for *mercatores christiani* (Christian merchants). Moreover, the language of the time proves as much: "Jew" and "merchant" became synonymous terms.

*For Pirenne, the Middle Ages begin only about 750, at least from the perspective of Western Europe. Nor can the preceding period between the fall of Rome in 476 and the high tide of Arab conquests in Spain, France and Italy (732-759, p. 157) accurately be called the Dark Ages. The dates of 560 and 705 recorded on Tucson Artifact 13 by the Jewish "Romani" of Brittany and Gaul in Eretz Israel (the Beautiful Land) and America (Calalus) fall within the afterglow of a Mediterranean culture, while all the other dates, from 775 to 900, correspond to the chaotic, brave new world of Germanic dominance. After being again beaten down by the Viking attacks in the ninth century, the Carolingian false start would lead to a secure new northern-oriented and Atlantic-facing civilization rightly called medieval. Commerce would recover in the eleventh century, when the face of Western Jewry was transformed, to suffer further changes during the Crusades, twelfth century and High Middle Ages. When the great historian put down his pen on May 4, 1935, another era for Jews was dawning in the Germanic North which he had chronicled so fearfully.*

## CONCLUSION

The West was blockaded and forced to live upon its own resources. For the first time in history the axis of life was shifted northwards from the Mediterranean. The decadence into which the Merovingian monarchy lapsed as a result of this change gave birth to a new dynasty,

the Carolingian, whose original home was in the Germanic North.

With this new dynasty the Pope allied himself, breaking with the Emperor (in Constantinople), who engrossed in his struggle against the Musulmans, could no longer protect him. And so the Church allied itself with the new order of things. In Rome, and in the Empire which it founded, it had no rival. And its power was all the greater inasmuch as the State, being incapable of maintaining its administration, allowed itself to be absorbed by the feudality, the inevitable sequel of the economic regression. All the consequences of this change became glaringly apparent after Charlemagne. Europe, dominated by the Church and the feudality, assumed a new physiognomy, differing slightly in different regions. The Middle Ages—to retain the traditional term—were beginning. The transitional phase was protracted. One may say that it lasted a whole century—from 650 to 750. It was during this period of anarchy that the tradition of antiquity disappeared, while the new elements came to the surface.

This development was completed in 800 by the constitution of the new Empire, which consecrated the break between the West and the East, inasmuch as it gave to the West a new Roman Empire—the manifest proof that it had broken with the old Empire, which continued to exist in Constantinople.

## 2. Rhadanites

*There has been long discussion about the Rhadanites and the meaning of this term. Ibn Kurradadhbah was a Persian postal official who wrote between 846 and 886. Radanites or Rhadanites are not mentioned anywhere else. Scholars have derived the word, variously, from Rhodians, Rhone merchants and "those who know the routes." Perhaps it was understood in all three senses. Rhodians, a Greek people whose national symbol was the rose (rhoda in both Greek and Hebrew), pioneered Mediterranean trade in the classical age, founding Marseilles and other trading towns in the West. Under the Romans, it was Rhodian law that underlay the commercial code for international trade. They or their successors apparently named Roda de Berà in Catalonia, Rhode in Spain, Rotez in Southern France, the Rhône River, Rouen and Rhodaus Town (Canterbury). Perhaps of significance also is that Petra, the principal trading hub in the Jordanian desert, was known as the Rose City before its total abandonment following the Arab conquest in 663. When Roman, Jewish and Syrian merchants founded their factories and warehouses in the new Arab capital of Egypt at Cairo outside Fustat, they chose an island in the Nile and named it Rhoda. It would have been natural for the "Roman" merchant-adventurers in Calalus to select Rhoda as a name for their foundation, "a walled city overlooking a plain and ringed round with hills." This is an apt description of Tumamoc Hill and the Tucson Basin (The Josephus Cross 5AB).*

*Louis Rabinowitz, chief rabbi in Johannesburg, fully documents and describes four international routes by sea and land taken by the Rhadanites. This association of Jews held a monopoly on trade originating or terminating in the West for over a hundred years, corresponding to the dates of the kings of Rhoda. Rhadanites were unique in being able to take advantage of the blocking of Mediterranean sea routes by the Arabs and cross from Christian ports through Muslim lands to*

*India and China and return. They carried slaves and furs into Spain, North Africa and the Eastern Caliphate and brought spices, silk and other high-cost, low-bulk goods home to Constantinople and Carolingian France. Rabinowitz goes into detail about their practices, ports of call, imports, carrying trade and achievements. His book can be read as a long gloss on this important passage, which he calls "the key to the whole economic history of the Jews in the Middle Ages," supplementing it with responsa, travel accounts and other documents from Judaic studies.*

