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# ORIGINS OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMY

For fifty years debate has raged about early European commerce during the period between antiquity and the Middle Ages. Was there trade? Or no trade? If trade, in what – and with whom? New evidence and new ways of looking at old evidence are now breaking the stalemate. Analysis of communications – the movements of people, ideas, and things – is transforming our vision of Europe and the Mediterranean in the age of Charlemagne and Harun al Rashid.

The prevailing view of Europe's stone-age isolation yields to one of openness and dynamic change, even as new archaeological findings on the economic collapse of the Roman empire throw that change into clear relief. Discovering the travellers themselves, and the things they carried, leads to ships, sailing rhythms, the reopening of overland routes, and the rise of Venice. The travellers' stories show how the first truly European economy exported European slaves in exchange for African and Asian coins, silks, and drugs. The patterns laid down by 800 would shape trade and shipping into the next millennium.

This is the first comprehensive analysis of the economic transition from antiquity to the Middle Ages in over sixty years. Using new materials and new methodology, it will attract all social and economic historians of antiquity and the Middle Ages, and anyone concerned with the origins of Europe, the history of the slave trade, medicine and disease, cross-cultural contacts, and the Muslim and Byzantine worlds.

MICHAEL MCCORMICK is Professor of History, Harvard University. His many publications include *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West* (1986) and contributions to *The Cambridge Ancient History*, *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, and *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*.

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## *Communications and Commerce, A.D. 300–900*

Michael McCormick
*Harvard University*

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*In memory of*
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# MAPS

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When elevations are shown, the first level of shading designates heights of 1,000–3,000 feet (305–915 m), the second level, 3,000–7,000 feet (915–2,134 m), the third, 7,000–11,000 feet (2,134–4,622 m), and the darkest shading indicates elevations over 11,000 feet (4,622 m).

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# FIGURES

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# PREFACE

This book began in Baltimore. But it was fostered in the remarkable scholarly repair of Dumbarton Oaks, and grew to maturity in the bracing clime of Cambridge, Massachusetts. It sprang, utterly unintended, from another research project, on diplomacy between the Carolingian and Byzantine empires. My intent had been a respite from the "powerful and sinister drama" of late antiquity, the social transformations of political power and its rituals which had formed the subject of *Eternal Victory*.

When I had about concluded the research for the diplomacy book, I sat down to write a brief chapter describing how two early medieval courts communicated. Within a few weeks it became clear that my prosopographical study of diplomats had uncovered much new evidence. A few months more of research, and I was back at Dumbarton Oaks to present a first sketch of my findings in an informal talk. I no longer remember everyone in the small group who attended that talk, but I do recall that my friends Alexander Kazhdan and David Jacoby were present. Both levied vigorous criticism of the sort that we all most enjoyed, even as they lent me further important evidence for my findings. Alexander, in particular, objected to detecting broad shifts in the infrastructure of Mediterranean shipping and transport on the basis of "only sixty pieces of evidence," sixty instances of long-distance communication. We all laughed when I retorted that complaining about "only" sixty witnesses was rather unbecoming to a Byzantinist. But I took his point, and have spent no small effort in deepening the research in order to expand the evidentiary base. Conversations with my friend John Baldwin urged me on in seeking independent series of data against which to test the patterns, and the intellectual stimulus of The Seminar of the Department of History of the Johns Hopkins University showed me some places to look for them, particularly when I listened to papers and comments by Philip Curtin and Richard Goldthwaite. The "pieces of evidence" are now some ten times what they were, and the patterns observed that distant day still hold. But others have emerged alongside them.



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The move to Cambridge both slowed and deepened progress. No one who examines the footnotes of this book will fail to recognize that it was written in Widener Library. This book owes an incalculable debt to the men and women, librarians, scholars, and benefactors who have made that library great: without it, and them, it would never have been written in this way.

At Harvard University, I have been immensely stimulated by my colleagues and students, particularly in the Department of History. Thomas N. Bisson, in particular, has exemplified collegiality in every way, and so made this book possible also. I am grateful to the Department for its handsome support of this project, especially to my colleagues David Blackbourn, Chair, Patrice Higonnet, Chair, Publications Committee, and Mark Kishlansky. To list the colleagues who have sparked my thinking in the last eight years would make this a very long preface indeed. But I cannot fail to mention the most stimulating interlocutors of all: the justly fabled students, graduate and undergraduate, whose probing, thoughtful questions push all of us ever forward in our understanding of our subjects.

Special thanks are due to a few colleagues who helped me in areas where I dared not help myself. Bernard Septimus and, while on a visit, Robert Brody made an invaluable contribution to this book by introducing me to important new Hebrew evidence. Roy Mottahedeh generously aided me by deciphering the inscriptions on some Kufic dinars. Michael L. Bates provided precious expertise on the Arab coins. Horace Lunt has helped me more than once with his piercing insight into the linguistic (and other) jungles of Old Church Slavonic. At Dumbarton Oaks, Irfan Shahîd kindly labored over an Arabic text on my behalf. There too, Philip Grierson has taught me much. It is due to long years there, across the hall from Philip, and his unfailingly kind and thoughtful answers to my questions that I dared to venture as far into numismatics as I have. The last part of this book was written up in the splendid circumstances afforded me by my friend and colleague, then Director, Angeliki Laiou, during a spring leave at Dumbarton Oaks. I am not about to forget the stimulus of my conversations there, especially during the questions that followed the public presentation of my findings in the very room where the first results had been discussed nine years earlier. Irene Vaslef and her assistant Mark Zapatka worked wonders in obtaining for me books and articles which wandered far beyond the ample confines of Byzantium. Thrice in recent months I had the privilege of discussing my findings in depth with Dietrich Claude, whose gift of his own book on the subject had sharpened my interest long ago. It was with great sadness that I learned of his death two weeks after our last meeting.

My weekly swims with Paul Meyvaert have exercised the mind no less than the body. Poor Paul has had many a theory tried on him in the slow lane of Blodgett Pool; rarely did he fail to suggest a further reference. Telephonic, electronic, and face-to-face conversations with Guy Philippart and his comments have been a



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continuing source of stimulus, especially on hagiography, but on much else as well. The John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation made possible the research on diplomacy out of which this book was born. That it was born at all in the intended fashion reflects the support of my editor, Mr. William Davies; Ms. Philippa Youngman's meticulous copy-editing has made this a better book.

From beginning to end, this book has benefited from the serene and happy home that Magda has created for all of us. Thomas Kennedy and Elena Sylvie have borne patiently Daddy's isolation upstairs with his computer and books. My brother Tom, Cathleen McCormick, and my other cousins and aunts have listened tolerantly and sometimes even enthusiastically to descriptions of my work. Tonawanda has continued to provide a warm refuge from the rigors of academe, in the home of my mother, and amidst the watchful friendship of Mary Lou and Rose Marie Metzger.

Our home in Tonawanda holds fond memories of the two scholars to whom this book is dedicated. To have known and worked closely with one such scholar is privilege enough for a lifetime. Twenty-six years of knowing and learning from Léopold Genicot and nineteen with Alexander Kazhdan seem an unfair share for any one historian. Both followed the development of this study closely, and urged me onward. To their memory and example it is respectfully dedicated.

15 August 1999
Tonawanda, New York



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# ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| AASS | *Acta sanctorum*, 3rd edn, Paris, Rome, Brussels, 1863–. |
| AAWG | Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse, 3rd series. |
| AB | *Analecta bollandiana*, Brussels, 1882–. |
| ACO | *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum*, ed. E. Schwartz *et al.*, Berlin 1914–. |
| BAH | *Berichte über die Ausgrabungen in Haithabu*, Neumünster. |
| BDHIR | Bibliothek des [Preussischen] Deutschen historischen Instituts in Rom, Tübingen. |
| BHG | F. Halkin, *Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca*, 3rd edn, SH 8a; Brussels, 1957; *Auctarium*, SH 47; Brussels, 1969. |
| BHL | *Bibliotheca hagiographica latina*, SH 6 and 12; Brussels, 1898–1901; H. Fros, *Novum supplementum*, SH 70; Brussels, 1986. |
| BibS | *Bibliotheca sanctorum*, Rome, 1961–. |
| BM | J. F. Böhmer, E. Mühlbacher, *et al.*, *Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter den Karolingern*, Regesta imperii, 1; 3rd edn, Hildesheim, 1966. |
| BMGS | *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, Oxford, 1975–. |
| BS | *Byzantinoslavica*, Prague, 1929–. |
| BSFN | *Bulletin de la Société française de numismatique*, Paris, 1948–. |
| BZiel | J. F. Böhmer and H. Zielinski, *Die Karolinger im Regnum Italiae*, Regesta Imperii 1, 3, 1; Cologne, 1991. |
| CBSDO | *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art*, ed. J. Nesbitt and N. Oikonomides, Washington, DC, 1991–. |
| CC Cont. Med. | *Corpus christianorum, Continuatio mediaevalis*, Turnhout, 1971–. |
| CCL | *Corpus christianorum, series latina*, Turnhout, 1953–. |
| CDL | *Codice diplomatico longobardo*, ed. L. Schiaparelli *et al.*, FSI 62–6 (1929–86). |
| CFHB | *Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae*, Washington, Vienna, etc. 1967–. |
| ChLA | *Chartae latinae antiquiores*, ed. A. Bruckner *et al.*, Olten etc., 1954–. |
| CPG | M. Geerard, *Clavis patrum graecorum*, Turnhout, 1974–87. |
| CSEL | *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum*, Vienna, 1866–. |



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| DACL | *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, ed. F. Cabrol and H. Leclercq, Paris, 1907–53. |
| D Arnulf | *Die Urkunden Arnolfs*, ed. P. Kehr, MGH Die Urkunden der deutschen Karolinger 3 (1940). |
| D Ch III | *Die Urkunden Karls III.*, ed. P. Kehr, MGH Die Urkunden der deutschen Karolinger 2 (1936–7). |
| D ChB | *Recueil des actes de Charles II le Chauve, roi de France*, ed. G. Tessier *et al.*, Chartes et diplômes relatifs à l'histoire de France, 8; Paris, 1943–55. |
| D L II | K. Wanner, ed., *Die Urkunden Ludwigs II.*, MGH DDKar 4 (1994). |
| D LG | *Die Urkunden Ludwigs des Deutschen, Karlmanns und Ludwigs des Jüngeren*, ed. P. Kehr, MGH Die Urkunden der deutschen Karolinger 1 (1934). |
| D Loth I | *Die Urkunden Lothars I. und Lothars II.*, ed. T. Schieffer, MGH DDKar 3 (1966). |
| DD Imp | *Diplomata imperii*, 1, ed. K. A. F. Pertz (1872). |
| DDKar | *Diplomata Karolinorum*, ed. E. Mühlbacher *et al.* 1– (1906–). |
| Dekkers | E. Dekkers, *Clavis patrum latinorum*, 3rd edn, Steenbrugge, 1995. |
| DHGE | *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, ed. A. Baudrillart *et al.*, Paris, 1912–. |
| DOC | P. Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, 2–3, Washington, DC, 1968–73. |
| Dölger | F. Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches*, 1, Berlin, 1924. |
| DOP | *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Washington, DC, 1941–. |
| EI | *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn, ed. H. A. R. Gibb *et al.*, Leyden, 1955–. |
| FSI | *Fonti per la storia d'Italia*, Rome, 1887–. |
| FMRZD | *Die Fundmünzen der Römischen Zeit in Deutschland*, ed. M. R. Alföldi, Berlin, 1960–. |
| Grumel² | V. Grumel and J. Darrouzès, *Regestes du patriarcat de Constantinople*, Paris, 1972–. |
| HBN | *Hamburger Beiträge zur Numismatik*, Hamburg, 1947–. |
| ILS | *Inscriptiones latinae selectae*, ed. H. Dessau, Berlin, 1892–1916. |
| JE | P. Jaffé, P. Ewald *et al.*, *Regesta pontificum Romanorum ab condita ecclesia ad annum post Christum natum MCXCVIII*, Leipzig, 1885–8. |
| JESHO | *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Leyden, 1957–. |
| JRA | *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, Ann Arbor, 1988–. |
| JRS | *Journal of Roman Studies*, London, 1911–. |
| Laurent | V. Laurent, *Le corpus des sceaux de l'empire byzantin*, Paris, 1963–81. |
| Lavrov | P. A. Lavrov, *Materialij po istorii vozniknovenija drevnejšej slavjanskoj pis'mennosti*, Akademija Nauk SSSR, Trudij slavjanskoj komissii, 1; St. Petersburg, 1930. |
| LMA | *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, ed. R. Auty *et al.*, Munich, 1977–99. |
| Mansi | J. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, Florence, 1759–98. |



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| MBAH | *Münstersche Beiträge zur antiken Handelsgeschichte*, Ostfildern, 1982–. |
| MGH | *Monumenta Germaniae historica*, Hanover, Berlin, etc. |
| AA | *Auctores antiquissimi*, 1877–1919. |
| *Capit.* | *Capitularia regum Francorum*, ed. A. Boretius and V. Krause, 1883–97. |
| *Capit. episc.* | *Capitula episcoporum*, 1984–. |
| *Conc.* | *Concilia*, 1893–. |
| *Epist.* | *Epistolae*, 1889–. |
| *Form.* | *Formulae*, ed. K. Zeumer, 1886. |
| *Poet.* | *Poetae latini*, 1881–. |
| SRG | *Scriptores rerum germanicarum in usum scholarum*, 1839–. |
| SRL | *Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum*, 1878. |
| SRM | *Scriptores rerum merovingicarum*, 1884–1951. |
| SS | *Scriptores*, 1826–. |
| NC | *Numismatic Chronicle*, London, 1838–. |
| ÖAWD | Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philos.-hist. Klasse, Denkschriften, Vienna. |
| *ODB* | *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. A. P. Kazhdan and A. M. Talbot, Oxford, 1991. |
| PG | *Patrologiae cursus completus . . . series graeca*, ed. J. P. Migne, Paris, 1857–86. |
| PL | *Patrologiae cursus completus . . . series . . . ecclesiae latinae*, ed. J. P. Migne, Paris, 1844–64. |
| PLRE | A. H. M. Jones *et al.*, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, Cambridge, 1971–92. |
| Pros. | M. McCormick, "Early Medieval Travelers. A Mediterranean Prosopography, A.D. 700–900," in preparation. |
| QFIAB | *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, Tübingen, 1898–. |
| R1, R2 etc. | Appendix 4, Register of Mediterranean Communications, no. 1, 2, etc. |
| RBPH | *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, Brussels, 1922–. |
| RE | *Paulys Realencyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft*, ed. G. Wissowa, Stuttgart, 1893–. |
| REB | *Revue des études byzantines*, Paris, 1946–. |
| RGA | *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*, ed. H. Jankuhn *et al.*, 2nd edn, Berlin, 1968–. |
| RIN | *Rivista italiana di numismatica*, Milan, 1888–. |
| RN | *Revue numismatique*, Paris, 1838–. |
| SB | Sitzungsberichte |
| SC | Sources chrétiennes, Paris, 1941–. |
| Settimane | Settimane di studi del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, Spoleto, 1953–. |
| SH | Subsidia hagiographica, Brussels, 1886–. |
| Syn. CP. | *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, AASS, Nov. Propylaeum. |
| TIB | *Tabula imperii byzantini*, 1–, ed. H. Hunger, ÖAWD, 125, etc. Vienna, 1976–. |
| TM | *Travaux et mémoires*, Paris, 1965–. |



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# *Commerce, communications, and the origins of the European economy*

The Mediterranean world that appears in the pages that follow may sometimes seem a different place from the one that historians have imagined until now. It is a world whose long-buried air pollution is prompting scientists to hypothesize about the changing aggregate metal production of the Roman empire, even as ships that sank centuries ago emerge from the ghostly depths laden with the secrets of an age once thought dark. Archaeologists now plot the ebb and flow of exchange from the tons of Roman ceramic containers issuing from excavations, or the spread of Arab-style buttons and weighing scales across ninth-century Scandinavia. It is a world in which Merovingian relic collectors eye the shrines of Byzantine Asia Minor, and their Carolingian successors focus on those of the Arab Middle East. In the 790s, a word stemming from the Malay tongue of southeast Asia makes its way into a Carolingian book written 15 km from the Rhine. In the same years, the pope who welcomed Charles the Great into Rome was also credited with helping the bishops of Africa, and he was but the first of his age to engage on the opposite shore of the Mediterranean.

In this world, we meet the same Bulgarian aristocrat on the banks of the Tiber and the Bosporus. Jewish merchants trade at a European saint's fair and seek religious advice from learned rabbis living in Iraq, while Muslim businessmen from the Middle East report on the textile market of Rome. Mass conversion to Judaism on the eastern edge of the Black Sea intrigues a Carolingian scholar and infuriates a Byzantine emperor in Constantinople. We spy Frankish captives in jail near Baghdad, and catch a glimpse in Jerusalem of seventeen devout women from Charlemagne's empire serving the shrine of the Holy Sepulcher. It is a world in which Christian travelers in the Mediterranean can be observed and counted, not in tens and twenties, but in their hundreds. In this world, a powerful abbot in central Italy keeps his cash savings in Arab dinars, a pope festoons the shrines of Rome with hundreds of yards of precious silk, and a biblical commentator at work in the Ardennes talks about the Arab candy brought to him by travelers. In this world too, one discerns, dimly and sporadically, the figure of Europeans, driven in chains



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down the Alps or across the Apennines to the grim vessels that would ship them across the sea. A life of slavery in Africa and the Near East awaited these children, women, and men, whose bodies purchased the early wealth of Christian Europe.

## From the end of Rome to the origins of the European economy

The problem of the transformations of the Mediterranean world, the end of Rome, and the origins of the European economy has excited historians of all obediences for most of the twentieth century. Few of them would recognize the picture just sketched, but that is not for lack of their efforts. Commerce and shipping, in particular, have sparked lively debate among historians of early Europe since the 1920s. The reasons are clear. Commerce has usually been deemed indispensable to assessing the economic characteristics of any civilization, including that of early medieval Europe. Its place in the early medieval economy illuminates the broader issues of the continuity or rupture of the first European civilization with respect to the ancient world that preceded it, and to the Europe that followed it. The signal role of international trade in the modern economy which produced the best historians has only deepened the resonance of the debate. The clear and contrasting positions about Carolingian commerce developed by two distinguished economic historians, Alfons Dopsch (1918–20; 1921–2) and Henri Pirenne (1922; 1923; 1937) still echo and shape discussion three quarters of a century later.

Carolingian commerce ranks among the most controversial issues in medieval economic history.[1] Despite enormous and learned efforts, there is little consensus. Like Maurice Lombard, a few "maximalists" see a thriving long-distance trade in Charlemagne's Mediterranean, along the lines of what Dopsch envisioned.[2] But "minimalists" predominate today. They follow Pirenne, even if they do not accept his explanation that the Arab conquest killed international commerce. Almost emptied of ships and trade, their early medieval Mediterranean is reduced to near prehistoric levels of commerce, and their Europe stood isolated from the greater economies of the south.[3] As Pirenne already sensed, this desolate

1 Thus Johanek 1987, 8, at the beginning of his good overview of Carolingian trade north of the Alps. See also, e.g., Hübinger 1968; Claude 1985a, 9–16; Genicot 1987; and Verhulst 1993.

2 Dopsch 1921–2; Bolin 1953; Lombard 1972.

3 A few examples from many: Pirenne 1937; Hodges and Whitehouse 1983, 75; cf. Hodges and Whitehouse 1996, 170; Doehaerd 1971, believes that some commercial contacts occurred (e.g. 289–90), but tends to discount their economic significance and to emphasize the changeless poverty between the fifth and tenth centuries (350–2), even if there were some scattered, timid signs of growth in Carolingian Europe. Cahen 1980, 22, believes that despite some continuing contacts, "genuine links, direct and intense" occurred only from the tenth century onwards. The stimulating work of Horden and Purcell 2000 appeared too late to be used here.



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Mediterranean contrasts strikingly with the economic effervescence increasingly visible from excavations around the North Sea. And, as if Carolingian commerce were not enough of an issue in itself, assessing it leads directly back to that greatest of historical problems, the fall of Rome and the end of the ancient world.

The reason for the lack of consensus on Carolingian trade is straightforward. Written sources that explicitly document Mediterranean commerce in the eighth and ninth centuries are rare and recalcitrant. This has obliged historians to rely, essentially, on a few anecdotes about merchants and imported fineries. The problem with anecdotes, however vivid, is that one is hard put to prove whether they illustrate the exception or the rule. To the firm believer in rising Mediterranean trade, a late report of a trader at Charlemagne's court who was in contact with the Holy Land is but the tip of the unrecorded iceberg; to the skeptic, he seems the rare bird a voluble biographer mentions just because he was so exceptional, and therefore noteworthy.[4] Since the volume of scholarly discussion now far outweighs the evidence to which it is devoted, it might appear that everything that could be said about Carolingian merchants has been said.[5] Why add one more study to a bibliography which is already lengthy?

Simply put, new insights are transforming the broader historical and economic context in which the old debate on Carolingian commerce in the Mediterranean has been played out.[6] A scholarly Rip Van Winkle who went to sleep over his late Roman or early medieval dissertation twenty years ago would scarcely recognize the age which recent research has unveiled. New methods and tools have sprung up and invite new questions. Together, the new insights and new tools open large new vistas to the historian. The time is ripe for trying new approaches to old problems, including this one.

In the first place, a new and very different consensus is redefining the broader economic context into which Carolingian commerce fits. This is nowhere more clear than in the current understanding of the great estate, an institution that not so long ago symbolized all that was backward and inefficient in the early medieval economy. The time is also ripe because of an explosion of new information about shipping and exchange in the late antique Mediterranean. Appraisal of the Carolingian economy is necessarily shaped by what preceded it. However we understand the trend around 800, if, as Pirenne thought, shipping and commerce flourished at the end of antiquity, that would make the trend

4 E.g. Notker the Stammerer, *Gesta Karoli magni imperatoris*, 1, 16, 19.20–20.22.

5 For instance, Lopez, once something of a maximalist, declared that the great debate about the volume of trade must be abandoned because it is moot: 1987, 309. This is not, of course, to deny that the debate has contributed greatly to illuminating other aspects of Carolingian commerce, as Lopez himself notes. See below, Part V.

6 Just one large example which is only now coming to fruition is the European Science Foundation's program on the transformation of the Roman world: see the overview in Wood 1997.



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c. 800 appear very different from what it would seem if late antique trade had collapsed. But more than just the amount of information and its context have changed.

Earlier arguments relied heavily on information about traders in narrative sources, or more exactly, on the scarcity of that information. In the last decade or so, however, historians' approaches to early medieval literary sources have undergone a sea change. Latin and Greek works from the period have begun to be recognized as literature. Simple as it appears, this affects, deeply, how we interpret them. Historians, but also poets, biographers, and letter writers of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages are no longer viewed as direct, objective reflections of reality, to be quarried without querying the "facts" – and silences – which they contain, in light of the literary and social filters which sifted and shaped their observations.[7]

New methods are changing and deepening the testimony of old sources in more ways than one. Prosopography, the collective biography of many incompletely documented individuals, has just begun to produce dividends, by unveiling collective patterns of behavior which have lain concealed under the mass of individuals. Hagiography, the most venerable of all our subdisciplines, is moving beyond the old and honored obsession with "true" and "false" saints, to new questions which expand the explanatory power of the largest single body of evidence to survive from the early Middle Ages. Numismatics, as practiced particularly in Great Britain and France, has gone from triumph to triumph, creating incomparably greater precision in understanding the development of early medieval money and its movements. And who can do medieval history in the twenty-first century without appreciating that the digital promise of the 1960s is now entering fulfillment, in ways both anticipated and unforeseen?

The most obvious of promises fulfilled are the new full-text databases and the awesome speed and exhaustiveness of the digital search techniques they allow. Vast collections of texts are now available in research libraries and, increasingly, on-line: all 222 volumes of the crotchety old *Patrologia latina*, 300 some volumes of the *Corpus christianorum*, a piece of the venerable *Monumenta Germaniae historica*, or the partial text database of the Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine hagiography project. So far, their importance has been double. In the pre-digital age, no historian of early medieval trade could have afforded to spend months reading fifteen or twenty thousand serried columns of Migne's *Patrologia latina* hoping to stumble on a stray mention of early medieval toll collectors. Even if one had that kind of ideal leisure, one could never be sure that the sole occurrence had not slipped by in a moment of fatigue or distraction. The speed of the new tools

7 Goffart 1988. Dopsch 1921–2, 1: 26–8 (cf. v), long ago pleaded for economic historians to consider their sources no less critically than other historians.



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makes such risky queries – does the word for toll station (*teloneum*) show up in Carolingian biblical exegesis? – a matter of seconds (ch. 22.1). The ability to fail cheaply fans audacity. Hence this book has been able to thicken the relatively thin dossiers that illuminate late antique and early medieval commerce, through digital searches which became feasible in its late stages, to be sure, but also through the old method, if that is the right word, of wide reading and serendipity.

The digital revolution has made a second and equally important contribution. The swift and exhaustive mustering of parallel word usages allows more precise interpretation of the slippery and still ill-charted languages of early medieval writers. A less obvious, but no less important advance has come from the diffusion of powerful computers into almost every scholar's office. They allow any of us to manipulate far larger sets of evidence than have ever been deployed in this debate.

But the best of tools are no better than the questions to which they are applied. In this respect too, it is time for change. Though the new digital tools expand it somewhat, the fact of the matter is that explicit evidence on long-distance trade and shipping is not abundant in the written sources. A much more dramatic change in the amount of data at our disposition comes from reformulating the question. No scholar can read Dopsch and Pirenne without admiring their command of the written sources and the clarity of the questions they posed.[8] But we need not accept their every assumption. Scholars and economists, not to mention modern businessmen, have moved beyond Pirenne's unshakeable conviction that advanced international trade was possible only in a world founded on the gold standard. Two more assumptions call for scrutiny. From Pirenne forward, scholars have tended to assume that ninth-century writers were as interested in merchants as the sixth-century historian Gregory of Tours. It followed that only explicit references to merchants and long-distance trade similar to those of Gregory could shed light on the pattern of Mediterranean commerce in the age of Charlemagne. Silence in the ninth-century sources could only mean absence in ninth-century reality. But what if the sources were not much interested in commerce? In that case, we would have to look for activity in which they *are* interested, and which could shed light, directly or indirectly, on commercial ship movements. In that case, we should look for evidence of communications. More on this in a moment.

The second assumption, in Pirenne's demonstration, relied equally on the argument from silence to confirm the silence about the merchants. Since late antique men and women had written on papyrus and consumed large amounts of spices in their cuisine, Pirenne assumed that Carolingians too would have done

8 For interesting discussions of the development of Pirenne's thought on the transition from antiquity to the Middle Ages, see Delogu 1998; cf. Bachrach 1998.



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the same, if these indubitable imports had been available. But that is to assume the unfailing cultural continuity of taste. Renewed scrutiny of papyrus shows clearly that some people continued to use it, and others did not. Focusing on this difference (of which Pirenne was aware), reveals that the question of papyrus imports had a rather more precise – and limited – significance than the great Belgian scholar imagined. So too with spices. Is it so obvious that once the supply of spices had been substantially interrupted for a generation or more, every kitchen in Frankland would have clamored for them anew when supply resumed? Pirenne's argument from silence implies yes. But here too, there are reasons to think otherwise (Ch. 24.2–3).

These considerations define the triple task of this introduction. Our first charge is to examine how recent research has changed understandings of the economic context in which early medieval trade occurred. Our second will be to consider more closely the nature of the literary record on whose explicit references to commerce the issue has stood or fallen. The third objective will be to outline a new approach to the problem, by uncovering the broader universe of communication within which trading voyages occurred.

The vision of an impoverished and stagnant agrarian economy in the time of Charlemagne still has powerful adherents. But new approaches are undermining that vision. The most important concern the economics of the great estate, the not unrelated issue of dependent traders, and the extraordinary trading world of the North Sea which is emerging from the earth. Together, these three developments challenge the old vision of a stagnant and closed economy in northwestern Europe around 800 A.D. And it is on northwestern Europe that we should focus: however much opinions might vary on Byzantine and Muslim economic strength in the eighth and ninth centuries, appraisals of their commercial activities have never approached the dismal levels meted out to the Frankish west. But this challenge also obliges us to consider the issue of why and how merchants appear as they do in the written evidence. This will lead us to ask whether we can reach beyond the long-distance and traveling merchants who are unambiguously announced as such in the sources. Do they truly stand isolated? Or can the study of communications allow us to recover a broader context of shipping and transport against which to view them? We shall attack the principal weakness of the sources by finding a new approach to the scattered mentions of isolated merchants.

## The changing context of Carolingian commerce

A particular form of great estate has been emblematic of the Carolingian economy for the last hundred years. Simplifying somewhat, these large, agrarian



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institutions typically had a bipartite structure. Peasants of varying status held and farmed for themselves one part of the estate lands, in return for rents of various kinds and labor on the estate lands retained by the proprietor. How historians understand the origin and functioning of these estates has recently changed profoundly, with important implications for our vision of the overall economy. Rather than some kind of fossilized late Roman legacy, these large and complex agrarian establishments are now seen as a distinctively Carolingian phenomenon that expressed and incited economic dynamism. Though they may have preserved and developed elements inherited from the Roman economic and social order, bipartite estates prove now to have emerged from social, political, and agrarian conditions specific to several regions in the early Middle Ages. We find them chiefly in the lands between the Loire and the Rhine, and in northern and central Italy – the two most economically developed areas of the European continent in these centuries – and, finally, in the newly colonized lands east of the Rhine.

These new economic entities were often very large indeed, whether one counts the number of dependents who worked their fields, the number of acres they farmed or the cumulative distance of the sometimes far-flung holdings which produced for them. The Parisian monastery of St. Germain des Prés had about 1,700 peasant households (*mansi*) on its books, Lorsch and Prüm probably about 2,000 each. St. Wandrille calculated in 787 that it had 4,264 households, while, across the Rhine in the Frankish "wild east," the colossus Fulda has been reckoned to own some 15,000 households.[9] To broaden the range of products and guard against local shortfalls, geographic dispersion was the rule, and it could entail vast distances. For instance, one abbey just north of Paris owned an entire valley on the Italian slope of the Alps.[10] Because the big religious houses and the royal fisc (the best documented estates) strove to produce as much as possible to meet their own needs, earlier scholars sometimes imagined a Carolingian economy dominated by great estates and an essentially agrarian autarky or "domestic economy."[11] The great estate itself tended to satisfy all basic needs, they thought, to the detriment of market activity. In recent years, however, deeper scrutiny of how exactly these estates functioned has revealed a more complex picture, with greater implications for transportation, markets, and commerce than once appeared.

9 From a large bibliography, the key titles are Verhulst 1966, the various papers in Janssen and Lohrmann 1983, and in Verhulst 1985, and Toubert 1995, 116–55, in addition to the studies cited in the following notes. For further bibliography see Morimoto 1994. The size estimates come from Kuchenbuch *et al.* 1991, 40–1.

10 St. Denis owned the Valtellina, where the Adda river empties into Lake Como: DDKar 1, no. 94 (775 A.D.); see Map 13.1.

11 See the succinct overview in Toubert 1983, 5–9.



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Case studies of the transport of goods within four of the best documented of these new domanial systems bring out these implications well. They come, moreover, from three very different economic and geographic regions. One estate centered on Paris and the Seine. Another was in western Germany, situated on a tributary of the Moselle, on the Eifel plateau. Two more lay in northern Italy, and scattered their holdings across Lombardy and down the Po river.[12] In all four cases, close scrutiny has uncovered highly organized systems of communications over land and water. Thanks to labor and transport services imposed on the tenants, large quantities of agrarian and craft goods flowed yearly from outlying locations to the central domain. The goods under way ranged from cereal staples to high value products such as wine and iron tools. In all four cases, the drive to satisfy the needs of the central house was powerful, but in none did those needs exhaust the surplus production of the whole complex. Some was sold off in markets near the place of origin, while other goods were transported to a central market for sale. In the case of St. Germain, for example, this meant transporting large quantities of wine (an estimated 6,000 hectoliters for its Paris area vineyards) toward Paris and other regional and international markets.[13] This kind of productive organization was not confined to agrarian products. The distant land acquisitions of the Parisian abbey of St. Denis in the eighth century have recently been reinterpreted as a large-scale policy of acquiring mineral resources, particularly iron ore and salt.[14] In other words, the economy of northwestern Europe in the ninth century possessed a good number of overlapping regional systems whose nature it was to centralize for consumption *or for sale* surpluses supplied by dispersed production centers.[15]

Centralizing and accumulating wealth presented further opportunities for commerce, both in terms of supply of estate wares and demand for other goods. At the same time, the yearly transport of estate wares had spillover effects by intensifying circulation and communication along the rivers and roads of Francia and northern Italy. This certainly affected the infrastructure of transport, for instance by encouraging work on roads or the development of new river ports.[16]

12 See, respectively, St. Germain des Prés: Devroey 1993b, XI (originally 1984); on Prüm: Devroey 1993b, X (originally 1979) and, with some reservations, Kuchenbuch 1978; for Bobbio and Santa Giulia at Brescia, Toubert 1995, 183–20 (originally 1983).

13 Devroey 1993b, XI, 577–81; the estimated volume comes from Jean Durliat, cited *ibid.*, 577.

14 Stoclet 1993, esp. 418–34.

15 Documents may soon be extended by archaeology, which is pointing toward links between ceramic supply and estate ownership: see below pp. 66of.

16 See the interpolation c. 850 of Charlemagne's diploma of 786 for St. Germain, DDKar I, no. 154, justifying the creation of a port and market on both sides of the Seine at Marolles and Montereau-faut-Yonne (see Map 15.1), at the confluence of the Yonne, as discussed by Devroey 1993b, XI, 581; cf. the roughly contemporary efforts by Lorsch to obtain landings along the



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Sometimes archaeology combines with the texts to unveil striking instances when ninth-century administrators renewed the ancient infrastructure. For example, excavation has shown that one of the fortified Rhine ports with which the Roman emperor Valentinian I (364–75) had reinforced the frontier was abandoned in the early Middle Ages. It came back to life in the eighth century as a royal estate and river port. It then passed into the hands of the abbey of Lorsch, which lay a few kilometers upstream on the creek into which the stone port structures – perhaps including the foundation of a Carolingian crane – were built.[17] Finally, and no less importantly, where coinage was available, a surprising proportion of the rural dues are specified in cash.

Overall, from the eighth century to the tenth, the general trend among great estates to monetize the dues of rural households has become unmistakable. This is now recognized to be true in the Po valley and, more remarkably, between the Loire and the Rhine. Even if coins were specified only as a standard of value, the implications for rural markets and the spread of money into the countryside are obvious. Without both of these, the dependent peasants of the great estates could scarcely have made or understood payments increasingly defined in terms of money, not goods.[18] The independent evidence of the coinage itself bears this out. Not only is Carolingian money infinitely better understood than a generation ago: it is now seen as a coinage whose technical characteristics indicate the minting of "a very large number of coins" of consistently high quality, itself the token of "a prosperous and tightly controlled economy" under Louis the Pious. The minting of obols (half-pennies) seems also to increase. This is what one would expect if demand were growing for smaller coins for smaller transactions.[19] In other words, directly and indirectly, great estates stimulated trade. They encouraged or followed the nascent trend to a monetary economy, even as they intensified the developing networks of communication within and among the different regions of the Carolingian empire. This is a far cry from the domestic or closed economy that the great estates were thought to betoken less than a generation ago. And from the 770s to the 830s at least, those developing communication networks enjoyed some two generations of exceptional institutional and political stability.[20]

Rhine: Johanek 1987, 47. Archaeology has revealed a shoreline settlement connected with the royal palace complex – the royal fisc was the supreme example of a great estate – at Ingelheim on the Rhine: Ellmers 1981, 89–91. For Carolingian roads in general see below, Ch. 13.1.

17 At Zullenstein: Jörns 1979, esp. 121 on the 2.2×2.5 m stone base facing the port building's entry. Jörns evokes the possibility of a crane or a fixture to tie up the boats. Wood pilings would have sufficed for the latter and been safer for the boats, and there was probably no shortage of trees in the area.

18 Kuchenbuch 1988, 337–8 and Toubert 1995, 132.

19 Coupland 1990, 24 (quotation), 26 and 28.

20 Hägermann 1989, and the works of D. C. North, e.g. 1990.



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A further sign of agrarian economic growth comes from the new understanding of water mills. These expensive and complex mechanical installations signal investment for productivity. They represented a major and highly profitable release of human or animal power from the labor necessary to grind grain for daily bread. We now know that they had spread much more widely in late antiquity than was even recently believed.[21] Scholars have long recognized their presence in the Carolingian countryside, but argued from their uneven distribution in estate records that "undoubtedly progress in this direction was timid and slow."[22] More exacting scrutiny of the same records reveals a very different picture. By the earlier ninth century, water mills had been built everywhere that the hydrology permitted. Some went back as far as the seventh century; some had certainly been built by lay proprietors before entering the abbeys' holdings; and in the 820s, the abbot of St. Germain was busy putting in new mills whose productivity was still greater than that of the old ones. Mills on the royal estate of Annappes were the most productive of all.[23] Far to the southeast, on the northern edge of the Alps, mills also began to spring up along the creeks of Bavaria toward the middle of the eighth century, and growth spurted again a century later.[24] Across the Alps, water mills were being built in the Po delta and the duchy of Rome, to name only two easy examples.[25] Much work remains before the final word on Carolingian water mills is written. But it is already clear that, in the eighth and ninth centuries, this key indicator of investment and agrarian productivity now points upward.

In general economic terms, the steady erosion of the old vision of demographic stagnation is even more significant. It helps make sense of the new understanding of individual developments like the great estates and water mills. Cemetery populations, rapidly expanding areas of arable land, population densities derived from estate registers, and fertility ratios deduced from the same source tell the same story in many different regions of Europe. Whether we look at the Seine or the Po river basins, the Namurois, northern Spain and southern Gaul, the Rhineland, Thuringia, or Provence, population and economies were growing, sometimes at a surprising clip. Even the episodic famines that hit the Carolingian heartland in Charlemagne's day can be taken as "accidents of growth," arising out of the

21 Wilson 1995.

22 Duby 1976, 17.

23 Lohrmann 1989, whose findings make a new and systematic examination of the entire problem a pressing desideratum. The most recent archaeological discoveries, becoming available as this book went to press, entirely confirm and extend Lohrmann's argument: see Böhme 1999.

24 Koller 1982.

25 Po: see e.g. Lazard 1986, 387, who argues that the term *aquimola* (also well-attested at Rome) is a calque from Byzantine Greek. For Rome, see for instance the references which this word yields from the digital *Patrologia Latina Database*, which also point in the same direction of growth, once they are checked against the standard editions.



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strains between rapid population growth and slower expansion of food production.[26] Nor are the indicators of demographic expansion limited to Christian Europe. To the east, beyond the Franks' forest frontier, signs are multiplying of a burgeoning population in the once deep obscurity of the Slavlands.[27] Population densities were of course quite uneven across the early medieval continent. But the essential new conclusion is that the demographic contraction which had affected the western regions of the late Roman empire (see Chapter 1) had been reversed. The great growth of Europeans was already under way, more than a century earlier than accomplished historians generally believed even thirty years ago or less.[28]

The dependent trader is yet another player on the early medieval economic scene whose appraisal has changed, with interesting implications for the question of commerce. These well-attested merchants were in service to great religious houses. Their dependency once was thought somehow to disqualify them as authentic vectors of commerce.[29] Now scholars have generally recognized that, though they may have operated under the aegis and for the benefit of one of those great economic entities that were the wealthy Carolingian bishoprics and monasteries – also, often enough, great estates – such traders were nonetheless pursuing trade.[30] They must be taken into account to understand the full spectrum of Carolingian commerce. In fact, in many cases they traded under privileged circumstances, since some houses had gained toll exemptions for their merchants; and it would be surprising if these dependent traders were not involved also in marketing the surplus goods of the great estate. Because their privileges were often valid for the entire kingdom, it is in any case clear that such merchants operated on a considerable geographic scale.

26 Verhulst in Duby *et al*. 1990, 188–9. For the possibilities for population growth in the Seine basin which arise from a more sophisticated statistical approach to the polyptych of St. Germain des Prés: Devroey 1993b, V; economic growth in the Po: e.g. Toubert 1995, 136–7 and 152–5; demographic advances in the Namurois: Genicot 1995, 35–43; northern Spain and southern Gaul: Bonnassie 1990; Germany: Lohrmann 1990; Provence: Zerner 1981 and 1990, 153–7. Growth seems to have been stirring even in a rather remote and rugged region like the Abruzzo, in Italy: see Feller 1998, 419–58.

27 E.g. Meduna and Černá 1991, figure 7, shows a 20 percent increase in occupied sites in the 7th–8th C. and the 9th–10th C. Cf. Klápště 1991, 396, on growing evidence which "documents a demographic increase in central Europe as early as the second half of the first millennium."

28 Compare Duby 1976, 67, and 1978, 79 and 82 (originally published in 1962 and 1973, respectively), where a slightly less negative appraisal of the Carolingian population has gained ground. See also the resolutely pessimistic position of Fossier 1981, and in Duby *et al*. 1990, 182–4.

29 Discussion in Johanek 1987, 44–54.

30 See on this subject the stimulating discussion and rich bibliography of Devroey 1993a, who makes an important distinction (383–4) between rural agents of religious houses and merchants who, at least initially, tended to be recruited "from a pre-existent urban or commercial fabric."



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A final element that is changing how we think about the Carolingian economy has been a stupendous advance in the archaeology of trade, at least in the north. Sustained excavations have gone hand in hand with intensified scrutiny of massive quantities of archaeological evidence, old and new, from major trading settlements such as Haithabu, Birka, Dorestad, and Hamwic, and many lesser sites scattered along the shores of the North Sea and the Baltic. From the earth has come proof that commerce surged in and among these regions in the eighth and ninth centuries. We know now that the Carolingian empire exported wine, weapons, pottery, grain, glassware, millstones, and many other goods to England and the Jutland peninsula. Some of these wares traveled even further.[31] This is important in itself, for it implies that at least the northern regions of Carolingian power enjoyed some decades of remarkable economic growth and commerce. It is not, moreover, inconceivable that some of that exchange spilled over into other, more southerly climes: must we really imagine, with Pirenne, that the economic activity of the North Sea remained divorced from the southern reaches of the empire?

But the greatest significance of these northern findings may be methodological. The written sources attesting to this veritable boom in the north are no more abundant or eloquent than those referring to trade in the southern regions of Carolingian power, where the archaeology of exchange has barely begun. Against the thousands of square meters of the northern emporia already excavated and published, and the stacks of monographs, we can set only a handful of small trenches at comparable southern sites, such as Porto Romano or Venice. Work presently under way or soon to begin promises to change that. In the meantime, the argument from silence need not weigh so heavily against the scattered written evidence on southern trade. But what about the written word?

## Early medieval writers' attitudes toward merchants

Much debate about early medieval commerce has turned on merchants' presence or absence in the sources. Yet, like peasants and women, merchants are severely underrepresented in the surviving source material from early medieval Byzantium and the west.[32] In much of Europe, the faithful actually absorbed the contempt for commerce and its profits that late antique churchmen sought to instill in their listeners (Ch. 4.1). The preachers were probably most successful

31 All of this suggests that, even if overly optimistic, Lewis 1958, 179–244, was on the right track concerning the economic vitality of the North Sea. For more, see below, Chs. 20 and 23.

32 See, e.g. on the difficulties of studying Carolingian rural guilds Oexle 1981, 301.



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among their spiritual progeny, the ecclesiastics of the medieval west. These monks and clerics of course wielded the pens that have produced most of our sources. Christian dislike for commerce – if not for its proceeds – allied with the new aristocratic ethos of a warrior life to produce a ruling class that was often indifferent and sometimes even hostile to the trading life. The result contrasts strikingly with the zest for both trading and warfare one finds in the pagan, Germanic north and which still permeates the later saga literature.

The litterateurs' contempt for commerce was nonetheless not universal, even among Latin Christians. The scant records of ninth-century Venice breathe an atmosphere of markets and merchants. Anglo-Saxons and those imbued with their culture, like the Frank Einhard, are another partial exception. A detail is telling. Early biblical commentators constantly discuss the story of Christ cleansing the Temple, and they do so in virtually the same language. Although the Gospels (especially John 2, 14–16) speak only of buying and selling, or of money changers, many early commentators routinely refer to the people driven from the Temple simply as "merchants" (*negotiatores*): in their eyes, the mere activity of commerce was enough to profane the holy place.[33] However, Bede, followed slavishly by Alcuin, parts company in this one detail: for him, the men whom Christ expulsed were not merely merchants: they were *unjust* ones. For the Anglo- Saxon monk, not all merchants were bad. The problem was not trading in the Temple, but dishonest trading.[34]

A disdain for merchants and their ways nonetheless pervades many a Frankish writing.[35] It was probably not lessened by unconscious word association. The assiduous reader of Carolingian sources might well garner the impression that the word "commerce" crops up as much in connection with sex as with coins.[36] A famous anecdote encapsulates wilful Carolingian incomprehension of price elasticity. En route home from a pilgrimage to Rome, the neurotic nobleman Gerald of Aurillac was horrified to learn from a Venetian trader that he had in fact gotten a great deal: he had paid far less for an especially fine textile than what it would have commanded at Constantinople. So he got a friend heading down to Rome to take the difference in cash to the seller. Thus, says his biographer,

33 E.g. Paulinus of Nola, *Ep.* 20, 5, *CSEL*, 29.1.146.24–7: "excutiat flagellum pietatis suae, quo uerberat omnem filium quem recipit, et expellat a sensibus mentis nostrae, quasi a negotiatoribus templi, omne commercium atque contagium iniquitatis."

34 *Homeliarum euangelii libri* ii, 2,1, *CCL*, 122.39–43, commenting on John: "Sed nolens ipse dominus aliquid in domo sua terrenae negotiationis nec eius quidem quae honesta putaretur exhiberi dispulit negotiatores *iniustos* et foras omnes simul cum his quae negotiabantur eiecit." Cf. Alcuin, *In Evangelium Joannis*, *PL*, 100.773B.

35 And not just the literary works. Siems 1989, 110–38, demonstrates that numerous Carolingian legal sources avoid the very word for merchant, even when that is what they manifestly are talking about.

36 See e.g. *MGH Capit.* 2.596, s.v. "commercium."



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Gerald lived up to the apostolic injunction "let no man defraud his brother in business" (1 Thess. 4, 6).[37] The late Roman legacy of contempt for trade reached even more unlikely climes. On the shores of the Bosporus, according to a well-known story, the Byzantine emperor Theophilus (829–42) was disgusted to discover that a trading ship that was docked in sight of the imperial palace belonged to the empress. He reckoned commerce to be incompatible with empire, and ordered it to be destroyed.[38]

Apathy toward traders fashions the evidence in subtler ways too. Even when early medieval writers deign to mention merchants, they often consign them to anonymity. Because it is broad and spread across many sources, this pattern reveals the writers' attitudes more reliably than the egregious anecdote. It finds no better illustration than the Frisians. Their name in this period is virtually synonymous with trade. A comprehensive review of sources that certainly or possibly document this coastal people centered in the modern-day Netherlands catalogued sixty-five early medieval works and authors. Only a third (twenty-three: 35 percent) explicitly or implicity refer to merchants. Even by the most generous count, fewer than one in ten (five: 8 percent) name a specific person who might have been a trader.[39] If this is the sum of prosopographical data available for a famous trading nation operating in the heart of the Frankish empire, what echos can we expect from the distant Mediterranean?

The social and ethical blinders that constricted many early medieval writers' vision of merchants thus obscure their role in these societies. The double problem of literacy and record preservation deepens the obscurity. Who, if anyone, used writing in the trade of northwest Europe is unclear. In large areas – for instance the vital and expansive "northern arc" across Scandinavia – commercial writing was, so far as we can tell, virtually nil in the eighth and ninth centuries. Even areas which knew about acts and preserved a few wills and real

37 Odo of Cluny, *Vita Geraldi Auriliacensis* (*BHL* 3411), 1, 27, *PL*, 133.658A–C. On the value of this biography, see A. Trin, "Géraud 1," *DHGE* 20 (Paris, 1984), 832–5. If the Venetian was telling the truth, one wonders about the explanation: were they smuggled goods which avoided the stiff Byzantine export fees? Another possibility is that Byzantine-style "knock-offs" were being produced in Rome. One of our Byzantine travelers, Saint Blaise, earned his keep in his Roman monastery by weaving purple textiles: see below, Ch. 7.3.

38 Theophanes Continuatus, 3, 4, 88.10–89.14. For the ancient attitudes which underlay this gesture, Giardina 1993, 563–72.

39 Lebecq 1983, vol. 2, who has cast a very broad net. Of his 70 chapters, nine are later than the year 1000, are Arab or Byzantine works, or concern merchants in general (e.g. V–VI) and so are not germane to this question. The remaining 61 sections inventory references to the Frisians or their territories in 65 works or authors. By "implicit" references to merchants, I mean, for instance, the word *emporium*, or references to buying and selling.



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estate transactions concerning important religious houses show no trading records. We have no idea whether Italian merchants buying slaves in Rome or selling them in Africa needed or produced contracts. Nothing survives that is remotely comparable to the Cairo Genizah, the celebrated room where a Jewish trading community centered in Old Cairo deposited all writings bearing Hebrew lettering (and which itself only becomes substantial in the eleventh century). The two most likely places to look for trade and traders in the ninth century are Venice and Amalfi. But they simply do not preserve many archival records from our period. For Amalfi, there exist *two* acts of any kind before 900, as well as a summary of a third; for Venice, fewer than twenty records have come down to us, all in later copies.[40] Yet, even with these meager scraps, we feel we are under different skies at Venice, for the scraps breathe commerce and merchandise.

The result of this source situation is clear. It has fostered the modern understanding of early European commerce which features a handful of scattered Italian, Frisian or Jewish merchants. Trekking alone through hostile territories and darting across enemy-infested seas, they dealt in tiny quantities of luxury goods, catering sporadically to rich warriors and prelates who had hoarded the resources plundered from the starving peasants of an underdeveloped, anemic agrarian economy. The crux of the matter is whether the scattered and anecdotal evidence for early medieval commerce is representative or not. The answer to that question must come from the historical context, against which the anecdotes can be judged. The new vision of the Carolingian agrarian economy changes that context in important ways. Specifically speaking, the very nature of the literary blinders revealed by the case of the Frisians suggests a new approach which capitalizes on the characteristics of early medieval literature, rather than being crippled by them. The time has come to broaden the inquiry to investigate long-distance communications in the Carolingian era.

## Early medieval communications

Hunting for commerce has proven illusory. The sources do not much care about it; they speak only rarely of merchants who crossed the sea to import exotic goods. And so the argument from silence – or rather from scarcity – has prevailed.

40 Amalfi: Schwarz 1978, 237–8, citing *Codice diplomatico amalfitano* 2, no. 584 (860 A.D.); *Memorie storico-diplomatiche di Amalfi* 1.113 (875 A.D.). For an overview of all the diplomatic source material for Campania, Skinner 1995, 11–19. Venice: see e.g., *Documenti di Venezia*, nos. 37–40, 43–5, 52–4, 56, 58, 59–60.



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Explicit mentions of long-distance merchants are few and far between, and therefore the same must be true of commercial exchange.

This book proposes a new approach to this old problem. It is true that Carolingian evidence on commerce is less ample than scholars would like – although not nearly so bad as has been made out. But there is a large and untapped well of evidence which reflects indirectly on the issue of commerce: communications. In the early Middle Ages, people, things, and ideas moved long distances across space from one place to another. These diverse movements all constitute communications. The blinkered written sources show us plenty of people on the move: ambassadors, pilgrims, refugees, slaves, raiders, and even a few traders. Latin and Greek, but also Old Church Slavonic and Hebrew, not to mention Arabic, sources record a surprising amount of long-distance travel around the Mediterranean. And it is not just people who have left their tracks across the written and other records. News, letters, disease, and objects – saints' relics, coins, silks, drugs – traveled too. If we turn our attention from the narrow issue of commerce, in which our sources were not much interested, to the broader one of "communications," particularly of the sort that attracted our aristocratic informants, the picture changes, dramatically.

The study of communications in the Middle Ages is in its infancy. But it has already been born.[41] If, rather than demanding that the sources give us what we want, we take what they give us, they give us communications. But they do not give them up easily. The number and details of communications directly and explicitly attested which can be analyzed without further ado are useful. But the information increases very substantially when is one is willing to invest greater preliminary labor in recovering the information about individual trips which lies latent in the sources. The single richest source of information on long-distance communications lies in the movements of individuals.[42] For instance, the statement in the Frankish *Royal Annals* that a particular bishop went on an embassy to Constantinople gives us a communication between two places in a particular year. Researching the bishop's life can yield further precious nuggets: the season of arrival and departure, the routes, his age at travel, details of the vessels taken, courses followed, and dangers dodged. This fact has dictated the first, not inconsequential research project on which this book is founded: a collective biography, or prosopography of early medieval travelers. When I began this project, I had expected to find several dozen travelers whose Mediterranean movements could be documented to a greater or lesser extent. I was wrong. Sustained research has identified almost 700 individuals who traveled alone or in small groups. Some are

41 See e.g., Bautier 1992 and Piemontese 1992, in a publication, revealingly, sponsored by Italian telecommunications companies. In fact, this kind of study has been around in one form or another for some time: Haskins 1926. See also Ciggaar 1996.

42 See for example, on medieval pilgrims, Micheau 1979 and Malamut 1993.



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mere shadows in the sources, like the Greek-speaking traveler Gregory ("Gregorius 4"), who witnessed an eruption of Vesuvius en route from Constantinople to Rome in 788. Others are individuals whom we can know as well as almost any comparable individual from antiquity or the Middle Ages, thanks to the wide swath they cut through the records and realities of their day. They are men like Saints Constantine (Cyril) and Methodius or Anastasius Bibliothecarius. Others still may be less familiar, but their personalities and travel experiences emerge from oblivion with striking clarity: a student of Alcuin like Amalarius of Metz, or a European slave in Africa turned holy man in Italy, like Elias the Younger. For each one, it was necessary to reconstruct in detail a biography, and to pay special attention to their movements, which could often be reconstructed with surprising precision.

Overwhelmingly and unsurprisingly, the travelers we can see belonged to the elite. They traveled as ambassadors, pilgrims, and such. But other kinds of travelers appear as well: missionaries, refugees, exiles, raiders, and slaves all demand scrutiny. Even merchants crop up in numbers which are proportionately smaller, but not inconsequential. From this prosopography, we can extract several things. The first is a sharper picture of the people we know traveled, down to questions (such as travelers' ages) which offer some hint for the broader history of infrastructures of travel. When, where, and why they traveled is usually forthcoming, and their individual and group histories yield still more information which can throw direct or indirect light on patterns of communication in the eighth and ninth centuries. For instance, much new information emerges on matters such as speed and seasons of travel, which turns out to have further implications for the communications world of the early medieval Mediterranean. Not least, a clearer understanding of what we are seeing deepens our sense of what we are missing.

Furthermore, these individuals' travel histories correspond to a very large series of trips across and around the Mediterranean Sea. When we add to individuals' movements (not a few of whom traveled together) those of letters and the like, they total about 400 instances of communication. All of them can be dated with some precision, which opens up an entirely unexpected window on the ebb and flow of long-distance travel across two centuries. This new database helps us also to piece together much more of the great puzzle since, as the bishop's case suggests, many of the trips shed light on changing route structures, seasonality of travel and more. The prosopographical research also yields a rich and barely noticed vein of anecdotal evidence about the conditions of early medieval shipping and travel. The result of this research is laid out in the Register of Mediterranean Communications (Appendix 4), which tabulates some 800 movements of all kinds between c. 600 and 970, and which approaches exhaustiveness for the period from 700 to 900.



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Communications are obviously not limited to the movement of persons. Even when the persons who moved them are no longer visible, certain things also traveled in the early medieval Mediterranean, and their movements too can be fixed in time and space. Two types of objects beckon for attention in this respect. The first are relics. They may seem to document putative patterns of travel and transport; even if that were the sole import of their testimony, it would be valuable, since it teaches us with which regions of the old Roman empire early medieval people in France believed communications were still possible. There is nothing putative about the second type of objects. For coins struck in the Byzantine or Arab empires made their way to the Carolingian empire and its approaches. Although the precise nature and timing of these objects' movements are sometimes not as sharply defined as was the case for persons, the sum total of movements implied by these different objects adds several hundred more cases of communications to our discussion.

The debate has been long and vexed, the method proposed here is novel, and the conclusions it has yielded have taken some rather unexpected turns. Given that, it appeared wise to analyze each set of movements separately. I have consciously striven to approach the problem of early medieval communications from as many independent avenues as possible. If independent sets of evidence continuously uncover the same patterns, chances are strong that those patterns stem from reality, and are not artifacts of the circumstances which produced and preserved one set of evidence. Even within the prosopographical part of our inquiry, eastern and western travelers are often independently attested. They also display distinctive travel patterns. Thus the Greek and Latin records provide partially separate and independent data on two different human groups on the move on the Mediterranean Sea. This is even more true of the small but not insignificant number of travelers who come to us courtesy of the Old Church Slavonic, Hebrew, Arabic, and Georgian sources.

The movements of objects multiply the independent evidentiary series. Two separate early medieval relic hoards have been exhaustively analyzed for the light they throw on the communications horizons of the shrines that accumulated them. Analysis of the mentions of Arab coins in early medieval records is followed by the testimony of the Arab coins themselves, as well as by coins struck in the Byzantine empire which traveled toward the Carolingian empire. These lengthy and separate investigations produce a large set of substantially new evidence on early medieval communications.

Commercial voyages were a subset of these broader streams of communications. Not all communications, of course, were commerce by another name, although that was sometimes so. Even the surprising patterns of communications which will emerge do not automatically prove commerce, although in some cases that is indubitably the implication (Ch. 18.1). What the study of communications



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does provide is a new and incomparably richer context of shipping and travel against which to view old – and new – evidence about that smaller segment of documented communications which were commercial in nature.

## The road ahead

The road ahead is long, broad and complex. This imposes clear articulation of its limits. In time, the starting point for investigating the origins of European commerce has been pretty clear since World War I. To understand the problem of early medieval commerce, it is imperative to peer back into antiquity. Dopsch, Pirenne, Claude, Hodges and Whitehouse have all done so, although they varied exactly where they began their studies. Dopsch went back to the time of Caesar, Pirenne to the fifth and, especially, sixth centuries; Claude started his investigation around 500, while Hodges and Whitehouse devoted particular attention to archaeological data of the fifth and sixth centuries. Concluding has spawned more options. Dopsch carried his analysis down to Charlemagne, and devoted a separate book to the Carolingian economy. Pirenne made a few forays into the later ninth century and beyond, but Charlemagne and the early ninth century really do mark, substantially, the term of his study. Claude concluded his study essentially in the first half of the eighth century. Hodges and Whitehouse took their study of western Europe down to about 850, and even a little later for the Near East.

Critical questions of trend, change, and continuity can only be answered over the long run. So we have broadened the chronological scope with respect to most of our predecessors. This investigation begins around 300 A.D. The new society, economy and culture of the late Roman empire was then assuming its definitive shape even as a number of institutions took root which would affect the critical state sector of the economy; some important long-term economic processes also were then becoming visible in western Europe. I have attempted to carry the investigation a little further forward, down to around 900, with a few forays deep into the tenth century. Some of the developments that emerge in the pages that follow become clear only across this time span.

Nonetheless, to investigate anew at equal levels of depth and detail 600 years of dramatic economic change – and the voluminous scholarly literature devoted to them – is a tall order. Preliminary studies have hardly reached the same level of maturity across the entire six centuries. The archaeological evidence, and thinking about its implications, are strongest down to about 700. Within that period, late Roman ceramic is central to everything we think we know about exchange. It is increasingly well mapped from the fourth to the early seventh century. Thus it is possible to summarize what we now know about the transformations of the late



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antique economy in relatively short order. Archaeological evidence for Mediterranean commerce after 700, on the other hand, is just beginning to appear. Consequently, the new archaeological data, though present from the start to the finish of this book, weighs more heavily down to 600. The new prosopographical and other data that I have myself assembled weigh more heavily after about 670. For late antiquity, in other words, the main lines of development look clearer and clearer. Much of the seventh century, however, remains crucial but obscure, although the decades before the Arab conquests are beginning to yield up their secrets, and real progress is occurring in the subsequent years.[43] For this reason, I have paid particular heed to new sources of evidence starting in the final decades of the seventh century: travelers and their movements, certainly, but also relics and coins.

In space, the focus has been on those parts of western Europe which came to constitute the Carolingian empire, and its connections with the Mediterranean world. The excellent work that has already been accomplished makes this focus less predominant in the late antique chapters – although, comparatively speaking, western Europe is still far better and more deeply studied than the other regions of the Roman empire, with the emerging exceptions of Africa and Palestine. Western Europe looms larger in the eighth and ninth centuries because this is where the debate has been, and where the sources run thickest. Even so, every step deeper into the enigmas and evidence of Carolingian Europe has led me to the conviction that, economically speaking at least, early Europe cannot be understood in isolation from the broader world of which it was a part. This is true whether we look, like Pirenne, to the North Sea, England (and Scandinavia); like Lombard, to the south and the economies of the Caliphate and Spain; or eastward, to the astonishingly neglected Slavs and Bulgars, and to Byzantium. I have therefore dared to venture into these exotic climes, sometimes deeply. Some of them are new for me; such a trespasser can only hope that specialists' dismay at the novice's inevitable shortcomings will be tempered by pleasure at an outsider's interest in their hitherto private parks.

The logical focus of this study should by now be clear. It attempts to discern the changing patterns of communication across the Mediterranean Sea between about 300 and 900 A.D. and to use them to analyze anew one particular type of communications: commerce in the Carolingian economy, and the place of that phenomenon in the broader Mediterranean world.

These methods, premisses, and limits structure this book. Five stages articulate the investigation. Part I, "The end of the world," lays out the evidence for the

43 D. Claude, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 91 (1998), 142 emphasizes the need for more scrutiny of the seventh century.



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decline and fall of the Roman economy and its implications for the infrastructures of communications which late antiquity bequeathed to the early medieval world. Chapters 1 and 2 chart the overall trend from different indices. Changes in settlement patterns, disease pools, and agriculture all point to the general downward trend of the economy, and lead us to explore the fate of two types of industrial or craft production: metallurgy and kitchen pottery. Chapters 3 and 4 examine the transformations of the Roman system of transport. Land and river communications are an integral part of the whole, but the emphasis is on sea transport. Its volume, cargoes, the impact of state subsidies, and the shifting center of gravity of late antique shipping are the crucial themes.

Part II, "People on the move," presents the evidence which sustains most of Parts IV and V: the individuals and small groups whose movements yield the largest single set of communications which we analyze in this book. Humanly and historically, westerners and easterners are, in many ways, distinct groups, and for the best-attested types of travelers they have been analyzed separately. Chapter 5 sketches portraits of four westerners who crossed the Mediterranean in the eighth and ninth centuries; Chapter 7 does likewise for six easterners. Some, like Saints Cyril and Methodius, are household names, among medievalists at least. Others will be less familiar figures such as Amalarius of Metz or Gregory the Dekapolite. But each face appears in a new light, and each helps us remember this essential fact: that we are studying in the first instance people, not abstract forces. From the broader groups of which these more tangible individuals were a part, Chapters 6 and 8 present the collective evidence, a kind of sociology of early medieval travelers. They allow us to see how our better-known travelers are representative of the larger groups. A last chapter rounds out the picture by sketching what we know about some less visible kinds of travelers. Here we meet the merchants who are unambiguously presented as trading on a Mediterranean scale, as well as the slaves in whom they often were trading. Politically motivated travelers such as refugees and hostages crop up more often than one would expect, and further confirm the elite bias of our sources. Two more mysterious groups conclude this chapter: the nearly invisible immigrants, sailors, and fishermen of the early Middle Ages, and the very visible – and very neglected – group of imaginary travelers. A wealth of information arises out of these chapters, not only about travel and travelers, but also about fundamental shifts in the infrastructures of communications.

Part III, "Things that traveled," explores the parallel and independent evidence of two sorts of objects which were believed to have crossed, or indubitably did cross, the early medieval Mediterranean. Chapter 10 examines the changing geographical horizons revealed by the growth of two large hoards of relics – all told some 500 objects – assembled in France under the Merovingian and Carolingian kings. Chapter 11 addresses "virtual coins" from the Arab world, that is the Arab



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dinars and dirhams mentioned more than a hundred times in the archival records of Carolingian Italy. It uses their documentary traces to uncover when and where they reached Europe, as well as to clarify how their economic significance differed from region to region. Chapter 12 compares the virtual coins to the 700 or so actual Arab and Byzantine coins that have come from the soil of Europe.

Part IV, "The patterns of change," capitalizes on the investments of Parts II and III. A new and rich context emerges for viewing what we can know today about commerce in the early Mediterranean economy. The new information derived from the prosopography of travelers paints, in Chapter 13, how our early medieval argonauts experienced travel. The next three sections analyze changing patterns of communications over time. Chapter 14 charts the secular rhythms of communications, that is the rise, fall, and partial recovery of Mediterranean communications between about 700 and 900. Chapter 15 explores the seasonal rhythms of Mediterranean travel, and their implications for deeper shifts in shipping and transport. Chapter 16 investigates the rate, speed, and duration of travel and turns up yet another latent shift with broader implications for our theme. Part IV concludes with three chapters that map for the first time the changing spatial patterns of long-distance communications in the early medieval Mediterranean. Chapter 17 uses the evidentiary base of communications to reconstruct the history of the main shipping routes that linked western Europe with the southern and eastern Mediterranean rim. Chapter 18 confirms the repeated hints of the earlier chapters and details the commercial breakthrough of Venice and the Adriatic route around 800. Chapter 19 uncovers in similar fashion the land routes. The new understanding of the communications world of which Carolingian Europe was one part sets the stage for Part V.

This final part, "Commerce," unfolds in six chapters. They examine the convergence of the patterns of communication and those of the birth of the European commercial economy. Chapter 20 reviews key and often controversial issues in understanding early medieval trading worlds, such as the relations of war and commerce, of early medieval rulers and trade and, especially, the chief characteristics of the trading worlds beyond the Carolingian empire. Chapters 21 and 22 prove that, despite the indifference of the literary sources, there is no shortage of merchants, or markets, in Carolingian Europe. The shortage is only of merchants whose geographic horizons are explicitly identified by the sources that mention them. Lacking that, it is still possible to take what the sources give us, and plot where exactly on the map the merchants were when they are mentioned. Along the way we will meet some important new evidence, such as contemporary testimony from Syria and Iraq about long-distance merchants and markets in Rome and Paris, and ponder the implications of recent archaeological study of kilns in the Rhineland. Chapter 23 studies the extent and limits of these European clusters of merchant connections to the economies that surrounded Carolingian



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Europe, from Scandinavia to Africa and Iraq. The final, conclusive elements in rediscovering early Europe's commercial world fall into place with Chapters 24 and 25. For if indeed Europe traded on a significant scale with the Arab world, where are the wares? These last segments analyze, respectively, foreign imports into Europe and European exports to the more developed worlds of Africa and Asia. In the first, the fate of papyrus allows us to draw very different conclusions from those sketched by Pirenne. The work of historians of medicine and palaeographers uncovers the first stage in the appropriation of the new Arabic science by the Carolingian physicians of Europe and its implications for long-distance commerce; a glance at silk imports makes the case in a way that affords sporadic but telling quantification. The final chapter addresses the enigma that these changing patterns of communications and commerce imply: what did Europe possess in value and quantity large enough, and in demand strong enough among the more developed countries of Asia and Africa, to finance these remarkable and expensive imports? The answer may appear disturbing to some, but I see, at present, no way around it. By way of conclusion, "At the origins of the European economy" assesses the destabilizing impact of the commercial surge that occurred in the Carolingian age, as it recapitulates a long and complicated series of investigations, and reflects on some of their implications for our understanding of the broader history of early Europe.

Four appendices present in succinct fashion some of the most important new data uncovered, assessed, and assembled for this book: checklists of Mediterranean travelers and mentions of Arab coins, a critical inventory of Arab and Byzantine coins discovered around Carolingian Europe, and last but by no means least, the Register of Mediterranean Communications. With these tools in hand, it will be easy to correct, improve, and deepen my findings. The road ahead is long, and it is time to get under way.



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# 1

# *The End of the Ancient World*

Daily I grow weaker from the pain, and I sigh longingly for the remedy of death. So much sickness of fevers has assaulted the clergy and people of this city that practically no free man, no slave remains who is good for any work or service. From the neighboring towns, the devastations of the epidemic are announced to us every day; how Africa is wasted by epidemic and fevers, you know more exactly, I suppose, for being closer to it. People arriving from the East describe worse desolations still. By *all* these things, as the end of the world draws near, you know that the affliction is general . . .

In August 599, Pope Gregory the Great found these comforting words about Rome and the rest of the empire to console a noble couple on their own sufferings in Sicily.[1] Awareness of impending doom pervades his work. Epidemic, enemy invasion, riot, and economic dislocation encroached on his understanding of himself and his civilization. To an Anglo-Saxon king he announced climatic catastrophe: "As the end of the world approaches, many things menace us which never existed before: inversions of the climate, horrors from the heavens and storms contrary to the season, wars, famine, plagues, in some places earthquakes . . ."[2]

Mere protestations of doom and gloom from a popular preacher bent on putting the fear of God into his wayward flock and terrorizing them into reform? Certainly not: Gregory believed it, and acted on his perception that the world was coming to an end. The imminent fullness of time drove his very practical and eschatological efforts to extend the faith to the ends of the earth, to the island of Britain.[3] Nor was this collapsing world view the monopoly of Latin churchmen. Gregory of course had lived at Constantinople. A generation later, an Egyptian layman and associate of the emperor Heraclius echoed the Persian

1 See Maps 2.1, 3.1 and 4.1 for places mentioned in this chapter. The quotation is from Gregory, *Registrum* 9, 232 (August 599), *CCL*, 140A.814.9–18.

2 *Reg.* 11, 37 (22 June 601), *CCL*, 140A.931.46–50.

3 Richards 1980, 52–4.



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court's speculation on the end of the world.[4] In the spring of 632, a Byzantine refugee who had crossed the sea to escape the victorious barbarians openly wondered about the forced baptisms of Jews and Samaritans which he had just witnessed in Carthage. Were they not, he shuddered, the prelude to new apostasies, the manifest sign of the end announced by Scripture?[5] This was the climate that, a little later, produced the great tale of the Antichrist and Pseudo-Methodius' predictions of a Byzantine Armageddon, predictions which would inflame western imaginations down to the Crusades and beyond.[6] The terrifying conviction that the end was at hand was not confined to Christians. Persecuted Jews felt the same way, whether they looked at the military defeats of Rome's eternal empire, or suddenly expected religious services to resume in the ruins of the Temple.[7] The apocalyptic fever infected even triumphant Muslims.[8] Waves of Christian defeat and desolation breathed renewed life into their eschatological ideas until late in the seventh century.[9] But Gregory the Great and Maximus Confessor do not mislead us by pointing to a first nadir of worldly despair spiked with spiritual effervescence.

## 1. Long-term trends in the late Roman economy

The troubles they knew were sufficiently bad that informed contemporaries saw the world ending in the decades around 600. Awareness of deep crisis need not, in itself, mean economic collapse or even contraction. Inherited mental categories that no longer explained new realities might precipitate similar reactions. Where a modern historian applauds accelerating economic change in the form of growth, contemporaries could just as well perceive threat to the established order. In a deeply biblical mind-set, such change triggered mental responses which identified the crisis as the end of time. Such was the case for the other great era of eschatological anxiety in the Middle Ages. The decades surrounding the year 1000, historians of every stripe agree, witnessed accelerating economic growth across Europe, and set off plenty of mental alarms. Nonetheless, economic dynamism was not what

4 Theophylactus Simokattes, *Historiae* 5, 15, 3–7, 216.14–217.6, with Dagron and Déroche 1991, 39 n110, whose compelling picture of the apocalyptic mentality of the seventh century I have followed.

5 The missing fragment of Maximus Confessor, *Ep. 8 frag.*, ed. Devreesse, 35; Dagron and Déroche 1991, 30–1. The author of the *Doctrina Iacobi nuper baptizati* claims to be one of the Jews forcibly converted at Carthage; he echoes this world in crisis in profoundly disturbing fashion and announces his apocalyptic vision early on: cf. e.g. 1, 5, 75.8–15 and 3, 8–10, 165–9.

6 Pseudo-Methodius, *Apocalypse*.

7 For Jewish Apocalypses dated to the 630s and 640s, Dagron and Déroche 1991, 38–43.

8 See the forthcoming monograph by David Cook, which the author kindly shared with me.

9 See e.g. Reinink 1992 and Drijvers 1992.



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stimulated the eschatological expectations of the late sixth century. The end of the ancient economy provides the indispensable prelude to the beginnings of the medieval system of communications and exchange in the Mediterranean basin.

Heaps of evidence, mostly archaeological, are now piling up. The yearly improvement of ceramic typologies and fabric and kiln studies goes hand in hand with new excavations and good stratigraphies. In deepening detail, they uncover the deposit patterns of foreign and local pottery. This in turn unveils across a broad front two fundamental processes: the contracting traces of settlement and the final stages in the ancient flow of African and eastern wares into the corners of western Europe still integrated into the Mediterranean world. The wares dwindle away around 700. The process is the same one whose northern extremities, in a flash of insight, Pirenne discerned from the disappearance of Merovingian papyrus and spices, even though he lacked the evidence that linked that disappearance to its deep causes. Suddenly we see a few hundred kilos of amphoras where only five or ten years ago we saw nothing. But that must not blind us to the larger fact that we are indeed witnessing the end of the Roman economy.

If evidence continues to accumulate and if analysis keeps pace with discovery, coming years will fill in the picture. New finds will probably alter portions of it. Yet, even as masses of new material emerge into the light of day, they are very unevenly distributed in space and time. Our own historical conditions confine investment in uncovering the past mostly to western Europe and its academic extensions in the eastern and southern Mediterranean. The biggest surprises should come from the Byzantine regions of the east, where the soundings are fewer, and shallower. On one hand the historian is inundated with new data, and on the other, the most economically vibrant part of the ancient empire is still comparatively under-explored, and texts alone must do duty where excavations would extend their testimony. Already, however, enough is clear to take stock of what, economically speaking, can only be called the "fall of the Roman empire."[10] If today we seek only to avoid error, we will miss a fine opportunity to lay out a general map that tomorrow will challenge and correct.

What follows is anything but a full accounting: that would need another book. But to understand the patterns which prevailed at the beginning of medieval Europe, we must grasp the salient features of how the late Roman economy changed. And it is better to illustrate incompletely the emerging picture with a few examples whose very specificity inoculates the reader against overconfidence, than to pretend to generalize definitively at this early stage about the fates

10 A few (from many) noteworthy titles: Hodges and Whitehouse 1996, Panella 1993, Sodini 1993, Delogu 1994, Hendy 1985, Wickham 1994, 7–42 and 77–98. Among older works, that of Patlagean 1977 remains essential, as of course does Jones 1964. Greene 1986 usefully surveys the contribution of archaeology to Roman economic history.



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of millions of individuals over a dozen or more generations, distributed across the land mass of some thirty modern states.

The overall economic trend of the Roman world from c. 200 to 700 was downward. This is not to say that decline prevailed everywhere, all the time: far from it. But within these chronological limits, the overarching pattern is now clear, even if the details are sometimes sporadic and even contradictory. In this and the next chapter, several key areas of human activity confirm the fact of broad economic decline. A look at them shows the strengths and weaknesses of the evidence, where it overlaps and where it does not. The primordial element is population size, because in a pre-industrial society, the aggregate amount of wealth produced is directly connected with the numbers of people working. The recent focus on settlement patterns sheds light on food production, the primary sector of any economy.[11] Indirect but independent evidence for a crescendo of economic and population change, with likely demographic implications, comes from a second, new area of historical investigation, the health patterns of the Roman world. Both lead to a diagnosis of decline. Two further kinds of economic activity will confirm and deepen that diagnosis. Looking at the late Roman economy from four very different angles offers a fuller perspective on the changing reality uncovered by the remarkable work that has been accomplished – and indicates all that remains to be done. This changing economic reality supplies the indispensable context for appraising what is known today about changing patterns of long-distance communication, particularly shipping, as the ancient world drew to its end.

## 2. People and food

First and foremost, the population. It is impossible to number and no later province preserves the rich census material that, for third-century Egypt, allows sophisticated demographic analyses.[12] But that does not mean that we cannot guess the general tendency, differing regional trends and sometimes even more, from indirect (or "proxy") data for population movements and general economic trends. If some way could be found to disentangle the cultural and administrative factors that affected the creation of the thousands of surviving records – on papyri, stone, and sherds – it might be possible to move beyond the broadest level of generalization, especially with growing ranks of computerized

11 Technology, whether in the form of tools or organization, is the element which can change this; our understanding of the role of technology and innovation in the ancient world is still rudimentary: witness for instance the recent redating of the big hydraulically powered mill complex of Barbegal near Arles, from late antiquity to the 2nd C.: Leveau 1996.

12 Bagnall and Frier 1994.



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tabulations.[13] Even if this material should yield only partial results, they could serve as a point of comparison for future palaeodemographic research into late antique cemeteries. In the meantime archaeologists have pushed the collecting and debating of another kind of proxy data the furthest.

Field surveys have blossomed. As archaeologists have walked the acres of more and more regions, they have gathered, with increasing care, the pieces of the past scattered across the surface of the Mediterranean countryside. They have now been systematically analyzing such pottery sherds for about three decades. That ancient ceramics were relatively cheap, ubiquitous, and are, increasingly, well dated and localized makes them a precious tool for all kinds of investigations. The connection between sherds and population is not unproblematic. Even so the converging results and ever improved methods are beginning to yield a clear picture of differing rates and trends of sherd deposit, and therefore, it is thought, of settlement, and even, it is hoped, of population change over time and space.[14] What happened in the countryside was decisive for the entire economy and population. In a pre-modern economy, the extent of land farmed was the first and primordial economic fact determining food production and therefore wealth at its most basic level. And the countryside was the demographic wellspring of society, since deaths always outstripped births in pre-modern cities.[15]

In general, such surveys suggest that more places in the countryside are attested (and therefore inhabited) from the early second than the seventh century. This has been taken to mean that proportionately fewer men and women populated the Roman imperial space in the seventh century. In fact, the connection between pottery and population is probably more complex. In addition to ceramic supply, changing forms of land ownership (estates) and agrarian organization (more

13 A number of scholars seem at least implicitly, and often independently, to suspect a rough demographic underlay to quantitative trends in document production: MacMullen 1982, 237, on private papyri; McCormick 1985, 152; Lopez 1987, 308–9; Duncan-Jones 1996, 124–30, observes in many regions sharp drop-offs in numbers of dated papyri, inscriptions etc., that coincide with the Antonine Plague; cf. for another period Bozzolo and Ornato 1980, 91–7. The matter deserves systematic scrutiny. An overall downward economic trend may well be echoed in aggregate patterns of the production of inscriptions, although it is difficult to distinguish straitened circumstances from changes in fashion. There is, for instance, some reason to believe that painted posters, which scarcely ever survived, replaced inscribed ones in some parts of the Roman world.

14 One source of problems was the fact that early efforts sometimes picked up only one or two kinds of "diagnostic" pottery, usually foreign, and failed to take into account changing patterns in the supply of that pottery to the region under study. On the methodological difficulties of early surveys and some ways of overcoming them, see Millett 1991 and Mattingly 1993, 359–60. See also below.

15 E.g. Genicot 1953, 454–5; cf. Cipolla 1980, 145.



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herding, less plowing), a move toward more nucleated settlement (more people living in fewer places), even changing preferences for ceramic, wood or skin utensils, all may have helped change patterns of ceramic deposit in different regions.[16] Yet all of these causes that contribute to shifting ceramic deposit surely herald important economic changes in the countryside. Even the most critical students of the late Roman rural landscape tend to conclude that, while drawing direct correlations between ceramic deposit and demographic trends may exaggerate the latter, some population change was occurring, and it is reflected in some not uncomplicated way by the survey results.[17] But the picture looks very different when one focuses on smaller regions and periods. Anyone who has examined some of the newest studies will recognize the extreme diversity of data emerging from opposite corners of the Roman empire, and hence the great risks of generalization. Even neighboring micro-regions sometimes show sharply divergent fates in late antiquity.[18]

That still does not exempt the historian from trying to see the broader pattern beneath the new profusion of divergent data. The rate, extent, timing, even direction of change vary. Rural sites in Gaul were thinning when those of Africa were thickening. Egypt may have been stable, while Syria was swarming with people. Early hints of settlement contraction and presumed demographic slump come from Roman Gaul and Campania in the late second century – coincident with the great Antonine epidemic? The hints increase thereafter in the northwest quadrant of the empire, although, within this large zone, the pattern was by no means irreversible everywhere.[19] In one region of late antique Spain, around Tarragona,

16 For a thoughtful critique of current oversimplifications of the connection between sherd deposit and demographic trends, Alcock 1993, 49–92. Dossey 1998, 13–67, argues powerfully that estimating population *increase* in late Roman Africa directly from sherd deposit fails to recognize the changing cultural and economic conditions of pottery use in that region, and so may overstate growth. On the other hand a sealed and well-preserved organic deposit at Nîmes militates there against the substitution of wood kitchenware for ceramic in the 6th C.: Leenhardt *et al*. 1993, 123.

17 One could make the counter-argument that the same number of people congregated in fewer places. There is surely some of that, but, taken all together, the evidence still seems to suggest real decline in numbers. The towns, for instance, were usually not growing when sites in their hinterlands were growing scarcer.

18 As is made clear, for instance, by Anglo-Italian research along the Albegna river: Attolini *et al*. 1991.

19 See for northern Gaul, Wightman 1985, 101–32, 243–66, 305–10; the systematic study of Van Ossel 1992 confirms and deepens the diagnosis of shrinking and increasingly impoverished settlement, even as it makes clear varying regional trajectories; more recent survey of the Aisne region adds further weight to Van Ossel's findings: Haselgrove and Scull 1995, 62–3. Cf. for Italy, the revised 1996 French edition of Hodges and Whitehouse, 38–55, with the new afterword, 166–7, which recognizes the methodological difficulties but continues to defend the overall pattern of demographic decline. For a specific case



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detectible occupied rural sites dropped by about 40 percent in late antiquity.[20] Some areas of the African countryside also evince decline. Others probably prospered and expanded down to the fourth and even fifth centuries, at least in Proconsularis (Carthage's hinterland), and to the south, in the steppe area around Sufetula (mod. Sbeïtla), where the Arabs would decide the fate of Byzantine power in Africa.[21] In the Segermes valley, settlement growth indicates a growing population later still, down to the middle of the sixth century; sharp contraction followed.[22] Third- and fourth-century documents show a populous and stable Egypt.[23] Northern Syria's rural population apparently grew until it peaked around 550. Then it seems to have stagnated for a few generations before slipping into a gentle decline that stretched into the eighth and ninth centuries.[24] In almost every region of Greece that has been surveyed, rural sites increased in the fourth, fifth, and even sixth centuries.[25] Drastic change came only in the seventh century.[26]

If the regional syntheses are any guide, the processes of settlement contraction and, presumably, the population decline and impoverishment that they seem to imply, describe a kind of giant arc. They began in the northwest, hard by the ancient heart of the Roman empire. Much like the movement of global weather systems, contraction gradually overtook the eastern and southern reaches of the empire, but only centuries later.[27] When so many years and miles

study which overturns earlier arguments for settlement continuity in the hinterland of Trier – an economically favored area of Gaul – see Janssen 1983. Others have argued for settlement continuity, e.g. in the diocese of Rheims, but the demographic implications are less clear. See for instance the prudent assessment of Périn 1983. For a compelling reassessment of the Antonine "plague": Duncan-Jones 1996.

20 From 35 in the early empire to 20, according to the innovative survey of Carreté *et al.* 1995, 246.

21 Mattingly and Hitchner 1995, 189–95 and 211–13.

22 Dietz 1995, 798–9.

23 Bagnall 1993, 182–3 and Bagnall and Frier 1994.

24 Gatier 1994.

25 Alcock 1993, 37–49.

26 See e.g. *ODB* 2: 870; cf., more precisely and more tentatively, Bintliff 1995, 113, knowledge of which I owe to Veronica Kallas. For more preliminary reports confirming rural decline in the 7th C.: Harvey 1995, 250–2. See also, in general, for major demographic decline then Haldon 1997, 143–7. Contra, at least in areas which escaped invasion: Kaplan 1992, 529–30 and 539–40.

27 This parallel may only be coincidence, but it is increasingly clear that climatic change is an essential aspect of the broader economic context, especially of fundamentally agrarian societies like the late Roman one. It is still early days in palaeoclimatology, especially for the more remote historical eras, although palynology, dendrochronology, etc., combine with computerized modeling to promise a new era: Whyte 1995, 9–62. Specialists are lending new attention to climatic and cosmic developments that may have affected historical processes, particularly in the 6th C.: Koder 1996 and Farquharson 1996. Prehistory has elicited particularly stimulating discussion of climate and historical change, e.g. Sherratt 1997.



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separated these processes, one might legitimately question the causal connections among them. But it is intriguing to observe that this macro-pattern anticipates the parting of the ways between Latin Europe and the Arabo-Byzantine Levant and Africa. And it provides a context indispensable to making sense of the changes occurring in the late antique infrastructure of transport and communications.

More than the scatter of sherds says that the countryside was changing. Beginning – once again – in the second century, a Roman emperor may have sought to stem the desertion of arable land in the countryside.[28] Although the causes and precise extent remain controversial, a cascade of imperial laws from the fourth to the sixth centuries leaves no doubt that wide acres of farmland were going out of production, and so depriving the tax office of its take.[29] The western emperor thus wrote off over half a million land-tax units (*iugera*) in Campania in 395.[30] Some places around the empire were short of hands to work the lands to pay the taxes; hence, land prices there may have dropped to levels well below those of the Principate.[31] Landowners lured farmers away from other estates, private or public, and emperors strove mightily if not successfully to stem agrarian labor mobility (and facilitate tax collecting) by enforcing the legal tie of peasants to their place of origin.[32]

Changes in the countryside went beyond how much land was exploited. In some areas of the old Roman space, shifting settlement patterns suggest that farming organized the land in new ways. In northern Gaul, large landed complexes which had sprung up from the first or second century saw their villa centers abandoned. Formerly dispersed occupation sites may have tended to move and cluster together. Although some villa abandonment might reflect changes in villa ownership and operation, or simply where the owners lived, there is no doubting that even where the changes were least dramatic, the countryside looked different in the fourth and fifth centuries.[33] By the late sixth and seventh centuries, when scattered documents from the French countryside begin to survive, some essential processes of agrarian change may already have come to completion.[34] At the other

28 Pertinax: Herodian 2, 4, 6, 1.160 with Jones 1964, 812; against this passage: Whittaker 1976, 140–1.

29 Jones 1964, 812–23; against: Whittaker 1976, written, of course, before much archaeological evidence was available.

30 Not thirty years later, more than a third of the imperial lands held by the *res privata* in Proconsular Africa had also to be written off: *Cod. Theod.*, 11, 28, 2 (Milan, 395), 1.2.617; 11, 28, 13 (Ravenna, 422), 620. Even Whittaker 1976, 162–3 is inclined to admit the testimony of the former; against the latter, 161.

31 Thus Jones 1964, 822.

32 Discussion of imperial laws in Jones 1964, 812–19; cf. for the 6th C. in the east, Kaplan 1992, 375–82, and for a very different approach to aspects of the same problem, Patlagean 1977, 301–40.

33 Wightman 1985, 243–66; Ferdière 1988, 2.207–19 (on which cf. Leveau 1991); Van Ossel 1992, 173–84.

34 Verhulst 1966 argues for the appearance



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end of the Mediterranean, in the north Syrian limestone massif east of Antioch, the trajectory differs. Its famous peasant villages sprang up in the first century; after third-century difficulties, they are thought to have expanded continuously from the first half of the third century until the mid-sixth. An enormous investment in stone-clearing allowed the development of new fields. Fine new houses went up for small-scale farmers whose growing of cereals and legumes was flanked by important and profitable oil production (even if earlier work overestimated the latter). Here it seems to be the sixth century that sees the end of growth and the seventh, deepening impoverishment.[35]

In some places, new crops, new foods, drove out old. In northern Gaul, hardy spelt triumphs over the more delicate wheats of the early Roman era. Changes like this may owe something to culture: *spelta* is one of the first words Latin borrowed from Germanic (cf. Germ. "spalten," Eng. "split," referring to the action needed to remove its thick, tough husk).[36] Its prominence on Carolingian estates perhaps echoed from afar preferences developed among Roman soldiers, who were so often of Germanic origin. Spelt in fact shows up frequently in the late empire's western military installations.[37] But the change also owes something to economics. This stubborn plant may not have the highest yields, but its hardiness during growth and good shelf-life enhanced its appeal when margins for error shrank in a land-locked agrarian system geared to subsistence, with little recourse when crops failed.[38] Rye and oats also gained in importance.[39]

At the same time that northern Gaul was battening down the hatches, across the Mediterranean in the sixth-century hinterland of the ports of Gaza and Ascalon, high-quality viticulture surged amidst the varied crops of the area's subsistence farms.[40] Here the availability of sea transport serving a voracious capital encouraged the development of a specialized export, the exceptionally robust and expensive wine which attracted Pirenne's attention, not to mention Merovingian

around Paris in the 7th and 8th C. of the "classic" bipartite estate; cf. Verhulst 1985, 11–15 and 19–20; according to Tits-Dieuaide 1985, a first textual indication of the "classic" system may come in 573; the evidence becomes firmer in the late 7th C.: 48–9; similarly Hägermann 1985, 64–5, concludes from the formula collections (blanks used for drawing up legal documents) that important elements of the "classic" great estate were appearing by 600. The archaeological data on the other hand leads Van Ossel 1992, 183, to wonder whether a shift to new estate structures may not have occurred as early as the later 4th and 5th C.

35 Gatier 1994, 30–4; 44–6.

36 Diocletian, *Price Edict*, 1, 7 and 8 (A.D. 301), p. 98; cf. Devroey 1990, 230–4.

37 Devroey 1990, 230–1. Certainly, the recent American immigrant experience suggests that the ancestral foods are sometimes the last element of the old culture to disappear, long after language and even religion.

38 Devroey 1990, 240; Körber-Grohne 1987, 68–71.

39 Devroey 1990, 232–3.

40 Gatier 1994, 31.



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devotees in Tours and Lyons (Figure 1.1).[41] Elsewhere, increasing reliance on the lighter load of pastoralism may have lessened the heavy labor of cereal cultivation, even as its fundamental need for greater spaces probably reflects the lessening demographic pressure on the countryside. One wonders whether such a shift may have increased meat consumption in some places in the western empire.[42] The taste for horseflesh which intrigued the excavators of a Carthage rubbish heap probably means that the British scholars have chanced on refuse from Vandal (or Vandal-influenced) households. As St. Jerome noted, they loved horsemeat.[43] A garbage dump near the heart of late antique Naples shows, from the late fifth century on, a marked shift toward eating goats and sheep, relative to pork, the late Roman favorite.[44] With surprising swiftness, fourth-century Egypt

41 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 7, 29, 348.6–12 and *Liber in gloria confessorum*, 64, 335.26–336.15. Archaeology is just now reconstructing the history of the production and export of this wine thanks to the identification of some amphoras as Gaza wine containers (Figure 1.1), so it is worth clarifying that Pirenne (1937, 46) distorts Gregory, when he claims that it was available "everywhere, en masse," a common ware in the stores of Tours. Nothing in the first text suggests that the servants were sent to a store ("à la boutique") to buy the wine for an impromptu celebration, rather than, for instance, to Eberulf's personal supply ("misitque pueros . . . ad requirenda potentiora vina"), which was not in the church where he had taken asylum. Gregory attributes the second story about a widow who delivered a *sextarius* (c. 0.5 liter) a day as an offering for Mass to hearsay ("fuisse ferunt"); he makes clear that this was a wealthy couple and that the wine offering was consuming the fruit of the husband's labor ("senatoria ex gente pollentes"; "in quid defluxit labor meus in saeculo . . . ?"). This extravagance works out to about thirteen Gaza amphoras: cf. on their capacity, Bonifay 1986, 300.

42 Early medieval textual evidence leads Montanari 1979, 211–18; 371 to conclude that meat, gathered and gardened foods outweighed cereals in the early medieval diet of northern Italy and reflect the economic role of pastoralism. Cf. Janssen 1985, 1257 on the contrast between a late Roman cereal-based diet and a medieval meat-based one. But much more evidence is needed: the bones of early medieval Sardinians of modest economic status analyzed by Fornaciari and Mallegni 1986, 222 showed a very low meat intake: cf. the small role of meat in the written evidence from the more prosperous eastern provinces in the 5th–6th C.: Patlagean 1977, 44–53; physical analysis of 263 skeletons in two "Merovingian" cemeteries near the Bodensee suggests that higher-status individuals ate much more meat than lower-status ones: Schutkowski 1995, 261–4.

43 Jerome, *Aduersus Iouinianum* 2, 7, PL, 23.295C–296A; horse butchering at Carthage: Schwartz 1984, 237–40; 246. Taste undermines the deduction drawn there (238–40) of economic difficulties. Contrast the absence of butchered equine remains from the contemporary refuse at Naples, King 1994.

44 King 1994, 377, and 388–9. He notes (381) that the kill-off pattern for the sheep implies they were being raised for wool. This could hint at an increasing reliance on local sources for textiles. It contrasts with the heavy reliance on pork in (the more wooded ecology of?) northern Italy of the 8th and 9th C.: Montanari 1979, 223–50. At Naples, the proportion of kitchenware which could be placed in a fire for cooking



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Figure 1.1. Gaza amphora: Type A "Gazition." Archaeologists are recovering the production history of "coarseware," such as the distinctive amphoras produced at Gaza and its environs. The robust Gaza wine so appreciated in Gregory of Tours' Gaul crossed the sea in containers similar to this one. Excavators have turned up Type A amphoras around the Mediterranean, including at the Merovingian wharves of Marseilles, where they occur c. 600 in the company of African dishes ARS 105. The study of amphoras charts with increasing precision the ebb and flow of imports into various regions. Ashkelon Excavations: The Leon Levy Expedition, photographer Carl Andrews. Courtesy of Lawrence E. Stager.



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abandoned beer, the millenary drink of the Nile, for wine of all varieties. This surely reflects a cultural change, and possibly one of trading patterns as well.[45]

## 3. Population health

However their diet evolved, the collective health of late Romans changed significantly. Although palaeopathology is still in its infancy, the first results point clearly in this direction. For instance, the changing health of a population interred at Saint-Martin-de-Fontenay (Calvados) does not contradict the broader pattern. A (small) sample shows good health under the late empire; the sixty-four people whose remains were recovered might show slight improvement in the fifth century, although some troubling signs occur in their teeth. In the sixth century (262 individuals), a drop in life expectancy and traces of malnutrition signal deteriorating conditions of life and health.[46]

As we learn better every day, human health is enmeshed in the broader fabric of economic and social life. Changes in the pathocoenosis, the array of diseases characteristic of a society, alert us to underlying changes in the economy, even as the diseases themselves worked further transformations. According to some archaeologists, the debilitating infection of malaria was newly devastating in late antiquity.[47] Late antique Rome experienced a distinctive surge in death rates from July to October which could reflect the exceptionally virulent malarial strain of *plasmodium falciparum*.[48]

Two independent considerations reinforce the likelihood that malaria gained ground in late antiquity. The first comes from late Roman society's apparent ecological difficulties. We do not know enough about changing patterns of investment in infrastructures, from waste removal services to sewer and drain building

Foonote 44 (*cont.*)
declined, as that of commonware (which seems not to have been so used) increased. This might insinuate another dietary change: Arthur 1994a, 218.

45 Bagnall 1993, 23–32.

46 Pilet *et al.* 1994, 65–7; 93–6; 123–8.

47 Soren and Soren 1995. See in general Vegetti and Manuli 1989, 392–3 on classical consciousness of malaria, and, above all, the fundamental work of Grmek 1989, 275–83; cf. too Sallares 1991, 271–81.

48 The seasonal surge emerges from two independent analyses of more than 3,000 epitaphs. Because precise date of death was a Christian concern, the evidence does not reach back into the early empire. Of course, by weakening the afflicted, malaria might have combined with gastro-intestinal infections (which typically peak in the warm months) to produce a particularly deadly season of death, so that the precise causal mechanism for this pattern remains, for now, subject to caution. Scheidel 1996, 139–63, suspects that the *falciparum* strain had affected Rome at least since the days of Horace (*Serm.* 2, 6, 16–19). Shaw 1996, 100–38 arrives at a similar picture, but insists on the difficulty of proving malaria's decisive role.



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and maintenance. If, as seems likely, local and central governments spent less, for instance, on hydraulic infrastructure, we would have another important piece of the late Roman puzzle.[49] The extension of marshland and silting up of river mouths in any case typify this period. In tandem with contraction of settled land – which was also the drained and cleared land – these developments would have increased the breeding grounds for the kind of mosquitoes prevalent today in the Mediterranean basin.[50] Even in the wealthier east, big public works aimed at stopping erosion and checking silting seem to end after Anastasius and Justinian.[51]

The second consideration comes from modern epidemiology. Between 1930 and 1960, hematologists mapped across Italy an inherited blood disorder, thalassemia-β. Theirs is a striking map. The genetic mechanism which explains the persistence of this potentially lethal disease resembles that for sickle-cell anemia: it confers greater resistance to malaria. Its distribution in modern Italy approximates the territory still controlled by Constantinople toward 650. In fact, comparable levels of the disease can be found in most of the modern states that exist within the boundaries of Justinian's empire. The implication may well be that ecological and pathological frontiers, in which malaria played a signal role, reinforced the political ones of the sixth- and seventh-century Byzantine state.[52] This in turn strengthens the suspicion that malaria surged in the pathocoenosis of a dying antiquity.

Another disease also sheds light on broader economic conditions. Like malaria, leprosy (Hansen's disease), had been known within the Roman world for some time. However, human remains and texts together argue that, between the fourth and the sixth centuries, this previously sporadic disease became endemic. For a contagious disease, leprosy is not easily spread and there is much that remains unclear about its diffusion. It does seem clear that its generalization

49 Trevor Hodge 1992, 332–45, describes (335–43) how the overflow of water from fountains trickled down and irrigated, if it did not clean the streets of Roman towns provided with aqueducts; he is in any case concerned only with the building and functioning of the drains and sewers, not their demise. Neudecker 1994, 130–31 and 139–40, tracks toilets essentially down to the 4th and 5th C., when he observes a move away from lavish public latrines toward new, more utilitarian structures in some major cities, even as old luxury latrines were restored. Scobie 1986 assesses the appalling sanitary situation in the heyday of the empire, and notes (412) the need for periodic cleaning of many sewers.

50 On the geological processes, Vita Finzi 1969. The connection between man-made environmental change and malaria is discussed in the different biological context of equatorial Africa by Coluzzi 1994. The hypothesis of expanding malarial zones recurs in studies of places whose characteristics seem appropriate: e.g. in northern Campania, Arthur 1991, 158.

51 Hendy 1985, 67.

52 McCormick 1998b, 24–31.



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is linked with poor hygiene and great poverty. If this is true, then the Roman world, from Gaul to Syria, experienced deteriorating health conditions and increasing poverty in the sixth century.[53]

But the most famous disease of late antiquity was disturbingly new, and it was lethal. The bubonic plague took up residence in the Roman world in the sixth century. The debate continues about the exact demographic implications of the bubonic infections that swept across the Mediterranean basin beginning in 541. It seems likely to me that its consequences were important wherever it appeared over the next 208 years.[54] Because the late antique transmission of the bubonic plague was closely linked to black rat colonies, the disease sheds particular light on our theme. Both rat colonization and the interregional conveyance of the contagion were enmeshed in maritime communications. Contemporaries were well aware of it: the infection always started at the coast and worked its way inland, says Procopius. Terror-stricken Palestinians claimed that headless Ethiopians sailed by in brass ships, spreading the contagion along their beaches.[55]

Whatever the economic and demographic *consequences* of this new constellation of diseases, its *occurrence* signals changes in the society in which the illnesses became established. Two out of three, malaria and plague, particularly affected coastal areas of the sea that unified what was left of the Roman empire. That all three converge in the sixth and seventh centuries underscores the extent to which the age of Justinian and his successors marked a turning point in the health history of the ancient world. The end of growth or the accelerating decline which affected much of the southern and eastern Mediterranean population in the second half of the sixth and the seventh centuries coincided with the new pathocoenosis and reinforced its significance, just as the decreasing prosperity documented by domestic architecture in northern Syria seems to converge chronologically with the transformation of leprosy into an endemic disease.[56] Such a convergence of turning points itself bespeaks broader changes in the economy and society in those decades.

After centuries of the usual mix of bad years and good, the provinces of the Byzantine empire entered now into a remarkable succession of bad years, as the

53 Grmek 1989, 168–76; cf. 154; Patlagean 1977, 110–11; Sallares 1991, 239–41.

54 Consequential: Biraben and Le Goff 1975, Patlagean 1977, 87–92, Allen 1979, Koder 1996, 277, and, above all, the fundamental study of Conrad 1981, out of which have emerged a number of important articles, e.g. Conrad 1994 and 1996b; exaggerated: Durliat 1989, with the response of Biraben, *ibid.*, 121–5. Whitby 1995, 93–103 and Kaplan 1992, 458–61, both display a certain skepticism. New evidence from Syria: Koder 1995.

55 Procopius, *Bella*, 2, 22, 9, 1.251.7–9; John of Ephesus, *Fragmenta historiae ecclesiasticae*, fragment E, 229.17–29; cf. Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle*, 2.2.238 and McCormick 1998a, 57–8.

56 Cf. Gatier 1994, 45–6, for the Syrian houses.



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population and the economy contracted in many regions. Profound as some of these changes were wherever they were felt, it is less certain that they reached everywhere equally. An eyewitness observed that the bubonic plague spared the inland population of Berbers, even as it devastated the Roman towns of Africa.[57] So too there is reason to believe that the contracting infrastructure of water-borne communications linking Merovingian Gaul to the Mediterranean economy impeded the spread there of the plague.[58] And the bubonic infections appear to have missed the Arabian peninsula.[59] On the other hand, a pre-Islamic Arabic poem may depict bubonic devastation inland, along Roman roads running south of Damascus.[60] In other words, the earlier pattern of divergent development implied by the different timing of settlement abandonment around the former Roman space may have taken new turns in the sixth and seventh centuries. The economic consequences of the much better mapped Black Death of the fourteenth century were not simple, nor even uniformly negative, at least for the survivors. We may suspect positive as well as negative consequences for the Justinianic plague.[61]

Settlement patterns suggest that ill-understood processes of demographic stagnation and decline moved slowly across the old Roman space. They finally reached the east in the sixth or early seventh century. Around the same time, the history of disease marks a new configuration in the health experience of the population. The new pathocoenosis could not by itself have been the leading cause of wide-reaching economic change, for change had started earlier in most of the Mediterranean world. But it surely must have reinforced some aspects of that change, if only by debilitating or destroying a part of the work force. Both settlement patterns and disease encourage us to believe that the overall economic trend of the late Roman world was downward between c. 200 and 700. The fate of Roman industry confirms that diagnosis, as two case studies will show.

57 Corippus, *Iohannis seu de bellis Libycis*, 3, 343–97, pp. 60–2.
58 McCormick 1998a, 58–61; cf. Ch. 3.3.
59 Conrad 1981, 347–52.
60 If the epidemic was indeed bubonic; Conrad 1994.
61 Biraben and Le Goff 1975, 63, long ago voiced the hypothesis that the plague's differential mortality played a role in the subsequent rise of western Europe; cf. also Lebecq in Contamine *et al.* 1997, 46–7.



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# 2

# *Late Roman industry: case studies in decline*

The evidence from settlement patterns and health history points to economic deterioration, but it also turns up very differing regional trends. Two case studies of Roman craft production will clarify the transformations of critical areas of the late Roman economy. The extraction and production of metals is universally recognized as an indicator of economic development. The second case comes from one of the best-studied "industries" of the ancient world, the production of pottery. But this time we will view ceramics not as a diagnostic tool, but as an economic enterprise in itself.

## 1. Metal extraction and production

A heavily militarized late Roman state grappled with almost permanent warfare on several fronts. Perhaps more than a half million men strong in the fourth and fifth centuries, the army devoured iron, bronze, and gold.[1] The bureaucracy and the barbarians also clamored for their share.[2] Mining and metal production were therefore

1 Jones 1964, 679–85 calculated a paper strength of 600,000 from the *Notitia dignitatum*, which, as he emphasizes, comes close to Agathias' late 6th-C. figure of 645,000 for "the beginning [of the Christian empire, presumably], under the emperors of the old days." Agathias claims that this had dropped to barely 150,000 in his day: *Historiarum libri quinque*, 5, 13, 7–8, 180.6–17. Jones (683) treats Agathias' figures with respect. MacMullen 1980, 460, dismisses them; see however the criticism of Whitby 1995, 75n50. Efforts to approach the problem from the total monetary supply across time are probably futile, at least for now. Whatever one thinks of the calculation of issue size from die marks, Kent *et al.* 1994, ix, has noted that 5th-C. emperors' issues seem merely to have added to, rather than replaced the coinage in circulation, so that issue size does not shed much light. The shifting imperial frontiers and poor hoard reporting of the east and Africa mean that knowledge of monetary supply probably does not get much better for the 6th C.

2 Two independent evaluations of the tens of thousands of pounds of gold and silver paid



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all the more crucial to the Roman economy. Mineral resources and the installations they attracted existed around the empire, and the simple answer to the fate of metallurgy might appear to be that the loss of territory diminished Roman metal production, even if metal making continued unabated in the barbarian kingdoms.

Military defeat did in fact preempt production in several key areas between the third and the seventh centuries, but the story turns out to be more complicated.[3] In mineral resources, Britain and Spain were the richest western provinces and they are well studied. In both places, mining peaked in the second century, when some industrial installations reached an astonishing scale of operations, although they seem to have operated alongside much smaller sites. The third century saw steep decline which cannot be explained by exhausted mineral lodes. In key production zones, only about one in ten operations – iron-working sites in Britain and mines in Spain – continued into late antiquity. The pattern looks typical for both regions.[4] The 80 hectares of slag heaps at the largest production site in the Forest of Dean appear still to have been growing as Roman power in Britain neared its end. Even so the bulk of the evidence points to smaller-scale installations under the late empire, "little shafts worked by independent miners, or perhaps small groups." Proliferating smaller sites may well stem from the imperial government's efforts to cover some of its needs by including metals in the taxes that landowners paid in kind.[5] In both Spain and Britain

by the empire as tribute in the 5th and 6th C. conclude that the payments were usually only a small part of the imperial budget and probably had few long-term consequences: Hendy 1985, 260–4; Iluk 1985.

3 In the last decade or so, Roman mines and metallurgy have begun to receive searching attention, although the usual 20th-C. pattern – most work has been done in the richer countries of northwest Europe – obtains here too. See in general the fine entry by A. Kazhdan and A. M. Talbot, *ODB* 2: 1375–6, and Greene 1986, 142–8. Lombard's stimulating general study (1974) needs to be redone on the basis of the new evidence.

4 In both cases 12 percent of sites continued producing. For a good overview of the British evidence, see Jones and Mattingly 1990, 180–96. Of twenty-six iron-making Roman sites in the Weald, only three may have continued operations beyond A.D. 300: 193, Table 6.3. For Spain, see Domergue 1990, 215–24, who observes that while 173 mining sites were certainly exploited in the early empire, a maximum of twenty-one continued into the later empire. Most of them functioned into the 4th C.; two may have been operating as late as the 6th C. Domergue further observes that in the gold producing areas of the northwest, easily accessible alluvial gold deposits were found hard by the Roman sites and could have been exploited then. On the other hand, two or three of the thirteen Lusitanian mines presenting some chronological evidence show signs of activity in the 4th or 5th centuries: Edmondson 1987, 40–1; cf. 47–8.

5 On the Forest of Dean site see Jones and Mattingly 1990, 193; it may be that the ending of operations in the Weald and the surge in the Forest of Dean are connected: Cleere *et al.* 1985, 84–5. For the quotation and the fiscal collection of metal: Jones 1964, 838–9; cf. too on the new importance of small-scale fiscal supplies: Belous 1988 and 1991, 13 and 14.



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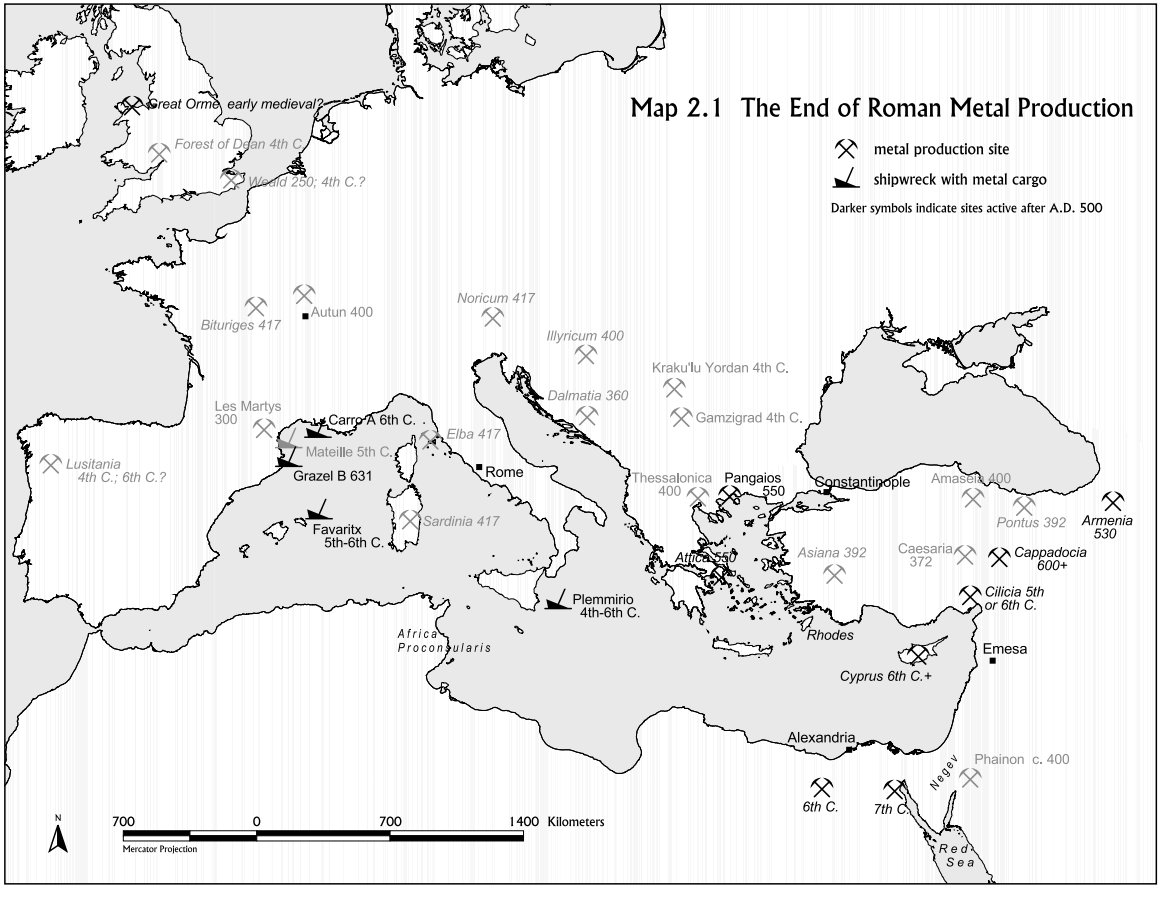


Years indicate last documented metal production at a site (Roman characters) or zone (italics). This map shows that many eastern sites continued production into the sixth or even seventh century, whereas dwindling western metal production practically ceased in the fourth or early fifth century. Ships loaded with metal cargoes that went down off western coasts suggest that eastern exports helped to compensate for western production shortfalls down to the early seventh century (cf. Table 2.1).

some mineral extraction continued to the end of antiquity and, very probably, beyond.[6] But even on the most optimistic reading, the doubly reduced volume of production and organizational scale means that change outweighed continuity there. And, most importantly, the contraction occurred *before* these provinces slipped from imperial control.[7]

Gaul's best-mapped cases do not contradict the bigger picture. Some 25 km north of Carcassonne, the impressive iron forges at Les Martys (Aude) started up in the first century B.C. From across the region, high-grade ore funneled into their furnaces and produced a slag heap estimated at about 2–3 million tons before its modern destruction. After declining deeply in the second century, the forges rebounded vigorously in the third. Then the furnaces went cold.[8] Some 450 km to the northeast, a regional survey of mining in the Morvan near Autun yields less precise contours. But it is just as interesting, for it illuminates a level of production lower than that of Les Martys. It was nevertheless substantial, and perhaps more typical. Here we find around 200 mostly small and mostly Roman production sites in an area measuring about 300 sq km. This "industrial zone" was devoid of settlements, as St. Jerome indicates it should be. It is flanked by an area consisting of settlements and villas interwoven with dispersed production centers, which the archaeologists have identified as "domanial." The survey technique shed no light on shifts from the first to the fourth centuries, but one of the "domanial" smelting sites yielded charcoal dated by radiocarbon to c. A.D. 400. Thereafter, no sure sign of operation shows up until the thirteenth century.[9]

6 See, for some evidence along these lines, Domergue 1990, 269–77; the British Wealden works were of varying scale, and their organization is unclear: Jones and Mattingly 1990, 192–3, although it appears that the imperial channel fleet, *Classis Britannica*, played a critical role. For early medieval production see, e.g., the case of Great Orme, Llandudno, Jones and Mattingly 1990, 181, Table 6:1; for Spain, although King 1972, 195, allows that Isidore's account (*Origines*, 16, 22, Lindsay) of Spanish extraction of lead and silver *might* document 7th-C. production, the bishop's near total dependence on Pliny, demonstrated by Díaz y Díaz 1970, does not inspire confidence. Edmondson 1987, 200 is right to doubt the "Visigothic" evidence alleged, since what he is citing there is not the 7th-C. *Lex Visigothorum*, but, at best, one *interpretatio* attached to the early 6th-C. abbreviation of the *Cod. Theod.*, 2, 14, 1: *Lex Romana Visigothorum*, 2, 14, 1, p. 50. Philip Grierson has observed that the Visigoths' striking of gold coins in obscure places in the gold-producing northwest might reflect gold mining: Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 53.

7 Edmondson 1989 underscores the element of continuity, even as he emphasizes the importance of the shift to small-scale operations better fitted to the patterns of local rural economies.

8 Judging from the small but revealing areas excavated: Cauuet *et al.* 1993, 34; 68–9, cf. 123–5; 408.

9 Mangin *et al.*, 1992, 222–4, 230–1, 242, 341. Two sites which lack diagnostic characteristics *might* be from the intervening period: 242. For St. Jerome, see below, n13.



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Although the archaeological evidence runs much thinner, elsewhere metal production probably fared better for longer. Rutilius Namatianus rhapsodized about the mines of Elba as he sailed by in 417. He claims that the small island's iron production equaled that of Noricum, Sardinia, and the Bituriges' big furnaces (*largo camino*). Coming from a man who, five years before, had been in charge of the imperial arms factories, the statement can be taken seriously.[10] A generation earlier, the government had attempted to stem the flow of miners to Sardinia during what looks like some kind of gold rush.[11] Rutilius intimates that the Danubian hinterland was rich in Roman metallurgy; one center specializing in argentiferous lead reportedly left behind over a million tons of slag. Illyricum's signal importance can be read in the fact that, around 400, it was the only region for which the eastern emperor appointed a ranking official just to oversee mining operations. He seems to have supervised intermediaries who collected the government's share from miners.[12]

These arrangements imply that a number of centers were producing there in the fourth century, and it is tempting to think that St. Jerome came by his interest in metal-processing as a Balkan youth. Certainly his allusions to metalworking are not banal. He vividly evokes the strenuous labor and enormous appetites of miners (*fossores metallorum*), who cause mountains to collapse (*qui subvertunt montes*) and who sleep under the sun and rain.[13] Revealingly, when he was translating Eusebius, Jerome interpolated information about a recent mining accident as well as convict labor in a copper mine.[14] Around 360 Dalmatia still exported iron in abundance.[15] Further inland, a fortified site some 20 km south of the Danube might be typical. At Krakulu Yordan, iron and probably gold were smelted on a small hilltop installation until fire destroyed it late in the fourth

10 Rutilius Namatianus, *De reditu suo*, I, 351–6, p. 19; *PLRE* 2: 771; *Notitia dignitatum*, Occ. 19, 16–39, pp. 145–6; cf. Jones 1964, 834–5.

11 *Cod. Theod.* 10, 19, 6, (368, Mattiacum) and 9 (379, n. pl.) pp. 558–9.

12 On the *Comes metallorum per Illyricum*, see *Notitia dignitatum*, Oriens 13, 11, p. 36; cf. *Cod. Theod.* 1, 32, 5 (Milan, A.D. 386), 1.2.68 on the *curialis*' duty of collecting the share, and on the share itself: *Cod. Theod.* 10, 19, 3 (Paris, 365, from new freelance miners), 4 (Rome, 367), and 12 (Constantinople, 392), 1.2.557–60; cf. Claudian, *De Bello Getico*, 535–43, pp. 258–9, which refers to Thracian tax payments in iron, and claims that the Goths continued to collect them; Jones 1964, 838; see in general Vryonis 1962.

13 *Aduersus Iouinianum*, 2, 6, *PL*, 23.294B; the open-air beds of miners probably explain the absence of settlement in the "industrial zone" of the Morvan.

14 Eusebius, *Onomasticon*, 114.3–4, where Jerome added "quod nostro tempore corruit": *ibid.*, 115.3–4; convicts at Phainon in Nabataea: 168.9–10 and 169.9–11. Cf. too his description of iron- working and the properties of different metals when he comments on a scriptural reference (Ezech. 22: 19–21) to metal reduction: *Commentarii in Ezechielem* 7, 22, *CCL*, 75.297.592– 299.671.

15 Eusebius, *Expositio totius mundi et gentium*, 53, 190.5–9.



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century.[16] Macedonia also had many Roman iron and copper mines. Although their chronology is unclear, the existence of an imperial arms factory at Thessalonica around 400 suggests that some mines were still functioning; abundant iron had made it a good place for traveling merchants to stock up a generation earlier.[17]

Gold miners (sifters? *aurileguli*) were at work in the Pontus and Asiana dioceses at about the same time.[18] Basil of Caesarea's faithful mountain-dwellers paid their taxes in Cappadocian iron around 372.[19] In the fifth and sixth centuries, a Cilician town collected tolls from caravans transporting lead and tin down to the sea; these metals too probably came from Cappadocian mines.[20] Mining sites that operated from the fifth through the seventh, and even eighth centuries have emerged from a recent survey of the metal-rich Taurus in the vicinity of the Cilician Gates, including a zone rich also in rare tin deposits. Slag heaps of 600,000 tons or more stud one site which is littered with late Roman (as well as later Byzantine and Islamic) ceramic.[21] Archaeometallurgical analysis of Byzantine silver artifacts has uncovered a change in their gold and especially iridium content. This shows that from the sixth to the seventh centuries the

16 Krakulu Yordan lies in the upper valley of the Pek river; the excavated area covers about 608 sq m: Werner 1985 and 1986. See the general survey of mining in the broader region by Dušanić 1977, who, though he focuses on the earlier empire, mentions mining of the 3rd, 4th and even 5th C.: e.g. 76 n154, 81, etc. The 1m-ton estimate at Stojnik in the Mt. Kosmaj region is a 19th-C. figure, *ibid.*, 78; cf. Werner 1985, 225. Metalworking is also attested in the late 4th-C. fortress at Gamzigrad, identified as Romuliana: Werner 1986, 563, a place "restored" by Justinian: Procopius, *De aedificiis*, 4, 4, 4.124.2; cf. R. E. Kolarik and A. Kazhdan, *ODB* 2: 821. See also the overview of iron mining, smelting and tool production in the region by Popović 1988, 213–29.

17 Samsaris 1987, 152–62 surveys the Roman sites he encountered, but only the *fabrica* (*Notitia dignitatum*, Or., 11, 36, p. 33) offers evidence for a late date. His report on the hilltop fort near Oreini and the nearby smelting facility gives only very general grounds for a 1st or 3rd-C. date (*idem* 1979: 244). Abundant iron: *Expositio*, 51, 186.2–3: "abundans omnia, negotium uero eicit ferrum et plumam." Rougé (*ibid.*, 187) translates the last word as "embroidery," and accepts the MS reading. The latter is certainly the *lectio difficilior*, but I confess to finding Godefroy's emendation (*plumbum*, "lead") appealing on the triple grounds of phonetics, script and sense. In any case, *pluma* is probably better translated as "down," which one can imagine may have interested traders.

18 *Cod. Theod.* 10, 19, 12, pp. 559–60; Asterius, bishop of Amaseia in Pontus c. 400, is probably using an image familiar to his audience when he emphasizes the cheapness of the wooden board with which gold miners separate (wash?) the gold from the earth: *Homilia 8 in SS. Petrum et Paulum*, 9, 5, 92.21–23, where the Greek does not refer to convict labor, *pace* Vryonis 1962, 3. For the medieval and early modern working of Pontic minerals, Bryer 1982.

19 *Ep.* 110, 2.11.11–12.19.

20 *Inscriptions de Cilicie*, no. 108, 171.14–15 and 180–1.

21 Yener and Toydemir 1992.



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eastern empire's silver sources shifted.[22] In the sixth century, too, Armenian gold mines were a bone of contention between Constantinople and Persia.[23] Near Athens, miners worked the ancient silver galleries of Laurion in the fifth and sixth centuries and, if Paul the Silentiary is to be believed, Thracian Pangaios and Attic Sounion supplied at least some of the 40,000 lb. of silver which adorned the Hagia Sophia.[24]

Other ancient mining regions were also active in the late Roman east. Cyprus produced the iron and bronze which went into its own, apparently substantial, shipbuilding industry. Ongoing archaeological survey confirms that, toward the end of antiquity, copper mining continued on what looks like an important scale.[25] In Nabataea, the copper mines of Phainon attracted Jerome's attention.[26] The sixth-century emperor's camel caravans carried iron from oases in western Egypt overland to the Nile.[27] The eastern Egyptian desert also probably exported minerals. Metal and goods transport in the fifth and sixth centuries probably explain a fortified road linking the Red Sea to the Nile.[28] An eloquent new witness has in fact just come to light there. Should a large (1,000 inhabitants?) industrial settlement prove to be the sixth-century gold mine its excavators suspect it to be, it may indicate an imperial strategy to shift gold production to regions that, before Islam, looked safer than the Balkans and Persarmenia.[29] But the large scale of this operation is, so far, unparalleled in the sixth century. It is tempting to connect that scale to the imperial government itself.

This picture of how mining and metal production developed does not contradict the broader economic indicator of settlement patterns. Beginning around 200, the number of sites producing various metals in the northwest contracted

22 Meyers 1992, 170–1.

23 See Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 7, 18, PG, 67.773C; John Malalas, *Chronographia*, 455.20–456.8; Procopius, *Bella*, 1, 15, 18 and 27–30, 1.77.5–8 and 78.23–79.10, on all of which cf. Vryonis 1962, 5–6.

24 Edmondson 1989, 92; some sixty lamps dating from roughly 425 to 550 were found in an ancient gallery at Thoricus: Butcher and Binder 1982; Paul Silentiary, *Descriptio Sanctae Sophiae*, 679–80, p. 246; Procopius, *De aed*. 1, 1, 65, 4.15.14–16, gives the figure, which approaches the range of c. 3,800–11,500 k. for the main silver decoration of the sanctuary worked out by Marlia Mango and accepted by Morrisson 1995, 548.

25 Cyprus: *Expositio*, 63, 204.5–206.9 and A. B. Knapp, "The Archaeology of Mining: Fieldwork Perspectives from the Sydney Cyprus Survey Project (SCSP)," unpublished report at "Metals in Antiquity, International Symposium, 10–13 September 1997," Cambridge, MA. Timothy E. Gregory and A. Bernard Knapp kindly inform me that their preliminary assessment shows that mining activity continued at least up to the late 6th C.

26 See above, n14.

27 Gascou 1989, 307 and 313. Ancient sites in the oases are littered with slag heaps: Wagner 1987, 306.

28 Zitterkopf and Sidebotham 1989, 157; this is how I take their "Byzantine" (177).

29 Meyer 1995. A first review (221–2) of the pottery suggests that the settlement began in the 5th C. and continued into the 7th, and possibly even 8th C.



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sharply. A hundred years later, only a small fraction of the earlier sites were still operating. It may be that the fourth century stabilized or improved in some regions of Britain and Gaul but, by around 400, things again begin to look pretty dim. Sardinia's iron and gold and Elba's iron still flowed, to judge from the texts, and some production also persisted in the Balkans. But it would not last. Theoderic's Italy was famished for metal: statues and metal fixtures of older constructions disappeared into the metallurgists' cauldrons.[30] In the fifth and sixth centuries, despite problems documented by the laws (see below), texts and archaeology combine to show that the mines and metal production fared better in the eastern provinces. Metal extraction, in fact, follows a trajectory similar to that established for the quarries with which they were associated in Roman minds. While the western stone works collapsed by the early fifth century, eastern ones continued and even intensified their activities into the first half of the sixth century. The east now exported its stone products to the west, a situation typified not only by the sculpted Constantinopolitan capitals used in Ravenna, but by the near-complete marble fixtures (weighing c. 76 tons) aboard a Justinianic ship which sank off Marzamemi, Sicily, apparently en route to Africa.[31]

Why the decline in western metal production? To some extent, the shrinking economy of the western provinces required less. And, if the Roman army did indeed contract dramatically by the sixth century, the contraction of government-induced metallurgy should have followed suit. Western miners' numbers may have been dwindling as part of the broader demographic drop indicated by settlement patterns. East or west, manpower in the mines was clearly a problem even, or especially, where free men (and women?) were concerned.[32] Convicts continued to be condemned *ad metalla*: to quarries, certainly, down to the sixth century, to mines, till c. 400 at least.[33] Heavy taxing of miners aggravated the labor shortage.

30 Claude 1996, 61–2.

31 Sodini 1989.

32 A shortage of slave labor may have made the problem of large-scale operations particularly acute. At least this is what one might hypothesize, given ideas about the role of slave labor in earlier Roman mines, on whose economics see Fenoaltea 1984, esp. 641–3 and 653–5. The Codes suggest that miners were typically freemen who were tied to their livelihood in the typical late Roman fashion; cf. Jones 1964, 838, and Belous 1991, 14–15. *Cod. Iust.* 11, 7, 7, p. 430, the Justinianic revision of *Cod. Theod.* 10, 19, 15, pp. 560–1, adds "sive metallariae" but this could refer to miners' wives, who, with their children ("cum sua subole"), also were not supposed to escape their *origo*. Nonetheless, women were condemned *ad metalla*: Justinian, *Novella* 22, 8, p. 151.35–152.1. Domergue 1990, 224, suggests that a manpower shortage was one critical factor in reducing Iberian mining. So far, there is no evidence of efforts to overcome this problem through technology.

33 For quarries see Justinian, *Novella*, 22, 8, 151.35–152.5; for mines see above, n14. More data on specific mines and quarries might be collected by studying hagiographical and other evidence for Christian leaders who were so condemned, including by Christian princes.



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Already in 378, not a few Thracian miners had gone over to the Goths to escape their fiscal burden.[34] A few years before, both eastern and western administrations had launched large-scale sweeps to locate miners who had fled their mines; the east repeated the round-up in 424.[35] Some fourth-century laws suggest that the imperial administration attempted to expand mineral production by encouraging freelancers to prospect and mine.[36] The Persian refusal to return Roman gold miners whom they had hired helped spark a war under Theodosius II. It points equally to a shortage of miners.[37]

The labor shortage may have been particularly acute in mines because of special factors, for it affected both parts of the empire despite their differing demographic trends. Why should mining have been particularly subject to labor mobility? No one can doubt that digging out ore in late Roman conditions was even more brutal and dangerous than in our modern mines: hence the condemnation of the worst criminals *ad metalla*. Deserted farmlands may have created a problem for the imperial tax collectors, but they represented an opportunity for men accustomed to the hardest labor known to their time. Even in the better-off east, some landlords were desperate enough to resort to illegal maneuvers to find the bodies to work their fields.[38] Subsistence-level farming must have seemed a desirable alternative to many miners, especially when the imperial tax collections narrowed the profits they could extract from their work. Ethnographic study has suggested that certain kinds of pottery production relied on an impoverished, under-employed population for their manpower. Might this not have been the case for late Roman mining also?[39]

Whatever the causes, steep contraction in the number of western metal making sites – including the largest ones – means that the volume of output dropped. It is not unlikely that the decline outpaced the population fall, and hence the shrinking need for metal. Could eastern production have surged to supplant the west's metallurgical shortfall?[40] More archaeological evidence from eastern mines should settle the matter. In the meantime, shipping supplies some

34 Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 31, 6, 6, 2.175.22–7.

35 *Cod. Theod.* 10, 19, 5 (Antioch, 369), 7 (Trier, 370 or 373?) and 15 (Constantinople), pp. 558 and 560.

36 *Cod. Theod.* 10, 19, 3 (Paris, 365), pp. 557–8; cf. on marble quarries, *ibid.*, 10, 19, 2 (Antioch, 362), p. 557, where Julian explicitly says that he hopes thereby to drive down prices; cf. Jones 1964, 838.

37 Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 7, 18, *PG*, 67.773C.

38 E.g. Jones 1964, 818.

39 *Cod. Theod.* 10, 19, 7 (Trier, 370 or 373?), 558.4–5: "ut nemo quemquam Thracem ultra in possessione propria putet esse celandum . . ."; and 15 (Constantinople, 424), pp. 558 and 560; cf. Jones 1964, 838. For the role of poverty and poor land in fostering a "household" pottery industry: Peacock 1982, 23.

40 Cleere *et al.*, 1985, 84–5, for instance suggested an analogous pattern of correlated decline and expansion within different regions of Roman Britain; note too Domergue's suggestion (1990, 224) that competition from other regions played an important role in the Spanish collapse.



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TABLE 2.1
Metal cargoes of late Roman wrecks, A.D. 300–700 (Map 2.1)

| Wreck no. | Date | Name, place | Cargo | Cargo provenance | Home port | Parker no. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 300–600 | Plemmirio, Sicily | bronze objects: lamps, censers, pitchers, bowls, a steelyard[a] | Syria or Egypt | ? | 833 |
| 2 | c. 400–425 | Mateille (Gruissan) near Narbonne | iron ingots, metal objects (bronze scrap?), amphoras: Almagro 51a, pear-shaped (cf. Almagro 51c) and cylindrical, + another form, either Dr 23 or cylindrical[b] | Spain? | ? | 682 |
| 3 | 450–600? | Favaritx, Minorca | hundreds of bronze objects: plates, keys, coins, ingots, etc.[c] | Egypt or Syria? | Egypt or Syria | 397 |
| 4 | c. 500–550 | Carro A, off Marseilles | lead bar; lead anchor stock or ingot: association with wreck uncertain; 1 dish: ARS Hayes Form 103 | ? | ? | 268 |
| 5 | c. 631 | Grazel B, near Narbonne | metal objects (mostly bronze), some of which were presumably cargo; also a bronze coin hoard[d] | Constantinople, probably via Sicily | | 483 |

*Notes:*
[a] Kapitän and Fallico 1967 date the objects to the 5th or 6th C., assign them to Syria and Egypt, and think they were the fittings of a luxury passenger cabin. Parker identifies them more plausibly as a metal cargo, but redates them to the 4th or 5th C. for reasons which are unclear.
[b] Peacock and Williams 1986, 132–3 and 136–41; Almagro 51 comes from Spain, Dr 23 from the Guadalquivir river valley.
[c] Fernandez-Miranda and Rodero Riaza 1985 suggest that it was a ship of traveling metalworkers.
[d] Solier *et al.* 1987.
*Source:* Parker 1992.

hints, for eastern metals needed transport to destinations in the west. The data from sunken cargoes (Table 2.1) supports this conclusion as far as bronze is concerned: metal cargoes cluster after about 400, when the total volume of shipping was declining (Chapter 4), and the two metal cargoes whose provenance we know were eastern. Maybe a fifth-century astrologer relied as much on common knowledge as the stars when he divined that two different northbound ships loaded metalwork in Alexandria.[41]

41 Silver and bronze as it turned out: *Horoscopes*, 103.23–5 and 104.19–23; cf. Dagron and Rougé 1982, 124–5 and 129–30. For Egyptian mines, see above.



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In the west certainly, and in the east, generally, the large installations typical of the early empire disappeared. The exceptional Egyptian site is thought to be a gold mine, the area in which the imperial administration presumably retained the strongest direct involvement. This left individuals or small groups as the dominant extractors and producers of metal in the fifth and sixth centuries, a pattern reminiscent of the more distant past, for instance classical Athens.[42] The shift towards small-scale operations fits easily into the agrarian economic matrix of the countryside where mines were located, and it was well advanced by the fourth century.[43] In late Roman Africa, numerous iron working sites around Sufetula seem to follow just this pattern.[44]

In the seventh century we are met with silence. Some have construed it as continuity, and others, conclusion.[45] If early archaeological indications are borne out, the mines of Cyprus operated up until the late sixth century, at least.[46] In the second half of the seventh century considerable efforts went into scavenging old bronze. In 654, a Jewish merchant of Emesa is supposed to have bought the Colossus of Rhodes from an Arab conqueror and carried it off on the back of 900 camels; in 663, the Byzantine emperor stripped Rome of its metal statues and the roof of the Pantheon. Both measures suggest that the empire and the Caliphate faced a metal shortage in those years.[47] This militates against continuity, for bronze at least. At the same time, new evidence has revealed that exploitation of some very ancient sources of metals intensified in the early Islamic period. On present chronology, copper and gold production resumed in the southern Negev in the eighth century, as the new economic world of the Caliphate took shape.[48]

42 Osborne 1987, 76–81.

43 Edmondson 1989, 98.

44 Hitchner 1982, 84–5 and 88–90. I owe this reference to the thoughtfulness of Leslie Dossey.

45 In favor of continuity: Vryonis 1962, 16–17; Edmundson 1989, 101, cites a personal communication of M. Mango for evidence of 850 mines in the Taurus mountains "still operating" in the 8th C. If the number and continuous operation are correct, this is revolutionary material. Against: Kazhdan 1964; cf. Meyer 1995, 222. For the possibility of "Byzantine" silver and lead mines in Cappadocia: *TIB* 2: 158–9. They are not more precisely dated. The notion that subsaharan African gold was reaching Byzantine Africa is unfounded: Kaegi 1984.

46 See above n25.

47 *Liber pontificalis*, Mommsen, 187.10–14; Theophanes, A.M. 6145, 1.345.7–11; correct reading of the place name in Anastasius' Latin version from superior manuscripts, *ibid.*, 2.216.26, sustained by a Syriac source: Conrad 1996a, 172. The latter makes an interesting attempt to explain away Theophanes' account as fiction inspired by eschatological ideas. W. E. Kaegi Jr. is not convinced: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 90 (1997): 568, no. 2634. The contemporary Roman parallel reinforces my skepticism also.

48 Avner and Magness 1998, 40–5 and 50–2; for the tax receipts of an Egyptian ironworker under the early Arab regime, Hickey and Worp 1997.



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One final shaft of light falls on the changing level of Roman metal production from an unexpected quarter. Ancient smelting was not highly efficient: substantial metal was lost in the form of air pollution. Scientists are now recovering the record of that industrial pollution in the deposits of airborne lead and copper particles borne by upper atmospheric winds to different places around the globe. The work of independent teams on distant sites supports the picture of the trend of late Roman mining and metal production we have drawn. Ice cores from Greenland show a clear downturn in pollution generated by metal production, precisely in late antiquity. Analysis of the atmospheric pollution derived from metal production and deposited in a Swiss peat bog shows a similar downward trend: after the Roman peak, the lowest level in lead (and, probably, silver) mining occurred c. 648–988.[49]

Shrinking metal making might in itself suggest a loss of economies of scale and perhaps a decline in specialized production. If true, this would furnish another indicator of an economy which was going into reverse in the west, and perhaps also in the east, albeit later. One final angle on the complex phenomenon of late antique economic decline will confirm the facts evinced by settlement, health patterns, and metal production. Its particular characteristics allow the finest chronological detail yet available. It provides welcome insight into a region which stands at the juncture of the eastern and western parts of the empire and whose overall economic profile suggests that it had more in common with the east than with the west.

## 2. The ceramic industry

Many of the sherds which sustain the settlement surveys came from the ceramic dishes and bowls that found wide use across the Roman world. Because of its ubiquity and potential for dating archaeological sites, pottery is the late Roman empire's most scrutinized craft industry. The fineware constituted a kind of "middle range luxury" good which must have been fairly cheap, and it certainly broke easily; how forms developed over time has been carefully charted, even as, increasingly, the stratigraphies of meticulously excavated deposits refine the relative and absolute datings of particular forms. From the first century A.D. until some point in the second half of the seventh century, the countryside of Roman Africa produced massive quantities of reddish orange fineware, principally dishes and bowls. This "African Red Slip" ("ARS") ware owes its name to its red finish; it was widely diffused and is far and away the best-studied ceramic

49 Hong *et al.* 1994 and 1996; Shotyk *et al.* 1998, 1637.



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from late antiquity.[50] In the last two decades or so, innovative ways of looking at ARS dishes and bowls have transformed them from inert dating tools to ever more eloquent witnesses on how and when the late Roman economy changed.[51]

Geographic distribution of these dishes outside Africa has received the most work, as scholars have mapped with growing precision and detail how distribution patterns changed over time.[52] Innovation or fossilization of specific dish forms has been noted for what it may tell about production; and scholars have begun to wrestle with the crucial issue of the changing volume of production (or export).[53] Equally exciting insights stem from the tons of surviving amphoras, the durable containers which carried certain Roman foodstuffs near and far. Notwithstanding a well-traveled Roman adage about long-windedness – "I started out making a jar and wound up with an amphora" (Horace, *Ars poetica*, 21), and some archaeological evidence that amphoras and fineware might be produced together, the workshops documented by surviving contracts and at El Mahrine (Tunisia) specialized either in amphoras or fineware.[54] Fineware deposits shed light on shifting regional production as well as on conditions of export, transport and market structures. Most recently new information is emerging on the microstructures of production.[55]

Roughly speaking, breadth of geographic diffusion, estimated volume of export production, and frequency of typological innovation overlap. How the first two connect is perhaps less obscure than for volume and typology. The wider the demand for African products, the wider the geographic distribution of ARS. Of

50 Hayes 1972 and 1980 are the foundation on which all later work is based; cf. too Anselmino *et al.* 1981; for an up-to-date overview of this flourishing subdiscipline, see Hayes 1997. Mackensen 1993 studied in depth the production of one pottery complex c. 45 km inland from Carthage.

51 Carandini 1969; Panella 1986 and 1993; Tortorella 1986; Peacock and Williams 1986; Wickham 1994, 77–98; and, for the most detailed analysis yet on ceramic movements and the flow of goods, Reynolds 1995.

52 Beginning with the maps of Hayes 1972; Anselmino *et al.* 1981; Tortorella 1986 and 1995.

53 Innovation: Fulford 1984, 110; volume: Fentress and Perkins 1988; Reynolds 1995.

54 Adage: e.g. Jerome, *Ep.* 107, 3, 5.146.26–8 or Sidonius Apollinaris, *Ep.* 9, 16, 4, 3.182; archaeologically associated: Strobel 1987, 110; specialized: the important 3rd-C. contracts explicitly identify the pottery shop as one dedicated to making wine amphorae: e.g. P. Oxy. 3595.7. Mackensen 1993 reports no amphora production at El Mahrine, and the papyri distinguish potters, *kerameis*, from fine potters, *leptokerameis*: Cockle 1981, 88.

55 Transport and regional market structures: Panella 1986 and 1993, Abadie-Reynal 1989 and esp. Reynolds 1995; cf. too McCormick 1998a, 73–80; production microstructures: Strobel 1987 and Mackensen 1993; archaeology of kilns: Peacock *et al.* 1989 and Empereur and Picon 1989 (although both focus on amphoras); and the important ethnographic material analyzed by Peacock 1982.



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course, geographic range need not translate directly into export volume: the preeminent role of Rome and Constantinople as consumption centers was such that, in terms of volume, cargoes to these two cities alone might well have constituted the lion's share of export production.

One study tracked the changing volume of ARS exports to secondary markets in the western Mediterranean, that is outside Ostia and Rome. By these lights, exports first peaked in the second century.[56] Steep decline ensued, but it leveled out and then exports turned upward in the fourth century, before dropping again around 400 (Map 2.2). Contraction subsequently slowed; indeed, expansion may have resumed in the second quarter of the fifth century. Thereafter the general trend continued downward in a step pattern: stabilization or partial recovery (Map 2.3) punctuated decline until, around 650, African exports practically vanish outside Constantinople.[57] The picture would certainly change if the evidence of the eastern Mediterranean and especially of the two capitals were included. For instance, ARS exports to Constantinople surged briefly around 670 (see Ch. 4.4). But the broad outline is probably right.

Before late antiquity, ARS had spread most widely in the western Mediterranean. The fourth-century upturn in the volume of exports within the western basin coincided with sharp geographic expansion beyond it. African tableware flooded the east and penetrated far inland to attain its greatest geographic range in the fourth and early fifth centuries. Declining export volume in the first half of the fifth century more or less coincided with contracting distribution (see Map 2.2).[58] Significant quantities of ARS again reached the eastern Mediterranean early in the sixth century (see Map 2.3). For the rest of its production life, it would continue to arrive there, as well as in scattered spots around the western Mediterranean. But in both basins it now appeared in fewer places, and it rarely moved inland.

So, as far as late antiquity is concerned, volume and geographic distribution peak in the late fourth century, and slump in the fifth – before the Vandals, it seems. A softer descent thereafter heralds stabilization or even resurgence in the early sixth century. The long, drawn-out contraction in volume and geographic distribution that follows ends in a whisper in the decades after 650. Patterns of typological innovation echo these peaks and valleys: typological change was

56 Fentress and Perkins 1988, with the modifications of the more complex approach developed by Reynolds 1995, 106–21.

57 Export of ARS need not be the same as production of ARS: its use seems to have expanded in one African valley in the first halves of the 5th and 6th C.: Lund 1995, 469; cf. Reynolds 1995, 112. Could growth in internal consumption be linked with a decline in exports of ARS, and thereby shed further light on the complexities of 5th-C. exchange? The regional African patterns of production and export argued by Reynolds 1995 introduce a further layer of intricacy.

58 See also Hayes 1972, Map 6.



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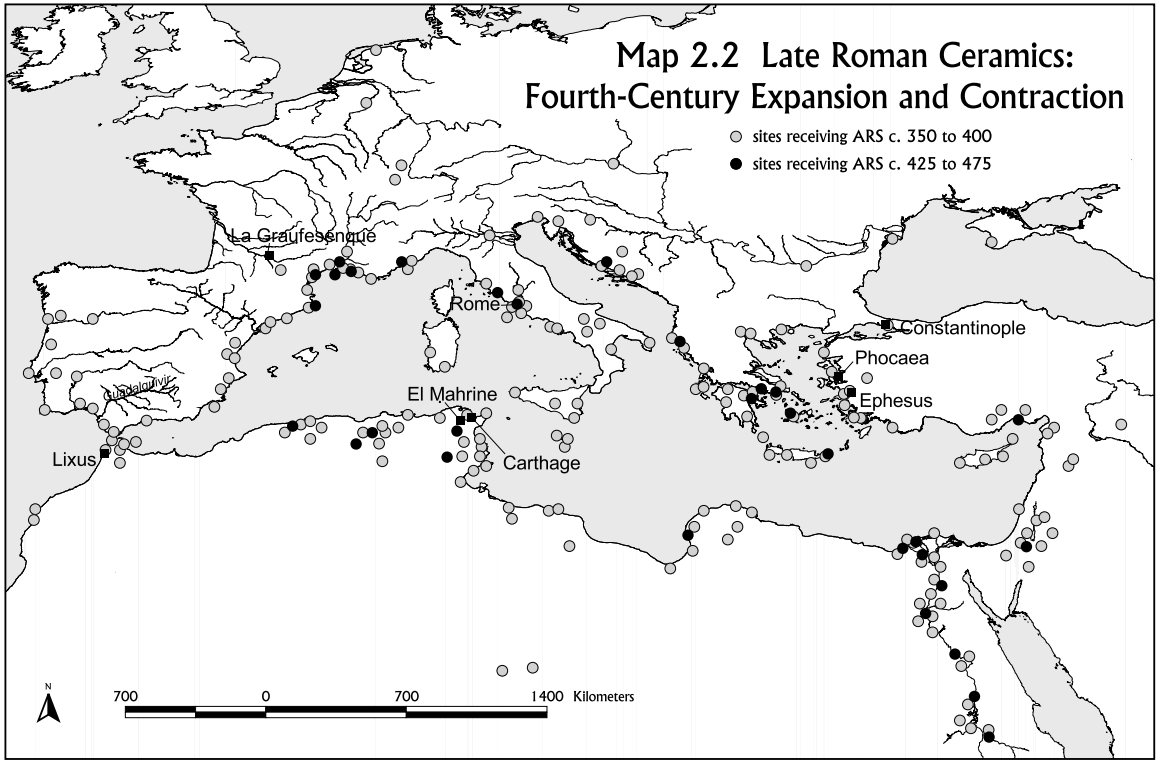


This map illustrates the wide distribution of the middle range luxury dishes and other vessels manufactured in Roman Africa c. 350–425, and, by way of contrast, the sharply contracted distribution of these wares c. 425–475. The map is based on Hayes 1972, maps 7, 8, and 10, with the chronological revisions and concomitant replotting that follow from Fulford 1984, 112–13.

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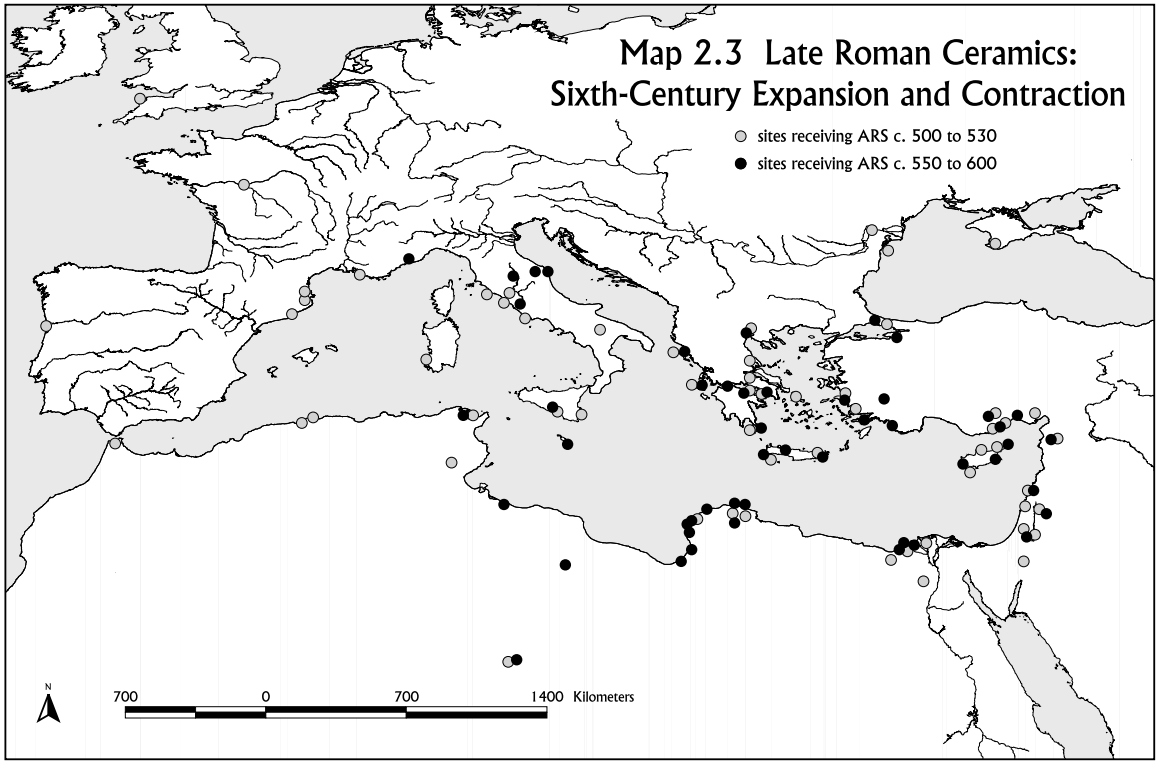


By the early sixth century, distribution once again expanded, particularly into the eastern Mediterranean basin. At the end of the century, the final contraction toward the eastern Mediterranean is unmistakable, even though this map probably overstates sites receiving ARS c. 550–600 (it includes some ceramics that actually date from c. 530; cf. Fulford 1984, 109). Recent archaeological work has multiplied considerably the evidence from all periods, but maps 2.2 and 2.3 still convey a fair idea of the relative extents of the changing patterns of distribution. Hayes 1972, maps 11 and 12; Hayes 1980, xli–xlii; Fulford 1984, 114.

most frequent in the late fourth and early fifth century, and again in the late fifth and early sixth century. Dish forms fossilized in the seventh century.[59] It is worth noting that the various political changes Africa underwent do not appear to influence aggregate production, at least before the seventh century.[60]

Why typological innovation and volume of production seem linked is not obvious. But it is surely interesting. Is it necessarily true that the more examples one makes of a hand-crafted object, the more frequently one will vary it? Little research has so far gone into patterns of technical or economic innovation in late antiquity, although the spread of the codex, water mills, or new grains like spelt, not to mention the extraordinary structure of the Hagia Sophia make this culture's innovative dynamism hard to deny.[61] One key may lie in how Roman potters organized their production. The late Roman economy seems to have had great difficulty accomplishing appreciable economies of scale; rather, it increased production by expanding "laterally."[62] In order to produce more, it was feasible not to up the number of pots made by an individual potter, or focus efforts in new, larger, nucleated production units, or even manufactories.[63] Rather the typical solution was to multiply the number of individual potters producing pots. Why this should be so is not clear. The big mining operations of the second century, like the large newly redated water mills at Barbegal, near Arles, show that the Romans were familiar with economies of scale. Yet the giant complex of fish-processing plants at Lixus, on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, suggests that even when situations developed which looked likely to spawn large-scale processing operations, other – cultural? – factors kept smaller enterprises dominant. This enormous installation boasted more than 1,000 $m^3$ of fish vats at various times from the first century A.D. down to the fifth or sixth. Even so, the huge complex seems in fact to have operated as multiple small production entities clustering in ten small (c. $10 \times 10$ m) "factories."[64]

That typological innovation coincided with a surge in the volume of dishes produced may confirm this essential insight, even taking into account the delicate matter of changing fashions.[65] The only practical way to meet a surging demand was to field a greater number of individual, small-scale potters. This multiplied the opportunities for competition and for individual solutions to the problem of making dishes. Hence the proliferation of new forms may reflect, in part, a multiplication of small-scale pottery enterprises of the kind vividly described by the Egyptian papyri, and which seem to fit arrangements at important early imperial

59 Fulford 1984, 110.
60 Mackensen 1993, 487–91.
61 Codex: McCormick 1985 and the papers in Blanchard 1989; water mills: see e.g. A. Wilson 1995; Hagia Sophia: Mango 1986, 59–68.
62 Patlagean 1977, 233–5.
63 To use the typology of Peacock 1982, 8–11.
64 See Ponsich 1988, 103–36, who notes that the total site, part of which is obstructed, may have been twice as large as what we can now measure.
65 See Mackensen 1993, 469, on the imitation of metalware as a factor in creating new types.



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installations in Gaul.[66] Although the archaeological evidence is not decisive, the workshops at El Mahrine could also fit this model. These observations raise the broader question for economic historians, of why things worked this way and whether this helps to explain the failure of the late Roman economy to surpass a certain threshold.[67] But for now, the essential contribution of ARS to our inquiry is clear.

Over time, the forms of ARS show us in a different language the same trend toward contraction which characterizes other aspects of the late antique economy. Like estimated export volume and proven geographic distribution, the *range* of products made by the potters of Roman North Africa narrowed pretty steadily from the fifth century onward. African potters produced some thirty-nine different forms in the fifth century. That dropped to about twenty-nine (about 25 percent) in the sixth, and then to fourteen (about 50 percent) in the seventh.[68] The products themselves also argue that we really are seeing the decline of a major craft industry. To judge from Hayes' appraisals, dishes diminished in quality, costliness of elaboration, finish, and added decorations.[69]

A first stab at estimating export volume has noted a broad correlation with the rise and fall of African public building down to 450, which is as late as construction has been tabulated. This has suggested that export and building reflect in

66 Papyri contracts of the 3rd and 6th C. show that individual potters seconded by helpers (their families?) rented time in a landlord's pottery installation and paid their rent in pots, under the arrangements known to Roman lawyers as *conductio–locatio*. Strobel 1987, 91–113 and P. Lond. 3. 994 (A.D. 517); P. Cairo Maspero 67110 (A.D. 565), as well as the P. Oxy. cited above, n54. On the operations of the early imperial potteries of La Graufesenque (Map 2.2), see Marichal 1988, 103–10. The early and middle imperial organization of amphora and oil production in the Guadalquivir valley equally testifies to interlocking estate organization and ceramic making: Ponsich 1974, 91.

67 Potential lines of investigation would include the lack of capitalist instruments, e.g. credit for potters on the make. Given the role of poverty in supplying potters (above, n39), might successful ones have tended to get out of the business and into farming? If pottery production facilities were tightly integrated into estate structures, might landlords or estate managers have wanted to protect their share of the pie and not supply fuel or clay to potential entrepreneurs? Landlords might have preferred to rent out shares of their production facilities to multiple small potters – as we know they did – rather than to one large producer in order to encourage competition for their facilities, to keep rents high. Finally, the cultural factor of the late Roman family as the critical unit of social and economic organization needs more exploring.

68 This is based on Hayes 1972, Forms 50–111, with the date changes from Fulford's (1984, 49–84) most secure contexts (A 2.1 and 3–4; cf. Mackensen 1993, 391–5) and Mackensen 1993, 396–433. I have not incorporated new forms proposed by Fulford. The general picture would in any case be the same even without these two revised chronologies. Some forms carried across two centuries; they have been counted twice, since they reached markets in both centuries.

69 Hayes 1972, e.g. 156, Form 101; 166 (Form 105); 292.



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some way the economic well-being of Proconsular Africa.[70] One can extend the comparison. For instance, the chronological distribution of 2,169 dated Christian inscriptions at Rome peaks at approximately the same time as ARS, in the second half of the fourth century.[71] Since Rome was surely the prime destination of African exports in those years, this is particularly interesting. If the production – and export – of African ware really does reflect in some broad way economic well-being, at least in the regions directly concerned, then, after a spectacular second century and bad third century, the fourth century was a time of increasing prosperity. The fifth and sixth centuries were a long period of steep and then softer decline, interspersed with plateaus and even a brief resurgence, before the end came in the seventh century. African pottery production parallels western mines in the second century; fourth-century ceramic making may bear some comparison with continued mining in the central reaches of the western empire; thereafter, however, Africa looks more like the eastern Mediterranean in settlement as in pottery production. In other words, the late economic development of Roman Africa occupies a position not dissimilar to the one it earlier held in culture. Though geographically in the western Mediterranean and exporting widely there in good times, it was always responsive to eastern developments, whether we look to a phenomenon like the imperial cult, the fact that oriental Christianity first found its Latin voice in Africa, or the trend of ARS exports.

A definitive analysis of the economic testimony of ARS would have to take into account the role of particular transport systems, and to weigh its performance against competing products, such as Phocaean ware ("Late Roman C"). By the sixth century, the latter was increasingly filling in the east the market niche formerly occupied by ARS. But this ceramic from Asia Minor was never able to reverse the situation in the west and conquer broad new markets there. By the time Phocaean ware hit its stride, there was little demand left in the west, whether for African ware or its eastern competitors.[72] Very local pottery and wooden wares replaced them, insofar as people could still afford to use dishes of any kind.[73] But this is already taking us into patterns of communication and exchange in the early Middle Ages.

◈

Whatever measure we take, the overall economic trend of the late Roman empire was downward between the third and the seventh century. The timing differed

70 Fentress and Perkins 1988, 210–11 with Figure 4; cf. Panella 1993, 695, Figure 14.

71 Shaw 1996, 106, Figures 1 and 2. Note that the selection of dated papyri graphed by MacMullen 1982, 237 (where N = c. 3,000 for a 400-year period), while concurring with an absolute peak in the 2nd C. (140–60), seems to show a different distribution: after recovering in 300–20 from a 3rd-C. slump, they declined.

72 Panella 1993, 639 and 657–62.

73 For an early assessment of the situation in the duchy of Rome from the late 7th to the 9th C., see Patterson 1993.



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substantially from west to east, but in the end, even the wealthy east followed suit. Whether we look at the number of rural settlements, the array of diseases, the extraction and transformation of metals, or the production of pottery, the western pattern is now hard to mistake. The picture would not differ fundamentally if we looked at the fate of western towns, the patterns of public building, the production of bronze coinage – the standard of daily exchange – or a well-studied food-processing industry like the making of the salted fish and fish sauces the Romans prized. None disappeared completely, but none failed to contract over the long haul.[74] The further south we go, the better people seem to have fared in the fourth century. Although most places experienced a resurgence from the third century, the well-being of the fourth century – one that lasted several generations – did not usually equal that of the second century, nor would it extend far into the fifth. Overall, in the empire's western regions the economy contracted very substantially.

The east looks better in both the fourth and fifth centuries. The very decline of the west may have contributed to this when, for instance, the east was called upon to supply more metals to supplant the west's slumping production. Yet the archaeological details are still scarce enough to leave many gaps which may hold surprises. The generation or two around the year 500 probably enjoyed renewed prosperity in the east. Decline slowed, maybe even stopped and briefly turned for the better in at least the southern central regions of the west. These were the heady days of Theoderic's Ravenna, of Anastasius' and Justin I's Constantinople. Deeper in the sixth century, the shadows gather. By its end, intelligent and widely experienced men like Gregory the Great awaited the final cataclysm. In the west, human beings had become much scarcer. In the east, their numbers stagnated at best. Those who lived on were afflicted by terrible illnesses which were no longer new. Metal extraction, where it had continued, was declining if not practically ceasing. Hence the Italian monk Benedict assigned to the abbot himself the duty of keeping track of iron tools.[75] Did a sick and failing bishop of Rome even notice that in his shrunken, besieged, and infected town, he ate off far fewer types of African dishes than he had used in his youth? In coming decades, even the invincible capital of Constantinople would begin a steep slide, if it had not already started.[76] The towns of the territories that would form the medieval empire of

74 Towns: Wightman 1985, 219–42 and 306–9; Delogu 1994; Ward-Perkins 1984, e.g. 149–54 or 179–99; for the decline in the western minting of bronze coinage in the western empire in the 5th C., Grierson and Mays 1992, 46–7, a decline that would be checked only temporarily in the areas reconquered by Byzantium. Recent excavations at Ostia and Porto reveal rarification of bronze coinage beginning in the 5th C.: Spagnoli 1993, 256–63 and Rovelli 1993b, 333–4. Fish: Ponsich 1988, 231–4; Curtis 1991; Ben Lazreg *et al.* 1995.

75 Benedict of Nursia, *Regula*, 32, 2.560.

76 Mango 1985a, 53–60.



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Byzantium fared no better, for instance in seventh-century Asia Minor. A once splendid city like Ephesus slid headlong into obscurity, becoming something that looked – and must have functioned – quite differently from what it had been but a century before.[77] Only in the territories taken over by the Arabs do towns seem to follow a different trajectory, the onset of which was perhaps delayed.[78]

The shadows deepen over more than the economic experience of people around 600. Political structures underwent radical geographic transformations. The end had begun, paradoxically, with the swift and enormous expansion of Constantinople's power, when it had destroyed the Vandal and Ostrogothic kingdoms and reconquered Africa, Italy, and part of Spain. But before long New Rome slipped, almost imperceptibly, into a death struggle with the mighty empire of Iran. Although impermanent, the Persian armies' deep incursions and their occupation of the Holy Land and Egypt dealt severe blows to both the imperial fisc and the already tarnished myth of Roman invincibility, not to mention the real economic loss incurred by those whose cities and estates were sacked and the diversion of resources to a cascading series of wars. Asia Minor also suffered deeply.[79] From the north, the Lombards undid much of Justinian's achievement in Italy, while the appearance of the Kotrigurs, Avars, and Slavs rang the death knell for Roman control of the Balkans. This meant the loss of a prime recruiting ground for soldiers and a major land route to the west (see Chapter 3), as well as of important mineral resources that constituted the sinews of imperial power. The ancient empire, in other words, was staggering decades before the Prophet left Mecca. Small wonder that Jews and Christians alike conflated the final cataclysmic struggles of Roman power and excitement at the Messiah's impending appearance, albeit each imagined different outcomes.[80] Riven by dissension, fear and deprivation, the young men who were the last Romans turned on each other in factional violence which now spread from town to town.[81] One kind of Christian turned the screws on another. Both persecuted Jews, Samaritans, and pagans. Jews perhaps hoped for better from the Persian invader and briefly turned the tables on their tormenters. But when the imperial authorities returned, the Christians launched reprisals and forced baptisms even as Arab raiders probed the edge of the ancient

77 Kazhdan 1954, whose arguments once seemed so radical, has been entirely vindicated: e.g. Foss 1977 and, for Ephesus, 1979; Averil Cameron 1993, 152–75 and, for further references, McCormick 1998a, 114n153.

78 Kennedy 1985.

79 Lee 1993, 143–4 enumerates nine Roman or Persian invasions from 300 to 500, an average of one about every twenty-two years. From 501 to the final destruction of Persian power in 627, he counts thirty-one, thirty of which came in the 100 years that began in 528, that is, about one every three years. Cf. Foss 1975.

80 Dagron and Déroche 1991, 38–43.

81 Alan Cameron 1976, 282–3; cf. Dagron and Déroche 1991, 20–2.



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empire.[82] Economic, social, political, and mental change that was so broad and deep could not but affect the patterns of communications and transport in which they were enmeshed, as the world of late antiquity approached its end.

82 See in general Dagron and Déroche 1991, 17–38; cf. Olster 1994; see also Dexinger and Seibt 1981, for a seal which might be that of the officially recognized leader of the Jews during the Persian occupation.



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# 3

# *Land and river communications in late antiquity*

PROFOUND SHIFTS in the economy, culture, and political structures of late antiquity precipitated deep changes in how – and how much – people and things moved long distances. Transport and communications played a key role in the transformations of the ancient world. Transport is the bridge that links the critical factors of supply and demand over distance. The communications it allows channel the movements of people, who bring with them their distinctive cultural baggage, with all the consequences such contacts entail for cultural effervescence. Linking supply and demand over distance is essential to economic specialization which, in turn, is critical to economic growth. In fact, despite broad ecological similarities around the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, Roman transportation and communications had fostered some regional specialization and interdependence in earlier centuries, as we have already seen from the history of mining and dishware production. This chapter will consider some of the main changes that affected key systems of land and river communications. The next one will turn to the sea. But first we need to clarify a few general concepts and conditions.

## 1. Routes, ships, and men

Some changes afoot in the last centuries of antiquity affected the basic structures of communications, that is, the physical plant of wagons, animals, ships, roads, ports, and routes. They also influenced the directions, frequency, and speed of land and water travel. They modified their volume in aggregate and along certain axes. At some point the change in the quantity of movements became change in the nature and significance of movement. Pirenne made the case of papyrus famous. But the story is more complex, and perhaps more revealing.[1] By the time it disappeared altogether from the Merovingian royal writing office, and

1 1937, 73; see below, section 3, and Ch. 24.2.



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centuries before popes and other Italian officials stopped issuing documents written on it, imports into Gaul of Egyptian papyrus had slowed to a relative trickle. Judging from a famous Merovingian privilege, a few ships were still unloading papyrus at Marseilles or Fos-sur-Mer in the third quarter of the seventh century.[2] But, by this date in Gaul it no longer looks like the widespread, relatively low-cost consumer good it had been in antiquity, when it served for making string and lamp wicks and for wrapping groceries as well as writing letters and producing books.[3] The structures which transported papyrus to Gaul still existed around 675, but the volume was approaching insignificance. The economic importance of papyrus imports to Gaul was nearing the vanishing point long before the last ship sailed.

Six factors especially condition the spatial patterns of human movement. First, the locations and second, the size of human populations or material resources that such movements connect are primordial. So too is a third factor, the geography (and ecology) of the space to be traversed. The technology available for travel is a fourth element, and it is intimately connected with the fifth, the things which need to be moved. The technology for moving bulk goods such as rolls of papyrus, casks of wine, marble column drums, or large quantities of grain naturally will differ from that needed for small-volume, high-value goods such as spices, or self-propelling goods such as the pigs that fed Rome and Constantinople, or the slaves whom the ancient and medieval world captured in the north and exploited in the south. And finally, one cannot neglect the cultural attitudes which shape travel, for instance conceptions of pilgrimage, linguistic and cultural familiarity or hostility, and political imperatives.[4]

Routes, that is to say the specific places through which travelers moved on their way from one point to another, can be imagined in different ways. Several

2 Confirmation by Chilperic II (29 April 716) of a lost diploma of Chlothar III and Balthild (661–73) or of its confirmation by Childeric II (662–75), for Corbie, which it quotes: *Corbie*, p. 236. The significance of Chilperic's confirmation is controverted, but that of the earlier documents which it confirmed cannot be doubted.

3 Lewis 1975, 24–7 and 95. With one exception, Pirenne's argument (1928, 181) that papyrus was so abundant in Merovingian Gaul that it was still used as lamp wicks comes from Gregory of Tours, and so refers to the 6th C. The exception is Aldhelm, *De virginitate*, 22, *MGH AA* 15.271.9, which, however, describes a miracle involving Bishop Narcissus and oil lamps at Jerusalem; the story derives directly or indirectly from Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 6, 9, 2–3, 539.7–16, in which the detail of the papyrus wick is lacking. In any case, the exotic story scarcely proves that olive oil lamps with papyrus wicks were commonplace in late 7th-C. Wessex: on the contrary, Aldhelm has to explain that the papyrus was in the middle of the oil, like tinder in suet: "et papirus in centro positus velut fomes arvina vel sevo madefactus."

4 I have found the exposition of Lowe and Moryadas 1975 useful; Siegfried 1960 is stimulating; cf. Lee 1993, 150–1.



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different routes might exist alongside one another, linking the same places through a more or less broad swath of space, and so constitute what we might call "corridors." Routes furthermore ramify and intertwine. And of course to distinguish land, freshwater or sea routes oversimplifies, since to get from, say, Roman London to Constantinople, one might change one's mode of transport several times. Indeed, at several points along the way, Roman travelers could vary the route or even the corridors of travel. Nonetheless, the classic distinction between land, water, and sea travel offers a convenient way of reflecting on a reality whose specific historical incarnations were much more complex and varied.

The changing conditions we have already observed dictated deep transformations in the need and capacity to move to various places. To take a simple example, if the population of Rome dropped, roughly, from 800,000 to 60,000 souls between A.D. 300 and 530, how can this not have curtailed the volume of goods and people traveling toward that point on the Tiber river?[5] Change of such caliber will have made waves across the entire system of late Roman communications. As the size of this one hub, or "node," shrank, its function and subsystems of communications changed, and the resources its communications had once commanded might go elsewhere. In miniature, something like this must have happened hundreds of times as settlements, military bases, and towns grew and shrank. In grander terms, since the population of the European quadrant of the Roman empire declined while from Egypt to Mesopotamia that of the southeastern quadrant surged, the entire system of communications will have shifted, if there is any validity to the "social mass" model of human interaction.[6] The volume of movements should have increased within the southeast, even as they shrank in the northwest. Equally, one might expect the number of movements linking the two regions to diminish.

The relative economic importance of shipping and other forms of transport must be analyzed against the backdrop of these deeper trends. Overall, the numbers of ships that sank in the western Mediterranean declined dramatically between c. 300 and c. 700. No one has suggested that this reflects a breakthrough in building ships which were harder to sink. In itself, however, fewer ships do not prove that their economic importance declined. If the population – and therefore

5 These are the figures suggested by Durliat 1990a, 116–17, on the basis of the data concerning the food supply. Lo Cascio 1997, 58–76, arrives at some 600,000–700,000 and a "few tens of thousands" respectively, and dates the major drop to Alaric's sack, followed by partial recovery before the final collapse. However opinions may differ, the changing order of magnitude is certainly correct.

6 Lowe and Moryadas 1975, 150–7; Lee 1993, 151, has made a first attempt to apply this concept to late Roman history. Most simply put, it means that the more people are active in one place, the more communications they are likely to have with other places.



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the economy these ships served – shrank at the same rate as the number of ships, the relative economic importance of shipping may well have remained about the same within a contracting economy.

In fact some early and very partial evidence points in this direction. The coastal town of Tarragona lies along the route many of the sunken ships were taking. The Spanish city continued to receive imports from Africa well into the sixth century, at least. A scrupulous survey of the town's hinterland yields a first opportunity to compare ships and settlement. In this case, the proportion of decline in rural sites does compare closely with the drop in shipwrecks. Of course, a single case provides only a first clue. To compel conviction, the comparison would have to be extended to most major ports actually visited by ships along this route.[7] Precision in measuring either the population or the shipping decline is at present out of reach. I emphasize these potential complications mainly in order to alert the reader to the potential fragility of widely spread notions – including some I share – about what was really happening in the transformations of the Roman world. In any event, the decline in the absolute number of late Roman ships, at least in the western Mediterranean, was occurring alongside other changes in land and water communications. These further changes set the stage for our investigation of early medieval developments; they both reflect and affect other changes in the ancient economy.

## 2. Land communications and the closing of the overland corridors

Land travel probably did not get any easier between the sixth and eighth centuries. Whether it got relatively cheaper or not is unclear. When the barbarian kingdoms coalesced on Roman soil, they may have thrown up new political barriers along the great overland arteries that in centuries past had channeled travelers, especially those of the imperial government. What sort of controls, if any, were exercised at overland frontier crossings? Geographic distributions of imports that overlap with imperial customs and administrative divisions indicate that even under the unified empire, administrative geography had funneled the movements of certain kinds of exports.[8] Here some evidence favors post-Roman continuity

7 Occupied sites dropped by 63 percent (or, as the authors put it, from 1 site per sq km to 1 site per 1.6 sq km) from the 3rd to the 6th C., apparently inclusive. Known wrecks decline from eighty-six in the 3rd C. to thirty-two in the 6th, which also works out to a decline of 63 percent. The exactness of the correspondence is striking but insignificant. My data come from Carreté *et al.* 1995, 280 (cf. 56 for the chronology of "late antique") and Parker 1992, 13–15. Parker's figure records wrecks from the entire Mediterranean, but the overwhelming majority of those discovered to date lie in the western basin.

8 Gabler 1985.



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with imperial practice. But administrative continuity does not clarify whether costs changed.[9]

Whether the new rulers were doing any better than contemporary imperial administrators at maintaining the roads, bridges, and other elements of the land infrastructure is unsure. It is difficult to generalize about the late Roman road system, particularly in the sixth and seventh centuries. Scattered inscriptions attest to attempts to restore parts of the western road system in the wake of the Justinianic reconquest.[10] The greatest efforts probably went into strategic highways. In the sixth century, this would mean those connecting Constantinople to the Persian front, to the Danube frontier and, maybe, overland to Italy.[11] But so far, there is no sign that major investments in infrastructure continued after Justinian.[12]

From the vantage point of the early medieval west and the Byzantine east, the single most important change in land transportation was the disruption of the two corridors linking western Europe to the imperial capital and the east. Men and matériel had coursed for centuries along and toward the great Danube frontier complex. During the sixth century that frontier came under siege. When the Avars and, in the seventh century, the Bulgars, definitively occupied the middle and lower Danube regions, Constantinople's control ended for 400 years.[13]

9 Two centuries later the Lombard kingdoms had a system of controls on the Alpine frontiers, which seems to show topographical continuity with the locations of earlier Roman customs offices: Duparc 1951, 15; cf. also Schneider 1987, 36. Ganshof's suspicion that the Merovingian customs houses at Fos and Marseilles continued late Roman installations has much in its favor: Ganshof 1958, 5; cf. Ganshof 1960, 125–6; for the latest archaeological evidence from the imperial customs house at Marseilles see France and Hesnard 1995. Vismara 1947 argued that imperial prohibitions on trade with the barbarians remained in effect and severely hampered trade, but archaeology suggests, at the least, that this was not universally true.

10 See the laws on the repair of roads and bridges in *Cod. Theod.* 15, 3, pp. 817–18; Justinianic repair: e.g. a bridge over the Via Salaria, *ILS* 832 (A.D. 565); cf. various road and bridge works described by Procopius, *De aed.*, e.g. in Asia Minor, 5, 3, 4–6, 4.154.14–28; 5, 3, 8–15, 155.3– 156.9; 5, 5, 1–3, 158.26–159.16, etc.; as well as Justinian's concern about financing aqueduct, bridge, wall, and road repair in Pisidia: *Novella* 24, 3 (A.D. 535), p. 192.9–29. The supposition that a dwindling number of inscribed milestones reveal lessened interest in the road system may well be a mirage due to changing administrative habits. The prudence of King 1994, 4, finds support in recent reports from the dry climate of the Middle East that suggest that later Roman road indications were simply painted on top of older, inscribed markers.

11 For roads in Asia Minor, see preceding note; Procopius observes that Justinian's curtailment of the *cursus velox* spared the route leading to the Persian frontier: *Anecdota*, 30, 10, 3.182.19– 21; e.g. Hild 1977, 34–5 on this key road to the eastern front, which also served late Roman pilgrims heading for the Holy Land; for the roads toward the Danube, Schreiner 1986.

12 Hendy 1985, 67.

13 For the Avars' advance, Pohl 1988, 48–162 and 237–55; Chrysos 1987, 38–9, observes



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The blocking of the Balkans was even more consequential. This corridor comprised three distinct routes. The northern one, the famous "army road," began in the Danube basin and ran diagonally from Poetovio (mod. Ptuj) to Adrianople (Edirne) via Sirmium (Sremska Mitrovica), Singidunum (Belgrade), Naissus (Niš), Serdica (Sofia), and Philippopolis (Plovdiv).[14] Further south, from Dyrrachium (mod. Durrës) or from the alternate starting points at Apollonia or Aulona, the great overland road of the Via Egnatia snaked through the mountains and marshes toward Thessalonica, and ended at the Golden Gate of Constantinople (cf. Map 7.3).[15] A third route also combined sea and land transport: travelers sailed from Italy, past Patras and all the way to the end of the Gulf of Corinth. From the isthmus they continued north, either overland or via the Aegean Sea, to the capital. The Balkan corridor, particularly the last two southern variants, provided a much shorter route to Italy and offered viable options during the bad weather.[16] No one has yet attempted to study how the movement of people along these various routes ebbed and flowed in antiquity, nor even to determine when exactly travel on them ceased.

But it did end. A first guess would be that they went out of regular use at different times between c. 550 and 650. Disruption probably began in the north and affected the southernmost route last, since the migrations moved that way, and the Corinth route mostly avoided contested land masses. As early as 552, even an army marching to Italy along the "military road" was temporarily blocked at Philippopolis by marauding "Huns."[17] Sixth-century travelers between Italy and Constantinople may have preferred the two southernmost routes, whether for speed or security is unclear. For instance, the legation dispatched by Pope Hormisdas in January 519 and that of Peter, future Patrician, Justinian's envoy to the Gothic queen of Italy in late 534, both traveled overland between Constantinople and Italy on the Via Egnatia.[18] Other sixth-century travelers used the more southerly route through Corinth.[19] This was still true as late as the

that the Byzantines dropped even the pretense of sovereignty over the region in relations with the Bulgars. For more on the Bulgarian empire and transeuropean communications, see Ch. 19.

14 Jireček 1887, 1–68.

15 See on the ancient route the convenient overview in Hammond 1972, 19–58; cf. Ch. 19.1.

16 On speed and safety, Claude 1985b, 149–50.

17 Procopius, *Bella*, 8, 21, 21, 2.602.25–603.9.

18 *Collectio avellana*, 167, 3, *CSEL* 35.2.618.16–18, where mention of Aulona, Scampae and Lignidus (=Lychnidus) reveals the route; on the road to Italy, Peter the Patrician had met Italian envoys heading for Constantinople; he stopped in Aulona to await new instructions: Procopius, *Bella*, 1, 4, 20–1, 2.23.8–14.

19 Thus Gregory I, *Dialogi*, 3, 2, 1, 2.266.1–12, about the trip to Constantinople of Pope John I (523–6), where the detail about changing horses shows that the pope continued overland toward Constantinople; and, *ibid.*, 3, 3, 4, 1–4, 2.270.1–272.36, for the trip to Constantinople of Datius, bishop of Milan, sometime between 538 and 550 (cf. *ibid.*, 270–2n1 on the date). Mummolus, a Merovingian envoy to



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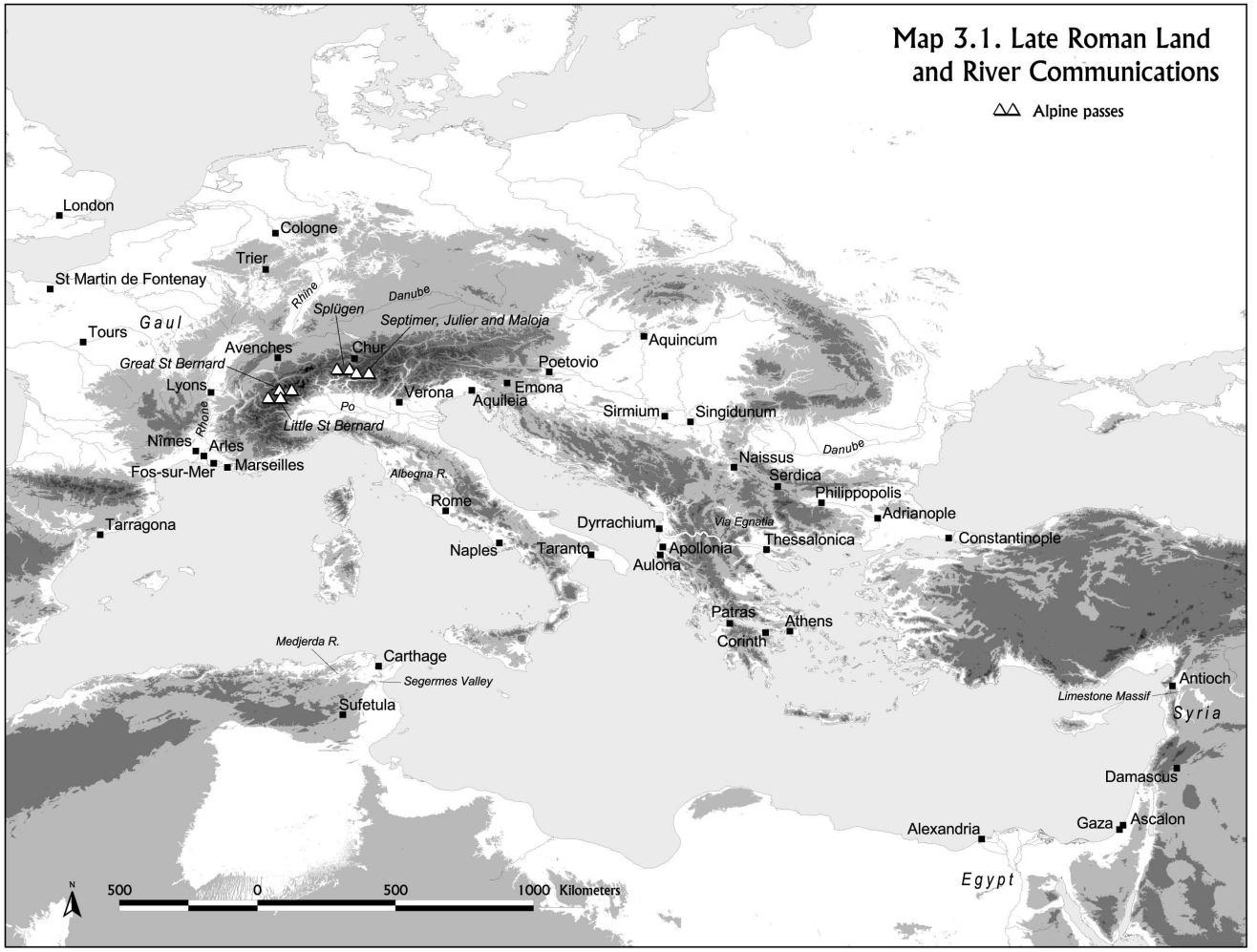


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winter of 591, when Gregory the Great's nuncio to Constantinople traveled that way to the capital. His February departure from Rome left uncertain whether he would continue on from Corinth overland or by ship. The choice depended on the weather, as Gregory makes clear.[20] In the course of the seventh century, however, Slavic colonization of the Balkans ended imperial control of much of the territory traversed by the Via Egnatia and interrupted long-distance travel on it. The same developments, apparently, also disrupted normal communications through Corinth.[21]

Between about 650 and 750, only two trips so much as hint at a land leg over any part of Greece. But even the hints are uncertain and, in any case, highly exceptional.[22] The least doubtful case comes from Emperor Constans II's extraordinary expedition to the west. He set out from Constantinople for Italy in 662, and reached Taranto in the spring of 663.[23] No small part of the imperial court as well as a large army must have accompanied the emperor. This will have challenged, acutely, whatever was left of the old imperial infrastructure linking the capital to Italy. Even in the heady days of Roman government in the saddle, the imperial baggage train was a daunting burden for the most highly developed governmental infrastructure the pre-modern western world would know.[24] Just for short, seasonal campaigns, the rulers of the much reduced Byzantine empire required 1,086 pack animals to transport their personal baggage train through the friendly imperial provinces toward the front. That operation was complex enough to have generated a specialized treatise on its logistics. One emperor plausibly claimed that, along a difficult road, his army was drawn out in a file ten miles long.[25]

During the seventh-century expedition, the emperor and his troops "came along the coastal regions," from Constantinople as far as Athens (see Map 18.2). This has been taken variously to mean that the emperor and a fleet navigated

Footnote 19 (*cont.*)
Constantinople c. 533/47, also used this route, since he was delivered of a kidney stone when his ship put in at Patras: Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria martyrum*, 30, *MGH SRM* 1.2.56.32–57.15.

20 Gregory, *Registrum*, 1, 26 (JE 1095), *CCL*, 140.34.14–35.28; cf. 1, 24 (JE 1092), pp. 22–32.

21 For a lucid overview of the migrations in the Balkans, Lemerle 1954 maintains its value today, despite notable progress in the details. For an effort to map the invasions and settlement of the Balkans, see Popović 1975, 1978b, and 1980, with the critical observations of Metcalf 1991. For the resumption of travel along this route, see below, Ch. 19.

22 Obolensky 1988a, 51, believes that tenuous links may have continued between c. 600 and 750, because eastern Illyricum still fell under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome, but he adduces no specific evidence. Even for him the Balkans became a barrier no later than c. 750–800.

23 Detailed study: Corsi 1983.

24 See e.g. Millar 1977, 28–40.

25 Hendy 1985, 272–5; 304–15; Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *Three Treatises*, pp. 94–151.



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along the coast, or that the emperor and army marched along the shore.[26] The common practice of coastal navigation in this era argues that our informant was not merely specifying the banality that an imperial fleet avoided blue water.[27] Given the men and matériel to be moved, it is more likely that ships trailed the marchers along the coast. They would have transported the bulk supplies required by a very large group of men and beasts traveling through hostile territory, even as the march lessened the strain on whatever existed in the way of an imperial transport fleet.[28] A glance at the winding route on roads that were secondary at best, not to mention the notion of a large army stretched out on sometimes narrow beaches and marshy coastal plains, pinned between mountains and sea, offers devastating insight into the operation's extraordinary audacity – if not to say desperation.[29] The exploit certifies beyond doubt the eclipse of the more northerly and shorter Via Egnatia, the route trodden by so many westward-bound armies in centuries past.[30]

At Athens, Constans II's passage has left archaeological tracks in the form of some army gear and an astonishing surge in deposits of copper coinage.[31] But did his forces circumnavigate Greece from there? Or did they march to Corinth and meet up with transport ships in the Gulf, thus avoiding the risky sail around Cape Malea? The scholars who favor the former hypothesis find comfort in archaeological traces of Constans II or his army at Corinth. In a kind of last, impoverished echo of antiquity, a two-thirds life-size statue was raised to the victorious Constans in the agora. There is also a modest spurt in copper coins deposited there during his reign. Against this is a detail which Paul the Deacon adds to the *Liber pontificalis*' account, that Constans sailed from Athens to Taranto.[32] But

26 *Liber pont.*, Mommsen, 186.8–9: "venit Constantinus Augustus de regia urbe per litoraria in Athenas"; Corsi 1983, 111, with further references, and *passim* on the expedition.

27 On coastal navigation, see below, pp. 418–22.

28 This was not uncommon procedure: Belisarius and troops did so after landing in Africa: Procopius, *Bella*, 3, 17, 1–16, 1.385.3–388.5; Liudprand of Cremona did it even with his relatively small group: *Legatio* 59, 207.22–5; likewise Charlemagne's army when advancing along the Danube: BM 314b.

29 Some idea of the route can be gleaned from *TIB* 1: 90–7 and the Byzantine-era roads marked on the accompanying map.

30 Lemerle 1954, 274; Corsi 1983, 116.

31 For his 27-year reign 769 copper coins as against 224 for the 31-year reign of Heraclius: Grierson 1986, 52, Figure 4. Note with respect to purchasing power (cf. *ibid.*, 50) that Grierson himself combines Heraclius with Constans II. Corsi 1983, 111.

32 Statue: Kent 1950. Under the circumstances, the victory might well have been prospective, rather than actual. Coins: Grierson 1986, 52, Figure 4, who (46) notes however that the relatively small number of small bronze coins might be connected with the sale of "Corinth coins" in the 1920s. More coins: MacIsaac 1987, 136–7, 630–8, who (101) connects the spurt with Constans II's presence. Corsi 1983, 116, observes that the statue and coins could



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whichever route the emperor took, this faint flicker of activity at Corinth was short-lived, and entirely exceptional.

A second case also involved some kind of overland leg somewhere between Constantinople and Sicily. It was no less extraordinary. In the midst of the great Arab siege of 717–18, word reached the beleaguered emperor in Constantinople that a rival emperor had been proclaimed in Sicily. Leo III hatched a desperate plan to salvage the sheet anchor of imperial power in Italy. Under cover of night, he dispatched a swift *dromon* through the Arab blockade, to Kyzikos. In it rode a patrician, whom Leo had entrusted to replace the rebellious *strategos*. Beyond a small company, the new commander had only two weapons: surprise and sure information that, contrary to rumor, the imperial capital had not fallen to the Arabs. Somewhere between Kyzikos and Syracuse the party traveled by land.

This might have involved Corinth or some other place in Greece, and winter sailing. However, the recent uncovering of a parallel exploit during the Arab naval siege of the capital in 674–8 raises another possibility (see Map 7.3). The seventh-century Arab fleet had been based in Kyzikos, which made traffic through the narrow and difficult Dardanelles exceedingly dangerous. A daring Byzantine commander avoided the problem by hauling his ship over the narrow neck of land at the beginning of the Thracian Chersonnese, and so passed directly from the Aegean into the Sea of Marmara.[33] The exploit was common knowledge in the eighth century, and Leo III may simply have replayed it during the last Arab siege of Constantinople (R96). In the case of both Constans II and the Sicilian revolt then, overland legs involving Greece are plausible, but by no means assured. In any event, the context makes clear that they were quite unusual. The exceptions only prove the rule. By 700, traffic between Italy, Constantinople, and points east traveled mainly by sea, along the trunk route that circled Greece.[34]

merely reflect the stationing of troops there. This would be not at all implausible in either hypothesis, since Constans wintered only two or three days' march away in Athens. Writing a century or so later, Paul the Deacon changed the wording of his source to make the route explicit "Constantinopolim egressus, per litoralia iter habens, Athenas venit, indeque mare transgressus, Tarentum applicuit." *Historia Langobardorum*, 5, 6, 146.17–18. Three generations after the events, Paul did have close connections with the duchy of Benevento which fought and defeated the Byzantine emperor, and he might well have had independent information on this detail.

33 Zuckerman 1995b.

34 On the trunk route, see below, Ch. 17.1. A possible third case involves the file of letters concerning Pope Vitalian's intervention against Paul, the metropolitan of Crete (JE 2090–3), Mansi 11.16–19; cf. 99. The chronology of this file is, however, uncertain. JE 2090 dates the letter to Paul to 27 January 668, accepting the conjectural emendation of the manuscript's "VI. Kalendas Septembris indictione 11" (Mansi 11.17D), i.e. 27 August 667, to "VI. Kalendas Februarii" tentatively advanced by Mansi (11.100E), because "the other documents delivered by the same pontiff" bear the latter date. If we may judge from



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From the late Roman west it had also been possible to reach the east overland via Africa, once one had crossed the sea to Carthage or another African port. Ships of course linked Roman Africa to the eastern rim of the Mediterranean, but Roman roads too ran eastward, toward Egypt. Some people certainly traveled between Constantinople and Carthage by land: putting a speech in the mouth of the Praetorian Prefect, Procopius evaluated Carthage's distance from the capital in terms of 140 days on the road.[35] In 589, a Frankish delegation had sailed to Carthage en route to Constantinople; we do not know whether they continued overland or by sea.[36]

Where roads remained open, travelers in the sixth and seventh centuries may have had much to fear from the disorganized danger of brigandage. In earlier centuries, bandits had remained a localized and generally limited phenomenon. But it would be surprising if brigandage did not become more widespread as public order declined.[37] Military forces traveling along the main strategic highways also brought few benefits for travelers and nearby residents. Cassiodorus knew whereof he spoke when he compared troops moving across the farmlands of northern Italy to a powerful river scouring its bed clean of all growth.[38] And this was a friendly army.

Institutional changes affected the organization of land travel at public expense. The elaborate and expensive state post system (*cursus publicus*, *dromos*)

Footnote 34 (*cont.*)

Mansi's edition, only one other document actually bears this date (JE 2091; Mansi 11.18C; the others read "Data ut supra" 18E and 19C). The text of these documents is obviously unsatisfactory. One or more of the dates mentioned in these letters is certainly wrong: JE 2090 says that the wronged bishop John presented his petition to the pope on "Decimonono die mensis Decembris praesentis 11. indictionis" (11.16B), i.e. 19 December 667, and states that a synod was convened "post aliquos dies" (16C); JE 2091 says he presented the petition "Per Septembrem enim mensem praesentem, 11. indictione" (11.17E, which surely should be corrected to read "praesente 11. indictione"?), i.e. September 667. Whatever the correct date, if, as the indiction suggests, all this occurred before emperor Constans II's assassination (15 July 668) then bishop John and the dossier were first sent to Syracuse, where the emperor resided, since the accompanying letters JE 2093 and 2091 went to the bishop of Syracuse and the imperial cubiculary Baanes, asking them to help in the matter. The date of the papal letter would then refer to the departure of the group for Sicily, not Crete. For a seal, probably of this man, see *Byzantine Lead Seals* 1, no. 1086; cf. also no. 566?

35 *Bella*, 3, 10, 14, 1.358.1–2. Roads to the east: Salama 1951, 54–5, and the detailed study of land and sea routes in Purcaro Pagano 1976.

36 But we may suspect they sailed. Justinian seems to have reestablished not only the Roman tax system in reconquered Africa but also the state shipping service, to transport the tax proceeds to the capital. Gregory of Tours, *Historiae* 10, 2, 482.1–6; 483.15.

37 On the earlier rareness of bandits, Jones 1964, 825; on brigandage see Isaac 1998, 122–58.

38 *Variae*, 4, 36, 2, *CCL*, 96.165.8–166.15.



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had once studded the Roman roads with stations (*mansiones*), as often as every ten miles. There individuals on state business could change animals, get their carts fixed, or lodge. High-ranking persons and their dependents finagled the use of this transport system illegally, and the public post seems to have transported state levies in regions lacking water transport, for instance in North Africa.[39] The fifth and sixth centuries saw curtailment of its facilities, although the institution was maintained on the critical route to the eastern front. In some form the state post continued to function within the Byzantine empire down to the eleventh century and even later in the Caliphate, where its very name (*barīd*; cf. Greek *beredos*, Lat. *veredus*, used of a Roman postal mule, the root also of German *Pferd*) testifies to its Achaemenid and Graeco-Roman antecedents.[40]

Beyond abuses, the state post indirectly encouraged non-governmental communications. The knowledge, for instance, that cartwrights were attached to the state relays and that local farmers regularly supplied fodder along the roads may well have encouraged private individuals choosing their means of transport; the cartwrights certainly helped to maintain across the countryside the expertise needed for cart making and repair of all sorts.[41] Although there is little evidence that the Roman state built roads for anything but military purposes, the secondary road networks (*uiae uicinales*) clearly served local needs, including commerce.[42] Some places could only be reached overland, and caravans or wagons served them.[43] There is no reason to think that people transporting goods by land systematically avoided the main public roads.[44]

Where it happened, the curtailment of the public post affected the convenience and speed of government-sponsored travel.[45] Did it also decrease the *amount* of such travel? Greater difficulty would have acted as a disincentive, whenever such travel was not essential.[46] At the same time, an even more fundamental change

39 Recent evidence reported by Mackensen 1993, 59n40, has nonetheless suggested that even there, the Medjerda river played a larger role than was previously thought.

40 See in general Chevallier 1997; Jones 1964, 830–4; Laurent 2.196–244, for the seals of later postal officials. Typically, Procopius assails Justinian for measures that, more than once, sound like reasonable trade-offs in terms of cost and efficiency: *Anecdota*, 30, 1–11, 3.180.1–183.4; John Lydus, *De magistratibus*, 3, 61, 226.27–230.4. On the caliphal postal network, see D. Sourdel, "*Barīd*," *EI* 1 (1960), 1045–6, and Goitein 1964, 118–20.

41 On cartwrights, *Cod. Theod.*, 8, 5, 31, p. 383 (Trier 370); cf. Bulliet 1975, 26.

42 *Digest* (Ulpian), 43, 8, 22, p. 732.

43 On the imperial iron caravans from the oases of Egypt, see Ch. 2.1. Justinian built a fine two-lane wagon road to Rhegion (mod. Küçük Çekmece), c. 15 km west of Constantinople, obviously to meet some local supply need: Procopius, *De aed.*, e.g. 4, 8, 4–9, 4.134.8–23.

44 See in general Schneider 1982, who confirms the conventional wisdom but notes their likely use for local markets and peddling.

45 Procopius, *Anecdota*, 30, 8–11, 3.182.10–183.4.

46 See McCormick 1998b, 38–9, on the problem of government travel.



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was afoot. Reliance on pack animals grew at the expense of wagon transport. Here the east seems to have preceded the west. Pack animals may finally have reached a dominant position in the Frankish empire by the eighth or ninth century, but Charlemagne still wanted carts for his army. In the south and east, the transition was essentially completed by the sixth century.[47] Deteriorating road surfaces may have played a part: carts and wagons perform best on well-built (and maintained) roads, which explains why Procopius waxes ecstatic over the fine paving of a cart road near the capital.[48] The shift to beasts of burden might also reflect a reorganization of routes to serve changing settlement patterns. In towns, furthermore, public streets narrowed and clogged as shops spilled over into the streets and transformed late Roman cities from the regular grid-plan favored since Hippodamus into the urban warren of the Middle Eastern bazaar. Even so the evidence is compelling that economic factors played a decisive role.