*According to Joseph Jacobs in Jewish Contributions to Civilisation, "Europe owes to the Jewish Radanites the introduction of oranges and apricots, sugar and rice, Jargonelle pears and Gueldre roses [viburnum opulus, snowball tree, kalina, national symbol of Ukraine], senna and borax, baelium and asafetida, sandal-wood and aloes, cinnamon and galingale [galangal, a type of ginger], mace and camphor, candy and julep, cubebs [Java peppercorns] and tamarinds, slippers and tambours, mattresses, sofas, and calabash, musk and jujube, jasmine and lilac . . . [also] the word 'douane' for custom-house, 'tariff', 'bazaar', 'bale', 'fondac' or 'factory', and 'baggage' . . . as well as 'barge', 'barque' and 'sloop'. There is also the possibility that the royal breed of horses in France, known as limousine, introduced in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, was due to these Jewish merchants . . ."*

*Abu al-Qasim 'Ubayd Allah ibn Kurradadhbah, The Book of the Routes and the Kingdoms, quoted in Robert S. Lopez and Irving W. Raymond, Medieval Trade in the Mediterranean World: Illustrative Documents with Introduction and Notes (New York: Columbia UP, 1990, pp. 31-33. The textus receptus is the French one published by De Goeje, Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum, Leiden, 1889, vol. VI, p. 114.*

### **Routes of the Jewish Merchants Called Al-Radhaniyya**

These merchants speak Arabic, Persian, Roman (Greek), Frankish (Latin), Spanish, and Slavonic. They travel from the East to the West and from the West to the East by land as well as by sea. They bring from the West eunuchs, slave girls, boys, brocade (finished silk goods), beaver skins, marten furs and other varieties of fur, and swords. They embark in the land of the Franks on the Western Sea (Nantes, Rouen and other Atlantic ports, or alternatively the Mediterranean), and they sail toward al-Farama (Pelusium in the Nile Delta). There they load their merchandise on the backs of camels and proceed by land to al-Qulzum (Suez), twenty-five parasangs (about 100 miles) distant. They embark on the Eastern Sea and proceed from al-Qulzum to al-Jar and to Jidda (ports of Medina and Mecca on the Red Sea coast of the Arabian Peninsula); then they go to Sind (Pakistan), Hind (India), and China. On their return from China they load musk, aloe wood, camphor, cinnamon, and other products of the eastern countries and they come back to al-Qulzum, then to al-Farama, and from there they embark again on the Western Sea. Some of them sail for Constantinople in order to sell their merchandise to the Romans (Byzantines). Others proceed to the residence of the king of the Franks to dispose of their articles (Aachen, Charlemagne's court).

Sometimes the Jewish merchants, embarking in the country of the Franks on the Western Sea, sail toward Antioch. From there they proceed by land to al-Jabiya (Damascus), where they

arrive after three days' journey. There they take a boat on the Euphrates and they reach Baghdad, from where they go down the Tigris to al-Uballah (al-Oballah and Basra on northern shore of the Persian Gulf). From al-Uballah they sail for, successively, Oman, Sind, Hind, and China....

These different journeys may likewise be made by land. Merchants leaving from Spain or France proceed to Sus-al-Aqsa (Atlantic Morocco) and then to Tangier, and from there they set out for Africa (Tunisia, Kairouan, formerly Carthage) and to the capital of Egypt (Fustat, Old Cairo). From there they turn toward al-Ramla (east of Jaffa, in Palestine); visit Damascus, Kufa (site of former Ctesiphon on branch of Euphrates in Iraq), Baghdad, and Basra; cross al-Ahwaz (Elam), Fars, Kirman (three provinces of Persia, east of Iraq), Sind, and Hind; and reach China. Sometimes also they take the route back of Rome (Eastern Roman Empire, Byzantium), and, crossing the country of the Slaves, proceed to Khamlij (Khalendsch or Khamlidj, predecessor of Itil), the capital of the Khazars (Jewish Khazar Kingdom). They embark on the Caspian Sea, then reach Balkh (near the Oxus River in the Uighur Empire in Central Asia), and Transoxiana, then continue the journey toward the camp (yurts) of the Tughuzghur (the Land of Yurts, Turkistan), and from there to China.

### 3. Three Kinds of Merchants

*This Arab author covers business practices in the Afro-Eurasian ecumene in a simple, but sound fashion. He omits the category of tycoon or capitalist ship owner to which our merchant-adventurers belonged. In addition to the carrying trade in spices and other high value goods from East to West, they also were vested in mining and the metals and gem trade and collected tolls. Many Eastern specialties, such as silk and cinnamon in China and India, could only be paid for in gold or silver. The grand businessmen at the top of the economy were able to mint their own coins and mine their own gold; typically, the sovereign of the land received what is known as the Royal Fifth. They owned ships and operated some of the mines. Additionally, they engaged in banking and protection services, even providing insurance on risky ventures. Jews, of course, are credited with a number of important contributions to the history of commerce. They developed the money transfer (disqui), pay-to-bearer instrument or check (suftaja), an international credit system, loan agreement or bond (starr) and commenda contract. The commenda (which is similar to a silent partnership) specified profit for an investor or stock holder upon sale of goods at a port or market, even if losses occurred. Abu al-Fadl Ja'far ibn 'Ali al-Dimishqi, The Beauties of Commerce, late ninth century, quoted in Robert S. Lopez and Irving W. Raymond, Medieval Trade in the Mediterranean World: Illustrative Documents with Introduction and Notes (New York: Columbia UP, 1990), pp. 24-27.*

There are three kinds of merchants: he who travels, he who stocks, he who exports. Their trade is carried out in three ways: cash sale with a time limit for delivery, purchase on credit with payment by installments, and *muqarada* (contract). But the *mutadammin* (tax farmer, contractor) is not regarded as a merchant because he is nothing but a hired man of the

proprietor, and the earnings upon which he relies are the payment for services rendered by him in the management and in the collection of rents (tolls, taxes). The different between him and the managing party of a *muqarada* is the following: the managing party is not bound to indemnify [the investor] for accidental loss of the investment so long as he does not go beyond the localities agreed upon. . . .

A combination of craft and commerce occurs, for instance, in the textile and spice trades because both trades consist of two kinds of activity. They belong to the crafts because the cloth merchant must know the standards of the wares, the good and bad qualities, and the fraudulent practices which go with them. Likewise, the spice merchant must know the different drugs, remedies, potions, and perfumes, their good and bad sorts as well as the counterfeits. He must know what commodities are subject to rapid change and spoil and which ones are not, and what means ought to be used to preserve and to restore them, and lastly he also must understand the blends of electuaries and potions, of powders and drugs. The textile merchant must also understand the folding and display of the wares and what means are used to store them. But both the spice merchants and the cloth merchants belong to the class of merchants because they buy and sell and draw their profit therefrom, and so forth....

Know, my brother—may God guide you to what is dear and agreeable to Him—that the rule of the operations of the merchant who stocks consists in buying the wares in the time of their season and whenever the importation is uninterrupted, the supply large, and the demand small....

This type of merchant above all needs early information on the relative situation of wares in their places of origin and native lands, whether the quantity on hand is great or small, cheap or dear, whether business has prospered abundantly and is in a good state or whether it has turned out poorly and has deteriorated, whether the import routes are cut off or are safe. He must try to obtain the knowledge of all this through inquiries and precise questioning of the caravans....

When the merchant who stocks has made up his mind and is resolved to buy a ware, for instance, at 200 dinars cash, he ought not to buy all at once but to divide the purchase into four different times separated by intervals of fifteen days, so that the entire purchase is concluded within two months, the reason being that the price of the purchased ware either ceaselessly rises and falls or else remains steady. Now if after the purchase of one part the price goes up, he knows that this promises him profit and makes gain possible; and he should be happy about it, if indeed he is a moderate man and values a profit made through foresighted consideration more highly than a dangerous speculation. If, however, the ware becomes cheaper, he can then be happy in two respects, first, because he has remained protected against the fall price which would have hit him if he had purchased the whole and, second, because he now has the opportunity to buy good wares cheaply. Should, however, the price remain unchanged at the same level, his eye is sharpened to seize the right moment for buying and stocking wares. But if he buys everything in great haste at one time, then something that he has not considered is sure to happen to him, and now he seeks to make up the loss. From this,

## MERCHANT ADVENTURER KINGS OF RHODA

then, arise the controversies and lawsuits which are so frequent in this profession....

The merchant who travels must, above all, pay attention to what kinds of wares he buys, and here he must exercise great caution. He also ought not to lull himself into the belief that his hope must necessarily be fulfilled on arrival at the desired destination, because the journey may very easily be delayed or become impossible through some obstacle, perhaps because the route is dangerous or the winds unfavorable to a sea voyage, or because some unforeseen event takes place in the locality to which he wishes to travel. Such things may easily happen to a merchant. He must then sell the ware, for better or for worse, where he has bought it; and if he has not prepared himself in advance for such a contingency, he will suffer a great loss in its price....

Further, it is worthy of note that he should carry with him a price list of all the wares of the locality to which he will return.... When he wants to buy an article, he establishes by this record the difference in price of the ware in the two places, takes into account the provisions he will need up to the time of his return, adds to the price list a list of the different tolls in that country, and calculates the profit....