Diocletian's effort to throttle inflation by regulating prices (A.D. 301) throws light on many nooks and crannies of the late Roman economy. For *general* hauling, his edict on prices specifies that camels were 20 percent cheaper than wagons, but that the beasts could carry only about half a late Roman wagon load, i.e. 600 Roman lb. (196.5 kg) instead of 1,200 lb. (392 kg). For *wood* hauling, on the other hand, the rate is the same for both.[49] Today's beasts help us understand Roman ones: the shorter the distance, the higher the modern camel's carrying capacity. This illuminates Roman customs data showing that donkey loads increased by up to a third when the beasts were working short routes (c. 15 km).[50] In aggregate, short-range land transport may have increased at the expense of long-distance freight, which would help to explain the shift in vehicles. Perhaps the nature of the things carried also changed, and so nudged the balance in favor

47 The inland distribution of Merovingian sarcophagi seems to indicate continuing wagon transport; 6th-C. graves point to a special connection between aristocratic women and wagons. For both points, Janssen 1989, 200 and 211–19. On the apparent shift in the Carolingian countries, see Lebecq 1998, 475–7; Charlemagne's carts: *MGH Capit.* no. 75, 1.163.25–35; the territory to be traversed must have been a prime consideration. For the Islamic world and late antiquity, Bulliet 1975 and Bagnall 1985.

48 See above n43.

49 If the text is reliable, for the segment on general hauling survives in only one witness: *Price Edict* 17, 1 and 3–4, p. 149; wood hauling: 14, 1 and 8–10, p. 141, where the *burdo* appears cheaper than both. See in general Bulliet 1975, 20–7. Habermann's (1990, 83) analysis of Roman customs documents from Egypt proves that the typical burden for a camel came to about 177 kg, although loads of 295 kg occur exceptionally (65). The question then becomes why anyone would have used wagons at all if they cost 20 percent more. The segment on wood transport implies that for certain (bulky) goods, the camel's comparative advantage disappeared. Speed, distance and varying local natural conditions may also have been factors. For long hauls it would also have been possible to change a wagon team without unloading the freight.

50 Habermann 1990, 62–5.



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of camels over carts. The fact that the Roman army used camels probably meant large-scale breeding. This would further have increased their availability and, presumably, lowered their cost; they certainly found users as far afield as Merovingian Gaul.[51] Finally, deteriorating roads or even waterways could equally have pushed toward a wider reliance on beasts of burdens.

## 3. River communications and the case of the Rhône route

The Rhône, the Rhine, and the Danube linked Rome's northern territories to the Mediterranean heartland. All three rivers were busy with traffic in the fourth and fifth centuries: for the Roman army, the Rhine and the Danube functioned at least as much as arteries for moving men and matériel as military barriers.[52] Changes in the relative intensity of traffic along the three rivers probably echoed the northern fringe's changing relations to the Mediterranean center. In any case, with the road systems which connected with and flanked them, these great rivers were crucial arteries of communication under the Roman empire.

From, let us say, late Roman Cologne, one could reach Constantinople by traveling up the Rhine and then across to the Danube and down to the Black Sea (see Map 3.1). Here and there along the way, various alternative routes branched off toward the eastern capital. Some routes linked the Rhine to the Saône and Rhône rivers. From Arles or even Lyons, ships sailed straight out to sea. Goods traveled up the Rhône in the opposite direction and overland, particularly toward the imperial capital of Trier. So much so, in fact, that Arles was reckoned the seaport for land-locked Trier, "forwarding to the latter city goods from the entire world."[53] Different routes scaled the Alps. From the Rhine, one could head for Avenches and reach the Roman mule track that ran from Lake Leman across the Great St. Bernard; wagons would probably have taken the Little St. Bernard. One could also follow the upper Rhine toward its source in the Alps, and in the vicinity of Chur choose between the mule road over the Splügen pass or the cart roads

51 On the army: e.g. Mauricius, *Strategicon*, 12, B, 22, 480.117. See in general Démougeot 1960 and Bulliet 1975, 87–140.

52 Whittaker 1994, 56 and 99–100, goes even farther. For Mediterranean and Rhenish goods which reached Britain down the Rhine between the first and fourth centuries, see Peacock 1978, 49 and 51, who observes that this route was longer and, theoretically, twice as costly as the route via Bordeaux and the Garonne; the best explanation for an apparently more costly route is that English imports piggybacked on an infrastructure developed for supplying the Rhine garrisons and civilians; cf. too Fulford 1978, 59. On late Roman Rhenish naval organization, see Höckmann 1986. Höckmann 1985, 136–43, has a good overview of river shipping with bibliography; cf. too de Izarra 1993.

53 The Rhône and the Rhine: e.g. Braemer 1989, 112–14; Lyons a seaport: Rougé 1965. *Expositio* 58, here 196.6–9.



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toward Italy via the Septimer or the Julier–Maloja passes.[54] Alternatively one branched off from the Danube. Travelers could cross the Alps on the Via Claudia Augusta toward Verona, or head toward the Adriatic either along the prehistoric "Amber Trail," or by following the main route from Aquincum to Aquileia via Emona (mod. Ljubljana).[55] Further down the Danube, one might leave the river at Belgrade, and travel through the Balkans directly to Constantinople along the great "army road" that we have already mentioned.

The decline of Roman authority has sometimes been connected to a reduction of road traffic and a corresponding increase in river travel. The way the Rhône corridor developed suggests that reality was more complicated. In future it will be necessary to analyze the evidence anew, case by case, and focus on specific travel corridors where different modes of transport interacted with shifting settlement patterns, and on what precisely was being moved.[56] We have just seen how important rivers were under the Roman empire, and they continued to be so in the successor societies. But even the great European rivers were not unchanging entities. Scrutiny of modern maps suggests considerable instability in the Rhône as recently as the early nineteenth century.[57] This was probably not the only stream whose shifting sandbars affected travel. River use depended in part on the resources to improve or maintain a channel; failing that, the means of transport had to adapt to shallower streams and swifter currents, or leave the water behind.

When the Romans lost the Danube, the river corridor to the east closed down for several centuries; the Lombards and Avars appear also to have disrupted the ancient amber route between the Baltic and the Mediterranean.[58] On the other hand, Merovingian colonization eastward transformed the Rhineland's geographic role. Now the former frontier became the backbone of a new kingdom, which greatly enhanced the great river's potential as a corridor to the south. However, as a direct route, the Rhine's value depended on who controlled the southern exits of the Alpine passes, and their relations with the Franks and Bavarians to the north. Power in the Po basin shifted twice in the sixth century, as Byzantines drove out Ostrogoths, and Lombards, Byzantines.[59] The disruptions degraded the potential of the Rhine-Alps-Po corridor, and left the Rhône as the crucial sixth- and early seventh-century connection to the Mediterranean. Hence the panache with which the Franks occupied Arles, where they staged circus races

54 For recent research into Roman use of different passes, see Fellmann 1990; the latest archaeological investigation of the Great St. Bernard nonetheless assumes, and recovered possible evidence of, cart traffic: Hunt 1998, 272 and 274.

55 Czysz 1990; Fitz 1990 and the other contributions in Pavan *et al.* 1990. See also below, pp. 369–79.

56 See Lebecq 1998; cf. for antiquity, Braemer 1989, 109–21.

57 McCormick 1998a, 60n49.

58 Jankuhn 1986, 19.

59 See Christie 1991.



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in an imperial style that raised irritated eyebrows in Constantinople. Hence too the importance of the royal customs stations in the Rhône delta, at Marseilles and at Fos-sur-Mer.[60] This is why the fractious Merovingians shared control of this area in the sixth and seventh centuries.

Different scholars' work has produced the impression that, between the sixth and the eighth centuries, the main axis of communications between Gaul and the Mediterranean shifted eastward, away from the Rhône valley and toward the Alps.[61] The cultural and commercial implications of such a change were very great indeed. Switzerland and the Rhine valley replaced Provence and the Rhône river as the main intermediaries with the Italian Mediterranean world. As unlikely a place as Saint Gall, overlooking the Lake of Constance, emerged as a major way station that relayed Greek culture into northern Europe.[62] Commercially speaking, the eastward shift sounded the death knell of low-value, high bulk Mediterranean imports into Frankland, for it represented the triumph of land over water transport. The backs of animals and men replaced boats and barges. Regardless of the disposable wealth of Frankish society, regardless of the rise and fall of empires far to the east, this shift constituted a dominant factor for the transport of goods between the Mediterranean world and transalpine Europe.[63]

What has been less appreciated is that this broader shift comprised two parts whose chronology was probably staggered. The first was the abandonment of the Rhône valley as a major *water* thoroughfare leading beyond the river itself into further Gaul. It has been argued that political insecurity played a particular role in this change, and there is doubtless truth in the observation that Arab and Carolingian campaigns disrupted communications there, at least for short periods in the first half of the eighth century. But these short-term disruptions occurred against the backdrop of a secular trend unfavorable to the Rhône: already in the late sixth century, epidemiological evidence has argued that bulk shipping was having difficulty reaching Lyons on a regular basis. Here seventh-century privileges for the abbey of Corbie provide powerful confirmation. By royal grant, the goods to be taken from the king's customs house in the Rhône delta were to be transported north *by wagon*.[64]

The second shift may have been connected with the first, but it affected the feeder system that led to the Rhône valley in the first place. Some such change has been suspected on the basis of hints detected in letters and narrative sources, and

60 Procopius, *Bella*, 7, 33, 5, 2.442.17–22.

61 See e.g. Claude 1985a, 39–40; Johanek 1987, 15–16.

62 Kaczynski 1988.

63 For the implications of this shift for the importation of papyrus, see below, Ch. 24.2.

64 Epidemiology: McCormick 1998a, 58–61; the 7th-C. privileges are known from the confirmation by Chilperic II (29 April 716), *Corbie*, no. 15, p. 236, on which see above, n2, not to mention the similar testimony from St. Denis; cf. Claude 1985a, 24; discussion in Lebecq 1998, 466 and 493–5.



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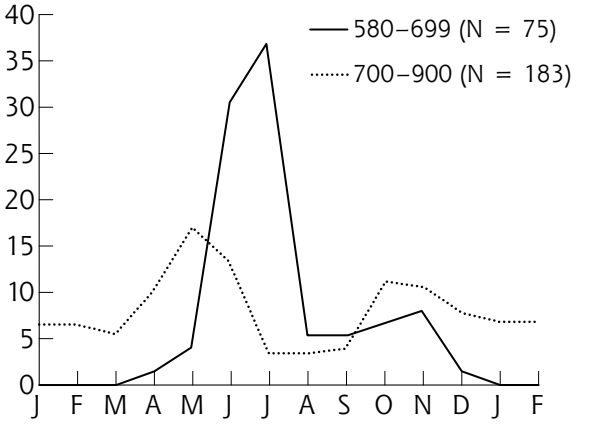
Chart 3.1. Changing seasonal patterns of communications: percentage of papal letters sent to northern Europe each month, 580–900




In the late sixth and seventh centuries, no papal communications traveled north toward Gaul and Germany in the bad sailing season of January, February, and even March (for the sole December document, see n68). Communications peaked in the fine sailing months of June and July. After 700, communications spread out more evenly across the seasons. They peaked in spring and late autumn, bottomed in the hottest months of the fever season, and continued unbroken through the winter. The difference between the two monthly distributions reflects the shift to a predominantly overland communications system from a predominantly seaborne one.

the hints can be multiplied, for instance, when a papal biographer bothers to specify that envoys to the Carolingian king in 773 traveled by sea, as though that were something unusual.[65] In fact, the aggregate patterns of the dispatch of papal letters to Gaul and points beyond uncover a silent shift. The seasonality of communications changed, deeply, between the later sixth century and the ninth. The graph shown in Chart 3.1 summarizes those patterns. It compares the months when dated papal letters were sent north in late antiquity and in the Carolingian period.[66]

65 Claude 1985b, 135–6; R182.

66 The graphs summarize the aggregate data of papal documents recorded in JE 1048–3582, with the additional material in Hiestand 1983; cf. also Conte 1971, 397–507 and 1984, 189–247. I have used only documents which are clearly, usually explicitly, dated. This analysis was first attempted, in partial (i.e. A.D. 578–715 and 872–8) and experimental fashion, by the members of my Seminar in Late Antique and Early Medieval History at Harvard University in 1995 and 1997. In addition to stimulating discussion in both instances, the participants supplied me with their raw data as well as final analyses, and I am grateful to all concerned. I have extended the period of analysis, vetted and corrected their findings, and recalculated all the data.



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Around 600, communications overwhelmingly peaked in June and July, in the season of good sailing weather.[67] Nothing went north in January, February, March, and probably also December.[68] The explanation is not hard to find: most communications between Rome and Gaul traveled by sea. In the eighth and ninth century, on the other hand, although communications peaked during the fine weather of spring and autumn they continued year round, when ships rarely set out from shore. Letters still went north in February and November in good numbers, and the letter dispatches were more fully spread over the entire year, including even January. The slump in the hot months of summer hints of the fear of Italian fevers (Ch. 15.1). Overall, this hitherto hidden seasonality proves that the usual route shifted for Rome's communications north of the Alps. It explains why, for the first time, in the eighth century, papal records began to specify that travelers to Gaul went by sea: the sea route was now the exception.[69] In the late sixth and seventh century, when sea travel to Gaul had been routine, it had passed without comment. That papal communications locate the shift around 700 tallies well with other independent evidence, principally that of Anglo-Saxon pilgrims' movements.[70]

The Lombards' invasion of northern Italy in 568 probably was decisive in promoting the sea route to the main link with Gaul at the end of antiquity. Their conquest of the Po valley and continuing hostility to Byzantine forces disrupted much of Italian life in the later sixth century. We know that a few Byzantine ships continued to bring supplies from the capital, and especially from Africa, to the handful of imperial forts strung along the Ligurian coast which resisted deep into the seventh century. The final fall of Africa perhaps ended the resupply of the Italian outposts, particularly if it was mostly ships arriving from distant Constantinople that now linked Africa and the coastal outposts between Rome and Marseilles (Ch. 4.5). The end of eastern deliveries to this region combined with the diminished transport capacity of the Rhône river to lessen the coastal route's importance, even before we begin to take into account possible changes in supply at the eastern end and demand at the western terminus of the route.

By 700 the Lombards were becoming a more stable presence in northern Italy. Warfare with the remaining Byzantine strongholds did break out sporadically, and Rome itself was threatened several times in the eighth century. Even so, relations between the neighboring territories generally improved, and a kind of modus vivendi set in. The sixth-century hostilities between Lombards and Franks also faded into the distant past. In the first half of the eighth century, their relations warmed to the point that the young Pippin III traveled to the court of the Lombard king for his first haircut.[71] Frankish pilgrims had no trouble trekking across the Lombard kingdom, and the land route gained in importance. A few ships still worked their way along the seacoast but, as the papal letters show, the main communication route linking western Italy to northwestern Europe now



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ran overland, through the Alps. What about those ships?

67 It should be noted that the analysis focused on letters, and that sometimes bundles of letters traveled together. This swells somewhat the peak periods, especially for the communications of 570–699. Nonetheless, recalculating the monthly totals to eliminate this factor by reckoning all letters or documents dated to the same month and year as one dispatch yields a substantially similar picture, even though it understates the number of dispatches, since letters dated in the same month sometimes traveled north separately (e.g. JE 2525–6). By this understated reckoning, the early period (N=21) sends 80 percent of its dispatches north between May and October, with July still the peak month, although October equals it here (19 percent each). By this method, the late period (N=108) yields an almost identical picture to the graph, with peaks in May (19 percent) followed by June and October (11 percent each) and November (10 percent). What is more, the data itself seem to hint that bundles of letters tended to travel by the preferred route of each period.

68 The sole December bull in this group is ambivalent. JE 2104 of 673–5 is the last document before 700 and is addressed to an Anglo-Saxon. It may be that overland travel had already resumed by that date; it is equally possible that the Anglo-Saxon beneficiary wintered in Rome.

69 The earliest case I note is in 739; the reason for the voyage is plainly the Lombard attack that motivated the embassy; see R144.

70 See Szabó 1996, 136–7 and *idem*, in press.

71 BM 53h.



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# 4

# *Sea change in late antiquity*

IT IS HARD to overemphasize how deeply the Mediterranean pervaded imperial civilization. The great cities clustered around its beaches, while its climate shaped the Roman lifestyle and food production, fostering the classic dietary triad of wheat, oil, and wine. Its fish adorned the Romans' mosaics and flavored their dishes. Above all, the mastery of its waters allowed the unprecedented degree of interregional economic specialization and integration which accompanied political and cultural unification. The main reason for this economic importance has been noted many times. Moving goods by sea was dramatically cheaper than moving them by land. Diocletian's Edict on Prices substantiates the classic observation that it cost less "to ship grain from one end of the Mediterranean to the other than to cart it 75 miles."[1] To understand the fate of the ancient economy, it is essential to grasp a few facets of late Roman shipping. The key structural issues are the relation between sea transport and commerce, the impact of state subsidies on shipping, and the characteristics of ports, ships, and their cargoes. They will prepare us to consider the profound changes in the shipment of goods around the Mediterranean that archaeologists are now uncovering; these are matched by changes in the shipping itself. They culminated in the seventh century and created an entirely new seascape in the eighth.

## 1. Transport and commerce

Sea transport was inherently cheaper. But was it commercially significant? Recent studies have emphasized that, in volume, the greatest shipments were noncommercial transports of state supplies.[2] Notwithstanding the state transports,

1 Jones 1964, 842; cf. Diocletian, Price Edict, 17, 3–5, pp. 148–9 and 37, 1, 1–42, pp. 200–3. However, as Harris 1993, 27–8, notes, the inelasticity of demand must also be considered, and in some situations, the economics may have been more complicated.

2 See most importantly, Durliat 1990a.



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late Romans certainly believed that profits, ships, and the sea went hand in hand. Augustine himself, preaching not far from the harbor at Hippo, spontaneously connected shipping, a cosmopolitan outlook, and money-making. Enumerating the four great careers which tempted his flock – farming, state service, the law courts, and the sea – the African bishop concluded:

"Sailing and trading," another says, "that's great!" It's great to know many provinces, *make money everywhere*, not be beholden in town to some mighty man, always to travel in foreign lands and nourish the mind on a variety of business and nations, and then to come home, rich with the profits![3]

One can only wonder about the African audience of the fifth or sixth century to whom another preacher appealed. His sermon described the mystery of the Resurrection as though it were a lively seaside market. Here Christ becomes a merchant, and his body is a ship loaded with precious merchandise, the souls he had freed from the pirates. The preacher's rhetorical effusion affords an exceedingly rare look at what must have been a very common sight around the edges of the Mediterranean, ancient and medieval.[4]

O how lovely the beach looks when it's filled with merchandise and it bustles with businessmen! Bundles of different clothing are pulled from the ships, countless people delight at the sailors' cheerful singing, and the rich man dances in the sand.[5]

He is describing exactly the same kind of beachside market that we can see with our own eyes in an African mosaic (Figure 4.1).

Around the middle of the fifth century, commerce and shipping elicited less enthusiasm from a Gaulish bishop, but his assumption was the same.[6] From his cathedral on the heights above the ancient port of Nice, the pastor fulminated against the profits which drove men down to the sea in ships. He also implied that Nice was running a trade deficit.

Let's find out whose fault it is that a man's life is entrusted to a thin plank hull, why people risk the dangers of the sea. Isn't it because of greed that the sailor's shout curses the deep sea as the storm crashes over him? Doesn't it come down to the invidious desire for gain, when the shipwrecked body smashes against sharp rocks and the sea wave tosses water-bloated limbs on to unknown shores? No, never would a seaman have entrusted himself

3 *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, In Ps. 136, 3, *CCL*, 40.20–2.

4 Houston 1988 makes this last point powerfully on the basis of comparative evidence.

5 Ps. Fulgentius of Ruspe, *Sermon* 38, *PL*, 65.901–2. For the African collection which preserves this sermon: Dekkers, no. 844.

6 For a survey of the rather diverse patristic opinions on commerce, Drexhage 1986, 568–74; for a probing study of the complex interplay between religious ideas and economic practice, see Laiou 1996.



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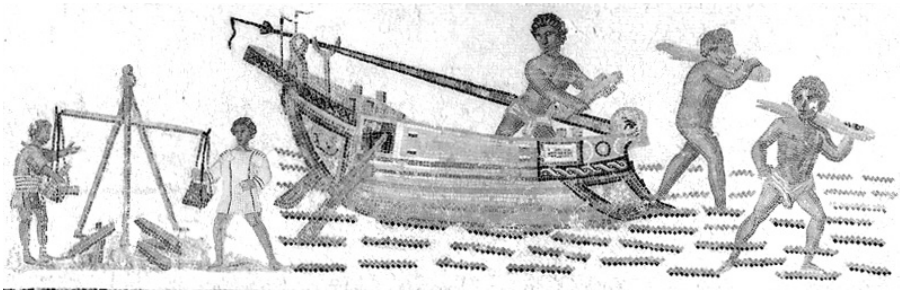

Figure 4.1. "O how lovely the beach looks when it's filled with merchandise": Fine natural or artificial harbors were not the only places of sea commerce in the late Roman and early medieval Mediterranean. Beachside markets were well known in late Roman Africa: this mosaic illustrates exactly the sort of scene described by the anonymous African preacher of the fifth or sixth century. The ship is beached in shallow water, and the stevedores are unloading its wares in the surf; to the left, some of the goods are being weighed. Photo courtesy of the Institut national d'archéologie et d'art, Musée du Bardo, Tunis.

to a ship unless the passion for trading had spurred the desire for sailing. And then a man is borne off by the waves so he can quadruple his money: they export gold so they can import perjury with falsehood. For when something is bought cheaply only so it can be retailed dearly, doing business always means cheating.[7]

There is no doubt that in Valerian of Cimiez's mind, the lust for profit drove the shipping of his day. And what profits, if only we could believe him! Whether or not they liked the money to be made in shipping and commerce, these three preachers clearly lived in the same world that produced the *Description of the Whole World and Its Peoples*, that practical guide to the best buys of the fourth-century empire's different shores.[8] It was this world that was coming to an end, although not necessarily thanks to Bishop Valerian's eloquence.

The accumulating tons of pottery speak their own language. Every year brings new refinements, new points on the increasingly dense map of seaborne imports and exports. The indestructible sherds of fineware, containers, and, increasingly, coarseware must stand for the millions of tons of grain and other perishables with which they had once traveled around the Mediterranean. Although the importance of state-imposed fiscal transports means that we must speak sometimes of exchange rather than commerce, the economic significance

7 Valerian of Cimiez, *Homilia* 20, 7, PL, 52.754B–C (Dekkers no. 1002).

8 See e.g. *Expositio totius mundi et gentium*, 51, p. 186, on the iron, down (or lead), bacon, and cheese for sale in Macedonia.



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of the movement across the sea of millions of bushels of fiscal grain every year (hence the name, "*annona*") is hard to deny. This tax-induced transfer of food chiefly benefited the capitals, the court, and the army.[9] A shrewd commercial observer noted that an emperor's presence in a province meant both abundance and high prices.[10] As this very remark implies, fiscal supplies did not exclude private commerce, and the same witness observes both private and public cargoes landing in Seleucia, the port of Antioch.[11] One way or another, some movements of goods documented by the archaeological evidence are connected with the annona system.

Volume and, to a certain extent, variety characterized goods shipped around the late antique Mediterranean. The stupendous harbor installations destined to accommodate the grain fleets speak to volume. The grain and oil of Africa benefited from the triple port system of Carthage, whose circular harbor has yielded what look to be records of the annona oil measured there.[12] On the receiving end, Ostia and especially Portus Romanus were developed expressly for the capital.[13] In the famous harbors of Alexandria, the bounty of the Nile was transferred from river barges to deep-sea freighters and conveyed north to Constantinople.[14] The magnificent natural harbor of the Golden Horn was difficult for ancient ships to enter from the south, so the emperors soon constructed big artificial ports on the new capital's Sea of Marmara shore. All together, the ports of Constantinople may have been capable of docking some 500 ships at a time.[15] The artificial harbor of Seleucia welcomed both annona and private shipments destined for the great city of Antioch.[16] But the annona was not the only reason for harbor installations. Anastasius I improved the harbor at Caesarea in Palestine, which probably welcomed Holy Land pilgrims as well as supplies for its inhabitants.[17] And the African beach market reminds us that other shipping

9 See in general Durliat 1990a, who also emphasizes the extent of annona shipments to the other cities of the empire; against which see Reynolds 1995, 123.

10 *Expositio*, 58, 196.1–4, on Gaul; cf. on Antioch, *ibid.*, 23, 158.4–8. For the impact of the imperial court on a regional economy, see the classic case study by Cracco Ruggini 1995.

11 *Expositio*, 28, 160.1–7.

12 On the harbors of Carthage in this context: Hurst 1994, 114–15; if they can still be located, the oil accounts preserved in the "Ostraka latins de Carthage" surely deserve a full edition and closer scrutiny.

13 Meiggs 1973, 149–71 and 278–310; Fellmeth 1991, has attempted to calculate the potential volume of freight handled in the ports of Rome. For the late stages of their history, see Coccia 1996 and Paroli 1996.

14 E.g. Haas 1997, 24–8.

15 Thus Mango 1985a, 38–40, calculates c. 4,000 m of dock space and assumes 8 m per ship, which is probably too little; Fellmeth 1991 arrived at almost the same length for the docks of the ports of Rome, and reckons 338 ships at 12 m each.

16 Above, n11.

17 Procopius of Gaza, *Panegyricus in*



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worlds coexisted with these great built-up harbors and the state-subsidized fleets that moored in them.

## 2. Public money and private ships

Late Roman shipping varied in its juridical status, its geography, and its cargoes. All changed over time. Juridically and financially, the annona ships loom large. They dominate the surviving sources (and recent scholarship) and they surely constituted an appreciable segment of the empire's total transport fleet. The need for state-subsidized shipping arose from the convergence of harsh economic realities and entrenched mental habit.

The economic fact was that the great cities were incapable of feeding themselves from their own hinterland; the mental one was that the ancient world identified political power with civic munificence. Besides, the restive populations of the capitals and the army added a political imperative to the cultural expectation of imperial largess.[18] Egypt and Africa produced enormous agrarian surpluses, so the trick was to transport the yields of the land tax, levied in foodstuffs, to the capitals in a timely and cost-effective way. The state had begun subsidizing the ships which brought grain to feed Rome centuries before, but the system reached a high level of development in the fourth century and later.[19] Carrots and sticks encouraged shipowners to transport the annona at the lowest possible cost to the imperial treasury. Although, like ancient legislators, modern historians tend to focus on the abuses and crises, it is hard not to reckon a success a system which managed to feed the capitals and the army down to the moment when supplies were cut off.

Incentives for private persons to finance grain transport ships were indispensable, since the state's freight rate was substantially below that commanded by private shippers.[20] At least down to the sixth century, certain lands were

*Anastasium imperatorem*, 19, 17.11–22, confirmed archaeologically: Raban 1989, 290–1. For recent archaeological work on important second-tier harbors in the eastern Mediterranean, see Raban 1995, Hohlfelder 1995, and Leonard 1995.

18 Economic necessity: Durliat 1990a; cultural need: Veyne 1976.

19 The essential collection of laws is *Cod. Theod.* 13, 5–9, heavily revised in *Cod. Iust.*, 11, 2–6, pp. 428–30. Summary but solid outline in Jones 1964, 827–30. For more details: Cracco Ruggini 1971, 152–7; the careful study by Herz 1988; Sirks 1991 and De Salvo 1992; Durliat 1990a, 239–41, entertains the opinion that the annona ships belonged to the state.

20 There is some discrepancy in the ways in which scholars have calculated the percentages, but a state rate of 7 percent of the value of the grain compared with a private rate of about 12 percent looks about right for the early 4th C., judging from *Cod. Theod.*, 13, 5, 5, 1.2.749 and Diocletian's Price Edict, 37, 1, 1–3, p. 200; cf. the varying interpretations of



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hereditarily subject to the *functio navicularia*.[21] This meant that their revenues had to help finance the construction and operation of the ships which transported the annona. In exchange they enjoyed significant tax privileges. The most valuable was probably the exemption from the empire's main land tax, which was prorated to the capacity of the ships the landowner financed. Almost as attractive was the fact that the *navicularii*, as shippers in the state service were known, escaped the generally dreaded service on town councils.[22]

There were other carrots too. A law of 371 documents the most important. According to this law the state assumed a large part of the capital cost of shipping by ordering the provinces to supply the timber required to build the *navicularii*'s ships.[23] A strategist writing in Justinian's later years reckoned the cost of shipbuilding alongside the construction of walls as major items in the state budget, although both paled in comparison with paying for the army.[24] Diminished risk was another factor. As Bishop Valerian and the hundreds of Roman wrecks now emerging from the seabed make perfectly clear, shipping ventures were dangerous – hence later the importance of risk-sharing instruments like the later medieval *commenda*. The sea was no less dangerous for state shippers but, under normal circumstances, they were better insulated from financial risks. First off, work was guaranteed every year by the single largest economic unit in the ancient world, even if the state was a menacing adversary in case of conflict. But more important – and even though his personal fortune was liable for certain damages to the cargo – the annona shipper, unlike a private businessman, was not financially responsible for state goods lost at sea under legitimate circumstances. This last provision opened the door to highly profitable frauds. This in turn made the crew subject to torture in judicial investigations of annona losses, at least down to Emperor Maurice

Footnote 20 (*cont.*)
Durliat 1990a, 242n153 and 258, Herz 1988, 216n25, and Jones 1964, 828. The state rate had risen to 10 percent two centuries later: Justinian, Edict 13, 8, 783.8–26, and the discussion in McCormick 1998a, 68–71.

21 McCormick 1998a, 97.

22 An example in Libanius, *Ep.* 705, 2, 10.639.3–8 with Jones 1964, 1344n11.

23 *Cod. Theod.*, 13, 5, 14, 1 (Constantinople), p. 751, concerning Oriens and Egypt. As usual in the *Code*, it is unclear whether this was new, and if it was, whether the practice extended beyond the case at issue; inclusion in the *Code* strengthens the latter likelihood.

24 "The financial system was set up to take care of matters of public importance that arise on occasion, such as the building of ships and of walls. But it is principally concerned with paying the soldiers. Each year most of the public revenues are spent for this purpose": *Anonymous Treatise on Strategy*, 2, 12.18–21; Dennis' translation, p. 13. At this date (cf. Dennis, *ibid.*, 2–3), there is little likelihood that Justinian was spending much on a navy, so the reference most probably is to subventions for the ships that sustained city life.



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(582–602).[25] Furthermore, under a state that recognized few limits to its ability to command and constrain, it was also no small advantage for *navicularii* to be exempt from requisition outside their annona duties. Finally, most scholars agree that state shippers alone transported and sold non-annona goods duty-free, giving them a customs exemption and commercial advantage over their private competitors. The value of this last privilege was sufficiently clear to competitors that private merchants aspired to gain it by fraud.[26] Though this list does not exhaust the advantages of working for the annona, it suggests that they were not inconsiderable.

In return, *navicularii* were obliged to transport the annona safely and in more or less timely fashion. This entailed operating in concert with an oppressive and powerful state whose multiple layers of bureaucracy were venal and sometimes at cross-purposes. The state attempted to set sailing schedules and regulate as much of the *navicularii*'s activity as was feasible. This could even include ordering an annona convoy to sea in seasons of great danger, when the political imperatives of hunger so decided.[27] Officials were sporadically active in tracking down and coercing back to duty *navicularii* who enjoyed the benefits of their status but avoided its obligations. *Navicularii* who did not manage their state obligations and incentives carefully, or who suffered adverse circumstances ranging from bad weather to poor cooperation from port authorities, could wind up in dire straits. Should the state determine that its shippers were not meeting its expectations, the menace of confiscation hung over their fortunes.[28]

The economic implications of this subsidized shipping system are multiple. At relatively low cost, it allowed the state to transfer large amounts of wealth, in the form of food (especially the staples of grain and olive oil) and supplies around the Mediterranean as political and strategic imperatives dictated. A redistribution model of the earlier imperial economy has argued that imperial taxes encouraged trade to raise the cash to pay them, and then redistributed the proceeds

25 *Cod. Theod.*, 13, 9, 1–6, pp. 760–2; *Cod. Iust.*, 11, 6, 3, p. 429; cf. Augustine, *Sermo* 355, 5, 128.26–129.9; torture abolished: John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 103, 1–3, pp. 164–5, with Durliat 1990a, 242n151; see also De Salvo 1992, 353–69.

26 Requisition: *Cod. Theod.*, 13, 5, 5 (Milan? 326), p. 748; *ibid.*, 13, 5, 8, p. 749 and 17 (386), p. 752; duty-free: *ibid.*, 13, 5, 24, p. 753. Against: Durliat 1990a, 87n139; cf. n. 141 and Durliat 1990b, 103n4; for: Jones 1964, 828; Herz 1988, 252; De Salvo 1992, 259, among others, with McCormick 1998a, 80–5.

27 For an ill-omened winter convoy from Sardinia described by Paulinus of Nola, *Ep.* 49, pp. 390–404, esp. 1, 390.20–391.10; cf. the (corrupt) text of *Cod. Theod.*, 13, 9, 3, 2, p. 761, apparently bearing on surcharges for winter voyages, with De Salvo 1992, 327–9.

28 *Cod. Theod.*, 13, 5, 27–28, p. 754; cf. 13, 5, 29 and 35–6, pp. 754 and 756; 13, 6, 1–10, pp. 757–9.



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around the empire. If the model has any validity in the late empire, these massive transfers may have primed the pump of the state sector, as it were.[29] In any case, the system fostered huge concentrations of urban population, with whatever economic consequences the subsidized cities entailed.[30] That state shippers enjoyed customs-free status in their personal commercial operations meant that the annona transport also subsidized and encouraged trade which went beyond the movement of state levies. The system reduced transport costs substantially by decreasing capital outlays for the ships in at least some cases, by diminishing risk and guaranteeing predictable business rhythms, routes, and rates (albeit lower ones) aboard ships loaded with state supplies, on which private merchandise might literally have traveled piggyback and duty-free.

But there is more. So long as the benefits of state service outweighed the costs, the annona system created an uneven playing field for rival shippers who did not have the advantages of the state subsidies. Private shippers must have had difficulty competing with annona fleets along the routes leading to the major consumer centers of the empire; they were forced to recoup the capital costs of their ships and pay duties on the goods they transported. In other words, the establishment of the late Roman annona fleets was probably detrimental to other shipping. They could well have driven non-subsidized ships to seek out other niches, such as local, small-scale trading and coastal lugging, or longer routes not serviced by annona carriers.

The indirect consequences of the annona system are perhaps less obvious, but no less important. Contrary to some popular impressions, the Mediterranean Sea is big: it can get nasty enough to send twentieth-century aircraft carriers skidding down large waves. In a predominantly oral seafaring culture, captains and crews would probably tend to stick to the waters whose winds, currents, weather, reefs, and ports they knew.[31] The utterly predictable sailings of the annona convoys exercised a kind of gravitational pull on any private shipping that was able to compete with them. Once the human capital of a given port – the pilots, sailors, and even merchants – gained familiarity with certain routes and destinations, they

29 Although the fact that the late imperial annona was originally collected in goods – see also ch. 2 on metal levies – introduces an important difference; nonetheless, late imperial taxes shifted increasingly to cash commutation, first in the west and then, later, in the east: Jones 1964: 460–1; Hopkins 1980; cf. also Wickham 1994, 7–42.

30 Durliat 1990a, 5–9 and 572–89; those consequences may have extended beyond the obvious to less patent ones comparable to those analyzed by Jacobs 1969, 82–141.

31 I presume this orality; the very few texts such as the *Periplus maris Erythraei* which aim to supply practical details about seafaring are earlier; the *Stadiasmus maris magni* appears to be of composite date: Rougé 1978, 102 with n100 and 119 with n160. Even late Roman military commanders probably had no detailed maps to guide their operations: see Isaac 1996.



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had every incentive to stick with them.[32] In this sense, then, the annona fleets will have encouraged the same seamen to travel the same courses, even when sailing aboard non-annona ships.

The shipping industry as a whole probably enjoyed indirect benefits from the annona system. The hundreds of vessels required to transport the hundreds of thousands of tons shipped annually to the capitals will have kept shipyards busy, helping to maintain high levels of expertise and construction and repair capacity.[33] Infrastructures benefited. The state did not stint when it came to spending on port installations for loading or unloading the annona fleets, and the ports and longshoremen were still there when the annona business was transacted. Thus, for instance, a contemporary observer on Antioch's magnificent artificial seaport, even as he implies that, around 360, the ships that put in there were based elsewhere:

> Seleucia too is a fine town, which supplies everything, both fiscal and commercial goods, that reaches the aforesaid Antioch. The master of the world, emperor Constantius [II], seeing how useful it was to him and the army, cut through a huge mountain and brought in the sea. He built a big and good port, in which the arriving ships are safe and the fiscal cargo is not wasted.[34]

The consequences went well beyond the shipping. This is true whether we talk about the economic implications of return cargoes – quarry exports from Constantinople's environs come to mind, or the heavy cheeses, iron, and roof tiles which empty homebound ships could pick up in Dalmatia after delivering supplies to the strategic capital and supply depot of Aquileia – or about the movement of communications, of people and messages.[35] The flow of ambitious Africans to Italy – Augustine and his friends Alypius and Nebridius, not to mention African mosaicists, come to mind – seems to surge in the decades when Carthage supplied the bulk of Rome's annona. Some of them might have gone there anyway to seek their fortunes, but the volume and frequency of shipping links can only have encouraged the pattern.[36] It is, for instance, hard not to suspect that the annona ships' regular sailings fostered Augustine's epistolary exchanges with Italy. So too the founding of Constantinople and the assignment to it of the state grain levies of Egypt caused a sudden and lasting expansion of

32 A point well put by Mattingly 1988, 54.

33 For more on the numbers of ships, see below; for the size of the annual grain shipment to Constantinople, see n109.

34 *Expositio*, 28, 160.1–7.

35 Quarries of the Sea of Marmara: Sodini 1989; 4th- and 5th-C. emperors were frequently in Aquileia, and its fluvial port installations are still impressive: Mangani *et al*. 1981, 224–7; Dalmatian exports: *Expositio*, 53, 190.7–9.

36 On Augustine and his friends, Brown 1967, 67–8 and, on the connection of Africans on the make, mosaicists, and the annona axis: Panella 1993, 636–41.



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shipping crossing the Mediterranean toward the new capital. Constantinople's annual grain supply under Justinian has been estimated to have required thousands of ship landings each year.[37]

## 3. Ports, ships, and cargoes

At the outset, the home ports of the late Roman merchant marine were many. It is least difficult to trace the state shippers and it was surely they who moved the greatest volume of goods. In the fourth century, they ringed the Mediterranean: some were, possibly, still based in Gaul, others, certainly, made their homes in Spain, Sardinia, Africa, Italy, along the Levantine seaboard, and in Alexandria.[38] These home ports fitted into a pattern of routes which looks complex and highly developed.

Flows of amphoras and fineware are being used to recover the shipping routes of late antiquity. Coarseware is adding yet another criterion.[39] Archaeology's insights could be deepened and extended by applying to late antiquity a method similar to the one developed later in this book. Comprehensive analysis of the individual and small group movements assembled by the prosopography of late

37 For Constantinople's impact, Ahrweiler 1974, 165–6; cf. Dagron 1984, 530–2, for the view from Constantinople; for the harbor installations connected with this development, Mango 1985a, 38–40; estimate of shiploads: McCormick 1998a, 103–7 and below, section 5.

38 The evidence for Gaulish *navicularii* seems to peter out in the 3rd C.: see the documents cited by De Salvo 1992, 396–412, including the inscription in the "Piazzale delle corporazioni" at Ostia; for the others: *ibid.*, 396, 412–39, 464–82.

39 This is particularly evident in Reynolds 1995, the most ambitious and useful attempt yet to discern supply and shipping routes, as well as distribution (and redistribution) patterns in the western Mediterranean. His description of routes nonetheless relies heavily on the argument from silence (i.e. the absence of certain forms in a given ceramic assemblage from a specific site), paired with positive attestation of other forms, the well-foundedness of which in each case must be left to specialists. But must one always conclude that absence of a particular class of objects is prima facie evidence that ships carrying those objects "bypassed" a port? For instance (Reynolds 1995, 135) the absence of a certain eastern fineware at Carthage, paired with the indubitable presence there of eastern foodstuffs documented by the surviving amphoras is taken to mean that eastern ships carrying eastern fineware bypassed Carthage. But attempting to sell those foreign dishes in the distribution center of African fineware – a place where ARS production and consumption was so abundant that it even encompassed roof tiles – at the same time that they sold other, less available eastern goods, may seem something like carrying coals to Newcastle. Would not a trader who knew his markets have held back the Late Roman C (from Phocaea) until his ship reached a market with inferior supplies of fineware? For red-slipped rooftiles at Carthage, see Stevens *et al.* 1998, 379.



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Roman elites could be set against shipwreck and pottery distribution as well as the movements implicit in the great letter collections of the era. The result would test and correct deductions based on ceramic distribution patterns.[40] Viewing the patterns that emerge in the light of modern navigational guides and ancient descriptions of voyages should open new insights into how these great and lesser routes developed and changed. For instance, the rise in exports of amphoras (Figure 1.1), linked with Gaza's wine production, bears comparison with the growing prominence of Ascalon (some 20 km away) as a port for long-distance shipping, not to mention the ballooning taste for wine in nearby Egypt (Ch. 1.2). Archaeologists are beginning to uncover the far-flung contacts of this coastal region throughout the sixth and seventh centuries.[41] It is no coincidence, surely, that precisely then, records survive of individual travelers who just happened to be heading to other places via Ascalon.[42]

In the meantime, we may distinguish in a general way the high-volume routes dictated by the needs of the annona and documented by the distinctive archaeological deposit patterns linked with it. They were presumably more direct and therefore tended to deep-sea courses.[43] Texts, shipwrecks, and archaeological distribution sketch a number of secondary routes, often through muddier coastal waters. One prominent example is the route that runs along the western Mediterranean's northern edge, from Italy toward Spain via the southern French coast, where we have already met Rutilius Namatianus in the late autumn of 417. Another followed the coast of northern Africa, from Alexandria to the Tripolitania, and was made famous by Synesius' plaintive account of the navigational difficulties caused by his Jewish skipper's Sabbath observance.[44] Some ships nonetheless kept to blue water. For example, St. Nicholas of Sion (d. 564)

40 For a stimulating preliminary attempt along these lines, see Durliat 1990b, 98–100.

41 Arthur and Oren 1998.

42 On "Gaza" amphorae ("Late Roman 4"; also "Late Roman 2" – see Figure 1.1), e.g. Panella 1993, 664n218; Johnson and Stager 1995; travelers: in the 6th C., the Egyptian ship that St. Nicholas of Sion took from Lycia for the Holy Land was bound for Ascalon; for the trip home, he went from Jerusalem to Ascalon, where he found a Rhodian ship bound for Constantinople via Rhodes: *Vita S. Nicolai Sionitae* (*BHG* 1347), 27 and 36, 50.4–6 and 62.1–7. For a ship sailing there in 619 from Rome, see R2, and for another, from Spain, in the earlier 8th C., R113.

43 Cf. e.g., the imperial desire that annona ships take direct routes implied by *Cod. Theod.* 13, 5, 33 (Constantinople, 409), p. 755, even though it seems to me that the author of these lines was playing on the words *recta* and *devia*. The claim by McCann, in McCann and Freed 1994, 89, that artifacts recovered from the deep sea off the Skerki Bank, north of Carthage, represent such a blue-water route has been questioned by Parker 1996.

44 Rutilius Namatianus, *De reditu suo* and above, Ch. 2.1; Synesius of Cyrene, *Ep.* 5, (olim 4), pp. 11–26. Reynolds 1995, 133, demonstrates these routes from the independent evidence of ceramic distribution.



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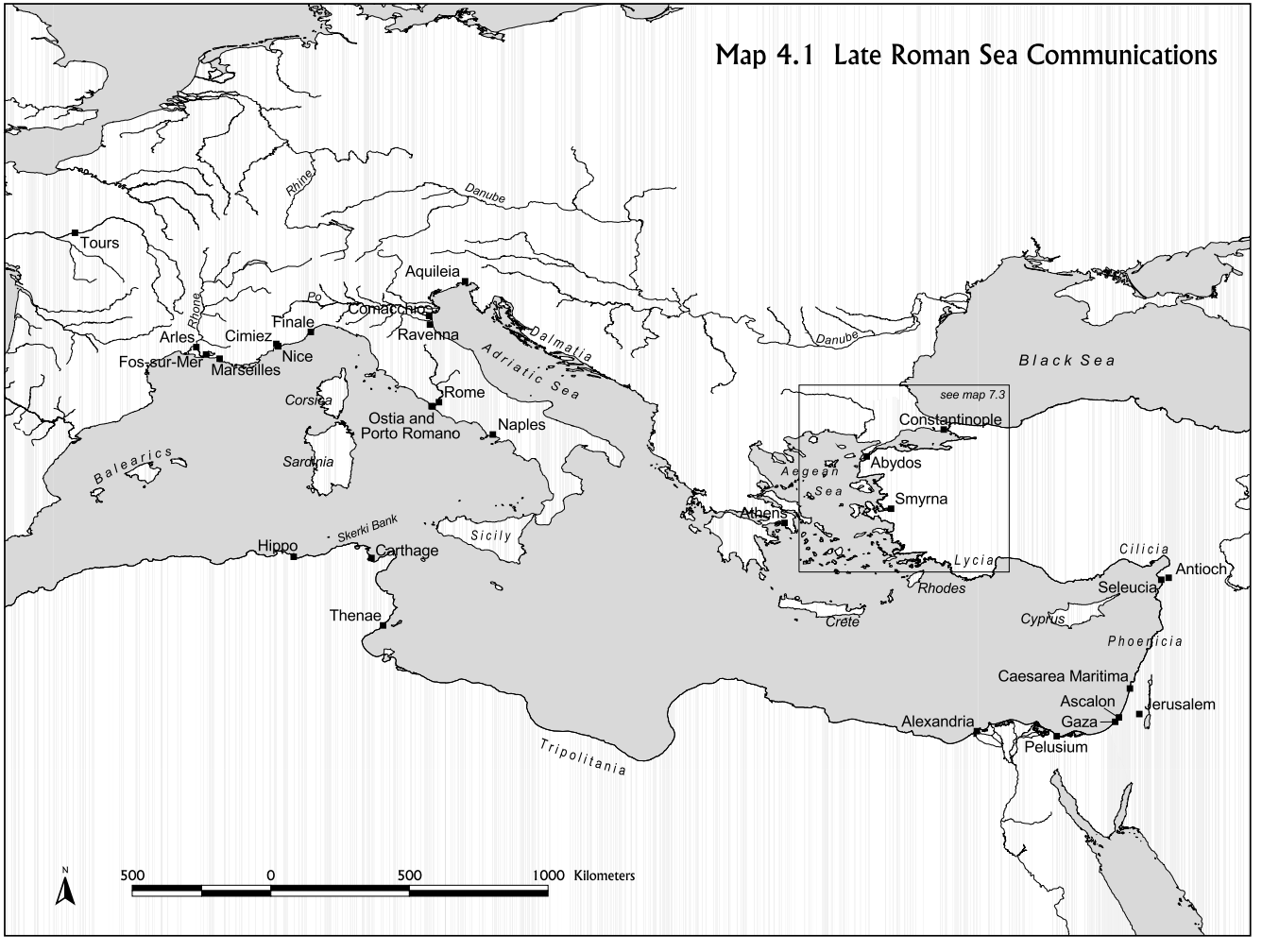


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made the run straight across the Mediterranean from Lycia to Egypt, apparently without spying land.[45] The sea link to Roman Britain has attracted much attention, although it must have been only a minor route in the last centuries of antiquity.[46] A systematic study along the lines indicated above would prove changing patterns of use of individual routes; even more importantly, it would illuminate how such change on one route affected other routes.

The ships that sailed these routes varied too. One obvious administrative distinction concerns annona ships and those operated by private shippers. Another difference is size. A few texts have led to much writing about the decline of ship sizes in late antiquity. The hundreds of ships discovered on the sea bottom authorize a fresh assessment that confirms but also modifies the testimony of the texts. The reality is more complicated than was imagined even thirty years ago, when big ships were supposed to have disappeared in the crisis of the third century, as shipping and its economic importance declined.[47] Giant ships (over 250 tons carrying capacity) were a short-lived phenomenon of the late republic and early empire. But occasionally they were resurrected for the special task of moving large pieces of stone. In the fourth century, for instance, to transport a mammoth obelisk to Rome required a specially built ship "of a hitherto unaccustomed size" and driven by 300 oars. This we can well believe, since the obelisk, which stands now in front of the Lateran Basilica in Rome, measures 32 m long by 2.7 m square at the base, and weighs about 230 tons.[48] Ships of middling size, capable of carrying 75 to 200 tons of cargo, had indeed become more numerous in the first and second centuries and declined after the third century.[49] But the smallish ships of under 75 tons cargo capacity which are the most common during the later Roman empire, are also the largest single group in all periods of antiquity. The average capacity of late

45 *V. Nicolai Sion.*, 27–32 and 35, pp. 50–6 and 60–2. When they left Lycia, they were "sailing through the middle of the sea": *emesopelagoumen*, 28, 52.1. After a landfall in the Nile delta, they sailed east to Ascalon.

46 Claude 1985b, 156–60; Reynolds 1995, 135; Maddicott 1997, 10. Rougé 1987 argues that Paulinus of Nola's *Carmen* 24 describes a deep-sea voyage from Narbonne to Rome; it would be roughly contemporary with Rutilius' coastal voyage.

47 Rougé 1961, 132–9 and 1966, 71–3. My discussion of overall size classes and carrying capacities is based on Parker 1992, 26, and 1990, 340–2.

48 Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 17, 4, 13, ed. W. Seyfarth (Leipzig 1978), 1.109.13–20; cf. *ILS* 735 and, for the measurements, *Britannica Online*, 1997, s.v. Obelisk.

49 Carrying capacity in metric tons is approximately equivalent to a wooden ship's deadweight tonnage, i.e. how much the empty ship actually weighs. Loaded, the ships will have weighed about double their deadweight tonnage. The estimation of tonnage is a complicated matter. The most sensible guidance through these particular thickets still comes from Lane 1966, 345–70; for the terms and equivalences, see esp. 348, on deadweight tonnage and the rough equality of the weight of a wooden sailing ship's cargo and the weight of the ship herself, and 366.



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antique freighters, in other words, resembled that of their Hellenistic counterparts. The decline in capacity of the late antique shipping fleet concerns the relative importance of different classes of ships, at least in so far as we can judge today, on the basis mostly of western Mediterranean wrecks.[50]

Deadweight tonnage may not mean much to most readers, but a familiar figure like Christopher Columbus puts the matter in perspective. Considerable research into the three ships in which he first crossed the Atlantic suggests that his flagship, the *Santa Maria*, had about a 120-ton capacity. Columbus' favorite ship, the *Niña*, in which he himself sailed more than 25,000 miles, carried around 51 tons. This is just about the size of the two best known ("small") seventh-century cargo ships, Saint Gervais B (c. 41–49 tons) and Yassı Ada A (c. 37–58 tons).[51] Ships of this size – and smaller – routinely crossed the Atlantic to colonial America.[52] Although their designs differed from those of late Roman ships in important ways, and there were of course much bigger ships afloat in the early modern period, the comparison may dissuade us from hasty deductions about the decadence of late Roman shipping based solely on ship sizes. The changing capacity structure of the late antique transport fleet could still reflect a broader economic decline. But before certainty can be attained, such a cause needs to be disentangled from other contributing factors, such as changing maintenance patterns in the ports – the kind of silting we have already noted would have placed a premium on smaller ships with shallower draft – and in the actual operating patterns of annona ships for instance, which may have militated against the economies of scale implied by bigger ships.[53]

Ancient cargoes were as diverse as the economy itself.[54] The list of things shipped is coming closer to reality today, but we are still far from a proper economic assessment. That would evaluate their relative proportions in the aggregate, and discretely, by routes and periods. Ancient shipwrecks have yielded loads of amphoras, pottery tiles, metal and ore, stones hewn for various purposes from building to milling, works of art, large basins and containers, pine cones, resin, pipes, glass, and lamps, as well as grain. Judging from the kinds of objects which survive in the sea and counting different types of amphoras as different sorts of cargo, a study of ninety-eight well-preserved shipwrecks between c. 400 B.C. and A.D. 400 indicates that about one third of ships show only one cargo type. Another 60 percent reveal between two and five different recognizable freights in each vessel. What the amphoras contained is gradually becoming clearer: oil, obviously, fish sauces and other fish products, wine, olives, and honey all traveled

50 Cf. Parker 1992, 26.

51 Pastor 1992, 15, Table 3, and 17, Table 4. For the early medieval ships, see Tables 20.1, no. 3 and 20.5, no. 22.

52 I owe this information to my distinguished colleague Bernard Bailyn, who shared with me his unpublished archival research on the subject.

53 McCormick 1998a, 100–3.

54 Parker 1992, 16–22.



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in these large ancient jugs, but the certain matches between individual amphora types and contents are still not numerous, and identical containers need not always have transported identical goods. As we have already noted, the greatest volume of freight transported in late antiquity was also the least likely to survive, the annual *annona* shipments of grain, loaded in sacks or poured directly into the hold. Under Justinian, Alexandria shipped some 160,000 metric tons of grain to Constantinople every year. The Spanish oil shipments from the Severan period whose discarded containers created the Monte Testaccio in Rome have been estimated at 22,500 tons annually; Africa's exports must have reached a comparable scale when they replaced Spanish oil at Rome and elsewhere.[55]

Mountains of wood were needed to fire the gigantic public baths of late antiquity, as well as for construction. They must often have been moved by sea around a Mediterranean whose most convenient forests were the first to be felled.[56] Animals too were shipped far and wide.[57] It is clear from the written sources that textiles were an essential element of ancient exchange, at least as far as value is concerned.[58] High-priced items like spices, medicines, and perfumes, as well as (relatively) low-value papyrus remain archaeologically almost invisible.[59] Merchants or investors naturally worried about their ships. A couple of horoscopes drawn for them illustrate the range of goods actually loaded in 475 and 479. It is edifying that there is almost no overlap with cargoes recovered from the sea bottom. A ship bound for Athens was carrying camels, draperies and other textiles, and silver litters from Africa. Another sailed from Alexandria to Smyrna, packed with pet birds, papyrus, bronze or copper kitchen pots, and a special cabinet loaded with medicines.[60]

55 Justinian states that Alexandria shipped 8 million units – presumably *artabai* – of grain to Constantinople every year: Edict 13, 8, 783.10; for this quantity's conversion into 160,000 metric tons, see Durliat 1990a, 257–8. The oil estimate is that of E. Rodríguez Almeida, reported by Panella 1993, 626n48; cf. Blázquez Martínez *et al.*, 1994, 12.

56 Meiggs 1982, 257–9; 371–403; *Cod. Theod.*, 13, 5, 10 (Adrianople, 364), 750. A sobering measure of the scale of transport this required comes from detailed analysis of the moderately sized baths at Weissenburg (Bavaria). They would have required over 200 tons of hardwood fuel for year-round operation: Grassmann 1994.

57 See, e.g., below, n60.

58 See, e.g., above, on the textiles unloaded at the beachside market.

59 On spices, which are to some extent indistinguishable from medicine, and papyrus, e.g. *Expositio*, 35–6, 170.5–8 and 172.1–9. Very small amphoras ("unguentaria") presumably reflect high-value liquids. For the still not negligible price of papyrus in the early Middle Ages, see below, p. 706n45.

60 *Horoscopes* 103.13–29 and 104.9–30; and esp. Dagron and Rougé 1982, 123–5 and 129–30; the copper pots could have been predecessors of the ones assigned to the 7th C. and known archaeologically, which Werner argued were exported from Egypt to Merovingian Gaul: e.g. Werner 1961, 563–6 and 598–9. The Egyptian origin of some of them at least has been seriously challenged: Périn 1990 with further references. The find map of Werner 1961, 566, leads me to wonder whether, if they did come from the eastern Mediterranean, they



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The temporal patterns of ship movements varied and, with them, the communications they conveyed. Recurring rhythms were first and foremost seasonal. Stable weather favored shipping during the Mediterranean summer; the unpredictable winter brought the double danger of more frequent storms and poor visibility. This last especially made blue-water sailing a leap into the unknown. Consequently, the sea was usually reckoned "mare clausum" – "closed" – from November to March. Nonetheless, urgent matters could and did compel ships to sail out of season. That annona convoy, for instance, was wrecked attempting to sail from Sardinia to Italy in late winter.[61] Still, the cycles of crop growth combined with this broad seasonal pattern to send the great grain and oil fleets northward in waves, beginning, in the case of Africa, on 13 April and continuing until 15 October.[62] Climatic conditions influenced particular routes at different times of the year. For instance, the *meltemi* winds which blow down the Aegean from the Black Sea made voyages northward to Constantinople difficult between July and September. In the Levant, normal weather conditions favored westward voyages that set out in October, like one of 1 October 474 known from a horoscope.[63]

So every year, shipping – and communications – expanded and contracted on a seasonal rhythm. Next to the food production cycles of grain, oil, and wine, these seasonal flows of ships and goods must have been striking features of the late Roman economy, and indeed, culture. For all of this makes clear that the ships of the late Roman empire constituted a kind of invisible highway on which people, things, and ideas moved around the inland sea, connecting distant and nearby provinces, societies, and regional economies. But this invisible highway was not as sturdy or as permanent as Roman roads.

## 4. Secular change 1: the flow of goods

When we turn from the recurring rhythms of the seasons to change on the scale of centuries, deep transformations emerge. The ports, routes, volume, and, probably,

Footnote 60 (*cont.*)
were exported to Rome and acquired there by pilgrims, rather than marketed by the north Italian merchants Werner hypothesizes. On northern pilgrims and Roman markets, see below, Ch. 21.2.

61 Winter convoy: above, n27. See in general Rougé 1952 and 1966, 32–3; Casson 1995, 270–3, as well as below, Ch. 15.2.

62 *Cod. Theod.*, 13, 9, 3, 3 (Trier, 380), 761.19–762.1; cf. Casson 1995, 270–2.

63 On the *meltemi* and Constantinople, see e.g. Denham 1983, xxv–xxvi and 97, and *Sailing Directions* 1991, 72 and 76, cf. Chart A51: c. 65 percent of winds blow from the north or northeast in July. The difficulty was well known to inhabitants of the capital such as Procopius, e.g., *De aedificiis*, 5, 1, 8–12, 4.150.20–151.11, about the Dardanelles, where the southbound current added to the difficulties. October sailing: *Horoscopes*, 102.2–3; for climate and autumn departures from the Levant, Pryor 1992, 3–5; see also below, Ch. 15.



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relative proportions of various kinds of shipping looked very different in 330 and in 630. So too did the movement of goods, starting with the annona. Recent archaeological findings reinforce the conclusion that the annona system made a critical difference in shaping the flows of late Roman long-distance communications. More and more fiscal goods levied in the provinces probably explain why the share of non-Italian ceramic sherd deposits at Ostia leaps from about 20 percent c. A.D. 100, to over 85 percent in the third and fourth centuries. It also explains why only the capital features so high a proportion of imported materials.[64] The way the Romans transported their grain has usually left no direct archaeological trace.[65] The tons of virtually indestructible pottery sherds must therefore stand for the millions of tons of grain whose traces will never be recovered. At present, the best evidence lies in the western basin of the Mediterranean, where important work is under way at both ends of the annona corridor from Carthage to Ostia and Rome, as well as at numerous secondary sites. Some of the excavated containers must have transported the oil levies of Africa to the capitals; this seems to be the meaning of their massive, homogenous patterns of deposit.

The increasingly precise dating and localizing of amphoras, fineware, and, now, coarseware, is particularly exciting. For the first time in Roman economic history, we can begin to discern changing volumes of production and export/import flows over time and space. No one has maintained that kitchenware was collected as part of the taxes, and some of the amphoras certainly transported substances, such as fish products, whose annona status is undemonstrated. Nonetheless, that their patterns of movement substantially converge with those of the state grain and oil shipments becomes readily understandable if we accept that fish products and fineware piggybacked, directly or indirectly, on the annona shipments. Moreover, even though the clearest evidence comes from the African exports in the western Mediterranean, such convergence is not lacking in the less reconnoitered eastern basin.[66]

Today, the best data on eastern exports concerns their deposits in the western Mediterranean. This may distort the true eastern picture insofar as the distant

64 Fulford 1987, Figure 2, for the changing proportions; cf. Panella 1993, 624–5.

65 Usually, but not always: the early 7th-C. wreck Saint-Gervais B, which foundered off Fos-sur-Mer, was covered with grain ("rivet wheat"): Parker 1992, 372–3, no. 1001.

66 As we noted earlier, African evidence has dominated analyses so far, and if it has peculiarities, they will distort early general views such as this one. But we must begin somewhere. The fundamental study is Panella 1993, a revision and updating of her pioneering synthesis of 1986. For African exports to the east, the groundbreaking synthesis is Abadie-Reynal 1989, who developed explicitly the connection between annona transports to Constantinople and African ceramics. Reynolds 1995 takes the discussion to a new level of complexity. For more bibliography and discussion, McCormick 1998a, 73–80.



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western distribution zone might have been peripheral to exchange patterns centered closer to home. What is more, because Africa exported large quantities of oil as well as grain, the proportion of amphoras – and therefore enduring evidence – must have loomed larger in African cargoes than would have been the case in Egyptian loads. Although the Nile did produce some foodstuffs suitable for shipping in amphoras, they would have been proportionately less with respect to the grain, which leaves no traces. In other words, on a given site fewer Egyptian amphoras may present the same proxy value for overall food imports as many more African sherds.[67]

From the third century African goods increasingly prevail among detectible wares arriving at Ostia and Rome. They displaced, most notably, the Spanish oil imports whose 53 million (estimated) broken containers still form a "mountain" along the Tiber.[68] African domination of discernible food and fineware imports to Rome peaked in the fourth century, as Egyptian production was diverted to the new capital in the east, and Spanish exports declined. Texts and excavations show equally that Africa also shipped in some quantity to Constantinople.[69] In the fifth century African exports continued, although archaeologists differ on the extent to which they were stable or declined in the western Mediterranean, and when this might have happened. If decline they did, the Vandal conquest – which surely ended the export of tax wealth to Italy – will have played a role, although the drop-off looks to have started earlier.[70] It is possible that Vandal Africa shifted a

67 This observation helps to resolve the apparent contradiction between early imperial texts referring to Rome's dependence on Egypt and the archaeological record noted by Fulford 1987, 69–70.

68 The African share surges under the Severans: Blázquez Martínez *et al.* 1994, 142; size: 13.

69 Panella 1993, 620–39; cf. McCormick 1998a, 73–80 and 88n105.

70 Panella 1993, 641–2 with n117: A.D. 425 to 475 saw no substantial changes in production centers, in distribution in the western Mediterranean, nor in the African share relative to other sherds on individual sites; she does recognize substantial decline in the "late fifth and early sixth century" (648–51) which she seems to connect with interruption of the African annona. The latter nonetheless must have occurred decades earlier. To the finding of Fentress and Perkins 1988 that the volume of 5th-C. African exports shrank, she opposes possible evidence of flourishing Constantinopolitan marble imports and marble working at Carthage around 500 and continuity in villa construction and use. Neither of these appear to me to exclude decline in the first half of the 5th C. Against the argument of Fulford 1980 and 1983 for a sharp decline in African exports beginning before the Vandals, Panella (643n124) relies on Tortorella's (1986) more gentle decline, based in part at least on his redating of certain ARS vessels. More detailed study has rejected these redatings as unfounded: Mackensen 1993, 387–91. Note too that Bonifay and Piéri 1995, 116, observe typological stagnation in African amphora production of the 5th C.; in fineware, this has been correlated with declining production: see above, Ch. 2.2.



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greater proportion of its exports to other, non-fiscal western Mediterranean ports, particularly in Spain; indeed, the plummeting population of Rome should have forced such a shift, whatever the overall size of exports.[71] In any event, the thinner documentation from the fifth-century eastern Mediterranean seems equally to indicate that African dishware shipments declined (see Map 2.2).[72]

At Rome as well as Carthage and Arles, early signs of a new age appear around 400. Eastern amphoras testify to new patterns of movement, reflecting the importation of foodstuffs from Asia Minor and from the Levant. Eastern foods reached more and more ports as the fifth century progressed, and they were followed by fineware and, ultimately, some coarseware.[73] State-sponsored efforts had attempted in 384 to shift some of Egypt's production to Rome on an emergency basis. Along with supplying the eastern armies in Italy in 388–91 and again in 394–5, they may have helped reacquaint eastern shippers with a region to which they probably had been sailing less over the preceding two generations.[74]

The deeper causes behind expanding eastern imports into western ports in the fifth century remain uncertain. Economic difficulties in the western hinterlands have been adduced to explain the growth of eastern imports, but the realities may be more complicated.[75] In any case, a fifth-century preacher from the Riviera has already told us that Nice exported gold in return for foreign goods.[76] In the excavated area of the harbor of Marseilles, eastern amphoras outnumber African ones in the fifth century, peaking c. 450–75. Thereafter the proportion of African

71 Rome's decline: Durliat 1990a, 110–23 with Fig. 1 suggests a decline of about 55% from c. 800,000 in the 4th C. to c. 350,000 in 452; Lo Cascio 1997, 75, believes that his somewhat lower 4th-C. figure was more than halved by 452; according to Durliat, the next three generations would have witnessed a further drop of over 80 percent, to c. 60,000 in 530; shifting African distribution, mainly to Spain: Keay 1984, 420–6; see also Panella 1993, 650–2; and esp. Reynolds 1995, 112–15; cf. McCormick 1998a, 94–5.

72 Panella 1993, 644–5; see however Reynolds 1995, 114.

73 Panella 1993, 639, 645, 657–8; Fulford in Fulford and Peacock 1984, 2.258–9; for the conclusive proof of production at Phocaea (Map 2.2) and western distribution of "Late Roman C": Mayet and Picon 1986. Cf. for southern Gaul, Bonifay *et al.* 1991, 27–9 (amphoras and fineware), 34–8 (coarseware), and, in general, Reynolds 1995, 116–21.

74 Symmachus, *Relationes*, 9, 7, and 37, 2, 288.6–11 and 309.30–36; cf. Vera 1981, 95 and 280–8. For Theodosius I's movements see, e.g. Seeck 1919, 275–9 and 283.

75 Fulford 1983. As research moves beyond the pioneering stage, it will be necessary to pay closer heed to what exactly was moving in the amphoras and, probably, to consider more complicated economic scenarios. Insofar as market mechanisms were in play, imported goods may have flowed to places that, like Nice, could pay for them. What was in the amphoras or the cargoes on which the fineware piggybacked is important here, since one must consider the elasticity (or inelasticity) of demand for those goods. See also Reynolds 1995, 114–21 and 132–5.

76 Above, n7.



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amphoras to eastern ones rose again steadily into the late sixth or early seventh century.[77]

The basic pattern holds for the rest of antiquity. African exports recover an ever larger share of a dwindling western market; in the east, a major current propels foodstuffs from the south, from Egypt, Palestine, and Cyprus toward the north and Constantinople. Some eastern amphoras were still reaching Byzantine Italy around 650, although they were then vanishing from Gaul and Spain, and getting rarer at Carthage.[78] Justinian's reconquest restored the Roman tax system in Africa. This triggered resurging exports toward Constantinople; in the later seventh century a brief but intense increase in African deposits at Constantinople probably reflects Emperor Constans II's documented squeeze of more fiscal yield out of Byzantine Africa.[79] Africa also continued to export to at least several sites held by imperial forces along the Italian coast. Directly or indirectly, African wares still reached Marseilles until, in the closing decades of the seventh century, the narrowing flow dried up. Imported amphoras practically disappear from Naples and Rome as well around 700.[80]

Kitchenware and amphoras continue to serve as the main proxy evidence for the seventh-century production and export of eastern Mediterranean foodstuffs. With few exceptions, the big picture is one of the "fragmentation of the organization of production and exports."[81] Amphoras also become smaller, which may

77 Part at least of the preponderance of eastern amphoras in 450–75 is due to Africa's shift to fewer but larger amphoras. Bonifay 1986, 297–9; cf. Tables 1 and 2, 302–3, bearing on nearly 5,000 sherds, representing a minimum of 262 amphoras; and Bonifay and Piéri 1995, 116. For the continuing commercial importance of Marseilles in the late 6th C., see especially Loseby 1998.

78 Panella 1993, 667, 668–670; Bonifay 1986, 297–301; and Bonifay and Piéri 1995, 116. Note that in Bonifay 1986, the minimum number of individual amphoras declines dramatically from the two 5th-C. strata analyzed (53 and 107) to the 7th-C. layer (18): 302–3 and Tables 1 and 2, and 304, Table 6. A coincidence? At Carthage, Fulford 1980, 76, also notes a substantial drop in volume in the later 6th and 7th C.

79 ARS "is markedly more common in levels of the mid-6th century and later, accounting for 25 percent of total fine wares; this again matches the Aegean evidence": Hayes 1992, 7. For the later 7th-C. surge, Hayes 1992, 7 and 100–5; cf. 105–7; and Constans II, from the *Liber pont.*, Mommsen, 188.1–6, with McCormick 1998a, 78–80.

80 See the overview of Morrisson and Sodini, in Hodges and Whitehouse 1996, 6–11; Tortorella 1995; Liguria: Murialdo 1995; Rome: Saguì 1993, 415; Reynolds 1995, 131. African fineware continued to arrive in Naples until some point in the 7th C.: Soricelli 1994, 145–50. Relative to eastern ones, African amphoras began to decline there from the mid-5th C., and continued to do so in the 6th, contrary to the pattern of Marseilles. Regular amphora imports of any sort ceased in the 7th C., perhaps before 650. Those that trickled in thereafter suggest only intermittent commerce: Arthur 1994c, 436.

81 Panella 1993, 663.



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further reflect a splitting up and contraction of markets.[82] At Constantinople, amphoras still dominate the ceramic assemblages into the eighth century but, so far at least, they have not seemed to continue earlier production series. This implies that the provisioning of Constantinople was shifting to new geographic bases, as indeed one would expect from the geopolitical upheavals of the seventh century. In terms of shipping, the atomization of production and distribution has been connected with a shift to coastal lugging, "cabotage," in contrast to the more direct, deep-sea routes apparently preferred by the annona fleets and other ancient mariners.[83] The state's massive movement of homogenous goods among a few central places now gave way to multi-centered circulation of small quantities of diverse goods. Or perhaps more accurately, the former disappeared and the latter, which had always been present, was all that remained.

## 5. Secular change 2: the transformation of late Roman shipping

There is one crucial fact in the long-term history of late Roman shipping. Without any compensating changes in vessel size, the overall number of ships lessened. As we have seen, that rate might bear comparison with population decline in the western Mediterranean, at least down to the age of Justinian. But the decline in numbers of ships was not evenly distributed.

Of particular consequence for the early medieval economy, major shipping centers contracted toward the eastern Mediterranean. If the better-documented *navicularii* are any indicator, how much different home ports contributed to the total shipping fleet of the late Roman world changed profoundly. Between the fourth and the sixth centuries, the *navicularii* of Spain, Gaul, Italy, Sardinia, and Africa disappear.[84] The fate of general African shipping is an important but open question. The Vandal conquest of Carthage in 439 gave the newcomers the home port of what was presumably the largest transport fleet in the west. In subsequent decades, the Vandals took over the Balearics, Corsica, and Sardinia. The conquerors could, if they so chose, dominate all direct sea traffic linking Africa, Spain, Gaul, and Italy. Is there a link with the fifth-century increase in eastern imports around the western Mediterranean? Still, African goods continued to reach the rest of the empire once the early Vandal storms had subsided. But these exports were no longer dominated by non-commercial fiscal transfers or transported by African *navicularii*. Whether they were exported in non-subsidized African

82 Panella 1993, 668 with n232. It will be interesting to learn whether the standardization of container sizes detected shortly after 625–6 (which van Alfen 1996 connects to state supply), continued, and it will be essential to determine *when it began*.

83 Arthur 1986; Panella 1993, 654–80.

84 McCormick 1998a, 93–107.



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vessels – not at all impossible – or in ships from other regions, or both, is at present as intriguing as it is unclear.[85]

The Byzantine reconquest breathed new life into subsidized shipping in Italy and Africa. Annual grain fleets surely were sailing from Carthage to Constantinople in the early seventh century: in 608, the rebelling Heraclius pressured Constantinople by holding back the annual convoy to the capital "of the ships of Africa."[86] The Carthage to Constantinople sea link seems to me to have played a key role in traffic between the Levant and the west in the first half of the seventh century: thus a Jewish merchant returned home to Palestine from Africa via the capital.[87] Nonetheless, when a famine ravaged Italy around 575–8, Emperor Justin II sent grain ships from Egypt, not nearby Africa, to relieve Rome.[88] Even if substantial annona shipments were continuing to Rome under Gregory the Great, his administrative correspondence makes it abundantly clear that the bulk of his supplies came from Sicily. Half a century later, Ravenna was no different.[89]

While western harbors faded away, Alexandria remained a great port. Palestine, Cilicia, Phoenicia, and Cyprus freighted many ships too, if one can judge from the classification of cargo provenances and the fees they paid a port official of Seleucia around 530.[90] The enduring political stakes of bread distributions at Constantinople – underscored by an imperial ceremony – explain why annona transports continued in the east throughout the sixth century and why the state made new investments in their infrastructure. Thus Justinian built a huge new granary on the island of Tenedos. Henceforth the grain fleet could deliver its cargo to the mouth of the Dardanelles and avoid that last difficult leg to Constantinople.[91]

85 *Ibid.*, 94–6; Reynolds 1995, e.g. 132, assumes that African exports to Spain traveled "principally" in African bottoms.

86 A man who owns land locally identifies himself as a *navicularius* at Ravenna between 542 and 584: P. Ital. 2, 43, p. 150.13, etc. Roman fiscal system reestablished in Africa: Procopius, *Bella*, 4, 8, 25, 1.455.16–23. Hurst 1994, 2.1: 114–15, deduced from excavation and from Procopius, *De aedificiis*, 6, 5, 10, 4.180.19–20, that the imperial government reconstructed the Ilot Sacré in Carthage's circular harbor for the restoration of annona shipments; for the grain ships of Africa: Theophanes, A.M. 6100, 1.296.2–3; cf. Anastasius Bibliothecarius' translation: *ibid.*, 2.182.9–10; cf. also Durliat 1990a, 229–30.

87 *Doctrina Iacobi*, 5, 19, 213.10–13 with 212, n127; contra: Reynolds 1995, 132–5.

88 *Liber pont.*, Mommsen, 159.2–9.

89 Rome: Durliat 1990a, 132 and 154–7; Ravenna: Agnellus, *Liber pontificalis ecclesiae Ravennatis*, 111, 350.13–19.

90 Dagron 1985; it is unclear whether any of these ships belonged to the state transport service. On the other hand, except for vessels coming from Cilicia, the fee inscription at Abydos identifies ships by their cargoes: wine, oil, dried vegetables, bacon, and wheat, and may well designate annona transports: Durliat and Guillou 1984, 589–91; Dagron 1985, 455.

91 Other ships came down from the capital to ferry the grain the rest of the way. Ceremony: Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *De ceremoniis*, 2, 51, 1.699–701, on which see McCormick 1998a, 37–40; Tenedos: Procopius, *De aedificiis*, 5, 1, 7–16, 4.150.17–152.2.



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Because the Latin technical term *navicularius* found no universally applied Greek equivalent, it is more complicated to track the eastern state shippers from Justinian's reign onward.[92] But the annona transport certainly continued and Justinian continued to spend state money on subsidizing the building of ships.[93] Late in the sixth century, Maurice's reform of torture procedures for shippers seems to show that the old laws on *naviculariі* still found application.[94]

Why did the center of gravity of Mediterranean shipping shift eastward? That the eastern ships operated in a more favorable economic environment surely helped, particularly since changing settlement patterns argue that the east escaped demographic stagnation until the sixth century. This means that, relatively speaking, the sixth-century economy of the eastern Mediterranean was larger than that of the western basin, perhaps more so than before in late antiquity. The social mass theory implies equally that the differing demographic patterns of eastern and western Mediterraneans should have intensified communications in the former, relative to the latter. Shipping should reflect these broader patterns. Another contributing factor lay in the collapse of the supply and the demand of the annona system feeding Rome. Whether the Vandals or the depopulation of Rome came first is still not entirely clear. Regardless, the process of concentrating shipping resources had already set in a century before the Vandals conquered Africa, and we last hear of Spanish and Gaulish *naviculariі* long before the population of Rome declined.[95]

92 Greek tended to use the same word (*nauklēros*) for both state and private shippers; when clarification was desired, the term was qualified with a periphrasis like "who transport the state grain." This may imply that the status of state shippers was becoming more like that of private ones (pro: Rougé 1966, 255–8; contra: Durliat and Guillou 1984, 589), but that is not certain. *Cod. Iust.*, 11, 2, p. 423, "De naviculariis seu naucleris publicas species transportantibus" juxtaposes both terms in a way that might as easily reflect the vacillation of an administration which was just then abandoning Latin, as a real institutional change. Cf. a few years later Justinian, Edict 13, 5, (539), 782.21–2: τῶν ναυκλήρων ὑποδεχομένων τὸν σῖτον … καί … πρὸς ταύτην τὴν … ναυτιλλομένων πόλιν. Later in the 6th C., John of Ephesus' Syriac text identifies them in similar fashion, using the Greek words: *Fragmenta hist. eccl.*, fg. H, 249.1–27: "Ii naucleri, annonae publicae advectores, quum omnes fideles essent, ad Regem convocati sunt . . .," which was partly reproduced by Michael the Syrian, Chronicle, 2.2.205: ". . . avec les patrons des navires qui amenaient le blé du δημόσιον." The case for the continuing distinctiveness of the state shippers seems to be strengthened by the resurrection of the Ptolemaic term "nauarchos" ("admiral") as a flattering if sporadic translation for *navicularius* in the 5th and 6th C.: Rougé 1966, 242–3 and Gascou 1989, 304–6, who suspects, however, that the distinctive status ended under Justinian.

93 Anonymous Treatise on Strategy, 2, 12.18–21 with discussion above, n24.

94 Above, n25.

95 De Salvo 1992, 396–412, cites no Gaulish *naviculariі* from the 4th C., while the last mention of Spanish *naviculariі* comes in *Cod. Theod.*, 13, 5, 8 (n. pl., A.D. 336), p. 749.



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As these broader, silent economic shifts unfolded, the geographic reconfiguration of the annona supply system in the fourth century may have affected how ships operated. The new capital sprouting up on the Bosporus enjoyed the same privileges as old Rome. This meant diverting to Constantinople the grain and ships of Egypt. The initiative may well have boosted the productivity, and therefore the profitability, of the Alexandrian annona fleet. Because Constantinople is closer to Egypt than Rome, the new organization will have reduced the time Alexandrian ships spent at sea on state deliveries to the capital by some nineteen days, a reduction of 35 percent and equivalent to about 10 percent of the entire shipping season. At the same time it left unchanged, or indeed, newly strained the subsidized shipping of Carthage. Some African ships now had to make the longer voyage to the new capital.[96] This explains why Alexandrian ships could make up to three runs to Constantinople each year, whereas two return trips to Rome required some very good luck.[97] If Alexandrian ships were making money on their annona runs, they were able to increase their profits by making one or two additional trips. If they were not making money there, they still did well under the new system, since they gained almost an additional three weeks for more profitable non-annona transport. For the African fleet, on the other hand, things stayed the same or got worse. They continued to sail the easy course they had always followed to Rome, and perhaps expanded in numbers to meet the new, larger share of Rome's needs that fell to them. But now they had also to assume some part of what was for them the far lengthier and more risky transport of fiscal wares into the eastern Mediterranean, to the new capital.[98]

The overall shift in shipping's center of gravity suggests that the proportion of eastern ships operating in the western Mediterranean also grew. The shipwrecks do not contradict such a view.[99] Probably it was these eastern ships that carried

96 For the comparative advantage the new configuration offered Alexandrian shipping, see McCormick 1998a, 101–3; for African deliveries to Constantinople, Panella 1993, 635–8. Bakirtzis 1995, hypothesizes that the grain fleet usually stopped in Cyprus en route to Constantinople. The author's evidence is ambiguous – the presence of Constantinopolitan marble on the westernmost tip of the island – and could just as well stem from the Cypriot ships that, as we have seen, served Constantinople. It would in any case, only diminish, not remove Constantinople's comparative advantage.

97 Procopius, *De aedificiis*, 5, 1, 10, 4.150.27–151.7. Two trips to Rome a "squeeze": Casson 1995, 298–9; cf. McCormick 1998a, 102–3.

98 See McCormick 1998a, 88n105.

99 Most of the thirteen possibly 7th-C. wrecks in the western Mediterranean presented in Tables 20.1–3 offer no obvious clue to their home port. The four cases in which apparent crew possessions or other characteristics (not cargoes!) suggest one all point east: below, Table 20.1, nos. 1, 3–5. Judging from the descriptions of Parker 1992, 14 etc., the picture does not change when it is extended to all the western wrecks he assigns to the 6th C.



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the oft-observed Levantine trading diaspora of sixth-century Gaul – and its less noted equivalent in seventh-century Africa – to the doorsteps of Caesarius of Arles and Gregory of Tours.[100] In fact, the possibly fictitious story of Jacob, a Jewish merchant who was baptized by force and miraculously championed his new religion, is certainly reliable for the contemporary background it supplies. It shows that eastern merchants who dealt in Gaul may often have traveled there via Carthage. This Jacob was carrying out a business deal for an important person in Constantinople: after he had sworn to sell on the sly *either in* Africa *or in* Gaul the clothing (worth 144 s.) entrusted to him at Constantinople, Jacob took a ship to Africa in 632.[101] This shows that some at least of the eastern goods which arrived at Marseilles and Fos-sur-Mer traveled there in the company of the seventh-century African amphoras and fineware which archaeologists are now discovering, and it suggests that the distribution systems that lay behind the ceramic assemblages now coming to light were more complex than is sometimes imagined.[102] The fact that Jacob was to sell his wares while he waited for the ship which had carried him to Carthage "to come [back]" and take him home to Constantinople with the profits, implies that the ship went elsewhere in the meantime. Constantinople, Italy, or Gaul are all possible; the circumstances suggest the latter two are the most likely.[103] If so, then this is another indication

100 Verhulst 1970, 17–18, and Claude 1985a, 65–71 have observed that only two easterners can be named who are explicitly identified as merchants. To these must be restored the Syrian merchants in Gaul supplied by the *Vita Genovefae* (*BHL* 3335), 27, *MGH SRM* 3.226.14–21, since Heinzelmann and Poulin 1986 have vindicated the Life. Moreover, even if the sources do not explicitly identify them as such, I find it difficult to explain exactly what most of the other easterners present in Gaul in the 6th C. were doing there, if they were not involved in trade. Other evidence in the same direction has gone unobserved. Some of Gregory of Tours' information on the eastern empire shows a distinct monophysitic cast (McCormick, *ODB* 2: 883). The orthodox bishop's unwitting heterodox sympathies must reflect his informants. As it turns out, the shippers of Alexandria counted among the most enthusiastic monophysites, according to an unimpeachable source: John of Ephesus, *Fragmenta hist. eccl.*, fg. H, 249.1–27. The *Doctrina Iacobi*'s description of the tightly knit Jewish community of Carthage and their merchant visitors from the Levant is set around the forced baptism of 31 May 632 (Dagron and Déroche 1991, 31), but may have been composed in the 640s (*ibid.*, 247); Levantines include Jacob himself and Ioustos (a cousin of the Carthaginian Isaakios 3, 1, 153.1–2 and whose father had taught Scripture to Jacob, *Doctrina*, 3, 4, 157.1–2), 5, 18, 213.10–12 with 212n127.

101 *Doctrina*, 5, 20, 215.162–217.29.

102 For Marseilles, see the prudent analyses of Bonifay 1986 and Bonifay and Piéri 1995; cf. Reynolds 1995, 134, who argues against an eastern sea link via Carthage, and Loseby 1998, 215, who maintains the opposite.

103 The details about the ship and its movements survive only in the more complete Old Church Slavonic translation of the *Doctrina* and are incorporated into the French translation: here 216, completing the lacunae in 217.23, 26, and 29, on which see Dagron and Déroche 1991, 59.



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that eastern bottoms were carrying goods in the western Mediterranean, even from Carthage. A miracle story from late antiquity reinforces the point when it depicts a ship from the east stopping in Africa en route to Marseilles.[104]

The overall reduction in ships between 300 and 700 is clear. We have already seen that, from the third to the sixth century, the numbers of shipwrecks provide a first indication that shipping declined in a way that could have matched the broader trend of the western population and economy. This might imply only limited change, if any, in the economic role of shipping. But that assessment also simplifies, since the shipping drop had actually been sharper into the fifth century, and the number of wrecks shows a substantial upturn in the sixth century.[105] If upturn there was, however, it didn't last long. The number of wrecks plummeted anew by over 60 percent (to twelve wrecks) from the sixth to the seventh century and again, by 92 percent, into the eighth century (one ship).[106] This time there is no common measure with even the most pessimistic assessments of population change. A further element of uncertainty comes from the geographical distribution of the wrecks which, we have noted, are overwhelmingly western. Yet even if, to allow for the western bias, we were to assume a stable eastern fleet, the total number of ships operating in both parts of the Mediterranean probably dropped dramatically, by 700.[107]

How many ships are we talking about? Except perhaps by extrapolating from the number of ships sunk, it is hard to imagine how one could estimate the total size of the Mediterranean transport fleet at any time before the end of the Middle Ages, and perhaps later. But there are some educated guesses about the annona fleet that served Constantinople in the sixth century. An Egyptian resident of the capital who, in the early seventh century, must have witnessed the spectacle with

104 *Miracula S. Demetrii* (*BHG* 516z–22), 6, 313–14, 1.239.9–240.12 (from two 12th-C. MSS) about stone architectural fittings originally destined for Marseilles, which miracle certainly dates before c. 665 and perhaps is as early as the 6th C. That the cathedral of St. Victor in question was that of Marseilles comes from the Latin version of Anastasius Bibliothecarius, *Miracula S. Demetrii* (*BHL* 2123), *PL*, 129.726A–C, which furthermore situates at Thenae the encounter with the ship bound for Gaul. Lemerle wrongly dismisses Anastasius' testimony (cf. 2.197 and 1.31n22), for he used MSS at least 300 years older than what Lemerle had.

105 The data in Parker 1992, 13–15 indicates a 28 percent upturn in sinkings between the 5th C. (25 wrecks) and 6th (32 wrecks), i.e., an increase of seven wrecks. Though the dating of the wrecks is sometimes very approximate and might distort century-to-century comparison, the general trend remains clear. Parker lists eighty-six wrecks for the 3rd C., fifty-four for the 4th.

106 *Ibid.*

107 Since so many ships come from the southern French and neighboring coasts, Parker's figures may be further distorted by their special sensitivity to developments on this route: cf. for an earlier period, MacMullen 1988, 8–9.



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his own eyes, describes a sea so covered with ships that it appeared to have turned into dry land.[108] The 8 million *artabae* of annona grain shipped yearly from Alexandria to sixth-century Constantinople have allowed scholars to estimate that transporting it required between 2,400 and 3,600 shiploads, depending on the ship size.[109] Even allowing for the multiple annual voyages which the reconfigured annona system allowed, this implies some 1,200 to 1,800 subsidized eastern ships in the sixth century. What proportion the subsidized ships represented of the whole transport fleet serving Constantinople in those years is a more hazardous guess. If we are right that subsidized ships enjoyed a competitive advantage over non-subsidized ones, it would seem unlikely that there were twice as many private ships as subsidized ones.[110]

Whatever the actual numbers, the overall quantity of ships operating in the Mediterranean must have kept declining in the decades following the Justinianic edict that mentions the 8 million *artabae*. For within two years the bubonic plague exploded on to the scene, striking a sharp blow to the whole system. As we have seen, contemporaries understood well that in this case death came from the sea. The contagion was transmitted by the very ships which for centuries had bound the Mediterranean together. And its first casualties will have been precisely the men who sailed those ships, even as its most deadly breeding grounds centered on the ports where the ships were built, loaded, and repaired, and where the specialized craftsmen and merchants who made the whole system work were concentrated.[111] Justinian specifically cites the plague-induced scarcity of sailors which was allowing them to demand the higher wages which he sought to roll back.[112] Worse, the infection did not strike once and disappear: it kept coming back. For the next 206 years, plague over and over again killed in the same human milieu, down to its final and devastating spasm. Then too, in 747, ships spread it to Byzantium (R153). But even the hammer blows of the sixth- and seventh-century plagues could not dismantle the Roman supply system. Despite the difficulties,

108 Theophylactus Simokattes, *Historiae*, 2, 14, 7, 98.14–19. For more: McCormick 1998a, 105–7.

109 From Justinian, Edict 13, 8, 783.8–11, Durliat and Guillou 1984, 597, estimate 2,400 to 3,000 shiploads, while Mango 1985a, 38, reckons 3,600 cargoes of 10,000 *modii*. These estimates bear comparison with the fleet of 3,700 ships which an African rebel is reported to have sent against Italy in 413. Our informant was writing only about three years after the event, in one of the port towns which must have contributed ships to the fleet: Orosius, *Historiae adversum paganos*, 7, 42, 12–13, Arnaud-Lindet, 3.126; cf. McCormick 1998a, 105–6.

110 Earlier estimates which implicitly range from 3,600 to 5,400 total annona and private ships, appear high to me, especially given Orosius' insistence that the 3,700 ships of 413 were without parallel in recent history.

111 This argument is more fully developed in McCormick 1998a.

112 Justinian, *Novella* 122 (23 March 544), 592.22.



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despite the increasing breakdowns and disruptions, the annona ships kept sailing north, delivering their indispensable food supplies to the imperial capital for nearly three more generations.[113]

The final blow to the annona system came from the land. Alexandria fell to the invading Persians in 617. In 618, the distribution of public bread ended in Constantinople forever.[114] With it died a political culture founded on ancient ideals; with it too died a substantial part of the maritime culture of the Mediterranean. Even if ships were still arriving from Carthage, they were insufficient to replace the loss of Egypt. And a desperate emperor would have fed his beleaguered troops first. Roman forces briefly regained control of the great Egyptian port a decade later, but there is no sign that the annona shipments began anew. Within a few years the Arabs fell on the exhausted empire and, one after another, the main ports surrendered: Alexandria, Seleucia, Carthage. In the space of a few decades the Roman state, already staggering from decades of economic difficulties, was stripped of perhaps three quarters of its tax revenues.[115] Defeat dashed any hope of restoring the old annona supply system. This is why the ancient and glorious office of the Praetorian Prefects of the East disappeared in the seventh century. They had lost their raison d'être.[116]

Almost a generation before the Arab conquests, in 617, the many hundreds of annona ships which had sailed from Alexandria to the capital had lost their mission and their subsidies. Some could escape to other ports, including Constantinople, where Alexandrian residents are documented in the seventh century; others could have sought out new markets elsewhere, in the west for example.[117] But there other conditions throttled demand, or the ability to connect demand with supply, including the decay of the main water route into the heart of Gaul, the Rhône corridor. Warfare added to the dislocation in Italy as Lombard power expanded down from the heights toward the coasts.[118] Changing political boundaries and instability, differing currencies and increasingly divergent administrative and juridical cultures all contributed to constricting or closing the capillaries by which seaborne exchange penetrated beyond the western coastal enclaves still held by Constantinople or still operated by the local powers. It is indeed striking that, after the opening decades of the seventh century, in the western Mediterranean, African and eastern Mediterranean ceramics occur mainly in the outposts still held by Constantinople, places like Naples, Rome, probably Ravenna, or tiny Finale in Liguria. Their imports do not

113 McCormick 1998a, 113–18.
114 Butler 1978, 72–89; *Chronicon paschale*, 711.11–15. Cf. Durliat 1990a, 271–3.
115 Hendy 1985, 619–20.
116 *PLRE* 3, Alexander 21 and Leontius 32; cf. *ibid.*, 1474.
117 Alexandrians at Constantinople: *Miracula S. Artemii* (*BHG* 173), 16 and 17, 16.11–12 and 17.17.
118 Delogu 1994.



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seem to have gone much further inland, whether or not that meant crossing the military frontier with the enemies of the *Respublica*, as Latin-speakers called what was left of the Roman empire.[119] If we are right in detecting the importance of a triangular route linking Constantinople to Italy and Gaul via Carthage, then the final fall of that port in 698 was virtually the coup de grâce to an agony which had dragged on for three or four generations.

◈

Mediterranean transport shipping changed and contracted between 300 and 700. Caught between the scarcity of certain information and the rush of new, imperfectly understood material, any general assessment today naturally involves as much guesswork as demonstration. But if the next few decades produce as much new data and new insights as the last few, they will soon correct and improve this provisional effort. Three elements define the change: subsidies, home ports, and total numbers of ships. Throughout most of this period, two types of ships circulated among ports: subsidized annona transports and non-subsidized commercial ships. Subsidies made annona ships' operations more successful than those of non-subsidized competitors operating over the same routes; this implies that the proportion of subsidized ships probably grew. With brutal and definitive swiftness, the seventh century terminated the trend. The end of the Egyptian annona shipments must have put out of business a substantial proportion of the merchant fleet still operating, just as, overnight, it shifted the numerical balance from the subsidized to non-subsidized ships.

It is of course true that even after the bread distribution at Constantinople ceased, the court and the military units which were not self-sustaining still needed supplies. A unified system of amphora measurements may tie in with centrally controlled collection and distribution of foodstuffs in the later reign of Heraclius; but its age and scope at that time is unclear.[120] We hear too of the temporary restoration or reinforcement of state transport obligations in Africa and Italy in the 660s, and the relative volume of African imports at Constantinople seems to surge at the same time.[121] At least one group of shippers engaged in some kind of yearly public grain transport as late as the ninth century.[122] Subsidized shipping for civilian purposes might have managed to survive for a time in Africa, Italy, and the Aegean. But how important can it have been, given the desperate straits of the imperial government as it scrambled to field the armies and navies it needed to fend off total annihilation? The end of subsidies is

119 Naples: Carsana 1994, 257–8; Rome: e.g., Patterson 1993, 309–11; Finale: Murialdo 1995, 450.

120 Above, n82.

121 Above, n79.

122 Ignatius the Deacon, *Ep.* 21, 68.25–70.36, with commentary (pp. 180–1) suggesting that these shipments may have been intended for the army.



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the first, culminating transformation that ended the late Roman shipping system.

Present evidence of the ships themselves is weighted toward western Mediterranean wrecks. Even so, the written sources suggest a gradual geographic contraction of western shippers, or at least of *navicularii*; the archaeological evidence does not contradict this. The new capital, and the concomitant reorganization and, in effect, doubling of the size of the annona service, worked deep and distant consequences which benefited eastern shippers more than western. Egyptian vessels were now redirected to New Rome, and gained thereby a relative advantage over African ships. This happened to coincide with the shifting of the social and economic center of gravity to the now richer and, relatively and probably absolutely, increasingly more populous and prosperous east. Western ships, on the other hand, faced a deteriorating economic and political situation close to home. The fifth century remains unclear. Whether or not the African merchant marine prospered under the Vandals is at present uncertain, and the story might look different over the short and the long runs. But already, toward the close of the fourth century, military and political developments were attracting some eastern ships into the western basin. Combined with dwindling mentions of western ships, the proportionately high level of eastern imports in fifth-century western pottery assemblages hints that ships from the more vibrant east were already doing more business in western ports.

The sixth-century data are not abundant. But every time we can determine the ship's origin – even for western wrecks – the home berth lies in the east. It seems likely that, by Justinian's day, the combined advantage of easier service to nearer Constantinople and the superior economic environment of their home basin allowed eastern ships to dominate both eastern and western basins of the Mediterranean. This is the context which witnessed, indeed, which explains, the influx of Levantine merchants into Gaul made famous by Pirenne. Whether it helped or not, something of the old system was nevertheless restored, at least in Byzantine Africa, in the wake of Justinian's reconquest. But now, most of the fiscal product that Africa was still capable of generating was redirected east to Constantinople. This meant that that long and difficult voyage which had provoked protest back in the fourth century will have been those ships' mainstay.[123] In other words, eastern ships probably dominated in the later sixth and seventh centuries. This was the second major transformation of the late Roman shipping system.

Thirdly, the number of transport ships declined overall from the third to the eighth century. Down to about the sixth century, the decline in ships may only

123 On the 4th-C. protest, see McCormick 1998a, 88n105.



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have kept pace with the broader contraction of the population and economy in the empire's northwestern quadrant. There may even have been some resurgence early in the sixth century. Thereafter however, the numbers of ships plummeted in a way that probably outstripped the trend of the broader population, at least in the better-documented western Mediterranean. Between the sixth and seventh centuries, the numbers of ships sailing the Mediterranean dropped by about two thirds, to surmise from what the shipwrecks tell us so far. This far exceeds even pessimistic assessments of the demographic impact of the better-documented later plagues, and the hypothetical evaluations of the late antique contagion.[124] Things got worse for non-military shipping between the seventh and eighth century, if we can judge from the near silence of the seabed.

Did military shipping follow another course? That is a question for another study, but one suspects that the total number of military ships did increase in the Mediterranean between 300 and 700, albeit spasmodically. The rise of Vandal sea power and imperial resistance must have occasioned a first investment in warships in both basins of the Mediterranean in the fifth century. How exactly the Persians conquered Cyprus and Rhodes in the earlier seventh century is unclear, but both the conquest and the Roman response must have involved ships.[125] And the later seventh century saw the building of real navies, as Byzantine and Arab carried their duel for supremacy to the sea.[126] Perhaps that naval build-up threatened merchant ships. The latter probably did not constitute an extremely abundant prey in the second half of the seventh century. But the new navies may have reinforced indirectly the rarification of transport ships. For in terms of lumber, shipwrights, and crews, the rapid naval build-up of Byzantines and Arabs must for a few decades have nearly monopolized the already straitened material resources for shipping.