The merchant who arrives in a locality unknown to him must also carefully arrange in advance to secure a reliable representative, a safe lodging house, and whatever besides is necessary, so that he is not taken in by a slow payer or by a cheat....

Know, my brother—may God guide you—that the operations of the merchant who exports consist in employing in the locality to which he exports someone who takes care of the wares sent to him. The latter is then entrusted with selling the wares and with buying others in exchange, and he ought to be a trustworthy, reliable, and well-to-do man who has devoted himself fully to commerce and who is also well experienced with it. The goods are shipped to him, and the entire selling is placed in his hands. He receives a share of the gain of all that he buys or sells (commission, often 10 percent). If a ware is low in supply, he may stock it, if he thinks it wise. The wares which are sent him must correspondingly be bought with care and shipped prior to the time of the fair in the best quality and in the best condition possible. Therefore, one must endeavor to buy the wares with the possibility of extending the term of payment, with easy conditions of payment, and with rights of option. If this is not possible with one ware, one should try to obtain it with another; for the profit, with the assistance of God, depends on suitable purchase.

Lastly, one must send a ware only with reliable carriers who keep it under their protection until it is received by the appointed representative.

### **4. An Irish Monk's Geographical Knowledge**

*Most of us are familiar with the legendary voyages across the Atlantic by the Irish monk St. Brendan and his companions. It is assumed these navigations had little or no basis in history. Recently, however, it has been proved that the details are echoed in at least one reliable source, the Irish scholar Dicuil. Working at the court of Louis the Pious contemporaneously with our Tucson Artifacts,*

*Dicuil had more than a little to say in his world geography about the North Atlantic Ocean. Such extracts prove there was a whole realm of travel and practical knowledge separate and divorced from book learning in the Middle Ages, when small notice was accorded to geography as a discipline and maps mostly showed places in the Bible with Jerusalem in the center of the world. Translated from David Stifter, Philologica Latino-Hibernica: Navigatio Sancti Brendani. Ph.D. thesis, University of Vienna, 1997, pp. 112-13.*

There are many other islands in the ocean north of Britain that can be reached from the islands in north Britain in a direct voyage of two days and nights with full sails and a lasting favorable wind. A certain devout priest reported to me that he came to one of them in two days of summer sailing with a single night spent in between in a two-banked ship.

Some of these islands are quite small, but almost all are separated by narrow distances on the open sea. For almost a hundred years hermits lived on them, having sailed to them from our own Ireland. But just as they were deserted from the beginning of the world so are they now vacant of any sign of religious life on account of the Norman pirates, although full of countless sheep and different kinds of seabirds. I have not found these islands mentioned in any authoritative book.

## 5. The Tannin

*Two of the swords (Artifacts 11 and 12) have pictures of monsters on them with forked tongues, along with the emblems of the Levites and Calalus, the country the Jews ruled. These two artifacts seem to be "government issue" ceremonial swords of the regiment, perhaps of the officers thereof, who may therefore have carried the title "dragon" or "dragoon." Such was the title of captain or general in Welsh, Breton and Arabic tradition (Pendragon = head dragon, chief of the warriors, commander-in-chief). We believe in all instances this is the tannin (TNY), the Biblical dragon. The Bible mentions the "the great sea monsters" that God created on the fifth day (Gen. 1:21), and in some ancient myths as well as Biblical texts (Ps. 74:12-17, Job 26:5-14) creation results from the slaying a sea monster (tannin). The same word is used to describe the frightening sea monster that the Lord will kill at the end of time (Isa. 27:1). In Ex. 7:10, Moses' staff thrown down before Pharaoh becomes a tannin. This symbol appears frequently in the Cabala, the Talmud and Midrash, where it is embroidered into a mystical lesson about the godlike that goes beyond a beginning and ending, and whose flesh the righteous will dine on in the Messianic Age. A strange Bible verse is Neh. 2:13: "And I went out by night through the Valley Gate to the Gate of the Serpent (tannin) Well and the Refuse Gate, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down and its gates which were burned with fire." A tannin's force and strength was the boast of long-distance travelers and deep-sea voyagers like the Phoenicians and Vikings with their "dragon ships": they, like the Creator, could overcome the most fearsome and unruly creature, the tannin, bring order out of chaos and were therefore among the greatest beings on earth (or rather the seas). See I.10 "Roland Addresses His Sword Durendal" for the medieval custom of serpents on swords, iconic of the all-conquering. In Cherokee literature, the tannin is called the uk-tee-nah*

*“Unslayable” (from Greek ouktenas) as in this national narrative of the people’s migrations, translated from the Cherokee language by William Eubanks in 1896. The Cherokee clearly have sea-borne origins. The “wisest of the wise” took the name of the dragon. The meaning of the original light of the temple is unknown—was it electricity? Early visitors to the Holy Land remarked on magical smokeless illumination in globes that never flickered or ceased at the Holy Sepulcher. The Cherokee Origin Narrative: Authentic Version of William Eubanks’ “Red Man’s Origin” (Longmont: Panther’s Lodge, 2017).*

But the white invader began to use firearms against them and the Cherokee tribe was driven back farther and farther.

The Cherokee tribe then became discouraged and completely demoralized and said to the council of the clans that nothing could be done as the great serpents, the *oo-ca-te-ni*, had become extinct and there was no chance to obtain the terrible poison that had been so successfully used against the first invaders. So the wise men were consulted again, who ordered, as before, for the clans to hold a council second war dance around the round or half sphere temple. This notice was then made known to all the clans who gathered at the ancient site of the sacred round or half sphere temple. The clans gathered in except one or two who refused to come but when sent for finally came in. Then the seven days' dance commenced and completed, at the beginning of which seven days' dance the seven wise men of the clans entered the temple which for ages had been neglected and somewhat improved. The wise men after entering found that it could not be lighted with light that emanated from the spiritual light or from the wise men. Seeking the cause of the failure of the temple to light up, the lowest grade clan of the wise men, the terrible *Sah-ho-ni* clan, asked the next higher wise man of the second clan and he asked the third, and he asked the fourth, and he asked the fifth, and he asked the sixth, and he finally, the wisest of the wise, the *Koola* clan, answered and said: Our temple, ancient and sacred, has been neglected; the original fire, the eternal and primitive, has been allowed to become extinct by destroying the wise *oo-ca-te-ni* or the *tanian*, the wise of the tribe. He can never be found again until the other clans be found and the tribe reunites. We can do nothing, only to employ a substitute to illuminate our temple, and which shall be the outer body of the eternal fire. When the substitute for light, the fire, was kindled, the wise men looked upon their *e-ca-ca-tis* and could behold nothing in them but images as a brilliant light appeared in them originally.

## 6. How to Reach Canton

*The early medieval sea lanes were the same as those used by the Romans. See J. Innes Miller, The Spice Trade of the Roman Empire (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969). This from the Arab writer Ahmad ibn Abu Ya'qub ibn Ja'far ibn Wahb Ibn Wadih al-Ya'qubi, called Ya'qub the Geographer (died 897/8). Quoted from Paul Lunde, "The Seas of Sindbad," Saudi Aramco World (July–August 2005) 56/4.*

Whoever wants to go to China must cross seven seas, each one with its own color and wind

and fish and breeze, completely unlike the sea that lies beside it. The first of them is the Sea of Fars (Persian Gulf), which men sail setting out from Siraf. It ends at Ra's al-Jumha; it is a strait where pearls are fished. The second sea begins at Ra's al-Jumha and is called Larwi. It is a big sea, and in it is the Island of Waqwaq and others that belong to the Zanj. These islands have kings. One can only sail this sea by the stars (i.e. by deep-sea charting). It contains huge fish, and in it are many wonders and things that pass description. The third sea is called Harkand (Bay of Bengal), and in it lies the Island of Sarandib (Ceylon), in which are precious stones and rubies. Here are islands with kings, but there is one king over them. In the islands of this sea grow bamboo and rattan. The fourth sea is called Kalah and is shallow and filled with huge serpents. Sometimes they ride the wind and smash ships. Here are islands where the camphor tree grows. The fifth sea is called Salahit and is very large and filled with wonders. The sixth sea is called Kardanji; it is very rainy. The seventh sea is called the sea of Sanji (China Sea), also known as Kanjli. It is the sea of China; one is driven by the south wind until one reaches a freshwater bay, along which are fortified places and cities, until one reaches Khanfu (Canton).

## 7. Toltec Commerce and Business Practices

*"We sought nothing but peace," remarks the annalist under the year 795, one of the last entries in the series of inscriptions signed by Oliver. The colonists' intentions were not those of brutal conquest or forceful domination but lawful governance, peaceful trade and duly authorized commerce. The Mesoamerican people known as Toltec Chichimecs or Chalchihuites founded the colony of Calalus, or the Hohokam ("All Used Up"), about 560.*