If this triple transformation of late antique shipping is essentially correct, then we can see more clearly several of the principal causes. One was the state subsidies and their constraints, whose impact changed with the founding of the new capital, and over time. Another was the differing economic and political trends of the areas which increasingly regionalized shipping fleets could easily serve. The

124 The Black Death around 1348 probably killed between a third and a half of the population: Benedictow 1992, 150–2. Russell 1968 guessed that the first Justinianic wave killed 20 to 25% of the population (180), and that about half the population was destroyed in the first fifty years of infection (181). Conrad 1981, 435–41 uses a statistical model to arrive at about 50% mortality on the first infection at Constantinople (where the calculated number of deaths – 244,000 – tallies with John of Ephesus' statement that the authorities ceased counting after 230,000 deaths), a 35% mortality rate in Egypt in 744 and 25% mortality at Basra in 749.

125 Foss 1975.

126 Eickhoff 1966, 14–41; Ahrweiler 1966, 7–71; Fahmy 1966a and 1966b.



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Vandals' role remains murky. The human devastation of the bubonic plagues may well have been the most serious blow to late antique shipping in the sixth century, both by the grievous losses of human capital that they implied and by the fact that those very losses drove up the cost of shipping, which had come to be concentrated in the eastern Mediterranean, and particularly at Alexandria. The annona system continued to function nevertheless. Yet if their subsidies lent the annona ships a competitive advantage over non-subsidized ships, then more and more of the eggs of late Roman exchange – and private commerce also, since the annona ships did both – were winding up in the same basket. This situation made the sudden interruption of the eastern annona service particularly devastating to the broader phenomenon of Mediterranean shipping and trade, a disruption not lessened by the fact that it occurred in the midst of broader political, cultural, and economic disorganization and decline, the exact contours of which are yet to be fully mapped.



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# *The end of the ancient economy: a provisional balance sheet*

THE ECONOMY which had sustained the Roman empire collapsed. It did so through a very long concatenation of gradual deteriorations and sharp blows. Over time, the short-term trend was neither uniform nor unidirectional: the situation improved, sometimes considerably, at various times between c. 250 and 650. But the short-term upswings were not sufficient to redress the long-term trend even when, in some areas, they lasted two or three generations. Certain regions began to decline while others were still, or once again, climbing to new heights of population and the production of wealth. This very disjuncture worked negative consequences on the interaction of different regions of the Roman empire.

The situation in the closing decades of the seventh century was radically different from what had obtained even 160 years earlier. Population and settlement decline had reached the southeastern quadrant of the former Roman world at last. Whether it still continued in the areas where it had first appeared, and how exactly the newcomers, especially the Slavs and Arabs, affected it, is less clear. There is no sign that late antiquity's established or newly virulent infections were abating. In volume, variety, and also geographic range of export, the last pottery shops of Africa were producing on a scale which was but a shadow of their former selves; in the Middle East, others may have been stepping to the fore, but they are, for now, indistinct. The atmospheric record argues for continuing decline in metal production although, as always, the exact nature and level of decline will have to be measured against the overall trend of the economy and its underlying base, the population. Anecdotal evidence certainly points to the increased value of scrap metal. And, for Christians at least, the endless succession of crises, suffering, and defeats had shaken their mental world to its very foundations.

Patterns of communication were changing beyond the great inland sea. The northern overland routes through the Balkans had long played a critical role in assuring contacts between imperial Constantinople and western Europe. Now



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they were severed and the shrinking sea connections loomed even more important. The camel was outdistancing the wheel across much of the southern Mediterranean, and the donkey figures prominently. They hint that the proportion of short-distance hauls had grown at the expense of long-distance ones. In the first decades after the conquest, the Arab armies that spilled out of the desert and into Egypt and Africa may also have stimulated overland communications in the sea's southern hinterland, to the detriment of the old Roman sea lanes.[1] Whether or not, in any part of the old Roman space, river traffic grew – proportionately – is unclear and must be settled on a case-by-case basis. The early evidence from the Rhône does not evoke bustling traffic on this once great avenue to northern Europe. Of these changing patterns of communication, the contraction of shipping was most heavy with consequence.

No single cause was decisive in terms of that contraction. Nonetheless, beyond the central fact that late antique shipping was tributary of a broader economic situation beyond its control, the devastation inflicted by the plague and the effects of the subventions were probably the two most important causes of the decline of ancient shipping. The annona system also worked a further, indirect effect on the Mediterranean economy.

The annona system was conceived in terms of certain political and cultural objectives. On balance, it is hard to say that it failed to achieve them: one way or another, it had worked up until the very moment when the supplying region was conquered by enemy forces. But it had indirect negative consequences. The system tended to concentrate shipping first on two, and then, in the end, on one great axis, to the detriment of other shipping routes and centers. And it favored the movement about the Mediterranean of goods which were not unique to any particular zone: olives and wheat can be, and today are, grown virtually around the entire sea, as they were in the Middle Ages. Oil and wheat were only uniquely *abundant* in two or three zones, and – in part because of the very existence of the annona system – in uniquely great demand in a few others. This government-sponsored direction of the replaceable goods of grain and oil to the great consumer cities of Rome and Constantinople came at the expense of exchanges founded more closely on the true ecological differences and the economically complementary character of different regions. An economy dominated by annona transport lacked incentives to develop commercial exchanges of resources unique to different regions, which could in turn lead to greater regional specialization and increased efficiency of production of a wider variety of goods. If the bulk of cereal and oil production of Africa and Egypt reached the capitals,

1 For instance, the Egyptian draftees dispatched to man the Arab raiding fleet of Africa seem to have been sent overland: Bell 1913; Yusuf 1996 argues that land transport was more important in the Muslim world until the 11th C.



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there was little left over to supply, for instance, the miners of Illyricum. They then had to obtain their own food locally, as well as "cause mountains to collapse." Could this political distortion of geographic patterns of supply and demand be another factor that contributed to the curious failure of the Roman economy to surpass the relatively advanced stage which it attained? In any case, it meant that when political and military events threw the system into crisis, most shippers had relatively little in the way of alternative circuits, markets, and suppliers to fall back on; the spadework to foster interregional economic integration beyond the feeding of the capital barely existed. Most of the eggs of the shippers of Alexandria were probably in the one basket of the annona. This only exacerbated the crisis that must have attended the events of 617 and subsequent years.

Scholarly opinion differs on the economic conditions in the Middle East on the eve and during the first decades of the Muslim conquest. But the greatest unknown remains what happened next in the areas which fell to the Muslims. Little carefully focused investigation has gone into exactly how those events affected networks of transport and commerce, by reinforcing or redirecting (or not) their geographic or economic flows.[2] Even so, the picture is becoming increasingly clear for the areas still under Christian control. It is not bright.

In terms of communications and exchange, massive, centralized, and homogenous movements of goods between a few places on opposite shores of the Mediterranean were finished. In their stead stood what had probably always been there, operating on the margins of the state-subsidized transport system: local and not so local shippers who bought and sold many different things on a small scale, connecting a multitude of minor centers of production and consumption.[3] The most exotic goods they had to trade probably passed through countless hands, slowing their movement and boosting their price. But that mattered little, for along the northern Mediterranean at least, demand cannot have been very strong. True, the flight to Rome and Sicily of elite refugees fleeing the end of empire in the Levant must have, for a moment, increased demand in their new home for some of the familiar tastes of the old one.[4] But to what extent they had the means to satisfy these and how much of a supply there was are as yet unclear.

The new era's minute commercial links find striking illustration in the treaty drawn up between "the soldiers" (*milites*) of an Adriatic village and the Lombard

2 First hints from the north Sinai survey: Arthur and Oren 1998, 210–11; cf. also Avner and Magness 1998.

3 E.g., Abadie-Reynal 1989; Delogu 1994, 8–11. Despite the jargon, see also the meritorious attempt of Bintliff and Hamerow 1995b to use archaeology to sketch the big picture in few words.

4 For some discussion and bibliography on this refugee movement, which affected profoundly the high culture of places like Rome and southern Italy, but whose numbers are uncertain, see McCormick 1998b, 31–8.



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king as the eighth century opened.[5] The derisory quantities and the parochial horizons of the tiny port of Comacchio, surrounded by its salt pans and its eels, make it highly unlikely that these peddlers of salt and small packets of spices up and down the Po river crossed the great sea to Alexandria or elsewhere to get their few ounces of pepper.[6] It was not just the routes and directions. The volume and value of objects transported around the Mediterranean had declined dramatically.

The shifting balance toward local shippers and traders who mostly stuck to their home regions is reflected by the ceramic assemblages of the age. In these early days, archaeologists discern small quantities of locally or regionally distributed wares. But as the dust settled in the new geographical, cultural, and economic configuration that would become the House of Islam, a vast redistribution of wealth had occurred in the southeast. Much of that wealth must have been put back into circulation by the new masters. Their needs had now to be satisfied, needs for palaces, mosques, delicacies, and staples; needs also for men and women to serve them. As Pirenne observed, the expansive reorganization of the economic and cultural world into which the southern Mediterranean was integrated, centered on the outliers of the Indian Ocean and the Fertile Crescent, and looked southeastward to Mecca and points beyond, rather than northwestward toward Rome. But that reorientation was the culmination, not the beginning, of generations of profound economic change inside the ancient world.

Whether we look to the land, to the rivers, or to the sea, communications and transport experienced far-reaching changes across the face of the lands that had once been Roman. Some reflected broader economic trends, others resulted from specific administrative decisions. Most had their roots deep in the economic developments of the late empire. All had consequences for travel and transport whose sum might well have exceeded the total of their constituent parts.

In the final decades of the seventh century and the opening years of the eighth, the seaborne economic world of Constantine and Justinian, of the trader who compiled the *Description of the Whole World*, of the massive annona transports delivering the agrarian wealth of the south to the voracious mouths of the north, was dead. Even if he vastly underestimated the changes which had affected the Mediterranean economy of Gaul in the centuries preceding the Merovingians, and saw in Islam a cause, where most scholars today would see a consequence of late Roman economic decline, Pirenne was right in focusing scholarly attention on how different the economic age of the Carolingians was from that of late antiquity.

But beginning around 700, the disparate elements of geography, technology, culture, politics, and the quest for profit would weave a new web of connections, of routes, and of infrastructures by which traders as well as raiders, refugees as well as pilgrims, ambassadors as well as wanderers might travel from west to east



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and back again. It is to the birth of that new world that we must turn. Like most beginnings, that of the European economy occurred in dim obscurity; its earliest movements are hard to detect, harder still to appraise, and easily confused with the last spasms of a world in agony. The archaeological study of this new time is itself much newer and the results much thinner than for late antiquity. So let us turn to what the recorded movements of people and things can tell us about communications between western Europe and the rest of the Mediterranean world. And let us begin at the beginning, with the men and handful of women whose movements, even if only on a small scale, begin to sketch the ghostly shadow of the origins of European patterns of communication and commerce in the Mediterranean Sea.



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# PART II
# PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

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# *Part II: People on the move*

THE MOVEMENTS of individuals and small groups supply much fresh information on communications between Carolingian Europe and the Mediterranean worlds of Byzantium and the Caliphate. Generally speaking, that information is of high quality. Before we begin to exploit it, however, a word on the strengths and weaknesses of my evidentiary base is in order.

The investigation has approached exhaustiveness for sources in Latin, Greek, and Old Church Slavonic. They have been scrutinized for travelers from continental western Europe who connected with Byzantium and the Arab world from 700 to 900.[1] Only those travelers for whom the information appeared to me reliable have been counted – though I have tried to use in other ways the valuable evidence that comes from people who never really traveled merely because they never existed (Ch. 9.3). Some reliably documented travelers attested in these languages must have been missed. But within the limits of this inquiry, I do not think there are many.

Experienced practitioners of early medieval sources know how fluid and still relatively uncharted their languages are. Constant philological attention is essential if the evidence is to be shorn of the inaccurate understandings that have sometimes enveloped our witnesses' words. The need for searching linguistic scrutiny simply to grasp precisely what the sources were saying in the languages with which I am more or less comfortable made me reluctant to venture beyond them.

Nonetheless I have done so, sparingly. In the end, it would have been foolish to ignore the precious data about travelers (and other matters) that have come my way from sources in other languages – principally Arabic and Hebrew, occasionally

1 A small handful were collected also from before and after these dates (seven and nine respectively). For one reason or another they showed up in my research and including them seemed better than rejecting them. Further research would easily increase these outliers.



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Georgian – simply because I have not yet had the leisure to learn them. Specialists have been generous in advising me about the tenor of the texts I have used in translation, and this has encouraged me. The history of communications and commerce has already suffered too much from a failure to see that sources speaking different languages – even just Greek and Latin – reflect the same realities. Specialists who command the Semitic and other languages, and the cultures which produced their precious sources, will probably be able to improve on my understanding of these texts. More importantly, enough surprising, if not to say hitherto unknown data has emerged from them to hint that a rich harvest is still to be gathered in the Arabic and Hebrew records, if specialists should choose to apply the prosopographical methods developed here. For now, it will be enough for the reader to know where it will be easiest to improve on my efforts.

For this kind of inquiry, questions of chronology, both seasonal and annual, matter – sometimes immensely. I have therefore scrutinized and, where necessary, corrected the received opinion about individuals' movements. The full information on these travelers will appear in a separate volume.[2]

Who were these intrepid travelers who went down to the sea in ships? How many can we know about, where did they come from, when and why did they travel in an age when the conventional wisdom would have us believe that scarcely a Christian plank floated on the great inland sea? To skip these questions would be to miss the reality that many and diverse individuals constitute the patterns that will occupy us. The first surprise is the size of this slice of early medieval humanity. All in all I have been able to identify 669 individuals who set out to travel in the early medieval Mediterranean and its hinterland. They mostly crossed borders of some sort; they mostly traveled some considerable distance, usually more, indeed, considerably more, than 500–1,000 km. They are about evenly divided between those who can be classified as "westerners" and "easterners."[3] A slight majority (347: 52 percent) are known by name. They are overwhelmingly Christians, as might be expected from a mostly Christian source base in an age of sharp religious identities. Nonetheless a few Jews, Muslims, and presumably pagan Slavs and Scandinavians do crop up. The travelers are also overwhelmingly male, as is not untypical of ancient and medieval records. Even so we glimpse a handful of females who were supposed to, or who actually did, cross the sea. Diplomats and religious travelers of one sort or another are far and away the best-documented travelers, and it is with them that we shall begin. From Carolingian Europe, Byzantium, and their margins, I have uncovered some 480

2 That monograph (cited as "Pros."), a prosopography of early medieval travelers in the Mediterranean, will go to press shortly.

3 One can quibble about the details in a few cases, but 339 were probably or certainly "easterners" (essentially, Byzantines and Arabs), while 330 can be called "westerners."



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of them (72 percent of the total), including a few cases whose motives for traveling are ambiguous.[4]

The second surprise is how much we can know about some travelers. A few wrote; others left a distinct historical trail across sources ranging from the Frankish court's annals to property conveyances preserved only in the papers of seventeenth-century scholars. Many, of course, are hardly more than shadows. Just under half of our travelers (48 percent) are anonymous, like the unnamed monks who resided in a short-lived Frankish monastery in Jerusalem. These monks are but numbers on a list, from a kind of statistical survey produced by Charlemagne's *missi dominici* to Palestine. Yet even unnamed travelers often reveal more than their anonymity.

There are also less well-documented or less obvious groups that we scarcely will wish to ignore. Merchants head that set, along with slaves and the relatively well-documented company of refugees, exiles and hostages. Another contingent, which must have been relatively large, remains almost invisible: sailors, fishermen, and just plain wanderers. Finally those who traveled in the rather abundant but generally ignored works of fiction from this era have a valuable contribution to make. How story spinners of the early Middle Ages understood the general conditions of travel affords precious insight into common assumptions about communications.

What is the best way to present the travelers whose movements pave the way to deeper analysis of early medieval communications? Two approaches beckon. The one deployed to date has been essentially anecdotal. It describes a few better-documented travelers, and assumes that they are typical. A prime example is Gregory of Tours' "swarming" Syrian traders, whom earlier scholars cited as the archetypal merchants of the late sixth century. As lively as Gregory's anecdotes are, they beg the fundamental question of representativeness. So much so, in fact, that more recent studies of these Syrians would

4 A very few cases (ten) of exceptional interest actually or probably traveled twice or more under different or ambiguous classifications. For the overall enumeration of 669 travelers, I have naturally counted them only once, under their primary classification. I have nonetheless felt free to include their testimony on their travel under other guises, so that they are also included in a few of the summary tables twice. They are Constantinus 1, Sergius 2, Petrus 3; Basilius 4; and Ioseph 1, Petrus 7, Elias 1, Leontius, Anon. 305, and Blasius. The first three naturally all figure as western diplomatic travelers (Ch. 6), but their cases are treated again in light of the assumption that they were pilgrims/immigrants (or the descendants of such) to Rome before their diplomatic travel (ch. 8). Basilius 4 was both an eastern pilgrim to Rome (Ch. 8) and a merchant (Ch. 9). Ioseph 1 and Leontius were both envoys and captives or slaves; Petrus 7, Elias 1, and Blasius were both pilgrims and captives or slaves; Anon. 305 was a merchant captain until he was captured and enslaved.



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reduce the number of individuals unequivocally attested as merchants to . . . two.[5]

The dilemma is familiar to historians of antiquity, Byzantium, and the early Middle Ages: was the isolated anecdote mentioned precisely because it was so unusual?[6] In that case, it must be void of general significance for the broader history of early medieval civilizations and economies. Or is it, rather, something typical, revealing to the startled historian an unsuspected density of communications in this supposedly dark age? It is time to begin to count, even in rudimentary fashion, the cases which present certain characteristics. The numbers are small enough that we can scarcely speak of quantitative or statistical history. And yet they are large enough to be counted, and to gauge with less imprecision our knowledge, or ignorance.[7]

But what exactly should we count? Or rather, how should we count? One of the most obvious conclusions to emerge from this research is that there was more movement in the early medieval Mediterranean than the conventional wisdom has hitherto allowed. I therefore have counted travelers restrictively, to insure that such counting, if anything, underestimates the real numbers. The primary ambition of the next five chapters is to discover, enumerate, and profile the people whose movements underpin the analysis of early medieval communications. Thus we can survey just who is recorded, and surmise who is not, as we detail the known. In this light, I have stuck with the evidence for individuals and small groups: armies, raiding fleets, or troops of hundreds of slaves do not figure in these tallies. Unless otherwise specified, the numbers given in these chapters refer to the number of individuals explicitly recorded in the sources. In some instances, the sources clearly refer to an unspecified but plural number of travelers: "the ambassadors," "the sailors" or "we [merchants]." The plurality of these references has been recognized in the most restrictive way possible: they have been counted as two. In other words, my numbers make no pretense at representing the totality of people who traveled in the early medieval Mediterranean, or even the totality of people mentioned in the sources as traveling, if we include large groups.[8] But they do give a clear accounting of the

5 Pirenne saw them as a "swarm" (1937: e.g., 44, "ils grouillaient"). For criticism of Pirenne and additional evidence in his support, see ch. 4n100. As much as I admire Alfons Dopsch's exceptional erudition and vigor of both thought and style, he too sometimes failed to distinguish the exceptional from the ordinary. Thus, for instance, his description of the organ-building craft in Frankland in the 820s begins to sound like a small industry that equipped numerous churches and chapels: 1921–2, 2: 158. In fact, he is talking about one imported craftsman who, so far as we know, built one organ: Pros. "Georgius 6."

6 For a stimulating discussion of aggregates and individuals, see Laiou 1994, 369–81.

7 The reader should note that in my tables, percentages are always rounded off.

8 All large groups are excluded from the tallies. The largest group of anonymous



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minimal numbers of individual travelers and small groups who appear in the sources.

Furthermore, it seemed wise to include people who planned to travel, but who never made or completed the voyage. Failure illuminates success. The reason for this should be clear: some travelers died en route; others found their way blocked for various reasons. Their failures add depth to stories of the much larger group of people who actually did make the trip. Besides, it is of great interest for the historian of communications to know when, where, and sometimes even why, travel was interrupted.

I have attempted to guard against overstating the numbers by excluding from the tallies homonymous or anonymous travelers for whom there is real reason to believe that they might be identical with other people who have been tracked. Moreover, the sources must refer to specific individuals for them to enter into these tallies. For instance, descriptions of classes of people who customarily made certain trips are not counted as individual travelers.[9] Finally, for a person to be counted as a traveler, some specific evidence of travel is generally required. For instance, simply because someone is identified as Jewish or even as a Jewish merchant, I have not tallied him among the travelers unless there is some specific reason to believe that he traveled to or from Byzantium or the Caliphate.[10]

The anecdote is easier but, by itself, less accurate, and offers no guarantees beyond the historian's implicit judgement that it is representative. Classifying and counting entails the risk of blurring the very human faces of our travelers. But it helps resolve the fundamental issue of whether we are seeing an exception or the rule. The more accurate, if less amusing method is indispensable. Yet numbers tell only part of the story. The people who actually did the traveling are its heart, and its foundation. The more we understand individual travelers, the better we can interpret the aggregate evidence of all known travelers. Individuals' stories and groups both belong here.

This part of the inquiry is articulated in five chapters. The first four treat the best-attested kinds of travelers. The western and Byzantine travelers came from very different parts of the world and, to a certain extent, display different travel

travelers I have included comprises the twenty-seven western monks explicitly attested as established on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem: see ch. 6n3.

9 To take a famous example, the Radhanite merchants are excluded from these tallies: Ibn Khurradadhbih describes them only as an amorphous group who routinely travel the routes he mentions; see further Ch. 23.3.

10 One might object that Byzantines, e.g. at Rome, might actually be Byzantines born in Rome, or at least in Byzantine Italy. This is the most delicate case, and it is discussed below, Ch. 8.2. Those born in Byzantine Italy who moved into the Frankish ambit are in any case of interest to our theme.



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horizons. Separate treatment for each is not therefore a bad idea, the more so since they are numerous enough to warrant it. In each case, a chapter of thumbnail sketches of individuals and their travel experiences paves the way for a more general and more sociological picture. The fifth chapter treats the more obscure kinds of travelers of both cultures.



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# 5

# *A few western faces*

Diplomats and pilgrims are the best-attested western travelers in the early medieval Mediterranean. One of Charlemagne's ambassadors and two western pilgrims have left accounts of their trips to the east. A papal envoy who wrote no such narrative has nonetheless made enough tracks that we can reconstruct his story. Half a century separates the ambassadors and nearly thrice that divides the pilgrims. As their stories will show, the intervening generations were anything but devoid of developments in Mediterranean communications.

## 1. Jerusalem pilgrims

St. Willibald is almost emblematic of the Carolingian ecclesiastical revival. An Anglo-Saxon immigrant, he collaborated closely with St. Boniface and served the new German bishopric of Eichstätt with distinction (741–87). In the evening of his life, the great prelate dictated the story of his youthful travels to a nun. Hugeburc was his relative who had herself recently immigrated from England. The detail and style of narration suggest that Willibald had kept some kind of written record of his trip. Errors are mostly phonetic distortions of proper names (e.g. "Strobrolis" for Strobilos in Asia Minor) or arise out of Hugeburc's strange stew of shaky grammar and bombastic style.[1] Once one gets past that, it is clear that the nun worked hard to recount accurately her kinsman's story.

Willibald had been entrusted to a local abbot at a tender age. When he was twenty, he set out from his Hampshire home for Rome. With his father, brother and an unspecified number of fellow travelers, he went down to the trading settlement that was springing up at Hamwic (mod. Southampton), to find a ship for the Continent. The group crossed the Channel, apparently in a convoy, and rowed or sailed up the Seine as far as Rouen, where a market was being held that

1 Gottschaller 1973.



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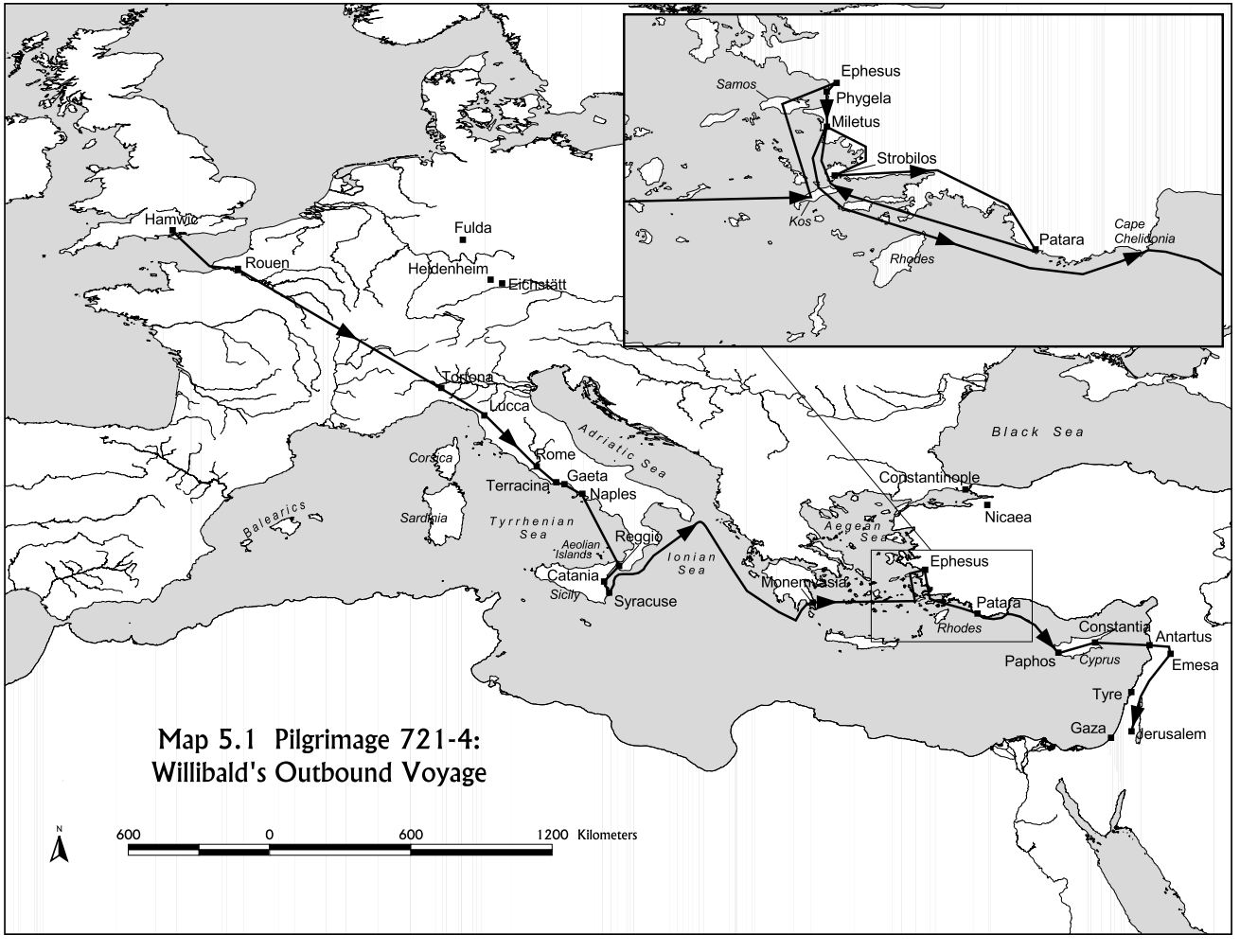


Map 5.1 Pilgrimage 721-4:
Willibald's Outbound Voyage

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summer of 721.[2] Though their crossing of Frankland went unrecorded, they entered Italy via one of the western passes, since the next place mentioned seems to be Tortona. The father died at Lucca, but the others kept on and reached Rome on the feast of St. Martin (11 November). There they stayed for two Easters, apparently in a monastery. When the weather warmed, Willibald was struck with terrible cyclical fevers, chills, and difficult breathing: it sounds like malaria. The following Easter, Willibald set out for Jerusalem with two companions, one of whom, the Anglo-Saxon Tidbercht, would follow him to the end.

They trudged as far as Gaeta, where they boarded a ship bound for Naples and then spent two weeks visiting the local shrines. When they were ready to continue, an Egyptian ship appeared in port, so the travelers thought, by divine dispensation. Aboard it they sailed to Calabria and, so far as we can tell, all the way to Ephesus. Hugeburc mentions landings in Reggio di Calabria, Catania, and Syracuse. It crossed the Ionian Sea and circumnavigated the Peloponnese. At the entrance to the Aegean, they put in at Monemvasia which, like some Byzantine Gibraltar (Figure 5.1) loomed invulnerable off the Slav-infested mainland. The ship also made stops at Kos and Samos en route to Ephesus. After venerating the Ephesian shrines, the travelers walked to Phygela (mod. Kuşadasi). They continued on to Strobilos and finally to Patara, on Asia Minor's mild southern shore. There they wintered.

When spring returned, Willibald and Tidbercht took a ship back up into the Aegean, as far as Miletus, where they admired some Stylites and caught a ship directly ("transfretabant") for the mountainous promontory of Cape Chelidonia (R111). The local port had been deserted, and the travelers suffered terrible hunger. They sailed on to Cyprus, landing at Paphos around Easter. After a three-week stay, they headed overland to Constantia to pray before St. Epiphanius' relics until the feast of John the Baptist (24 June). Another ship took them to Antarados (mod. Tartus, Syria), from where they walked to Emesa (mod. Homs). By now the group had grown large enough to attract attention. The eight *contribuli* (*sic*, presumably therefore Anglo-Saxons) were arrested as spies. A Spaniard was delegated to interrogate them, and a kindly merchant saw to their material and spiritual needs.

The Spaniard's brother was a eunuch in the caliphal entourage. He brought their case to the attention of the caliph ("whose name was Myrmumni" i.e. *amir al-mum'minin*, "Commander of the Faithful") who, according to Hugeburc, happened

2 "Convoy": I think this is what Hugeburc means by "cum classis [!]," 91.6; cf. however 91.7: "classis clamitantibus"; see also Gottschaller 1973, 30 for the ending. Market: "Ibi fuit mercimonia," 91.12. For his travels, Hugeburc, *Vita Willibaldi* (BHL 8931), 3–4, 90.7–102.18. For more details, and a discussion of the alternate chronologies which have been proposed (and which vary by one year), see Pros. "Willibald." On these trading ports, Ch. 23.1.



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Figure 5.1. "And they came across the Ionian Sea to the city of Monemvasia, in Slavinia land . . ." Like most who sailed the main trunk route linking western Europe to the east in the eighth century, Willibald landed in this Byzantine fortress town; this is close to what he saw as his ship approached the island from the southeast. Slavs dominated the mountainous Peloponnesus looming in the background, but offshore Monemvasia remained a kind of Byzantine Gibraltar guarding the western sea lane into the Aegean. Many Mediterranean sea cities (Naples, Messina, Ancona, and so on), like Monemvasia, crouch at the foot of a great land mass. From the beginning of history, lofty mountains or volcanos helped compass-less navigators guide their ships across the water toward the sea cities. Courtesy of Haris A. Kalligas.

to be in Emesa. The Spaniard and the captain of their ship from Cyprus testified on their behalf, with the result that they were freed and even absolved of a customary payment. That gold *tremessis* presumably refers to the *jizya*, the poll tax paid by non-believers. The group then headed south to Damascus to honor the relics of St. Ananias and visit the shrine of Paul's conversion. Over the next three years, Willibald twice took the road to Damascus; the side trips are unexplained and may have had little to do with piety. In any case, from there it was on to Galilee and the Holy Land. Willibald often remembered how many nights he had stayed at various shrines and Hugeburc conveys this, along with experiences which struck the bishop, like the strange appearance and habits of water buffalo, as well as his traditional pilgrim's bath in the Jordan. At last Willibald and Tidbercht reached Jerusalem, once more on St. Martin's day. Again, Willibald fell gravely ill; he remained bedridden until the week before Christmas. At this point in his narration, he describes several of the most important shrines – Christ's tomb, for instance – and especially their curiosities. The detail is sometimes minute, for instance about the waterproof lantern in the roofless church of the Ascension.[3] Once Willibald had recovered, his group toured the southern religious sites as far as Gaza. Then,

3 Water buffalo: Hugeburc, *V. Willibaldi*, 4, 96.10–13; Holy Sepulcher: 97.16–25; lantern: *ibid.*, 98.16–19.



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for reasons that are not given and that are not obviously connected with pilgrimage, he headed north to Tyre, Sidon, and Tripoli. He ascended the "mountain of Lebanon" and went back to Damascus, before returning via Caesarea to winter in Jerusalem.[4] For motives that are again unclear, the next spring he went north to Emesa and northeast to Salamiyeh, where he fell ill, possibly with the bubonic plague. Since he gloats about his success as a smuggler, one wonders whether these unexplained travels too were not connected with some kind of trading venture: his base of Jerusalem was the scene of an important international fair (below, p. 587). His traveling companions went off to obtain authorization from the caliph, apparently to leave for Byzantium, but he had fled the infection and they could not find him.

The governor of Homs finally gave them a travel document (*epistola*). They were forced to travel in pairs since food had become scarce in the stricken region. Back to Damascus they went and hence to Jerusalem one last time, before traveling north to Samaria's shrines and an adventure with an Ethiopian traveling companion and a timid lion.[5] After Ptolemais (mod. Akko), they reached "Head of Lebanon" (Ras en Naqura/Rosh ha Niqra?), whence they were sent along to Tyre (Sur).[6] There Willibald risked his life, he says, smuggling past Arab officials the balsam he had purchased at Jerusalem. He describes in loving detail the device he had crafted to conceal it, as well he might, given the stakes. The reason he ran the risk was probably to finance his travels: balsam was precious. Even in the well-organized trading world of ancient Rome, it had been worth some 100 times the highest quality of frankincense.[7]

His party was held up for "many days" in Tyre, waiting for their ship to be readied. Whether it needed repairs, cargo, or something else, is unclear. Finally, on 30 November, they shoved off and sailed all through the winter, reaching Constantinople the week before Easter, 6 April. The season surely explains the slow trip, since the bad weather would have caused frequent layovers. But it must also have been an advantage for the smuggler.

In the imperial capital, Willibald apparently took up residence inside the basilica of the Holy Apostles; his sightseeing took him as far as Nicaea (Map 7.3). He made friends with Latins in the capital, for he was able to sail back to Italy with the envoys of the pope and emperor. The ship went first to Sicily and put in at Syracuse. From there they sailed north to Catania, Reggio di Calabria and then to the Aeolian islands, as northbound ships often did (Ch. 17.1). On Vulcano, the

4 *Ibid*. 99.20; 100.2.

5 Hugeburc, *V. Willibaldi*, 4, 100.9–101.1.

6 For the identification: Wilkinson 1977, 164, s. n. "Lebanon."

7 Willibald's description makes clear that he was smuggling the resin. It is possible that this is the latest reference to the balsam production of Judaea; otherwise Willibald could have acquired Arabian balsam, for instance at the annual fair of Jerusalem. On the value, botany and history of balsam, Groom 1981, 126–31.



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southernmost of the islands (Map 16.1), everybody went ashore to peer into the crater to see what Hell was really like. At Naples, Willibald and Tidbercht parted company from the others and headed overland to Monte Cassino, where they joined the small community and lived the next ten years.

Now a monastic officer, Willibald impressed Pope Gregory III with his tales of intrepid travels, and he wound up being sent across the Alps to work with Boniface.[8] There he was ordained priest at around age forty; a year later, he was made bishop of Eichstätt. With his brother, he founded the double monastery of Heidenheim, where Hugeburc took up residence. Present at the great reform councils launched by Boniface, this associate of Pippin III and Charlemagne became a figure to be reckoned with in the reformed Frankish church. As a man of high social status, he witnessed several important property transactions that have survived. Late in his long life, in 786, he deeded nine peasant households (*mansi*) to Fulda. Approaching his ninetieth year, Willibald died on 7 July.

Our second traveler to the Middle East sailed almost a century and a half later. The Frank Bernard was apparently a monk who was at home in the Champagne region. In 867, he traveled to the Holy Land and back in a trip that featured shrines of St. Michael. His story starts in Rome, where he formed a traveling party with two other monks, a Spaniard named Stephen, and the Beneventan Theudmund, from San Vincenzo al Volturno. An audience with Pope Nicholas I produced a blessing and "help" (of the pecuniary sort?) along with a papal authorization to leave Rome, presumably in the form of an ecclesiastical letter of recommendation for traveling churchmen (*litterae formatae* or *commendaticiae*).[9] The three pilgrims first stopped on Italy's east coast, at the cave shrine of St. Michael on Monte Gargano (Map 5.2).

They proceeded to the Arab emirate of Bari. They did so without any difficulty that we can detect. This is quite remarkable, for they must have been traveling in the wake of a great Arab raid against Venafro and Monte Cassino.[10] The author of that attack, the formidable emir Sawdan of Bari, granted them an audience, whatever arrangements were needed for their sea voyage, and letters of safe conduct addressed to the governors of Alexandria and Old Cairo. Bernard points out that these documents described the particulars of their faces and their itinerary.[11] They went on to the port of Taranto (distances in miles and directions are carefully specified at each stage) where they found six ships packed with enslaved Beneventan Christians, presumably booty from the recent raid. Bernard overestimated their

8 Hugeburc, *V. Willibaldi*, 5, 102.35–104.9.

9 Bernard, *Itinerarium*, 1, p. 309. See Pros. "Bernard," where the reader will find the references for everything not specifically documented here.

10 *Chronica S. Benedicti Cassinensis*, 19, *MGH SRL* 478.1–16 and Avril and Gaborit 1967, 273–4, along with Pros.

11 Bernard, *Itinerarium*, 3, p. 310: "quarum textus epistolarum principi Alexandrie necnon et Babylonie noticiam vultus nostri vel itineris exponebat."



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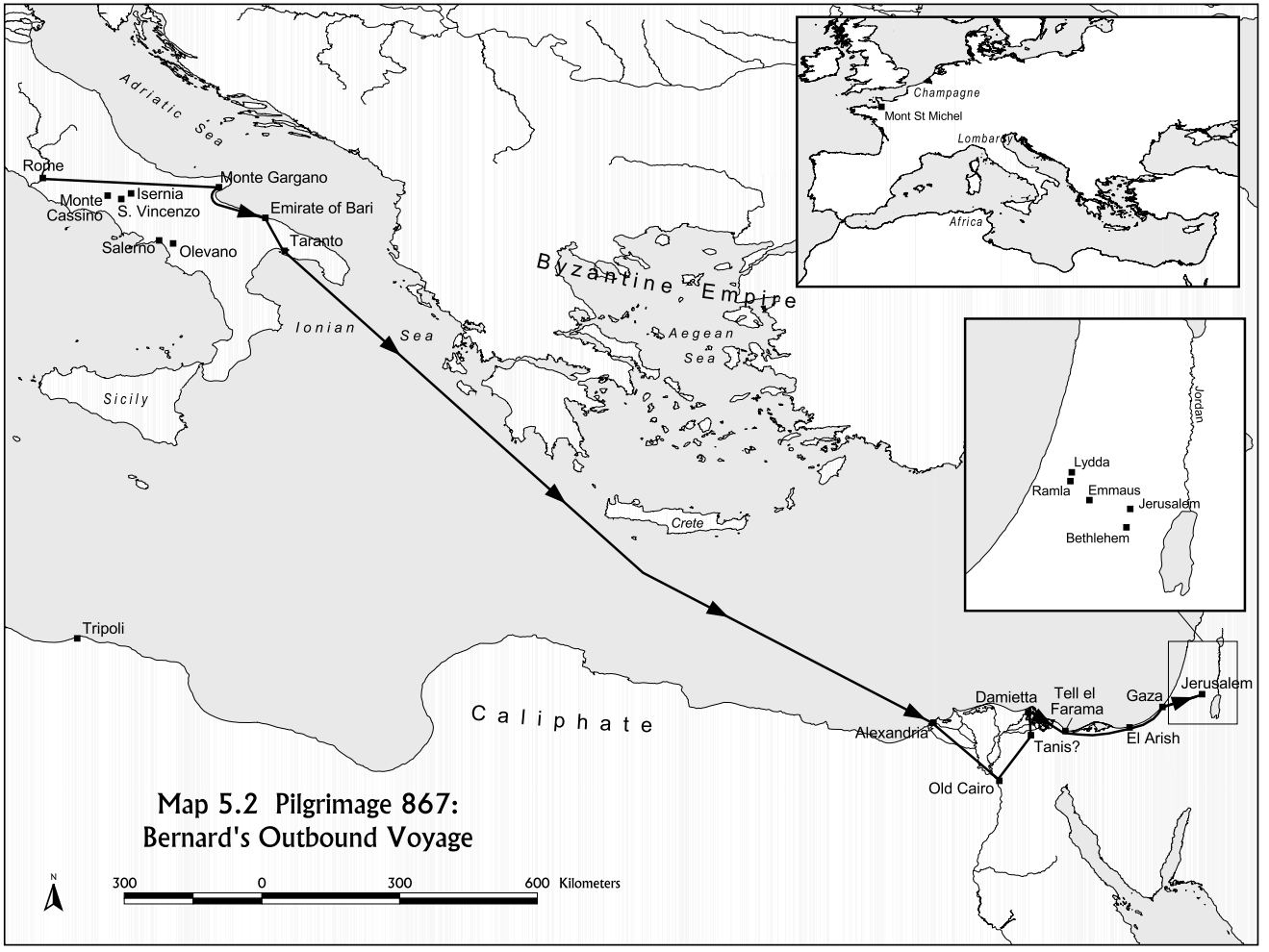


Map 5.2 Pilgrimage 867:
Bernard's Outbound Voyage

total number at 9,000, but it is clear that they were many.[12] The first two pairs of ships set off for Africa and Tripoli. Apparently protected by the arrangements made in Bari, the pilgrims boarded one of the slavers bound for Alexandria, which they reached after a month at sea. The captain of the very large crew – over sixty sailors – collected a fare of two gold pieces each before allowing them to disembark.[13] To the pilgrims' considerable disappointment, the governor of Alexandria took cognizance of their letter from Sawdan, but then exacted the substantial fee of 13 *denarii* for new documents, intended for the governor of Old Cairo.

They visited the local shrines – Bernard mentions the Venetians' theft of St. Mark's body – before boarding a river boat and traveling up the Nile to Old Cairo, to get their papers in order. Bernard notes that this trip was toward the south and took six days. He mentions the Pyramids ("Joseph's granaries") and how the guards of Old Cairo took them right to the governor, Ibn Khakan ("Adelhacham"), whom Bernard identifies as second only to the caliph (*amarmomini*). Ibn Khakan inquired carefully into every aspect of their trip and examined their letters. He also required that each of the pilgrims give him 13 *denarii*. They apparently refused and were promptly jailed. Six days in prison changed their mind. Once they had paid up, Ibn Khakan issued a new travel document which, he assured them, would exempt them from further payments wherever they went. Bernard notes that they still needed to pay a smaller fee of one or two *denarii* in order to obtain a document or a seal impression each time they left one of the cities that he mentions. Nonetheless the trip would be quite smooth thereafter.[14]

The companions took another boat down the Nile, this time, to Damietta and Tanis (San el Hajar), where Bernard singles out the local Christians' hospitality and the monuments from Moses' time. The next stop was the ancient Pelusium, Tell el Farama, where, three centuries before, the bubonic plague had begun its devastating sweep across the Mediterranean. Bernard mentions the local church, but he dwells on the camel market, where travelers rented beasts for the six-day crossing of the desert. To help his Frankish readers imagine a desert, he compares its blinding vastness to Champagne under a winter snow. In so doing, Bernard reveals to the modern reader that this region of France was

12 *Itinerarium*, 4, pp. 310–11.

13 *Ibid.*, 5, p. 311. Fares were traditionally paid at the end of the voyage later in the Middle Ages also: Goitein 1967–93, 1: 341. Bernard sounds a little surprised here. He probably had paid the customary gratuities to the skipper and crew on embarking (*ibid.*, p. 342), and may have misunderstood them to be the fare.

14 Bernard, *Itinerarium*, 7, pp. 312–13. At this point Bernard tells the reader about Patriarch Michael of Egypt who resided in Old Cairo, and explains the annual tax that Christians were required to pay for their personal security, that is, the *jizya*. A lesser person (*vilior persona*) pays only 13 *denarii*, says the Frankish monk, thereby making clear to us the nature of the payments that had been extracted from him in both Egyptian cities, and perhaps already in Bari.



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already deforested in the 860s. The Egyptian desert had two inns (*hospitia*). As he rather ruefully notes, in them one had to buy from Christian and "pagan" merchants all the necessities that could not be foraged from the barren land. Thereafter, things improved, since the land was again fertile all the way to Gaza.

The pilgrims passed through *Alariza* (el Arish?) to the Arab metropolis of Ramla and the nearby monastery of St. George, on the site of the ancient Lydda or Diospolis (mod. Lod). From there it was on to Emmaus (mod. Kh. Imwas) and, finally, Jerusalem. They were received in "the hostel of the most glorious emperor Charles" where, says Bernard, all Romance-speaking pilgrims were welcome. The monk mentions the church of the Virgin attached to the hostel, the magnificent Bible given to the church by Charlemagne, and the market revenues that sustained the establishment. He then offers a rapid overview of the main shrines, not even bothering to go into detail about the Holy Sepulcher. He reports for the first time the miraculous fire of Holy Saturday, and notes the name and monastic background of the reigning patriarch. For the other nearby shrines which he visited, he takes pains to point out how to get to them: "From there we went across to Bethany, which is a mile away, to the south . . ."[15]

Bernard wandered no further ("six miles from Jerusalem") than Bethlehem and the river Jordan. West of Jerusalem he visited the church of Saint Mamilla and the many martyrs "killed by the Saracens," apparently confusing more recent troubles with the Persian massacre of 614.[16] This quick tour seems to have been all the travelers intended, for they went straight to the coast, found a ship, and headed home. Sixty stormy days at sea took them to the southwest coast of Italy. There the companions visited another shrine of St. Michael, in the great cave of Monte Olevano, near Salerno, before proceeding to Rome and parting company. Bernard then tacks on the earliest description of the French shrine of the archangel, Mont St. Michel. His story ends with observations on the marvelous security of travel in the Caliphate – if my camel or donkey died, I could go to the next city and get another one and my goods would still be there when I returned, he claims. This he pointedly contrasts with the most dangerous area he traversed: Romania (presumably the duchy of Rome), where pilgrims to St. Peter's traveled at their own peril and in armed groups.[17]

Both Willibald and Bernard covered an immense distance – well over 6,000 kilometers as the crow flies – in order to venerate Christianity's most sacred sites. The adventure of it doubtless seasoned the religious satisfaction. But what is striking is not so much the distance they covered, or the difficulties they confronted – neither trip was an affair for the faint of heart. It is the great difference between their experiences. Time, space, and indeed, quality of experience

15 Bernard, *Itinerarium*, 16, p. 317.
16 Cf. Wilkinson 1977, 162, s. n.
17 Bernard, *Itinerarium*, 23–4, pp. 319–20.



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distinguish them in fundamental ways. But before we scrutinize those differences, let us make the acquaintance of two more Carolingian travelers to the Middle East.

## 2. Ambassadors to Constantinople

Amalarius is one of those rare Carolingian figures whom we get to know in a personal way. He bragged about his travels and used them to bolster his authority. His liturgical theories, Amalarius supposedly claimed, were universally accepted in Italy and at Rome. He had been to Constantinople, he had been to Istria and Rome, so he should know.[18]

Amalarius might have come from a family important enough to get him in trouble.[19] Whence he hailed is unknown; his "Gallia nostra" is hard to pin down. It is striking, however, that in an era of Frankish chauvinism, he rarely uses that ethnic term and that he calls himself a "Gallus." Proto-Romance laces his language. Together with his remark on the pronunciation of the word "Iesus" ("gisus") by celebrants "of our own Gaul," they surely reveal a native speaker of Romance.[20] He had studied with Alcuin and he attended at least one Easter service at Tours.

If the canonical age was observed, as it was in Willibald's case and in others too (Chapter 6), Amalarius could have been born no later than a few years after the Franks conquered Italy (774). He certainly remembered discussions at Charlemagne's court and dated a linguistic phenomenon as "before" and "after" the imperial coronation. He may have belonged to the royal chapel.[21] The timing of his episcopal appointment suggests that he was well regarded by Charlemagne's cousins Wala and Adalhard, who dominated the faltering ruler's final years. Amalarius would have fitted comfortably next to a man like Jesse of Amiens, who also sailed to Constantinople, and who was also constantly at court in this period. They probably shared connections with Alcuin.[22]

18 Thus his enemy Florus of Lyons, much of whose testimony confirms what Amalarius reveals about himself in his technical treatises: Florus, *Epistola contra adinventiones Amalarii*, 7, *MGH Epist.* 5.270.41–271.2. For points not specifically documented here, see Pros. "Amalarius."

19 Amalarius, *Ep. ad Hilduinum*, 4, *Opera liturgica*, 1.341.25; cf. Pros.

20 "Gisus": *Ep.* 1, 1, *Opera liturgica*, 2.386.11–13; he is referring to the phonetic phenomenon of assibilation (e.g. Lat. "iam" becomes Italian "già"): Väänänen 1981, 53–4. See further Pros.

21 Discussions: *Epistula ad Hilduinum* 8, *Opera liturgica*, 1.342.22–6; cf. *ibid.*, 1.68; Fleckenstein 1959, 60.

22 Influence of Wala and Adalhard: Paschasius Radbert, *Epitaphium Arsenii* 1, 6, pp. 29–30. Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici imperatoris*, 21, 346.14–16; *Translatio S. Viti martyris* (*BHL* 8717–19), 3, p. 38; cf. von Simson 1874–6, 1: 19–22; Kasten 1986, 56–72; Weinrich 1963, 18–28. Jesse: Pros.



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As bishop and would-be metropolitan of Trier, Amalarius lived not too far from Aachen, and he was intimately involved in the last years of Charlemagne's rule.[23] The Danish war and growing pirate activity were then inducing the court to stabilize relations with Scandinavia. Early in 811, the all-powerful Wala went in person to the frontier, some thirty or forty kilometers from the growing emporium of Haithabu, to finalize a new peace with the Danes. Conversion was another approach to the same problem, and Amalarius did his part by consecrating the first Christian church north of the Elbe. The new foundation at Hamburg lay two or three days' march south of Denmark and was intended to serve as the launching pad for missions to the north.[24] This kind of royal confidence made Amalarius a natural choice for an embassy to the east early in 813.

Amalarius' mission was to carry the authenticated copy of the treaty of peace and obtain the subscriptions of the Byzantine emperor and his court. An associate of Adalhard of Corbie, the abbot of Nonantola, was his fellow ambassador. Abbot Peter offered a double advantage: he enjoyed the trust of Wala's half-brother Adalhard of Corbie, and he knew well the region where they might find a quick ship. When the envoys left Aachen, around March 813, Amalarius had probably reached at least his thirties; Peter, on the other hand, was already "aged."[25]

Amalarius did more than talk about his trip. He penned a poem which Max Manitius reckoned one of the most obscure of the Carolingian age. Once that obscurity has been pierced, the "Sea Verses" yield a vivid picture of the voyage to Constantinople.[26] The party comprised both Franks and monks from Peter's abbey. If it followed the general pattern, it would have numbered from twenty-five to fifty followers (Ch. 6.3). The envoys' route differed from those of Willibald or Bernard, for they sailed down the Adriatic (Map 5.3). By late June, they had reached Byzantine Dalmatia. In the frontier town of Zadar, Amalarius celebrated the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul (28 June) and compared liturgical notes with the local archbishop and a deacon, who had himself been ordained in Rome. There, at the latest, they were met by a Byzantine envoy who was to guide them to Constantinople. They sailed for the imperial capital, possibly aboard a warship.[27] As they moved south

23 Like others, he was consulted on the baptismal ritual: Charles particularly appreciated the alacrity of his response: *Opera liturgica*, 1.251.16–17.

24 *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 811, p. 134; Abel and Simson 1883, 2: 465–8; Rimbert, *Vita Anskarii* (*BHL* 544), 12, *MGH SRG*, p. 33; cf. Oexle 1967, 338.

25 Pros. "Petrus 6." Charlemagne's letter to Michael I emphasized that his envoys would take ship as soon as the weather permitted: *MGH Epist.* 4.556.27–8; "grandaevus": Amalarius, *Opera liturgica*, 1.229.31.

26 *Versus marini*, *MGH Poet.* 1.426–8; for some useful philological observations, Düchting 1989; comment: Manitius 1911–31, 1: 399. For more on the *Versus marini*, its text and testimony, see Pros.

27 At least that is what one might deduce from Amalarius' mention of oars, since these are more usually associated with warships than merchant mariners. See below, pp. 407f.



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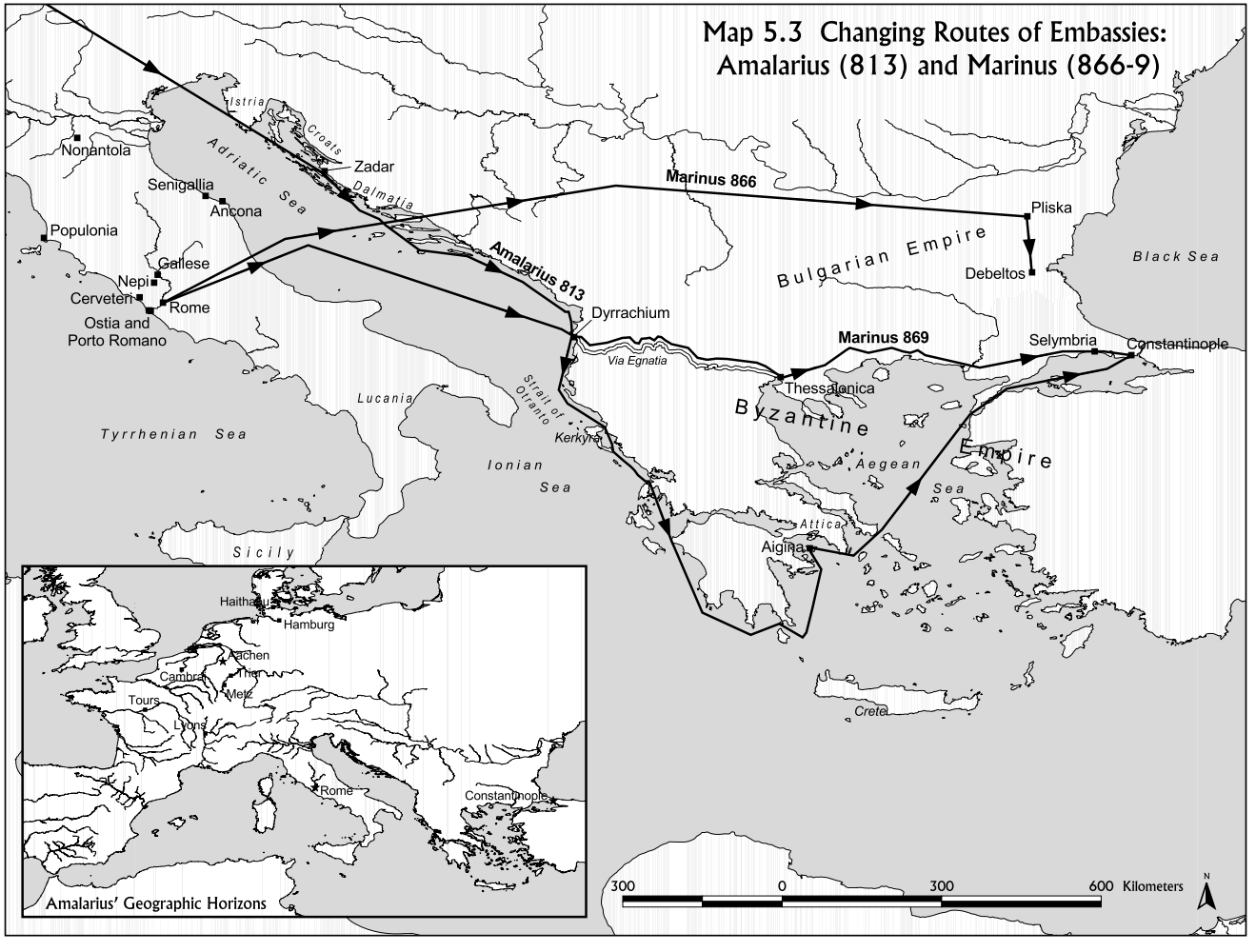


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along the Balkan coast, heavy weather forced them back into port at Dyrrachium (mod. Durrës, Albania). The next memorable point on their voyage was on the other side of Greece, the fortress on the island Aigina in the Saronic Gulf; they may have put in there while struggling against the unfavorable "meltemi" winds that prevail in July.

The party seems to have lingered in Attica. This stands to reason, since the Bulgar khan Krum and his army were right then running amuck in the Byzantine capital's European outskirts. Amalarius would nonetheless winter in Constantinople. Once Charlemagne's envoys arrived in the beleaguered capital, they spent eighty days exploring the town until they were suddenly confined to their residence.[28] Amalarius attended Mass in the Hagia Sophia and carefully noted details he would later use in a liturgical treatise. When Leo V finally returned, or so Amalarius was told, the envoys were summoned to the palace, where the emperor inquired about Charles' health, that of his children – perhaps an allusion to a marriage project with the recently deposed and castrated Byzantine co-emperor Ignatius – and spoke well of the Franks. Amalarius' phrasing seems to recognize that hearing the emperor's voice was a special favor.[29] As Amalarius and Peter boarded a ship with the Byzantine envoys Christopher spatharios and Deacon Gregory, feverish preparations were afoot in Constantinople to ward off Krum's imminent full-scale assault. The ambassadors shoved off before word came that Krum had dropped dead on 13 April 814.

The trip home was entirely by sea. The envoys encountered heavy weather and stayed away from "the Slav shores"; they piled up their spears and strung their bows when they sighted an (African?) Arab (*Maurus metuendus*) ship. But a gale drove her away, as the travelers huddled under their rain-repellent skins.[30] Weather and excitement notwithstanding, Amalarius kept working on a new liturgical commentary aboard ship. They finally reached Italy in late spring 814, where they stopped at Nonantola before crossing the Alps. An uncertain welcome awaited them at Aachen, for in the meantime Charlemagne had died. Louis the Pious received them and, at the general assembly that began on 1 August, he confirmed for Peter the long-deferred and quite important property

28 *Versus marini*, 37–43, p. 427. This is Hanssens' interpretation: *Opera liturgica*, 1.66; he suspects that the confinement was due to some mistake the envoys made. It is perhaps more likely that the normal procedures for controlling foreigners' movements had lapsed during the confusion of Leo's usurpation and Krum's siege of Constantinople, which Amalarius diplomatically does not mention at this point.

29 According to the malevolent *Scriptor incertus de Leone*, 346.1–2; cf. 346.22 and 347.9–10, Leo V did not leave the city to oppose the enemy the entire time that Krum was ravaging Thrace; but he may well mean only that he stayed in the capital area. Alternatively, Amalarius may not have got the full story. Emphasis on Leo's voice: *Versus marini*, 48–50, p. 428. Cf. McCormick, *ODB* 1: 231–2.

30 *Versus* 51–65, p. 428.



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transaction that had brought him to the Carolingian court in the first place. This suggests Louis' satisfaction with their embassy. Shortly after Peter returned to Italy, however, Amalarius suffered a swift and unexplained reversal of fortune. He was deposed.

Between 819 and 825, he recovered Louis' favor, perhaps in connection with the rehabilitation of Adalhard and Wala in 821. Now he took up residence in the palace, where he found a supporter in the archchaplain, Hilduin, abbot of St. Denis.[31] When Louis and his advisors began orchestrating a religious and political rapprochement with Constantinople, they called on Amalarius. He eagerly contributed to the Frankish theology of a "middle way" which in fact resembled second Iconoclasm and was consonant with the desired political alliance. The emperor apparently intended to send him back to Constantinople with Halitgarius, bishop of Cambrai, in order to negotiate the union. But Peter of Nonantola's successor, Ansfrid, was the final choice.[32] Unshakable loyalty to Louis the Pious during the turbulent 830s won Amalarius the see of Lyons, replacing the fugitive Agobard. His liturgical ideas and his personality – Florus railed against Amalarius' warm relations with the Jews of Lyons, whom he shows us crowding around the archbishop in the sanctuary – combined with the politically tense situation to shorten the flamboyant prelate's tenure. When Amalarius stood accused of doctrinal innovations before a gathering of bishops in 838, he was asked where he had read the explanation he offered. Our traveler made the very un-Carolingian mistake of saying he had read it in his own mind. He was sacrificed on the altar of reconciliation between a failing Louis and his eldest son, and Agobard recovered his see.

Amalarius had a special connection with Charlemagne's illegitimate son Drogo (d. 855), bishop of Metz and celebrated patron of the arts. He spent the last years of his life in Drogo's city; he was probably already in his seventies when, around 850, he contributed to the controversy surrounding the theories of another traveler to the Adriatic Balkans, Godescalc of Orbais.[33] Amalarius probably died later in the same decade. He merited burial in the shrine of the Carolingians' ancestor St. Arnulf, near a number of earlier Carolingians as well as Charlemagne's queen Hildegard, and of course Hildegard's son, Louis the Pious.[34] Some of Amalarius'

31 *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 821, p. 156; Weinrich 1963, 43–4; Kasten 1986, 110–14; 138–44. Pros.

32 It may have been at this time or in 831, when Amalarius was sent as ambassador to Rome (perhaps in connection with the Scandinavian mission), that his fellow Alcuinian, Einhard, wrote him instructing him to prepare for a quick departure on an embassy, after Easter: *Ep.* 4, *MGH Epist.* 5.111.

33 Drogo became Louis the Pious' last archchaplain and a mainstay of his power in the late 830s, and subsequently went over to Lothar's entourage. Drogo: Pfister 1902; Oexle 1967, 346–51. For Godescalc, see below, pp. 260f.

34 Oexle 1967, 273–4, 278; cf. too 275n128.



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writings circulated immediately, but not for long: beyond their addressee, Peter of Nonantola, we know that the *Versus marini* was copied in the Turonian milieu of Alcuin's students and followers.[35] His lengthy liturgical commentary *Liber officialis*, on the other hand, proved quite successful.[36] It contributed mightily to popularizing the allegorical method of interpretation by applying it to the liturgy. One cannot help but wonder whether the allegorizing, symbolic interpretation of the liturgy then appreciated in Constantinople influenced Amalarius' approach, which struck Carolingian contemporaries as highly unusual.[37]

Our second ambassador's service of the Roman church began, formally, when he was a twelve-year-old boy, but its roots lay deeper still. Marinus' name is one which appears among Roman ecclesiastics only after the massive influx of Byzantines in the seventh century. His father was a priest named Palumbus, and Marinus was born north of Rome, in Gallese, an early medieval castle town which sprang up on a strategic hill above the Tiber, and which commanded the two key arteries of central Italy, the Via Amerina and the Via Flaminia. The castle's first bishop appears in 826, not long before Marinus' birth, and bears the name, uncommon among the Roman clergy, of Donatus. Perhaps not coincidentally, this name would crop up again later in Marinus' career.[38]

By 860, young Marinus was a subdeacon in Santa Maria Maggiore. He was there the fateful day when Pope Nicholas I received the Byzantine ambassadors Arsavir and bishops Zachary of Taormina and Theophilus of Amorion, who had come to announce Photius' appointment to the patriarchate. Marinus perhaps figured at a Roman synod of 861.[39] He was certainly one of the flock of promotions with which Nicholas I put his personal stamp on the papacy: he became one of the seven deacons of the Roman church who were the ancestors of the cardinal deacons. In 866, Pope Nicholas seized the opportunity of a religious overture from the Bulgarian ruler Boris-Michael. With the legates who carried the pope's celebrated *Responsa* to Boris' queries about right religion, Nicholas dispatched Marinus, then in his twenties or thirties, the priest Leo, and another recent promotion, Bishop Donatus of Ostia. But these men were to serve as envoys to Michael III, and they bore a sheaf of letters for the Constantinopolitan elite (R559).

35 Pros.

36 Hanssens' edition, *Opera liturgica*, uses 24 MSS; cf. Suntrup 1978, 46–9.

37 See e.g., R. F. Taft, *ODB* 1: 488–9 on Byzantine allegorizing.

38 The main sources for Marinus are the 9th-C. biographies of the *Lib. pont.*, Duchesne, 2.151–85 and the papal correspondence. For detailed documentation on Marinus, see Pros. Name: Llewellyn 1981, 360–1; birth: 12th-C. *Liber pontificalis* of Pierre-Guillaume, 224; on Gallese, see Bullough 1966b, 222–3; bishop Donatus of Gallese: *Concilium Romanum a. 826*, *MGH Conc.* 2.2.562.2–3.

39 *Concilium Constantinopolitanum a. 869–70*, actio 4, Mansi 16.58C–D.



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It was a mission for intrepid men. Their purpose can only have been to arrive unexpectedly and communicate directly and aggressively to the Byzantine capital Rome's condemnation of Photius. The pope expected them somehow to lobby the Byzantine court to this end.[40] They traveled via a brand new overland route through Bulgaria, along with bishops Paul of Populonia and Formosus of Porto (the future pope), whom Nicholas had selected for the delicate business of enticing the Bulgarians away from Byzantium. But Marinus and his companions were blocked at the Byzantine border, presumably at Debeltos or thereabouts. After camping there for forty days awaiting Constantinople's permission to proceed, they headed home rather than submit to the conditions for entry which the Byzantine government conveyed to the Bulgarian ruler, presumably at the latter's capital of Pliska. They spent some time there since, a little later, Boris-Michael felt he knew Marinus well enough to want him to head his own church. Marinus resisted the appointment: he claimed that he had his heart set on the embassy to Constantinople, for which he was still a candidate in early 868.

At the synod convened by Hadrian II to publicize the new pope's fidelity to his predecessor's policies, it was Marinus who delivered the papal address. Along with Donatus, Marinus was sent anew to Constantinople in the summer of 869, accompanied now by Stephen, bishop of Nepi, and carrying papal letters which identified the three men as Hadrian's close advisors (*consiliarii*). Now a new emperor was avidly seeking Roman cooperation against Photius. Basil I needed any help he could get to shore up his regime after the coup and horrific crime whereby he had arranged the murder of Michael III, his benefactor and, according to the well-informed papal biographer, adoptive father.[41] This too was no mission for the faint of heart.

The papal legation again traveled overland through Bulgarian territory, and sent Boris letters of greeting while they were in transit. This time the papal legation was met with honor at Thessalonica. At Selymbria, a more splendid welcome awaited the legates. They were greeted by an imperial protospatharios and the higoumenos Theognostus, who had staunchly supported Patriarch Ignatius at Rome. The emissaries brought the papal legates forty horses from the imperial stable, a silver table service, and Byzantine personnel to wait on them. On Sunday 18 September, Pope Hadrian II's representatives were feted with a splendid *adventus* ceremony through the Golden Gate of Constantinople, an honor associated

40 The *Liber pontificalis*' claim that emperor Michael III had indirectly instructed them to come, and only via this route, is, to put it mildly, disingenuous: R559.

41 *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.178.2: "it is uncertain whether <his> son willed it," "dubium an filii voluntate," before going on to state that Basil convinced everyone "ut fertur" that he was not involved in the murder; cf. Bury 1912, 174. In the 11th C., as in the 6th, adoption was part of a strategy for succession to the purple: R. J. Macrides, *ODB* 1: 22; *PLRE* 3: 1325. It would make good sense also in the 9th C.



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with the emperors themselves.[42] All was not sweetness and light however, since the emperor declared himself too busy with the birthday of his son, the future Leo VI, to receive them.

The audience was finally held in the Golden Banquet Hall, the Chrysotriklinos, and Basil went out of his way to flatter the Romans, going so far as to kiss the ambassadors. To make a long story short, from October 869 to February 870 Marinus and his fellow legates presided over the eighth ecumenical council, where they succeeded in imposing papal conditions for restoring Ignatius and settling the schism at Photius' expense. They also promulgated canons on icon veneration and other disciplinary measures. At some point, Suppo III, Evrard and Anastasius Bibliothecarius, the Frankish emperor Louis II's envoys to Basil, joined them. The princely ambassadors had come to negotiate a marriage between the two imperial families. When Marinus and his fellow legates had Carolingian Europe's greatest Hellenist check the Greek text of the conciliar proceedings, Anastasius discovered that praise of Louis II had been excised from a papal letter. The legates' ensuing protests and adamantly conditional acceptance of the acts of the council soured the atmosphere. Things went steadily downhill and, on 2 March 870, Basil tried to bully Marinus and his companions into accepting the eastern patriarchates' supposed ratification of Byzantine control over the Bulgarian church.[43]

These circumstances weighed on Marinus' return trip. An imperial spatharios escorted the ambassadors overland to Dyrrachium. From there, the Romans were on their own and took a ship for Ancona. It first headed north along the usual coastal route. But before the ship reached the point where it would have turned westward to cross the Adriatic, it was captured by Slav pirates and the envoys wound up in the hands of Domagoj, the prince of the Croats. Marinus spent thirty days locked up. The Roman clergy and Louis II blamed Basil I for failing to provide an escort, and hinted darkly that it was all a Byzantine plot to punish the envoys for their perseverance. In any event, after papal and imperial remonstrances and a Byzantine reprisal raid, the legates finally made their way to Rome. They got there three days before Christmas, bereft of their belongings and the counciliar documents. These the pope obtained thanks only to the provident care of Anastasius, who had had duplicates made.[44]

Marinus' embassies were the early marks of a magnificent career. He served John VIII (872–82) as a very close advisor, and was made bishop of Cerveteri and

42 *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.180.8–24 and R594; on the Golden Gate in an imperial ceremony a few years later, see McCormick 1990, 155–6.

43 Pros; see also Arnaldi 1961, 31–2.

44 Marinus' imprisonment is referred to in the more complete Greek text of Pope Stephen V's letter to Basil I (JE 3403); previous scholars have located it at Constantinople or Rome, erroneously, in my opinion. See further, Pros.



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treasurer (*arcarius*) of the Roman church in return.[45] Early in 880 the pope charged Marinus and the bishop of Senigallia with attempting to persuade Charles III to defend Rome from the Arabs. A few months later, Photius wrote a letter to Marinus announcing his return to the patriarchal throne. The Byzantine reminded him of the ill-treatment he had suffered at Marinus' hands a decade earlier, and offered his friendship and the gift of a relic of the Cross in a gold setting. Beyond the element of personal satisfaction at long-deferred vindication, Photius was surely recognizing here Marinus' influence at Rome.[46] Two years later, Pope John sent his treasurer on a dangerous embassy to separate the bishop of Naples from his Arab allies. Some of the latter were to be handed over to Marinus and his fellow envoy; the rest were to be executed. Marinus was successful and the Arabs were forced to retreat further south.[47]

A lifetime of service to the Roman church bore its ultimate fruit when Marinus succeeded John VIII. His short pontificate (882–4) entailed a summit with Emperor Charles III, the restoration of Formosus, the consecration of the future Pope Stephen VI as a deacon, a surviving handful of the usual privileges and other communications with churches in Gaul and Italy, and the opening of privileged relations with King Alfred the Great. Marinus exempted the Anglo-Saxon colony at Rome from tolls and a tax (R694), and sent to Alfred a relic of the True Cross, presumably different from the one that he had received from Photius. He was buried according to the recently reinvented tradition, at the entrance of St. Peter's, in the company of Benedict III and Nicholas I. Marinus' epitaph still trumpeted his achievements in Constantinople.[48] In sum, a remarkable career, with connections that stretched from Byzantium to England, via Bulgaria.

The envoys' trips differed in interesting ways. Both going and coming, Amalarius had started out in the springtime. Marinus' first trip, on the contrary, began quite late, in November; his second trip headed out in June and home in the spring. The difference between Marinus' 866 departure and Amalarius' reflects the single most important difference between the two trips from the perspective of communications systems. The later ambassador used a new overland route, which took him across Bulgarian territory, and thereby allowed a much longer traveling season than the Mediterranean sea, with its ancient winter "closing" (Ch. 15.2). So far as we can tell, Amalarius traveled exclusively by sea. Their routes in fact overlapped only a little, when the final leg of Marinus' homebound itinerary from Constantinople took him along the same shipping channel in the coastal waters of modern-day Albania, Yugoslavia and Croatia which Amalarius'

45 E.g. John VIII, *Registrum*, 224, JE 3288, 200.3–4; cf. Lohrmann 1968, 236; Pros.

46 *Ep.* 272, 2.220. At the same time Photius also sent letters to two other influential Roman bishops, Gauderic of Velletri and Zachary of Anagni, which indicates that he was well informed about the power structure at Rome.

47 Pros.; cf. Gay 1904, 127.

48 Borgolte 1989, 122.



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ship had sailed. And of course, Marinus and his companions suffered a fate which, by modern lights, was common indeed in the early medieval Mediterranean. They were captured by pirates and lost everything but their lives. Almost two generations earlier, Amalarius' ship had been luckier, or better prepared.

## 3. Comparisons

Amalarius' trip also differs from those of the pilgrims. Unlike theirs, it had no overland legs, once the envoys had reached the Adriatic from Aachen. The route varied substantially, since it began in the Adriatic, which was itself a novelty. It also appears to have been more direct. Amalarius' overall trip went faster than Willibald's, and more slowly than that of Bernard. Were it not, however, for a grave military crisis and revolution on the throne to which Amalarius had been sent, his trip might have been as expeditious as Bernard's. Of course, Amalarius was a man on a mission, who traveled through perilous waters with the backing of two powerful emperors, possibly aboard a warship. But even in their perils Amalarius and Marinus differ from the pilgrims, since they alone testify to threats from enemy vessels. Yet Amalarius, at least, spills more ink on seasickness and bad weather than the military menace.

The differences between the two pilgrims' voyages are even more interesting. First of all, the time they spent on pilgrimage: Willibald was gone eight years. Bernard may have been gone eight months, at most, for the conventional wisdom that his trip took three years is groundless.[49] It is unclear whether we should make anything of the fact that in the 720s the Anglo-Saxons suffered repeated illnesses and even death as they entered the new disease environment of the Mediterranean, whereas Bernard and his Spanish and Italian companions record no illness in their much shorter trip. But as far as itineraries are concerned, from Rome on, the pilgrims' outbound routes differed completely, just as they differed from the ambassadors'. Willibald boarded his first ship at Gaeta, and then took another ship at Naples, and sailed in stages to the Byzantine Aegean; later he made his way, in similiar stages, to Cyprus and Syria, reaching the Holy Land from the north. The entire outbound voyage lasted two years. Bernard, on the other hand, sailed directly from Italy to Alexandria in thirty days. He completed the rest of the trip overland to Jerusalem across Egypt, after a substantial detour to get his papers squared away. He presumably rubbed shoulders with local

49 It derives from what looks like a 10th-C. editor's rubric "Anno *non*gentesimo septuagesimo incarnationis Domini nostri Iesu Christi hec nobis comperta sunt," *Itinerarium*, 1, p. 309, which the most recent editors have misunderstood as a declaration by Bernard, and corrected to fit this misunderstanding. See further Pros.



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travelers all the way, and he surely used their infrastructure. The camel rental market at Tell el Farama and desert inns on the overland route toward Ramla, Jerusalem, and indeed, Damascus and Baghdad, were not created for Bernard's convenience. Once the two pilgrims reached the Holy Land, their experiences diverged too. Willibald spent years wandering around the region's shrines and making a series of side trips which seem to have had no religious motivation. To get back to western Europe, he felt it necessary to sail first to Constantinople where, seemingly oblivious to time, he decided to spend another couple of years before returning to Italy and taking up residence at Monte Cassino. Bernard and his friends visited the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem and then simply went back to the coast and boarded a ship sailing directly for Italy's Tyrrhenian coast. Once there they visited another regional shrine and headed back to Rome.

Even so summary a comparison reveals two radically different experiences. In one, travel is achingly slow and indirect, and the travelers cling to Christian territory as long as they can. In the other, travel is relatively swift and direct, and the pilgrims leave Christian territory literally at the first opportunity. The differences are clearly real. But are they typical for their respective generations? If they are not, there is little we can conclude. If, on the other hand, they are indeed representative, then we must begin to revise, dramatically, our understanding of communications in the Mediterranean sea. Things will have changed deeply between 720 and 870.

There is a case that these differences are not accidental. Although Willibald and Bernard have left more detailed stories than other travelers, in its own time each story is not unique. Thus, around 700, other western travelers like Arculf or Thomas of Farfa also made the trip from Jerusalem through Byzantium, and took some lengthy time to do so (R43; R62). In the second half of the ninth century, on the other hand, Frotmund and his brothers made repeated pilgrimages to the Holy Land through Egypt and North Africa (R521).

Moreover, their accounts differ in a fundamental and telling respect. Willibald describes the visual experience of the sacred sites in refined detail. He allows the reader to envision, almost to touch, a distant reality which he will never see with his own eyes.[50] The shape of the Holy Sepulcher, of the stone which had closed it shut, the fifteen golden oil lamps illuminating around the clock the bier where the Lord's body had been placed, that waterproof lantern in the church of the Ascension, or even the curious appearance of water buffalos are the kind of thing which Willibald imparted to his audience through Hugeburc.[51] Distances are given only sporadically and rarely accompanied by directions. It would have been

50 Cf. e.g. on Arculf, Wilkinson 1977, 40–2 and, about pilgrim narratives in general Richard 1984, 145–6.

51 Above, n3.



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no small feat to use this narrative to repeat Willibald's exploit. Several generations later, Bernard proceeds very differently. He skips even a description of the Holy Sepulcher itself: that kind of thing is in Bede, he says. Rather the later writer abounds in practical advice: describing Monte Gargano he carefully notes that no one should place gifts on the altar. No, a receptacle hangs in front of the altar for donations (*donaria*).[52] Bernard tells his readers how to get a passport from the Arab authorities and what it describes, how the *jizya* works and how much different Christians have to pay to enjoy its protection. He explains how and where you rent a camel to cross the desert between Egypt and Palestine.[53] He specifies the days or miles it takes to accomplish various legs, indicates the directions, notes that you have to pay for anything you need in certain inns, and states the going rate of exchange between Carolingian and Arab currency.[54] When Bernard informs his medieval readers that in the Caliphate, payments are accepted only by weighing the species of payment, the modern reader may think of the astonishing spread of caliphal-style scales and fine weights across Scandinavia in the late ninth century.[55] The Frank makes abundantly clear that the duchy of Rome is the most dangerous part of the whole itinerary; Louis II's Lombardy – about which he had not yet breathed a word, although any traveler following in his footsteps would have to cross it – is, he says, substantially safer. And the Caliphate is the safest of all. Over and over again, Bernard supplies an astute warning or valuable tip which would be utterly useless to someone who was not planning on making the trip himself. How can we not conclude that the ninth-century author assumed that his readers could themselves undertake a voyage which, a century and a half earlier, had seemed virtually impossible?

Our first four travelers reveal the challenges ahead of us. They suggest that the ways people and things moved across the Mediterranean world from western Europe to the Byzantine and Islamic rim changed. Can we confirm such change? In terms of time, were there years or seasons when more or fewer people traveled? In terms of space, were there places that were more – or less – connected, and did they change over time? Did the routes connecting the edges of the old

52 Bernard, *Itinerarium*, 11, p. 315; gifts: 2, p. 310.

53 Safe conducts and payments: *Ibid.*, 3, p. 310; 5, p. 311; 7, pp. 312–13; 9, p. 313; camel rental: 8, p. 313.

54 Travel days: *Ibid.*, 5, p. 311; 7, p. 312; 8 and 9, p. 313. Miles: 15 miles from Jerusalem to Mar Saba: 11, p. 315; 1 mile from the Mount of Olives to Bethany: 16, p. 317; Bethlehem, 6 miles (a fact of obvious interest to readers of the Nativity narrative which is also included in Hugeburc, *V. Willibaldi*, 4, 98.25): *Itinerarium*, 17, p. 317; a monastery one mile from Bethlehem: 17, p. 317; 30 miles to the Jordan, 18, p. 318; etc. Points of the compass: e.g., in and around Jerusalem: 11, 12, and 16, pp. 314–17. Note the exceptions that prove the rule: the valley of Jehoshaphat (Kidron) and the Mount of Olives lack orientation but, as anyone who has been there knows, they are visible from Jerusalem. Exchange rate: 6, p. 311.

55 *Ibid.*, 6, p. 311; cf. Steuer 1987b.



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Roman sea remain the same or, as these stories have suggested, did they too fluctuate? And if change can be proven, can it be explained? Is it unconnected with the question of commerce? But before we can rightly discern the patterns of movement of people and things, we need to look more deeply at the people themselves whose movements hold the key. We must look behind the anecdotal, and find out what we can about the broader group of western ambassadors and pilgrims. Only then can we be assured that Amalarius, Marinus, Willibald, and Bernard are exceptional in their eloquence, not their experience.



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# 6

# *Two hundred more western envoys and pilgrims: group portrait*

On 3 November 869, the Roman monk Peter was summoned to the church council then under way in the Hagia Sophia. In the presence of the Byzantine emperor and Roman legates, the man was accused of participating in Photius' synod which, two years before, had deposed Pope Nicholas I. He denied everything. For the historian of Mediterranean communications, his defense is striking: "So am I the only Peter who comes up to this city from Rome? What about the other 10,000 Peters who have come up [here]?"[1] Although Peter may not win points for mathematical precision, his defense assumes a fair crowd of similarly named Romans at Constantinople in 867. The monk's forgotten protest challenges the notion of a ninth-century Mediterranean empty of communications and contacts. Closer scrutiny of the larger group of western pilgrims and envoys deepens that challenge.

## 1. Basic facts

Including Amalarius, Marinus, Willibald, and Bernard, I have been able to discern 239 individual envoys or pilgrims who traveled, or who intended to travel from western Europe into the eastern Mediterranean between c. 700 and 900. A majority belonged to an embassy.[2] This hints, again, at the role of social prominence in creating the documentary record.

1 *Concilium Constantinopolitanum a. 869–70*, Mansi 16.136C: ". . . etenim numquid ego solus Petrus sum in hanc urbem a Roma ascendens? Alii dena millia ascenderunt Petri . . ." Anastasius presumably translated the Greek word *murias* as 10,000; it usually means "a countless number." Cf. also the Greek summary, Mansi 16.384D–E. Peter's "up" reflects the mental geography of a culture which situated "east" at the top of such maps as existed. For more on Peter, see Pros. "Petrus 12."

2 60 percent, i.e. 144 ambassadors – seven of whom could also qualify as pilgrims – and ninety-five pilgrims.



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TABLE 6.1
Comparison of named and anonymous western ambassadors and pilgrims

| | Envoys | | Pilgrims | | Envoys *and* pilgrims | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **No.** | **%** | **No.** | **%** | **No.** | **%** |
| Named | 91 | **63** | 29 | 31 | 120 | 50 |
| Anon. | 53 | 37 | 66 | **69** | 119 | 50 |
| Total | 144 | 100 | 95 | 100 | 239 | 100 |

More pilgrims than ambassadors are nameless: the proportions are practically inverse (see Table 6.1). But this disparity is due mostly to a single document, whose administrative intent obviated the need for personal names. It is hard to know what is more remarkable about Charles the Great's survey of the Christian religious personnel in Palestine: its content or the fact that virtually every major historian of Charlemagne has ignored the "Inventory Memorandum on God's Houses in the Holy Land."[3] Were it not for the Inventory, the anonymity rate for envoys and pilgrims would be almost identical. More importantly, the roll underscores the role of social prominence in preserving records of travel. Had it not survived, known ambassadors would have outnumbered pilgrims by even more than they do. This serves as a precautionary reminder of the role of source survival in shaping our knowledge; but it is also the most extreme case among the hundreds of records from which the total group of 669 travelers has emerged.[4]

3 The *Breve commemoratorii de illis casis Dei* consists of at least three separate documents, transcribed *seriatim* on a damaged roll discovered at Basle in 1865. Though almost never mentioned among scholarly discussions of the capitularies, these documents belong among that hodge-podge of royal records. They do not figure even in the fine work of Mordek 1995. The roll records twenty-seven western monks explicitly attested as established on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, for whom no other attestation can be advanced. The so-called *Breve*, p. 302, actually mentions thirty-five monks, but that presumably includes eight monks independently attested elsewhere: Dominicus 1, Theodorus 4, Arimundus, Gregorius 6, Iohannes 10, Leo 4, and Anons. 92 and 106. I have prepared an edition, translation, and study of the roll from which I cite the text, although references are given to the edition by Tobler and Molinier, which is mediocre at best.

4 The *Breve* supplies the most individuals (fifty-eight) of any single record and is the sole witness for fifty of them, i.e. just under 8 percent of the total group of travelers.



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## 2. Geographic characteristics

The value of including anonymous travelers becomes immediately apparent when we probe the broader characteristics of ambassadors and pilgrims. Even if we may not know the *name* of certain Frankish ambassadors to Constantinople, or the Spanish woman who lived as a recluse at the Holy Sepulcher around 810, their *geographic background* is patent and precious to the broader inquiry. So where did the ambassadors and pilgrims come from?

The geographic origin of 168 (71 percent of the 239) can be recovered (see Table 6.2).[5] Plausibly enough, these travelers suggest that likelihood of eastern Mediterranean travel increased with proximity. Non-Byzantine Italy supplied the overwhelming majority of ambassadors and pilgrims, more than twice as many as the next closest region. The Carolingian empire north of the Alps was home to the second largest contingent and it supplied about four times as many travelers

TABLE 6.2
Known geographic origins of envoys and pilgrims to the east

| | Envoys | | Pilgrims | | Envoys *and* pilgrims | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **No.** | **%** | **No.** | **%** | **No.** | **%** |
| Italy | 97 | **72** | 7 | 21 | 104 | **62** |
| Carolingian empire* | 33 | 25 | 11 | **32** | 44 | **26** |
| England | 2 | 1 | 9 | 26 | 11 | **7** |
| Ireland | | | 4 | 12 | 4 | **2** |
| Spain | | | 3 | 9 | 3 | **2** |
| Moravia | 2 | 1 | | | 2 | **1** |
| Total | 134 | 100 | 34 | 100 | 168 | 100 |

*Note:*
*North of the Alps.

5 I have taken as "geographic origin" a traveler's main place of residence. When there are several geographic associations (for instance someone is appointed bishop elsewhere), I have used his principal residence prior to the trip. For instance, Willibald, later bishop of Eichstätt, is reckoned as coming from Wessex, where he grew up and began his journey. Though Suppo was ethnically a Frank, he was closely identified with the court of Pavia, and so is naturally counted as coming from northern Italy. This method sheds the most reliable light on infrastructures.



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TABLE 6.3
Geographic origins within Italy of envoys and pilgrims

| | Envoys | | Pilgrims | | Envoys *and* pilgrims | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Geographic origin** | **No.** | **%** | **No.** | **%** | **No.** | **%** |
| Rome | 52 | **58** | 1 | 14 | 53 | **55** |
| Northern Italy | | | | | | |
| kingdom of Pavia | 15 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 15 | **15** |
| Veneto | 12 | 13 | 1 | 14 | 13 | **13** |
| *Subtotal* | *27* | *30* | *1* | *14* | *28* | *29* |
| Southern Italy* | 8 | 9 | 4 | 57 | 12 | **12** |
| Central Italy | 3 | 3 | 1 | 14 | 4 | **4** |
| Totals | 90 | 100 | 7 | 100 | 97 | 100 |

*Note:*
*Outside effective Byzantine control for most of the period, i.e. Campania and Benevento. It does include, for instance, Oria, which had just come back under Byzantine control when its bishop Theodore was sent as the pope's ambassador to Constantinople.

as the next largest group, from the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Spain and Ireland bring up the rear.[6]

In nearly 100 cases it is possible to go further and appraise which regions in Italy supplied the most envoys and pilgrims (see Table 6.3). Like Marinus, over half the diplomatic and religious travelers were connected with the church of Rome. The duchy of Rome (including the nearby bishoprics such as Ostia or Nepi) produced about twice as many of these sorts of travelers as the next most plentiful area, northern Italy.[7] The parts of southern Italy that were not under effective Byzantine control (i.e. Campania and Benevento), display about half as many travelers as northern Italy, while central Italy comes in last place.[8]

6 Spain appears to be the exception here; however, including the emirate and the Arabic sources would probably bring the Iberian peninsula into line.

7 One could make a case that, e.g. Ravennate travelers were also affiliated with the Roman church, especially in the 9th C., but I have favored geographic proximity over purely juridical connection. Travelers from Ravenna therefore figure among northern Italians.

8 One traveler has a Lombard name, which points to central or southern Italy: Pros. "Theuderissius"; McCormick, "Mediterranean Communications."



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TABLE 6.4
Changing percentages of travelers: four regions of Italy, eighth to ninth centuries

| | 8th C.* | | 9th C. | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Geographic origin** | **No.** | **%** | **No.** | **%** | **No.** | **%** |
| Rome | 33 | **62** | 20 | **38** | 53 | **100** |
| Northern Italy | 8 | 29 | 20 | 71 | 28 | 100 |
| Southern Italy | 3 | **25** | 9 | **75** | 12 | **100** |
| Central Italy | 1 | 25 | 3 | 75 | 4 | 100 |
| Total | 45 | | 52 | | 97 | |

*Note:*
*Includes two travelers from c. 697.

The duchy of Rome's dominance among Italian diplomats stands to reason. Rome had historical and administrative connections with the Byzantine east, and special links with the Holy Land had arisen out of the Levantine immigration of the seventh century. Its unique religious and diplomatic status combine with its relatively good historical records to lend its travelers particular prominence. The fact that, overwhelmingly, the Italian travelers were on diplomatic missions of one sort or another would tend equally to favor Rome and its institutional sophistication.

Over time, the Italian picture reflects the broader one, but imperfectly. Overall, western envoys and pilgrims more than double from the eighth to the ninth century.[9] More Italian pilgrims and envoys also are known to have traveled in the ninth than in the eighth century (52 and 45 respectively – see Table 6.4), but the difference is not as sharp. When we examine the chronological distribution by regions, the picture gains texture: from one century to the next, the other regions of Italy double or triple their numbers, while Rome's are nearly halved. Chart 6.1 makes clear the differing performance of Rome with respect to the rest of Italy.

One might be tempted to suspect that increasing source materials explain the increasing number of travelers recorded from the other regions of Italy. But this simply cannot be the case for Roman travelers. The evidence from the church of Rome is not bad in the eighth century, but it improves dramatically in the ninth.[10]

9 Seventy-five between 700 and 799; 159 from 800 and 899; the total of 234 excludes the five travelers from the closing years of the 7th C.

10 When most of our sources are available in suitable electronic format, this kind of fundamental methodological consideration will be easy. For now, it is virtually impossible. By way of rough estimate, Duchesne's *Liber pontificalis* devotes 140 pages to the annotated biographies of popes from 701 to 795, and 198 to popes



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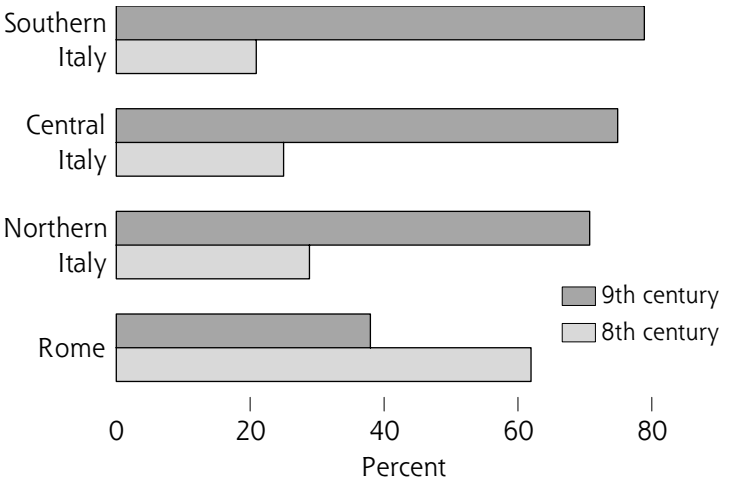
Chart 6.1. Changing origins of travelers from Italy, eighth and ninth centuries




This chart shows how four different regions of Italy display dramatically different trends in supplying envoys and pilgrims. The number of travelers coming from Rome dropped by more than a third between the eighth and ninth centuries; those coming from other regions nearly tripled or more. See also Table 6.4.

Purely diplomatic and theological issues cannot explain the shift either: although tensions rose and missions declined over second Iconoclasm (815–43) and Photius (858–67 and 877–86), first Iconoclasm (726–87) had pushed Roman tensions with Constantinople past the breaking point in the eighth century. Some part of the difference is probably due to the de facto secession of Rome from the Byzantine empire, reducing the kind of routine administrative travel that linked the capital and its provinces.[11] But nearly a halving of contacts?

If we were to rely solely on the raw numbers of this group of travelers, they would argue that, in the ninth century, Rome's share of travelers was equalled by northern Italy, specifically the kingdom of Pavia (i.e. the Po valley) and the Adriatic rim. Rome's relative importance as an intermediary with the eastern Mediterranean therefore decreased, while that of the Po–Adriatic system and, to a

Footnote 10 (*cont.*)
from 795 to 891. The difference is substantial even allowing for the very long commentary (almost 14 pp.) on Leo III (795–816). The contrast in the volume of papal correspondence is even clearer. JE 2141–502 inventories 361 papal communications between 700 and 799. JE 2503–3525 catalogues almost three times as many documents (1022) from 800 to 899. Even allowing for forgeries and errors, the picture is clear.

11 On administrative travel, McCormick 1998b, 38–40.



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lesser extent, the Campanian seaboard, increased. There remains the problem of growing source materials. Baldly stated, if the volume of sources surviving in the north increases in the ninth, how can we be sure that we are not just seeing a change in the rate of attestation of a phenomenon which has remained constant?[12] The short answer is that we cannot at this point exclude such an explanation for the Po–Adriatic travelers. But we can register the apparent pattern, and watch for further evidence, for or against.

Sixty-four travelers from beyond Italy can be located (Table 6.2). The largest number (69 percent) came from the Frankish empire, and the majority of them – three quarters – were diplomats. Everywhere else, pilgrims outnumber envoys. Ambassadors' predominance among the Franks reflects the Carolingians' political success as well as the existence of good – though not perfect – court records. From the eighth to the ninth century, the overall numbers increase, but only moderately.[13]

Another more subtle geographic pattern is more revealing. We can deduce the microregion of origin only for a relatively small number of pilgrims.[14] But when we plot them over space, an unanticipated correlation appears (Table 6.5). A surprising number of them – at least nine out of fourteen (64 percent) – lived within 100 km of one of the rare early medieval emporia, the large settlements such as Hamwic, Quentovic, or Venice that typified contemporary trading circuits.[15] This works out to two or three days of travel (Ch. 16.2). The correlation of geographic origin, trading town, and aptitude for Holy Land travel is not likely to be a coincidence conditioned by population geography.[16] One might suspect a sort of

12 It seems to me indubitable that overall, the volume of surviving sources increases from 700 to 900 in northern Italy; cf. n10. But there are certainly significant regional and, probably, chronological variations that have never been mapped. A rough estimate can be derived from an earlier, partially successful effort to compile a complete diplomatic record of the kingdom of Pavia. The *Codex diplomaticus Langobardiae* publishes a collection of acts which roughly quadruples in the second half of the 8th C. (from 13 to 58) and then doubles in each succeeding half-century (96 and 215 documents respectively for the first and second halves of the 9th C.).

13 From twenty-eight to thirty-two; Table 6.2 is larger because it includes the outliers.

14 Fourteen of all 95 pilgrims (15 percent); but that approaches half (15 of 34 (44 percent)) of western pilgrims about whose geographic origin we know anything at all. In McCormick 2000, I included ambassadors in this correlation; I have of course also added more travelers since then (1993). On further reflection, envoys seemed a less revealing subgroup who posed different problems, since the criteria by which rulers selected envoys were probably connected with political considerations.

15 See for Hamwic, below, Ch. 23.1; for the Italian towns, including the market center of Rome, Ch. 21.2; and for Quentovic and Verdun, Ch. 22.1–2.

16 The Parisian basin, for instance, is not well represented among the travelers, yet it is generally reckoned one of the most densely populated regions of transalpine Europe in this period. Schwarcz 1985, 40–41; cf. Ennen 1987, 78.



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TABLE 6.5
Correlations of pilgrims' homes and emporia, in chronological order (see also Map 6.1)

| Traveler* | Microregion | Emporium within 100 km |
|---|---|---|
| Bercharius | Montier-en-Der | Verdun |
| Petrus 1 | "Burgundy" | |
| Martinianus | Rome or Fermo? | ? |
| Martyrius | Rome | Rome |
| Thomas | Maurienne | |
| Silvinus | Thérouanne | Quentovic |
| Tidberchtus | Hampshire | Hamwic |
| Willibaldus | Hampshire | Hamwic |
| Madalveus | Verdun | Verdun |
| Dauferius 1 | Benevento | Naples/Amalfi |
| Bonegesius | Southern Campania | Naples/Amalfi |
| Dominicus 2 | Comacchio | Venice |
| Anon. 241 | Anjou | |
| Frotmundus | Anjou | |

*Note:*
*For more on the origins of these travelers, see Pros.

mental proclivity to movement, encouraged by acquaintance with the traveling merchants who clustered in these settlements. Or, more interesting still: is this a first, indirect indication that these emporia, especially those of the North Sea, were in fact *connected* to the great Mediterranean routes?

## 3. Social profile

Where we can establish the facts, the documented travelers turn out to have been overwhelmingly religious in profession. If we include monks among the ranks of religious, almost seven out of ten travelers had made some kind of religious vow at the time that we apprehend them in the sources.[17] Among the diplomatic travelers they dominate two to one.[18] Among pilgrims, the proportion is an even more overwhelming eight to one.[19]

17 164 certain or probable religious (69 percent); 51 certain or probable laymen (21 percent); 24 uncertain (10 percent).

18 86 certain or probable religious against 41 certain or probable laymen; 17 of uncertain status.

19 78 religious to 10 laymen; 7 uncertain.



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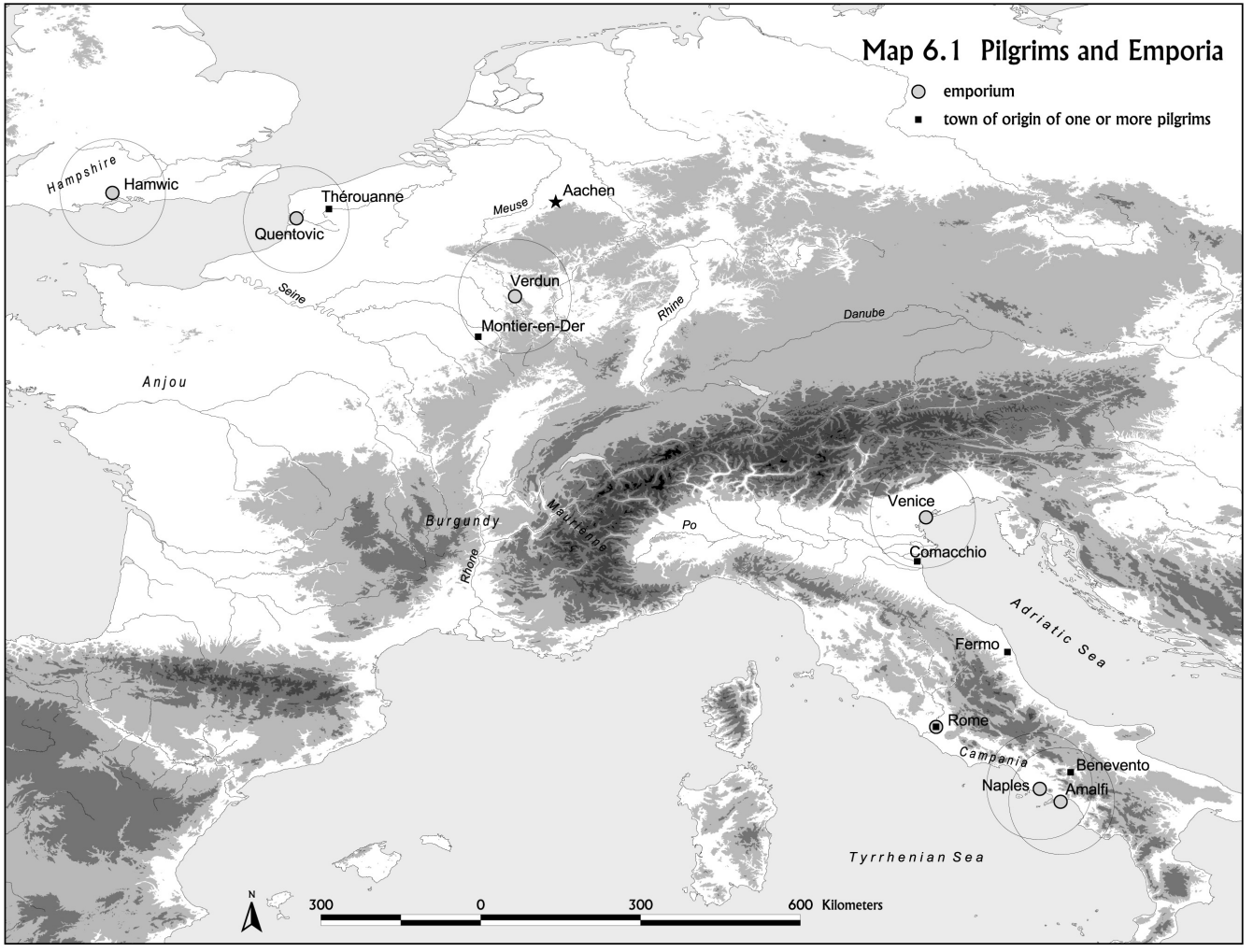


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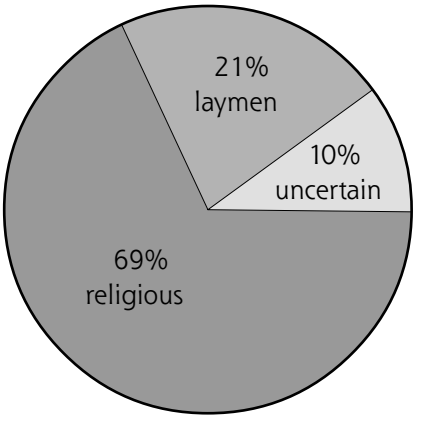
Chart 6.2. Religious status: western envoys and pilgrims




Taken at face value, this would mean that the great majority of travelers were ecclesiastics. Yet it is by no means certain that the fifty-eight western monks and nuns who resided in Jerusalem had entered the religious life before deciding to stay in the Holy City. Although their chief motive for travel was obviously religious, they need not always have been in orders when they set out on their adventure. Monastic conversion at the culmination of a pilgrimage is not unfamiliar in the Carolingian period: Pippin III's brother, the mayor of the palace Carloman, offers only the most spectacular example.[20] George, the abbot of the Frankish monastery of Jerusalem, probably had a similar experience. He had been baptized Egilbald, but took the religious name of George. The choice of the great Palestinian saint for his new name suggests, strongly, that his monastic conversion occurred in the Holy Land.[21]

Two further factors skew the evidence toward religious travelers. One we might call the collegiality factor. The connection between religion and literacy in the early medieval west means that there is far more biographical information about ecclesiastics than about lay people. Notwithstanding the sometimes surprising pockets of lay literacy, men and women of the church tended to do most of the writing. They also tended to be more interested in other ecclesiastics. The second factor derives from the social prestige attached in general to those who had accepted the religious life. How early medieval sources handle merchants has

20 *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 745–6, pp. 4–6, making very clear that he was tonsured only when he reached Rome. In like fashion, in 709, two Anglo-Saxon kings, Cœnred of Mercia and Offa of Essex, had renounced the world and traveled to Rome, where they became monks: Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, 5, 19, p. 516.

21 Pros. "Egilbaldus."



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already indicated the important role social status played in determining who gets mentioned in early medieval sources. That holds for this group of travelers in particular. Granted, some ecclesiastics were of ignoble origin and many churchmen remained far down on the social ladder. But it seems likely that, as a whole, there were proportionately fewer low-status individuals among ecclesiastics than among the larger numbers of the lay estate, in which low-status peasants must have constituted the overwhelming majority.[22] And there is no getting around the fact that men and women of the church constituted only a tiny minority of the total population from the later Middle Ages, when we begin to get useful statistics. Various early modern records from Europe's Catholic countries show that between 1377 and 1745, ecclesiastics of all descriptions comprised between about 1.5 percent and 3 percent of the total population.[23] This furnishes at least an order of magnitude for the early Middle Ages as well. The source material is indubitably weighted toward the socially distinguished, and ecclesiastics are particularly favored.

A counterproof comes from members of embassies and pilgrims of low social rank. Only three travelers (1.1 percent) are unambiguously of very low social rank, since they are clearly servants.[24] About the social status of another thirty-seven, we lack specific information. But most were almost certainly of high status, since they were ambassadors. What emperor or pope would send someone of low social status to impress his ideas on a foreign ruler? There are no sure cases of low-status ambassadors.[25] Next to the three servants, the other sixteen laymen whom we can rank on the social ladder occupied the top rungs, including princesses (three), dukes (four, and one son of a duke), counts (seven), gastalds (one, and one son), while two more came from a "most noble" family.[26] So we hear mostly about the crème de la crème. Nevertheless, it is possible to form an idea of who we are *not* hearing about, and

22 For a churchman and ambassador of low-birth status who rose to the heights of power and ecclesiastical rank, Pros. "Ebo." For one particular case of a low status priest ("de nativitate servus vester") in the reign of Louis the Pious see *Ep. variorum*, no. 25, *MGH Epist.* 5.339–40.

23 Cipolla 1980, 80–2.

24 Anons. 88–9 and 167. A fourth (Leo 8) is qualified by Anastasius Bibliothecarius' Latin translation as *mundanus* which is non-committal. Another 15 lack any useful information.

25 It may be countered that Isaac the Jew might have been reckoned of low social status by virtue of his religion and the merchant background widely attributed to him (though not documented in the sources). In fact, however, if he were a court merchant, his privileged position would have given him some significant social weight, even aside from his presumed wealth. In any case, Isaac is probably mentioned only because the Frankish ambassadors, as we know, had died en route. Isaac seems therefore to have been left as the highest-ranking person in the group of survivors. Pros. "Isaac," "Lantfridus," and "Sigimundus."

26 Frotmundus, Anon. 241.



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even how many of them there might have been, at least insofar as embassies are concerned.

The Frankish royal annals' report that Charlemagne sent Amalarius and Peter on an embassy to Constantinople means that these men headed the embassy. There was no need to tell a readership of prelates, counts and their ilk that prelates and counts did not travel alone. Amalarius' poem about his trip casually mentions another four individuals who traveled with him.[27] In fact, Louis the Pious attempted to limit the crowds that accompanied his grandees on imperial business, since they were entitled to requisition food, supplies, and shelter. Bishops were henceforth entitled to daily supplies for only forty people! Counts and abbots had to make do with traveling parties of thirty, and vassals, with seventeen.[28] Ambassadors' retinues to Constantinople may have been somewhat smaller since, in 968, Liudprand of Cremona's personal following numbered but twenty-five. In 869, as we have seen, forty horses from the imperial stable welcomed Marinus and his fellow ambassadors at Selymbria. The Byzantine practice of calibrating logistical support to convey diplomatic messages prevents us from directly extrapolating the total size of the party.[29] But taken with Liudprand's evidence and Louis the Pious' legislation, it shows that every head of an embassy mentioned in the main narrative sources implies, conservatively, at least some fifteen to twenty-five followers. These will have included companions of high social status and religious personnel to insure the performance of the liturgy en route, as well as the lower-status men who cooked, interpreted, guarded, and groomed.[30] While they are not counted in our totals, it is important to remember that they were there.

As expected, ranks of religious travelers also appear top-heavy. About a fifth of our ecclesiastical travelers were prelates (i.e. bishops and abbots: thirty-three of 163 certain or probable ecclesiastics). In keeping with the collegiality factor, however, the lower ranks are better represented in the case of churchmen. And in this case, the complete conspectus of religious personnel in the "Inventory of God's Houses" helps balance the picture.

The social analysis laid out in this table yields another surprise. Bishops and abbots are the best-documented social group of the Carolingian empire. One therefore expects to find them overrepresented in every category of travelers.

27 *Versus marini*, 427.10–23, 29, 32 and 33.

28 *Capitularia*, 141, 29, *MGH Capit.* 1.291, with discussion in McCormick 1994a, 26–7, and 43–4n51–6. Cf. Bede, *Historia abbatum*, 21, 1.385, who says Ceolfrid, abbot of Wearmouth and Jarrow, had a retinue of more than 80 persons for his pilgrimage to Rome in 716.

29 For Liudprand's evidence, McCormick 1994a, 43–4n53–4. Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *De ceremoniis* 1, 89, 400.8–12.

30 See McCormick 1994a, 43n53.



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TABLE 6.6
Status of ecclesiastical envoys and pilgrims at the time of their travel*

| Rank | Envoys | Pilgrims | Total | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| bishops | 24 | 3 | 27 | 16 |
| abbots | 7 | 2 | 9 | 5 |
| priests | 13 | 2 | 15 | 9 |
| deacons | 5 | | 5 | 3 |
| subdeacons | 2 | | 2 | 1 |
| monks | 7 | 68 | 75 | 46 |
| papal administrators** | 12 | | 12 | 7 |
| other | 16 | 3 | 19 | 12 |
| Total | 86 | 78 | 164 | 100 |

*Notes:*
*Insofar as it can be determined. The evidence is most secure for the prelates and priests in this respect.
**I.e. defensors etc. I have been unable to determine to my satisfaction the ecclesiastical rank of these officials in this period; it is possible that some were not in orders.

While they are indeed prevalent among envoys, only five prelates figure among pilgrims and, as we have just seen, one of them, abbot George, probably entered religion only at the end of his pilgrimage. Nor are two priests very many, especially given that the percentage of priests increased sharply in Carolingian monasteries.[31] Monks predominate, and western monks established at Jerusalem lead among them. Even leaving aside the fact that monks were technically laymen, we have already seen that there is no clear reason to assume that the majority of these westerners had taken their monastic vows prior to arriving in Jerusalem. All of this suggests that Carolingian Holy Land pilgrimage did not faithfully mirror the institutional Church. On the contrary, the prosopography of western pilgrims hints that the trip to Jerusalem attracted lay society much more than the institutional church.

Enough survives to illustrate travel by women: first and foremost, that it occurred. To be sure, it was contemplated in the numerous marriage alliances negotiated between Byzantium and the west; but, unlike two Byzantine brides, none of the western women intended for eastern marriages actually sailed to Byzantium.[32] Less exalted women traveled in apparently substantial numbers, at

31 On the increase in priests: Oexle 1978, 101–3.

32 Byzantine brides: Pros. "Evanthia"; "Anna 2"; Carolingian princessses: "Gisela," "Rotruda," "Irmingarda."



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least as far as Rome. This is well documented for Anglo-Saxon women of high and low social status.[33] Indeed, in 747, St. Boniface urged English prelates and princes to curtail the numbers of English laywomen and nuns on the roads to Rome, since most of them came to no good ("paucis remanentibus intactis"). There were, he claimed, few towns in Lombardy, Frankland, or Gaul that lacked an English woman of easy virtue (*adultera*) or prostitute.[34] At least one Irish woman traveled to Rome in the early ninth century, and our informant doesn't seem to consider that unusual.[35] Women from the Frankish empire had shorter roads to Rome, and were perhaps not far behind females crossing the Channel and the Irish Sea.[36]

Some intrepid women actually went to the Holy Land. Thanks to the "Inventory of God's Houses," we know about a few of them. That seventeen women from Charlemagne's dominions reached Jerusalem and decided to settle there as nuns indicates that more may well have undertaken the trip successfully and, like many male pilgrims, returned home.[37] We cannot know whether the tenth (9 percent: 21 women) of documented religious and diplomatic travelers who were women approximates the real proportion of those who traveled. But joined with the female pilgrims who crossed the Alps to venerate St. Peter, as well as the women we will see heading east as political refugees or exiles, not to mention the enslaved females exported to the Islamic world (see Chapter 9), the seventeen western nuns living in Jerusalem warn against facile assumptions about the gender of travelers. And they prove that the more celebrated women pilgrims of the late tenth century had Carolingian forerunners.[38]

Human age and the activities which may be linked with certain ages are gaining increasing attention from historians. Age-specific activities have certainly changed over time. "Nasty, brutish and short" sounds like a plausible description of early medieval life spans. One garners the impression that their health and reduced life expectancy meant that early medieval individuals experienced their life cycle more rapidly than say, most late twentieth-century Americans.[39] The European nuns who settled in Jerusalem have dealt a first blow to the

33 Bede, *Chronica maiora*, *CCL*, 123B.534.2041–3.

34 Boniface, *Ep.* 78, 169.15–25. Earlier, he had himself encouraged and accompanied to Rome a female relative: *Ep.* 27, 48.5–26 and *Ep.* 105, 229.10–20.

35 Brigida, who became lame en route home and was left behind at St. Goar by her kinsfolk and fellow countrymen: she is mentioned because she was miraculously cured: Wandalbert of Prüm, *Miracula S. Goaris* (*BHL* 3567), 15, 63.6–11.

36 Two examples: the Alamannian Beata: Hlawitschka 1960, 18; an anonymous woman, apparently from the Tours region: Theodulf of Orleans, *Carmina*, 72.iv, *MGH Poet.* 1.568.195–6.

37 A Spanish woman, apparently not from Charlemagne's bridgehead around the Pyrenees, was also established there as a recluse. Pros. "Anons. 137–53, 159"; *Breue*, ed. McCormick, "Holy Land"; cf. ed. Tobler and Molinier, p. 302.

38 E.g., Runciman 1969, 73.

39 See e.g., Riché 1978, 47–9.



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conventional wisdom about the prohibitive rigors of travel in the early medieval Mediterranean. How about the age of travelers?

About even the most exalted Carolingian, data of this sort are hard to come by: historians cannot agree when Charlemagne was born.[40] This is also true for lesser men. The least resistant terrain for exploring the problem of age lies among ecclesiastics, thanks to the Church's doctrine of "canonical age."

The teaching held that particular religious dignities were open only to individuals who had attained certain biological ages. It offers one potential approach. Since we are entering new territory, and since observance may well have varied between the Roman and the Frankish churches, it is prudent to assess the two western cases separately. A close study of the data about one Carolingian churchman has inclined at least one scholar to skepticism: on the least favorable assumptions, Godescalc of Orbais, who *might* have been a deacon in 829, *may* have been twenty-one to twenty-three years old, rather than the canonical twenty-five.[41]

The normative evidence does not speak with one voice. Justinian I had defined the canonical ages as thirty-five for bishops, thirty for priests, and twenty-five for deacons and subdeacons. He later explicitly reduced the age for bishops to thirty, a measure which probably reflects the enduring consequences of the plagues of 541 and 558.[42] The "Quinisext" Council (692), some of whose provisions the Roman church contested, established bishops' and priests' legitimate age at thirty; for subdeacons, it was reduced to twenty.[43] These seventh-century ages apparently already had found acceptance at Rome in the fifth century.[44]

Were the rules honored? No one has studied individual careers to see. Observance may have been more rigorous for the major orders; lowly subdeacons elicit more skepticism.[45] To judge from a letter Pope Zachary sent to Boniface in 751, the Roman church then took the canonical age quite seriously, at least for priests and bishops. Boniface had sought a dispensation to ordain priests below the canonical age. Zachary urged him to stick with the canon: only if he could find no thirty-year-olds whatsover would Boniface be allowed to ordain priests from age twenty-five, like deacons.[46] Prosopography lets us test these Roman scruples on two careers.

40 Werner 1973; Becher 1992.

41 Freise 1978, 1023–6; cf. Pros. "Godescalcus 1."

42 *Novella* 123, 1, 3.594.22–4; and 13, 3.604.16–18 (A.D. 546). The Greek text has 30, the Latin 35, for priests; cf. M. Th. Fögen, *ODB* 3: 1497–8 and Blokscha 1931, 45, who has apparently consulted only the Latin text: *Novella* 137, 2, 3.697.4 (A.D. 565). The *Novels* were of course the law of the land in reconquered Italy.

43 Many of the Quinisext's measures produced Roman opposition; its provisions on subdeacons nonetheless worked their way into Gratian (*Dist.* 77, c. 4): Fritz 1937, 1594–7.

44 Blokscha 1931, 55–7.

45 See Delmaille 1935, 339–40.

46 Boniface, *Ep.* 87, 198.17–24; cf. Blokscha 1931, 77–8.



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Formosus was at least forty-eight when he became bishop of Porto Romano (c. 864 or 865), and so well over the legitimate age. He was fifty years old when he was sent as a missionary and diplomat to the Bulgar court, and fifty-two when he was ordered to proceed to Constantinople. The canons were also followed for Marinus' ordination as a bishop and, perhaps, as a deacon.[47] So the two cases we can check argue for observance of the legitimate age for higher orders.[48] Nonetheless, it is wise to regard the canonical ages as only a useful approximation, pending more systematic study.

Applying that approximation suggests the minimum ages for almost two thirds of the Roman travelers, calculated from each individual's earliest attestation with the appropriate dignity (Table 6.7). Individuals making more than one trip obviously supply multiple cases (thirty-five cases in total).

If the canons were observed, these would all be *minimal* ages; we have no idea how much older the individuals might really have been. The bulk of the travelers about whom we can hazard a hypothesis would have been in the fourth decade of their life, at least, when they set out for Constantinople. By this reckoning, they would have been in what we would consider today the physical prime of life. More surprising are the three ambassadors over age 50, given assumptions about the rigors of early medieval travel. But these are precisely three of the best-known careers of the whole group, and one of the ages is established by independent evidence.

Although there is less evidence about non-Roman travelers, what there is tends to confirm both the observance of the canonical ages for priests and bishops, and the fact that some travelers were at least in their fifth decade of life.[49] Again, the bulk of travelers whose ages can be estimated were probably no younger than

47 The data on his date of birth can be interpreted in two ways: see Pros. "Marinus 2." In the least favorable, Marinus would have been between twenty-three and thirty-one when he first appeared as a deacon; and between thirty and thirty-eight at the earliest possible date at which he could have been made bishop. If the more favorable (and, in my opinion, more likely) interpretation of his age as a subdeacon is accepted, he would have been between thirty-one and thirty-nine at his first attempt to travel to Constantinople in 866, when he is first attested as a deacon, and between thirty-seven and fifty-three when made a bishop.

48 Landolf, bishop of Capua and papal envoy to Constantinople in 891/2 is the one case where the evidence may argue against the observance of canonical age: in 879 he is called "adolescentulus"; he was consecrated in 879/80. But his case tells us more about the complex family struggles over power in Capua than about procedure in episcopal appointments which the Roman church really controlled, notwithstanding John VIII's presence at his consecration; Pros.

49 For Frankish normative evidence on the canonical ages, see Blokscha 1931, 77–82. The only possible evidence from this group against the canonical age is uncertain, and concerns the status of deacon: Pros. "Erlbald."



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TABLE 6.7
Minimum ages of papal envoys, if the canonical ages were observed

| Minimum age | Individuals and dignities* | Number of cases |
|---|---|---|
| 20+ | subdeacons: Dorotheus, Iulianus | 2 |
| 25+ | deacons: Gregorius 1 (future Pope Gregory II: [possibly 29/43+]), Iohannes 8 | 2 |
| 30+ | priests and bishops: Donatus 2, Georgius 2, Georgius 4 [31+ on second mission], Iohannes 23, Michaelius (1st mission), Nicetas 1, Nicolaus, Paulus 1, Petrus 3, Romanus, Zacharias 5 [possibly 37+], Theodosius 5 [31+, 2nd mission], Eugenius 878 [31+ and probably 33+], Constantinus 2 [32+], Leo 7 [probably 35+], Marinus 2 [**?31/9+** as deacon, first mission; **34/42+**, second], Stephanus 3 [32/38+], Petrus 17 [probably 40+; possibly 48+] | 21 |
| 35+ | Michaelius (2nd mission), Paulus 8, Dominicus 4 [36+], Radoaldus [37+] | 4 |
| 50+ | Formosus [**50,** 1st mission; **51**, 2nd], **Anastasius 4 [52+], Petrus 4 [55+] | 4 |

*[ ] signify possible/probable ages based on chronology of other dignities than that held at time of mission; **bold:** ages/years independently established; individuals who made more than one trip appear more than once, where appropriate.

**Strictly speaking, Anastasius Bibliothecarius was an imperial envoy, but he had been ordained in the Roman church.

their thirties. The three whose biological ages are certain were aged thirty–thirty-one, forty-eight and about sixty-six years, although the youngest and the oldest did not actually go on their mission – and one can well sympathize with the sixty-six-year-old Ebo's refusal. To this clear evidence about age, we should add Amalarius' statement. He was presumably in his mid-thirties or more when he called Peter of Nonantola, his fellow ambassador, "aged" (*grandaevus*).[50] If indeed older men were not infrequently chosen, this may stem, in part, from the nature of the diplomatic task. Rulers would probably have chosen as representatives experienced individuals with a proven track record.

Willibald was the youngest traveler, a healthy twenty-two or twenty-three when he set out for the Middle East.[51] But the other two pilgrims whose approximate age we can establish tend in the same direction as the older envoys. The biological events of Dauferius 1's life – he fathered a son around or before 779 – mean

50 Pros., "Petrus 6."

51 Pros. "Willibald." A boy refugee and his mother started for Constantinople, but interrupted their trip: Pros. "Sicco" and "Anon. 78."



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TABLE 6.8
Minimum ages of other western travelers, if the canonical ages were observed

| Minimum age | Individuals* | Number of cases |
|---|---|---|
| 20+ | Erlbaldus (18/22+), Willibaldus **(22/3)** outbound, (**28/9**) inbound | 3 |
| 30+ | Anon. 223, Zacharias 2, Nordbertus, Arculf, Thomas, Hyacinthus, Iohannes 11, Amalarius (32+), Madalveus **(42/64)** | 9 |
| 40+ | Halitgarius; Haido **(48)** | 2 |
| 50+ | Fortunatus (52+) on trip to Constantinople | 1 |
| 55+ | Fortunatus (55+) on trip from Constantinople; Ebo **(c. 66)** | 2 |

*Note:*
*( ) signify probable ages based on chronology of orders. **Bold:** ages/years independently established.

that he would have been at least in his late forties when he set out for Jerusalem. And although we cannot date Madalveus' pilgrimage between 753 and c. 776 with certainty, there is some ground for placing it in 768, when he would have been 57. As with the papal and royal envoys, he seems older than we might have expected. And that raises again, from a different angle, the issue of how difficult it truly was to travel to the Middle East, at least in the century and a half after 750, the period when the older travelers are attested.

## 4. Under way

What we can see fits further with the fact that not all 239 individuals who were supposed to travel eastward completed the journey. For various reasons, a few never got beyond the planning stages.[52] Life was pretty dangerous in the early Middle Ages: individual histories and excavated cemeteries agree on this.[53] Infectious diseases had helped disrupt communications in the dying decades of antiquity. Thereafter, the various infections probably coalesced into geographically discrete disease pools as the density of some populations declined and new patterns of organization redefined the zones within which people habitually

52 For example, the Frankish princesses betrothed to Byzantine emperors, Gisela, Rotruda and Irmingarda; Ebo; also Anon. 223, if my identification with Walafrid Strabo is correct.

53 See for the Carolingian elite, Bullough 1984, 91; cf. 90n59; for peasant mortality, e.g. Auboire 1988, 180–2.



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moved.[54] The corollary is that people who crossed into such new zones of habitual population movement also entered new disease pools. In other words, their bodies faced greater danger from infections new to their immune systems.

Willibald's wealth of biographical tidbits – and an exceptionally hardy constitution which meant that he lived to tell about it – throw sharp light on the human cost of traveling in this new world. While under way from Hampshire to Rome, his father fell sick and died at Lucca. Then, as summer settled over Rome, terrible fevers beset the two surviving brothers. Right after he reached Jerusalem, Willibald fell very ill again. Later, he lost his sight for two months; finally, in Syria, he contracted what sounds like the bubonic plague. One wonders, beyond the obvious religious attraction, whether the custom by which westerners' Holy Land trips began with a voyage to Rome was, consciously or not, a form of "seasoning," which allowed them to experience the Mediterranean disease pool and, if they survived, build antibodies which would serve them in good stead as they moved toward that disease pool's epicenter.[55] Certainly, Carolingians were well aware of the dangers of the fevers which they attributed, with some justification, to the heat of the Italian summer (Ch. 15.1). Italy and Palestine were mentioned in the same breath as particularly plague-ridden.[56]

Willibald's illnesses uncover an underlying circumstance which was so banal that we rarely hear about it. For some travelers died during their trip without any hint of violence, although, naturally, it is difficult to connect the deaths specifically with a different disease environment. The evidence probably understates mortality, since there was little reason to report the distant death of any but the most important individuals. Three of the travelers who set out for the Caliphate together from Treviso in 797 died after they reached Jerusalem. The two fatalities mentioned by the Royal Annals, predictably, headed the embassy.[57] A decade later, we learn of the death of the Frankish leader of another embassy to Baghdad.[58] The social filter which shapes what gets mentioned in the Royal Annals equally explains that they breathe not a word of the deaths of two lower-ranking members

54 For modern genetic evidence probably connected with endemic malaria from Italy which I have argued stems from this period, see McCormick 1998b, 24–31. For "disease pools," McNeill 1976, e.g. 67–8.

55 The term "seasoning" is how early settlers in the British North American colonies described the initial spasm of sickness and death which decimated each arriving group of colonists, as I learned from Bernard Bailyn.

56 Christian of Stavelot, *Expositio in Matthaeum*, *PL*, 106.1455A: "Fit vero pestis frequenter in Palaestina et in Italia."

57 Pros. "Anon. 86," "Lantfridus" and "Sigimundus." We do not know the cause, but the phrasing for all three men's deaths would certainly admit illness. The fact that Isaac did not so succumb might reinforce the common assumption that he was a professional merchant who knew the ropes of Middle Eastern travel, and acted as the embassy's expert guide and interpreter.

58 Pros. "Radbertus."



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of Amalarius' embassy.[59] But even given the probable underreporting of travel deaths, for the most prominent travelers who are reliably recorded, the mortality rate was not very high. All in all, seven of 239 travelers (3 percent) are known to have died before completing a round trip. This is not many, considering the risks inherent in lengthy foreign travel, the general state of health, and the different disease environments, not to mention what we have seen about the ages of some.[60]

Sometimes travelers did not reach their goal for other reasons. Diplomatic travel to Constantinople was especially exposed to politically motivated disruption. More than one in ten documented travelers to Constantinople did not get there (fourteen out of 117: 12 percent). Beyond the three who died en route, five seem never to have left their homeland, and seven more were stopped inside Byzantine territory or after a long journey to its borders. Another pair were more successful a second time.[61] In 731/2, and again in 866/7 the Byzantine authorities blocked undesired papal emissaries en route (R132–3; R559). Shifting sands at home might sometimes end an embassy before it had gotten very far. This seems to have happened at least once late in Louis the Pious' reign.[62] Another time, the man chosen as ambassador simply refused to go to Constantinople.[63]

Nonetheless, the single most remarkable thing about these 239 travelers runs counter to the conventional wisdom. For all the dangers modern medievalists have posited along early medieval shipping routes, very few of our travelers had their voyage interrupted by violence. The dangers of overseas travel were real, but they came as much from shipwreck and, I think, illness, as predatory violence. Attacks did happen, and we occasionally see travelers reacting to danger. Amalarius, for instance, specifies the twin threats of coastal Slav pirates and a high seas Muslim raider that his ship avoided in 814. Yet there is actually only one incident when pirates seized three western envoys, and they returned home, minus their effects, by the end of the year (R601; cf. R436). In a second incident, raiders captured a merchant skipper on a commercial venture from Rome to the Aegean around 892 (R729). The relative rarity of such experiences, at least for diplomats and, so far as we can tell, pilgrims, is confirmed by the fact that the

59 Anons. 167–8. Given the relatively close integration of contemporary Rome into the Byzantine polity, it is improbable that the bishop who died in Apulia en route to Constantinople in late 710 or early 711 was affected by a new disease environment (Nicetas 1). It is unclear why on the same occasion, Georgius 2 was left behind at Naples.

60 Even so, the fact that five of the seven come from two somewhat better documented trips gives pause.

61 Never left: Gisela, Irmingarda, Rotruda, and below.

62 Anon. 223. Formosus' failure to execute his orders and travel to Constantinople as Nicholas I lay dying probably reflects uncertainty over the papal succession: R572.

63 Pros. "Ebo."



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ambassadors' capture provoked vociferous protest, and was reckoned without parallel. There were even intimations that it was all a Byzantine plot.

Western pilgrims and ambassadors were heading, mainly, for Constantinople (117) and Jerusalem (105).[64] Four went to both places on the same trip. Seven more went to Baghdad, and three of them certainly stopped in Jerusalem en route. In the ninth century, travelers increase to both Constantinople and Jerusalem, but the rate of increase is much steeper for Jerusalem.[65] It is true that most of the ninth-century pilgrims occur only in the "Inventory of God's Houses."[66] But even if this one document had not survived, we would still find a hefty increase in Jerusalem travelers (of 95 percent, from 20 to 39).

Of course, dividing the travelers at 800 is arbitrary. And counting individuals gives only a first indication, for it oversimplifies and distorts. Some pilgrims or members of a diplomatic party traveled together, so that one particularly well-documented trip swells inordinately a particular year's travelers. For instance, Pope Constantine's large retinue in 710 creates a sizable blip in that year; Charlemagne's envoys to Baghdad traveled as far as Jerusalem with Count Gebahard's emissaries to the patriarch of the Holy City; the seven attested members of this single group made only one trip outbound. In either instance, evaluating communications by tallying individuals gives a distorted impression.[67] To map shifts in the frequency of documented communications over time, in other words, focusing on *trips* made by individuals or groups, rather than on number of individuals alone, produces more reliable results.

There is more than the number of movements to the aggregate picture of the 239 pilgrims and diplomats. Viewed broadly over a two-hundred-year period, the travelers yield further clues to long-range developments that reinforce and deepen the anecdotal evidence of our thumbnail sketches. Many of the pilgrims' movements included intermediary stops. The late antique pattern of pilgrimage had frequently included Constantinople, which made sense both in terms of the late Roman communications system and the hoard of relics amassed there.[68] Precisely this pattern still predominates among our earliest travelers, three of whose trips certainly included Constantinople. But two more

64 It is plausible that two more travelers, reported as going to India, also went to Jerusalem. Pros. "Aedelstan" and "Sighelm."

65 Constantinople: 54 in the 8th C. and 62 in the ninth, an increase of 15 percent; Jerusalem 20 and 89, respectively; at first blush, this represents an increase of 290 percent; but see next n. The travelers who went to both are counted twice.

66 58, of whom 8 are independently attested, so that even without the "Inventory," we would know about 39: cf. above, nn3 and 65.

67 See R73; Anons. 86–9, Isaac 1, Lantfridus, Sigimundus.

68 Thus the pilgrim itineraries: *Itinerarium burdigalense*, *CCL* 175.8; Egeria, *Itinerarium* 23, 8–9, *ibid.*, 67.40–9; Ps. Antoninus Placentinus, *Itinerarium*, 1, *ibid.*, 129.4.



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preferred Ephesus.[69] If the capital may appear routine, Ephesus seems less so. Certainly Thomas' biographer connects his three-year stopover there to the tomb of St. John the Evangelist.[70] Willibald and Tidbercht also venerated the local shrines, but this happened to be where the ship they had taken, apparently in Italy, landed them.[71] Now Ephesus had been an important shipping center in antiquity, but like so many other Byzantine towns, it had contracted dramatically by the time the Anglo-Saxons got there.[72] Even so, later in the eighth century, Ephesus was certainly the site of an important fair. The fair combines with the clustering of early pilgrims around Ephesus en route to or from other destinations to suggest that this town was then the terminus of interregional shipping routes. Its exceptional role in the travels of Willibald, Thomas, and also Madalveus hints that the fair existed a generation or two before its earliest attestation (R229).

The picture of pilgrim routes changes in the later eighth century. Between c. 753/76 and 900, *no* pilgrim from the Latin west is known to have stopped at Constantinople en route to or from Jerusalem. Yet, as we have already seen, they did not cease traveling to the Holy Land: on the contrary, they went in greater numbers. Nor did Ephesus cease functioning as a shipping and market center (R417). Bernard's trip has shown that, in 867, pilgrims traveled to or from the Holy Land by a new route, through Egypt. Less well-known travelers reveal that this may have started around 800 and that, in any case, the shift had certainly occurred before 825.[73] Could this changing picture of pilgrim travel disclose a hitherto hidden transformation of infrastructures which accompanied the rise of the Islamic polity and economy? But in that case our observation would imply connections between the Christian north and the Islamic southern rim.[74]

69 Arculfus, R43; Willibald and Tidbercht homebound: R125; outbound they stopped in Ephesus: R108; Thomas homebound via Ephesus R62; Madalveus stopped in both places outbound: R180.

70 *Constructio Farfensis*, 2, 5.2–10. This 9th-C. work from Farfa surely preserves authentic data from around 700: the itinerary itself is without western parallel in the 9th, and prosopographical details about Thomas' otherwise unknown companions smack of authenticity: see Pros. "Martinianus" and "Martyrius." Cf. Wattenbach *et al*. 1952–90, 4: 426–7. Ambrosius Autpertus, *Vita Paldonis, Tatonis ac Tasonis* (BHL 6415), 107.1–10, already mentions his Jerusalem pilgrimage in the 8th C.

71 Pros.

72 Foss 1979.

73 The Irishman Fidelis is probably the earliest: R391; so too Dominicus 2: R405; Frotmundus also: R521; below, Ch. 17.2. A few western pilgrims may still have transited via Constantinople, but the essential point is that the city (and its shipping) ceased to be on the usual route.

74 Arculf provides an exception which proves the rule. In the 680s he traveled to Alexandria, to *get a ship to Constantinople*: R42. Like the persistence of late antique patterns of shipping to Marseilles down into the 8th C., this suggests that some forty years after the Arab conquest of the Egyptian capital, the old pattern of shipping still had some vitality.



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By the same token, Marinus and his companions unveil a new path to Constantinople in 866. Although their overland trip was deliberately blocked on Byzantium's doorstep the first time, the second time they were welcomed with open arms (R592). If they were not alone on this route, they signal another development of profound import in the system of communications between western Europe and the Middle East: the reopening of a land route for the first time since the end of Roman power. In time and space, this development is quite distant from the shift in infrastructures which shunted pilgrims south, across Africa and Egypt, to reach the Holy Land. It may also be, in part at least, causally independent of that shift. But this matter will require closer scrutiny (see Chapter 19).

The pilgrims and diplomats came firstly from Italy, secondly from the Frankish empire, and only in lesser numbers from England, Ireland, and Spain. A surprising proportion of the pilgrims stems from within three days' march of an emporium. And what of the violence that has become emblematic of our image of Mediterranean sea travel in the age of Charlemagne? So far as we can tell, sickness as much as hostile action threatened travelers. Men of relatively advanced age undertook the trip to the east. At least a few women went as well.

The patterns of western travelers' movements suggest change and growth, not stasis and stagnation. They echo the differences we uncovered among our four better-known pilgrims and diplomats. The earliest travelers replicated the communication patterns of late antiquity, reaching the Holy Land via the Byzantine Aegean – Ephesus looms large – or the Bosporus. Sometime between c. 753/76 and 800/25, western travelers aiming at points beyond Constantinople abandoned the ancient Byzantine route and *began to travel east through the Islamic world*. Around the same time, the share of travelers setting out from Rome and Italy's Tyrrhenian coast shrank, while those from the Po valley and the Adriatic rim surged. Envoys and pilgrims to the southern and eastern reaches of the House of Islam increased. So too, in contrast to an eighth-century traveler, a ninth-century pilgrim abounds in practical tips which would be pointless in a world where Frankish travelers to Egypt and the Holy Land were non-existent. Bold and clear, these patterns leap out from the aggregate data of our 239 envoys and pilgrims, confirming the anecdotal stories of four prominent travelers. Are we really seeing nothing but changes in the survival pattern of documents? Let us look at a second group of pilgrims and envoys, whose movements headed in the opposite direction.



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# 7

# *Byzantine faces*

IT IS TIME to meet a second set of people on the move. They were born, raised, and made their careers in sibling cultures that differed deeply from Charlemagne's western Europe. But they too ventured across the great inland sea, to the other end of Christendom. In fact they knew some of the westerners we have already encountered.

Systematic scrutiny has turned up even more easterners who traveled across the Mediterranean world in the eighth and ninth centuries. They range from a Byzantine jester at the court of the Lombard kings to a deposed patriarch.[1] Among the easterners too, a few faces stand out in the large but shadowy group of travelers whose traces we can still detect. These six men are known mostly through sources whose survival owes nothing to the circumstances which have preserved records of the western travelers: the light they cast on our problem is practically independent of what we have seen so far.

We begin with a bishop, born in a cattle town in Asia Minor, but accustomed to life in the capital, a staunch iconophile who enjoyed the confidence of pope and patriarch. This Michael was one of the few men who knew both Charlemagne and Harun al Rashid. Next come two of the most original men to issue from Byzantium, soldier's sons from Thessalonica. Constantine (Cyril) and Methodius followed the imperial command and their own instincts west. As missionaries, they blurred the borders between official and religious travelers. Their travel's result was to convert the Slavs, invent a new literature and forge the mother language of one of Europe's great civilizations. Small wonder that even today, their faces remain enveloped and obscured by the lingering luster of hagiography and ethnic chauvinism. Our three Byzantine pilgrims take us into other milieux. Gregory Akritas, a simple sort, quit his sheep on the isle of Crete for a pilgrim's existence in foreign lands. Gregory Dekapolite and Blaise of Amorion

1 Pros. "Gregorius 3"; "Callinicus."



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were born in the interior of Asia Minor and followed different paths to Rome and then back to Constantinople.

## 1. The ambassador

Michael was a gregarious man, with an eye for beautiful books. He was a friend to Photius' father, and predicting great things for the unborn child, he blessed the future patriarch's pregnant mother.[2] He shows up in many contemporary sources and merited a hagiographical biography himself. Although his Life has never been fully published, it was summarized by the compilers of the Synaxary of Constantinople around the year 1000, and again, at much greater length, in the nineteenth century.[3]

Michael was born around 746 of wealthy parents at Synada (mod. Şuhut, Turkey), in the highlands of western Asia Minor (Map 7.1). Mountains ringed his hometown on the southwestern edge of the Anatolian plateau. According to a loquacious successor, Synada's soil was poor and the climate harsh. It produced neither wheat nor olive oil nor wine; its wood-starved inhabitants burned dung for fuel. But it was rich enough that a tenth-century metropolitan had to beg the emperor whose help he sought to look at his debts, not his assets, and a skilful analysis has detected the town's real wealth.[4] Its well-being derived from good roads and stock-raising. The cattle must have been herded to other towns to market and supplied the dung which warmed the town's inhabitants in the bitter continental winter. Synada also boasted quarries, perhaps around Michael's time, and it featured a Jewish community, among whom St. Constantine the Jew

2 Most of these thumbnail sketches are built on the evidence assembled in Pros., to which the reader is referred. For certain potentially controversial or non-prosopographical points in this chapter, I have nonetheless spelled out the essential evidence in somewhat greater detail.

3 The *Synaxary of Constantinople* (hereafter *Syn. CP.*), a calendar enumerating briefly the daily liturgical commemorations of the city of Constantinople, took its essential shape in the 10th C.: R. F. Taft and N. P. Ševčenko, *ODB* 3: 1991; cf. Kazhdan 1996, 485–6. Heavily abbreviated *Life*: *Syn. CP.*, 703–4. Doukakes seems to offer a reworked version of an earlier text, presumably related to the unpublished *Life*. Doukakes' material often parallels the other primary sources, particularly Theophylact's *Vita Theophylacti* (*BHG* 2451; see below), and one passage is nearly identical to the corresponding segment of the very short *Synaxary* life: cf. Doukakes p. 416 and *Syn. CP.*, 703.14–704.5. This suggests that the *Synaxary* may be abridging Doukakes' source. On the unpublished *Life*: *BHG* 2274x. On Michael's biography in general, Pargoire 1901, 347–50.

4 Thus Leo of Synada, *Ep.* 43, 68.7–70.25. The best information on Synada will be found in Robert 1961–2, esp. 137–66; see too Vryonis 1971, 14 and 20–1.



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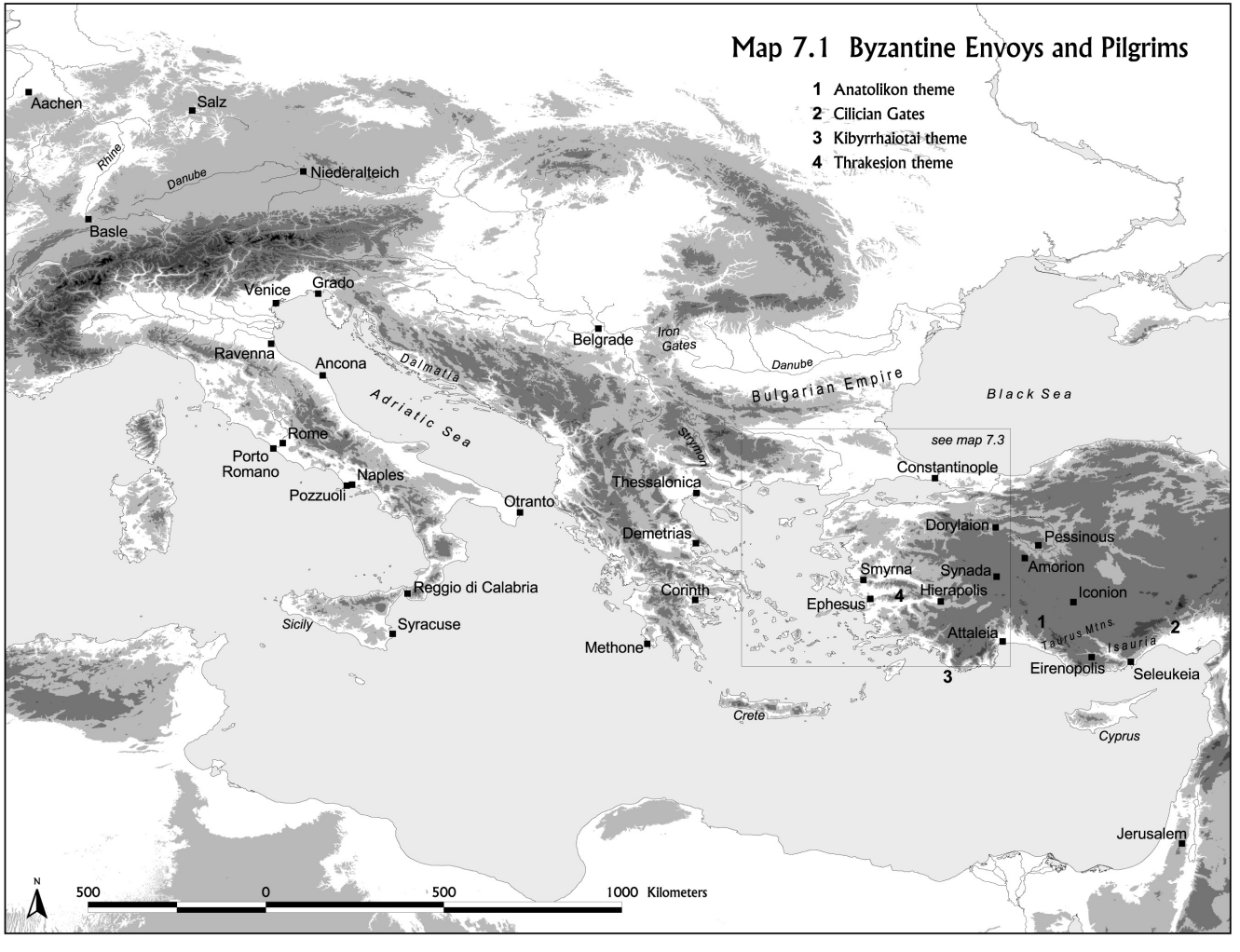


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was born toward the middle of the ninth century.[5] It lay about 150 km south of the strategic military road that ran from its suffragan, the strategic fortress town of Dorylaion (mod. Eskişehir), southeastward across the Anatolian plateau toward the Cilician Gates and Syria.[6] Finally, Michael's town harbored the relics of St. Trophimus, a local martyr of some repute.[7]

His parents fulfilled a vow by consecrating their long-awaited child in a shrine of the archangel and naming him Michael. He received his early education – "grammar, poetry and the other disciplines," as well as much Scripture – in his home town, before traveling to Constantinople for more advanced studies.[8] The next three decades or so are an intriguing blank, until we learn that Michael became friends with Theophylact, another Asian migrant into the capital.[9] Though of modest birth, Theophylact served the son of a patrician and quaestor, the imperial secretary (*asēkrētis*) Tarasius.[10] He apparently introduced Michael into Tarasius' social network, exemplifying a pattern of integration into the imperial court that was just then becoming classic.[11]

Michael and Theophylact entered Tarasius' new monastery, All Saints, on the Thracian shore where the Bosporus begins.[12] When the empress Irene raised Tarasius to the patriarchate, he took his friends with him, promoting them with dizzying speed. Within the space of thirty-three months they were installed in the clergy of the Hagia Sophia, of which they were appointed treasurers (*skevophylakes*, the second position in the cathedral clergy) and priests, and then they became metropolitan bishops.[13] Clearly they fitted into Tarasius' efforts to create

5 On the pastoralism of this region in the Byzantine economy Hendy 1985, 54–6 and, on Synada and the type of agrarian economy there, *ibid.*, 138–45; quarry: Leo of Synada, *Ep.* 45, 72.15, whose "cutters" (πρίσται) Robert 1961–2, 5–43, ingeniously connected with the nearby quarries of Docimaeum; Theophilus used its marbles for a palace: Theophanes Continuatus, 145.19; cf. 143.20–1, with Robert 33. Though Robert presumes that these columns were not *spolia*, this cannot be ruled out. Against, Vinson, *ed. cit.*, p. 129. *Vita Constantini Iudaei* (BHG 370), 2, *AASS* Nov. 4.629A; cf. A. Kazhdan, *ODB* 1: 506–7.

6 *TIB* 4: 97–9.

7 F. A. Angarano, "Trofimo, Dorimedonte e Sabbazio," *BibS* 12: 672–3.

8 Pros. "Michael 2"; Doukakes, pp. 412–13. See e.g. Lemerle 1971, 242–66 on this classic pattern, a few generations later; cf. Buckler 1948, 203–5.

9 Theophylact, *Vita Theophyl.* (BHG 2451), 2, pp. 71–2, "from the region of the East," presumably referring to Asia Minor, and 5, pp. 73–4.

10 Theophylact, *V. Theophyl.*, 2, p. 72; on Tarasius' background: *Catalogus patriarcharum Constantinopolitanorum*, 72, 291.1–4; cf., e.g. Ignatius, *Vita Tarasii* (BHG 1698), 396.4–7 and 397.1–3, and *Syn. CP.*, 487.28, who claim he was *prōtoasēkrētis*.

11 Doukakes, p. 413; cf. on this pattern, Kazhdan and McCormick 1997, 189–95.

12 Theophylact, *V. Theophyl.*, 5, p. 73; cf. 2, p. 72 and Doukakes, p. 413. Tarasius' foundation and burial at All Saints: *Syn. CP.*, 488.24–5 and 29–30.

13 Doukakes, pp. 414–15; cf. for the seal of a Michael Skevophylax which might have belonged to him, Laurent, 5, nos. 77–8. On the office, Beck 1959, 101–2. In manifestly



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a reliable nucleus of prelates who shared his ideas and those of his imperial patron, the empress Irene.

Metropolitan Michael participated in the opening of the second ecumenical council of Nicaea, on 11 September 787, and in several later sessions.[14] We lose sight of him for sixteen years until, late in Tarasius' patriarchate, he was chosen to head an important embassy. Charlemagne's coronation as emperor in 800 had angered the Byzantines, who naturally viewed the Frank's title as a usurpation. Now, however, renewed contact between Irene and the Frankish ruler had begun thawing the relationship. Along with at least one unidentified papal envoy, Charlemagne's ambassadors had carried to Constantinople a response favorable to Irene's initial probe and, probably, the famous offer of marriage to the besieged empress. Then, shortly after their arrival in Constantinople, Irene was toppled and replaced by Nicephorus I.[15] The fifty-seven-year-old Michael was selected for the delicate task of consolidating the rapprochement and explaining Irene's fall to Charlemagne.[16]

Tarasius' protégé was accompanied by Peter, the abbot of Goulaion, and a lay dignitary named Callistus. With the Frankish ambassadors, they first traveled to Rome to meet Pope Leo III, and then proceeded north.[17] They finally caught up with Charlemagne at his palace at Salz, on the Franconian Saale river, in late July or early August 803.[18] Charles happened then also to receive another (future) traveler to Constantinople: Fortunatus, the Venetian patriarch of Grado, who may have been just defecting from the Byzantines (below, pp. 254–8). Two monks from Jerusalem were also on hand (R263). Notwithstanding the crowd, things apparently went quite well for the Byzantines, since Michael left with a draft treaty. But negotiations subsequently stalled, and then were entirely derailed by Frankish designs on Venice.[19]

By now, however, the metropolitan of Synada enjoyed his new master's confidence, for he continued in imperial service after the death of Tarasius (18

Footnote 13 (*cont.*)
linked fashion, Doukakes, p. 414 and, less clearly, Theophylact, *V. Theophyl.*, 7, p. 74, take pains to emphasize that the promotions were not due to simony, which Tarasius perhaps too ostentatiously opposed: R223.

14 Pros.

15 For these events, see Classen 1985, 82–7.

16 Michael's identity as the ambassador of 812 was established by Grumel[2] no. 382; cf. Grumel[2] no. 392 on a false mission of Michael to Rome, from Doukakes, p. 416, presumably a distortion of the true, earlier mission. Though the Byzantine sources do not explicitly state that Michael went on two missions to the west, and that the same man led the earlier mission, the identity of the prelate Michael entrusted with the embassies of 803 and 812 is certain. See Pros.

17 See Pros., "Petrus 5" and "Callistus." That the legations traveled first to Rome and then to Frankland is proven by the royal annalist's statement that, when they left Charlemagne, "they went *back* (*re*gressi) to Rome": *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 803, p. 118.

18 The palace apparently has just been discovered: Weinrich 1996.

19 Classen 1985, 91–3; cf. R266.



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February 806). He also seems to have been on good terms with Tarasius' successor.[20] In a far graver crisis, Emperor Nicephorus I turned again to Michael and Peter. In June 806 the Caliph Harun al Rashid had reacted to a Byzantine treaty violation by personally leading a massive invasion of the empire. The Arabs captured many fortified towns, and the emperor was forced to sue for peace. Michael led the legation. Negotiations with the caliph were laborious and lengthy; the final terms entailed a cessation of Byzantine frontier fortification and a heavy tribute, including a humiliating poll tax on the emperor himself and his son. But the ruler probably reckoned Michael's performance a success, since the danger was averted, the tribute payment would soon lapse, and fortification would soon recommence.[21] Michael seems to have made the best of a bad hand.

The metropolitan's influence was so durable that yet another emperor turned to him to salvage the earlier peace treaty with Charlemagne and resolve the newly troubling problem of Venice. For the preceding hundred years, no one – Lombard, Byzantine or Frank – had much cared about Venice, beyond unavoidable matters like clarifying boundaries.[22] Things changed around 800. Suddenly, the hodge-podge of settlements in the malarial lagoons at the head of the Adriatic excited the covetous gaze of Franks and Byzantines alike. In 805, the Franks had seized on a dispute among the Venetian ruling elite to assert their authority over the offshore settlements and Dalmatia. Suddenly Venice was valuable enough for Constantinople to react in a way it had not when, half a century before, the old imperial capital of Ravenna had fallen to the continental power. Byzantium went to war in the Adriatic against the Carolingians from 806 to 810; Pippin, Charlemagne's son, prosecuted the Frankish attack. The fortunes of war seesawed as fleets were dispatched from Constantinople and both parties raided along the coast. By 810, Byzantium had reestablished control over Venice and Dalmatia; young Pippin succumbed to a fever contracted during operations in the lagoon, removing the Franks' driving force. A first Byzantine overture elicited a strongly favorable response from an aging Charlemagne.[23] The new emperor, Michael I, turned to Michael of Synada.

20 The new patriarch had also served with Tarasius as an *asēkrētis*, and he had known Michael at least since they had both participated in the second Nicaean council: Alexander 1958, 57–61.

21 Theoph. A.M. 6298, 1.482.1–18; cf. al Tabari, A.H. 190: *History*, 30.261–4. Michael's name is missing from both the Greek manuscripts of Theophanes and Anastasius' Latin version. An early textual accident is possible; or perhaps Theophanes did not wish to commemorate the name of the iconophile champion in this unhappy context. See also Canard 1962, Kennedy 1981, 130–1 and Treadgold 1988, 144–6.

22 A boundary agreement between King Liutprand and Duke Paulutio and Marcellus, *magister militum*, in the early 8th C., is mentioned in the *Pactum Hlotharii I* (840), 26, 135.1–4. For more on Venice's new prominence in the 9th C., see below, Ch. 18.

23 For a synopsis of events, see R266–R306.



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Despite his advanced age – he was now about 66 – Michael was an obvious choice, given his past successes. He apparently enjoyed a good relationship with Pope Leo III. That was important since the late emperor had strained church relations, and any settlement between Franks and Byzantines would have to include the pope who had helped create the rival emperor.[24] What is more, whether or not Charlemagne was thinking about playing the caliph off against Constantinople, the Byzantines are likely to have suspected a potential maneuver which was one of their own stock diplomatic tools. The man who had recently negotiated the treaty with Harun al Rashid was thus doubly indicated. And so Michael traveled back to Frankland with Charles' envoys and two Byzantine officials. If they sailed aboard the same vessel, Michael shared the Franks' experience of shipwreck. Still, all went well thereafter. The Franks renounced their claims to Venice, the Byzantines recognized Charlemagne as *basileus* (medieval Greek for "emperor") – without specifying of what or whom – and discussions began about a marriage between the two ruling families to seal the deal. Metropolitan Michael led the ceremony in the splendid new palatine chapel at Aachen, receiving the text of the new treaty and chanting a Greek acclamation recognizing the barbarian king as *basileus*.[25]

From Aachen, the ambassadors traveled on to Rome. In St. Peter's basilica, they received the treaty from the hands of Leo III. They also delivered Patriarch Nicephorus I's synodal letter, restoring or confirming communion between the eastern and western churches, and brought the pope a crystal and encaustic *enkolpion*, or scapular, containing fragments of Constantinople's most precious relic, the True Cross. As Nicephorus himself states, this and other presents were carefully rolled up in a piece of fine linen which was then closed with a lead seal. Finally, the envoys sought the pope's intervention in the Moechian schism.[26] Given their itinerary, the season may have been advanced and obliged them to winter in Rome. During his stay there, Michael became friends with another traveler, Gregory Akritas, and prevailed upon him to accompany him home.[27]

In almost three decades of serving different Byzantine rulers, Michael had weathered more than a few storms. But Leo V's accession triggered an insurmountable challenge: the new emperor contemplated reversing the policy on icons. At Christmas 814, patriarch Nicephorus, Michael, his old friend Theophylact of Nicomedia, as well as other stalwart iconophiles were summoned to an audience.

24 Alexander 1958, 105–8.

25 R311; the unnoticed and unusual interjection "Deo omnipotenti gratias!" in *Annales Xantenses* a. 812, *MGH SRG* 4.12–18, shows that the author was closely connected to Haido and his traveling party; on Haido's shipwreck, Pros. The engagement is confirmed by Charlemagne's interest in members of the imperial family implied by Leo III's detailed report on their fate: Pope Leo III, *Epistolae* X, 7, *MGH Epist.* 5.99.13–14; cf. *Ep.* X, 8, 100.18–26.

26 R312; Patriarch Nicephorus I, *Epistola synodica*, *PG*, 100.200B–C and Frolow 1961, 214–15 on the relic; cf. the confused account in Doukakes, p. 416.

27 *Vita Gregorii Acritensis* (*BHG* 2166), *Syn. CP.*, 373.10–374.3.



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Speaking one after another, they punched holes in Leo V's feigned veneration for icons and his claims to be but an honest broker in a dispassionate theological investigation.[28] The aging metropolitan of Synada boldly challenged the emperor's legitimacy in front of the court. Michael had been around long enough to know the outcome. He would spend the rest of his life in confinement.[29] Yet, even deposed and imprisoned, Michael retained a measure of influence. When he learned that Zachary, a financial official, mutual friend and the former guard of Nicetas of Medikion, had been captured by barbarians (Bulgars?) in Thrace, Michael wrote to Nicetas in his place of exile, asking him to pray for Zachary's release.[30] Unbowed and past his eightieth year, Michael died on 23 May 826, attended by Theodore Studite, who penned a touching memorial of the last days of this champion of orthodoxy.[31]

## 2. The missionaries

Our next voyagers to the west also traveled under imperial auspices. Although they had served previously as diplomats, their charge this time was more complex. Emperor Michael III and Patriarch Photius were intervening on the doorstep of Carolingian power by sending missionaries into Moravia. Scholarly research has thoroughly vindicated the contemporary and remarkable biographies of the Apostles of the Slavs. Yet they remain underexploited by historians who are not primarily concerned with early Slavic history. The Life of Constantine the Philosopher (later Cyril) was composed in Old Church Slavonic between Constantine's death in 869 and 15 December 882, for it was used at Rome before the latter date. These circumstances mean that the Life comes from the immediate entourage of Methodius, and Constantine's brother stands behind the biography as source, guarantor, and, naturally, censor.[32] Methodius' biography was

28 Theosterictus, *Vita Nicetae Medicii* (*BHG* 1341), 32, p. xxiv and 34, p. xxv; the group included Euthymius of Sardes, Aemilianus of Kyzikos, Joseph of Thessalonica and Eudoxius of Amorion; cf. Grumel[2] 391 and esp. Alexander 1958, 125–35.

29 Theodore Studite, *Ep.* 364, pp. 497–8; cf. p. 363* and Stiernon 1970, 124–5.

30 Theosterictus, *V. Nicetae Medic.*, 44, xxvii.

31 *Ep.* 533, pp. 804–6; cf. for the date Pargoire 1901, 348–50.

32 This radical and definitive solution of several long-standing controversies was developed by Meyvaert and Devos 1955 on the basis of new manuscript evidence and remarkable sleuthing. See esp. *ibid.*, 433–40, where they further propose the probable *terminus ante quem* of 879–80. For the early scholarship, Ševčenko 1991, 479–80n1, and, in general Ziffer 1995. In studying these biographies, I have moved slowly from deep skepticism to growing admiration both for the subjects and the works themselves. Ševčenko 1999 rightly underscores how familiar the author of the *Life of Constantine* was with Rome, while Ševčenko 1989 provides precious insight into contemporary Byzantine ideas about missions.



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probably written up by his disciples in the months following his death: the clouds were gathering, but the author seems unaware that disaster was about to destroy the mission.[33] As the reader will see, it is possible to vindicate their testimony on a few additional points.

Methodius was the older of the two. Constantine was born at Thessalonica in 826/7, youngest of the seven children. Their father held a military office of some importance (*droungarios*), which probably allowed him to provide well for his family until his death.[34] The youngest child was a sensitive boy. One day, when Constantine was out hunting, a gust of wind blew his prize falcon away; he could not bring himself to eat for two days. The sudden loss of his pet pleasure helped turn him toward a path of study and religion. The early feat of committing certain books of Gregory Nazianzenus to memory signaled his intellect.[35] As was not untypical for a Byzantine boy of birth and government connections, good looks allied with abundant talent to bring him to the attention of a member of court and open royal doors. In this case, it was the eunuch Theoctistus, the powerful minister of the regent empress Theodora who, whether or not he summoned him to Constantinople as the biographer claims, looked after his career once he had come to his notice.[36] Young Constantine studied Homer and, with Leo the Mathematician, geometry. Photius, arguably Byzantium's greatest intellect, taught him dialectic and more advanced subjects; Constantine's statements on philosophical matters leave no doubt that he was a serious intellectual.[37]

33 See e.g. Grivec and Tomšić 1960, 17–20. Cf. the closing words of the *Life of Methodius*, 17, 14, ed. *ibid.*, p. 166; and tr. *ibid.*, p. 238. The Old Church Slavonic text of the *Lives* produced by Lehr-Spławińsky, is superior: here, p. 180. I have used it along with the convenient reference system of Grivec and Tomšić. In the following notes, pages of the edition refer to Lehr-Spławińsky, from whom all quotations are taken; translation references are to the Latin version of Grivec. Cf. Ševčenko 1991, 285n1.

34 Ševčenko 1991, 479–92 with the additional material at 735–8.

35 *Life of Constantine the Philosopher* 3, 10–16 and 17, p. 137; tr. p. 172.

36 *Life of Constantine*, 3, 28, p. 138, tr. p. 173, which attributes to Theoctistus ("posьla po nь"), the initiative for Constantine's move to Constantinople. Leo of Ostia's *Translatio S. Clementis* (the "*Legenda Italica*," BHL 2073), 1, p. 455, preserves a servile adaptation of Gauderic of Velletri's lost *Translatio*, derived from Anastasius Bibliothecarius' lost translation of Constantine's own sermon on the subject and a copy of the Old Church Slavonic *Life of Constantine the Philosopher* far earlier than any that survives, not to mention the personal knowledge of Gauderic and Anastasius, friends and champions of the brothers. It says more plausibly that Constantine's parents took him to Constantinople. On this career pattern and Constantine, Kazhdan and McCormick 1997, 193–4.

37 Preserved in the Life: *Life of Constantine the Philosopher*, 4, 1–2, p. 138; tr. p. 173; on this passage, his study with Photius (which I see no reason to challenge, *pace* Lemerle), and his philosophical culture see Ševčenko 1991, 93–106 and esp. 99n30; cf. Kazhdan and McCormick 1997, 190–1.



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The path he wore through the capital's schools won him a place of authority in Theoctistus' household. In practical terms, this meant that Constantine went to live inside the imperial palace and entered the social world of the court. The minister's efforts to cement this brilliant young man's future included offering him his god-daughter in marriage and a governmental appointment, with a military governorship in the offing. When Constantine's spiritual longings made him refuse, the canny Theoctistus simply adjusted his sights and promoted his protégé's career within the church. With the empress' support, the eunuch had him tonsured as a priest and appointed to a significant office (*vivlotekarъ*) in the patriarchal administration of the Hagia Sophia. Since this certainly occurred before Theoctistus' murder in 855, Constantine's ordination disregarded the required canonical age of thirty, probably substantially. More importantly for his future in the west, however, it was performed by Patriarch Ignatius and avoided the controversy that would accompany Photius' patriarchal promotion and ordinations.[38] At age twenty-four, if the text is correct, this brilliant young priest was sent on an embassy with George *asēkrētis* to the capital of the caliph at Samarra, in present-day Iraq. There he defended his religion in debate with Muslim theologians.[39]

38 *Life of Constantine*, 4, 6–16, pp. 138–9, tr. pp. 174–6. Cf. on Theoctistus: P. A. Hollingsworth, *ODB* 3: 2056. On the office, an important study by Ihor Ševčenko, 1999. Dvornik's special pleading about the canonicity of Constantine's ordination (1933, 49–66 and 1970, 57) to the effect that "na popovьstvo," "to the priesthood" (*Life of Constantine*, 4, 15, p. 139; tr. p. 176), means "diaconate" because other men who held the dignity of *chartophylax* (itself a further hypothesis about the meaning of *vivlotikarъ*) were deacons, is of no avail against the words of the text itself. Dvornik can advance no other Old Church Slavonic or Greek text where the word or its Greek analogue (*hierosynē*) has that meaning. Cf. Grumel 1934, 351–2, and, esp. Hannick 1978, 292–4. Disregard for canonical age is only reinforced by the fact that his *Life* seems to situate the ordination before the embassy to Samarra, which, it claims, occurred when Constantine was twenty-four: see next note. If Leo of Ostia here preserves the wording of his source, the reference to God's will when mentioning Constantine's ordination – "ordinante Deo" – may be a delicate allusion to his uncanonical age. Byzantines sometimes used similar phraseology for instance when referring to emperors who had acquired the throne in unusual fashion. For more on canonical ages in the Byzantine church, see Ch. 8.4.

39 *Life of Constantine*, 6, 1–58, pp. 141–4; tr. pp. 178–82. The text probably exaggerates by implying that George accompanied Constantine, who was twenty-four in 850 or 851, rather than the other way around. No trace of the mission shows up in the Arab sources at this date: see e.g., Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 1: 214; cf. Dvornik 1970, 285–96. Dvornik explicitly rejects (1970, 63) the possibility that the *Life* is referring to a slightly later embassy, saying that there is "no evidence for the supposition"; but he fails to mention that the envoy's name, George, is identical in both cases. Theodora and Theoctistus sent this later embassy to the caliph to negotiate an exchange of prisoners, which exchange occurred in February 856. According to



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The details of Methodius' early governmental service are unknown. The regime appointed him to head a Slavic administration for many years, perhaps in the general region of his birth.[40] There is no historical reason not to believe the later source which claims that Methodius was married and had children: such would have been the normal course of events for a Byzantine official in this period.[41] Then something went terribly wrong. It involved Methodius witnessing the many "disorderly tumults" of this life, which might well hint at a political stimulus to otherworldly inclinations. The imperial official abandoned the world and fled to Mount Olympos (mod. Ulu Dağ; see Map 7.3) in Bithynia, where he became a monk and devoted himself to study.[42] He was joined by his brother. Their conversion may have occurred around 856; it has plausibly been linked with the palace coup which killed Theoctistus and drove Empress Theodora from power.[43]

In 858, Patriarch Ignatius was deposed and replaced by Constantine's old teacher Photius. Around this time, the brothers returned to the capital and government service.[44] In 860, Constantine was sent on a second diplomatic mission. This time his brother accompanied him to the court of the Khazar khan, whose kingdom reached west and south from the lower Volga. The Byzantines had a long-standing tradition of diplomatic alliance with this Turkic people: a century before, Constantine V had married a Khazar princess; more recently, emperor Theophilus had answered the khan's request and dispatched an architect to fortify a strategic ford on the Don river.[45] But Constantine's mission may have been prompted by a new situation.

Footnote 39 (*cont.*)
Tabari, the negotiations started well before an extension of an armistice had to be requested from 19 November 855; they had required, previously, trips back and forth between Constantinople and Samarra, so that, in fact, the original dispatch of George may have been considerably earlier than November 855: cf. Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 1: 224–6, with tr. 317–18. Constantine's biographer may have in mind an earlier and unmentioned exploratory embassy; it is equally possible that the author or the textual transmission has slipped here, making Constantine twenty-four instead of twenty-seven or twenty-eight.

40 *Life of Methodius* 2, 5–3, 1, pp. 172–3; tr. pp. 221–2.

41 See the middle Bulgarian *Akoulouthia* (13th–14th C.) in his honor, 6, p. 123; cf. Dvornik 1970, 58–9 and Dujčev 1971, 142; on the career pattern, Kazhdan and McCormick 1997, 194.

42 "Uzьrě mьnogy mlъvy beštinьny vъ žitьi semь," says his tight-lipped biographer: *Life of Methodius* 3, 1–3, p. 173; tr. p. 222.

43 In any case, Constantine's retreat can be dated after 850–1 or, perhaps, 855, depending on the date of the embassy to Samarra: see above, n39. *Life of Constantine*, 7, 1–5, p. 144; tr. p. 182. For the possible date and circumstances, see e.g., Dvornik 1970, 63–5.

44 For hypotheses on the chronology and motivation of their movements in this period, Dvornik 1970, 64–5.

45 O. Pritsak, *ODB* 2: 1126–7.



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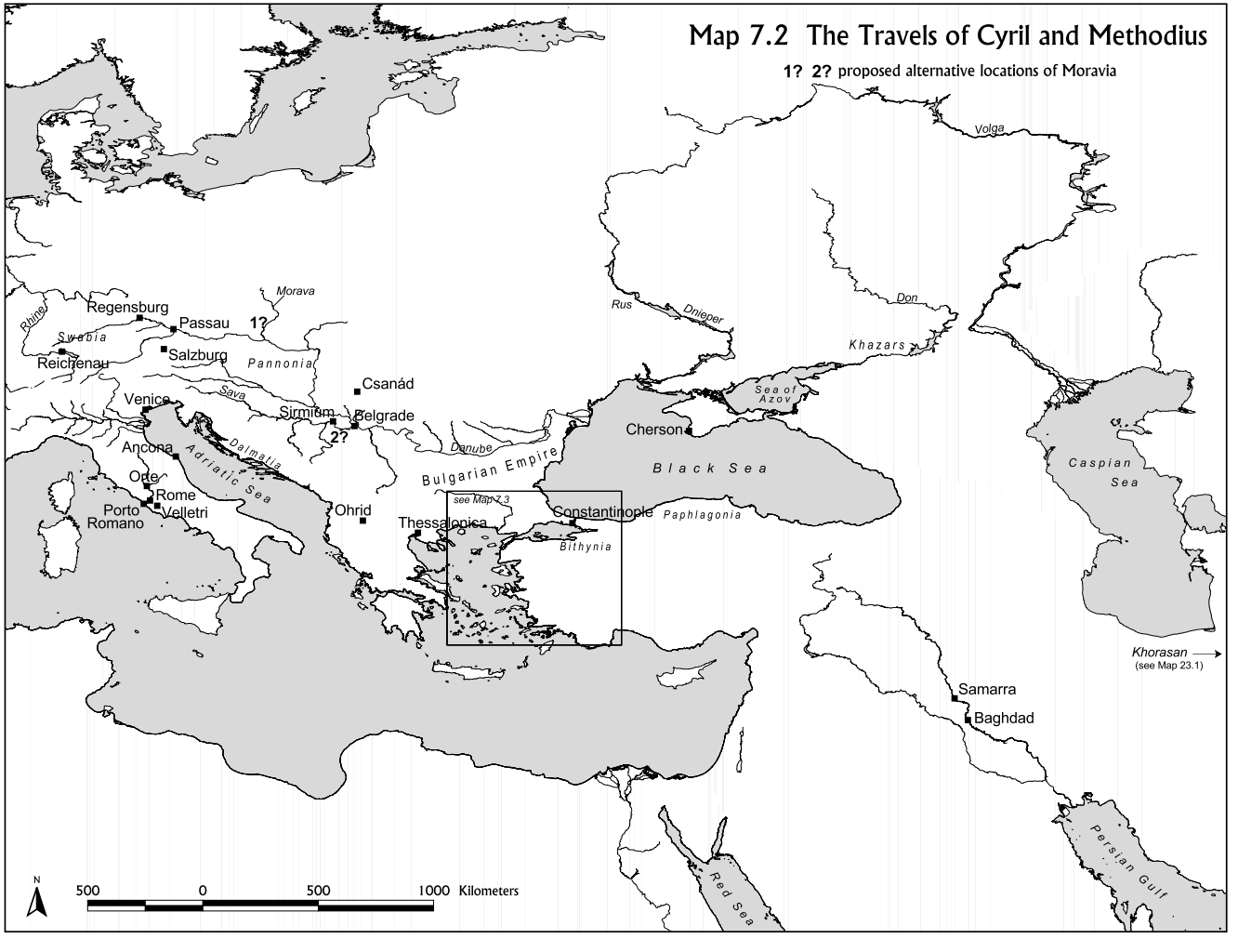

Like a bolt from the blue, 200 utterly unexpected Rus ships swooped down the Bosporus and struck Constantinople on 18 June 860. The raid shocked the empire into confronting a new danger from across the Black Sea, itself the culmination of a nascent network of communications stretching up the Dnieper and back toward Scandinavia.[46] This shock may have precipitated the mission to the powerful khan, who was well placed to threaten the new northern enemy. Since, moreover, Judaism was then outstripping Christianity (and Islam) among the Khazar elite, it made sense to include in the embassy a sharp mind, experienced at debating with non-Christians.[47]

The legation sailed across the Black Sea to Cherson, where it wintered. Constantine took the opportunity to study Hebrew, debate with a Samaritan, and pore over a Gospel book and Psalter written in a non-Greek script.[48] In vain, he also queried the locals for the whereabouts of St. Clement, St. Peter's disciple and successor at Rome. As Anastasius Bibliothecarius remembered Constantine's own words some years later, the Chersonese were not natives, but had all come together there from many different barbarian (i.e. non-Byzantine) peoples.[49] What exactly these foreign travelers did for a living we are not told. Through perseverance and miraculous intervention, Constantine nonetheless discovered on 30 January 861 relics he believed to be those of St. Clement. Probably while he was still in Cherson, he preached about the discovery in Greek.[50] Whether or not it

46 R534; cf. Mango 1958, 74–82. Two of our travelers, "Anons. 221–2," who had traveled from Sweden to Constantinople and hence to Frankland, had already apprised the capital of the new route's existence: R444.

47 The *Life of Constantine*, 8, 1–5, pp. 144–5, tr. pp. 182–3, states that the Byzantine embassy responded to a Khazar legation which had informed the emperor of attractive Jewish and Muslim offers of alliance conditional on conversion; see in general Pritsak 1978. The event is recorded also in the Hebrew and Arab sources; see the important study of Zuckerman 1995a, 241–50; in general, Hannick 1978, 332–5. The date of the mission's dispatch is not specified in the sources. Dvornik 1970 does not address this issue, but assumes (51 and 69; cf. 65) that it followed the Russian attack and was prompted by it. In his favor is the general tendency of Byzantine diplomacy to set third parties on enemies, and the embassy's wintering in Cherson before continuing on to the khan's court. This could mean that it arrived on the far shore of the Black Sea too late in the season to continue.

48 *Life of Constantine*, 8, 10–15, pp. 145–6; tr. p. 183–4. The non-Greek scripts are described as "rosьsky pismeny pьsano": "written with Ros' letters," for which the convincing emendation "sursьsky," "Syriac," was proposed by André Vaillant and reinforced with telling parallels by Roman Jakobson and Horace Lunt: see Lunt 1958; cf. e.g. Grivec, tr. 184n5.

49 Cf. Anastasius, *Ep.* 15, 436.31–2 (Constantine), reinforced by Metrophanes of Smyrna, once exiled to Cherson, *ibid.*, 437.18–20; Leo of Ostia, *Transl. Clementis*, 2, p. 456.

50 Only the Old Church Slavonic version survives, ed. and Latin tr. Vašica 1948; the text is also available (without apparatus) and a facing English translation (which I have not always followed) in *Monumenta Bulgarica*, pp. 8–29. The sermon was necessarily



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stems from the original delivery at Cherson or a later iteration, the attention-getting opening of the surviving version tells us something important about the kind of people this unusual intellectual spoke to.[51]

Hagiographical texts often begin with a *topos*, a stock device or idea about commemoration. The rhetorical purpose is to capture the audience's attention and goodwill, and establish the superiority of the author's subject. Long familiarity with hagiographical texts suggests that certain *topoi* recur over and over again, at least in the same time and place.[52] Many Byzantine texts feature the "exemplary model" theme: "by learning how St. X did it . . . you too can approach perfection," which, for instance, might particularly suit ascetic communities.[53] Others speak of the lifestyles of the strict and famous as beacons which guide sailors to safety.[54]

written after 30 January 861 and before Constantine's death in February 869. As it stands, the sermon was revised and fitted out with additional details, e.g. the introductory paragraph dating the event, or the reference to Nicephorus, as *then* ("togda") governor of Cherson (Constantine, *Sermon*, 2, p. 65, tr. p. 74; *Monumenta Bulgarica*, pp. 10–11). Sections 1–7 are presumed to be a little later, and section 8, for good reason, is thought to preserve (part of?) the original sermon delivered at Cherson: cf. Vašica 1948, 59. Finally the sermon itself refers to the giving of a sermon on the translation at Cherson: 6, p. 78: "i tou slovo prьnošeniju počьsti"; tr. p.69; *Monumenta Bulgarica* (7), pp. 18– 19; cf. Leo of Ostia, *Translatio S. Clementis*, 5, p. 457, with n3. See further, next note.

51 That the original was written in Greek follows from linguistic features of the surviving witness (Vašica 1948, 58–61) and Anastasius Bibliothecarius' statement about his lost translation: *Ep.* 15, 437.27–33. This probably rules out delivery to the Slavs of the Moravian mission between c. 863 and the trip to Rome around December 867. That leaves Cherson, either at the moment of discovery or on the return trip from the Khazars; Constantinople, from c. 861 to 863, or Rome early in 868; in any of them Constantine would have had a Greek audience. Of the three, Cherson appears to me the most likely: the detail of the town's topography points to a local audience (e.g. 7, p. 78; *Monumenta Bulgarica*, pp. 18–19); the apostrophes in the concluding section (8) directly address the Chersonese who participated in the invention and translation, and the "our city" ("grad našь") which will be blessed refers not to heaven, but to the place where the sermon was delivered, *pace* Vašica 1948, 71n12; so too Butler, *Monumenta Bulgarica*, p. 29n53. Finally the prologue plays repeatedly on the idea of abundant food, e.g. 1, p. 73 "sytostь" ; p. 74 "dobry pišča brašenь"; *Monumenta Bulgarica*, pp. 8–9. This would be a riveting device during the food shortage which presumably accompanied the severe drought of 861 in the Chersonese: see *Life of Constantine*, 12, 10–24; cf. 12, 1–6, pp. 157–8; tr. pp. 197–8.

52 It would probably be worthwhile to analyze the data systematically and to classify the *topoi* and the works in which they appear by content, time, and place. Long-term shifts in spiritual values and reader- and listenerships, as well as deep continuities, would appear rather clearly. On the general repertory of *topoi* in medieval Latin literature, e.g. Arbusow 1963, 97–103.

53 For an example taken literally as my files open, the prologue of the *Vita Evaresti* (BHG 2153), 1, 295.2–296.2.

54 E.g. *Vita Constantini Iudaei* (BHG 370), 1, 628B.



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Others still make comparisons with poets and historians of wars and champions of bygone ages or more recent times, or the alluring lies of fiction.[55] What I cannot remember is anyone in the ninth century who begins, as Constantine does, by evoking how carefully we listen to merchants' ("na koupleljuv'ca") tales of their travels. Or who continues by casting the invention of relics as a great "buy," a "splendid and even holy *business deal*" (коупь).[56] Was Constantine not addressing merchants? This would explain the foreign travelers at Cherson. We cannot tell for sure where this part of the text was delivered, but it seems hard to doubt that these opening words were a "hook" for people living by trade. And it is unusual to find any preacher of this age addressing merchants. But Constantine was an unusual man and to this we may owe a shaft of light on the unknown commerce of Cherson.

When the good weather returned, the embassy continued, meeting Khazar warriors and Magyar raiders en route. The legation sailed from Cherson across the Sea of Azov and up the Don, toward the khan.[57] At the Caucasian court, diplomatic fencing began with glasses raised and theological toasts challenging Christianity from a Jewish perspective, and vice versa. They led into dialogue and debate, including a Muslim angle.[58] When all was said and done Constantine impressed his hosts, but he failed as a missionary; perhaps the entire debate had been "rigged," in any case.[59] The khan agreed to help the emperor and offered great gifts to Constantine. The philosopher asked instead for only one thing: all the captive Byzantines "here." He was granted two hundred enslaved Greeks, with whom he returned to Cherson.[60] A little later, the Khazars converted to Judaism, triggering an anti-Jewish policy by the Byzantine emperor and wonderment in a

55 *Vita Ioannis Psichaitae* (BHG 896), 1, 103.6–14; or *Vita Davidis, Symeonis et Georgii* (BHG 494), 1, 211.5–11.

56 Constantine the Philosopher, *Sermon on the Discovery of the Relics of Clement*, 1, pp. 73–4; tr. pp. 64–5; *Monumenta Bulgarica*, pp. 10–11, where Butler takes this difficult passage quite differently. I am deeply indebted to my colleague Horace G. Lunt for discussing this passage with me and confirming the viability of my understanding of it, as well as introducing me to *Monumenta Bulgarica*.

57 *Life of Constantine the Philosopher*, 8, 19–9, 1, p. 146, tr. p. 185. For Methodius' presence on this part of the mission, *ibid.*, 12, 3, p. 157, tr. p. 197; *Life of Methodius*, 4, 1, p. 173, tr. p. 222.

58 *Life of Constantine*, 9, 15–11, 40, pp. 147–56; tr. pp. 187–96.

59 Thus Zuckerman 1995a, 244.

60 "Plěnьnikъ Grьkъ sьde," *Life of Constantine*, 11, 42–6, p. 157; tr. p. 197. Etymologically, the Old Church Slavonic word "plěnьnikъ," (cf. "plěniti," "to capture") resembles the medieval Latin *captivus*, a common term for slave: see below, pp. 735ff. Here it is unlikely that the term was being used of Byzantine captives held for ransom somewhere in the vicinity of the Caspian Sea, esp. since the khan of the Khazars had generally good relations with Byzantium. The same word is used to designate the 900 slaves freed by Cyril and Methodius in the early years of their mission to the Slavs: see below.



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Carolingian scholar, as Jews soon flocked to the northeastern shore of the Black Sea from Baghdad, Khorasan, and Byzantium.[61]

Their mission completed if not successful, the brothers returned to Constantinople and comfortable appointments.[62] Not long thereafter an embassy came from Rastislav, ruler of Moravia, seeking a bishop from Byzantium; he seems also to have sent a similar embassy to Rome, with a similar request which had gone unanswered. His Frankish neighbors were evangelizing his region, and the political and ecclesiastical hand of King Louis the German was much closer and heavier than anything Rastislav might fear from distant Constantinople. Caesar Bardas (the power behind the throne), the emperor Michael III, and Photius responded by sending Constantine and Methodius, many gifts, an imperial letter, and Constantine's recent invention of a script for the Slavic tongue. The traditional date is 863, which cannot be far off.[63] How exactly the envoys-cum-missionaries got to Moravia is unknown.[64]

Where exactly they went is subject now to healthy debate. The traditional location of Rastislav's "Great Moravia" grew up, not accidentally, with the multiethnic Habsburg empire and placed it along the Morava river in the territory of present-day Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary. A growing number of scholars argue that it should be situated much further south and east, in the vicinity of Sirmium.[65] Wherever they were, as the Byzantine missionaries tried to organize their new church and translate the liturgy and other basic texts into the local language, conflicts erupted with the Latin hierarchy and clergy. The Frankish church – and political elite – sharply resented the infringement on what they took to be their turf. Worse, with the zeal of a people who had mastered a foreign

61 Zuckerman 1995a, 251 and 255, and Christian of Stavelot, *Expositio in Matthaeum*, PL, 106.1456A–B.

62 *Life of Constantine*, 13, 1–2, p. 158; tr. pp. 198–9; cf. Ševčenko 1991, 285; *Life of Methodius*, 4, 5–6, p. 173; tr. pp. 222–3.

63 *Life of Constantine*, 14, 2–19, pp. 159–60; tr. pp. 199–201; cf. *Life of Methodius* 5, 1–12, pp. 173–4, tr. p. 223, which also depicts Svatopluk as joining Rastislav in the request, a reflection of the changed political circumstances when this Life was written; request of a bishop from Rome: *ibid.*, 8, 8–9, p. 175; tr. p. 226. On the context, e.g. Dvornik 1970, 73–104; and, in general, Hannick 1978, 284–301.

64 The *Life of Methodius* countenances the possibility that they traveled overland; cf. Dvornik 1970, 307–14 for his speculation. If the expression of the *Life of Methodius* 5, 11, p. 174, "i besědą sъstavlь pąti sę jętъ Moravьskajego, poimъ Methodьja," tr. p. 223, "and 'hit the road'" were not metaphorical, it would imply that the missionaries traveled to Moravia by land, not by sea. But the Greek analogue does not exclude sea travel, nor should this.

65 Traditional view, e.g., Dvornik 1970, 74–104; cf. Map A, facing p. 234. Imre Boba began the challenge in 1971; see esp. Bowlus 1995 and Eggers 1995. For a lucid critique of all sides, H. G. Lunt, *Speculum* 71 (1996): 945–8. Sirmium: I. Boba; Csanád/Cenad on the Hungarian/Romanian border: Eggers 1996, 68–9; cf. Eggers 1995, 148–57.



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tongue for their own worship, the Franks vigorously opposed the use of anything but Latin, Greek, or, theoretically at least, Hebrew, for the sacred. Moreover, Charlemagne's brutal conversion and extermination of Saxons who failed to grasp the superiority of his religion make abundantly clear the political implications of the good news of Carolingian Christianity for non-believers, or simply different believers.

In order to consecrate their newly converted and recruited Slav disciples, and also, surely, to raise for their mission a spiritual and political umbrella, the brothers decided on a risky but highly astute course of action. They headed for Rome. Their road crossed Pannonia, where they were well received by the local Slavic prince Kocel, who gave them fifty disciples to instruct in their new writing. From both Rastislav and Kocel, the brothers refused all monetary reward. Again Constantine and Methodius wanted only one thing: slaves. This time the human chattels were not limited to Greek captives and, if they are reliable, the numbers the Byzantines freed speak of very large slave populations: 900 from both princes. Following one of the Roman or prehistoric routes – the Amber Trail is the most famous, and perhaps the most likely – the brothers and their disciples crossed the eastern Alps toward the Adriatic. When they arrived in Venice, word of their linguistic and liturgical innovations had somehow preceded them. Controversies ensued with the local hierarchy, which seems strange, given that the Veneto was pretty much an ecclesiastical backwater. Then, from his deathbed, Pope Nicholas I summoned them to Rome. By the time they got there, Hadrian II occupied the Roman patriarchate; Nicholas had died on 13 November 867.[66]

They won friends even before they arrived by ostentatiously brandishing the long-lost relics of St. Clement. Pope Hadrian himself presided over an *adventus* ceremony to welcome home the remains of the ancient pope and, coincidentally, the controversial missionaries. Clearly, Constantine had not lost his diplomatic flair.[67] The relics proved their authenticity by working miracles, various cures, and, once again, liberations of prisoners or slaves.[68] After their long journey from Cherson, through Constantinople and Moravia, the relics were placed in the ancient shrine of San Clemente.

66 *Life of Constantine*, 15, 18–17, 1, pp. 161–5; tr. pp. 204–8; *Life of Methodius* 6, 1, p. 174; tr. p. 224.

67 I had initially suspected that this *adventus* ceremony was an exaggeration by the author of the *Life of Constantine*, 17, 2–4, p. 165; tr. p. 208, since the *Liber pontificalis* does not mention it. But the fact that it occurs in the *Legenda Italica* (and so must go back to Gauderic of Velletri's original version), and that Gauderic himself was present at the ceremony (Anastasius Bibliothecarius, *Ep.* 15, 438.10–14) guarantees its authenticity: Leo of Ostia, *Translatio S. Clementis*, 9, p. 459.

68 *Life of Constantine*, 17, 4, p. 165, tr. p. 208, where the phrasing hints that here the key word means prisoners: "jakože pacě i plěnьnici, Christa narekьše i svętajego Klimenta, plěnьšiichъ izbavišę sę."



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Better than the brothers' flair for timing was the fact that they were lucky. Hadrian's election was as problematic as it was fresh.[69] Constantine and Methodius needed the pope's support, and he needed anything that would strengthen his position at home. The charismatic Byzantine missionaries, with their restoration of one of the first popes' relics and their obvious desire to submit themselves and their new church to the see of Peter were perfectly tailored to a critical moment. Wherever it was, wasn't Moravia close to or indeed, within the late Roman diocese of Illyricum? The iconoclast emperors had stripped the Roman church of ecclesiastical jurisdiction over it and the popes had never ceased clamoring for its restitution, especially the late great Nicholas I.[70] So it might have seemed as though the greatest plum of all had just dropped into the beleaguered new pope's lap.

Among the Byzantine brothers' new Roman friends were Anastasius Bibliothecarius, another traveler to Constantinople, and his influential uncle Arsenius, bishop of Orte. The controversial Slavonic books were blessed by the pope and deposited in the great basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, with which Hadrian II had a special bond. The liturgy was performed in their presence, and the pope commanded that bishops Formosus of Porto Romano (yet another of our western travelers) and Gauderic of Velletri ordain the brothers' Slav disciples; according to the Slavonic biographer, Hadrian himself ordained Methodius. The ordinations took place in 868, presumably on the traditional Ember Days of March, or, possibly, June. The new priests then performed the Slavonic liturgy in the basilica of St. Peter. In case any interested parties missed the point, they repeated the same contested liturgy the following day at St. Petronilla's, a shrine particularly associated with the Frankish church. Next the liturgy was performed at one of the Roman churches dedicated to St. Andrew, then gaining recognition as the putative apostolic founder of the church of Constantinople, and in the basilica of St. Paul outside the Walls. A Slavonic overnight vigil service was performed over the tomb of the Apostle of the Gentiles, at which Bishop Arsenius and Anastasius assisted.[71]

At this moment of triumph, Constantine fell gravely ill. Sensing the end, he uttered these words: "From this day on I am the servant neither of the

69 Even the "sanitized" account of Hadrian's official biography cannot conceal the problems: e.g. *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.174.2–3 and 19–32; cf. 176.18–19. There is considerably more to be said about the brothers at Rome.

70 See e.g. Nicholas I, *Ep.* 82 (JE 2682), 438.25–439.4. For late Roman Illyricum, see here, Map 2.1; cf. e.g., Jones 1964, 1072–3, Map II (from the *Notitia Dignitatum*).

71 *Life of Constantine*, 17, 5–9, pp. 165–6; tr. pp. 204–8; *Life of Methodius* 6, 1–4, p. 174; tr. p. 224. On Hadrian and Santa Maria Maggiore: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.173.7; on the ordinations and testimony of the *Lives* in the context of the liturgical traditions at Rome: Tadin 1960; on St. Petronilla and the Carolingian family, e.g., Angenendt 1977, 54.



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emperor nor of any man on earth: I am the servant only of Almighty God." His brother at least surely recognized that the imperial diplomat and missionary was solemnly renouncing the traditional acclamations of loyalty to the Byzantine emperor, acclamations punctuated by the refrain "We are the servants of the emperor!"[72] Constantine donned the habit and took the monastic name of Cyril. On 14 February 869, he breathed his last. At Hadrian's command, all Greek monks resident in Rome, along with the Romans, marched in his funeral procession – another detail which smacks of the truth.[73] Methodius obtained from the pope that his brother be interred in the church of St. Clement, to which he had brought the relics from Cherson.[74] This unusual man had seen and understood sweeping changes beyond the borders of one of the most self-centered civilizations in western history, and he set in train changes that reverberate down to our own time. He was forty-two years old when he was laid in his tomb.

The older brother had been the junior partner. When his turn came, he was up to it. The first proof had come when Methodius artfully evaded the pope's efforts to drape himself further in borrowed sanctity by burying Constantine in his own tomb in St. Peter's basilica.[75] Meanwhile Kocel wanted him back in Pannonia. Hadrian sent him, but with a broader brief. Methodius carried a bull addressed to Rastislav, Svatopluk, and Kocel, informing them of his own and his disciples' ordination at Rome, and of papal approval for the translated Slavonic liturgy. Kocel received Methodius well and sent him back to Rome a second time with twenty disciples, so that Methodius could be consecrated as bishop. Hadrian obliged in a way that confirms the Roman view of the matter. He consecrated Methodius to the see of St. Andronicus, that is of Sirmium on the Sava

72 *Life of Constantine*, 18, 3, p. 166: "отъ селѣ нѣсмь az ni cěsarju sluga ni inomu nikomuže na zemli, пъ тькъто bogu vьsedrьžitelju." Tr. p. 210. Cf. e.g., Constantine VII, *De ceremoniis*, 2, 19, 612.9–10: "ἡμεῖς δοῦλοι τῶν βασιλέων καὶ αὐτοκρατόρων," and, in general, Treitinger 1938, 228.

73 Benedict III had established the new liturgical custom that the entire clergy of the Roman church, including the pope, should participate in the funerals of each of its members; Nicholas I had scrupulously followed his example: Borgolte 1989, 120. This looks then like an extension of the recent innovation to the monastic houses of Rome. It fits perfectly with Hadrian II's early efforts to convince doubters that he would after all pursue Nicholas I's policies.

74 *Life of Constantine*, 18, 5–27, pp. 166–8; tr. pp. 210–13. Boyle 1978 was able to follow the fate of Cyril's remains as far as 1799, and track down what appears to be the sole surviving piece, which was restored to San Clemente in 1963. If uncontaminated DNA evidence could be obtained, it would create an opportunity for comparison with any candidates for Methodius' remains, and so resolve definitively the Moravian controversy.

75 *Life of Constantine*, 18, 17–21, p. 167; tr. pp. 212–13, confirming, incidentally, the archaeological evidence. On Hadrian's tomb, Borgolte 1989, 75n156, now reinforced by this text.



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river, in the heart of the old imperial diocese of Illyricum. Methodius returned to Pannonia.[76]

The brothers' missionary effort along the Carolingian frontier had already run afoul of the powerful archdiocese of Salzburg, which had been expanding eastward since the days of Arn and Charlemagne.[77] In 870, the broader political conflict between Franks and Slavs that had fostered the mission in the first place now took an unfavorable turn. Methodius' patron Rastislav was toppled by his nephew, Svatopluk, who handed his uncle over to Louis the German to be blinded; the surge of Bavarian power eastward also swept up the bishop. Methodius was arrested and brought before Louis, perhaps at the Regensburg assembly where Rastislav was judged.[78] The Frankish hierarchy accused the bishop of trespassing on their territory. Methodius trumped them with their traditional devotion to Rome. He retorted that he would have left their jurisdiction: he was operating in the territory of St. Peter. As the Bavarian bishops badgered him in the royal presence, the Byzantine declared that he had not feared to speak the truth in front of emperors ("prědъ cěsari") and he wasn't about to change for the present company. Perhaps it was then that the bishop of Passau raised his horsewhip to hit Methodius, before the others restrained him.[79] Methodius was imprisoned for two and a half years in Swabia, very probably in the island monastery of Reichenau on Lake Constance. Yet his status within the monastery retained honor, for the Memorial Book of Reichenau's prayer association still bears a unique Byzantine Greek entry, and it begins with the name of Methodius, not impossibly an autograph (Figure 7.1). Five or six disciples were apparently interned with him at Reichenau and their names follow his in the Memorial Book.[80]

Word of Methodius' treatment and whereabouts leaked out, despite the east Frankish hierarchy's lies. In 873 Pope John VIII sent the bishop of Ancona, Paul – another traveler to Constantinople – to Bavaria to invalidate the local proceedings and to arrange for Methodius to be examined at Rome; a Bavarian bishop was convoked to answer for insults to Methodius and the see of Peter.[81] Around

76 *Life of Methodius*, 8, 174–6, pp. 157–8; tr. pp. 227–8, following here the chronology of the *Life*, as well as Dujčev 1955, 307; Meyvaert and Devos 1956, 206, and Dvornik 1970, 149–50 against Tadin 1960, 614–18. On the legend of St. Andronicus, one of the disciples mentioned by St. Paul (Rom. 16, 7), *Syn. CP.*, 483.16–20, 689.23–690.29 and 785.14–15 (bishop of Pannonia).

77 Salzburg's expansion: Wolfram 1995, 174–8 and 224–32; the *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum*, pp. 34–58, preserves Salzburg's view.

78 On the assembly see, Schmid 1972, 48–9.

79 John VIII, *Frag. reg.* 22, JE 2977, 285.38–286.1.

80 *Life of Methodius*, 9, 1–9, p. 176; tr. pp. 229–30; *Liber memorialis Augiensis*, *MGH Lib. mem.* 1.53D4/5 (cf. 4A1 and 5D4/5): Leon, Ignatios, Ioakin, Symeon (Lazarus), Dragais (the last two might be the Slavic and Greek name of the same person: thus Zettler 1983, 293–5). Cf. BM 1484a; Dvornik 1970, 151–4.