*On the Judas-Benjamin-Isaac Cross (6), in addition to Frankish axes, trademarks, seals, trade emblems, the siglum OL and the distinctive eight-sided cross of Calalus, there appear a Mesoamerican glyph with a fish head (probably the emblem of Michoacán, Land of Fishermen) and miter alongside the monogram R. A childish-looking circular face is paired opposite a ship's emblem. Beneath a temple is a small flattened ovate shape with a dot in it. There is also a brazier with fire. What appears to be a random spattering of dots surround the images on the artifact. They are especially noticeable around the cartoon-like face with two eyes and the legend IN MEMORIAM ("Let it be remembered"). That they are a deliberate part of the design is underscored by the fact that they are infilled with gold like the letters. I suggest these are ulli-drops.*

*Ulli-drops were used as we might employ seals, raised dots on signatures or watermarks to certify the legal standing of a document. Bancroft describes them as a standard part of Toltec commercial practice. "At midnight they cut flag-shaped papers for Xiuhtecuitli, the god of fire, fastened them to sticks painted with vermillion, and marked on them the face of the god with drops of melted ulli, or India-rubber." He continues: "Other papers, also marked with ulli, were cut in honor of Tlaltecuitli, to be worn on the breast. Others, for the god of the merchants, were used to cover a bamboo stick, which they worshiped and carried with them. The gods of the roads, Zacatzontli and Tlacotzontli, also had their papers ornamented with ulli-drops ...." Bancroft goes on to tell in great detail how*

*these papers were burned or sacrificed to obtain an augury about an upcoming trip. He adds other instances where ulli-drops were applied to copies of contracts and records of transactions. This practice of certifying or sanctifying commercial documents seems to go back to the Olmecs ("Rubber People"), who introduced trade to Mesoamerica before the Toltecs. Indeed, it is the Olmecs who are regarded as the original Toltecs, Mesoamerica's first advanced civilization.*

*Another possible example of this Toltec notarial custom occurs on the Ab Ovo Cross (3B). Beneath the words ADSUM DOMINUS ("I the Lord am with thee," Is. 52:6) is a space left blank to the left of Oliver's siglum. A spattering of ulli-drops appears below the word for the Lord. In the same manner, ulli-drops were shaken off a rod topped by a burning piece of rubber beside the face of the god in solemnizing a contract on paper in Toltec business practices. The divinity thus witnessing the rite or sacrifice could have been Yacatecuhtli, the patron god of commerce and travel, Xiuhtecuhtli, the god of fire invoked before business trips, or Quetzalcoatl, popular in cases of foreign trade and in cities like Tenochtitlan and Cholula. The whole practice was religious in significance and not dissimilar to the witnessing and oath swearing for formal copies of legal documents in the Western World. The entire series of artifacts, especially the inscription-bearing crosses signed by OL, needs to be closely analyzed by experts in the fields of medieval diplomatics (forms of legal and historical documents, chiefly laws and charters), sigillography and sphragistics (study of seals).*

*In the following extract, Bancroft summarizes the origins of Mesoamerican trade in the isthmus between the Pacific and Atlantic coasts of ancient Mexico and describes the central role of merchant princes (pochtecas) as well as the importance of commercial corporations. Hubert Howe Bancroft, The Native Races, Vol. II: Civilized Nations, San Francisco: Bancroft, 1882, pp. 378-90.*

### Commerce in Pre-Aztec Times

[There were] great commercial centers, where home products were exchanged for foreign merchandise, or sold for export to merchants from distant nations who attended these fairs in large numbers, itinerant traders continually traversing the country in companies, or caravans; and the existence of a separate class exclusively devoted to commerce.

From the earliest times the two southern Anáhuacs of Ayotlan (in Jalisco) and Xicalanco (in Olmec Country), corresponding to what are now the southern coast of Oajaca (facing the Pacific) and the terra caliente of Tabasco and Vera Cruz (on the Gulf Coast), were inhabited by commercial peoples, and were noted for their fairs and the rich wares therein exposed for sale. These nations, the Xicalancas (Mayan-Olmecs, capital Cacaxtla), Mijes (Mixes of Oaxaca), Huaves ("Sea Peoples" on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec), and Zapotecs (their successors, builders of Monte Albán) even engaged to some extent in a maritime coasting trade

....

The Toltecs are reported to have excelled in commerce as in all other respects, and the markets of Tollan and Cholula are pictured in glowing colors; but all traditions on this subject are exceedingly vague. In the new era of prosperity that followed the Toltec disasters (after about 1100) Cholula seems to have held the first place as a commercial centre, her fairs were

the most famous, and her merchants controlled the trade of the southern coasts on either ocean. After the coming of the Teo-Chichimec hordes (original "Dog Tribes" or Nahua "barbarians" from North Mexico) to the eastern plateau, Tlascalala (in East Central Mexico) became in her turn the commercial metropolis of the north, a position which she retained until forced to yield it to the merchants of the Mexican valley (in the 1400s), who were supported by the warlike hordes of the Aztec confederacy. Before the Aztec supremacy, trade seems to have been conducted with some show of fairness, and commerce and politics were kept to a great extent separate. But the Aztecs introduced a new order of things. Their merchants, instead of peaceful, industrious, unassuming travelers, became insolent and overbearing, meddling without scruple in the public affairs of the nations through whose territory they had to pass, and trusting to the dread of the armies of Mexico for their own safety; caravans became little less than armed bodies of robbers . . . .