81 Pros. "Paulus 8"; cf. *Life of Methodius*, 10, 1–3, p. 176; tr. p. 230.



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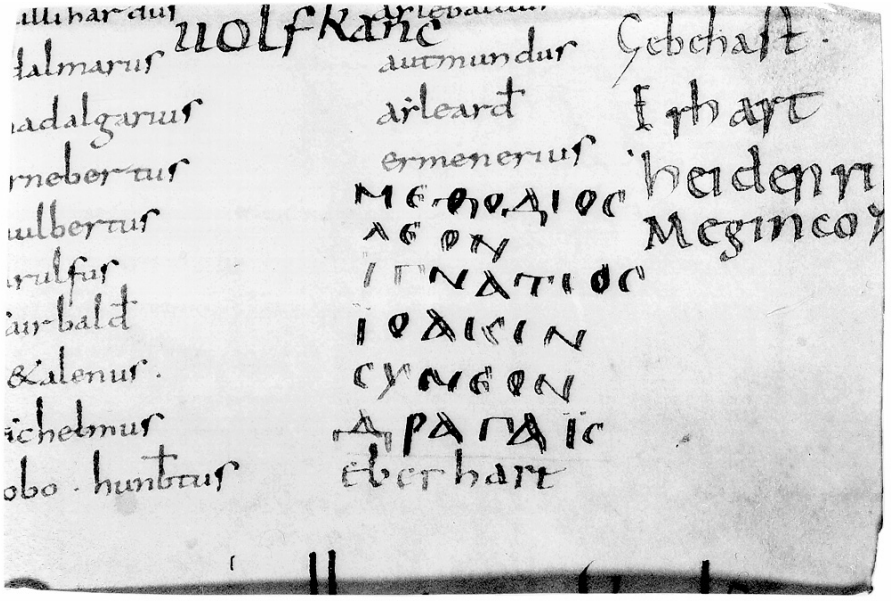


Figure 7.1. "Methodius was imprisoned for two and a half years in Swabia, very probably in the island monastery of Reichenau on Lake Constance." In 870, St. Methodius' mission among the Slavs fell afoul of shifting Slav politics and east Frankish expansion. Despite his defiance before Louis the German, the Byzantine bishop retained a measure of honor in his confinement, to judge from this entry in the Memorial Book of Reichenau, Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, Ms. Rh. hist. 27. Memorial books listed the names of the friends and supporters of churches for whom the community prayed. Amidst thousands of names copied in the elegant Carolingian letters of the ninth century, the writer of this entry noted the Greek names Methodios, Leon, Ignatios, Ioakin, and Symeon, and the Slavic name of Dragais, in an expert, rapid Greek book hand. Whether under the force of emotion or for some other reason, the writer pressed so hard that he splayed the tip of the pen nib, as the strokes still show clearly. It is not impossible that Methodius himself held the pen. The others are Methodius' disciples, who seem to have accompanied him in his monastic imprisonment. The pope ordered them to be liberated and restored to their mission. Courtesy of the Zürich Zentralbibliothek, Handschriftenabteilung.

the same time, Svatopluk expulsed the Frankish priests from his territory and asked the pope to send Methodius back to him. John VIII agreed, and Methodius set to work once again, using that old Christian missionary ploy of connecting military victory with the right faith.[82] Sniping still did not cease even within Moravia, so that in the summer of 879, John VIII had to forbid Methodius from using the Slavonic language in the liturgy and ask him to come to Rome.[83]

82 *Life of Methodius*, 10, 4–11, pp. 176–7; tr. pp. 230–1. Dvornik 1970, 156–7, for no reason I can see, dates Svatopluk's request to 871, when Methodius was imprisoned.

83 *Reg.*, 201, JE 3268, 161.14–15. Where the attacks were coming from is suggested by the *Life of Methodius*, 12, 1–6, pp. 177–8; tr. pp. 232–3, and implied by John's next



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Methodius was there for the fourth time in June 880. The Roman church found for him on every count, as John VIII wrote to Svatopluk. He further made Methodius an archbishop. However, as Svatopluk had requested, he also consecrated Methodius' rival Wiching as bishop, sternly admonishing him to obey his archbishop.[84] The papal fears were not unfounded. Methodius soon denounced Wiching for falsifying the papal decision and claiming that it subordinated Methodius to him. In March 881, John VIII renewed his support for the beleaguered Byzantine.[85]

Still the internal opposition to Methodius did not subside, as his biographer makes quite clear. It was the archbishop's rivals, presumably, who circulated rumors that the emperor who had murdered Michael III, Methodius' original patron, wished also to do away with Methodius. Just then a letter arrived in Moravia from Constantinople: Basil I invited Methodius to visit him. And there the archbishop went, between 881 and 884, when he was at least fifty-five years old. He was cordially received by Basil I and also by his family friend Photius, now triumphantly reinstalled on the patriarchal throne. Perhaps in connection with an imperial mission to evangelize the pagan Slavs of the Adriatic hinterland, Basil decided to keep two of the archbishop's disciples as well as some of Methodius' books. The archbishop returned to Moravia laden with gifts and the aura of imperial patronage.[86] After he got back he had a last burst of activity, translating, or revising earlier translations, from Greek into Slavonic. As his strength ebbed, he named the Slav Gorazd as his successor. Methodius died on 6 April 885. Fittingly, his funeral was celebrated in Latin, Greek, and Slavonic. He was buried in his cathedral, which has never been definitively located.[87]

Methodius left behind an impressive cadre of disciples. Various scholars assert with confidence that diverse followers had accompanied the brothers from Byzantium to Moravia in 863, mentioning, for example, Clement, Laurentius, Naum, and Angelarius.[88] In fact, critical scrutiny of the original sources provides

letter: *Reg.*, 255, JE 3319, pp. 222–4. They concerned at the least the *Filioque*.

84 *Ibid.*

85 *Reg.*, 276, JE 3344, p. 244.

86 *Life of Methodius*, 13, 5–6, p. 178; tr. p. 233; for the Byzantine mission to the Adriatic Slavs, R682; cf. Dvornik 1970, 170–4. The latter's claim (171) to "fix the exact date of this invitation" to 880, since Methodius' impending trip to and return from Constantinople is referred to by an "enigmatic passage" in *Reg.* 276, JE 3344 of 23 March 881, 244.15–18, overstates the case: there is no reason why the return in question could not refer to Methodius' return to Rome from Moravia. The pope says quite clearly that he will personally preside over the examination of the affair and the castigation of Methodius' enemy bishop (Wiching), which means that this will take place at Rome, when Methodius returns there.

87 *Life of Methodius*, 15, 1–5, p. 179; tr. pp. 234–5 and 17, 4–13, pp. 179–80; tr. pp. 236–7. See above, n74 for a suggestion using DNA.

88 The example comes from Dvornik 1970, 104, whose formulation appears to me, at best, imprecise.



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rather slender support for only Clement of Ohrid and Naum.[89] More probably, most will have been recruited on the site of their missionary endeavors. This was certainly true of Angelarius. No one has noticed that this "Byzantine" disciple of Constantine and Methodius bears a name which is not Greek at all. It is the common Germanic name Engilhari ("angel-army").[90] But this makes Angelarius far more interesting than an oddly named Byzantine. His affinity for the mission suggests that he was a Slav-speaker, so that his Germanic name points to an early case of cultural (and sexual?) interaction between Slavs and Germans along the Frankish frontier. Angelarius nonetheless deserves to figure among our travelers, for he journeyed east, under tragic circumstances.

Methodius' rival Wiching gained the upper hand and effectively destroyed the brothers' life work in Moravia shortly after his death. Frankish soldiers drove the saint's disciples, some 200 of them, out of their cathedral complex. The young priests and deacons they sold as slaves, and we shall follow their trip to the block in Venice more closely later (below, pp. 765–8).[91] The older ones were probably unsalable, so they were taken out into the forest and left to die. Including Angelarius, a small group managed to make their way to the Danube and Belgrade, an outpost of Bulgarian power. The local governor dispatched them down the river to the court of Tsar Boris-Michael, to whose conversion project they would contribute mightily.[92]

These stories have some important things to tell us. We can determine how old the travelers were, the places they went to, and when they went there. Two of three had been in the Arab world, indeed, at the court of the Commander of the Faithful himself, whom they must have seen face-to-face. Two had voyaged to the northern shore of the Black Sea and beyond, to the threshold of Central Asia and the

89 Pros., "Clemens" and "Naum." For a list of the brothers' greatest disciples, see Theophylact of Ohrid (c. 1050– after 1126), *Vita Clementis Achridensis* (*BHG* 355), 12, 110.21–27, based apparently on lost Slavonic sources (R. Browning, *ODB* 3: 1134), where he names Gorazd, Clement, Lawrence, Naum, and Angelarius; earlier Theophylact had specified as the Apostles of the Slavs' greatest disciples Gorazd, Clement, Naum, Angelarius, and Sabbas: *V. Clementis*, 2, 80.25–7; cf. *ibid.*, 155n95.

90 The first letter has perhaps been slightly distorted by assimilation with the Greek cognate *angelos*, and of course fitted out with a Greek ending. For the roots <angil> + <hari>, cf. Förstemann 1900–16, 1.107–8, 113–14 and 760. The name is attested seventeen times in the Reichenau *Liber memorialis*. Coincidentally, the form "Angelarius" occurs twice on the same page as the Methodian entry (above, n80), but in a different hand and language, and securely ensconced among the monks of Luxeuil.

91 *Life of Methodius*, 17, 5–6, pp. 179–80; tr. p. 236; cf. Theophylact, *V. Clementis Achrid.* 6, 98.5–8.

92 First Old Church Slavonic *Life of Naum*, 181; Eng. tr. 143–4. The first *Life* is believed to date from the tenth century: e.g., P. Gautier, "Nahum," *BibS* 9: 700–3, here 700; see Podskalsky 1991, 109–11, for further references; Theophylact, *V. Clementis Achrid.*, 11–16, 110.6–120.26.



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Caspian Sea. Their geographic horizons were far from the kind of isolated stasis sometimes associated with the early Middle Ages. Michael alerts us that after centuries of obscurity, Venice suddenly became the object of imperial competition around 800. What was happening in that tiny seaport to justify the kind of political and military investment to which his diplomacy bears witness? Constantine, Methodius and their enslaved disciples show us that Venice was not only a seaport, but the terminus of a land route from the middle Danube basin. To these important matters we will return. But let us first meet three individuals who traveled, mostly, under their own auspices.

## 3. The pilgrims

Gregory Akritas' story is quickly told. He was born on the isle of Crete in 754. Of modest but pious circumstances, his parents sound like well-to-do peasants.[93] After "a long time" studying, they put him in charge of their flocks. But shepherding was not to his liking, and, approaching his twentieth birthday, he ran away, finding passage on some ship to the Asian coast. He went to Seleukeia (mod. Silifke), almost on the Arab frontier in the naval "theme" (military province) of the Kibyrrhaiotai.[94] There Gregory subsisted on small amounts of bread and water. When Leo IV died (780) and orthodoxy regained its freedom, the twenty-six-year-old decided to leave the empire for Jerusalem and the holy places, which departure does not inspire unbounded confidence in his initial stance toward iconoclasm. He perhaps lived as a hermit or simple layman in the Holy City, since he only took monastic vows later. During his twelve years in the Holy Land, he "suffered horrible things from Arabs and Jews," which our informant could not bring himself to narrate.

In 792 Gregory left the Caliphate behind and traveled to Rome. There he at last took the monastic habit and tamed his flesh with continence.[95] He probably settled in one of the dozen or so Greek monasteries which then flourished in

93 The brief *Life* avoids the usual *topos* about his distinguished family, but states that he came from a "distinguished" island: *Syn. CP.*, 372.22–8. Within the rhetorical conventions of Byzantine hagiography, this is a pretty clear admission of inferior social status. For detailed references, see Pros. "Gregorius 5."

94 *Syn. CP.*, 372.28–31. This appears more likely than Seleucia Piereia, the port of Antioch. Describing a voyage in the opposite direction some thirty years later, the *Vita Michaelis syncellae* (*BHG* 1296), 9, 62.1–2, observes that a group of Jerusalem travelers first fell under imperial suspicion when they reached Seleukeia; cf. Cunningham, *ibid.*, 144n66. Around 800, prisoner exchanges with the Caliphate occurred on the Lamos river, about 40 km east of Seleukeia, *TIB* 5: 48. On the town: *TIB* 5: 402–6.

95 The date follows from the length of his stay in the Holy Land.



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Rome, and remained for the next twenty years until he met Michael of Synada. As we have seen, the diplomat prevailed upon Gregory to accompany him home; there he established Gregory in the monastery of Akritas (near modern Pendik; see Map 7.3), on the Sea of Marmara. He lived to see the return of iconoclasm in 815 and performed prodigies of asceticism.[96] Every evening until the end of his life he would take off his garment and climb into a tank set in his garden and filled with water. There he would stay until he had recited the whole Psalter. It is perhaps not surprising that St. Gregory Akritas went to his Maker in January.

Our second pilgrim was a rather complicated, sickly man who came from an influential family and alternately exploited and evaded that influence. Gregory the Dekapolite perhaps painted icons and certainly moved in mysterious ways, living under a different name (George) in Thessalonica. Once, in Italy, he was mistaken for an Arab spy.[97]

His biographer was a prominent man of letters. Ignatius the Deacon had been the iconoclastic metropolitan of Nicaea, but he discovered his deeper affinity for icons after the restoration of orthodoxy stripped him of his see. He probably wrote up the *Life* in the five or ten years after Gregory's death.[98] True at least to his literary ideals, Ignatius probably sacrificed some of the material most interesting to us on the altar of style. He had good sources, including two of Gregory's disciples and Gregory's uncle Symeon, who was more like a second father to the saint. This Symeon was archimandrite of the monasteries in Gregory's home region, a persecuted defender of icons and, perhaps, founder of a monastery in Thessalonica.[99]

Gregory was probably born in the Dekapolis around 797, on the margins of the Anatolikon and the Kibyrrhaiotai themes, in the Taurus mountains of Isauria (Map 7.1). His hometown of Eirenopolis (near mod. Kazancı) lay 50 km inland from Anemurium and the sea, on one of the many north–south roads that cut across the Taurus, in this case toward central Anatolia (Asia Minor) and that strategic highway. The local bishop was a suffragan of the metropolitan of Seleukeia, which lay at the mouth of the river above whose seasonal tributary Eirenopolis

96 Cf. Janin 1964, 490.

97 See Mango 1985b, 645–6; 637. Whether or not he painted icons hinges on what his biographer means by *anistorōn*; as it is used here, it could mean "describe" or "depict." He may have made icons himself: Ignatius Deacon, *Vita Gregorii Decapolitae* (*BHG* 711), 27, 69.16–20.

98 Mango 1985b, 645.

99 See on all these points, *ibid.*, 635–6 and 645–6; on Symeon as Gregory's second father, see Ignatius' portrait, *V. Greg. Decap.*, 29, 71.23–72.1; Pros. "Gregorius 9." He may be the same Symeon who prevailed upon the future patriarch Methodius – still another of our travelers – to compose the *Life* of the iconophile martyr Euthymius of Sardes, who came from Lykaonia, a region neighboring Symeon's own. Mango 1985b, 645–6; Gouillard 1987, 15n81 is more reserved on the identity of the Symeons. On Euthymius' birthplace, *ibid.*, 4.



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stood.[100] Gregory's parents were wealthy and well connected, if we may judge from his maternal uncle Symeon. Gregory early showed signs of an independent nature: for instance, he hated the silk clothes his parents wanted him to wear. Mother Maria decided that her eight-year-old boy should frequent teachers (*grammateis*), but once he had got past the rudiments, little Gregory decided that this sufficed for his purposes in life. He started spending a lot of time in the local churches.

When he was a teenager, the parents nonetheless found him a wife. But Gregory escaped from his wedding and sought out a local bishop who had fled the restoration of iconoclasm (815) into the surrounding mountains. With his help the boy joined a group of monks. After his father's death, Maria persuaded him to enter the same monastery where her brother had been tonsured.[101] An ugly confrontation with the iconoclast abbot drove Gregory to escape to his uncle's monastery. There he spent fourteen years before withdrawing to a cave. A demonic inclination to fornicate besieged him until his mother's likeness appeared to him in a dream that would have intrigued Freud.[102] Around 830 or 831, as military operations intensified some 200 km to the northeast, Gregory heard a heavenly voice instructing him to go elsewhere to please God.[103] Even though it was late in the season, he set out westward. When winter prevented him from continuing beyond Ephesus, Gregory stayed in a local monastery.

That spring, Gregory decided to head to Constantinople (Map 7.3). Ships crowded the port of Ephesus and their captains were eager to be off with their merchandise. Given the time and the place, this probably describes the conclusion of the annual fair connected with St. John Theologos (whose feast day was 8 May), and hitherto attested only in the late eighth century. But the skippers feared to shove off, because Moorish pirates were reported only 20 km away.[104] Gregory assured the captains of divine protection and they safely shipped out. His merchant ship was sailing north to the capital, where the saint planned to seek martyrdom from the iconoclasts. Something made him stop on the island of Proconnesus (mod. Marmara), about 120 km short of his suicidal goal. He stayed in the home of a poor man, who defied the imperial edict against sheltering iconophiles, perhaps in 832–3. For unspecified reasons, Gregory's entry – fresh from the Ephesus fair – into the man's household brought his host an abundance of life's necessities, and the poor man was not eager to let him leave. So Gregory had

100 Pros.; on the birth date, Mango 1985b, 636; on the place: *TIB* 5: 138–9 and 245.

101 Cf. Mango 1985b, 636.

102 The maternal apparition cut open his belly with a sword and showed him the rotting entrails which were giving rise to his sexual drive. From that day forward Gregory was cured of the carnal affliction: Ignatius, *V. Greg. Decap.*, 6, 50.26–51.7.

103 On Caliph al Maʿmun's campaigns, e.g. *TIB* 5: 48–9.

104 Ignatius, *V. Greg. Decap.*, 9, 53.10–21. On the fair, see R229.



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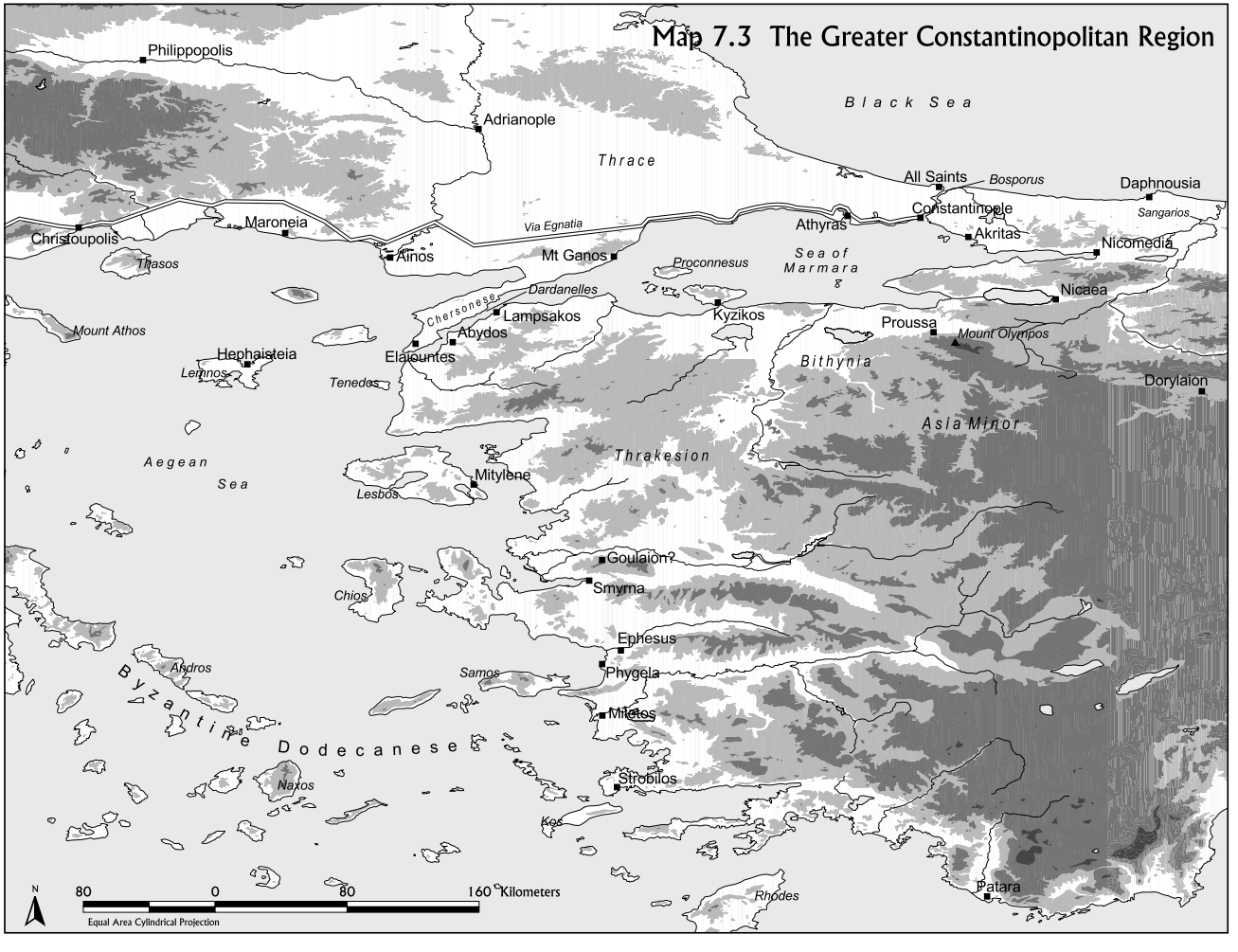


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to sneak off, sailing back down the Dardanelles to Ainos (mod. Enez). He took another ship to the seaport of Christoupolis (mod. Kavala), on the overland route between Thessalonica and Constantinople.

Gregory struck out on the road to Thessalonica. At a river, probably the Strymon, he met a band of Slav pirates. They were waiting to prey on ships, especially those that put into the river mouth looking for natural shelter and fresh water.[105] Gregory enchanted the Slavs with his calm demeanor and they ferried him across the river, showing him the road to Thessalonica. After a few days, he grew listless and anxious about where he should go next, until he happened to meet another monk who was traveling to Rome. Gregory decided to go along.

The only problem was money. So he became the other monk's debt servant and ate at his expense as far as Corinth. There it appears that they parted company. Again, Gregory encountered an Arab obstacle. The sailors in the port of Corinth refused his request to sail to Sicily, because of the Arabs. Once again, Gregory was able to talk them into it, and he reached Calabria without difficulty. In Reggio the pilgrim made a splash by refusing a gift of cash because it came from the imperial tax collector, even though he needed it for the voyage ahead.[106] Together with another monk he had met there, he boarded a ship out of Naples. As they sailed north a squall caught their ship and drove it aground. They reached the beach safely.[107]

They continued on to Rome, perhaps by road.[108] Gregory settled in a cell and concealed his power as a holy man. All was well for three months, until he delivered someone from a demon. The cat was out of the bag, and Gregory had to flee Rome or run the risk of human flattery. He stayed at Syracuse, perhaps for a few months, taking up residence in a tower overlooking the porticos of the port. There he had an interesting encounter with a prostitute who lived next door and specialized in sailors. He demonstrated his amazing powers by convincing the salt-weary sailors that they did not need her evil company, and he converted her to boot. To top it all off, he bested a dragon. A few more exorcisms and, not surprisingly, his fame began to spread. He decided to leave Syracuse.[109]

He sailed to Otranto, where he was accused of betraying the Christians to the Arabs, at a time when African raiders were operating in the vicinity. He didn't help matters by refusing to recognize the local iconoclast bishop, who nonetheless stopped bystanders from beating him. From Otranto Gregory again traveled overland, encountering a group of Arab raiders and living to tell about it. Ignatius tells us nothing more about this journey, except that the saint reached Thessalonica by unspecified means, probably around 834. Although he was known to the local bishop, who had to be an iconoclast, Gregory apparently met no more difficulties.[110] Around 836 or 837, Gregory boarded a ship for Constantinople and then traveled from there back down the Sea of Marmara to Bithynia to take up residence in a monastery on Mount Olympos (Map 7.3). This illustrates nicely how



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Constantinople functioned as a shipping hub, linking middle-range voyages, like that from Thessalonica to Constantinople (338 NM; 628 km), to short-range ones, like that from the capital to Bithynia (c. 45 NM; 85 km), which backtracked on the middle range route.[111] Later Gregory returned to Thessalonica. The sea link appears to have been preferred over the land route of the Via Egnatia (Map 7.3) between the capital and the empire's second city at this date, notwithstanding the Arab conquest of Crete.[112] Then, as his health failed, he traveled one more time by ship to Constantinople – this time making frequent stops (*kata mikron*) – to visit his uncle Symeon. Around this time Gregory helped to organize a clandestine mission to the pope, ordering Joseph the Hymnographer to sail to Rome to elicit support against the iconoclast regime. If Gregory's biographer is to be believed, Joseph, a Sicilian by birth and one of the greatest Byzantine hymn writers, was Gregory's disciple; his role in this mission has suggested that Gregory had more contacts in Rome than his biographer indicated. The mission was aborted, however, when the Arab pirates on Crete captured Joseph's ship and, rather than selling him as a slave, held him for ransom.[113] A year later Gregory was still at Constantinople, and there he died on a 20 November, around 841 or 842, "in a good old age." He was about forty-five.[114]

Blaise, our last pilgrim, hailed from the southwestern fringe of central Anatolia (see Map 7.1). This holy man was something of an ingénu. Though his lack of guile occasionally landed him in trouble, it appealed to more complicated men like Patriarch Ignatius or the emperor Leo VI. His substantial biography was commissioned by one of his disciples, probably some twenty to thirty years after Blaise's death. This Luke had been with Blaise since Rome; he had sailed with him back to Byzantium and Blaise hand-picked him as his successor on Mount Athos. Luke's words were also the primary source for the author, who was presumably a monk of Stoudios; the writer had in any case been made a monk by the same abbot Anatolius who received Blaise in that great Constantinopolitan monastery. In addition to whatever memories of Blaise lingered at Stoudios, the author may have known members of his subject's paternal family, since he stresses that it still enjoyed the

105 On the location and circumstances, Karayannopoulos 1989, 26–9, with further references. In 1986 the lowest five miles of the Strymon were navigable by boats drawing up to two meters, although the mouth had silted up: *Mediterranean Pilot* 1978–88, 4: 508. For evidence on how early medieval shipping used creek and river mouths see Ch. 13.3. Strymon Slav pirates preying on coastal shipping were a long-standing problem, as the *Miracula S. Demetrii* (*BHG* 516z–522), 277, 1.220.5–11, show for 677; cf. *ibid.*, 2.125–33.

106 Ignatius, *V. Greg. Decap.*, 11, 55.4–24.

107 *Ibid.*, 12, 55.25–56.9. Exactly what happened to the monk is not completely clear. A storm came up and drove the ship aground, which could well mean that the ship's crew ran her up on the beach and got out, after making her fast. The monk then went back out to the beached ship to



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highest reputation in his own generation.[115] He composed the biography in an extremely elaborate rhythmic style abounding in sound effects that occasioned some peculiar wording. Yet the Life's constant convergence with independently attested events and persons have earned it high marks for accuracy.[116]

Blaise may have been born in the early 850s.[117] He came from the village of Aplatianai, near Amorion (mod. Hisar). Amorion lay on a southern variant – once again – of the great artery leading to the Cilician Gates. That strategic fortress town and capital of the military province of Anatolikon had witnessed numerous battles during the Arab invasions. The Byzantine defeat there in 838 had been particularly humiliating, since it was then – and still, in Blaise's youth – the hometown of the reigning dynasty.[118] Amorion's environs belong to the same transitional zone between Mediterranean climate and steppe as Synada.[119] Our traveler was baptized Basilius; he took the religious name of Blaise ("Blasios") at Rome, years later.

His father had the rather rare name of Heracles and came from a family that was old, wealthy, and distinguished.[120] Blaise's elder brother was a man of no mean intellect and had merited higher education in the capital. Young Blaise's first studies promised some real ability too, so his parents decided to take him some 40 km across the Sangarios river to Pessinous, on the flank of the facing mountain. There a fast friend and supporter of Patriarch Ignatius, the metropolitan Eustratius, ordained the boy as a subdeacon. Since Blaise had not yet attained puberty, Eustratius can scarcely have observed the canonical age of twenty theoretically required for subdeacons.[121] Blaise subsequently went to live in Constantinople with his older brother, a priest in the Hagia Sophia. At first the brother feared that this naive and attractive young man would succumb to the temptations of the capital and he steered him away from secular learning to scriptural studies. When his beard began to grow, a swarm of impure passions assaulted the boy, but with time he overcame them, so that Patriarch Ignatius

get the food. He got there but the force of the waves capsized him σὺν τῷ λέμβῳ. This last word should mean the ship's small boat. This would indicate that the Neapolitan ship was too big fully to beach, and that they had gone ashore in the smaller craft which such ships usually towed. Alternatively, Ignatius might simply be misusing the term *lembos* to designate the main ship.

108 Ignatius, *V. Greg. Decap.*, 12, 56.10, says "they set out on the path (*tribon*) to Rome," which suggests that they continued overland, but which might be meant metaphorically for their route.

109 The events narrated presumably took more than a few weeks: cf. Mango 1985b, 637.

110 Ignatius, *V. Greg. Decap.*, 14, 58.24–5; cf. Mango 1985b, 638.

111 Ignatius, *V. Greg. Decap.*, 20, 63.15–17. Gregory's disciple who wished to visit him on Mount Olympos proceeded in exactly the same way, except that the saint, learning of his disciple's trip through a revelation, traveled to Constantinople to save him the trouble of the short hop: *ibid.*, 63.17–21.

112 This is what I deduce from the story of



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decided to consecrate him as a deacon of the Hagia Sophia, sometime after his restoration in November 867 and probably before c. 872.[122]

Temptation kept troubling Blaise and he decided it would be safer to leave Constantinople and travel to Rome. A crafty, money-loving old monk he met while praying in the Hagia Sophia told him that he had the same plan. Why not travel there together? Not realizing that the habit does not make the monk, Blaise agreed, and off they went toward the Bulgarian empire. Once there, the monk sold his young companion into slavery. Fortunately for the deacon, his owner was a Bulgarian noble who freed him, hoping that he would stay and exercise a healthy religious influence. It is unclear how long Blaise's enslavement and Bulgarian sojourn lasted. But he was determined to reach Rome.[123] In the end, he boarded a boat traveling up the Danube.

All went well until Blaise reached a place where the river met totally deserted "steep mountains" and fearful "chasms." This aptly describes the area around the famous Iron Gates, where the Danube cuts for about 200 km through the Transylvanian Alps and Balkan mountains. Blaise would have encountered this wild stretch of the river about 800 km up the fluvial plain from the river mouth. Here he was ambushed by pirates who thought he was a merchant transporting the kind of goods they wanted. Blaise infuriated his captors when he answered their demand for his valuables by pulling out his cross and saying this was better than gold. They dumped him in the wilderness to die.[124]

An angel guided Blaise back to the borders of the Bulgarian empire. There he met a bishop whom he had known when he had been a slave. The prelate was going to Rome, supposedly on pilgrimage (*euchēs charin*), and Blaise traveled with him, making excellent time and perhaps reaching his destination around 874. The young Constantinopolitan fell in love with the huge churches of the ancient city, as well as the quality of the Roman monasteries. He decided not to return to Bulgaria when the unnamed bishop left Rome.[125]

Blaise was accepted into Abbot Eustratius of Kyzikos' "populous throng" at the Greek monastery of St. Caesarius, on the Palatine hill. Still sporting secular garb and his diaconal tonsure, Blaise started off as a hermit in his own cell. Then he took the monastic habit and received his religious name from Eustratius. Keeping busy with weaving purple cloth and calligraphy, he rose through succes-

Anastasius and George, who traveled overland as far as Maroneia (about 300 km from Thessalonica), and then took a ship to Constantinople, sailing through the prowling enemy ships, presumably referring to Arab raiders: Ignatius, *V. Greg. Decap.*, 18–19, 62.16–63.11. Cf. Mango 1985b, 639–43.

113 Pros. "Ioseph 1"; cf. Mango 1985b, 645–6.

114 *Ibid.*, 29, 71.19–72.11; cf. Mango 1985b, 643–4. Ignatius is echoing Gen. 15, 15, on Gregory's age.

115 Pros. Lucas; *Vita Blasii Amoriensis* (*BHG* 278) 19, 666C (author and Anatolius); 26, 669A–D (Luke his source); 7, 659E–D (family), where he states he was unable to



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sive offices over the next eighteen years. He led the monks' liturgical chorus at the office, and served as librarian and sacristan. The life in Rome of this former deacon of the Hagia Sophia offers a textbook case of how individual travelers may have functioned as vectors of distant cultural stimuli. Would his liturgical experience at the Hagia Sophia have been without influence on his practice at St. Caesarius? His calligraphy in Rome must have reflected the latest trends he had learned in the capital, if not during his boyhood studies in central Anatolia. One wonders whether his weaving used the techniques of Anatolia, Constantinople, or Rome itself. In any event, after some service to his monastery in these capacities, his fellow monks finally prevailed on him to become a priest.[126]

Blaise attracted disciples. One of his more curious initiatives casts a vivid light on social and economic conditions inside this particular monastery. A fellow monk happened to be both very wealthy and very ill-tempered. He constantly abused and beat his servants, who seem to have been his slaves. In any case, Blaise wished to perfect the asceticism of Joseph, one of his closest disciples, not only by hunger and thirst but by "dishonor" (*atimia*), a trial which must have had particular resonance in an elite Byzantine social world dominated by rank rivalry and precedence.[127] The former slave's solution was to sell Joseph to the mean monk as the perfect slave, to teach him the true meaning of obedience and submission. The rich monk was so delighted that he exclaimed he would trade life itself for the opportunity to buy such a slave, and the deal was done. The incident, or its telling, was inspired by an anecdote in a classic of monastic spirituality, as the biographer avers. But Blaise's story differs in several crucial aspects, and they are revealing of contemporary realities. Joseph's enslavement is just such a change: in the original, the seventh-century narrator had simply remarked that a mean monk had beaten his disciple "like some purchased slave." In ninth-century Rome, slavery was more pervasive, penetrating even into monastic communities, and lending its

learn the mother's name. Cf. H. D[elehaye], *ibid.*, 656C–E and esp. Papachryssanthou 1975, 48–54 for an analysis of the *Life* and its connections with the diploma of Leo VI (Dölger 514) for the *protos* Andrew; cf. too Grégoire 1929–30. Papachryssanthou 1975, 49n43 and 51n55, rejects Luke as the successor of Blaise, but her reason – Luke and the author were at Constantinople, in Stoudios, at the time of writing – is itself a possible but not necessary surmise.

116 See already Delehaye, 656E; Grégoire 1929–30; Papachryssanthou 1975, 52; Gjuzelev 1968. For an analysis of the rhythmic style, Meyer 1905, 229–35.

117 Papachryssanthou 1975, 52n66 suggests c. 845, based on canonical age. But this is not a reliable guide for Byzantine churchmen; c. 851/6 is probably closer to the mark. See below, n122.

118 See in general, *TIB* 4: 122–5 and 131.

119 Hendy's "zone 2": 1985, 96; cf. 95, his map 23.

120 For details, see Pros. "Blasius."

121 Puberty: below; canonical age, Ch. 8.4. On Pessinous, *TIB* 4: 214–15.

122 *V. Blasii*, 7, 660A–C; cf. 659F; cf. Papachryssanthou 1975, 52n66. If we



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pattern to the monastic ascesis of humility.[128]

We should not imagine that Blaise – and at least a few others of his ilk – lived in splendid Hellenic isolation from the rest of Rome.[129] One or another incident throws light on his associations outside his monastery. The scion of an ancient and illustrious family naturally consorted with the local elite. He once cured the child of a Roman grandee and, according to his biographer, he often visited the papal palace as a spiritual advisor to the pope. In this period, that would have been Stephen VI (885–91) or Formosus (891–96). With the latter – yet another of our travelers – Blaise shared a Bulgarian background. All went well until he helped the most influential Roman and his wife have a son. They obliged him to be the child's godfather. In early medieval high society, Byzantine or western, spiritual kinship was tantamount to the real thing. Willy-nilly, Blaise was becoming ensnared in the particularly tangled and violent web of the Roman aristocracy and its intrigues. This can have been no pleasant situation for a holy man. He began to think about moving on, but his admirers opposed his desire to leave Rome.[130]

The benefits of a Roman exposure can perhaps be detected in the next episode. For once in his life, the guileless Blaise devised a ruse. To escape his adopted city, he feigned an illness which required a visit to the hot baths of Pozzuoli around 892. Along with his favorite disciples, Luke (the probable patron of the biography), the slave Joseph, and Symeon, the holy man boarded a merchant vessel sailing south. The winds blew strong and favorably, so that at the end of twelve stormy days, the ship put into Methone in western Greece. The captain left the pilgrims there and continued on the ancient route around Greece and up into the Aegean. He had set a course for the Pagasitic Gulf and the region of Demetrias (near Volos) for some trading venture. But he ran into barbarian raiders, presumably Arabs, who captured his ship and took him away, enslaved, to their own country (R729).

By unspecified means, Blaise and his disciples reached Constantinople safely and were accepted into Stoudios by the higoumenos Anatolius. The abbot introduced them to Patriarch Anthony II Kauleas (893–901), who in turn commended him to Leo VI. Reverting to his old ways, Blaise charmed the emperor by wandering away from the anteroom where he had been left waiting for his audience and walking in on the scholarly *basileus*, who was working on his calligraphy. He

assume that he was about sixteen when his beard began to grow and he was besieged by unpure thoughts prior to his diaconal ordination, and if he was ordained a deacon between 867 and c. 872, he will have been born c. 851/6.

123 *V. Blasii*, 8, 660E–661A.

124 *Ibid.*, 9, 661B–C. What I have called a merchant, the author's recherché prose calls a *chrēmatikos*, literally, a "pecuniary man," whom the pirates suspected of "transporting something desirable to them." Clarity came second to elegance for this writer.

125 *V. Blasii*, 10, 662A–D. For the date, Papachryssanthou 1975, 52n66. The identity of this bishop is intriguing. Given the papal conflict with Constantinople pre-



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asked the writer where he might find the emperor. We might imagine Leo laughing, as he nudged over his footstool and told the holy man to have a seat; he would show him the emperor shortly. As they chatted away, seated side-by-side, it dawned on Blaise just who this splendidly attired man was, and he fell to the floor to adore the emperor. The emperor kissed him and told him he had seen his face in a vision three years earlier. Blaise became a frequent visitor to the palace, where the emperor was having his troubles with other churchmen.

Four years in the capital were enough for the saint, who hungered for greater solitude. With the patriarch's agreement, Blaise and his closest disciples sailed for Mount Athos and a more eremitical existence (Map 7.3). Here all was well for twelve more years, until the hermits' peace was disturbed by certain people whom the Life does not specify, who laid claim to their haunts on Athos. Blaise set off for Constantinople and, in February 908, obtained from Emperor Leo a diploma against those troublemakers. The imperial privilege has survived, and shows that the troublemakers in question were other monks, from the monastery of Kolobou.[131] The next month, still in the capital, Blaise was overcome by illness and died on 31 March. He was buried in the monastery of Stoudios.[132]

The six Byzantines have opened yet another window on the communications world of Charlemagne and his successors. The view differs considerably from what most of us have grown accustomed to seeing, but not from what we saw among western travelers. In their persons, their acquaintances, and their travels, these men connected Aachen, Salz, Samarra, Cherson, the Danube basin and, over and over again, Rome. At the top, it was after all a small world. And it seems to have been getting smaller as the years passed, not so much in terms of size, but in the thickness of the connections, of the communications linking these places and people.

The view is striking also for the richness of detail that emerges from the travelers' movements. Gregory Dekapolite allows us to see the interlocking structures of middle- and short-range shipping routes anchored in Constantinople. His biography depicts the competing land and sea routes that coupled the two main cities of the Byzantine empire. Although the word "fair" is never mentioned, it is hard to imagine what else explains the crowd of ships laden with goods eager to sail one spring from the port of Ephesus. And what was the nature of the deal that compelled the luckless captain of Blaise's ship to speed toward Demetrias and slavery?

cisely over ecclesiastical jurisdiction and the appointment of bishops in Bulgaria, it seems improbable that a Byzantine bishop "on pilgrimage" could have stepped into the lion's den at Rome and been allowed to return to Bulgaria. For the hypothesis that the bishop was Theodosius of Nin, c. 879–80, see Grégoire 1929–30, 409–11; Gjuzelev 1968, 30–1 rejects this suggestion, as well as



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As the captain's case makes plain, there were dangers on the Mediterranean, at least in the ninth century when most of the incidents we have encountered occurred. The risk of shipwreck was real, whether or not Michael of Synada experienced it along with Charlemagne's ambassadors. The beaching of Gregory Dekapolite's ship on the shore of southern Italy is less clearly a case of wreck than of an extreme maneuver, but the difference was one of degree. Shipwrecks, however, were nothing new in the Mediterranean, and so far no one has argued that early medieval ships sank more easily than ancient or later medieval ones.

Pirates and sea raiders are another matter. They were real and they prowled the shipping lanes. We have already seen Amalarius of Metz's encounter with them. And we meet them again, menacing in the southern Aegean – but not actually attacking – the spring sailing from Ephesus and, a decade later, capturing a traveler bound for Rome and holding him for ransom on Crete; awaiting passing ships in the mouth of the Strymon in the northern Aegean or the Pagasitic Gulf; rumored in the Ionian Sea; or ambushing a traveler's boat on the Danube. Piracy was a threat, at least when these examples occurred, from 814 on. Each time, it was directed against shipping, rather than land settlements. But the presence of pirates does not prove the absence of shipping. On the contrary: "The hunter had to follow the game."[133] Piracy requires a reliable supply of victims, as it still does today in certain Pacific waters. If pirates were lurking in the Strymon, along the middle Danube, around the Aegean, and in the waters off Sicily, the implication must be that vessels bearing valuable goods also must have been there to attract and sustain their activities. And that an infrastructure existed – in terms of ships, ports, and markets – which allowed the sea raiders to launch their raids and exchange their loot for food and other necessities.[134] Perhaps, it will be argued, this may be conceded. Successful pirates still might mean the end of the shipping on which they preyed. That may be true. But if so, then we must also admit that the terms of the argument have shifted. For it implies that there was steady shipping to be interrupted. In the sixteenth century, Mediterranean piracy and economic health "rise and fall together."[135] Was it so different in the ninth?

Our early ninth-century ambassador traveled to Carolingian Francia through Rome. This certainly had a diplomatic rationale, but it may also hint that his route was similar to Willibald's two generations earlier. As the ninth century drew to a close, Blaise's trip home proves that the old route around Greece past Monemvasia was still active. What differs is that the *same ship* sailed *directly* from Rome to Methone in western Greece. This suggests that whether or not short coastal routes endured – the kind that required frequent changes of ships to cover long distances, as appears to have been Willibald's case – some merchant ships were now making longer runs.

Dvornik's earlier one that Blaise traveled with the Roman envoys to Bulgaria, and



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In the 830s, Gregory Dekapolite shows us a different route westward. His journey combined stages on land and at sea. He certainly went via Corinth and its gulf to Italy, rather than around Greece. Most striking of all, only a few years after Marinus and his associates had taken a brand new overland route eastward to Constantinople through Bulgaria, Blaise followed a similar route westward. The evidence of the trips is entirely independent in origin and in preservation; they confirm each other, powerfully.

Two other strands, each unexpected, run through these stories. The first contradicts the pervasive notion of the Islamic and Christian dominions as separate worlds which interacted only through conflict. One of our six featured travelers had lived in the Caliphate for a dozen years, and migrated to the margins of the Frankish empire without visible difficulty. Two more had met the caliphs themselves on government missions. While he was being tormented before the very Christian grandson of Charlemagne, St. Methodius perhaps thought of his experiences on the threshold of central Asia when his brother had debated, civilly, with local Muslims and Jews about the respective merits of their religions. A fifth traveler had walked through a group of Arab raiders and lived to tell about it. This too sounds like a closer fit with the image we garnered from Bernard, of distant places and a civilization with which Latin and Byzantine Christians had contacts more numerous and more important than is commonly thought.

The second strand is more sinister. Slaves and slavery keep cropping up along our routes. Bernard had sailed across the Mediterranean in a slave transport. That Constantine-Cyril requested the liberation of 200 enslaved Byzantines at the Khazar court is surprising, not because liberating one's fellow countrymen is strange, but because the Khazar court traditionally enjoyed good relations with Constantinople, so that the Greek slaves were not likely to be the result of warfare. Where did they come from? Was there already in 861 a trading system exporting Byzantine slaves toward central Asia? And were the Byzantines the only people who so traded? In any case, the brothers' interest in slaves was not confined to liberating their own countrymen. When, in the first flush of success, the Slavic princes Rastislav and Kocel offered them riches, they took only one thing: 900 slaves. There is no hint in the sources that these were anything but what we would expect in two Slavic principalities: Slavic slaves. That the numbers of slaves requested and received from two relatively minor Slavic prinicipalites are so much greater than what Constantine had redeemed in the mighty Khazar khaganate perhaps hints that the slaves were more numerous – and cheaper – in the former than in the latter. Certainly the fate of the marketable members of the

argues instead on chronological grounds that the *Life* is simply wrong, and refers not to a bishop, but to a Bulgarian layman known to have been sent to Rome in 879.

126 *V. Blasii*, 11, 662E–663A; 14, 663F; 15, 664B–C; 16, 664E–F. On St. Caesarius,



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Methodian mission who were captured, sold, and driven across the Alps from Moravia to Venice suggests that there is more to this than meets the eye. Nor is slavery absent from other accounts. Blaise himself was sold as a slave, and the old monk who hatched that idea must have known that beyond the imperial borders a market existed in Bulgaria where he might get away with selling a naive young man of good family and attached to the patriarchal clergy itself. Indeed, the notion of slavery was widespread enough to assume flexible forms: Blaise sold one of his disciples as a slave inside his monastery at Rome. Gregory Decapolite too sold himself as a kind of debt servant to another monk, to finance part of his travel to Rome.

Real but surmountable dangers, vibrant piracy which supposes a lively shipping world, changing and complex routes, intercourse with the Muslim world, and an undercurrent of slavery as well as rich data on our travelers' broader life experiences: this is no meager harvest. The convergence with western patterns is striking and seems to argue that the shared features of these individuals' travel experiences are not coincidental. But again we must ask: are these travelers exceptional only by the eloquence of their stories? Once again the vividness of the anecdote gains depth and strength from the sterner discipline of examining the entire group of eastern travelers.



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# 8

# *Easterners heading west: group portrait*

THE DISTINCTIVE faces of the half dozen eastern travelers we have just met stand up well against the overall group of 340 "eastern" travelers. "Easterners" are slightly more numerous than the "westerners." In their overwhelming majority, they were "Byzantine." Most (at least 247: 73 percent) were Greeks by political allegiance; a much smaller number (34: 10 percent) were of Greek culture, although they resided in the Arab world. A handful (18: 5 percent) were Arabs, mostly attested in Latin or Greek sources; the others are of uncertain political and geographic background. The term "eastern" is no more than a convenient shorthand for this polyglot group, since it includes some Italo-Byzantines and a couple of Africans.

We have included primarily "easterners" who crossed borders. Generally speaking, internal patterns of movement between the capital and western provinces of the Byzantine empire have not been taken into exhaustive account.[1] Once the broad patterns of long-distance movement across boundaries have been clearly established, others may wish to analyze their correlations with the internal communications which wove together the Byzantine provinces and capital and, indeed, with similar communications inside the Islamic world.

Byzantine Italy's shifting political geography complicates the issue. Places like Rome or Venice are obviously crucial to our theme in the ninth century, although they were still very much a part of the Byzantine empire at the outset of the eighth. So we have gladly broken our rule for them and the northern Adriatic coast, and taken into account activities of Byzantine officials involving them prior to their removal from the empire, if only to clarify what changed, and when.

1 In this early stage of research, tracking for example the military governors (*stratēgoi*) of Sicily whose main activities were confined to that island would add more labor than insight. Administrative and other movements between the capital and provinces of the Byzantine empire can contribute to understanding the pattern of Mediterranean communications, but so vast a topic would require analysis on its own. For a preliminary outline of the problem, McCormick 1998b, 31–45.



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TABLE 8.1
Types of eastern travelers: overview

| Type | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Envoys | 148 | 44 |
| Pilgrims | 92 | 27 |
| Officials | 19 | 6 |
| Slaves | 19 | 6 |
| Immigrants | 17 | 5 |
| Missionaries | 9 | 3 |
| Merchants | 8 | 2 |
| Exiles/refugees | 5 | 1 |
| Business | 3 | 1 |
| Marriage | 3 | 1 |
| Uncertain | 17 | 5 |
| Total | 340 | 100 |

Rome itself poses a special problem. Large numbers of Greek-speakers are documented there. But how are we to know where they came from? Its unique circumstances could well mean that many, even most, of them were native Romans, and this would change their significance to our overall inquiry.

This chapter focuses on the two largest groups of eastern travelers I have turned up: those whose travel was state-sponsored, and those who moved mostly for religious reasons, chiefly as pilgrims. It includes also the data on other Byzantine officials who traveled to the west; Byzantine missionaries in particular served the state as well as God, as St. Constantine's dying words implied. Nonetheless, other eastern travelers help to answer questions about broader geographic horizons, wealth, age, and the like, and their contribution has been duly noted. But questions specific to the least well-documented types of travelers – essential categories like merchants, sailors, and slaves – are addressed in the next chapter.

## 1. Basic facts

As in western Europe, ambassadors and pilgrims dominate known "eastern" travelers. Envoys alone account for almost half the total, pilgrims for nearly a third. Beyond envoys, individuals who traveled under some sort of official sponsorship include officials, missionaries, and the three imperial princesses designated as diplomatic brides, making a total of 179 individuals. Together with the ninety-two pilgrims, these people account for most (271: 80 percent) of the eastern travelers. Table 8.1 summarizes the basic types and numbers.



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TABLE 8.2
Comparison of named and anonymous eastern envoys* and pilgrims

| | Envoys | | State-related travelers | | Pilgrims | | Combined | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Named | 82 | **55** | 20 | **65** | 59 | **63** | 161 | **59** |
| Anonymous | 66 | **45** | 11 | **35** | 34 | **37** | 111 | **41** |
| Total | 148 | **100** | 31 | **100** | 93 | **100** | 272 | **100** |

*Note:*
*Including officials, missionaries, and three imperial princesses sent to the west.

A majority of all eastern travelers are known by name (195: 57 percent). The proportion of named to anonymous individuals stays roughly the same across the main categories of wayfarers (Table 8.2). Naturally, named travelers lend themselves to the most detailed analysis. Nevertheless anonymous travelers again furnish precious information.

The data on easterners' geographic background are a little richer – and a little more complicated – than for westerners. It is possible, in a certain number of cases, to distinguish origin (main residence prior to travel), provenance (point from which we can discern someone traveling to the west), and even birthplace. For some we know enough about their other travels to describe their broader geographic horizons. And the whole issue is complicated by the large Greek community of Rome and the considerable contingent of voyagers from the House of Islam.

## 2. Geographic characteristics

Taking the entire set of eastern travelers, including other, less well-attested kinds of travelers as well as the envoys and pilgrims, makes clear the relative contribution of various regions. The eastern travelers set out, overwhelmingly (275: 81 percent), from the Byzantine empire, including even a few residents of the Caliphate; a little under a sixth set out from the Arab world, including also a few subjects of the emperor; a small number came from Bulgaria.[2]

2 The figures will differ slightly, depending on whether one classifies travelers by provenance, main residence prior to travel, or original residence. Looking at them by provenance – the place from which they set out on their travel – the other totals are: Arab world, forty-nine (14 percent); Bulgaria, twelve (4 percent); unknown, four.



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Of course "Byzantine empire" covers a lot of territory and conceals its share of ambiguity. Many of those whom I have initially classified as coming from Byzantium were monks resident at Rome. We will return to them in a moment. Travelers from the Arab world equally call out for closer attention. But let us begin with the largest single group, Byzantines, in the narrow sense of the residents of the Byzantine empire who set out from Byzantine territory, including, for the moment, Byzantine residents of Rome, but not including Byzantine residents of the Arab world. Is it possible to discern which regions of the empire furnished the travelers?

Some kind of geographic connections can be detected for the overwhelming majority of these 275 individuals.[3] Many concern the travelers' main place of residence prior to their journey (95 of 234 with some kind of known geographic connections – 41 percent) and even, in a surprising tenth of cases, their birthplace.[4] It is edifying to compare birthplaces with residence, as laid out in Table 8.3.

Both the contrasts and the continuities between these two different series of data are revealing. First of all, Byzantine Italy appears frequently as a residence for the eastern travelers: proximity breeds travel, and the nearest region supplied a good many travelers. But it is noteworthy that Italian *birthplace* (and subsequent migration to another region of the Byzantine empire) correlates even more strongly with travel to the west. Either Italian immigrants constituted a large share of the Byzantine elite in these generations or they were disproportionately disposed to travel back to the west and the borders of their native region.[5] For Asia Minor, proportions of residents and natives are much closer. The European provinces show a smaller proportion of residences than birthplaces, which hints at emigration. The capital, on the other hand, displays far and away the biggest gap between births and residence: travelers were more than three times as likely to

3 85 percent; forty-one (15 percent) show practically no geographic data beyond where they appear in the west.

4 As examples of the former, palatine charges are taken to imply residence at Constantinople, episcopal sees, residence in that cathedral town, although occasionally this assumption may be unwarranted. On the other hand, the Byzantine emperors' ambassadors have not been counted automatically as residing in Constantinople, simply on the basis of their ambassadorial appointment. Although this is likely in many cases, there is at least one case of a churchman from Sicily being selected as an envoy and sent from Constantinople: Constantinus 4. Place of birth is known or can be deduced for twenty-eight travelers, including two whose residence prior to travel to the west is unknown.

5 Only three of the fifty-seven envoys were probably of Italian birth so far as we can tell, and one of them did not represent the government: Epiphanius 2, Ioseph 1 and Theodorus 2. Tempting though it is, by itself this is insufficient to conclude that the imperial government made a practice of selecting envoys with specialized regional background.



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TABLE 8.3
Byzantine travelers: known birthplaces compared with residences (cf. Map 8.1)

| | Birthplace | | Residence | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Locations*** | **No.** | **%** | **%** | **n** |
| Italy | 11 | **39** | **26** | 24 |
| Sicily 9 | | | | |
| Rome 1 | | | | |
| Reggio (Calabria) 1 | | | | |
| Asia Minor (1 each) | 5 | **18** | **19** | 18 |
| Amneia | | | | |
| Amorion area | | | | |
| Kyzikos | | | | |
| Eirenopolis in Isauria | | | | |
| Synada | | | | |
| Europe | 6 | **21** | **9** | 8 |
| Greece 4 | | | | |
| Athens 1 | | | | |
| Thessalonica 2 | | | | |
| "Graecia" 1 | | | | |
| "Moesia" (i.e. the lower Danube) 1 | | | | |
| Dalmatia 1 | | | | |
| Constantinople | 4 | **14** | **44** | 41 |
| Georgia | 2 | **7** | **0** | 0 |
| Kaxeti 1 | | | | |
| Caliphate (1 each) | 0 | **0** | **2** | 2 |
| Jerusalem | | | | |
| Alexandria | | | | |
| Total | 28 | **100** | **100** | 93[a] |

*Notes:*
*Numbers in this column specify birthplaces.
[a] Two more travelers resided either in Sicily or, more probably, Constantinople: Anons. 237–8.



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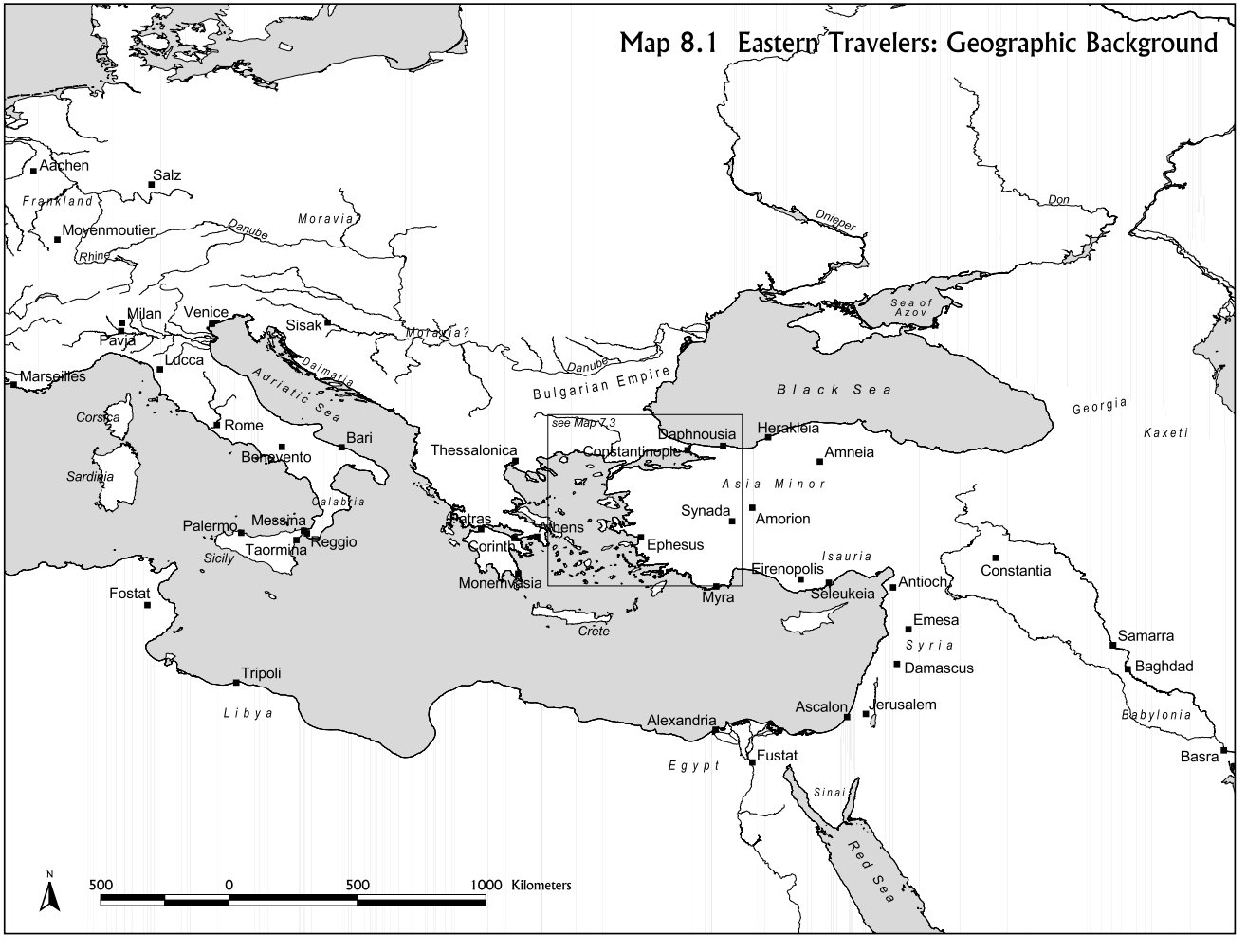

reside in Constantinople as to have been born there, so far as we can tell. The implication is manifest: already in the eighth and ninth centuries, the capital was a magnet for immigration from the provinces.[6] Even more striking, nearby Byzantine Italy naturally supplied many travelers to the early medieval west, but distant Asia Minor was not far behind. Overall, Constantinopolitans' share outpaced that of all the Byzantine territories between the Frankish west and the Bosporus combined. In fact, the capital's dominance is even more pronounced when we consider that several of the Asian residents came from the greater capital region, for instance, the see of Chalcedon and the monasteries of Bithynia.

Two groups of travelers merit a closer look. The first group is particularly interesting for their places of origin. Though they were predominantly of Hellenic culture, these travelers came from territories conquered by the forces of Islam, and add an important dimension to our investigation. The issue of origin is equally important for the second group: the large Greek community established at Rome offers its own problems and opportunities.

About one in seven eastern travelers I have uncovered set out from the Arab world (49: 14 percent of 340). They were mostly Christian and Hellenic. That so many appear from research geared to Byzantine and Latin source materials – presumably the least rewarding for the Arab world – challenges the conventional wisdom. Could levels of communications between the Christian and Muslim shores of the Mediterranean really have been so low in the early Middle Ages if so many moved across it? The importance of Jerusalem reflects the fact that the sample is overwhelmingly Christian. But the other main regions of the Caliphate are represented equally, from Iraq to Tunisia. Nearly half of these travelers (twenty-two: 45 percent) came to the west as envoys, chiefly from the patriarchate of Jerusalem (twelve) and also from the ecclesiastical authorities of Alexandria and Africa (three). Others, of course, represented the Islamic authorities of the Caliphate (seven), from Damascus, Baghdad and Fostat. Surprisingly, immigrants (seven), in addition to pilgrims (seven) – the two are not always distinct – make up a fair share of the rest. And, contrary to conventional wisdom that Muslims did not leave Islamic territory to trade, we find a few merchants (six), including some certain cases of Muslims, operating at least as far north as Rome. Other travelers on business of some sort (two) and prisoners or slaves (two) add a final contingent.[7]

We have already observed a persistent flow of western pilgrims to the Holy Land. It might be explained away as a triumph of religious devotion over economic realities. But that does not explain why easterners should travel from the Holy

6 See Pros.

7 The reasons for travel of the remaining three are uncertain.



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TABLE 8.4
Travelers' points of departure in the Arab world

| Place | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Palestine<br>Jerusalem 16<br>Ascalon 1 | 18 | 37 |
| Mesopotamia<br>"Babylonia" 1<br>Baghdad 4<br>Constantia 2 | 7 | 14 |
| Egypt<br>Alexandria 7 | 7 | 14 |
| Syria<br>Damascus 4<br>Antioch 1 | 6 | 12 |
| Africa<br>Fostat 1 | 7 | 14 |
| Uncertain | 4 | 8 |
| Total | 49 | 100 |

Land to the west, and why they should be such an appreciable fraction of the total group of eastern travelers. Was travel involving Jerusalem borne along by deeper, less visible currents? The Holy City was the starting point for a third, but only a third, of the eastern travelers.

Another, less obvious characteristic of some other eastern travelers further undermines the notion of interrupted intercourse, at least between Byzantium and the Arab world. Beyond the travelers who came directly from the Arab world to the west, another substantial group of eastern voyagers (28: 8 percent) also traveled to the Arab world at other times. In all, nearly a quarter of all eastern travelers also came from or went to the Caliphate (77: 23 percent of all eastern travelers). They traveled, naturally, as envoys, but also as slaves or prisoners, and as pilgrims. Although some of the eastern travelers with Arab connections made only a brief sojourn in the Caliphate, others lived there much longer: a dozen years or more is not uncommon.[8] To these we should add westerners resident in

8 E.g., Theopemptus, Stauracius, Theodorus 7 and his wife, Anon. 207, Basilius 4, and Abu Aaron all to adulthood; Gregorius 5, twelve years;



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the Arab world who returned to the west for short periods, for example, western religious permanently attached to the church of the Holy Land who returned to the west as emissaries of the east.

Migration, voluntary or not, between the Byzantine empire and the Caliphate is unmistakable. Most immigrated to the Byzantine empire or Italy; some actually moved back and forth.[9] Most of the long-term residents of the Caliphate display a blurred, complex cultural identity. Two who had been born in the Byzantine empire and transported to the Caliphate as slave boys kept their knowledge of Greek.[10] Almost all the others seem also to have spoken Greek. Even Zachary, the most clearly Arab among the group, shows a complex cultural personality.[11] This former Muslim converted to Christianity and resided in Rome for at least nineteen years. There he served the papal court in an intimate and respected capacity as a physician, before defecting anew to his old religion and homeland.

The story of this long-term Arab resident of Rome underscores the complexities and importance of Rome in tracking Mediterranean travelers. The Eternal City offers rich but somewhat problematic evidence. Its political and religious significance allied with its geographic situation on the edge of the Byzantine sphere of influence to make it a focal point for Byzantine travelers to the west; it was the single most frequent destination of our eastern travelers (see below). There they will have found people who spoke their languages and shared their culture. If the best-documented human groups, the monastic communities, are any indicator, the thriving and numerous Greek community dates from the seventh century. For the less well-to-do, no small encouragement came from the Roman custom of feeding pilgrims.[12]

They came as pilgrims. But they came also, perhaps especially, as immigrants and refugees from the turmoils of the end of empire, mainly from Syria and Palestine, the regions most affected by those seventh-century upheavals. At least in the early decades there is reason to suspect an influential number of native

Elias 1, c. forty-two years, to name only those we could classify as immigrants. See Pros.

9 Gregorius 5; Elias 1; Hilarion; the pilgrim-merchant-would-be ambassador Basilius 4 shunted around the Mediterranean, but showed no sign of returning permanently to the Arab world as far as we can follow him. See Pros.

10 Elias 1; Leontius.

11 Zacharias 4.

12 That pilgrims received food at the expense of the Holy See is explicitly documented in the mid-7th C.: Martin I, *Epistola*, JE 2080, PL, 129.600D–601A. Cf., e.g., Pope Leo III's construction of a bath for pilgrims as well as a pilgrim hostel, endowed with lands to supply food to pilgrims from "distant regions": *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.28.3–10. Archaeology may shed more light on the infrastructure of pilgrim hospitality in the early Middle Ages in Rome in particular. See for the early medieval textual evidence a few indications in Schmugge 1983.



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Greek-speakers among the lay elite of the duchy of Rome.[13] Was the Greek-speaking population of early medieval Rome an isolated, entrenched community of old immigrant families? Or did it continue to attract travelers of broader horizons?

We know nothing about how quickly early immigrant families assimilated into the local culture, but their children, at least in the first few generations, probably helped to people the dozen or so Greek monasteries which sprang up at Rome from the seventh to the ninth centuries.[14] Local Roman recruitment has in fact been judged better attested than the other obvious source, the Hellenic regions of southern Italy and Sicily. It has furthermore been suggested that the numbers of native Greek-speakers born in Rome dwindled in the course of the ninth century and that this, joined with a lessening stream of travelers from abroad, helps explain the disappearance of many Greek monasteries. Other Greek-speakers came from Constantinople, the more distant provinces of the Byzantine empire, and the Melkite churches of the Caliphate.[15]

A lost Greek inscription discovered on the Tuscan coast has cast a new shaft of light on the problem. This tomb marker commemorated three generations of a family of high officials in the early eighth-century Roman church. Several of the individuals are known from other sources, but their family connection and identity as Greek-speakers is new. It is plausible that the family came from Syria; they will have immigrated no later than 710, since by that date the grandfather may well have held a high post and accompanied Pope Constantine to Constantinople.[16] The choice of Greek for their tomb strongly suggests that the family remained hellenophone down to the third generation, assuming that the grandfather had immigrated, and was not himself born in Rome or elsewhere in Byzantine Italy. Since their provenance remains only probable, they figure among the quarter of Byzantine residents of Rome whose geography I have classified as unknown. But it is certainly legitimate to suspect that they were locals.

Closer scrutiny of individuals adds some nuance to the overall picture at Rome. Nearly a third of all the eastern travelers I have identified were more or less

13 See Sansterre 1983, 1: 20–1. Note that the latest evidence adduced there and in the relevant footnotes is from the first half of the 8th C. See *ibid.*, 1: 47 and 2: 103–4n388 for the slight evidence available on the *schola Graecorum*. This *schola* seems to have come into existence in the 9th C. and, in any case, was then insufficient to maintain Greek monastic vocations at the earlier level.

14 Sansterre 1988, 704–7.

15 Sansterre 1983, 1: 39–47, has conscientiously collected the evidence.

16 *Inscriptiones graecae* 14, no. 2263, with Cosentino 1996, 507–16. Cosentino's observation that the uniqueness of the name of Mamalus 1 in the Roman church reinforces the identification holds equally for Moschus: see Llewellyn 1981, 367. More onomastic research might add further clarity to the question of the family's provenance. For the other family members, see Pros. "Agatha," "Anastasius 1," "Marouse" and "Sergius 2."



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long-term religious residents of Rome, or went there on pilgrimage.[17] Is there any reason to believe that within this subset of eastern religious visitors or residents of the city, many came from further afield than Rome itself? It is possible at least to circumscribe the unknown and specify what is knowable.

For a little over a quarter of this special group (27 of 102: 27 percent) we have no geographic data other than their presence at Rome. For over a third we know either the birthplace (two), last residence before Rome (twenty-two) or both (fifteen).[18] Although the Byzantine empire supplied more residents (Table 8.5), the Caliphate sent a respectable share of Rome's religious (Table 8.6).

The trackable religious residents and pilgrims in Rome confirm the traditional view, that Byzantine southern Italy supplied a substantial share of the Greek monks of Rome. Italo-Byzantines of all descriptions constitute over a quarter of the entire group.[19] Adding the six males from the Tuscan inscription, on the hypothesis that they were all born locally, would boost the local share of certain or possible Italo-Byzantines to nearly half (44 percent: 15 of 34). Rome itself occurs as a likely birthplace only twice, and both cases come late in our period. One might suspect that its very banality might militate against the mention of Roman birth in Roman sources, so that the numbers of "locals" are understated, and many of the Greek monks of unspecified origin might in fact have been Romans.[20] Although the numbers are small, it is also worth noting that the Sicilian residents antedate the Arab conquest of the island, while the Calabrian ones show up in the late ninth century, a pattern which accurately reflects the changing weight of the two neighboring regions within Byzantine Italy.[21]

17 102 of 340 (30 percent). I have included various refugees, whose motives are generally recognized as religious in whole or in part; immigrants with religious connections which justify assimilating them to pilgrims (e.g. the Syrian bishop Theopemptus 1 and his daughter who settled in Rome in the early 8th C.). Among the more fuzzy cases, I have accepted the suggestion that Harun ibn Yahya was a pilgrim.

18 Thirty-nine individuals; 38 percent of the overall group of eastern pilgrims or religious resident at Rome; forty cases of provenance, since Basilius 4 made two trips to Rome, from differing residences.

19 Including Methodius (by virtue of his birthplace, not his residence) would yield ten of thirty-nine individuals – 26 percent.

20 Greek monks at Rome named Benedictus or Martinus (q.v.) would be obvious candidates for local birth, if only the possibility of their having taken a local religious name (cf. e.g., the case of the Constantinopolitan Petrus 7) could be excluded. Among Greek monks, Roman saints' cults (and, probably, the names they imply) gained ground in the later 8th and 9th C.: cf. Sansterre 1983, 1: 158–9.

21 As usual, Table 8.5 is organized in descending order of magnitude, and within sets, chronologically. From about 827, one would expect the Arab invasion of Sicily to have spurred renewed migration to Rome. In fact, archaeological evidence may link the monastery of St. Basil in Scala Mortuorum with Sicily or southern Italy: Sansterre 1988, 707–8n16.



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TABLE 8.5
Religious travelers to Rome arriving from the Byzantine empire: known residences and/or birthplaces

30 Byzantine of 40 known provenances; 75 percent; see Maps 8.1 and 7.3.

| Name | Residence | Birthplace |
|---|---|---|
| *Constantinople* (13 of 30: 43 percent of Byzantine provenances) | | |
| Methodius 1 | Constantinople | Sicily |
| Basilius 3 | Constantinople | |
| Anons. 194–7 | Constantinople | |
| Iacobus | Constantinople | |
| Petrus 7 | Constantinople (Samarra) | |
| Basilius 4 (second trip) | Constantinople | |
| Theognostus 2 | Constantinople | |
| Anon. 243 | Constantinople | |
| Anon. 273 | Constantinople | |
| Blasius | Constantinople | Amorion |
| *Italy* (9 of 30: 30 percent of Byzantine provenances) | | |
| Sergius 1 | Sicily | Palermo |
| Stephanus 1 | Sicily | Sicily |
| Anon. 75 | Sicily | |
| Anon. 214 | Reggio (C.)? | |
| Daniel 2 | Reggio (C.) | Taormina |
| Elias 1 | Reggio (C.) | Sicily |
| Elias 2 | Reggio (C.) | Reggio |
| Iohannes 22 | Rome | Rome |
| Anon. 308 | Rome | Rome? |
| *Asia* (5 of 30: 17 percent of Byzantine provenances) | | |
| Eustratius | Kyzikos? | Kyzikos |
| Hilarion | Bithynia | Georgia |
| Isaac | Bithynia | Georgia |
| Gregorius 9 | Eirenopolis | Isauria |
| Anon. 244 | Bithynia | |
| *Europe* (3 of 30: 10 percent of Byzantine provenances) | | |
| Zacharias 1 | Greece? | Athens |
| Iohannes 12 | Monemvasia | |
| Anon. 213 | Thessalonica? | |



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TABLE 8.6
Travelers arriving at Rome from the Caliphate (10 of 40 known cases; Map 8.1)

Given in chronological order

| Name | Residence | Birthplace |
|---|---|---|
| Theopemptus 1 | Mesopotamia | Constantia |
| Anon. 6 | Mesopotamia | Constantia |
| Gregorius 5 | Jerusalem | Crete |
| Anon. 246 | Jerusalem | |
| Anon. 262 | Jerusalem | |
| Basilius 4 (first trip) | Jerusalem | |
| Anon. 245 | Alexandria | |
| Anon. 264 | Alexandria | |
| Anon. 263 | Antioch | |
| Harun ibn Yahya | Ascalon | |

Italo-Byzantines were an important component of Rome's Byzantine religious population. Yet by these lights, they were not the overwhelmingly dominant one: as many Greek monks came from the admittedly large and diverse Caliphate as certainly came from Italy (Table 8.6). Constantinople looms large, since Constantinopolitans outstrip Italians. Their weight increases further still when we consider the greater capital region. This preponderance probably reflects the Imperial City's unique position in the cultural and religious life of the empire, as well as its preeminence within the communications network. Outside Italy, the empire's closer European provinces furnished only a few monks: other factors can outweigh geographic proximity. Another quarter of the Roman religious travelers of known provenance came from the Arab world (Table 8.6). That Jerusalem numerically heads the list of religious travelers from the Arab world arises, in part, from the natural links between the two greatest centers of Christian long-distance pilgrimage in the early Middle Ages. It also reflects enduring cultural and personal contacts which had originated in the seventh-century Levantine flight to Italy, the final stages of which we probably grasp directly in the immigration of Theopemptus 1 and his daughter.[22]

Whatever else is true, it is certain that almost a third (31 out of 102: 30 percent) of individual eastern pilgrims and the like attested at or en route to Rome did not come to Rome from Byzantine Italy. Even in the unlikely event that all

22 See in general Sansterre 1983, 1: 9–51; on the enduring links with Syria and Palestine, some more material in McCormick 1998b, 36–8.



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those whose provenance is uncertain came from the Eternal City or its neighboring regions, Greek-speaking Rome does not look like an entrenched, isolated society. The cosmopolitan character of the eastern religious at Rome is only strengthened by the group's broader geographic exposure.

Broader geographic exposure includes, in addition to the cases of known origin or provenance, travel subsequent to the individuals' attestation in Rome. In this respect, two thirds of the easterners in Rome for religious reasons show connections beyond Rome to the wider Byzantine and Mediterranean world (66: 65 percent). Thirteen of them are attested in more than one place outside Rome. Constantinople tops the list of places which they knew (29), followed by Asia Minor (17), Greece (14) and the Caliphate (11), other places in Italy (5) and, far behind, Georgia, Bulgaria, Frankland (2 each), and Sardinia (1).

The conclusion is clear. We can learn something about the travel experiences of most of the documented Byzantine individuals or small groups who were in Rome for religious purposes. Their personal movements span a broad geographic range, running from Bulgaria to Africa and from Sardinia to Samarra. The Greek population of Rome was a very cosmopolitan group indeed. Although many travelers had been to Sicily or Calabria, mainland Greece and the Caliphate, including Jerusalem and Africa, were also well represented. A second, methodological conclusion follows as well. The fact that, even by the broadest definition, about a third of this group remains of unascertained geographic horizons, and that at least a quarter of those whose provenances we know certainly came there from Byzantine Italy, means that we must be cautious about concluding that every *Graecus* mentioned in a western source came from the eastern Mediterranean. For the rest of our study, this means that individuals' documented trips or movements are surer gauges of communications than foreign individuals lacking such evidence.

## 3. Social profile

Most of the officially sponsored travelers and pilgrims belonged to the elite. This is obvious in the case of almost all ambassadors, officials and exiles, and apparent in a fair number of the pilgrims. Wealth is, and was, the most obvious source of social status. In a way quite different from Carolingian Europe, however, the state formally structured the middle Byzantine aristocracy so that institutional affiliation provides a second important element for describing this set of travelers.[23]

Some (six) of those travelers whose family is recorded in hagiography are explicitly identified as having wealthy parents.[24] But most envoys, pilgrims,

23 See e.g. Kazhdan and McCormick 1997, 172.

24 See Pros. "Blasius"; "Elias 2"; "Gregorius 9"; "Hilarion"; "Iacobus"; "Methodius 1."



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officials, and exiles offer no direct information on their economic status. We might be tempted to suspect that many poorly documented travelers, particularly low-ranking imperial officials, or monks were less well off than the exalted social personages who otherwise crowd our catalogue of travelers.[25] Yet the very fact of their travel and associations often suggests significant disposable wealth, and at least one Byzantine monk (Anon. 275) is positively identified as wealthy, paradoxical though that might appear. A few eastern travelers can be detected financing their movements as they went, along the lines of the Anglo-Saxon Willibald. Gregory Dekapolite, though he was born to wealth, rented himself as a "debt-servant" to another monk to pay part of his way toward Rome.[26] The unspecified operations of pilgrim-businessman-ambassador Basil of Jerusalem maintained him in Constantinople for twenty months, until he ran out of money.[27] Basil's travels around the Mediterranean and the length of time that he sustained himself in Constantinople, not to mention his priestly status, show that he was not from the lowest stratum of society. Yet along with the other imposter legates of the eastern patriarchates, the bishops and officials assembled at the Council of Constantinople of 869–70 judged that he deserved forgiveness for cooperating with Photius' plots, since he was "poor and foreign."[28]

One saint alone among this set of travelers certainly came from a less than distinguished milieu.[29] A soldier in an elite regiment like the pilgrim Peter probably stood above the bottom of the economic ladder, at least before his capture by the Arabs. So far as we can tell, most of these travelers came from well-to-do backgrounds; among them, at least, the lowest reaches of the economic spectrum are not very low.

Religious status was an essential component of social identity. For the total group of eastern travelers, religious outnumber laypeople.[30] But among the different types of travelers who make up this group, the picture varies considerably. Laymen outweigh churchmen among ambassadors; marital candidates and officials are all lay.[31] Pilgrims, on the other hand, are almost entirely religious.

25 E.g. "Daniel 1" or any of the many monks and travelers lacking other data.

26 Pros. "Gregorius 9."

27 Pros. "Basilius 4." Blaise is perhaps another case of self-financing travel. Despite his wealthy background, he kept busy weaving purple cloth and doing calligraphy in the monastery of St. Caesarius at Rome.

28 "Πτωχούς . . . καὶ ξένους": *Concilium Constantinopolitanum a. 869*, Acta graeca, act. 9, Mansi 16.397B; cf. Anastasius' version, *ibid.*, 156E: "pauperes et peregrini."

29 Gregory Akritas: see Ch. 7.3.

30 186 religious (55 percent); 146 laymen (43 percent including non-Christians); four who entered the church in connection with their travel (1 percent); four of uncertain status (1 percent). The pattern holds for the combined group of envoys, state-sponsored and religious travelers on whom this chapter particularly focuses: 154 religious (57 percent); 111 laymen (41 percent); four changes in status; and three uncertain.

31 Envoys: eighty-one lay (55 percent) to sixty-four religious (43 percent), with three uncertain.



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Eastern pilgrims differ somewhat from contemporary westerners with respect to position within the church, for there are a priest, a few deacons, and even some bishops among them.[32] Missionaries were mostly religious.[33]

Church-wise, pilgrims and envoys differ distinctively. Pilgrims were overwhelmingly monks; a minority (8 percent) held any ecclesiastical rank that we know of. The envoys who were churchmen, on the other hand, typically held dignities ranging from deacon to bishop. Bishops and metropolitans alone count for a third (34 percent) of envoys who were churchmen. Monks, though present, seem far less numerous.[34]

Whether they were envoys, officials, missionaries, or brides, insofar as we can see them, lay travelers were generally of high status. Just how high emerges from their state dignities. One in seven of this group of lay travelers occupied the very summit of the hierarchy of dignities: they were imperial princesses, or patricians like Theodosius Baboutzikos (Figure 8.1).[35] In fact, almost half of the lay travelers we can discern ranked in the upper ranges of the state aristocracy.[36]

That the loftiest dignities are disproportionately high and more numerous than lower ones implies one thing: the sources tend to mention explicitly only the highest-ranking members of groups. Such Byzantines were no less accustomed to escorts than westerners (cf. Ch. 6.3). No patrician or prōtospatharios traveled without a staff or retinue which would have included officers holding lower dignities. Subordinates usually appear because they were entrusted with some specific task mentioned by our records.[37] That so few individuals can be identified as staff personnel confirms the selectivity of the sources' identification of travelers

32 A total of 92 pilgrims, of whom 82 (89 percent) were clergy, and only 10 laymen, of whom four took religious vows in the course of their pilgrimage. At the time of travel, three were bishops, one was a priest, three were deacons. There are other priests, but it is unclear when they were ordained.

33 Missionaries: eight clergy; one *basilikos anthrōpos* who is presumably a layman. In its technical sense, the term usually designates military men; it is perhaps being used here in the broader sense of senior associates of the emperor: cf. A. Kazhdan, *ODB* 1: 266 and Philotheus, *Klētorologion*, 215.6–8, where the phrasing seems to exclude the churchmen mentioned in the same breath.

34 Deacons: three; priests, including two abbots and some patriarchal officials: nine; archbishop, metropolitans and bishops: twenty-two; monks: eighteen, plus two more abbots. To put the monastic envoys in social perspective, there is one further case of a probable monk who was a former patrician: Pros. "Michael 1."

35 Twelve patricians and three imperial princesses, of 104 (14 percent) laymen traveling on official business. Patricians and the other ranks are discussed by Oikonomides 1972, 294–8 and Winkelmann 1985, 29–68 who emphasizes (68) that aside from the very highest dignities, office retained a determinant influence in this, the formative period of the middle Byzantine state aristocracy.

36 Thirty-nine held the rank of spatharios or higher. See Pros. for details.

37 E.g. Stephanus 4.



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Figure 8.1. "(Mother of God, help Thy servant) / + Theodosius, Patrician, Imperial Protospatharios and Chartoularios of the Vestiarion." The lead seal bearing this Greek legend was once attached to a document issued by Theodosius Baboutzikos, a close relative of Byzantine emperor Theophilus. This side bears his name and title. Theodosius headed the "imperial" Vestiarion, a bureau which stored precious objects, ingots, and cash, and whose arsenal supplied war matériel for sea and land expeditions. In 840, Theodosius went on a lengthy embassy to Venice and the Frankish empire to negotiate alliances and military support (R455). Archaeologists discovered this seal at Haithabu in 1966; it shows that Theodosius was in communication with the Jutland emporium. Could he have been recruiting Viking mercenaries for the beleaguered Byzantine forces? Courtesy of the Archäologisches Landesmuseum der Christian-Albrechts-Universität, Schloss Gottorf, Schleswig.

and delineates their distortion.[38] Even among the *types* of travelers most likely to merit mention, it was mainly only those of the very highest status who were in fact mentioned, as in the west. One can begin to imagine the extent to which our informants ignored lower-status travelers of less-favored types.

## 4. Under way

So, the bulk of eastern Christian travelers moved on their own initiative, as pilgrims, or on state business. A few combined elements of both types, traveling as envoys of the Christian church of Palestine. All eastern pilgrims aimed for Rome,

38 In addition to preceding note, Anons. 249–50 and 279–80.



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most were religious, and most of these churchmen were monks. A fair number of churchmen also traveled on state business, but laymen were more numerous there. A final subgroup of Christian travelers partially overlaps with both of these broad categories, and partially escapes them. Whether pilgrims, envoys of some sort, or traveling on some other purpose, forty-nine travelers to the west started out from the former Byzantine territories of the Caliphate. About three quarters of them were Christian.[39] What more do these individuals and small groups tell us about the broader issues of travel and communications?

Western travelers showed a rather wide age span and some relatively advanced ages in a health regime which did not make for old bones. The canonical rules on allowable ages of ordination seem to have been followed, at least for priests and bishops. In Byzantium, the situation differed. Notwithstanding scholars' frequent presumption that Byzantine churchmen's careers respected the canons about legitimate age – thirty for priests and bishops, twenty-five for deacons – there is real room for doubt on this score, at least for the eighth and ninth centuries.[40] Our data deepen that doubt for priestly ordinations at Constantinople and in Georgia.[41] For Byzantine career patterns, clearly documented ages must be our guide. On the other hand, since the ninth-century Roman church seems to have respected canonical norms for priests and bishops, the numerous Byzantine pilgrims who received their ordination in Rome shed some light on the age of travelers. The prosopographical evidence from Jerusalem equally suggests that its patriarch also kept to the canons, so hagiopolitan ordinations can be used with greater confidence.[42]

Overall, age can be addressed with varying degrees of precision for about forty-five (13 percent) of all eastern travelers. For once, Byzantine data are superior to western. For some, we know only that they were "young" or "old," and we have already seen that for one biographer at least, forty-five qualifies as "good old

39 12 were not, if Harun ibn Yahya is reckoned a Christian.

40 For the ages defined by the Quinisext council, see above, Ch. 6.3. My sample entirely confirms the skepticism of V. Grumel, 1934: 352. A fairly clear example comes from the *V. Ioannis Psichaitae* (BHG 896), 3, 108.8–13: Patriarch Tarasius had wanted to consecrate two brothers as priests, but their abbot finally persuaded him to observe the canonical ages and consecrate the younger one as a deacon, and the older one as a priest. That an abbot had to prevail upon the patriarch to observe the canonical age is telling.

41 The career of Michael of Synada suggests observance, since he was between thirty-eight and forty-one when he became priest and bishop; Joseph the Hymnographer, on the other hand, would have been between 18 and 25, while the priestly ordination of Constantine-Cyril certainly disregarded the canonical age: see Ch. 7.2. In Georgia, Hilarion seems to have been twenty-three or twenty-nine years old. See Pros. for details.

42 All three cases we can test suggest priestly ordination between thirty-three and thirty-eight/forty-one: Michael 3, Theodorus 5; Theophanes 1.



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age."[43] But for another forty-five trips involving twenty-six individuals, we can be much more specific, as Table 8.7 reveals.

The travelers' age span is, again, very wide. Table 8.8 lays out the relative frequency of different ages among them. As we might have expected, more than half the travelers were in the prime of life, in their 20s, 30s, and 40s. Three women seem to have been in their teens; for two, marriage motivated the travel and explains the age. Pilgrims, immigrants and ambassadors run the age spectrum; the only envoy who may have been twenty was an exceptional case, since Joseph the Hymnographer was charged with evading imperial security and conveying a dissident message to Rome. Constantine-Cyril looks a little on the young side when he was sent on an embassy to Samarra, but he was probably not the leader of the delegation. Young people under thirty comprise a third of the known cases, suggesting that the world on the move was largely a younger one.

Yet what surprises again is just how late in life some Byzantines undertook lengthy trips within the Mediterranean basin. Elias the Younger, an inveterate traveler, was eighty when he answered the imperial summons and headed for Constantinople. His death on the road occasions little wonder. But nearly a fifth of these trips occurred when the travelers were in their fifties or even their sixties. This finding entirely confirms the scarcer – and independent – evidence for western travelers who headed across the Mediterranean at ages which, by early medieval standards, appear advanced. The age of some eastern and western travelers also hints, in its own way, that the travel infrastructures spanning the early medieval Mediterranean were less rudimentary than is sometimes assumed.

Looking at the easterners' broader geographic horizons strengthens the impression of long-distance geographic mobility. For such travel seems to have been a fairly typical element in the life experience of many. More than one in twenty eastern travelers made multiple trips across the breadth of the Mediterranean world, and they did so across the entire period under review.[44] Two even attempted the trip thrice.

With few exceptions, these men traveled on official business of some sort.[45] The sole pilgrim who went to Rome twice was also acting as a merchant; he was due to make a third trip under patriarchal and imperial auspices.[46] The predominance of multiple trips by officials and ambassadors sheds light on the inner workings of a medieval government, for it makes it likely that the Byzantine

43 E.g. "young": Anon. 6, Daniel 2, Drogus; "old": Anon. 273; "Good old age": see above Ch. 7.3, on Gregory Dekapolite. For this hagiographical *topos*, Browning 1981, 123.

44 21/340; 6 percent. See Table 8.9.

45 Theognostus went first as a refugee and private representative of the deposed Patriarch Ignatius; his second trip was as the restored patriarch's ambassador. Epiphanius and Euphemianus traveled as Theodore Studite's private emissaries to Rome.

46 Basilius 4.



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TABLE 8.7
Age at which easterners undertook travels

| Age | Name | Journey | Comment |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9/26 | Stephanus 1 | Sicily–Rome | * |
| c. 12? | Anna | Constantinople–Pavia | |
| c. 12? | Evanthia | Constantinople–Benevento | |
| 12 | Elias 1 | Sicily–Africa | slave, first time |
| 15 or less | Joseph 1 | Sicily–Greece | |
| c. 15 | Elias 1 | Sicily–Africa | slave, second time |
| 18/30 | Joseph 1 | Constantinople–Rome | |
| c. 19 | Clemens | Byzantium–Moravia | ** |
| c. 19 | Elias 2 | Taormina–Rome | |
| 19/23 | Sergius 1 | Palermo–Constantinople | * |
| 20 + | Methodius 1 | Sicily–Constantinople | * |
| 23/9 | Hilarion | Georgia–Jerusalem | |
| 24/9 | Constantine 3 | Constantinople–Samarra | |
| 24/5 + | Methodius 1 | Constantinople–Rome | * |
| 25/6 + | Naum | Constantinople–Moravia | * |
| 26 | Gregorius 5 | Seleucia–Jerusalem | |
| 30 + | Anon. 293 | Moravia–Constantinople | imperial summons* |
| 30 + | Basilius 4 | Rome–Constantinople | * |
| 30 + | Basilius 5 | Rome–Constantinople | * |
| 30 + | Methodius 1 | Rome–Constantinople | * |
| 30 + | Petrus 12 | Rome–Constantinople | * |
| 30 + | Zosimas | Rome–Constantinople | * |
| 30/6 | Hilarion | Jerusalem–Georgia–Constantinople | |
| 33/5 | Theophanes 1 | Jerusalem–Constantinople–Rome | |
| 34/6 | Gregorius 9 | Ephesus–Rome | |
| 35/6 | Constantinus 6 | Constantinople–Moravia | |
| 36 + | Methodius 3 | Constantinople–Moravia | |
| 36–8 | Theodorus 5 | Jerusalem–Constantinople–Rome | |
| 37 | Elias 2 | Reggio–Patras | |
| 38 | Gregorius 5 | Jerusalem–Rome | |
| 40s–early 50s? | Hilarion | Constantinople–Rome | |
| 42/8 | Clemens | Moravia–Bulgaria | |
| 42/55 | Georgius 8 | Palestine–Africa–Spain | *** |
| 48/9? | Naum | Moravia–Bulgaria | |
| 48/52 | Michael 3 | Jerusalem–Constantinople–Rome | |
| 54/7 + | Methodius 3 | Moravia–Constantinople | imperial summons |
| c. 55 | Elias 1 | Africa–Jerusalem | |
| c. 57 | Michael 2 | Constantinople–Salz | first trip |
| c. 57 | Elias 1 | Africa–Italy | |
| c. 57/8 | Gregorius 5 | Rome–Constantinople | |
| c. 58 | Elias 1 | Taormina–Greece | |
| c. 62/8 | Elias 1 | Reggio–Rome | |
| 65 + | Gaudiosus | Messina–Constantinople | |
| 66 + | Michael 2 | Constantinople–Aachen | second trip |
| 80 | Elias 1 | Reggio–Constantinople | imperial summons; **dies** |

*Notes:*
*Based on Roman canonical age.
**Assuming Clement and Naum were ordained at Rome in 867; advanced age appears to be confirmed by the fact that they were not sold as slaves; cf. below, pp. 250f.
***Assuming his Spanish biographer understood the term "adolescent" in the same way as Isidore of Seville.

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TABLE 8.8
Ages of travelers broken down by life decade

| Life decade | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 80s | 1 | 2 |
| 60s | 3 | 7 |
| 50s | 6 | 13 |
| 40s | 5 | 11 |
| 30s | 14 | 31 |
| 20s | 6 | 13 |
| Teens | 9 | 20 |
| Under ten? | 1 | 2 |
| Total | 45 | 100 |

TABLE 8.9
Eastern travelers making multiple journeys

| Name | Date of first journey | Destination | Purpose | Number of journeys made |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constantinus 1 | before 708 | Rome; Constantinople | pilgrimage–immigration | 2? |
| Sergius 1 | before 708 | Constantinople | immigration | 2? |
| Gaudiosus | after 721 | Italy; Constantinople | immigration–official business | 2 |
| Eutychius | 726/8 | Constantinople | official | 2? |
| Iohannes 7 | 752 | Rome, Pavia | diplomacy | 3 |
| Georgius 5 | 756 | Rome, Marseilles, Benevento | diplomacy | 2? |
| Constantinus 4 | 784 | Rome | diplomacy | 2 |
| Michael 2 | 803 | Franks | diplomacy | 2 |
| Paulus 5 | 808 | Venice | official | 2? |
| Epiphanius 3 | 808/9 | Rome | diplomacy | 2 |
| Arsaphius | 810 | Aachen | diplomacy | 2 |
| Euphemianus | 817–18 | Rome | diplomacy | 2 |
| Theodorus 6 | 824 | Franks | diplomacy | 2 |
| Zacharias 3 | 843/7 | Rome | diplomacy | 3 |
| Basilius 4 | 855/7 | Rome | pilgrim/merchant | 2 |
| Lazarus 2 | 855/8 | Rome | diplomacy | 2 |
| Theognostus 2 | 861/2 | Rome | envoy/refugee | 2 |
| Methodius 3 | 863 | Moravia, Constantinople | missionary | 2 |
| Petrus 11 | 866 | Rome | diplomacy | 2 |
| Nicetas 4 | 869 | Bari | official | 2 |
| Ali | c. 898? | Lucca; Samarra | slave; envoy | 2 |



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administration – quite unlike its Frankish counterpart – attached importance to regional expertise and experience in its foreign missions. The embattled abbot of Stoudios may have been lifting a page from state practice when he twice dispatched the same individuals as his private representatives to the pope.

It is also exceedingly interesting to see, in the first quarter of the ninth century, individuals repeating such lengthy travel who were *not* professional travelers and who lacked the transport resources of the Byzantine state. Still more interesting in this respect is the appearance in the next generation of a freelance traveler, Basilius 4, who made the trip from east to west twice under his own auspices. Might this be yet another indication that travel between east and west was growing more common? Certainly there is no hint in the telling of Basil's story at the Council of Constantinople that his long-distance voyages were any more unusual at that date than those of the "10,000" homonymous compatriots the Roman monk Peter claimed. This makes us wonder how typical travel may have been in the lives of those travelers we can detect.

Most eastern travelers (230: 68 percent) appear in the sources only in connection with one trip, so it is impossible to judge whether this trip was unique in their life experience. Nonetheless, of the remaining 32 percent about whom we know more, it is striking that three out of four seem to have had some kind of documented travel experience beyond their main trip to the west.[47] Outside the empire, we have already seen that a good number of the broader group of travelers had been in the Arab world, independently of their western voyage. Fewer travelers (seven) visited the other main, extra-Byzantine region, the Slavic world north and west of Constantinople, and all are confined to the ninth century. Before their mission to the Danube Slavs, Constantine and Methodius had been to Cherson and beyond. Clement, Naum, and, apparently, Agatho, bishop of "Moravoi," all traveled in the upper Danube and among the Balkan Slavs.

Where in the west were the travelers going? That envoys constitute the single largest group means that courts attracted the lion's share; north of the Alps, the predominance of courts was even more complete. Geographically speaking, Rome attracted the most: of 340, more than half (179: 53 percent) had Rome as their main destination; a number of others, for instance, Byzantine envoys to the Lombard or Frankish kings, had Rome as a secondary destination.

Interrupted trips are of obvious interest. Thirteen or fourteen trips involving eighteen or nineteen eastern travelers seem never to have been completed. They mostly involved ambassadors or envoys of some sort. Whether or not one traveler's

47 Twenty-seven of the better-documented travelers offer no evidence of other travel, i.e. 25 percent of the latter group. Three quarters do suggest some further kind of travel. This takes into account the data on birthplace and residence discussed above.



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TABLE 8.10
Eastern travelers: main destinations

| Region | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Italy (including Istria) | 237 | 70 |
| Europe, N. of Alps | 75 | 22 |
| Other | 28 | 8 |
| Arab world 18 | | |
| Constantinople 2 | | |
| Dalmatia 4 | | |
| Sardinia 3 | | |
| Uncertain 1 | | |
| Total | 340 | 100 |

trip really was interrupted is unclear, and three or four travelers died in the course of their trip.[48] Only three of the twelve aborted trips reflect difficulties with the infrastructure of travel. Elias the Younger's first voyage into slavery was circumvented by the Byzantine navy; Peter, metropolitan of Sardes, en route to the papal court at Rome, drowned in the Adriatic when the new Byzantine warship in which he was sailing sank (a second *dromon* conveying the other ambassadors survived).[49] The nature of the accident was presumably banal in ninth-century shipping. Joseph the Hymnographer's interrupted voyage westward is more interesting because it is a rare case among the 340 eastern travelers which directly supports the conventional wisdom that an Arab menace disrupted long-distance communications. While he was attempting to make a clandestine trip to Rome, Arab pirates fell upon his ship, captured him and held him as prisoner in Crete until he was ransomed (R436). Like the capture of a merchant skipper who had set sail from Rome, Joseph's case signals the critical repercussions on the travel infrastructure of the Arab conquest of Crete (R729).