Tlatelulco (in greater Mexico City) while an independent city was noted for her commerce, as was Tenochtitlan (Mexico City, successor to Teotihuacan) for the prowess of her warriors, and when mercantile enterprise was forced to yield to the power of arms, Tlatelulco, as a part of Mexico, retained her former preeminence in trade, and became the commercial centre of Anáhuac. Her merchants, who were a separate class of the population, were highly honored, and, so far as the higher grades were concerned, the merchant princes, the *pochtecas*, dwellers in the aristocratic quarter of Pochtlán (originally from Oaxaca), had privileges fully equal to those of the nobles. They had tribunals of their own, to which alone they were responsible, for the regulation of all matters of trade. They formed indeed, to all intents and purposes, a commercial corporation controlling the whole trade of the country, of which all the leading merchants of other cities were in a sense subordinate members. Jealousy between this honored class of merchants and the nobility proper, brought about the many complications during the last years of the Aztec empire . . . .

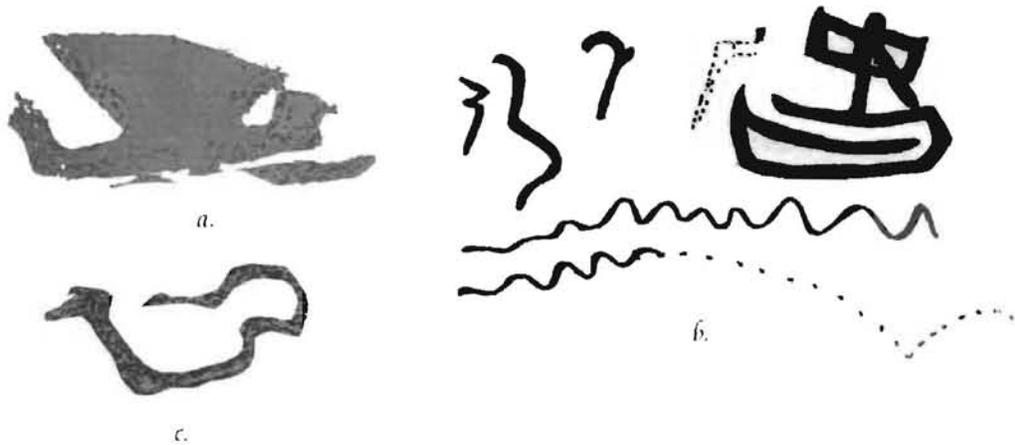
Nahua trade was as a rule carried on by means of barter . . . yet several more or less convenient substitutes [for money] furnished a medium of circulation. Chief among these were nibs, or grains of the cacao . . . . Another circulating medium was gold-dust kept in translucent quills, that the quantity might be readily seen. Copper was also cut into small pieces shaped like a T, which constituted perhaps the nearest approach to coined money. Cortés, in search of materials for the manufacturer of artillery, found that in several provinces pieces of tin circulated as money, and that a mine of that metal was worked in Taxco (in the state of Guerrero, southwest of Mexico City). Sahagun says the Mexican king gave to the merchant-soldiers, dispatched on one of their politico-commercial expeditions, sixteen hundred *quaubtli*, or eagles, to trade with. Bustamente, Sahagun's editor, supposes these to have been the copper pieces already mentioned, but Brasseur believes, from the small value of the copper and the large amount of rich fabrics purchased with the eagles, that they were of gold. The same authority believes that the golden quoits with which Montezuma paid his losses at gambling also served as money.