The other interrupted trips show no connection to structural difficulties of transport. The four travelers who accompanied Michael Syncellus as ambassadors of the church of Jerusalem to Rome were supposedly arrested by the iconoclast authorities in Constantinople en route west. More careful scrutiny has shown that they interrupted their westward voyage in the capital before iconoclasm was restored, that is, they lingered voluntarily at Constantinople, and they exposed

48 Although scholars have assumed that Constantinus 4 never reached Rome, other explanations of the peculiar circumstances of his trip are possible; see Pros. For the deaths, see below.

49 R431; the same event interrupted the profitable voyage of the African slave merchant Anon. 218; R573. Donnolo had the good fortune to escape from the convoy of slaves taking him to the Arab world: R804.



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themselves to criticism for doing so.[50] In any event, other travel to the west is unambiguously documented in precisely these years, so that the hagiopolitans' decision to delay en route cannot be attributed to the infrastructure. Epiphanius never reached Rome on his second trip there, because he was arrested by the imperial police for attempting to smuggle anti-imperial documents to the pope.[51] The case of the remaining six individuals (i.e., two trips) underscores the point. Imperial command halted the legation led by Theodore of Laodicea and Zachary of Chalcedon, when the embassy's sponsors were toppled from power.[52] In other words, there is explicit evidence of structural impediments to communications in the movements of our 340 travelers, but it is confined to the Arab conquest of Crete.

The known mortality of eastern travelers to the west was also low. Of the three or four deaths (4 of 340: 1.2 percent) en route, that of Theodosius Baboutzikos is uncertain; Peter of Sardes, we have already seen, perished in a shipwreck. The cause of Lazarus' death is unknown, although he was not a young man at the time of this, his second embassy to Rome, twenty-five years after his first voyage. He was in any case not lost at sea, since his body was returned to Constantinople for burial. Elias the Younger, who was over eighty when he died on the road at Thessalonica, presumably succumbed to the afflictions of old age; he had had a strong premonition that he would never return home.[53]

Although in both cases the numbers are low, easterners appear to have suffered less mortality than westerners (1.2 percent as opposed to 3 percent westerners). One underlying reason for the difference may lie in the distinctively lethal disease environment that northerners identified in the Mediterranean world. Natives of the region would naturally display stronger resistance to the local infections; since the bulk of eastern travelers never went beyond Italy, they remained in their native disease pool, unlike the transalpine travelers who ventured into the Mediterranean.[54]

Even assuming the worst for the uncertain cases, we are left with a handful (six) of interrupted travels that can be ascribed to disruptions of the infrastructure.[55] They scarcely justify the conclusion that the decay of shipping, collapsed infrastructures, or enemy attack precluded Mediterranean travel. In this the eastern travelers' experience, again, reinforces the inferences drawn from the western wanderers.

50 See Pros. "Michael 3."
51 Pros. "Epiphanius 3."
52 R566. The projected voyage westward of a Byzantine bride also came to grief, presumably for political reasons: Pros. "Anon. 227."
53 Pros. "Theodosius 3"; "Lazarus 2"; "Elias 1."
54 See above, Ch. 6.4; on migration and mortality, see the reflections of Curtin 1989, xiii–xvi.
55 Counting the uncertain cases of Constantinus 2, Theodosius 3, Lazarus 2, as well as the certain cases of Joseph and Peter of Sardes, and adding to them Elias 1 and the slave merchant Anon. 216.



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In the eighth and ninth centuries, detailed accounts of individual travelers' routes that specify the key stops along the way are rare. This has left the essential question of change or continuity in route structures largely unanswerable. The 340 eastern travelers help to overcome this difficulty, for the cumulative force of their travels' scattered detail points to changing routes. Thus, eighth-century travelers sailed to the west via Sicily (e.g. R206). Late in the ninth century, some easterners still sailed through the strait of Messina and around southern Greece into the Aegean (R729). But about 830, we first hear of a pilgrim approaching the west through Corinth (R422). A generation later, one pilgrim followed the Danube west toward Rome, while another traveled from Jerusalem to Rome via Tripoli in Africa (R622; R519). And we have already seen that the Adriatic drowned a Byzantine ambassador en route to Rome. Do these new coordinates imply new routes? Synchronous parallels in the movements of western travelers suggest, once again, that we are seeing changes in reality, not simultaneous changes in the pattern of Greek and Latin documentation.

This then is the second main group of travelers. Most were Byzantines, at least by culture. Whatever their language, one in seven set out for the west from the Caliphate. Even more striking is what our travelers' movements suggest about communications with the Caliphate, since over one in five of the whole group had been in the Arab world at some time in their life. Half of all easterners show up in Rome. The resulting Greek settlement in Rome was quite cosmopolitan. One wonders whether it is characteristic of an underdeveloped economy with a powerful capital that relations with neighboring regions should be about as intensive as with the capital. This is certainly the lesson suggested by a quite independent phenomenon, the geographic patterns of official documents' circulation inside the Byzantine empire.[56] The convergence may hint at deeply buried connections between economic realities and administrative ones. At the same time, well over half of the Greek residents of Rome are of undetermined origin. Many, perhaps most of them, could conceivably have come from Byzantine Italy or even Rome itself.[57]

These men and women are exceptional in many regards, beginning with the extent to which they are documented. The several hundred travelers nevertheless

56 As reconstituted by surviving deposits of lead seals; in a given province about 10 percent of seals come from the capital, and another 10 percent from provinces neighboring the one where the seal was found: Cheynet and Morrisson 1990, 116; cf. 111 and 113.

57 Note that the hypothetical total of certain Italo-Greeks (nine) + uncertain cases (sixty-two) comes to 71 percent of the total of 100 monks documented at Rome, which is not far from the 80 percent of seals which originate in the province of discovery, according to Cheynet and Morrisson 1990.



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did not invent their own travel infrastructures. From the aggregate patterns of their individual movements, we can begin to recover the routes, means and rhythms of long-distance travel in the early medieval Mediterranean. Even more importantly, they begin to reveal for the first time how these deeper structures changed over time. But first we need to take a closer look at some more meagerly documented or simply smaller groups of travelers: traders, slaves, defectors, and their ilk.



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# 9

# *Traders, slaves, and exiles*

Of their own free will, early medieval people crossed the Mediterranean in order to trade or to raid as well as to negotiate or pray. Some sought careers in the ancient capital on the Bosporus; others immigrated to Europe. Others still traveled under dire compulsion, as exiles, refugees, hostages, or as slaves. In most cases, their numbers probably were much greater than the high, mighty, and holy who dominate surviving sources. But people of low, suspect, or ambiguous social status appear more rarely and less completely in the early medieval written record. A fair number are of uncertain geographic origin – shippers and traders, for instance, attract only passing mention in sources treating the more important people who traveled aboard their vessels. Where was the home berth of the six slavers that Bernard the Frank saw anchored in the harbor of Taranto in 867? We may surmise, but we do not really know; nor can we do more than speculate on the ethnicity of the merchant skipper with whom St. Blaise sailed from Rome to Greece. The smaller numbers of these kinds of travelers make it more practical to treat together easterners and westerners. We will begin, again, with a few thumbnail sketches and meet some merchants, a slave, and a refugee. We will also test the anecdotes against the broader group of like travelers, combining this time the scarcer data of east and west. Next we will cast a glance at the travelers who are so few, or so low, as to be almost invisible: the immigrants, the sailors, fishermen, and wanderers who could not pass themselves off as pilgrims. Finally, we will turn to a rich source of information about all aspects of the early Middle Ages which has passed almost entirely unnoticed: early medieval fiction. Imaginary travelers shed real light on early medieval travel and communications.

## 1. Traders, slaves, and politicos

### *Traders*

In this era, merchants were travelers almost by definition. Alas, they count among those of whom the sources speak the least, so far as specific individuals traveling



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between specific places are concerned.[1] The very faintness of two faces underscores our dilemma. The first was one of the principal actors in the theft of St. Mark's relics in the later 820s. The second traded on a very different scale, as monk, part-time merchant and would-be ambassador.

Bonus comes to us courtesy of the oldest historical writing to survive from Venice, the Translation of the Relics of St. Mark.[2] His home was Malamocco, the old seat of the Venetian duchy, south of the new one at Rialto (see Map 18.1). Bonus held the rank of tribune, a dignity which looked more lustrous in the Byzantine provinces than in the capital.[3] At Venice, in fact, tribunes ranked next to the duke, or doge; theoretically, two were named each year.[4] Tribune Bonus was one of the most noble of the merchants who sailed out of the Adriatic in a convoy of ten Venetian ships loaded with unspecified goods ("navibus oneratis").

Supposedly the Venetians had no intention of violating the Byzantine emperor's embargo on trade with the Muslim world. But even the emperor yielded to God. By an amazing coincidence attributable only to divine intervention ("deo trahente"), the freight-laden ships were on a blue-water course ("profundaque pelagi navigantes") when a terrible storm overtook them. It just happened to propel them into Alexandria, one of the Caliphate's greatest trading cities. There the Venetians labored mightily to make some money by the sweat of their brow, selling whatever they had transported and buying up other products.[5] Between deals they visited the famous shrine of St. Mark, which was near the

1 However, it has not been emphasized that a fair number of merchants do crop up in the sources, but in such a way that it is difficult to assess their geographic range. For one way of turning this liability into an asset, see below, Chs. 21 and 22.

2 *Translatio S. Marci* (*BHL* 5283–4). Historians usually think of the *Chronicon Venetum* assigned to John the Deacon, and written c. 1008, as the oldest Venetian historical narrative: M. McCormick, *ODB* 1: 448. In fact, however, the *Translation* is certainly older, since it is preserved in at least one 10th-C. MS, Orleans, B.M., cod. 197 (from Fleury): cf. B. de Gaiffier, *AB* 76 (1958): 444–5 and Pellegrin 1988, 244 and 351. With respect to the work's historical value, I would go even further than Tramontin 1970, 46–58. In the personal and place-names, as in its historical references, the *Translation* generally reflects 9th-C. realities. It may well date from the generation or two following the events. In addition to Bernard's reference (*Itinerarium*, 6, p. 311), a little-known 9th-C. text from southern Italy, the *Vita Leucii* (*BHL* 4894 and 4894b; see below) also mentions the Venetian relic theft.

3 *Transl. Marci*, 248.11; could he be identical with the Boniço – surely a derivative of Bonus – "tribuno et primato," father of the Carosus tribunus who witnessed the will of doge Justinian in 828–9? See Pros., "Bonus."

4 Tribunus: *Uspenskij Taktikon* of 842–3, 63.27; cf. *ibid.*, comm., 336–7; in Venice: *Chron. Venetum*, 106.4–5; cf. Carile and Fedalto 1978, 236; on the differing perspectives of province and capital in this regard, McCormick 1998b, 50–1.

5 *Transl. Marci*, 247.1–7; 248.4–5: "Cumque Venetici apud eandem urbem negociis insudarent, moramque aliquando facerent . . ." Cf. Pros., "Bonus."



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port, to ask his intercession for their numerous sins, presumably including embargo-breaking.[6] Bonus in particular spent much time there. This was not surprising, since one of the sacristans, the Greek priest Theodore, was his spiritual brother: Bonus was the godfather of one of the sacristan's children.[7] Such spiritual kinship was a weighty affair in early medieval society, so we can surmise that this was not the first time the men had met. Other storms, presumably, had forced the Venetian merchant to dock in Alexandria in previous years.[8]

The rest of the story is well known: the sacristans were worried that the Arab governor's (*regulus*) ongoing campaign to collect fine marble *spolia* might desecrate the basilica. Bonus suggested that they steal the relics of St. Mark. The sacristans could accompany him back to Venice where they would live happily ever after. The thought both intrigued and frightened the relic keepers: weren't they going to wind up as slaves? "If we did give you the body and stayed behind, the people would kill us . . . But if we went up into your ship, in fact we would be led away just like slaves (*captivi*) to a land we have never seen."[9] Whether or not they actually used such words, the Venetian hagiographer spoke with verisimilitude. In the end, Bonus' suasions and a Muslim flogging changed their minds.

The body was stolen and concealed in a basket. The crafty Venetians disguised the apostolic remains as groceries for the return voyage. They covered the relic with cabbage leaves and, on top of that, they put pork. When the merchants reached a checkpoint the Muslim inspectors peeked inside but were disgusted by the pork and let them pass. They lowered the basket into their small boat and rowed out to the ship, where they hid the treasure in the sails. When it came time to weigh anchor, Theodore got cold feet and stayed on shore, even though his possessions had already been loaded with Stauracius, an Alexandrian monk and sacristan who was in on the plot. To make a long story short, the Venetians returned home in triumph, and Theodore and his family took a ship for Venice the following year, where Stauracius had already been appointed to the doge's chapel.[10] This is the last we see of Bonus.

His story reveals much: his status, noble by Venetian lights, the size of convoys, the ships' route, the same merchant's recurring trips to the same port. It shows us Venetian techniques for circumventing the Muslim customs officials and Byzantine decrees, and even how western sailors' galleys might first have introduced fruits and vegetables from the Muslim world into the west, a cultural transfer which was less likely when foreign ships visited western ports. Yet Bonus leaves us in the dark about the economic historian's most essential questions.

6 *Transl. Marci*, 248.6–9.

7 *Ibid.*, 249.21–250.2.

8 On spiritual kinship, Lynch 1986.

9 *Transl. Marci*, 253.15–254.2: "'Si dato corpore hic remanemus, . . . a plebe occideremur. Sin autem vobiscum in navem ascenderemus, duceremur utique tamquam captivi ad terram quam ignoramus.'"

10 *Ibid.*, 254.18–258.3; 261.6–11.



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What exactly were the ten ships full of? And what did the merchants acquire with the proceeds from that cargo?

Bonus shows every sign of being a professional merchant, operating on a sufficiently large scale to attain high social rank (or vice versa), and feeling quite at home on the opposite, Muslim shore of the Mediterranean. He had sailed often enough to Alexandria to know the Christian community there, indeed, to enter into spiritual kinship with an officer of the city's holiest shrine. The Venetians were no strangers to Muslim customs, as the ruse for hiding the relics shows. In these very years, the commercial enterprise of men like these was lifting Venice from the muck of the lagoon into international prominence.

At the other end of the social spectrum stood small-time merchants, people like Basil of Jerusalem, priest, monk, pilgrim, would-be ambassador, and part-time trader. We know about Basil only because he was caught in the wrong place at the wrong time, swept up in a web of power and conflict beyond his ken. The result for him was withering interrogation in the presence of the Byzantine emperor during an ecumenical council which sometimes sounds like a kangaroo court. The result for us is a rare insight into a kind of small-scale merchant whose role in long-distance trade was probably greater than their rate of attestation might suggest.[11]

Basil came from Jerusalem and had grown up in the Caliphate. An authentic envoy from Jerusalem, the patriarchal synkellos Elias, confirmed that he did indeed know the man.[12] Sometime before 855–7, Basil decided to leave the Holy Land and, like other residents of the Arab world, make a pilgrimage to Rome. He traveled to Tripoli in Africa.[13] From there he went on to Rome. En route he became ill. Later he went to Venice to find a ship to cross the Mediterranean to Constantinople. His story places his arrival in the imperial capital between, roughly, June and September 857.

Basil spent twenty months in Constantinople. During this first stay, Basil seems to have paid his way through commerce, for after twenty months, he ran out of

11 We have two versions of Basil's account of his movements: Anastasius Bibliothecarius' more complete and typically close translation of the proceedings of the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (869), Session 8, on 5 November 867, here Mansi 16.137A–B; and a much abbreviated summary of the original Greek: Mansi 16.384E–385C. The verbatim testimony is philologically challenging, since it takes us very close indeed to formal spoken Greek of the 9th C., albeit through the filter, usually, of Anastasius' translation.

12 *Concilium CPitanum a. 869*, actio 8, Mansi 16.137A–B; cf. Sansterre 1973, 196. For the details of Basil's biography and chronology, see Pros. "Basilius 4."

13 This is more likely than Tripoli in Lebanon, since other evidence demonstrates a shipping route between Tripoli and Italy: e.g. R512 and the discussion in Ch. 17.3.



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whatever he was using to make money or to get by.[14] To his interrogators, his meaning must have been pretty clear: he was a merchant, as an imperial official declared a few moments later.[15] Sometime between about March and June 859, Basil headed back to Rome, "in the year when the patriarch [Ignatius] left his throne."[16] This time he stayed eight years, residing in one of the Roman monasteries and becoming a priest. Presumably he also abandoned commerce, which flouted the canons.[17] For reasons uncertain, he returned to Constantinople in summer 867, shortly before the Photian synod that declared Pope Nicholas deposed.[18] At this point, Photius recruited Basil for his scheme. To his synod, Photius presented Basil as a representative of the patriarchate of Jerusalem who also happened to be a personal associate of the pope and who had delivered a bill of accusation against the Roman pontiff.[19] Apparently ninth-century

14 The phrasing is slightly obscure. Anastasius rendered Basil's original words "et non habui quomodo dispensarer": *Conc. CP. a. 869*, Mansi 16.1137B. The Greek condensation, *ibid.*, 385A, reads "καὶ οὐκ εἶχον τὰ πρὸς διοίκησιν." Διοικέω can be used in medieval Greek of commerce, e.g. Constantine VII, *De administrando imperio*, 31, 1.150.55: διοικεῖν ἐμπόρια. The Latin text would become easier if one emended the verb to read "dispensarem," i.e. "nothing left that I could spend" or "could manage" (in order to live).

15 Baanes, the eunuch patrician and praipositos, declares that Basil and Leontius are merely "merchants" (*negotiatores*). Sansterre 1973, 197 and 205–6, explained this as "trafiquant," not "vrai marchand." The original Greek presumably had *emporoi* or *pragmateutai*, since Anastasius elsewhere translates *pragmateutēs* and *emporos* by *negotiator*: cf. e.g. Theophanes, 1.194.3 and Anastasius, *ibid.*, 2.136.7; 1.345.10 and 2.216.26; 1.392.19–20 and 2.252.32. At 2.142.10, 11 and 18 Anastasius translates the first two occurrences of *pragmateutēs* in the usual fashion. The third time he uses *mercator*, for no other reason, I suspect, than to vary his diction: cf. 1.223.3, 5 and 12.

16 This clue unlocks the overall chronology of Basil's movements, which can be deduced with some precision, given the other chronological indications and the traditional sailing season which ran from March to late October. See Pros.

17 Mansi 16.137B: "habeo octo annos" (not included in the Greek abridgement): Anastasius has here translated literally the idiomatic use of Greek *echein* with units of time, "to spend." Hadrian II, JE 2914, *Ep.* 40, 757.9–17 on Basil's ordination. My reconstruction presumes he was ordained during the lengthier stay. On the canonical prohibition of commerce, see e.g. Drexhage 1986, 548–9.

18 Hergenröther 1867, 2: 111 calculated his return to Constantinople as 866, with which Sansterre 1973, 197n3 (cf. 206–7), concurred. The synod convened sometime between 1 August and 24 September. On the synod, Grumel² no. 498. The new date in fact reinforces Sansterre's reasoning (206–7), concerning the timeliness of Basil's arrival for Photius' plans. If this Basil is the one to whom Photius is referring in *Ep.* 2, 1.51.329, the word *palai* (1.51.328) still can be easily explained (cf. Sansterre 1973, 201n2): these men had "already" arrived, when "just now" (1.51.331–2) further letters arrived from Rome: cf. Bauer *et al.* 1979, 605, s.v.

19 At his interrogation, Basil denies that he ever delivered any *libellus* or knew the pope personally: "God forbid! Was I some *familiaris* of Nicholas?" Mansi 16.137B.



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Constantinopolitans saw nothing unusual about a resident of Jerusalem knowing a pope at the other end of the Mediterranean. Basil's good fortune peaked when he joined two other pseudo-legates and the embassy of Michael III and Photius to the court of Louis II, where they were to work to overthrow the pope.

The legation got halfway to Rome before an imperial command caught up with them. They were ordered back to Constantinople. Basil I had murdered the late emperor, Photius was about to fall, and imperial policy toward the pope was in the process of swinging about-face.[20] So there he was in November 869, erstwhile pilgrim, would-be ambassador, and one-time trader, now excommunicated at Rome and dragged before an ecclesiastical assembly whose brief was to destroy Photius, restore good relations with Rome, and build support for the usurper emperor. For the emperor and his representative Baanes, the conclusion was obvious. A man like this traveler was not the sort who signed indictments of popes, or even associated with them. He was only a merchant. Photius must have forged both the Roman indictment and Basil's identity as an associate of Pope Nicholas and representative of the patriarchate of Jerusalem. There his story ends, for we do not know if the emperor responded to the request of Nicholas' successor, that Basil and the other Roman renegades at Constantinople be handed over to the tender mercies of the papal legates and returned to Rome for further action.[21]

Basil's story is laden with obscurities. But the fluid boundaries among ambassadors, pilgrims, and merchants are unmistakable. Basil perhaps financed his original trip to Rome by some kind of informal trading. He seems to have done some kind of business deal on his first trip to Constantinople. Then he went back to Rome, where he maybe abandoned commerce and certainly resumed a monastic life. We can discern the wares and terms of trade here no more than in the case of the professional merchant Bonus. But at least we can glimpse another type of merchant, one who dipped in and out of trade. And Basil's story does not stand alone. It echoes that of Willibald who, a hundred years earlier, had financed a journey to Constantinople by small-time smuggling of a high-value ware (Ch. 5.1). Such shadowy, part-time merchants' individual dealings might have been small-scale, but their cumulative impact may have been more than negligible.

It is exceedingly rare to see individual traders like Bonus or Basil operating at long-distance from some identifiable home. Table 9.1 summarizes the key data about such merchants. All in all, only nineteen such men – mostly anonymous (thirteen: 68 percent) – have shown up in the sources. They represent at least fourteen different merchant voyages. This is a small percentage of the greater

20 Nicetas, *Vita Ignatii* (*BHG* 817), *PG*, 105.537C–D and 540A–B. Cf. Mansi 16.417E and *Conc. CP. a.* 869, actio 9, Mansi 16.155E–156D; Sansterre 1973, 223–5 and Grumel[2] no. 499.

21 Hadrian II, *Ep.* 40, JE 2914, 757.9–17.



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TABLE 9.1
Merchants attested as traveling in the early medieval Mediterranean (see Maps 8.1 and 16.1)

| Name | Starting place | Destination | Date | Repeat trips? | Identity | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Anons. 41–2 | Rome | Africa | c. 748 | | Venetian | slave traders; blocked |
| Anons. 66–7 | Tyrrhenian coast | Arab world | 776 | | Byzantine | slave traders; partially blocked |
| Anons. 86–7 | Venice | Jerusalem | c. 795 | yes | Venetian | |
| Anon. 96 | Frankish court | Holy Land | c. 800 | yes | Jewish | |
| Anons. 127–8 | Damascus? | Rome | before 810 | | Muslim | interested in textile market |
| Bonus | Venice | Alexandria | c. 828 | yes | Venetian | |
| Rusticus | Venice | Alexandria | c. 828 | | Venetian | |
| Iohannes 14 | Venice | Jerusalem | before 829 | | Venetian | trade and/or pilgrimage? |
| Anon. 216 | Africa | Sicily | 835 | | African Christian | slave trader |
| Anon. 218 | Africa | Sicily | 838 | | Christian | slave trader |
| Basilius 4 | Jerusalem | Rome | before 855–7 | yes | Jerusalem native | pilgrim and merchant;* also to Constantinople via Venice, and back to Rome |
| Anon. 268 | Amalfi | Africa | c. 871 | | Amalfitan | |
| Florus | Africa | Salerno | c. 871 | | Amalfitan | |
| Harrani | Africa | Salerno | c. 871 | | Arab | |
| Anon. 305 | Rome | Demetrias | c. 892 | | ? | |

*Note:*
*Basilius 4 has therefore been counted already among the ninety-two eastern pilgrims.



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universe of travelers.[22] Even so, they have a story to tell and its outlines fit what we can discern from Bonus and Basil. Almost all (eighteen: 95 percent) were coming or going to the Arab world, particularly North Africa (seven: 37 percent). All save one were traveling to or from Italy. Nearly a third (six: 32 percent) had business connections or a home base in the Byzantine empire outside Venice; over a third came from Venice (seven: 37 percent). A quarter (five: 26 percent) are seen on the repeated trips one would expect of merchants. In only four instances (involving six merchants) are any wares mentioned; on two occasions that is because someone was trying to halt the trade. The wares in question are usually Europeans, whom the merchants were exporting for sale as slaves to Africa or elsewhere in the Muslim world. The Muslim merchants, conversely, expressed interest in a textile market at Rome. One wonders whether the silence about the goods being transported in the other cases is always coincidental.

## *Slaves*

In fact, the shadow of slavery hangs over the whole body of written evidence which survives from the Mediterranean Sea at the origins of the European economy. We have just seen a Greek priest in Alexandria who shuddered at the thought of boarding his baptismal co-father's ship for Venice. Marching up a Venetian freighter's gangplank evoked a powerful and frightening idea: being "taken away just like slaves (*captivi*) to a land we do not know." In a Greek hagiographical novel from ninth-century Rome, a skipper promises a young man passage from Sicily to Africa in order to sell him into slavery.[23] Much later it emerged that someone had witnessed the crucial vision which had led the young man to flee his home and fall into the captain's hands. But the witness had feigned ignorance. He feared that if he revealed the vision, people would think he had made it up to hide the fact that he had kidnapped and sold the boy, or maybe even killed him.[24] Another Italo-Byzantine boy's nightmare about being sold into African slavery rings true.[25]

The slave trade in the eighth and ninth century has not wanted for scholars (Ch. 25.2). But no one has tried to approach the problem from the vantage point

22 2.8 percent: actually, a little smaller still, insofar as Basil has already been studied and counted in the overall group under his first hat, as a pilgrim.

23 *Captivi*: below, pp. 735ff.; Leontius of St. Sabas, *Vita Gregorii Agrigenti* (BHG 707), 5, 149.12–150.14. For κατά with the accusative instead of the genitive see, e.g., Mihevc-Gabrovec 1960, 36; cf. *V. Gregorii Agrigenti*, intro., p. 79. Impressed by the young man's piety, the skipper changed his mind and confessed his plan to Gregory: *ibid.*, 6, 150.1–5. On this text, see below.

24 *Ibid.*, 23, 172.30–2.

25 Thus the "night vision" of young Elias, in which God announced to him his future enslavement: *Vita Eliae iunioris* (BHG 580), 4, 6.65–71.



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of the slaves themselves. Although the life histories of slaves which can be reconstructed are only a small sample of a very large population, the great surprise is that it is possible at all. But to do so we must look beyond the Latin sources to the Greek, and particularly to the small but remarkable group of slave narratives produced in southern Italy in the ninth and tenth centuries.[26]

Only exceptionally do slaves appear in the sources as individuals. References to them as faceless groups, on the other hand, abound, whether as the "thousands" Bernard saw loaded aboard the slavers that would convey them to the markets of Egypt, Tunis, and Libya, or the 900 slaves whose freedom Constantine and Methodius obtained from the rulers of the Slavs (Table 25.2). Once in a very great while we can read the record of sale of these lowest of low-status individuals. Thus we glimpse a Gaulish boy on the block at Milan in 725, or a Slav girl in ninth-century Egypt.[27] Slav eunuchs and slave girls were certainly familiar in Baghdad and Samarra by the middle of the ninth century, as Al Djahiz's discussion of both of them in his "Book of Animals" shows.[28] In fact, judging from the Arabic word derived from "Slav," European eunuchs were already prominent in the caliphal guard in Baghdad in 811–13.[29] From a polemicist we catch the outlines of a capture, sale, and subsequent escape home to Frankland.[30] The currents of the slave trade were broad and powerful. They also swept up boys who came from families that were influential in the home culture; a handful of them escaped and told their stories. A few attained religious fame because of heroic deaths. Thanks to these stories, we can see a few faces, and none more clearly than that of St. Elias the Younger.

Elias was born at Enna, in Sicily (see Map 16.1), around 823, to the illustrious local family of the Rhachitai, and was baptized "John."[31] When he was five, Elias'

26 No doubt much of what I say here will be revised and deepened when someone with command of the Arabic and Hebrew sources takes an interest in this subject and approach. That is no reason not to start now.

27 Pavia: see below, Table 25.1; Slav slave bought at Fustat in Egypt by a trader in spices: *Arabische Briefe*, no. 19, palaeographically dated to the 9th C.

28 *Kitab al-Ḥayawān*, 1, 53, tr. Asin Palacios pp. 48–9; on Muslim slave markets: Rāġib 1993.

29 The lament by al Khuraymi in Tabari, *Taʿrikh al-umam waʾl-muluk* 9 (Beirut, n.d.), 449, mentions the *al-saqalib* in the context of the civil war of those years; cf. p. 508. I am grateful to Deborah Tor for supplying this reference to me, and for her discussion of the translation of M. Fishbein, pp. 142 and 225.

30 Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 195.149–59. See further, Ch. 25.

31 The story of Elias' – this is his monastic name – travels is narrated at length in his biography, *Vita Eliae iunioris* (*BHG* 580). It was written, perhaps in his own monastery, c. 930–40 and seems to derive largely from the testimony of Daniel, his disciple and companion, Pros. "Daniel 2." Where the biography's many references to contemporary persons and events can be verified against other sources, they check out: Rossi Taibbi, *ibid.*, pp. xviii–xxi. Birth etc.: *V. Eliae iun.*, 3, 6.47–50; cf. Pros. "Elias 1." On his travels, see Korać 1995.



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parents moved to a "Castle of Santa Maria," to escape the Arab attacks that had been intensifying since the fall of Palermo (831). Three years later, he dreamed that he would be enslaved and transported to Africa. There he would live in servitude and save many Christians who "lacked support" (*astēriktoi*: cf. 2 Pet. 2, 14). His parents heard about the dream and forbade him ever to step outside the town walls.[32] One day, when they were away, some playmates talked the twelve-year-old into joining them outside the walls anyway. The little boys were snatched by Arab slave hunters, who carried them down to the beach. There Elias was sold to an African Christian slave merchant and, crying his heart out, thrown into the ship to be taken to Africa and sold. This time he was doubly lucky. Around three o'clock in the afternoon, the crack crew of a big and fast Byzantine warship out of Syracuse spotted the slaver and chased her down; unlike some of their colleagues, these sailors preferred to restore Elias to his parents, rather than sell him for a profit at another slave market.[33]

Three years later, the boy would not be so fortunate. Another dream warned him of impending slavery. This time the fifteen-year-old rejoiced at the prospect of exile and servitude and prepared himself spiritually for the challenge. He was captured outside the walls and again, enjoying good luck in misfortune, he was sold on the beach to a Christian, who shipped him to Africa and sold him to another Christian. His new owner was a wealthy tanner.[34]

The biographer perhaps echoed his subject when he sketched a remarkable asceticism of slavery.[35] Elias' owner was impressed with his slave's good looks, excellent character, his devout prayer and sturdy performance, as well as his honesty and the fact that he never talked back. He promoted Elias to head his household, presumably making him manager of the tanning business, and he showed the young man every favor. At night, however, the devil attempted to ensnare Elias with impure thoughts; by day he tried to breed despair by reminding him of his loved ones across the sea. But Elias bore up under sadness and sex drive, until the crafty devil fanned the fires of concupiscence in his mistress, in an Afro-Byzantine replay of the biblical story of Joseph (Gen. 39, 1–20). To attract him, she applied her makeup with great skill; at times she rustled her dress sensuously, shook her hair loose and looked at him with lust in her eye. The holy man remained unaffected.[36] When one day she pounced, Elias rebuffed her. The woman scorned claimed the slave had tried to seduce her. The master's love changed into hate, he beat his slave mercilessly and chained him; all the while, the slave bore his suffering as an ascetic experience. Finally, the master learned

32 *V. Eliae iun.*, 3–4, 6.59–71.
33 *Ibid.*, 4–8, 8.72–12.149; R431. For the sale of recaptured Christian prisoners: R625.
34 *Ibid.*, 9, 14.166–70; cf. 8, 12.150–4.
35 *Ibid.*, 9–17, 14.170–26.338.
36 *V. Eliae iun.*, 11, 16.195–208. Cf. Kazhdan 1990, 138–9.



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the truth about his wife and he restored his favor. In the end, Elias was able to purchase his own freedom. It is unclear how long he was a slave, but it may well have been nearly forty years.[37]

After getting into trouble with the Muslim authorities for proselytizing in Africa, Elias decided to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, where he became a monk. He went on to Sinai, and then visited Alexandria. He set out for Iraq, to venerate the shrine of the three boys in the fiery furnace (Dan. 3). The Iraqi revolt of the Zandj (c. 869–83), the black African slaves, dissuaded him from completing the trip. From Antioch Elias returned overland to Africa, where he took a ship to Arab Sicily to visit his elderly mother, and he began his career as a spiritual guide. In the course of an illustrious career, he moved about, from Byzantine Taormina to Calabria, to Greece; and he went on pilgrimage to Rome. In Calabria, Elias founded a new monastery, and reports of his sanctity reached the Byzantine emperor. Despite the ascetic's great age, Leo VI summoned him to Constantinople. Traveling by sea and overland, Elias got as far as Thessalonica, where he died in 903. His biographer had made him say he was eighty years old when he set out on the final trip.[38]

The relatively happy ending to Elias' life as a slave must have been quite exceptional. The fact that he was sold to a Christian was decisive. Had a Muslim bought him, the outcome could have been disastrous for the devout Christian. Muslim conceptions of slavery advocated treating the state of enslavement as a process which, it was hoped, would lead ultimately to manumission and integration into the community. Socially, that integration entailed entering the clientele of the former owner. Culturally and religiously, it entailed conversion to Islam. Neglected Italo-Greek slave narratives show that these conceptions were not just theory. For instance a father and his two sons who had been captured at the fall of Syracuse enjoyed great success in their new African home as slaves of the Aghlabid emir Ibrāhīm II (875–902). So much so that, after years of faithful service, he wished them to head his financial services – not the first time Arab rulers showed appreciation for Greek number skills.[39] However, conversion to Islam turned out to be an insurmountable obstacle and, in the end, the young men were executed, along with their father and another aged Christian. The abridged Greek hagiographical account preserved in some southern Italian manuscripts has more than

37 The *Life* places his purchase of his freedom "a few days after" his master's pardon, 14, 22.267: μετ' ὀλίγας ἡμέρας, followed not long thereafter by his pilgrimage to Jerusalem. In fact, he seems not to have reached the Holy City until sometime after 878, forty years after his enslavement: cf. *ibid.*, comm., pp. 138–40.

38 *Ibid.*, 70, 112.1529–31. As Rossi Taibbi, *ibid.*, p. 179, notes, the wording is lifted from Athanasius' *Life of St. Anthony*; but the age has been changed; see also R759.

39 See e.g. Lemerle 1971, 150–4 and 169–71 on the caliph and Leo the Mathematician's geometry.



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general plausibility going for it. The story has so far been known only from the Arabic records' very different perspective.[40]

Elias is the best-documented slave exported from Europe to the Arab world in the ninth century. But he is not the only one. In addition to larger but amorphous groups, it is possible to discern at least forty-eight individuals.[41] Six others who were imported north into the Carolingian or Bulgarian empires can also be detected (Table 9.3).[42] Like most other samples from the Middle Ages, this one too is biased toward the upper crust. Of these individuals who fell into the networks of slave traders springing up around the Mediterranean, twenty certainly were of some social rank.[43] One suspects that high status explains the commemoration of others too.[44] Only three are positively identified as poor or sound like peasants.[45] Six of the captives were held for ransom, which may slightly skew the picture insofar as some individuals were so treated when they were unmarketable as slaves.[46] A seventh (Donnolo) slipped away from the caravan of slaves before it reached the ships.

Small and biased though it is, the sample is many times larger than what was known before. It tallies with the reality of slave-trading that has emerged from other research (Ch. 25.2). The disproportion between slaves exported southwards and northwards is all the more convincing for coming, essentially, from northern and Christian sources. Slaves crossing the Mediterranean in fact flowed mainly from Europe toward the south. The sample is overwhelmingly male. European female slaves were less numerous and more valuable than males.[47]

40 *Syn. CP.*, 72.1–74.3; for the Arabic evidence: Talbi 1966, 286; cf. Amari 1933–9, 1: 653–5.

41 For a summary of some larger groups of slaves shipped across the sea see below, Table 25.2.

42 I have excluded from Table 9.2 some less certain cases. Synesius, for instance, was probably a eunuch and might have been of servile status; the same might be true of Elissaeus, but we cannot be sure. The latter is identified as a notary, and the way in which both are named in the sources might suggest that they were not slaves. Circumstances hint that Zacharias 4 may have come to Rome as a slave (cf. Pros.), but he is more safely counted among immigrants.

43 See Pros. Donnolo's family was sufficiently wealthy to foster his scholarship; the individuals ransomed by Paschal I were presumably of some social stature to deserve this intervention.

44 E.g., Antoninus and his sons.

45 Anons. 73–4 and Anon. 318.

46 See below, pp. 769f. They are Anons. 179–80 and those ransomed from Spain, Joseph 1, and Petrus 7.

47 Female slaves pay a higher duty: Raffelstetten Plea, 251.27–8. In my sample, however, it is impossible to rule out that the sex ratio reflects the gender bias that typifies most European narrative sources up to much more recent times. The enslavement of the family of the Jewish scholar Donnolo-Shabethai at Oria in 925 presumably included the female members. Significantly, the only other individual female comes not in a western narrative source, but in an Arabic papyrus mentioning her sale: *Arabische Briefe*, no. 19. When Arabists and Hebraicists consider their evidence more closely, further cases will probably be forthcoming.



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TABLE 9.2
Individual slaves exported to the Arab world in the eighth and ninth centuries

| Name | Date | Ethnicity | Status before enslavement |
|---|---|---|---|
| Anon. 17 | 724 | Visigoth | ? |
| Anon. 18 | 724 | Visigoth | ? |
| Anons. 64–5 | 776 | Lombards | ? |
| Anons. 73–4 | 783 | Italo-Roman | poor |
| Anon. 93 | 9th C. | Slav woman | ? |
| Anons. 95–8 | 9th C.? | Byzantine | monks |
| Anon. Frank 1 mentioned by Agobard | 802 | Frank | ? |
| Anons. 179–80 | 817 | Italo-Roman | ransomed by Paschal I |
| Anon. slaves 1–2 in Spain | 817 | Italo-Roman | ransomed by Paschal I |
| Anon. Frank 2 mentioned by Agobard | 822 | Frank | ? |
| Anon. 193 | after c. 825 | Byzantine | priest |
| Anon. Frank 3 mentioned by Agobard | 826 | Frank | ? |
| Basil of Myra | 828 | Byzantine | parents own land |
| Ioseph 1 | 836/42 | Byzantine | priest, monk |
| Petrus 7 | 836/89 | Byzantine | soldier of tagmata |
| Anon. companions 1–2 of Bodo | 837 | Frank | ? |
| Elias 1 | 838 | Byzantine | illustrious family |
| Leontius | 867 | Byzantine | ? |
| Ḥadīj | before 868/9 | Slav | ? |
| Thaqīf | 868/9 | Slav | ? |
| Anon. 267 | 871 | Lombard | property owner |
| Anon. priest of Mitylene | 873 | Byzantine | priest |
| Antoninus | 878 | Byzantine | ? |
| Iohannes 20 | 878 | Byzantine | ? |
| Petrus 16 | 878 | Byzantine | ? |
| Anons. 286–7 | c. 880 | Slav | ? |
| Anon. 295 | 882 | Lombard | property owner |
| Anons. 298–301 | 885 | Slav | priest; deacon |
| Anon. 305 | 892 | ? | merchant skipper |
| Anon. 317 | 902 | Byzantine | married |
| Anon. 318 | 902 | Byzantine | peasant |
| Anon. 319 | 902 | Byzantine | monk? |
| Anon. 320 | 906 | Frank | ? |
| Donnolo | 925 | Byzantine Jew | future scholar |
| Anons. 320–1 | 925 | Byzantine Jews | Donnolo's family |

*Sources:* Pros. and, for the nine individuals who are not treated therein, as follows: Anons. Agobard 1–3: Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 195.149–59; anonymous slaves in Spain: R350. Basil of Myra: *Miracula tria S. Nicolai* (*BHG* 1353–6), 7–12, 1.188.16–191.26; Anons. Bodo 1–2: *Annales Bertiniani*, a. 839, pp. 27–8, where his indefinite number of fellow travelers ("quos . . . uendendos") is reckoned as two, according to my practice; priest of Mitylene: R627.



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TABLE 9.3
Individual slaves exported to the north, eighth and ninth centuries

| Name | Date | Ethnicity | Status before enslavement |
|---|---|---|---|
| Aegaeus | 796 | ? | ? |
| Putiphar | 796 | Byzantine | ? |
| Bagao | 796–800 | ? | ? |
| Drogus | 828 | Byzantine Slav | ? |
| Blasius | 874 | Byzantine | deacon |
| Ali | c. 898 | Arab? | slave commander of Aghlabid squadron |

Eunuchs were especially prized, and at least nine (17 percent) of our fifty-three male slaves had been castrated.[48] The majority are anonymous (thirty-five of fifty-four: 65 percent). Most are attested in the ninth century (forty-five: 83 percent). While laymen prevail in this sample, the "collegiality factor" in early medieval Christian records has probably boosted the proportion of enslaved religious.[49]

Sixteen slaves shed light on age at enslavement. They combine with other evidence to prove that most slaves were young. The clearest data come from those whose ages are explicitly or implicity given. Two enslavements occurred at age twelve and one at fifteen; another occurred at some point between eighteen and thirty years of age.[50] Canonical age suggests further instances of enslavement around twenty-five and thirty or perhaps less, although that evidence is less compelling.[51]

48 Table 9.2, Anons. 18, 286–7, and 320, and Ḥadīj and Thaqīf. In Table 9.3, in addition to Ali, four or five are exceptional cases of eastern eunuchs who served Charlemagne and Louis the Pious as cubicularies; their servile status is presumed, not explicitly identified. We do not know how Charlemagne obtained the three eunuchs who are identified c. 796 by their biblical pseudonyms ("Aegaeus," "Bagao," and "Putiphar"), but the last is called a Byzantine ("*Graeculus*"): Theodulf of Orleans, *Carmina* 27.87–92, *MGH Poet.* 1.493; cf. Pros. The fourth Carolingian cubiculary is particularly interesting, since he is explicitly identified as a Byzantine but bears the Slavic name of Drogus. See Pros.

49 Thirty were laymen at the time of their enslavement, while nine were certainly churchmen. The rest are uncertain. On the "collegiality" factor in recording individual ecclesiastics, see Ch. 6.3.

50 Twelve years: Donnolo; twelve and fifteen years: Elias 1; eighteen–twenty years: Ioseph 1.

51 Twenty-five and thirty: Anons. 298–301; also Blasius. In the former cases, it is uncertain whether Methodius was following Roman or Byzantine custom – we have seen reason to believe that the latter was more flexible: Ch. 8.4. Theophylact of Ohrid, *V. Clementis* (*BHG* 355), 34, 110.13–15 specifies in any case that only the "younger" (*neōteroi*) seminarians were sold.



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TABLE 9.4
Age at time of enslavement: qualitative evidence

| Slave | Age |
|---|---|
| Anon. Agobard 1 | "paruus puer" |
| Antoninus | "immature" (*aōros*) |
| Petrus 16 | same |
| Anon. 98 | *neaniskos* |
| Anon. Agobard 3 | puer |
| Drogus | "iuuenis" |
| Basil of Myra | still lived with his parents; emir's cup-bearer |
| Iohannes 20 | father of Antoninus and Petrus 16 |
| Anon. priest of Mitylene | priest: old? |
| Anon. 193 | priest: old? |

Qualitative statements on the age of slaves point in the same direction as the unambiguous data on the twelve- and fifteen-year-olds. Youth clearly characterizes the first seven slaves. Iohannes 20's age is uncertain: all we know is that he was the father of two young boys, and that he was martyred thirteen or fourteen years after his enslavement. Finally, the nine eunuchs must have been acquired and castrated young. The last two cases are the exception that confirms the rule. The priests might have been over thirty years old if canonical age were observed. They were clearly deemed unsalable and unlikely to command a ransom by their captors for, in the awful triage that accompanied slave raids, they were lined up with the group of captives who were to be executed.

Other accounts of early medieval slave markets and slave hunting are consistent with the individual slaves' youthful profile. The Anglo-Saxons of Gregory the Great's legendary slave market at Rome were "boys" and a fictional hero, Gregory of Agrigento, was eyed for kidnapping as a slave when he was eighteen.[52] When the Arabs raided a Corsican town, they carried off everybody and everything, except for the aged and the infirm; at Lipari, other raiders loaded everyone into their boats, except for some aged monks (R290; R441). They were too old for the block.

There is no mistaking where the slaves were going. Overwhelmingly, they were destined for the markets of the Arab world.[53] The four foreign slaves found north of the Alps were all eunuchs attached to the household of the

52 On the Roman slave market, see Ch. 21.2; for Gregory of Agrigento, Leontius, *V. Gregorii Agrigenti*, 5, 149.12–150.14 (cf. 4, 148.1), on his age.

53 Forty-three of fifty-four certain cases; the remaining five were very probably but not certainly destined for the Muslim economy as well: Anons. 298–301; Anon. Agobard 3 (above, Table 9.4).



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TABLE 9.5
Destinations of European slaves within the Islamic world (Map 20.1)

| Destination | Quantity | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Africa (including 3 at the Tunisian court) | 15 | 35 |
| Arab world, unspecified | 11 | 26 |
| Syria and Iraq (Emesa and Samarra 2 each; Baghdad 3; Basra 1) | 8 | 19 |
| Spain (Cordova 2) | 4 | 9 |
| Crete | 3 | 7 |
| Egypt (Alexandria and Old Cairo) | 2 | 5 |
| Total | 43 | 100 |

Carolingian emperors. Their special circumstances suggest that they were not part of a broader flow. Rather they stemmed from Carolingian efforts to imitate the lifestyles of their Muslim and Byzantine rivals, if indeed, they were not gifts from the latter.[54] Nevertheless one Byzantine sold another as a slave to a Bulgarian noble, and an Arab slave in Tuscany shows that at least a few slaves traveled north.[55]

As Table 9.5 indicates, Europeans were exported to the eastern as well as to the western basin of the Mediterranean. The sample suggests that Africa may have been the market of choice; unquestionably it was an important destination for European slaves. But it may loom larger simply because so many of our slaves come from Italian sources, and nearby Africa offered the most convenient market for Italians.[56] Crete will have been mostly a transit point for slaves who ultimately wound up elsewhere. One could further whittle down the list, but the essential point is clear, that slaves flowed toward Africa, Syria and Iraq, Spain, and Egypt.

54 Compare for instance, the transfer to the Carolingian court of the eunuchs Synesius and Elissaeus, in connection with projected marriages with the Byzantine dynasty: Pros.

55 Blasius; Ali reflects the taking of war slaves by Christian forces; cf. R491.

56 Cf. e.g., the six slavers Bernard the Frank witnessed in the harbor at Taranto: four were bound for North Africa – two for "Africa," i.e. Tunisia, and two for Libya – while two were heading for Alexandria: R577–9. On the export of slaves to Spain, see Constable 1996a.



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TABLE 9.6
Ethnic origin of individual slaves

| Ethnicity | Quantity | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Byzantines | 20 | 37 |
| Slavs | 8 | 15 |
| Italians from papal possessions | 6 | 11 |
| Franks | 6 | 11 |
| Lombards | 4 | 7 |
| Uncertain | 4 | 7 |
| Jews | 3 | 6 |
| Visigoths | 2 | 4 |
| Arab | 1 | 2 |
| Total | 54 | 100 |

Most ethnic and religious groups who resided in western Europe suffered enslavement (Table 9.6, drawn from Tables 9.2 and 9.3). Again, the predominant role of Byzantine evidence may exaggerate the proportion of Byzantines, but it still conveys the spectrum of slave ethnicity. The geographic recruitment of the slaves (Table 9.7) equally underscores the primordial role in our sample of Italy in particular and of the Byzantine empire in general. It is nonetheless noteworthy that the archetypal "voiceless people" of this era, the Slavs, appear more frequently than the relatively very well-documented Franks.

In sum, Byzantines of Italy and the home region, Franks, Slavs, Goths, Jews, even an occasional Arab found their way to the block in the eighth and ninth centuries. Most were inhabitants of the northern Mediterranean or its hinterland who were captured by violence or treachery and sold south to the Muslim world, especially Africa. Mostly they were males and young, barely teenagers in some cases. A good number were castrated in the process, an operation which surely enhanced their value. Everything else we know about the slave trade emphasizes the importance of the Slavs in feeding the slave markets of the Middle East (Ch. 25.2). But our sample reminds us that, at least for a time, Byzantines, Italians, and even northwestern Europeans supplied a substantial crowd of human chattels to the cities of the Muslim Middle East. In this respect too, the story of young Elias is not unrepresentative.



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TABLE 9.7
Geography of enslavement: place of capture (Maps 8.1, 16.1, 17.1, and 18.1)

| Place of capture | Ethnicity | Quantity |
|---|---|---|
| Italian peninsula: 25 (15 Byzantine; 6 Papal territories; 4 Lombards) | | |
| Calabria | Byzantine | 8 |
| Sicily (Syracuse: 3) | Byzantine | 4 |
| Apulia (Oria) | Byzantine Jewish | 3 |
| Rome? | Italo-Roman | 4 |
| Ravenna | Italo-Roman | 2 |
| Tuscany | Lombard | 2 |
| Salerno | Lombard | 2 |
| Byzantine east: 8 | | |
| Aegean | Byzantine | 4 |
| Anatolia | Byzantine | 1 |
| uncertain | 2 Byzantine and 1 Slav | 3 |
| Slavic eastern Europe: 10 | | |
| Slavic territories | | 5 |
| Moravia | | 4 |
| Bulgaria | Byzantine | 1 |
| Frankland: 6 | | |
| en route to Italy | Frank | 2 |
| Lyons | Frank | 2 |
| Arles | Frank | 1 |
| ? | "Frank"? | 1 |
| Other: 5 | | |
| Spain | Visigoth | 2 |
| Africa | Arab | 1 |
| unknown | | 2 |

## *Politicos: exiles, refugees, and hostages*

Political compulsion also set men and women on the long journey across the Mediterranean. The evidence about these travelers differs strikingly from that about slaves. Both Latin and Greek sources tend here to document individual cases, rather than the general phenomenon. This reflects the high social status and limited numbers of such people. Like Adalgis, co-ruler of the fallen Lombard kingdom, or Fortunatus, patriarch of Grado, accused of aiding the Franks' enemies, the largest such group of people that we can see traveled to escape



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political retribution. Others voyaged under arrest, as exiles. For instance, Callinicus, the deposed patriarch of Constantinople, was sent to Rome; Felix, archbishop of Ravenna, was deported first to Constantinople and then the Black Sea. At least a few traveled as hostages, a category which it is not always easy to disentangle from other types of official travel.

Fortunatus, patriarch of Grado, cut a fascinating figure at the Byzantine and Carolingian courts (Maps 8.1 and 18.1). He reveled in fine textiles, exquisite metalwork and Byzantine and Arab gold. He shows up frequently in the sources and his "will" is a major, if neglected source for the economy and art of the early ninth-century Veneto. It details his numerous benefactions to the churches of his tiny island city. Judging from the will, the once-beleaguered fortress town was now awash in gold and silver. Its shrines were swathed in luxurious textiles, includings damasks and the very high-quality "quadrabulum" silk, as well as historiated linen tapestries. Its 250-year-old churches were being restored, and their sanctuaries covered with gold and silver plate. New buildings, even a paved square, were springing up.[57] If this man betrayed both empires in his time, he lived in a dangerous part of the world, and he remained faithful at least to his kin. But it is hard to mistake contemporaries' allusions to his sleazy character. Or was it simply that an acquisitive mentality was then gaining ground more quickly in the Veneto than at Rome and elsewhere?

Fortunatus may have been born in Trieste, a short sail (some 25 km) across the gulf from his future island see. John, his honored kinsman and immediate predecessor as patriarch fell afoul of the ruling clique in Venice, apparently due to his tractations with Charlemagne. The doge's son attacked the island cathedral-fortress by ship and murdered John. According to a later source, he pitched the wounded patriarch from the highest tower of Grado.[58]

Fired by vengeance, the new patriarch soon defected from Byzantium and the regime of his relative's murderers, even as reports of his simony and suspicious character riled Rome. He crossed the Alps to appear before Charlemagne and his court at Salz. More than intrigues against his enemies insured

57 The "will" does not observe the usual diplomatic form of contemporary testaments, on which see Taylor 1995, 33–85. This may reflect the circumstances in which death surprised the intrepid defector, allowing him only time to dictate a list of his benefactions: *Documenti di Venezia*, pp. 75–8. For the Greek calque *quadrabulum* (*ibid.*, p. 76), see Table 24.1, n.*b*. For a partial summary of the will, see below, Table 11.1.

58 For the references supporting this account of Fortunatus' life, see Pros. I deduce his dedication to John from his will's reference to the textile he hung in front of the tomb "of Lord John," which "John" I identify with the late patriarch: *Documenti di Venezia*, p. 76. John's murder: *Chronicon Venetum*, 99.21–100.6; defenestration: *Origo ciuitatum Italie* (*Chron. Altinatense*), ed. secunda, 100.2–6; on Patriarch John's dealings with Charlemagne, see Kretschmayr 1905, 53–4.



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Fortunatus' warm welcome in Germany: he heaped sumptuous gifts on the new emperor, including two magnificently sculpted ivory doors.[59] His defection from Venice's Byzantine overlords brought tangible rewards in the form of a grant of immunity for his church and toll-free status for four ships. But the pro-Frankish regime he helped install proved short-lived, and conflict broke out with Byzantium. As the fortunes of war see-sawed back and forth, a Byzantine fleet made the island of Grado no place for its patriarch, and Charles intervened with the reluctant pope to get Fortunatus named to the bishopric of Pula, in more securely held Frankish Istria. Around the same time, the Frankish emperor granted Fortunatus a permanent refuge and secure source of revenues in the north by making him abbot of the French house of Moyenmoutier (diocese of Toul). The pope feared that Fortunatus would pillage Pula's property, and he warned that the royal advisors who supported the Venetian had all been bribed. Still he had little choice but to acquiesce in Charles' plan. Pope Leo III knew nonetheless whereof he spoke, and Fortunatus' conduct contributed to the crisis of the Frankish regime in Istria described in the Plea of Rižana.[60] By 814, Fortunatus had recovered Grado, presumably as part of the peace treaty negotiated between Charles and Michael I in 812 (R311). It was probably then that the patriarch undertook the construction recorded in his will, summoning master builders from Frankland, and even covering one of his churches (Santa Maria delle Grazie: Figure 9.1) with a lead roof, the metal for which was a gift of the emperor.[61] Twice, Fortunatus got Louis the Pious to confirm the Rižana settlement.[62] In 819, Fortunatus was at Rialto, witnessing the earliest surviving act of a Venetian doge.[63]

Grado stood not only on the edge of Byzantine and Carolingian power; it was also the gateway to the Slavic world. Fortunatus' dealings there would trigger his next crisis. In 821, one of the patriarch's subordinates denounced to the emperor Louis Fortunatus' treasonable dealings with Liudewit, a rebellious Slav ruler headquartered at Sisak, some 200 km inland from Trieste as the crow flies (Map 19.1). Fortunatus' bricks and mortar perhaps played a role in this: he was accused of encouraging Liudewit's resistance by supplying him with builders and masons to build castles which could withstand Frankish forces.[64]

59 Pros.

60 The only decent edition of the *Rižana Plea* is by Petranović and Margetić; for bibliography and some aspects of its testimony, see McCormick 1998b, 45–51.

61 *Documenti di Venezia*, p. 76, "de dono sancti imperii," on which Venetianism, see McCormick 1998b, 23. Builders: *Documenti*, p. 77. For the identification of the church: Bovini 1973, 79.

62 The first confirmation follows from the words of the second, "Sicut enim a primordio vobis concessimus," *Documenti di Venezia*, no. 43, p. 70; see also BM 782.

63 *Ilario e Benedetto*, no. 1, May 819.

64 *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 821, p. 155.



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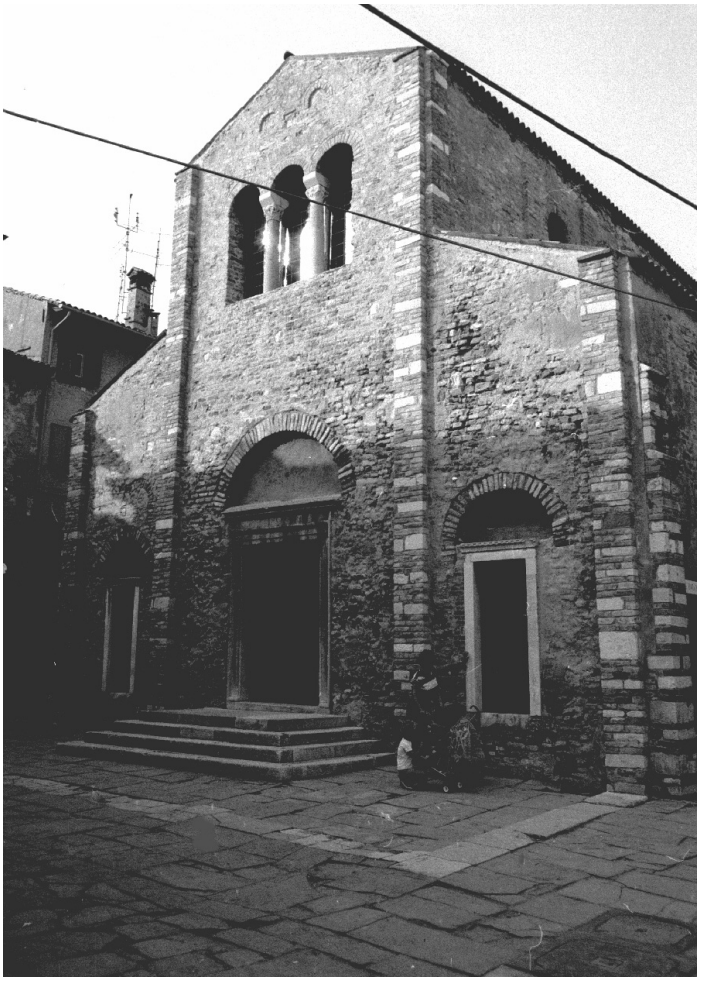

Figure 9.1. At Grado, Fortunatus lavished attention on the buildings of his island see, even covering this church, Santa Maria delle Grazie, with a new lead roof. The metal was a gift of the Frankish emperor. Where had it been mined, and how did it get to Grado? Courtesy of Ann Terry.

If his episcopal ordination had been canonical, the wily prelate was at least fifty-two years old when the menacing summons to the Frankish court arrived. Fortunatus feigned acceptance and undertook a routine trip across the Adriatic to Istria. But instead of returning to Grado and proceeding thence to Louis the Pious' court, his ship darted south across the frontier into Byzantine Zadar. The local governor immediately placed him aboard a ship for Constantinople, and the patriarch escaped the Franks.



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In the Byzantine capital, he may have purchased the magnificent golden reliquaries which he later left to his see.[65] But life in Constantinople must not have been all it was chalked up to be. After three years in his new home, Byzantine rapprochement with Louis loomed, and Fortunatus again shifted direction. He returned to Frankland in the company of a Byzantine embassy. They landed at Venice, as we know from the fact that Fortunatus had checked on his see en route north (R383). Presumably using the techniques which had worked so well at the Carolingian court, he managed to get himself named as one of the ambassadors in (at least) the Latin version of Michael II's letter of introduction to Louis the Pious. But when questioned at Rouen about Fortunatus, the Byzantine envoys maintained a pregnant silence. He proved unable to explain his earlier defection, so Louis and his advisors decided to turn the case over to the pope and ordered him to Rome. Fortunatus never made it: he fell ill en route and dictated the remarkable document that is his will, listing his many benefactions to his church, his various acquisitions, numerous luxurious textiles, the 61 lb. of silver he happened to have on him at that moment, and the artwork he was then having done in Frankland, improving a mediocre chalice with the gold from 50 Arab dinars. True to form, his depredations of his Frankish abbey were still creating problems after his death.[66]

Fortunatus was a political refugee, someone who fled across the sea to escape the political consequences of his actions at home. He represents the best-attested (twenty-seven refugees) type of traveler under political compulsion. The seventeen exiles come next. These were prisoners detained and moved to some distant location, usually from or through the center. Communications-wise, the six hostages were the inverse of exiles, individuals removed from home to the center. Such a detention was often honorable, to insure compliance with an agreement.[67] Further cases which would merit

65 The wording allows, however, the possibility that they had been bought earlier on his behalf: "capsa, quae venit comparata [cf. mod. Italian] de Constantinopoli lib. X," *Documenti di Venezia*, p. 76 and "capsam, quae empta fuit in Constantinopoli lib. XV," *ibid.*, p. 77.

66 Frotharius, bishop of Toul, *Ep.* 21–3, *MGH Epist.* 5.290–2, confirms Leo III's insinuation about Fortunatus' depredation of his benefice in Francia: Pfister 1890, 289–90; cf. Hampe 1896, 757.

67 One could easily modify these numbers insofar as not a few cases are ambiguous or fall into several categories. Thus Theognostus was certainly a refugee from imperial persecution even as he represented the deposed patriarch Ignatius to the pope. By the same token, the number would jump sharply if we were to assimilate to it the ambiguous and contemporary case of the summons to Constantinople of the pope and his entourage in 710. I have in general included here only those whose primary motive for travel was political compulsion, and who crossed into an area beyond the original authority's political control. The numbers could be increased by including, e.g., Byzantines exiled to the margins of the empire, for instance R294.



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inclusion will probably emerge from direct scrutiny of the Arabic sources in tandem with the Latin evidence.[68]

Of the fifty travelers who set out to cross the sea under these forms of political compulsion, four never finished the trip. Most traveled in the ninth century, although this time eighth-century travelers represent a substantial minority (34 percent: seventeen of fifty). They mainly started out in the western Mediterranean (eleven or possibly thirteen of fifty started out in the eastern Mediterranean). A majority are named.[69]

Even given the constant upper-class bias of our evidence, this group is particularly distinguished. There are no low-status individuals.[70] A king who became a Byzantine patrician, four dukes, and two duchesses, a patriarch, two archbishops, and two bishops set the tone. Three – two refugees and one exile (Anna 1 and Anons. 78 and 206) – were women. Their share is rather larger than usual and is due to travelers who took families with them.[71] Fortunatus could have been fifty-two or older on his outbound trip, and therefore fifty-five or more when he returned to face the music. So far as we can tell, he was the oldest among exiles and refugees. If the canons are any indication for the western churchmen, the age spectrum was wide (Table 9.8).[72] Lay people predominate, slightly.[73]

Constantinople was westerners' most common destination, since twenty-six of the exiles, refugees and hostages headed there. Ninth-century Germanic epic may echo ancient traditions, or it may resonate with recent experience when it depicts a hero like Hildebrand fleeing to the east to escape the hatred of Otachar.[74] In any case it is striking to find that exiles and refugees comprise a significant proportion of our travelers to Constantinople. As a destination, Rome came a distant second, with thirteen. Around 710, the earliest exiles in our sample

68 Thus, for instance, ʿAbd Allah, the emir of Cordova's brother, fled from Morocco to Aachen: R236. The presence of Anons. 60–1, men identified as "Franks," in a prison outside Baghdad in the third quarter of the 8th C., is an enigma. Their imprisonment presumably results from a move of some sort. Hypotheses would be that they were pilgrims, merchants arrested for some offense in the Caliphate, or Frankish mercenaries serving in the Byzantine army and taken in battle.

69 Thirty-one of fifty overall, 62 percent, are known by name, but only three of the eleven or thirteen travelers who began in the eastern Mediterranean are named; only eleven are anonymous in the western Mediterranean.

70 The closest we might come are some ten monks, of whom two may have been priests (Anons. 257–8), and Dominicus, a conspirator against the doge of Venice, about whom nothing else is known.

71 Godescalcus 1 and Anna, Iohannes 14 and Anon. 206 (conjugal couples); Sicco and his mother Anon. 78. Godescalcus 2 traveled with his godson Godescalcus 3.

72 The ages which could be deduced from the canonical age of the Byzantine travelers generally conform to this pattern. But we have seen that the legitimate ages were not observed in 9th-C. Constantinople: Ch. 8.4.

73 58 percent, i.e. twenty-one certainly religious vs. twenty-nine certainly lay persons.

74 *Hildebrandslied*, 18, p. 3.



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TABLE 9.8
Exiles and refugees: age at time of travel

| Age | Name |
|---|---|
| 15 | Sicco |
| 27 + | Gaideris |
| 30 + | Lunisso |
| 31 + | Felix 1* |
| c. 32 | Godescalcus 2 |
| 42 + | Christophorus 1* |
| 52 + | Fortunatus outbound* |
| 55 + | Fortunatus inbound* |

*Note:*
*Based on canonical age.

reveal the last gasps of late antique political structures whose hour had passed, as the Constantinopolitan center summoned those suspected of disloyalty (R70). Two generations later, in the welcome accorded to prominent refugees from Lombard Italy, we perceive the Byzantine government's traditional attention to nourishing rivals to regimes which it might challenge.

The Venetians traveling under compulsion tended to be sent to Constantinople.[75] Those who were perhaps considered less of a threat were transported just across the border, to the first Byzantine town down the Adriatic shipping lane, Zadar (Map 18.1).[76] The Adriatic links with the Slavs revealed by the accusations against Fortunatus recur here too. One potential doge who had been exiled to Zadar subsequently fled from Byzantine territory into "Sclavenia." From there he reached Frankish Italy, whence Venetian ambassadors retrieved him and sent him to Constantinople, accompanied by his wife.[77]

The story of Godescalc is a little different, but bears repeating in this context. One of the most controversial thinkers of his time, this child of the Saxon aristocracy was hounded by the ecclesiastical authorities of Frankland for his rebellious nature and daring theology, not to mention a conflict over his property. On the edge of the Adriatic, he found respite in the household of the powerful margrave Eberhard of Friuli and his wife Gisela, daughter of Louis the Pious and Judith.

75 9: Anon. 206; Christophorus; Dominicus 3; Felix 3; Fortunatus; Iohannes 14; Petrus 8–10.

76 See Pros. "Beatus" and "Iohannes 14"; Beatus is not reckoned among the exiles, since his embassy to Constantinople was more important.

77 Pros. "Iohannes 14."



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Probably when pressure to hand him over became too strong, he moved offshore to Venice. From there he could thumb his nose at Frankish institutions a few miles away. After two years, he moved on, spending time along the Byzantine frontier with the Croatian prince Trpimir and in Bulgaria, engaging in freelance missionary work among the Slavs, almost two decades ahead of Constantine and Methodius. He also traveled across Byzantine Dalmatia before he tired of flight and returned home, apparently through Bavaria, for judgement and life-long internment.[78] The outlaw theologian's wanderings provide a rare and precious glimpse of an early medieval frontier world, where the strictures of contemporary institutions weighed even less than they did closer to home, where the child of Saxon nobles and monk against his will found provisional refuge among the most noble of Frankish colonists, where the refugee monk rubbed shoulders with Venetian merchants and a Slavic prince.

The early medieval westerners who headed for Constantinople under political compulsion all came from Italy or Dalmatia. Even under the new skies of the eighth and ninth century, parts of Italy remained politically and economically close enough to see it as a viable place of exile for defeated members of the local elite. Yet Constantinople also remained distant enough, politically, to supply a secure place of refuge, especially vis à vis the Franks.

## 2. Invisible travelers: immigrants, seamen, fishermen, and wanderers

Immigrants for economic reasons are only rarely visible in the eighth and ninth centuries. But the surprising thing is that some appear at all.[79] We can observe twenty men and women immigrating across the sea, into a new culture, for reasons that will have been at least partly economic. Named (twelve: 60 percent) outweigh anonymous.[80] At the beginning of our period is one case which must once have been common, the child of an imperial Byzantine official posted to Italy, implying the immigration of a family unit.[81] At least four more travelers

78 Pros. His discussion of speech patterns among Latin-speaking Byzantines, which, says he, were widely diffused "per totam Dalmatiam longissimam reuera regionem inquam," bears the unmistakable stamp of first-hand experience: *De praedestinatione*, 6, *Opera*, 208.12–18.

79 For other evidence of early medieval immigration: McCormick 1998b, 31–8. Of course, in some respects the category blurs gradually into others. A political refugee like Adalgis hoped to return to the Lombard throne, but ended his days as an imperial patrician in Constantinople. Some travelers came to Rome or Jerusalem on pilgrimage, but decided to stay.

80 In a few cases, the compulsion or religious motives that drove them to move may simply be invisible. But that was surely not the case of all.

81 Iohannes 1; on the phenomenon in general, see Brown 1984, 64–9, and 69 on this case in particular; see also McCormick 1998b, 33–5.



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immigrated as a family.[82] Almost half (eight) came from the Muslim world, and most settled in Italy (fourteen). Three left Frankish Italy for Constantinople. Nine came from Byzantium to the west, and mostly settled at courts. The majority (twelve) were lay people.

Six accompanied saints' relics. Are we seeing, thanks to hagiography, a phenomenon that existed outside relic translations? Or do the translations alone explain a marginal phenomenon? The other cases lend credence to the former explanation. In fact, an economic explanation is hard to rule out even in the cases of the translations.[83] It may account for Abu Aaron's move from Iraq to Lucca around 900 – in which case we would have an interesting indication of that region's economic drawing power.[84] Remuneration almost certainly played a role for the Franks who immigrated to Constantinople to serve the emperor.

The Frankish immigrants to Byzantium look like fighters. The Byzantines were always on the lookout for tough foreign troops and, in the early Middle Ages as in the twentieth century, autocrats found it desirable to surround themselves with praetorian guards recruited from outside the societies that they sought to dominate. The reliability of outsiders, of mercenaries, dependent in all things on the ruler, outweighs that of insiders, who may be subject to social and political pressures originating in the broader social networks from which they stem and against which the ruler may be struggling.

The Byzantines did solicit formal military cooperation from the Frankish rulers between 814 and 867. Leo V sought help against the Bulgars (R330). The earliest surviving original document from the Byzantine chancery, the imperial letter of St. Denis, refers to a joint military operation (ἐν τῷ τα⟨ξιδ⟩ίῳ τούτῳ . . .) which involved Italy, quite possibly in 827.[85] Byzantine accounts of ambassadorial activity which can be dated to 839 and/or 842 refer also to the dispatch of western forces against the southern Mediterranean (R444). Some cooperation actually occurred in connection with the siege of Bari (R604). The wording that describes these ventures implies that the Byzantines were mostly seeking autonomous but coordinated military expeditions.[86] Such was surely the case of the operations against

82 Theodorus and Anons. 207–9. The same may have been true of Abu Aaron.

83 Thus the patent appeal to greed in the Venetians' insistence on the fine ecclesiastical appointments the Alexandrian clergy will enjoy if they move to Venice: *Transl. S. Marci*, p. 255 ". . . vosque eritis in oculis eius [*sc.* ducis Venetiarum] ultra quam credi potest dilecti, et primi in ordine sacerdotum, quae [*an* qui *legendum?*] admodum hic fuistis in ordine ministrorum."

84 Pros.

85 *Byzantine Imperial Letter*, 95.2; cf. Ohnsorge 1958a, 136.2 and, for its redating, R315.

86 *Taxidion* in a middle Byzantine military context is usually rendered "expedition" or "campaign." Theoph. Cont., 3, 37, 135.3–4 refers to "στρατεύματα . . . γενναῖά τε καὶ πολυάνθρωπα," while "Iosephus Genesius," *Reges*, 3, 16 and 18, who copied Theoph. Cont. or his source, refers to "πολυάνθρωπον στράτευμα, καί τινας ὑποστρατήγων αὐτοῦ"



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Bari. Of course, coordinated operations need not imply immigration. But some Carolingian warriors did find their way into Byzantine uniforms.

An Arabic source claims that in the 820s, Byzantine operations in Sicily included warriors designated as "alāmanīn." Though the word appeared closest to "Alamannian" to specialists (Ar. *al-almān*), the reading has usually been emended by the same specialists to read "Armenian" (Ar. *al-arman*), in no small part because the idea of Alamannians in Byzantine service seemed improbable.[87] What these scholars could not know was that Alamannians constituted a pillar of the Frankish military colonization of Lombard Italy, beginning in a big way in 776.[88] Although the matter remains unclear, it is not inconceivable that Byzantine commanders in Sicily recruited warriors from neighboring Frankish Italy.

Whether or not Alamannians fought in the imperial forces in southern Italy by the end of the century, other natives of Carolingian Europe certainly traveled to Constantinople to serve the emperor. And why not, if Franks were prepared to join the palace guard of the Muslim emir of Cordova?[89] Photius corresponded with an imperial official who held the substantial dignity of spatharios – usually a military title at this date – whom he identifies as an "Etruscan," by which he probably means that he came from non-Byzantine Italy, and possibly even Tuscany.[90] Franks counted among the special military group at court known as the "imperial men" (*basilikoi anthrōpoi*), and they were numerous enough to deserve explicit mention among the foreigners in imperial service who were routinely invited to Christmas banquets at the Great Palace. On this occasion, they were expected to wear their national dress, like the Farganese, Khazars, and

(50.16–17) and "τῇ κατὰ Ἰσμαηλιτῶν Φραγγικῇ ἐκστρατείᾳ" (51.47–8).

87 When Euphemius usurped the imperial office in Sicily c. 826 he entrusted one district to a barbarian Alamannian or Armenian follower named "B.lā -t.-.h.," according to An-Nuwairī (A.D. 1279–1332 – he uses earlier, lost sources), 2.113–14; cf. Amari 1933–9, 1: 375–7 with 375–6n2 where neither reading is judged fully satisfying; on the man's name *ibid.*, 376n1. If the man were indeed an Alamannian and had not changed his name to one less grating on Greek ears, the Germanic root <balth> could be concealed beneath the Arabic letters. The same Arabic historian claims that the army brought to Sicily in 828 by Theodotus, who was arriving from Constantinople to relieve the siege of Enna in the center of the island, comprised troops of varying origins, but mostly Alamannians, which again is usually emended to read Armenians. See the discussion in Pros. "Theodotus."

88 Only Franks outnumbered Alamannians: Hlawitschka's (1960, 46) painstaking study identified about 360 Franks, 160 Alamannian and 15 Bavarian lay immigrants in the Carolingian period.

89 Emir al Hakam I (796–822), surrounded himself with a palace guard of foreigners from Galicia, Frankland, and further away, including 150 faithful slaves captured in Septimania, and commanded by "Count Rabi," son of Theodulf, Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 1: 189–90.

90 Pros.; spatharios usually military: Winkelmann 1985, 51–4.



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Arabs with whom they were seated, to project a multinational image of the ancient empire's sway.[91]

Most of the raiders who seized wealth aboard ship or along the Mediterranean coastline came from the Islamic rim; a few came from Byzantium, particularly the officers of the Byzantine navy dispatched to the west.[92] The cat-and-mouse war at sea ranged far and wide across the Mediterranean and it has already been well studied, so that the essential data for our purposes are readily available.[93] Although a Viking fleet raided Morocco and wandered along the Riviera wreaking havoc, notably at Arles, from 859–62, it was an exception even more isolated than the handful of recorded Frankish attacks on Muslim territories (R530).

When in 774 the Carolingians took direct control of northern Italy, the new rulers inherited at least a rudimentary maritime infrastructure linking Tuscany to the Lombard territory of Corsica.[94] Likewise Frankish expansion into the Iberian peninsula fostered involvement with the Balearic islands. At the time of Charlemagne's imperial coronation, reports circulated in Constantinople that the Frankish king was building a fleet for an assault on Byzantine Sicily (R250). The rising Arab threat in the ninth century in any event spurred work on coastal defenses, and ships of some sort will have been a part of that.[95] Squadrons commanded by or serving the Franks appeared off Corsica (R276) and at the head of the Adriatic (R269).

Twice in the early ninth century, Frankish forces succeeded in carrying the struggle further afield. In 813, whether through carefully laid plan or luck, the count of the ancient seaport of Ampurias on the Costa Brava mounted an operation at Majorca, some 250 km from his mainland base (Map 17.1). There he ambushed Moorish ships returning to Spain after a raid on Corsica. He captured eight ships and liberated more than 500 Corsicans who were clearly destined for the slave markets of al Andalus.[96] Fifteen years later, a small squadron ("parva classis") commanded by Boniface II, count of Tuscany, circumnavigated Corsica and Sardinia looking for pirates. When he found none, he put into Sardinia. Boniface had friendly relations there and he found pilots who knew the maritime route to Africa. A landfall in the Gulf of Tunis led to five successful engagements

91 Philotheus, *Klētorologion*, 177.28–179.1. On these men, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 327–8 and A. Kazhdan, *ODB* 1: 266. It is unclear why Ahrweiler 1966, 397n3, assumes that they served in the imperial fleet.

92 The only Byzantine freebooters to appear in our evidence are the Orobiotai: R292.

93 App. 4 registers that data, and it has been used to create the database of "Complementary Movements," derived mostly from secondary literature. See further below, Ch. 14.

94 On the Lombards and Corsica see Ch. 17.4.

95 See in general on Frankish naval interests, Haywood 1991, 95–135.

96 R318; *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 139, implies that this resulted from careful planning; cf. BM 218a; Abel and Simson 1883–8, 2: 523; and Haywood 1991, 114.



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on African soil before the Franks returned to their ships and escaped (R404). In both 813 and 828, the local land official was entrusted with duty at sea involving islands; in the case of Corsica the island had had a long association with the count's continental base (Ch. 17.4). Although clearly reactive in nature and shore-oriented, here we see Frankish forces operating at several hundred kilometers from their bases. But the raids had no tomorrow. Even so, along with the defensive operations along the Tyrrhenian coast, they suggest some vitality in the infrastructures – ports, ships, mariners – along the Carolingian empire's Mediterranean rim. And, by century's end, Tuscan raiders were again preying on Aghlabid ships (R736).

We feel the social slant of our sources most painfully when it comes to the men who did the sailing for Boniface, as well as for our envoys and pilgrims. The human world of the sea is well hidden in the eighth and ninth centuries. The ships in which Amalarius, Blaise, and the others traveled did not sail themselves, but the narratives breathe no word of their crews.[97] Though anecdotal and legal material runs rich enough to give some idea of the sailors' life (see Chapter 13), individual seamen are so rarely mentioned that they need not detain us long. A few crop up on more or less local routes, or are only visible on segments of the great routes that ran around the Mediterranean.[98] None are named. Since they are almost invariably mentioned in the context of other travelers, they add little to our knowledge of communications per se.

It may be that the Arabic sources will be of some help on this score. We hear in any case of Arab raiders shipping out of Africa who sailed a large, captured Christian merchantman from Sardinia to an unspecified Christian port, possibly Naples, and from there back to Africa (R514). A few more are mentioned in a Greek source as manning the ships that took the monk Simon back from Africa to Calabria – another case of Arabs traveling to a Christian port on business (R502). At least four European sailors crop up in the account of the Venetian convoy that transported the relics of St. Mark.[99] Finally, an anonymous skipper with whom the pilgrim Jacob sailed from Constantinople robbed his passenger and abandoned him on Corsica, while another skipper has already appeared in his capacity of

97 There are some sources: the Aphrodito papyri document the conscripting of young Copts to man the warships of the early Caliphs (see e.g. Christides 1991), not to mention Byzantine evidence, chiefly for the navy: Ahrweiler 1966, 397–407. My colleague Alice-Mary Talbot alerted me to a hagiographical vignette about sailors at Constantinople laboring under their captain's eye, readying his warship for a voyage to "the western regions," under Constantine VII: *Edifying Story of Two Brothers*, 3–4, p. 264. For Byzantium, the situation does not get much better in the later period, except for Latin sources. For what is known, Makris 1988, 102–54.

98 E.g. Beneventan sailors on Lipari: R442; "one of the sailors" cured of a viper bite and mentioned in *V. Eliae iun.*, 52, 80.1090–1096, cf. R752.

99 Anons. 202–5.



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merchant.[100] In this respect, it is striking that the line between sailors and merchants does not appear very distinct for the Venetians. An unnoticed early reference to the theft of St. Mark's relics from southern Italy calls the thieves "sailors" (*nautes*!), and the Translation itself has the Alexandrians calling the Venetians the same thing (*nautae*).[101] Bernard mentions that the slaver on which he sailed from Taranto to Alexandria had a crew of sixty, the large size of which may be explained by the potential danger from the desperate human cargo.[102]

Whether fishermen ventured far is unknown but not unimportant.[103] In any case they probably played a considerable role in local transport and communications.[104] And fishing would have contributed to maintaining the human capital involved in boat-building and sailing.[105] St. Luke the Younger was the friend of the captain (*nauklēros*) of a fishing boat who had at least two *nautai* under him; one suspects they operated on a local scale.[106] If shippers, sailors, and fishermen are almost invisible, we should not be surprised that the truly marginal elements of society, the wanderers, hoboes, and beggars, are completely absent from the record of trans-Mediterranean travelers. There were "Latin"-speaking beggars at Constantinople in 968, since they came to Liudprand's residence seeking handouts.[107] We know of none such at Constantinople in the eighth and ninth

100 R463; above, Tables 9.1–2, Anon. 305.

101 *Vita Leucii episcopi* (*BHL* 4894), p. 363. On the text, see below. *Transl. S. Marci*, 256.12.

102 *Itinerarium* 5, p. 311. At least he seems to say this, but the Latin is not without ambiguity: "prohibiti sumus a principe nautarum, qui erat super sexaginta." The smaller the figure, the more reliable Bernard generally seems about numbers. A few scraps from just outside our period show sailors working their craft. A ship's carpenter had a sideline as an artistic woodworker for a Constantinopolitan shrine, presumably during the winter inactivity that came with his livelihood. In the course of a voyage to Gaul in the 660s, the carpenter dove under water to repair his ship's keel: R24. The remains of at least three adults, one of whom was about twenty years old, have been discovered in one wreck. Le Bataiguier, Parker 1992, no. 97. A 7th-C. source mentions two sailors, one aged fifty and the other fifty-three: *Miracula Artemii* (*BHG* 173), 7 and 27, 6.24 and 39.8–40.21.

103 I have encountered little useful evidence on early medieval fishermen and know of none attesting long-distance fishing expeditions based in Italy or along the French Mediterranean coast; some charters seem to refer to salt-water fishing, but they concern shoreline fisheries. For what it is worth, Santa Sofia of Benevento had privileges concerning fisheries at Siponto, between those of two other houses: Poupardin 1907, no. 2C, p. 66 (November 774) and no. 32, p. 78 (April 834); cf. Bertolini 1968b, 126, no. 9.

104 Cf. *TIB* 1: 103–4, on the importance of the rarely mentioned fishing boats for local traffic.

105 Braudel 1972, 1: 138–9.

106 *Vita S. Lucae iunioris* (*BHG* 994), 40, pp. 180–1. For Byzantine fishing, there are some indications in Koukoules 1948–57, 5: 331–43 and J. W. Nesbitt *et al*. *ODB* 2: 788–9, and esp. Makris 1988, 211–20, and Gounaridis 1998; on the local fishing industry of Constantinople, see Dagron 1995.

107 Liudprand of Cremona, *Legatio*, 46, 200.4–6.



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centuries; but the sources for the city and its population in those years are so meager that this silence means little.

## 3. Fictional travelers

The final group of travelers is, by contrast, well attested. Information about them is often richly detailed. We know their travels, their routes, the ethnicity of their crews, even the speed at which their boats sailed, or the dates on which they entered or left a particular port. Yet scholars have almost entirely ignored them, except perhaps when they have used them inadvertently. The only problem with these richly documented travelers is that they never existed.

They occur in fiction. Historians of the early medieval west and Byzantium have largely been allergic to the fiction produced in the period. The reasons for this are historical, since most of it is masquerading as history of an earlier era, and comes in the form of hagiography. Willy-nilly, today's historians are still burdened by tacit assumptions arising out of the profoundly religious motivation that gave rise to serious hagiographical research in the seventeenth century. Confessional conflict and the need to defend the faith by eliminating false saints from the public worship of the Catholic church were the driving forces behind the great scholarly enterprise of the Bollandists, the earliest institute of historical research in western history.[108] The very idea of publishing the Lives of the saints was opposed by no less a figure than Cardinal Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621), who feared that the enterprise would prove antithetical to the proper goals of hagiography, since such texts "might produce laughter rather than edification."[109] Three hundred years later, the disdain for the fantastic "hagiographical novels" and "fakes" is still palpable in the work of the greatest of the modern Bollandists, Hippolyte Delehaye.[110] The Bollandists' main objective, to discern which saints really existed, was only reinforced by nineteenth-century positivism. As they burrowed energetically into a mountain of unknown texts, their first task was triage; the texts that could not pass historical muster were edited, condemned, and then forgotten. One can scarcely blame them for remaining faithful to their mission.

108 For Rosweyde's original plan see Anonymous 1868; cf. Delehaye 1959, 11–114.

109 ". . . ne forte originalibus historiis multa sint inepta, levia, improbabilia, quae risum potius, quam aedificationem pariant . . ." Letter of 7 March 1608, ed. *AASS* Oct 7.1(1845).iE–F. Catholic apologist though he was, Bellarmine nonetheless viewed this as a secondary objection to the project, after its enormous size and cost.

110 E.g., 1955, 112–15; cf. his contrast between the "poets" and the "historians," xii–xiv.



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The most outrageous early medieval stories are set in the past, from the apostolic age to the preceding century or two. Consciencious scholars have rejected, correctly, the image of antiquity the medievals concocted. In the limited bibliographical and different mental conditions of the eighth, ninth or early tenth century, pious forgers were forced to invent the background details of their heroes' movements, details often of little importance to their story. For this, they usually had no better source than the realities of their own time. Do we laugh to learn that a southern Italian of the ninth century imagined that Venetian ships sailed to apostolic Alexandria? When the laughter subsides, we recognize that, inadvertently, the way early medieval fiction imagined antiquity preserves precious truths about the shipping of the age in which it was written.[111] The very anachronisms that proved their undoing in the eyes of earlier scholars are precisely what makes these historical novels so precious for us.

And so we must not fear to turn to fiction in order to establish fact. Details invented by the eighth-century Acts of St. Pancratius or the ninth-century Deeds of Dagobert throw more than one beam of light on our broader theme.[112] Four Italian hagiographical novels in particular furnish rich information on communications. The Life of St. Leucius of Brindisi comes from Apulia, and dates from the later ninth or early tenth century.[113] It details the apostle's imaginary trips around the Mediterranean and invents the early Christian ships from Venice.[114] The Greek Passion of St. Nicon paints a vivid picture of the embattled pagan "Roman" army defending a fortress Naples against the barbarians' assaults. Its hero invokes Christ and miraculously kills 180 enemy soldiers before boarding a ship to seek spiritual guidance in Constantinople. In the end he returns to Italy, where he dies a martyr at Taormina.[115] Other precious data comes from the ninth-century Life of Leo, bishop of Catania, written where he was venerated, and that saint's battles against an evil sorcerer.[116] But the prize is the Life of St. Gregory of Agrigento, supposedly written by an abbot "Leontius" – an archaizing name in the ninth century – of the abbey of St. Sabbas in Rome. He pretends that

111 Scholars' attitudes are beginning to change, especially for the wonderfully fantastic texts of southern Italy: see e.g. Longo 1990, Stallman 1990, Auzépy 1992, McCormick 1998b, 36–7, and Philippart 1998.

112 See, e.g. Ch. 22n40 or Ch. 25n68.

113 *V. Leucii* (*BHL* 4894, 4894b). Lanzoni 1927, 1: 306–8 dated it to 8th–10th C., since Brindisi is not depicted as subordinate to Rome. In fact, it must be post 828, since it mentions (p. 363) the translation of the relics of St. Mark to Venice. The work is preserved in a late 11th-C. MS, Monte Cassino, Archivio della Badia, ms. 146; cf. Lowe and Brown 1980, 2, 72.

114 *V. Leucii*, p. 363.

115 (*BHG* 1360), *AASS* Mart. 3 (1865).*15B–*18E. This work may well go back to the 8th or 9th C., since it hints of iconoclasm; two 11th-C. MSS survive: McCormick 1998b, 37n39.

116 *Vita Leonis Cataniae* (*BHG* 981); for its composition c. 813–40, *ibid.*, p. 54; cf. on this text Auzépy 1992, 62–7 and Longo 1993.



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he is describing "the most recent times" and that emperor Justinian is his contemporary.[117] In fact it was composed in a Greek-speaking milieu in Rome, by someone who presumably came from the region of Agrigento and who wished to bolster the veneration of his hometown saint. The author shows great familiarity with both places.[118] He combines fourth- and seventh-century personalities around a late sixth-century figure.[119] Of greatest interest to us, he loads his novel with details about trips around the Mediterranean: sailing dates, lengths of voyages, routes, and the like.

Naturally, none of the trips described by these historical romances have been incorporated directly into our overall data base of communications. Although they generally reflect real voyages, they do so indirectly. But they help immensely in fleshing out the picture of early medieval shipping. Of course it is always possible that the authors of these hagiographical romances invented the details of daily life that crept into their narratives. Aside from the odd and obvious miracle, close scrutiny of these details shows nevertheless that they cohere smoothly with what can be deduced from historical sources of more conventional grain. But to guard against confusing background patterns with specific and historically attested movements, I have always segregated the new data derived from the wonderful fiction of the early Middle Ages, so that the reader can easily compare it with material of indubitable character.

These then are the travelers about whom we know least, or to whom scholars have hitherto paid least heed. When we appraise communications in the early medieval Mediterranean, it is essential to know what we do not know. That ignorance should no longer extend to the valuable information furnished, inadvertently, by the novelists and Greek writers of early medieval Italy. Traders and slaves are not the most massively documented of early medieval travelers. But the very scatteredness and anonymity with which they appear in the sources, in contrast with the relative abundance of names and other details about the grander individuals who voyaged under political compulsion or raided at the king's command, confirm that we are correct in attributing the relative neglect of traders and their ilk to the social structures that filtered early medieval authors' historical imagination. And, less abundant though they may be, merchants and slaves *are* documented. They make a fundamental contribution to our overall data on communications and travel. But they will also do much more, for, in the end, they will help us understand the data they aid us to unlock.

117 "Leontius," *V. Greg. Agrig.*, intro., pp. 48–9. On the name frequency, *ibid.*, p. 49n104.

118 *Ibid.*, pp. 49–50.

119 *Ibid.*, pp. 26–8.



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# *People on the move*

A PROSOPOGRAPHICAL approach to the problem of early medieval communications yields a rich harvest of people on the move. We can see 669 travelers all told, who sought to travel around the Mediterranean in an era when movements there are thought to have been few and far between.[1] The 669 individual stories allow us to discern, with varying precision in time and space, some 400 movements around the Mediterranean basin, over 80 percent of which covered more than 500 km (see Chapter 14). These trips laid the foundation for new knowledge of the patterns of shipping and communications at the origins of the European economy.

The first, irrefutable conclusion is that the evidence about early medieval shipping and communications is dramatically larger, and richer, than has ever been realized. This implies that we may dare to ask new questions: not simply whether such communications occurred, but when, where, and why they occurred. Even more important, we can pursue the first anecdotal indications of hitherto unnoticed changes in the volume, direction and routes by which communications flowed. Right away, the role of the Arab world appears surprising.

The second conclusion is that, socially speaking, this large amount of evidence is unevenly distributed. Types of travelers who stemmed from the social elite dominate the written record. Aristocrats tended to be ambassadors, pilgrims, and missionaries, and it is they who prevail in the surviving records. The social filter of early medieval literature is fully confirmed and its contours are better delineated. Even the numerically fewer travelers from among the high and mighty who traveled under political compulsion are better documented than the far more numerous individuals who manned and sailed the ships that transported them.

The social profile of early medieval literature goes a long way toward explaining the dearth of merchants, sailors, and fishermen in our written records. Even

1 Forty (6 percent) of them never accomplished their trip for one reason or another.



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TABLE 9.9
Types of travelers

| Type | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| envoys | 292 | 44 |
| pilgrims* | 184 | 28 |
| exiles and refugees | 44 | 7 |
| slaves* | 39 | 6 |
| immigrants | 20 | 3 |
| officials | 19 | 3 |
| merchants* | 18 | 3 |
| uncertain | 19 | 3 |
| other categories | 34 | 5 |
| Total | 669 | 100 |

*Note:*
*For the explanation of the minor discrepancies in the different tables of these types of travelers, see above, p. 125n4.

so, dearth is not absence: merchants are in fact unambiguously attested as sailing the Mediterranean, and their evidence can be added to the better attested trips of envoys, pilgrims and the like. A surprising number of slaves also can be discerned, mostly because they happened to be high-status individuals who were sucked into the network of slave supply.

Ambassadors and pilgrims are most numerous. Do they shed light on the movements of others whom the sources are less ready to document? In the bluntest form, on whose ships did pilgrims and diplomats travel? Government ships may have moved some travelers, especially diplomats on urgent missions.[2] Travelers who sailed on state ships specially placed at their disposal might yield less reliable information on normal infrastructures and patterns of commercial shipping than travelers who were forced to rely on merchant ships, if we assume that state ships typically followed different routes or traditions of sailing from private ones. About pilgrims, Pirenne was categorical. In his view, studying the movements of pilgrims cast no light on broader economic developments, since their travels were subject to the vagaries of circumstance.[3] On the contrary, that is

2 Claude 1985b, 29.

3 Pirenne 1937, 72, esp. "Il ne faut pas confondre avec la circulation des marchandises, celle des pèlerins, des érudits et des artistes. La première suppose une organisation des transports et des relations permanentes d'importation et d'exportation, la seconde s'effectue au hasard des circonstances." He goes on nonetheless (73) to draw economic conclusions when pilgrims shifted from one point of departure to another.



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precisely why their movements can be precious indicators of infrastructures. Christian pilgrims were not necessarily in a hurry if there were religious sights to be seen. But they scarcely built, manned, and navigated the ships they took.[4] Religious travelers may not, in other words, shed unmitigated light on the normal speed of travel, but they surely reflect, at least indirectly, real ship movements. And those ships were often, indeed, usually, merchantmen, as the most clear-cut evidence shows.

Although the matter was so obvious to contemporaries that they rarely provide us with the kind of unambiguous statement we might like, there is sufficient indication of this. Hugeburc's account of her relative's travels through the Mediterranean in the early eighth century has provided the classic example of how coastal tramping predominated over direct blue-water sailing. The one clear detail she provides is that Willibald boarded a ship "from Egypt" in Naples and sailed to Calabria. It is utterly implausible that an enemy military ship was then servicing regional circuits in Byzantine Italy: the Egyptian ship was certainly a merchant vessel.[5] The case of Dominic of Comacchio is explicit. Around 828 he returned from his pilgrimage to Jerusalem via Alexandria, where he boarded one of the ten Venetian merchant ships then in port. He came there expecting to find such ships.[6] Some forty years later, Bernard sailed from Italy to Egypt in a slaver, one of half a dozen slave ships he "found" (*invenimus*) anchored at Taranto at the time of his embarkation.[7] The need to "find" a ship clearly implies that the traveler was relying on whatever vessel shipping patterns put at his disposal. In other words, in the eighth and ninth centuries, as later in the Middle Ages, pilgrims normally sailed aboard commercial vessels.

The overwhelming majority of diplomatic voyages supply no information on the kind of ship used.[8] But the circumstances of many travelers counted here as envoys seem in fact to rule out the use of state transports. For instance the representatives sent to Rome by Byzantine dissidents (twelve), or the envoys exchanged with Christian communities under Arab rule (ten), which together account for 13 percent (twenty-two of 165) of all diplomatic trips, can scarcely have traveled aboard official vessels. We do not know for sure on what ships envoys traveled between the Muslim authorities and the Carolingians. But we can

4 On the real problems of using the movements of ambassadors and pilgrims for calculating maximum speed of travel, see Ch. 14.

5 Hugeburc, *V. Willibaldi*, 4, 93.5–7. There is no hint that the shipper (*nautor*) who transported them from Cyprus to Syria was anything but a commercial shipper: *ibid.*, 95.4–7. On the return trip, Willibald and his companion Tidbercht sailed with papal and imperial ambassadors who were traveling to Rome, but we are not told about the ship: *ibid.*, 101.28–30.

6 *Transl. Marci*, 257.20–258.3.

7 *Itinerarium*, 4–5, pp. 310–11.

8 82 percent; of 165 maritime core movements of a diplomatic character, 136 allow no inferences.



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suspect that when the ambassadors of Charlemagne and Harun al Rashid returned from Baghdad to the Veneto, a merchant craft was more likely than an Arab warship to have carried them undetected through the attacking Byzantine fleet.[9] The only explicit evidence for diplomatic parties involving the Arab world twice indicates sailing aboard private ships. The African Arab envoys who came to the court of the exarch of Sicily in 813 did so aboard Venetian ships and, when Charlemagne had to fetch the elephant and other diplomatic gifts sent to him by Harun in 802, he sent the head of his writing office to the Ligurian coast to raise a convoy to cross over to Africa (R321; R255). Whenever we can document diplomatic contacts with the Arab world the evidence points to private ships, that is, in all probability, merchant vessels.

Surprisingly, this was also true of at least some official communications with the Byzantine empire. The idea that, in our period, envoys to and from Constantinople traveled in state ships is not without foundation. An imperial embassy of 867 certainly tried to cross the Adriatic in two warships.[10] That, in 813, Amalarius' ship used oars when it encountered navigational difficulties *might* mean that it too was a warship (Ch. 5.2 and below, pp. 407f). In particularly dangerous moments and places, it was obviously desirable for the highest ranking passengers to travel aboard a warship or under military escort. This explains the dispatch of a military squadron to convey a Carolingian bride from war-torn southern Italy in 869.[11] In a different context, the pope solicited two warships from Naples to take him to Arles in 878, at a time when the military crisis of southern Italy dictated his desperate trip (R652). The decision to supply incoming envoys with a ship seems also to have been taken *ad hoc*, as a diplomatic sign of particular favor.[12]

9 R271. The circumstances surrounding the embarkation of the envoys of 797 in the Veneto hint in the same direction: R238.

10 R573. Hadrian II's complaints that Basil I was more negligent than Michael III does not prove that under the earlier emperor envoys traveled in state ships, only that he had supplied suitable guides, "idoneo sociato praevio": *Ep.* 41, JE 2943, 760.6–11.