The Nahuas bought and sold their merchandise by count and by measures both of length

and capacity, but not by weight; at least, such is the general opinion of the authorities. Sahagun, however, says of the skillful merchant that he knows "the value of gold and silver, according to the weight and fineness . . . Native words also appear in several vocabularies for weights and scales. Brasseur de Bourbourg regards this as ample proof that scales were used. Clavigero thinks weights may have been employed and mention of the fact omitted in the narratives. The market, *tianquiztli*, of Tlatelulco was the grandest in the country and may be taken as a representation of all. Its grandeur consisted, however in the abundance and variety of the merchandise offered for sale and in the crowd of buyers and sellers, not in the magnificence of the buildings . . . we know that the space was systematically apportioned among the different industries represented. Fishermen, hunters, farmers, and artists, each had their allotted space for the transaction of business. Hither, as Torquemada tells us, came the potters and jewelers from Cholula, the workers in gold from Azcapuzalco in (northwestern Mexico City), the painters from Tezcuco (second largest city, on Lake Texcoco between sites of Teotihuacan and Tenochtitlan), the shoe-makers from Tenayocan (Tenayuca in the Valley of Mexico), the huntsmen from Xilotepec (Jilotepec in Guerero, Otomis), the fishermen from Tezcuco, the fruit-growers of the tierra caliente, the mat-makers of Quauhtitlan (Cuahtitlan in the State of Mexico), the flower-dealers of Xochimilco (city of floating gardens), and yet so great was the market that to each of these was afforded an opportunity to display his ware....

Here were to be found precious stones, and ornaments of metal, feathers, or shells, implements and weapons of metal, stone, and wood; building material, lime, stone, wood, and brick; articles of household furniture; matting of various degrees of fineness; medicinal herbs and prepared medicines; wood and coal; incense and censers; cotton and cochineal; tanned skins; numerous beverages; and an infinite variety of pottery . . . Cortés speaks of this market as being twice as large as that of Salamanca . . . Las Casas says that each of the two market-places in the city of Mexico would contain 200,000, 100,000 being present each fifth day; and Cortés tells us that more than 60,000 persons assembled daily in the Tlatelulco market. According to the same authority 30,000 was the number of daily visitors to the market of Tlascala . . . Considering the population of the cities and surrounding country, together with the limited facilities for transportation, these accounts of the daily attendance at the markets, as also of the abundance and variety of the merchandise, need not be regarded as exaggerations.

The particular divinity of the traders was Iyacatecutli, Iyacacoliuhqui, 'lord with the aquiline nose'—that nasal type being, as the Abbé Brasseur thinks, symbolic of cunning and skill. Services in his honor were held regularly in the month of Tlaxochimaco; but the ceremonies performed by traveling merchants seem to have been mostly devoted to the god of fire and the god of the roads. . . to this god offerings of ulli and paper were made by the leaders . . . The caravans . . . were received by the authorities . . . with some public ceremonies not definitely described.



*Ships in the Southwest: a. Hobokam bowl repeating motif, b. petroglyph from Hidgpath Hills, Arizona inscribed in South Iberian Punic "Mariners from Tarshish this stone proclaims" (after Lyle Underwood, p. 31 Farley), c. bird prow ship part of large ocean travel petroglyph panel atop Tumamoc Hill (TH-F20-1).*



*Ulli-drops. Quetzalcoatl face is surrounded by a spattering of ulli-drops and annotations in Old Breton ogam, all with gold infill, on the Judas-Benjamin-Isaac Cross (6B). The artifact serves as the memorial of long-distance trade privileges in spices accorded to the "Romans" Isaac, Judas and Benjamin, whose heads appear on 6A along with the monogram S ("Sacred") and miter of Quetzalcoatl. The agreement between European and Mesoamerican trading companies was sanctified according to the commercial practices and religious customs of the Chalchihuites people of Northwest Mexico, who were the senior partners.*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Donald N. Yates is a native of Cedartown, Georgia and lives in Longmont, Colorado. He earned a Ph.D. in Classical Studies with an emphasis on Medieval Latin Language and Literature at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1979. He is a member of the Medieval Academy of America. He has taught at St. John's University, University of Notre Dame and Georgia Southern University and has published a number of scholarly articles and books. He was a Member of the International Committee on Latin Paleography (Comité International de Paléographie), Paris, from 1978 to 1983. He studied ancient and medieval scripts, epigraphy and paleography under Berthe M. Marti, Daniel Sheerin, Christine I. Eder, Richard H. Rouse and Leonard M. Boyle, OP, Prefect of the Apostolic Vatican Library, among other leading figures in those disciplines. He worked at the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library in Collegeville, Minnesota, the world's largest repository of medieval texts on microfilm, before heading a team of experts at the Medieval Institute at Notre Dame, Indiana, where he led efforts to develop standards adopted later internationally for cataloguing and describing Latin manuscripts and the varieties of script in which they were produced. A recent book of history is *Old World Roots of the Cherokee: How DNA, Ancient Alphabets and Religion Explain the Origins of America's Largest Indian Nation* (McFarland 2012). Yates co-authored with Elizabeth Caldwell Hirschman *The Early Jews and Muslims of England and Wales: A Genetic and Genealogical History* (2014). For more information, visit [www.donaldyates.com](http://www.donaldyates.com).