11 R593. Similarly the specific circumstances explain Constantine IV's offer to supply a military escort, if need be, to Pope Donus' legates in 678: R37. The return of the western envoys in 968 coincided with the dispatch of a war fleet, which explains this case: R826. Liudprand was supposed to cross the Ionian Sea to Italy in winter in a *chelandion*, which usually means a warship: Ahrweiler 1966, 410–14. Might this case be due to the season?

12 This is why in 678 Constantine IV has to explain to the pope that he has commanded that a *local* ship be placed at the papal legates' disposition – the exarch of Italy is to supply it. This may hint that a private ship was to be requisitioned for the voyage: R37. Imperial officials carefully tailored the extent to which the state facilitated the travel of diplomats to the capital to its broader diplomatic stance, as the internal service memorandum preserved in Constantine VII, *De cer.*, 1, 89, 400.10–12, makes clear. This document dates from the 6th C., but was selected for inclusion in the 10th-C. handbook of imperial ceremonial.



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Finally, even when ambassadors traveled on state ships, we may wonder whether those ships displayed patterns of movement which differed from merchant vessels'. In two cases, they might. An emperor could command his naval ships to go where merchants might have had little interest in venturing. And insofar as the imperial vessels were oared warships, rather than mainly sailed transports, their larger crews and different architecture implied a series of navigational and logistical constraints. They made frequent landings to take on fresh water for the large crews of 150 to 300 sailors working under the Mediterranean sun, for instance, and their design made it advisable to avoid the high seas. Such constraints obliged warships mostly to operate coastally.[13] Nonetheless, even these ships reveal what was reckoned feasible in the period, and, precisely because of their logistical constraints, are more apt to shed light on landings, ports, and other elements of the infrastructure. We must simply guard against mistaking their very specific logistical constraints for the norm for all vessels operating in the ninth and tenth centuries. In a word, the movements of pilgrims and diplomats to the Islamic world can be used with confidence as proxy data on merchant shipping. Data involving Byzantium must be used with greater circumspection.

That the movements of diplomats and pilgrims can be revealing of those connected with commerce is suggested by another phenomenon too. The distinctions among the various categories of travelers we encounter in early medieval reality are less rigid than they might be in more highly developed economies whose labor force was more specialized. In the fluid world of early medieval long-distance travel, one might pass easily from one category to another. The passage from trader to raider is a commonplace among historians of medieval shipping, and occurs in our waters too: in 813, the Venetian ships conveying Muslim ambassadors encountered and destroyed two Spanish ships en route to Syracuse.[14] The line between travelers on diplomatic business and hostages also might be a fine one: the summoning of the papal court to Constantinople even as imperial officials traveled to Rome to execute members of the pope's entourage who had remained behind casts a sinister light on the complexity of Pope Constantine's situation en route to the capital in 710 (R73; R74). And what of the doge Beatus, embarked along with recognized hostages on an imperial warfleet which had come to the Adriatic to restore Byzantine control over a Venice whose defection Beatus himself had recently helped engineer?[15]

Merchants sometimes doubled as diplomatic intermediaries in Carolingian civilization. Thus, in the northern trading area, the Danish king used merchants

13 On dromons, see below, p. 405, with further references.

14 R321. On the easy shift from traders to raiders in the more developed shipping systems of the later Middle Ages, see Pryor 1992, 154–5; for the early medieval north, e.g. Sawyer 1982, 121–3.

15 Pros. "Beatus."



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to open negotiations with Charlemagne.[16] Farther down the political scale, the count of Carolingian Treviso commissioned Venetian merchants to negotiate on his behalf with the patriarch of Jerusalem (R233). Basil I obtained bells from Venice for his Nea church: we cannot tell whether were they purchased as objects of trade or extracted as diplomatic presents.[17] Isaac, who was part of a Carolingian mission to Baghdad, is widely assumed to have been a merchant, and plausibly so (R238).

More fluid still were the boundaries between pilgrims and merchants. We cannot say for sure whether the future doge of Venice was on pilgrimage or business when the architecture of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher so profoundly impressed him. But we may surely surmise that, like other contemporary compatriots, he had traveled there on business, and seized the opportunity to satisfy his religious needs as well.[18] Willibald financed one portion of his epic pilgrimage by smuggling balsam from Jerusalem to Constantinople, and although his wares are unknown, Basil of Jerusalem was a sometime merchant, sometime pilgrim, as well as an ambassador. This was a more general problem: Charlemagne warned King Offa that he had discovered merchants – obviously Anglo-Saxons in this case – masquerading as pilgrims to Rome in order to evade Frankish tolls.[19] And do we really believe the ambassador Liudprand's protestations that the prohibited merchandise he was attempting to smuggle out of Constantinople was only intended as gifts to churches?[20] Pilgrims might sometimes be pressed into diplomatic efforts, as for example the two western abbots of the Frankish monastery on the Mount of Olives who came to the Carolingian court in the earlier ninth century.[21] Similarly, in 881, two western monks were recruited to represent the patriarch of Jerusalem among western courts and seek funds for the Christian church in the Holy Land (R684). In sum, although the evidence is incomparably richer for pilgrims and diplomats than for merchants, the connections and contacts among different types of travelers in the eighth and ninth century are real and revealing.

16 "Negotiatores," *Ann. regni Franc.* a. 809, p. 128.

17 R645. The connection between trade and diplomacy in the north is underscored by Charlemagne's decision to use the official in charge of tolls in the North Sea emporium of Quentovic as his ambassador to King Offa during a dispute: *Gesta Font.*, 12, 2, pp. 88–9; in 949, Otto I's ambassador to Constantine VII is explicitly identified as a merchant ("institorem ditissimum") from Mainz named Liutefred: Liudprand, *Antapodosis*, 6, 4, 154.1.

18 Pros. "Iohannes 14"; cf. Anons. 84–5.

19 Alcuin, *Ep.* 100, 145.16–20; cf. Dopsch 1921–2, 2: 194 with n3. In the same breath Louis II mentions pilgrims to Rome and merchants doing business in his kingdom as the principal targets of banditry in 850: *MGH Capit.* no. 213, 1, 2.86.

20 He also describes his purchases on an earlier embassy in an effort to defend his actions: *Legatio*, 53–5, 204.5–206.7.

21 Pros. "Egilbaldus" and "Dominicus 1."



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TABLE 9.10
Languages of sources documenting travelers

| Language | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Latin | 450 | 67 |
| Greek | 108 | 16 |
| Latin *and* Greek | 73 | 11 |
| Arabic | 12 | 2 |
| Old Church Slavonic | 6 | 1 |
| Old Church Slavonic *and* Latin | 6 | 1 |
| Old English *and* Latin | 5 | 1 |
| Hebrew | 5 | 1 |
| Georgian | 4 | 1 |
| Total | 669 | 100 |

If the first issue in this kind of work is to find new data about an old problem, the second must be to test the validity of the new data. The Latin sources are the most abundant and rewarding. That they account for two thirds of our knowledge of travelers raises the issue of whether, as an aggregate, the Latin evidence distorts the overall picture. In some way, if only by overemphasizing the numbers of westerners, this must be true. But as perusal of the bibliography will show, the range, number – over 100 – and variety of the Latin sources alone provide a first warrant against undue influence from patterns of source survival of one or another type of record.

Secondly, a third (219: 33 percent) of our travelers are or would be known quite independently of the Latin sources' survival. In fact, as Table 9.10 suggests, the very diverse origins and quantity of evidence that a prosopographical approach uncovers is another guaranty that, notwithstanding the social slant of sources, we are seeing patterns of reality, not patterns of recording. The travelers we have tracked are documented in the Latin, Greek, Arabic, Old English, Old Church Slavonic, Hebrew and Georgian sources, the conditions of whose composition and preservation are independent of one another. No single set of sources suggests patterns aberrant from the other or the whole. The western travelers are overwhelmingly but not exclusively documented in Latin sources. A significant share (56: 17 percent) occur uniquely or additionally in the other languages. Conversely, just over half of the eastern travelers (179: 53 percent) occur only in Latin sources, yet another reminder that Byzantinists neglect the western evidence at their peril. The 219 travelers who are attested outside the Latin sources supply that much evidence whose circumstances of survival are independent of those which determined the Latin sources' fate. But there is still



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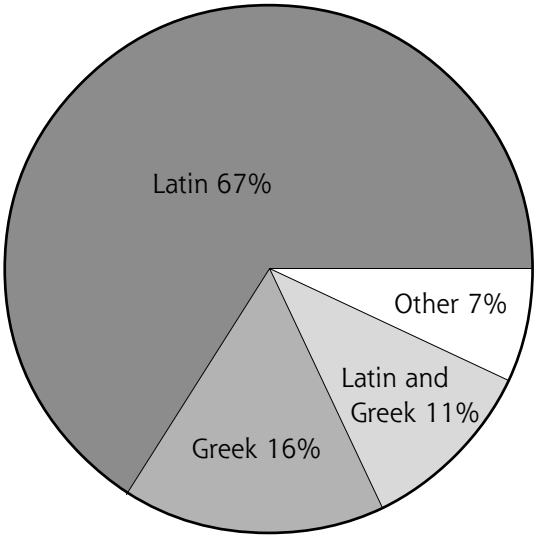
Chart 9.1. Languages attesting travelers




more, equally independent evidence that has rarely or never been systematically tapped for this question. Before we turn to analyzing the aggregate patterns into which the new material falls, let us expand the evidence further still to encompass data whose survival owes nothing to the hundreds of Greek, Latin, and other records. We can test the movement of persons by looking at the movement of things.



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# PART III
# THINGS THAT TRAVELED

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# *Part III: Things that traveled*

Studying people on the move in the early medieval Mediterranean has suggested certain patterns and even quantities of movement. In western Europe, communications seem to have been stirring anew after the long contraction that had culminated in the aftermath of the Justinianic plagues. That those movements concern 669 individuals and can be followed across source materials which are more or less independent strengthens the cumulative power of their testimony. But the method is novel, and the results may appear surprising.

The movement of *things* will add further, independent layers of evidence to the movement of people. A few of the relatively small number of objects that survive from the early Middle Ages have already been studied for the light they shed on patterns of movement and, it has been thought, patterns of trade. The most justifiably celebrated is the transition from papyrus to parchment in the Merovingian royal writing office (Ch. 3.1). Like some others, this one rewards further scrutiny (Ch. 24.2), particularly if we go beyond observing presence or absence to question the shifting cultural meaning of exotic objects, as well as the transport system which delivered it. Others still are pretty much neglected. Such survivors from the shipwreck of time testify to further series of long-distance movements in this era reputed so poor in source material. In circumstances of preservation, moreover, their testimony owes nothing to the evidence on the movements of people.

Of the different kinds of things that survive from the early medieval West, textiles, relics, and coins appear the most promising today. Perhaps archaeologists will add ceramics and glass tomorrow. Recent advances are clarifying and enhancing the testimony of textiles, particularly silk, but even in the most advanced work, the dating margins – usually 200 years – and places of origin (e.g. "eastern Mediterranean") are still so broad as to invite treatment apart (Ch. 24.5). Part III concentrates rather on two sorts of objects whose geography and chronology are less imprecise. Relics are among the best preserved and recorded objects that claim to have come to early medieval France from foreign climes. For reasons



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that have little to do with dispassionate scrutiny of the evidence, historians have studiously ignored their abundant and precise testimony on early medieval communications. Chapter 10 will capitalize on a detailed preliminary study of the formation of two of the greatest early medieval relic hoards. The one shortcoming of their chronology is that it is no more precise than palaeography can provide. But this disadvantage is compensated by the fact that their testimony reaches from the dying days of antiquity into the Carolingian age. They cast bright and unexpected light on changing trends in communications from late antiquity to the Middle Ages. Chapters 11 and 12 turn to a completely different kind of object and study the movement toward Carolingian Europe of coins minted in the House of Islam and in the Byzantine empire. Whatever one thinks of relics, there is no arguing about when and where these coins were struck. Together, relics and coins will take us another step toward understanding the patterns of communication that prevailed at the origins of Europe's commercial economy.



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# 10

# *Hagiographical horizons: collecting exotic relics in early medieval France*

## 1. The problem of early medieval relics

When . . . we saw the aforementioned churches [of the monastery of St. Riquier] established . . . we were fired by great desire and excessive ardor of love that . . . we might deserve to acquire a portion of the relics of the saints to adorn the same holy churches of God. Wherefore we have strained to labor with all our forces and all our mind, with the help of almighty God and the assistance of my glorious Lord, the great Emperor [Charles], so that from the various regions of the whole of Christendom we could deposit in this holy place as many [relics], of such kind and brought from such places as the following shows.

In the first place, [the relics] brought to us from the holy Roman church, given by the supreme pontiff Hadrian, of good memory, and after him, by the venerable Leo, Roman pope; from Constantinople and Jerusalem, by the ambassadors sent there by my Lord. And next [relics] sent to us from Italy, Germany, Aquitaine, Burgundy, and Gaul by the most holy Fathers, viz., Patriarchs, Archbishops, and Bishops and Abbots, as well as from the sacred Palace, which [relics] had been collected through the ages by kings, and thereafter especially by my aforesaid Lord. Thanks to his pious gift, we were entitled to get a portion of all of them and to deposit them in worthy fashion in this holy place. For those [relics] about which we are certain and have received documents (*breves*) from the aforementioned most holy men, we have not neglected to insert all these [relics'] names in this little work . . . But about the other relics received from the same holy fathers, whose identities (*nomina*) are doubtful (*incerta*) for us, we have written nothing.

Thus Angilbert, abbot of St. Riquier, Charlemagne's companion and de facto son-in-law, prefaced a catalogue of saints' relics. It figures prominently in the short work which describes his achievements in building his showplace of Carolingian monasticism.[1] The voice of a proud and careful administrator rings

1 On Angilbert, see Rabe 1995, esp. 51–4; on the new archaeological evidence for his extraordinary shrine: Bernard 1989. Angilbert's work is preserved in the *Chronicle* Hariulf compiled between 1088 and 1105. He made extensive and generally



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through this description of the process by which he built one of northern Europe's great hoards of sacred objects. As he recalls the relics he assembled, he reveals for us his not uncritical stance toward them, and how he separated the grain from the chaff. The two most important criteria are the region from which the relics came and the ecclesiastical – and social – status of the men in those regions who supplied the relics and supporting documentation (*breves*). Finally he checked the relics against what he knew, and rejected from his catalogue any relics whose identity still appeared suspect.[2]

Angilbert's relic hoard reflected the patterns of communications of his social world, the Carolingian court. His words reveal the utter seriousness with which he and his peers took the business of collecting relics. In part these precious objects came from the mortal remains of holy men and women. But no less important in the early medieval west, objects (*brandea*) like oil, wax, dust, or textiles which had been sanctified by contact with their tombs also counted as relics.[3] Angilbert's attitude appears to me not untypical for the Carolingian age; it suggests that the movements of relics might offer a profitable path to investigating communications. And not just communications: in this age, relics blended into commercial wares that were imported and sold for profit.[4]

Do we dare take early medieval religion seriously? John Calvin's sarcasm still stings some ears.[5] The cult of the saints is the most abundantly documented facet of early medieval civilization, and its literary manifestations have been the subject of critical study since the seventeenth century. Two things make the study of relics inviting for the historian of communications. The first is that they exist. Because relic collections were among the most jealously guarded possessions of medieval

Footnote 1 (*cont.*)
excellent use of the abbey's own sources, transcribing several key documents *in extenso*: see McCormick 1979, 116–18. The quote is from Hariulf, *Chronicon centulense*, 2, 9, pp. 61–2, of which the final words run: "... Sed de his, de quibus certi sumus, et a predictis sanctissimis viris breves recepimus, omnium illarum nomina in hoc opusculo inserere non negleximus ... De ceteris vero reliquiis, de quibus nobis incerta sunt nomina, ab eisdem sanctis patribus receptis, minime scripsimus."

2 Angilbert's scruples about relics with *incerta nomina* reveal how the royal court expected prelates to carry out the provision of the *Admonitio generalis* of 789, c. 42, derived from earlier canonical legislation: "... ut falsa *nomina* martyrum et *incertae* sanctorum *memoriae* non venerentur," *MGH Capit.* no. 22, 42, 1.56.34–5. See in general, Hermann-Mascard 1975, 84–7.

3 On the varieties of relics in the early Middle Ages, see Heinzelmann 1979, 20–3 and, in general, Angenendt 1994. For a useful survey of the earlier literature, see Guth 1970, 1–8.

4 Thus Felix, who traveled around the Carolingian empire stealing relics, "for profit" ("questus causa"): Liutolf, *Vita et translatio S. Severi* (*BHL* 7681–2), 1, *MGH SS* 15.1.292.1–3; cf. in general Silvestre 1952 and Geary 1990, 44–55.

5 Dubois and Lemaître 1993, 258–9. Calvin, Luther and, for that matter, Mabillon were nonetheless developing a critical tradition that originated in the Middle Ages: Schreiner 1966, 33–53.



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churches, those which managed to escape the furies of the Reformation and the French Revolution survive in remarkable numbers.[6] Once the heydays of cult and condemnation had passed, moreover, these artifacts benefited from a measure of benign neglect. Since the late nineteenth century they have begun to reemerge, draped in documents of astonishing antiquity. The second advantage stems from the intimate link between the cult of saints and particular places. A saint's cult centered first and foremost on the tomb, and the places he or she frequented.

A very large number of relics have survived. At least three major early medieval collections have come to us more or less intact, and many more individual relics are known from even minor churches around Europe. New ones emerge almost every year. They number at least in the hundreds and probably more, if we include objects like the Holy Land flasks (*ampullae*) of late antiquity, some of which still lie in the shrines where they were deposited over 1,000 years ago.[7] Aside from professional hagiographers, these discoveries have most interested palaeographers and art historians. Relics are often accompanied by "authentics" (Lat. *authenticum*), tiny documents which identify them. The tags are often of high antiquity and display scripts which are extremely rare. The relics themselves are often wrapped in precious silken containers, some of which go back to the Roman empire, and many others to the days of Dagobert and Charlemagne. And the containers constructed to house relics rank among the masterpieces of medieval art.[8]

Two of the three greatest early medieval relic hoards have been adequately published.[9] In 1900, Maurice Prou and Eugène Chartraire edited 160 medieval

6 Angenendt 1994, 237–41 and 271–3; Dubois and Lemaître 1993, 311. See in general Heinzelmann 1979 and Herrmann-Mascard 1975; for one distinguished scholar who took them seriously in our period, see Levison 1946, 33 and 36–8; cf. more recently, precisely for the authentics of Holy Land relics from early medieval Gaul, Hen 1995, 57–8, who assumes that they are evidence of trips.

7 Grabar 1958; Weitzmann 1974.

8 See already *Inscriptions chrétiennes*, 1.311–12, no. 215; Delisle 1884. For a good overview and bibliography, Dubois and Lemaître 1993, 262–5. On reliquaries, see e.g., *ibid.*, 292–305.

9 The third, a large collection housed in the chapel of the Sancta sanctorum inside the papal palace of the Lateran is the most tantalizing and the least well known. Pope Leo III commissioned the cabinet in which it is still housed, apparently for this purpose. The collection seems to contain a large number of relics and authentics, of which some certainly date back to the 8th C. Papyrus, Syriac, and Greek documents have all been reliably reported there, as well as tags assigned to Carolingian times. Because of woefully inadequate publication, however, only a small portion of its materials are available for study. The best accounts are the competing and equally unsatisfactory works of Lauer 1906 and Grisar 1907. Previously published authentics were republished by A. Petrucci and J. O. Tjäder in *ChLA* 22, nos. 725–6 and 728. *ChLA* 22, vi, announced their future publication by the late Mgr. José Ruysschaert and Jean Vezin.



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authentics preserved at Sens. Prou published sixteen more tags in 1904. In 1987, Hartmut Atsma and Jean Vezin republished the earliest tags and added thirty-eight further documents. For the whole Middle Ages at Sens, a total of 215 authentics document some 470 relics.[10] In 1983, at the instigation of Jean-Pierre Laporte, an indefatigable investigator of the history of the small French town of Chelles, east of Paris, the reliquaries preserved in the parish church were opened with the approval of the ecclesiastical authorities. Inside lay one of the most notable early medieval finds of this century: a collection of relics wrapped in early and precious textiles and labeled with authentics dating from the seventh century onward. Stunningly, they vindicated one of the late Bernhard Bischoff's most brilliant palaeographical hypotheses. With truly remarkable speed, Atsma and Vezin published facsimiles, datings and transcriptions of the tags older than c. 800.[11] The Chelles find yielded at least 150 medieval relic tags which document some 175 relics.

Between them, Sens and Chelles supply evidence on nearly 700 relics. Many of the labels that authenticate them were already old when Charles the Great died. A detailed study of the authentics and the light they cast on the growth of two early medieval relic hoards will be published elsewhere. The conclusions of that study will inform our appraisal of the abundant evidence these two hoards supply on the process, results, and geographic implications of early medieval relic collecting (Map 10.1).[12]

10 Prou and Chartraire 1900, 129–31; Prou 1904, pl. V; *ChLA* 19, p. 40. The plates published in Prou and Chartraire 1900 are superior to the extremely expensive ones published in 1987.

11 *ChLA* 18, no. 669; cf. the account and additional tags published by Laporte 1988. Script of Chelles: Bischoff 1966–81, 1: 16–34. McKitterick 1992, 6, has directly challenged this identification, arguing instead that the handwriting came from Jouarre and that Bischoff himself "reserved judgement" (citing 1966–81, 1: 31–2). My opinion differs from that of my learned colleague on both issues. Furthermore, as she herself admits (11), the new hypothesis requires the additional hypothesis that the Chelles nuns who wrote the authentics had learned to write at Jouarre or that the relics themselves were gifts from Jouarre to Chelles.

12 We may hope that if and when the Lateran collection is published, its testimony will deepen and correct the conclusions derived from the two great French collections. I know of about one hundred other published relics from the early Middle Ages scattered over more than a dozen collections. There are surely more to be found. Thanks to the *ChLA*, which concentrates on documents written before 800, the earliest tags are the best known; there are presumably a fair number of slightly later tags awaiting investigation. My research indicates that, much like coin hoards, each collection of relics presents its own specific physiognomy. It seemed therefore wiser to found this first approach on an exhaustive study of the two most important and securely published collections. In addition to the early medieval authentics listed in Dubois and Lemaître 1993, 264–5, see Austria: Feldkirch, Diözesanarchiv, s.n. (*olim* Röns), *ChLA* no. 1240; Germany: Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, 1991a, 1–5, *ChLA* no. 508, 12; Säckingen, Fridolinsmünster, Münsterschatz, *ChLA* no. 548. Italy: Vatican City, B. Apost., pap.



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But do we dare to use the relics, or more exactly, the ancient tags that accompany them? We are not interested here in what the relics *are*, only in where they came from. The tags identify the saints or, occasionally, holy places from which the relic was supposed to have come, and so point to distant places. Like every kind of evidence, they have their difficulties and peculiarities that affect interpretation. Detailed study of the authentics has clarified much of what the tags are capable of teaching us; it has also identified some of the pitfalls. It has proved possible to discern chronological layers in the growth of these hoards and to distinguish four different levels of certainty in identifying the cult center implied by the tags. The technical palaeographical, codicological, and hagiographic research on which the following account is founded proved lengthy, complex, and rewarding. In what follows I have summarized the results of those analyses.[13]

In the first place, since most saints' cults are localized to the place of their tomb, the presence of relics attributed to a particular saint tells us that communications existed with that place when the relic was acquired. Even if a relic were a fraud, it had to be a plausible one. Documented false relics in the early Middle Ages prove exactly that: whatever the relic in question was, the purveyor came from the place where the cult was centered.[14] The same holds true for relics whose fraudulent character, though entirely plausible, is not completely certain. For instance, the deacon Deusdona of Rome and his associates, whose thinly disguised sales of Roman relics to various Frankish leaders led one scholar to identify him as "the head of a large and highly organized group of merchants," certainly based his operations in Rome.[15] So too did the professional relic thief and merchant, the

lat. 27 and 28 (*ChLA* no. 726, 7); Vat. lat. 10696, *ChLA* no. 728; Rome, Chiesa di S. Agata dei Goti (*ChLA* no. 729); Cantù (prov. Como), Chiesa prepositurale di S. Paolo, *ChLA* no. 862; Monza, Cattedrale, Sacristia, *ChLA* no. 863.

13 For further details, see my forthcoming study of the formation of these two early medieval relic hoards: McCormick, "Relics."

14 A few examples: Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 9, 6, 1.418.2–420.6: a con man with Spanish relics turned out to be a bishop's runaway servant from the Pyrenees; Gregory I, *Registrum*, 4, 30, 1.249.48–53, about Greek monks who were apprehended removing bodies from a Roman cemetery c. 592 in order to export them to the East as martyrs. Things were little different under the Carolingians. Amulo of Lyons, *Ep.* 1, 1, ed. E. Dümmler, *MGH Epist.* 5.363.11–363.18, attacks the relics brought to Dijon from Italy or Rome by two individuals who claimed to be monks but who had forgotten the name of the saint. Amulo manifestly considers this a case of fraud for profit (cf. 5, 366.1–10), but he does not directly challenge the travelers' claim to have come from Italy. Whether or not someone had actually been to Italy, or indeed, was Italian, must have been easily verifiable in the 840s, given the Frankish elite's frequent travel across the Alps.

15 E.g. Einhard, *Translatio Marcellini et Petri* (*BHL* 5233), 1, 5, 241.55–242.27; Rudolf, *Miracula sanctorum in Fuldenses ecclesias translatorum* (*BHL* 7044), 2 and 9, ed. *MGH SS* 15.1.330.37–44; 336.5–10. Quote from Geary 1990, 45.



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French cleric Felix, who claimed to supply relics of St. Severus of Ravenna in 836. Whether or not the relics were what he claimed, the fact that they – and Felix – had to be smuggled out of Italy hidden among an imperial envoy's followers suggests that a theft had actually occurred. Moreover, we can track the movements of Felix and the relics from Pavia to Mainz.[16] Finally, Constantine and Methodius had certainly been to the Crimea. From there they carried all the way to Rome what they thought were the relics of Pope Clement.[17] Whenever we can check, in other words, we find that the people who "translated" relics had been to the regions from which the relics came, whatever the relics really were.

In the second place, the handwritings on the tags breed confidence. Some tags were written up at the place where the relics were deposited, as we shall see. But in most cases, the hands that wrote these tiny monuments occur only once, testifying to a piece by piece process of relic collecting; palaeography ascertains the approximate dates of many tags, and the chronology itself tells an interesting tale. Then there are the tags whose geography leaps out at us. Sometimes, a single tag in a single handwriting lists different relics associated with several different shrines; in others a few different tags were written for a few different relics by the same hand. When one plots the shrines for such tags on a map, the pattern that emerges looks like an itinerary. Even if one's prejudices insist that these too must be fakes, they had to be plausible itineraries at the time that they were written.

But the most remarkable confirmation of the little documents' testimony on communications comes from the few places whose local handwritings palaeographers happen to know. For instance, a tag claiming to identify hair from the beard of St. Boniface was written in an Anglo-Saxon handwriting shortly after his death (Figure 10.1). This just happens to be the script taught in Germany at the monastery of Fulda where Boniface was buried. Another authentic identifies a relic of St. Emmeram in a distinctively different English script such as was then used in the cathedral scriptorium of Regensburg. This is where Emmeram's tomb is.[18] A third example occurs in an eighth-century tag that accompanied a relic of Pope Gregory the Great. The hand that wrote this authentic seems to have used a highly specialized and unusual script, the "curialis" of the papal administration.[19] Whether or not the relic in question was

16 Liutolf, *V. et transl. Severi*, 1–3, *MGH SS* 15.1.292.1–36.

17 Ch. 7.2; see in general Heinzelmann 1979.

18 St. Boniface: *ChLA* no. 669, 23; for a similar Fulda hand, see von Heinemann 1884, 377 with plate, and Spilling 1978, 48–66; cf. Laporte 1988, 124 and 121, Fig. 29-B, no. 23, respectively. St. Emmeram: *ChLA* no. 669, 50. This expert hand in pointed minuscule is unmistakably different from the script of Chelles. It shows Anglo-Saxon influence and its form suggests that it belongs in the circle of script development in the episcopal writing center at Regensburg which Bischoff 1960–81, 1: 173, places around 770–90.

19 Although the plate is of poor quality, the distinctive ꝺ– shaped "a" which



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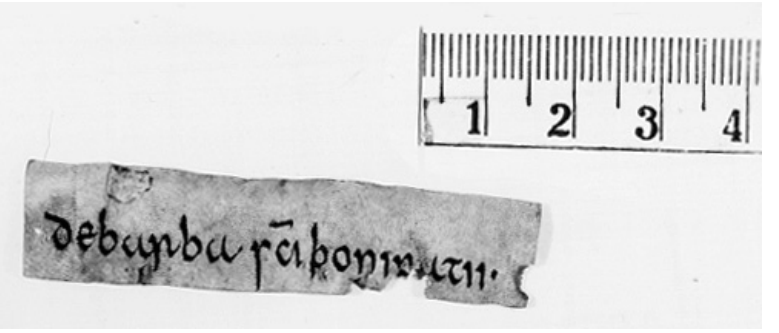


Figure 10.1. "From the beard of St. Boniface." This authentic, discovered at Chelles in 1983, identified a relic of St. Boniface. The handwriting is the distinctive Anglo-Saxon script used by the monks of Fulda. It proves that someone from the shrine where St. Boniface is buried wrote this tag in the decades following the saint's martyrdom. Cf. *ChLA* no. 669, 23. Courtesy of Hartmut Atsma.

really a memento of Pope Gregory, the person who tagged it probably came from the institution that controlled his tomb, over 1,000 km from Sens. We know so little about local scripts in the seventh and eighth century that even three examples which can be pinned down to these three tombs speak volumes.[20]

Classifying the tags into homogenous groups on the basis of their handwriting and physical characteristics was only the first step. Exploiting them for their testimony on real or imagined communications posed another methodological challenge: identifying the shrine to which the authentics point. Here discretion is the better part of valor. Sometimes one can identify the main shrine of a cult with near certainty. At other times cults flourished in so many different centers that the relic name alone does not allow attribution to a particular shrine; there also are homonymous saints. Even so, the handwriting or other relics acquired at the same time sometimes specify the cult center to which the relic probably refers. Overall, it proved possible to distinguish four descending levels of probability with which a specific saint and cult center can be identified. "Level one" identification means that, for all practical purposes, we can identify one main saint and one shrine with the item mentioned on the tag. "Level two" identifications belong very probably to one of two (occasionally three) alternative saints or differing shrines of the same saint, but among which the evidence is insufficient to choose. "Level three" covers tags which probably refer to a particular shrine, but for which other, less likely alternatives can be imagined. "Level four" authentics

exemplifies the script used by the papal court seems clear: *ChLA* no. 682, 37; cf. Rabikauskas 1958, 136–7.

20 For still more examples, see McCormick, "Relics."



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yield no reliable identification, usually because the tag is illegible, the saint is unknown, or because there are too many plausible identifications.[21]

My analysis of the patterns of communication implied by cult geography relies first and foremost on level one; level two identifications can also be useful, since some of them involve alternative saints and shrines located in the same general region. Level three identifications are interesting chiefly insofar as they reinforce or contradict patterns suggested by the first two, and I have been careful to keep their testimony separate. Level four identifications are left aside. In practical terms, this reduces the number of usable early medieval relics from 535 to about 315. In this first experiment with new evidence, it is better to work with fewer but more certain data.

At the least, the tiny tags should indicate from what sort of places people thought the travelers who brought them relics were coming. As it happens, Chelles and Sens are less than 100 km apart as the crow flies. They both belonged to the ecclesiastical province of Sens, and both stood by tributaries of the Seine river system. We therefore have a lot of potential evidence about the communications world in which one particular region of Gaul nestled. I shall analyze the hoards separately, paying careful heed to the changing geographic data implied by the relics, before combining their testimony to discern the broader temporal and spatial patterns into which these 315 real or putative communications fall over three hundred years. The result will be successive chronological snapshots of the geographic range of communications that reached central Gaul.

## 2. Collecting relics at Sens

An extraordinary number of different hands wrote most of the authentics preserved today at Sens; 144 relic tags were written between the seventh century and

21 For the detailed hagiographical research on which these determinations are based, see McCormick, "Relics." Another complication comes from possible intermediary stops or cult centers for certain relics, en route to the shrine where the relic (or rather, its tag) is now preserved. This affects the chronology of acquisition, however, more than the geography: see for example, below on the relics from St. Riquier and the Carolingian court. In general, my classification places the relics for which we know important secondary cult centers – a good example would be the rarer relics of Christ's passion, with main cult centers at Jerusalem and Constantinople – at identification level two, and more problematic cases in levels three and four, depending on the specifics of each relic's history. It does not entirely eliminate the problem of minor intermediaries in the travel of relics from main cult centers to places of deposit but, in the present state of research, that is the best we can attain. Although such things doubtless happened, there is no reason to believe that they are prevalent among identifications of level one.



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c. 1000. Close palaeographical study has revealed one large and very ancient group of twenty-nine tags in identical or very closely linked hands. Its antiquity merits the name the "Merovingian group." Beyond this group, only another seven or eight sets of tags were written by the same seven or eight hands. In practical terms, this means unified campaigns of labeling at Sens affect at most thirty-seven out of some 140 tags.[22] Differently put, around 100 different hands labeled relics preserved at Sens during the hoard's principal phase of formation, between roughly 600 and 1000. Most of these hands were active in the eighth and ninth centuries so that, aside from the Merovingian group, the hoard grew in very small increments. This palaeographical observation contradicts the conventional wisdom about the Sens treasure.

Two myths have muddied its history. It is generally believed that most of the Sens relics were not originally collected in that see. They supposedly entered its possession only in the ninth century, in two stages.[23] In fact, while there is a kernel of truth to the stories that the Sens relics came there only in the ninth century, they are gross exaggerations. Charlemagne's very large gift of relics to the archbishop of Sens is probably a late twelfth-century embellishment.[24] Two more modest, but real, royal Carolingian presents probably inspired the story in twelfth-century minds impressed in just those years with Charlemagne's soaring prestige.[25] *Some* relics probably reached Sens as gifts of Carolingian kings, but by no means most.

The second myth stems from a late eleventh-century chronicler. Intent on the lost glories of his abbey of St. Riquier, he claims that a renegade treasurer removed most of the relics which, as we have read, Angilbert had assembled there. The treasurer supposedly deposited them at Sens, where he became archbishop.[26] In fact, the identification of the treasurer with a homonymous archbishop is well

22 Although further research may turn up one or another palaeographical group in the remaining hundred odd tags, it is unlikely that any such groups will include more than two or three tags, and so contradict the basic pattern observed here.

23 See in general Prou and Chartraire 1900, 131 and 133–4; H. Leclercq, "Sens," *DACL* 15.1 (Paris, 1950): 1204–51, here 1243–4. In a larger sense, of course, whether or not the relics spent a generation at Charlemagne's court or at St. Riquier before coming to rest at Sens makes little difference. What counts for Carolingian communications with the Mediterranean world is that they were in Frankland.

24 Some of the relics documented in the 1192 inventory and thereby assigned to Charlemagne's gift almost certainly reached Sens much later in the 9th C. See McCormick, "Relics," on Prou and Chartraire 1900, 146, 21 (such references to this study identify the page and reproduction number), and the 1192 list.

25 9th-C. authentics that attest to royal provenances, although they make no explicit reference to Charlemagne: Prou and Chartraire 1900, 143, 10 and 158, 112, for a total of 13 relics. On the 12th-C. development, see McCormick, "Relics."

26 Hariulf, *Chronicon centulense*, 3, 20, pp. 141–2.



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known to be false, and comparison of Angilbert's detailed relic inventories with the Sens materials yields a different conclusion. Of the 179 St. Riquier relics documented by Hariulf, nearly half (82: 46 percent) have no possible correspondent in the published authentics of Sens cathedral. If the bulk of St. Riquier's relics were in fact transferred to Sens, they have been lost. Most of the remaining saints whose names recur in both places are, moreover, of such celebrity, if not to say banality, that they shed no clear light on possible connections between the two hoards.[27]

That leaves only a few relics that came to Sens in the ninth century from the hoards of sacred objects amassed at St. Riquier and the royal court. Nothing militates against the obvious assumption that most of the other relics were originally collected where their documents now survive, at Sens. Positive evidence reinforces that assumption, in the form of the prominence of key Senonais saints, and collecting patterns that reflect the personalities of two eighth-century archbishops.[28]

## *Changing geographic patterns*

The 144 early medieval authentics at Sens document a total of some 350 relics.[29] Palaeographical analysis of these 144 documents yields the chronological breakdown shown in Table 10.1. If the authentics approximate the overall pace of relic collecting at Sens, the eighth and ninth centuries were the most dynamic phase in the early Middle Ages. Detailed hagiographic research identifies 233 relics (i.e. some two thirds) from before 1100 whose main shrine can be identified at level one in my scale of probability.[30]

27 Cf. Prou and Chartraire 1900, 134, 5. See McCormick, "Relics," for details. Close scrutiny uncovers only three plausible cases in which relics mentioned by Angilbert could be identified with authentics preserved at Sens: cf. *ChLA* no. 682, 3 and Angilbert, *apud* Hariulf, *Chron. centul.*, 2, 9, p. 63: "De pane illo unde distribuit discipulis"; *ChLA* no. 682, 92 (with Prou and Chartraire 1900, 165, 152) and Angilbert's "De cippo in quo missus fuit," Hariulf, 2, 9, p. 64. One further instance may be St. Vigilius, *ChLA* no. 682, 90 and Hariulf, 2, 9, p. 65. My opinion differs from that of Prou and Chartraire 1900, 147, 28 about the relic of St. Andrew. For other traces of the influx of Centula relics in the Sens inventory of 1192, and St. Andrew, see McCormick, "Relics."

28 See McCormick, "Relics" on the authentics for Sts. Columba and Lupus of Sens (*ChLA* no. 682, 26 and 51) in the Merovingian group, and on archbishops Wilcharius and Beornrad.

29 It is sometimes unclear how many relics an authentic was meant to document; as elsewhere in this study, I have tried to err on the side of undercounting.

30 See above for the differing levels of probability of hagiographical identifications. Virtually every tag, if not to say every relic, required substantial research and it was impossible to publish even a summary account for each of the 500 relics considered here. The reader will find the details in my forthcoming study.



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TABLE 10.1
Sens: date of scripts of authentics

| Century | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 7th/8th | 34 | 24 |
| 8th | 39 | 27 |
| 9th | 46 | 32 |
| 10th | 17 | 12 |
| 10th/11th | 8 | 6 |
| Total | 144[a] | 100 |

*Notes:*

[a] Except for the groups "7th/8th C." (which I have up to this point kept separate, so as not to risk exaggerating the Carolingian period) and "10th/11th C.," all datings which span two centuries have been assigned to the later century. The datings include my personal revisions, as follows (using the standard palaeographer's Latin abbreviations for centuries, their halves, or "early" or "late" (e.g., s. viii$^{in}$ or viii$^{ex}$): *ChLA* no. 682, 9, saeculum (hereafter "s.") viii; 682, 14, s. vii–viii; 682, 16, s. viii; 682, 40, s. viii–ix; 682, 53, s. viii; 682, 69, s. viii; Prou and Chartraire 1900, 142, 3, s. ix$^{2}$; 143, 9 and 10, 144, 13 and 17, s. ix; 149, 42 and 45, s. ix$^{2}$–x$^{1}$; 150, 48, s. ix; 152, 70, s. ix$^{2}$–x$^{1}$; 156, 90, s. ix$^{1}$; 158, 112, s. ix; 159, 118, s. ix; 164, 145, s. ix$^{2}$–x$^{1}$. Most of the revisions of the earliest tags arise from the detection of homogenous groups unnoticed by previous palaeographers. Revisions of Prou's datings reflect the better understanding of Carolingian minuscule created by Bernhard Bischoff. As far as the totals are concerned, Prou and Chartraire 1900, 164, 147, is manifestly not an authentic and not included here, and 165, 149, undated but identified as "Merovingian cursive" and "semi-uncial," have left no traces in *ChLA* no. 682. Prou and Chartraire gave no plates, and I have therefore erred on the side of inclusiveness in their dates. For more details of the principal groups and revised datings, see McCormick, "Relics."

Cults associated with shrines of Gaul supply the lion's share. Italy, including Rome, looms large. This reflects the Franks' well-known devotion to the church of Rome, reinforced by pilgrimage and constant ritual borrowings, as well as the prominence of early Roman saints in the liturgical pantheon.[31] Africa and Spain enjoy only a small share. The total representation of the eastern Mediterranean is surprising. Taken together, Byzantium (in this case, the territories that remained after the Arab conquest), Egypt, and the Holy Land come in second only to Gaul itself. Pilgrimage to the holy places comes immediately to mind, but one would

31 On the Roman saints in the medieval *sanctorale*, Philippart 1977, 33–44.



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TABLE 10.2
Sens: regions represented by relics in the early Middle Ages (identification level one)

| Region | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Gaul | 110 | 47.0 |
| Italy (Rome) | 60 (47) | 26.0 (21) |
| Holy Land | 31 | 13.0 |
| Byzantium | 18 | 8.0 |
| Egypt | 7 | 3.0 |
| Spain | 3 | 1.0 |
| England | 2 | 1.0 |
| Africa | 1 | 0.4 |
| Total | 232 | 100 |

not expect communications with the Levant to outstrip those with the much closer Rome. It seems particularly incongruous compared with the received wisdom about the state of Mediterranean communications between the seventh century and the year 1000. But collapsing several centuries blurs change. A detailed study of the formation of this relic hoard has uncovered chronological layers in the developing geography of relic collecting.[32]

The most ancient layer in this great hoard *ends* in the late seventh century. A cursive script datable to then, physical format, and formulas demarcate a group of twenty-nine most ancient authentics. The unity of writing and format mean that one or more persons drew up these twenty-nine tags at about the same time, and in the same place. Nearly half of the tags comprise some of the longest such lists to have survived at Sens and Chelles. Furthermore, they seem to copy earlier records.[33] Combined with the large number of relics described (some 140), this shows us something new: this group resulted from inspecting and reorganizing a large relic collection which may already have been old in the seventh century. The appearance of two saints who died at that time joins with the handwriting to date the inventorying c. 680 or shortly thereafter. This "Merovingian group" of twenty-nine authentics offers us a retrospective inventory of the relics which had *already been assembled* by the end of the seventh century. Since Sens enjoyed a particularly undisturbed history stretching back to the days of Roman Gaul, and

32 See McCormick, "Relics."

33 At least one transcription error is made, and some of the multiple tags reveal sub-groups of internally consistent sets of relics.



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since these relics were already on the scene when the present tags were written, we are probably looking back further than anyone has previously imagined.

How far back is unclear. The most recent cults document some seven to ten saints of the seventh century; the latest died in 678.[34] Far more (some fifty) of the names were famous enough in the sixth century to figure prominently in the hagiographical works of Gregory of Tours. Many, of course, were great saints like Peter and Paul or Cosmas and Damian, whose enduring celebrity makes their presence at Sens less revealing. Some, however, are considerably more local, if not to say obscure.[35] Most remarkably, a few essentially vanish from the hagiographical horizon after Gregory's time.[36] In fact, some of the most archaic-sounding saints are simply unknown.[37] It is telling – and fine tribute to the flair of Louis Duchesne – that one unexpectedly confirms a century-old hypothesis on the true identity of the exceedingly obscure St. Cessator of Limoges.[38] Taken together, the overlap with Gregory of Tours, a case like Cessator, and, as we shall see, the heavy presence of easterners of whom we will hear little in later centuries, make it clear that we are seeing back beyond the late seventh century.

The assembly of this relic hoard had begun in a time when collecting focused naturally on the local traditions of Gaul itself and on the metropolis of martyrs, Rome. But it was a time when the Christian East, Africa, and Spain still helped shape the geography of sanctity. Within the Merovingian group, the region of the main shrine can be identified very probably for eighty-nine relics (Table 10.3). Cults from the southern and eastern Mediterranean are particularly interesting for the history of communications, as a more localized geographic breakdown suggests (Table 10.4).[39] That Byzantium outstrips the Holy Land suggests that biblical geography did not drive relic associations in this most ancient trove. Let us also note in passing the absence of Anglo-Saxon saints in the heroic age of the English

34 Certainly 7th-C.: Gaugericus (d. 623/7), Anastasius (d. 628), Ansaricus (d. 652), Eligius (d. 659), Praeiectus and Amarinus (d. 676), Leodegarius (d. 678), *ChLA* nos. 682, 46, 52, 46, 22, 74, 50 (cf. 74), respectively. Possible cases: Desiderius (d. 655), Martinus (d. 655), Sulpicius (d. 646), *ChLA* nos. 682, 19, 38, 74. See McCormick, "Relics."

35 E.g., Lupus of Troyes, Memmius of Chalons, Ferreolus, Romanus of Blaye, Benignus of Dijon, *ChLA* nos. 682, 14, 19, 33–5, respectively. See McCormick, "Relics," for further details.

36 E.g., Abraham of Clermont and Nicetius of Trier, *ChLA* nos. 682, 29 and 63.

37 Bishop Coprosedus, Elizabeth martyr: *ChLA* no. 682, 34; and perhaps the 1030 martyrs: *ChLA* no. 682, 24.

38 *ChLA* no. 682, 34 confirms Duchesne's surmise that the later medieval episcopal lists of Limoges unduly incorporated an obscure local holy man to flesh out their earlier gaps: Duchesne 1894–1915, 2: 49.

39 This comes from eighty-four relics, that is, without the five level two relics which could be assigned to two different regions of the eastern Mediterranean, and therefore must be excluded from the following table. Cf. above, preceding n.



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TABLE 10.3
Sens: regions of cults, Merovingian group (identification levels one and two)[a]

| Region | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Gaul | 42 | 47 |
| Italy | 18 | 20 |
| Eastern Mediterranean[b] | 25 | 28 |
| Western Mediterranean[c] | 4 | 4 |
| Total | 89 | 100 |

*Notes:*

[a] This group consists of seventy-eight relics whose saint can be identified at probability level one, and five relics of level two for which all possible alternatives are still in the same region (Gaul). The latter are: Sts. Desiderius, Nicetius, Ferreolus, Paternus, Nicasius, *ChLA* nos. 682, 19, 25, 33, 52, and 63. To these can be added five more relics of level two, whose alternative identifications lie in the eastern Mediterranean, and one more relic whose alternative locations c. 680–90 lay in the western Mediterranean, in the Byzantine province of Africa (i.e. Africa or Sardinia) for a total of eighty-nine relics. They are Symeon, Anthony (both *ChLA* no. 682, 7), two relics of Christ (*ChLA* nos. 682, 17 and 74), one of St. James (*ChLA* no. 682, 63), and St. Augustine of Hippo (*ChLA* no. 682, 14).

[b] Egypt, Holy Land, Constantinople and Asia Minor.

[c] Spain, Africa.

TABLE 10.4
Sens: Mediterranean cults, Merovingian group

| Region | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| (Gaul + Italy | 60 | 71) |
| Constantinople and Asia Minor | 9 | 11 |
| Holy Land | 7 | 8 |
| Egypt | 4 | 5 |
| Spain | 2 | 2 |
| Africa and/or Sardinia | 2 | 2 |
| Total | 84 | 100 |



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conversion. They make their appearance at Chelles and Sens only when the communications link between Gaul and England strengthens, in the later eighth century. The details of the foreign saints add further precision to this picture.

The Mediterranean relic cults which reached Sens sometime before the late seventh-century inventory evoke an archaic era. In this they confirm the comparison with Gregory of Tours. A few Spanish relics in a western Gallic collection are perhaps unsurprising, but it is worth noting that the Frankish king had obtained a relic of St. Vincentius of Saragossa, apparently in 541.[40] Augustine and Cyprian point to the Byzantine province of Africa.[41] Some more ambiguous relics hint of an even greater African presence in the Merovingian group.[42] These African echoes could well reach back to patterns of communications in a more peaceful period when, as we have seen, African cargoes routinely landed at Marseilles.

A closer look at cults connected with the eastern Mediterranean increases these hints of an ancient communications world. Naturally, the Holy Land is well represented in this very early stage of relic collecting. But its relative modesty among eastern Mediterranean shrines as a whole is striking. That contrasts sharply with later phases of collecting, when biblical relics and the Holy Land will predominate among eastern Mediterranean associations. At Merovingian Sens, mementos associated with Constantinople and Asia Minor actually outnumber items which evoke the land of the Bible. Even one of the Holy Land relics – St. Procopius of Caesarea – has nothing to do with the Bible, and everything to do with a leading port of Palestine.

There is more to what Table 10.5 tells us. Compared with the other, later relic acquisitions, Constantinople occupies a smaller place in this most ancient group, while the towns of Asia Minor loom much larger. This geographic distribution echoes an era before the withering of eastern Mediterranean urban life in the seventh century (see Chapter 2). Places like Euchaita (mod. Avkat), Caesarea in Cappadocia, Smyrna, even Chios fade from the historical and archaeological record in late antiquity.[43] Ephesus has illustrated in textbook fashion the process of decline, although special circumstances sustained or revived it in the eighth

40 Sens, however, had a relic of two of the Saragossa martyrs: Sts. Fronto and Vincentius: *ChLA* no. 682, 52. On the royal relic, see for example Van Dam 1993, 24–5.

41 *ChLA* nos. 682, 14 and 46. Augustine's relics apparently accompanied the evacuation of the imperial province of Africa to Sardinia during the Arab conquest: below, p. 508 and R100.

42 The damaged tag *ChLA* no. 682, 63, whose St. Pran<catus> appears to be an African variant on Pancratius, and who might be a different saint from the Roman Pancratius; St. Victorian, *ChLA* no. 682, 52, whose most likely candidates are a Spanish abbot and an African martyred by the Vandals. Three other possible African connections appear among the alternative identifications: Sts. Pantaleon, Lucius and Julia, *ChLA* nos. 682, 33, 45, and 63. For more details, see McCormick, "Relics."

43 See the relevant articles in *ODB*; on Euchaita in the 8th C., see nonetheless below, n81.



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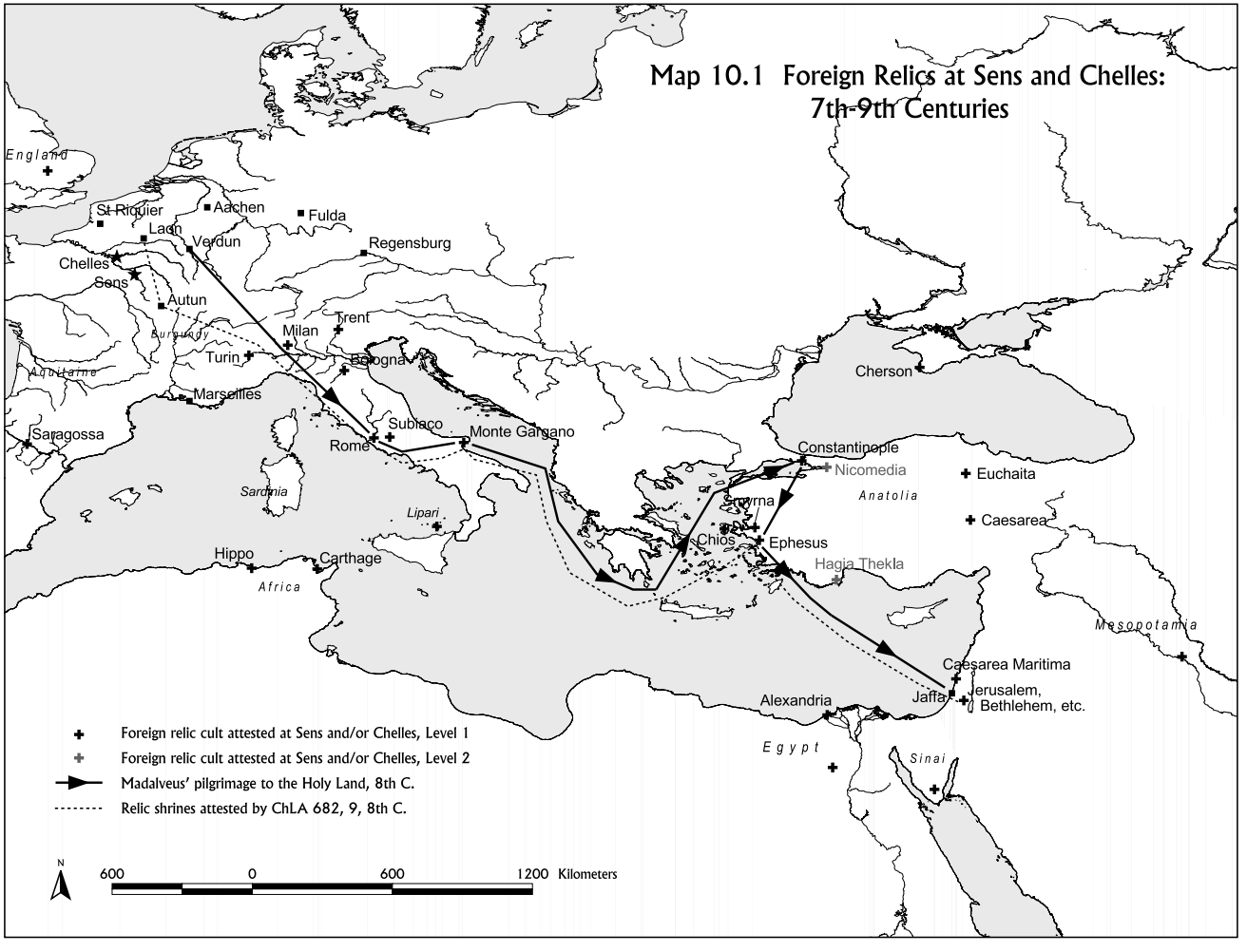


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TABLE 10.5
Sens: geography of eastern relics, Merovingian group

| Place | Relic | *ChLA* |
|---|---|---|
| Constantinople and Asia Minor | | |
| Constantinople | Andrew | 682, 17 |
| Constantinople | Virgin | 682, 28 |
| Constantinople | Luke | 682, 52 |
| Caesarea (Cappadocia) | Basil | 682, 34 |
| Chios | Isidore | 682, 46 |
| Ephesus | John Evangelist | 682, 43 |
| Euchaita | Theodore | 682, 7 |
| Smyrna | Polycarp | 682, 35 |
| Holy Land | | |
| Bethlehem | Lord's cradle | 682, 7 |
| Bethlehem | Jerome | 682, 7 |
| Bethlehem | "piece of Bethlehem" | 682, 25 |
| Holy Land | manna | 682, 74 |
| Holy Land | Apostles' table | 682, 19 |
| Caesarea | Procopius | 682, 73 |
| Jordan | Elias Prophet | 682, 7 |
| Egypt | | |
| Alexandria | Mark | 682, 17 |
| Alexandria | Mark | 682, 29 |
| Alexandria | Catherine | 682, 63 |

century.[44] What is more, in Gaul, popular late antique cults like that of Isidore of Chios barely outlived the Roman empire.[45] The same is true of Procopius, the Diocletianic martyr of Caesarea in Palestine, whose western veneration sputtered on only in Rome and southern Italy.[46] Nine relics for which alternative shrine connections appear equally plausible (identification level two) do not change this picture.[47] Two more reinforce either the pattern of Asia Minor towns on sea

44 Foss 1979; R229.

45 For instance, he is absent from the medieval litanies studied by Coens 1963; cf. this Isidore's limited Latin literary legacy prior to the Venetian translation in the 12th C., as catalogued in *BHL* 4478 and 4478a–c.

46 See *BHL* 6949–50 and J. M. Sauget, *BibS* 10: 1159–66.

47 Three or four point either to Constantinople or Jerusalem: Symeon, two relics of Jesus, and James: *ChLA* nos. 682, 7, 17, 74, and 63. Another has already been mentioned among the possible Africans; alternative cults of St. Lucius might also point to Rome or Egypt: *ChLA* no. 682, 45. Constantinople on one hand, and Rome or Alexandria on the other, are the alternatives for two more: Anthony and Helen: *ChLA* nos. 682, 7 and 52. See McCormick, "Relics," for details.



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routes (Nicomedia and Hagia Thekla, mod. Ayatekla), or the western Mediterranean (Africa and Rome, respectively; Map 10.1).[48]

In sum, the range of saints' cults documented by the Merovingian authentics fits its purely formal characteristics. This retrospective inventory reflects acquisitions even more ancient than the late seventh century. To be sure, it gives pride of place to the home church of Gaul, including some early saints whose cults would soon shrivel, and Rome. But it also claims access to a wide array of cults centered in Spain, Africa, the towns of Asia Minor, Alexandria, Constantinople, and the Holy Land. And, even leaving aside the case of Rome, two of the three largest suppliers of Mediterranean relics happened to be sea cities, indeed, as we have seen, the two greatest ports at the end of antiquity, Constantinople and Alexandria.[49] In fact, the majority of these relic cults were located in late Roman ports and shipping stations.[50] Did these relics actually cross the sea? That, at present, we cannot say with certainty. But when they reached the banks of the Yonne river, the ancient walled town of Sens still believed that it enjoyed access to the Roman shipping networks that wove together the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Otherwise, the relics would have been utterly implausible. We glimpse here the collecting of a great provincial church which began in an era *before* the sweeping changes in communications that culminated in the seventh century.

The next major phase of relic hoarding came in the eighth century.[51] For technical reasons, it is easier to divide scripts between "eighth-century" and "ninth-century" tags around 780–90.[52] Thus the bulk of tags dated simply "eighth-century" reflects an eighth century shortened by a decade or so, i.e. tags copied from approximately 700 to c. 785.[53] Including the multiple tags and groups which probably reflect particular itineraries or pilgrimages, this "short"

48 Pantaleon, *ChLA* no. 682, 33, and Thecla, *ChLA* no. 682, 13. Hagia Thekla is just down the road leading from Seleukeia to its ancient port, Holmoi: *TIB* 5: 441–4; cf. 272. Three identifications which uncertain readings or potentially ambiguous names render only possible (level three), would tend to reinforce the presence of saints from Egypt (two), and add another attestation to the largest group from Gaul: ?Athanasius, John the Hermit, and ?Maurice, respectively: *ChLA* nos. 682, 45, 63, and 74.

49 The third cult center is Bethlehem.

50 55 percent (twelve of twenty-two): in addition to the six from Constantinople and Alexandria, they are Carthage and Hippo (or Sardinia); Chios, Ephesus, Smyrna, and Caesarea Maritima.

51 Tags dated s. vii–viii, but not part of the Merovingian group, are *ChLA* nos. 682, 21, 30 (and possibly 56, dated s. viii by *ChLA*) which document relics of the Theban martyrs of St. Maurice d'Agaune. *ChLA* no. 682, 42 documents relics of the Roman martyrs John and Paul. A last tag dated "s. vii–viii," by the editors, *ChLA* no. 682, 53, belongs in s. viii: see below.

52 Because Carolingian handwriting was transformed from c. 780–90 to about 810, hands of this generation are usually quite distinctive. I have grouped tags in such hands with the 9th-C. tags.

53 Of course, it is possible that one or another label was written a little later in the 8th C., by a more conservative or simply older writer.



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TABLE 10.6
Sens: regions associated with relics tagged in the eighth century

| Region | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Gaul | 23 | 43 |
| Italy | 15 | 28 |
| Eastern Mediterranean | 16 | 30 |
| Total | 54 | 100 |

TABLE 10.7
Sens: comparison of geographic associations, Merovingian group and eighth-century collecting

Information in bold type signals major change.

| | Merovingian | 8th century | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Region | Percentage | Percentage | Number |
| Gaul | 50 | 43 | 23 |
| Italy | 21 | 28 | 15 |
| Constantinople and Asia Minor | 11 | 11 | 6 |
| **Holy Land** | **8** | **17** | 9 |
| **Egypt** | **5** | **2** | 1 |
| Spain | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Africa | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 54 |

*Note:*
Note that Africa was still Byzantine at the time of the Merovingian group, so that the total Byzantine component (exclusive of Italy) was 13 percent.

eighth century accounts for thirty-eight or thirty-nine tags, documenting some seventy-one relics.[54] Fifty-four relics can be associated with a shrine with the confidence of identification level one. Table 10.6 lays out the broad regions from which the cults stem. Comparison with Table 10.3 suggests that the regions which were thought to supply relics at Sens remained substantially the same, with one significant exception: Spain and Africa have disappeared. Closer comparison with the Merovingian phase uncovers more subtle shifts. The accumulation of relics

54 The 39th would be *ChLA* no. 682, 56, which may belong with nos. 682, 21 and 30, and whose date might therefore require modification.



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from the two regions closest to home changed somewhat, but in inverse relation. Fewer relics now came from Gallic shrines while, conversely, Italy supplied more than it had in the Merovingian period.[55] On the surface, the Byzantine heartland of Constantinople and Asia Minor remains stable. Though the numbers are small, Egypt has dropped by about half (5 percent to 2 percent) and Africa and Spain are gone. Most surprisingly, in the relic documents written at Sens between around 700 and 785, the proportion of objects claiming to come from the Holy Land has jumped. They more than double their share. Is this a hint at deeper shifts in patterns of communications between Frankish Gaul and the Mediterranean world?

The specific cults extend the testimony of the eighth-century phase. Italian relics reveal, in addition to Rome and two northern Italian cults, connections with the Aeolian islands and, on the Adriatic coast, the first sign of the cult of St. Michael on Monte Gargano. These places point to two different shipping routes, one the ancient trunk route running from Rome to the Aegean, and the other the Adriatic corridor (see Chs. 17.1; 18.1). Among Holy Land relics, local associations constrict toward Jerusalem: the Jordan and Caesarea disappear, nearby Bethlehem decreases, but on the other hand, Sinai appears. This trend toward constriction within the Holy Land makes for interesting comparison with what can be gleaned about the Christian religious establishment there early in the ninth century.[56]

Finally, and most provocatively, the details of relic associations from the empire undercut the apparent stability (10 or 11 percent) in the overall proportion of Byzantine relics. In the Merovingian era, the capital had accounted for only a third of the relics from the Byzantine heartland: the other two thirds came from the towns of Asia Minor. During the phase of relic gathering that ran from about 700 to 780–90, the picture altered sharply. The imperial capital now accounted for five of the six relics. And the sixth is the exception that proves the rule. In the eighth century, only Ephesus is left standing next to Constantinople among Sens relics. In fact, that major fair helped to keep Ephesus alive in the early Middle Ages, and the old port town was certainly visited by three of our western travelers in the very decades when the Ephesus relic was tagged.[57] In a word, the geography of Byzantine relics which were now reaching Sens differs in a very significant way from what had accumulated there in the Merovingian era. The differences mirror with remarkable precision what recent scholarship has disclosed about town life in early medieval Asia Minor, when the old urban centers dwindled away and Constantinople emerged as the great solitary city of the empire.

55 Cf. the findings of Prinz 1967.

56 See McCormick, "Holy Land."

57 On the fair, R229; the travelers are Thomas, Willibald and Madalveus: see below, pp. 171f.



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TABLE 10.8
Sens: eighth-century foreign relics and cult centers

| Place | Relic | *ChLA* |
|---|---|---|
| Italy (15) | | |
| Rome (11) | Peter, Paul, John, Lawrence, Marcellus, Gregory | 682, 9, 37, 39, 48, 53, 68, 70, 72 |
| Trent | Vigilius | 682, 89 |
| Bologna | Vitalis | 682, 90 |
| Monte Gargano | Michael | 682, 9 |
| Lipari | Bartholomew | 682, 68 |
| Holy Land (9) | | |
| Jerusalem | Lord's tomb | 682, 9 |
| Jerusalem | Lord's tomb | 682, 10 |
| Jerusalem | piece of Jerusalem | 682, 10 |
| Jerusalem | James | 682, 68 |
| Jerusalem | Lord's tomb | 682, 6 |
| Jerusalem | piece of the Mount of Olives | 682, 6 |
| Jerusalem | piece of Calvary | 682, 6 |
| Bethlehem | piece of the Lord's cradle | 682, 6 |
| Sinai | stone from Mount Sinai | 682, 10 |
| Byzantium (6) | | |
| Constantinople | Lord's sponge | 682, 4 |
| Constantinople | Virgin's garment | 682, 4 |
| Constantinople | Virgin's garment | 682, 12 |
| Constantinople | Andrew | 682, 16 |
| Constantinople | Andrew | 682, 68 |
| Ephesus | John | 682, 68 |
| Egypt | | |
| Alexandria | Mark | 682, 10 |

Disturbing though it may seem, the relics collected at the cathedral of Sens between the age of Gregory of Tours and that of Pippin III tell a new and important story. The ancient see was sufficiently integrated into the Mediterranean universe of communications to reflect dramatic urban change at the other end of the inland sea. When, like Caesarea in Palestine, or Carthage in Africa, the towns of Asia Minor prospered, they sent relics across the sea to Gaul, or at least so the clergy of Sens thought. When they died, the relic flow ceased. The only places that supplied relics in the eighth century also continued to welcome travelers, as we know from entirely independent evidence.

Tags that designate groups of relics look for all the world like someone's souvenirs of a Mediterranean voyage. They reinforce the horizons suggested by



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individual relics. Four multiple relic tags seem to reflect long-distance communications with the Levant. Two imply a succession of shrines which suggests itineraries. One (Figure 10.2), in the "a–z script" of Laon, lists relics whose chief shrines linked Gaul with the Holy Land. It looks like a collection formed during a pilgrimage to Italy and the Middle East, presumably by someone from Laon. If so, the eighth-century traveler began or ended in Gaul, went via Autun to Rome, continued to Monte Gargano, and then by sea to the Aegean and Ephesus or Constantinople, before arriving in the Holy Land.[58] Far fetched? Scarcely, at least in terms of geography and date. In the third quarter of the eighth century, the bishop of Verdun followed almost exactly this route, crossing the Alps to Rome, and thence traveling across Italy to the shrine of St. Michael at Gargano. From there he sailed to Constantinople, Ephesus, and Jaffa en route to Jerusalem (R180). Map 10.1 shows clearly the convergence of the two itineraries.

A second authentic combines relics from Jerusalem with a stone from Sinai and a relic of St. Mark, whose tomb we have already visited in Alexandria. The pattern suggests a wanderer in the Holy Land and Egypt, and recalls two more pilgrims' travels.[59] Two tags point to the Holy Land and Constantinople, but lack intermediary stops.[60]

So, early Carolingian relic collecting at Sens reveals continuing communications with the Mediterranean. Horizons have nonetheless contracted. Spain and Africa disappear; Italy looms larger. Relics claiming to come from the Byzantine empire still reach Sens, but they have narrowed to Constantinople and Ephesus only, as the rest of Asia Minor vanishes. The relative weight of Holy Land relics grows but, except for nearby Bethlehem, the contacts are mostly confined to Jerusalem. On the other hand, Egypt and the Sinai reappear together, hinting perhaps at new paths for pilgrims.

Our last phase of relic gathering at Sens is signaled by the fundamental changes which transformed the handwriting of Carolingian Europe. They make it highly unlikely that any earlier eighth-century authentics have crept into this "long" ninth-century group to distort its testimony about hagiographical horizons. Such labels list sixty-six relics whose main shrine can be identified at probability level one.[61] Whether we look at Frankish or Middle Eastern saints, change in the broader communications world is immediately apparent. For instance, holy objects now appear from the great Austrasian see of Cologne. Others come from Zurich, at the entrance to a lake route through the Alps toward Italy which

58 *ChLA* no. 682, 9.

59 *ChLA* no. 682, 10. R41 and R391; Sinai appears in neither, although the fragmentary account of Fidelis' trip shows him approaching it. Pros. "Fidelis."

60 *ChLA* no. 682, 6 records one relic of Bethlehem and three of Jerusalem; *ChLA* no. 682, 4 documents relics primarily associated with Constantinople or, possibly, with Constantinople and Jerusalem.

61 This includes the inventory authentic of the relics deposited at Melun in 809.



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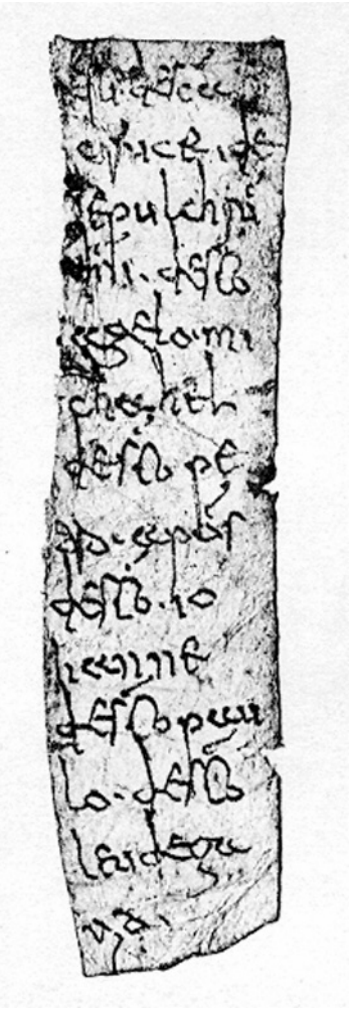

Figure 10.2. This memento of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, via Rome and Ephesus, recorded relics deposited at Sens. The person (pilgrim?) who wrote this label in the eighth century used the unique script of Laon ("a–z script") and listed the relics in hierarchical order. When mapped, the cult centers associated with the relics describe an itinerary involving Autun, Rome, Monte Gargano, Ephesus or Constantinople, and Jerusalem (Map 10.1). It closely parallels the pilgrimages of eighth-century travelers to the Middle East. Cf. *ChLA* no. 682, 9. Courtesy of Hartmut Atsma.



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TABLE 10.9
Sens: regions associated with relics tagged c. 790–c. 900

| Region | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Francia | 34 | 52 |
| Italy | 11 | 17 |
| Holy Land | 14 | 21 |
| Byzantium | 3 | 5 |
| Egypt | 2 | 3 |
| England | 2 | 3 |
| Total | 66 | 100 |

shows new activity in the ninth century. To judge just from these French relics, Carolingian Europe's center of gravity was shifting toward the Rhine.[62] In the reign of Charlemagne and his successors (Table 10.7), Frankland's share of saints increased. Italian cults slipped sharply from their eighth-century peak, and now Rome alone supplied them.[63] The part played by Byzantine relics also declined sharply. The Holy Land meanwhile continued to grow. Remarkably, Palestine was now supplying about as many new relics as Italy. Egypt shows a slight increase or remains the same. England finally enters French hagiographical horizons. The specific relics were perhaps connected with the presence of the Anglo-Saxon Beornrad (d. 797) on the episcopal throne of Sens, but we shall see that same trend simultaneously at Chelles.[64] English relics kept step with the Anglo-Saxon contribution to the Carolingian church.

Although their relative proportions shifted in significant ways, the same cult places as earlier in the eighth century were supplying relics in this last phase. In the Holy Land, Jerusalem predominates, Bethlehem and Sinai recur, and the Jordan returns. Byzantium remains limited to Constantinople and Ephesus; Egypt still means Alexandria, although Pachomius' relics could conceivably point beyond the delta.[65] Overall, Byzantine cults decline in importance. On the other

62 Prou and Chartraire 1900, 161, 133, relics of Sts. Lambert (Liège) and Servatius (Maastricht) deposited at Melun in 809; *ChLA* no. 682, 58, Sts. Felix and Regula (Zurich); on the Alpine route, see below, p. 761.

63 McCormick, "Relics."

64 On Beornrad, a disciple of Alcuin and relative of St. Willibrord – a Northumbrian, see Duchesne 1894–1915, 2: 419; Levison 1946, 110 and 165, and Bullough 1962b, 227.

65 Holy Land: *ChLA* nos. 682, 1 (cf. Prou and Chartraire 1900, 141, 2), 8, 11, 40; Prou and Chartraire 1900, 142, 3, 143, 10, 145, 18, 161, 133; Byzantium: *ibid.*, 143, 10, 147, 28, 161, 133; Egypt: *ibid.*, 149, 39; 161, 133; England: *ChLA* no. 682, 93.



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hand the newly conspicuous Holy Land reinforces the earlier suggestion of intensifying relations with the Muslim Levant. Separate authentics again testify to the appearance of relics connected with Egypt in the same era as the relic from Sinai. To judge from relic labels, communications with the Caliphate were increasing.

The basic picture is not changed by the relics for which alternative shrine associations may be proposed (identification level two). The majority do not add new regions, although they could increase the relative importance of some places. Thus, a large number of identifications could refer to either the Holy Land or Constantinople.[66] A few alternative associations hint nonetheless that geographic horizons were widening. South central Italy becomes a possibility.[67] Two authentics seem to document saints which add regions, either Asia Minor or Africa and the Aegean or, more probably, Spain.[68]

This phase comprises only two tags bearing multiple relics which might reflect trips into the eastern Mediterranean. Both certainly imply a connection with Rome, and one points more strongly to relics at Constantinople or Jerusalem.[69] Two authentics which form a group of passion relics point to either Jerusalem or Constantinople.[70]

So far then, the physical characteristics of the labels have allowed us to discern three phases of relic collecting in the early medieval hoard preserved at Sens. The oldest reaches back into the Merovingian era. The second consists of relics acquired in the eighth century. The last comprises relics acquired in the later years of Charlemagne and his successors. Over these three phases, geographic horizons changed considerably. To judge from this relic hoard, distant connections persisted after the Merovingian period, but their scope constricted. And we can detect in relic accumulation clear trends – an expanding Frankish empire, new

66 Ten such cases: Prou and Chartraire 1900, 143, 10 and twice on *ibid.*, 161, 133; four relics of Christ, *ibid.* 143, 9 and 143, 10 for the last three; St. Symeon of Syria (Constantinople or Antioch), *ibid.*, 159, 118; two more relics of Christ on my Group G: *ibid.*, 144, 13 and 145, 17, in which the identity of hands indicates that the True Cross relic in this case came from the same place as the sponge. Another relic may refer either to Alexandria or Constantinople: Anthony, *ibid.*, 161, 133.

67 Scholastica, Monte Cassino or Fleury, *ChLA* no. 682, 78; Senator (Albano, Milan or Avranches), *ChLA* no. 682, 80.

68 Clementine points to either Heraclea (Thrace) or Africa, Prou and Chartraire 1900, 149, 41; Isidore, to Seville or Chios, *ibid.*, 161, 133. In Carolingian culture, Isidore of Seville is much more likely.

69 Prou and Chartraire 1900, 143, 9 is the better case: Jesus' garment, Anastasius, Cross, the Virgin; *ibid.*, 159, 118 (Peter, Paul and Symeon Stylite the Elder) might suggest Rome and Constantinople or Antioch. But the possibility that undocumented relics of the Stylite, who was very widely venerated in late antiquity, may have found their way to Rome, argues against attaching too much weight to the more distant cult places.

70 *Ibid.*, 144, 13 and 145, 17; cf. McCormick, "Relics."



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TABLE 10.10
Chelles: chronological breakdown of authentics, seventh–ninth centuries

| Century | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 7th | 1 | 1 |
| 7th/8th | 9 | 6 |
| 8th | 113 | 77 |
| 9th | 24 | 16 |
| Total | 147 | 100 |

connections with England, more intense relations with the Caliphate. How does this compare with the treasure trove of early medieval relics from the royal convent of Chelles?

## 3. Collecting relics at Chelles

The chronology of relic collecting at Chelles differs somewhat; the great majority of its authentics date to the eighth century. This is not dissonant with the house's history. A small, earlier establishment there was expanded around 660. From 665, it became the retirement home of queen Balthild after she was forced from power. In the eighth and ninth centuries, the convent was favored by some of the Carolingian family's leading women; its nuns played a central role in producing the books which spearheaded the Carolingian reform.[71] To judge from the tagging of relics, the eighth century was Chelles' golden age.

How the handwriting of Chelles developed is exceptionally well mapped. This affords us the unusual advantage of distinguishing within the eighth century several chronological sets of tags, of differing degrees of precision. Even allowing for the fifty-eight tags whose place within the eighth century cannot safely be ascertained, the picture strongly suggests that tagging of relics peaked at Chelles in the second half of the eighth and the first quarter of the ninth century, especially since the sixteen tags which can be assigned to the first half of the ninth century all display scripts whose features suggest a date close to 800, and have been so classified in this table. In other words, relic tagging at Chelles peaked in

71 Beaunier *et al.* 1905, 67–71; Bischoff 1966–81, 1: 16–34.



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TABLE 10.11
Chelles: chronological attribution of eighth- and ninth-century tags

| Dating | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 700–49 | 2 | 1 |
| 750–99 | 18 | 13 |
| 775–99 | 35 | 25 |
| 700–99 | 58 | 42 |
| 800–25 | 16 | 12 |
| 800–900 | 8 | 6 |
| Total | 137 | 100 |

the reign of Charlemagne, when the abbey was governed by the king's sister Gisela, once the fiancée of a Byzantine emperor.[72]

Some thirty of these fifty-one relics were labeled within a few decades by various persons, presumably nuns, who wrote the house script of Chelles. These tags show *similar* scripts, which differs fundamentally from the situation of the Merovingian group of tags at Sens, whose script is identical. At Chelles, hands which are certainly different use similar Chelles scripts, and there are no long lists of relics among them. In other words, this group of Chelles authentics probably does not reflect a systematic retrospective inventory and relabeling of a preexisting hoard. Rather they record the addition to the Chelles treasury of relics acquired singly and in small groups, over a period of a few decades. Different nuns who had all learned to write at Chelles labeled them as they came in.[73] This is significant regarding the problem of their origins. For in these decades the convent enjoyed links with Charlemagne's court which were even closer than those of Angilbert at St. Riquier. The links were also older, since as early as 741, Chelles was a safe place to lock up a woman who threatened the emerging dynasty.[74]

Charlemagne himself certainly visited Chelles, and Alcuin's letters document intensive exchanges with its princesses.[75] The royal nuns copied prestigious

72 R170. As at Sens, some conservative-looking hands may have continued to write closer to the end of the 8th C. than I have placed them, but the basic picture should be sound.

73 For more details of the palaeographical, codicological and other reasons for drawing this conclusion, see McCormick, "Relics." For a differing opinion, see above, n11.

74 Charles Martel's ex-consort Swanahild: BM 43d.

75 On Charles at Chelles, which probably had a Carolingian royal palace: Brühl 1968, 28n95 and 31; Alcuin's letters: Bischoff 1966–81, 1: 27–8. Donald Bullough's finding that Alcuin's letters mostly stem from a brief period (personal communication) reinforces Bischoff's observation.



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liturgical manuscripts like the Gelasian sacramentary (Vatican City, B. Apost., Vat. reg. lat. 316) that were so prized in court circles, and they supplied members of the court with fine copies of major theological works. The reciprocal nature of gift exchange in Carolingian society argues that Charlemagne's open-handed distribution of relics must have reached his sister's house. Some uncertain part of the Chelles hoard, that is, yields insight into the fabulous, lost relic hoard assembled by Charles himself.

## *Early efforts*

The first authentics are older than the characteristic house script. Though their numbers are small, what they say about contemporary communications contrasts sharply with the retrospective inventorying of old relics occurring about the same time at Sens. The Chelles saints come overwhelmingly from the homeland, from Gaul. Only one relic each from Rome and the Holy Land hint of more distant relations. The oldest authentic, dated to the seventh century, points to Limoges. Of the dozen relics (on nine tags) whose script has been dated c. 700, nine or ten come from Gaul.[76] In other words, relics collected by a house closely connected in these years with the Merovingian royal family came from a world whose geographic horizons had contracted, encompassing only central and eastern Gaul, and a few contacts with Rome and Jerusalem (one each, or 8 percent).[77]

The next phase of relic collecting was richer both in numbers and geography. Fifty-eight relics authenticated in the eighth century or its second half can be associated with shrines at level one. Table 10.12 sets out their overall geographic distribution. The small number of relics from the seventh century at Chelles makes comparison fragile. Nonetheless eighth-century acquisitions seem to show change. Gaulish relics still dominate, but Italy, and especially Rome, now make up a larger share. Byzantium is a respectable contributor, lagging just behind the Holy Land. Given the small numbers, the difference between the Holy Land and Byzantine relics appears minimal. Egypt too occurs, and the total from the Islamic Levant is almost double that from Byzantium.

Table 10.13 spells out specifics for the foreign relics. In Italy, as usual, Rome dominates. Outside Rome, the connections are with southern Italy and the shrine of Monte Gargano patronized by the dukes of Benevento, who ricocheted between war and alliance with Charlemagne, precisely in the second half of the

76 83 percent; Saroualio cannot be identified, but is presumably a saint from Gaul, while Aredius is also certainly from Gaul: *ChLA* no. 669, 115 and 16, respectively.

77 In addition to the authentics cited in the preceding note: foreign: *ChLA* nos. 669, 5 and 98; from Gaul: *ChLA* nos. 669, 25, 34, 36, 69, 118, 127.



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TABLE 10.12
Chelles: regional associations of tags assigned to 700–99 or 750–800, in all scripts

| Region | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Gaul | 33 | 57 |
| Italy | 14 | 24 |
| Holy Land | 5 | 9 |
| Byzantium | 4 | 7 |
| Egypt | 2 | 3 |
| Total | 58 | 100 |

TABLE 10.13
Chelles: foreign relics, eighth century, identification level one

| Place | Relic | *ChLA* | Date |
|---|---|---|---|
| Italy (14) | | | |
| Rome (11) | Agatha, Peter, Paul, Sebastian, Silvester | 669, 13, 95, 97, 100–3, 113, 123 | 8th C. |
| Rome (1) | Petronilla | 669, 104 | 750–800 |
| Monte Gargano (2) | Michael | 669, 88–9 | 750–800 |
| Holy Land (5) | "tree of Joshua" | 669, 3 | 8th C. |
| | piece of the Holy Land | 669, 6 | 8th C. |
| | stone from Calvary | 669, 12 | 8th C. |
| | dirt from Bethlehem | 669, 7 | 750–800 |
| | from the Jordan river | 669, 10 | 750–800 |
| Egypt (2) | | | |
| ? | Paul the hermit | 669, 63 | 8th C. |
| Alexandria | Mark | 669, 71 | 750–800 |
| Byzantium (4) | | | |
| Ephesus | Mary Magdalene | 669, 35 | 8th C. |
| Euchaita | Theodore | 669, 134 | 8th C. |
| Cherson | Martin I | 669, 80 | 700–50 |
| Constantinople | Virgin's garment | 669, 78 | 750–800 |



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eighth century.[78] The contemporary relics of St. Petronilla also point to dynastic connections. The Carolingian family had arranged with the pope, probably in 754, that the relics of this reputed daughter of St. Peter be translated to a mausoleum in the basilica of St. Peter.[79] In the Byzantine empire, Constantinople and Ephesus fit the pattern we have observed at contemporary Sens: the ancient towns of Asia Minor are not on the hagiographical horizon. But it is striking to see two relics which refer to a communications axis within the Byzantine empire, the Black Sea–Aegean route, which was newly prominent in the later eighth century. One way or another, the relics of the martyred pope, St. Martin (d. 655), probably came through Rome. But they had to start out from Cherson, where Martin died and was, presumably, buried.[80] The main shrine of St. Theodore, at Euchaita (mod. Avkat), was in the Pontus.[81] Egypt reappears too. As at Sens, the eighth-century total of cults from the Caliphate outweighs the Byzantine relics.[82]

A few multiple relic tags evoke voyages. One, startlingly, documents a relic of Mary Magdalene centuries before her cult was previously known to have reached France. This tag implies her shrine at Ephesus, and combines a Gaulish saint (Amandus) with one who is probably Italian (although there is an African homonym). This suggests travel linking northern Gaul, Italy, and Ephesus, and resembles the itinerary of two of our travelers.[83] Another multiple relic tag may well refer to Egypt, while a third seems to point to Constantinople.[84]

## *The age of Charlemagne*

Charlemagne's reign dominates the last phase of relic collecting. It consists of authentics palaeographically dated to the end of the eighth century, to c. 800, and

78 See e.g. Carletti 1994, 174–81.

79 Angenendt 1977, 54–5 with n17.

80 Martin's torture and death by the Byzantine authorities would have been a powerful diplomatic card in the hands of a pope seeking Frankish protection. Might this explain the relic's presence at Chelles so early? See also Sansterre 1983, 1: 138–9; Martin's last voyage: see below Ch. 16.5.

81 Trombley 1985, argues that the town was "of considerable size" even in the 8th C. and that there was a fair there (71); against: Kazhdan 1988, 197–200. Whatever the outcome of that discussion, the saint's local champions may have been updating his hagiography precisely in the later 8th C.: Zuckerman 1988, 191–205.

82 Less reliable relics do not alter this basic picture, with three possible exceptions: St. Isidore who is much more likely, in this time and place, to be the Sevillan encyclopedist rather than the martyr of Chios: *ChLA* no. 669, 65; so too Pancratius here probably refers to the Roman one rather than the African: *ChLA* no. 669, 91. Faustinus is also more likely the martyr of Rome or Brescia, but Africa is not entirely excluded: *ChLA* no. 669, 35. The other alternative identifications (level two) introduce no new regions: cf. McCormick, "Relics."

83 *ChLA* no. 669, 35; cf. R180.

84 *ChLA* no. 669, 63 and 78, respectively.



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TABLE 10.14
Chelles: foreign relics, c. 775–900

| Place | Relic | Date | Reference |
|---|---|---|---|
| Italy (8) | | | |
| Rome (5) | Gregory, Paul, Peter, Petronilla, Anastasius | c. 775 | *ChLA* nos. 669, 49, 93, 96, 99, 105 |
| Rome (1) | Paul | 775–800 | *ChLA* no. 669, 94 |
| Rome (1) | Anastasius | 9th C. | Laporte 1988, 129, 37.2 |
| Lipari | Bartholomew | c. 800 | *ChLA* no. 669, 19 |
| Holy Land (5) | | | |
| ? | tree Jesus planted | c. 775 | *ChLA* no. 669, 11 |
| Bethlehem | Jerome | c. 775 | no. 669, 51 |
| Bethlehem | Jesus' cradle | c. 800 | no. 669, 8 |
| Sinai | stone Moses was standing on when he saw God | c. 800 | no. 669, 2 |
| Jordan | river Jordan | 775–800 | no. 669, 9 |
| Byzantium (3) | | | |
| Constantinople | garment of Virgin | 775–800 | no. 669, 73 |
| Constantinople | towel with which Jesus wiped disciples' feet | 9th C. | Laporte 1988, 129, 15.2 |
| Ephesus | John | c. 775 | *ChLA* no. 669, 76 |
| Mesopotamia | from the Tigris and Euphrates rivers | c. 800 | *ChLA* no. 669, 1 |
| England | Oswald | c. 775 | *ChLA* no. 669, 90 |

to the ninth century. Among ninth-century tags, most hands appear to me to belong to the first half, if not the first quarter. All told, forty relics from the late eighth and ninth centuries can be identified at level one.

Gaul and Italy maintain their positions as sources of relics, and the Holy Land and Byzantium stay about the same. Egypt is not now attested, but Mesopotamia and England enter Frankish hagiographical horizons (Table 10.15; cf. Table 10.14). For the first time – exactly as at Sens – relics from the eastern regions of the Frankish empire enter the hoard assembled at Chelles. What is more, the relics from the ecclesiastical province of Mainz come from *different* saints at Chelles and Sens. This reinforces the conclusion that the treasuries reflect changing patterns of communication, and not just changing tastes in relics.[85]

A synopsis of these relics introduces some nuance to the final phase of Carolingian collecting of foreign relics at Chelles. Byzantine relics return to the earlier pattern of the capital and Ephesus. The only cult from Italy outside Rome

85 The Sens relics are from Zurich (see above); the Chelles relics are of St. Boniface and Killian. *ChLA* no. 682, 32 and nos. 669, 23 and 110. For full details see McCormick, "Relics."



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TABLE 10.15
Chelles: comparison of regional component in three phases of relic collecting

| Region | Percentages | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | c. 700 (*N* = 12) | 8th C. (*N* = 58) | c. 775–900 (*N* = 40) |
| Gaul | 83 | 57 | 55 |
| Italy | 8 | 24 | 20 |
| Holy Land | 8 | 9 | 13 |
| Byzantium | | 7 | 8 |
| Egypt | | 3 | |
| Mesopotamia | | | 3 |
| England | | | 3 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |

points again to the south and a westbound sea lane, the island of Lipari off the north coast of Byzantine Sicily.[86] The relic which evokes Mesopotamia around 800 introduces a new region which includes Baghdad. That new caliphal capital lay precisely between the authentic's "Tigris and Euphrates" and was visited by a Carolingian embassy in the very years in which this authentic was written (R238). The total number of relics which refer to shrines in the House of Islam continues to outdistance those associated with Byzantine cults.[87]

Because they cover a shorter time span and are less numerous, the changing geographic associations of the Chelles relics are less marked than for Sens. Still they are interesting in and of themselves, as well as in comparison with Sens. Though the sample of seventh-century relics is small, it fits the prevalence of local relics usual in contemporary Gaul, as well as the persisting links with the Holy Land and Rome. Eighth- and ninth-century collecting shows substantial continuity. Nonetheless Holy Land relics increase in the time of Charlemagne and his successors, while the appearance of the Middle East and England invites comparison with what we know about patterns of communications from other sources.

◈

Geographic horizons changed as two rich churches of Gaul built their relic collections from the Merovingian age to that of Charlemagne. At Sens the process

86 On the Aeolian islands' role in west-bound courses, p. 505.

87 Relics whose associations offer alternative possibilities do not contradict the basic pattern. For the full accounting, see McCormick, "Relics."



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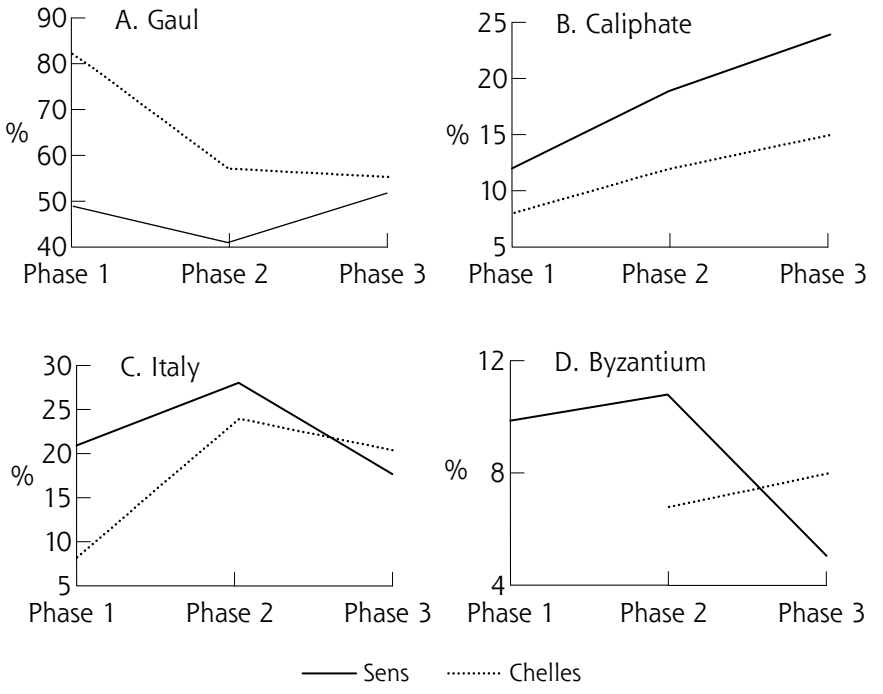
Chart 10.1. Sens and Chelles: comparative trends of the geography of relic supply




unfolded over three centuries or more; it continued for two centuries at Chelles. Early medieval relic gathering peaked at Sens under the Merovingians, during the lengthy but ill-defined period that came to an end around 680. At Chelles, collecting crested in the eighth century.

It is worthwhile to compare the trends of several regions at both shrines over the three phases of growth that we have been able to distinguish, even though phase one was considerably longer at Sens. In Chart 10.1, phase 1 corresponds to the Merovingian period, down to about 690, phase 2 to most of the eighth century, and phase 3 to the late eighth and ninth centuries. In no case are the proportions identical. But in graphs A–C, the trends are comparable, indeed, strikingly so. From the seventh to the eighth century, the proportion of local, Gallic shrines declined in both treasuries. Toward the ninth century, they converged at about half of the total relics. The trend of Italian relics also compares well. In both churches, their share increased in the eighth century at the same time that the representation of local relics declined. In both places, Italian relics declined relative to other cults in the age of Charlemagne and his successors. This is surprising, insofar as it appears to contradict the Roman thrust of the Carolingian liturgical reform. What is more, it flies in the face of the hagiographical collections which were diffusing



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Roman saint's cults at this time.[88] Perhaps this region of Gaul had been precocious in its affection for the Roman liturgy and cults, so that by the time of Charlemagne, the ecclesiastics of the province of Sens were more open to other cults. No less important, the contradiction with the hagiographical collections underscores the fact that that relic acquisition was anchored in a different reality.

Against this background of shifting trends, graph B traces a different trend: the proportion of relics which point to the Caliphate rose continuously across the three phases. This includes most notably the Holy Land, but also Egypt and Mesopotamia. Carolingian Sens was getting more relics from the Arab world than from nearby Italy, while at Chelles, relics from that part of the Middle East were at least approaching those from Italy. Although the numbers are smaller, the contrasting trends of Byzantine relics at Sens and Chelles are also striking. Unlike Sens, Chelles shows no fall off in Byzantine relics in the late eighth and ninth century. This is perhaps not unconnected with the personal Byzantine connections of its abbess.

In a word, patterns in the geography of relic collecting run mostly parallel in two hoards which were fundamentally independent in their origins. The high proportion of relics from Frankland, a similar share of relics from Italy, comparable figures for the Holy Land, not to mention the simultaneous appearance of England and Germany, all exemplify these similarities. To explain them we cannot merely invoke some kind of mental agenda for relic collecting set by the hagiographical fashions in the ecclesiastical province of Sens nor even, only, their physical proximity. The argument that such fashions might have affected the authorities in both institutions in the same way, causing them to seek out independently the same relics, withers in the face of the many relics which are unique to each collection.[89] We see here rather changing opportunities for long-distance contacts. Those opportunities developed in natural parallel for two wealthy institutions, situated in the same region of early medieval France, on tributaries of the same river system.

If we had to reconstruct the history of communications affecting Frankland from the end of Rome to the ninth century solely from the relics collected at these two shrines, we would have some interesting observations. Throughout the early Middle Ages, most contacts lay within Gaul: the situation is roughly comparable at Chelles and Sens in two of our three phases. In part, the extraordinary preponderance of regional contacts in Chelles' first phase may be affected by the small number of relics. But it is also true that Chelles' first phase certainly starts later than the similar phase at Sens, after, that is, the contraction of Mediterranean communications. Egypt had played a larger role in the first phase at Sens, and it is present in both hoards in the eighth century, though not in the ninth. England

88 E.g. Philippart 1977, 33–44.

89 See McCormick, "Relics."



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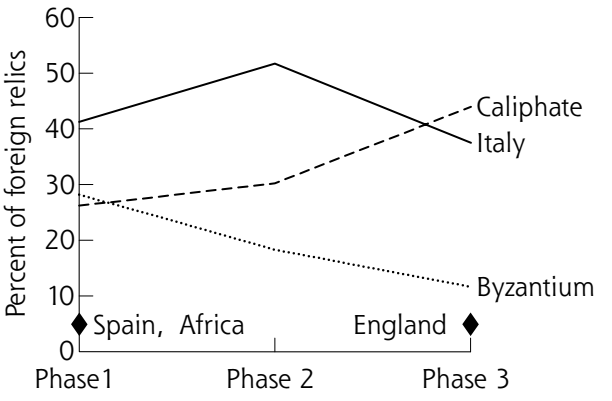
Chart 10.2. Sens and Chelles: relative percentages of foreign relics




appears first in both hoards in the final phase, while Iraq shows up at the same time, but only at Chelles. Spain had been present in the first phase at Sens and reappears in the third; Africa disappeared definitively after Sens' initial phase.

Some more particular patterns nestle within these broader trends. The greater size and antiquity of the Sens hoard allowed us to see how geographic horizons changed between the most archaic part of the collection and what came later. In the Merovingian phase of relic collecting at Sens, extremely obscure Gaulish saints rubbed shoulders with objects which claimed to come from the towns of Asia Minor, Africa, Spain, and Egypt. The far-flung cults depict the communications world of the late Roman empire; not coincidentally, a majority of these cults centered in Mediterranean port towns. The next age of relic collecting shows sharp constriction. Some regions – Spain, Africa, Egypt – drop away entirely or diminish. And even where the surface appears to show continuity, deeper inspection bares striking change in the Byzantine heartland. Compared with the Merovingian collection, the importance of the imperial capital swells while the towns of Asia Minor shrink away to nothingness, with the sole exception of Ephesus. Meanwhile, the caliphal Middle East, including the Holy Land, increases its presence substantially, in part at the expense of Byzantium. Sinai appears, and Egypt too, hinting at new routes of communication.

Eighth-century Chelles follows suit in pointing to increasing contacts with the Caliphate. It differs in preserving closer contacts with Byzantium, and also in getting two relics whose cults stemmed from the Black Sea region. This difference mirrors both Byzantine shipping of the age and, we may think, the personal links between the Carolingian and Isaurian dynasties.

So far, we have carefully segregated the data from each of the hoards. Combining the evidence of the two shrines' foreign relics (Chart 10.2) makes the



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broad trends clear, and sheds some light on the wide and changing hagiographical horizons of the ecclesiastical province of Sens in the early Middle Ages. Spain and Africa supplied relics at the end of antiquity, but not thereafter. England's contribution to the cults of Sens and Chelles was strictly a Carolingian affair. Italy's portion was important into the eighth century, then it declined. Byzantium's diminished. And the share of the Caliphate, overall, increased.

In sum, the aggregate patterns of communications manifested in the acquisition of relics by two early medieval churches of Gaul appear generally consistent. For long-distance communications in the Mediterranean, the most striking element is certainly the role of the Caliphate in suggesting or supplying cults to two churches of north central France, precisely when contacts with the Middle East are conventionally reckoned at their nadir. Unexpected though it is, the evidence from Sens and Chelles tallies in this respect with completely independent data about Carolingian travelers to the Holy Land. But the cults reach beyond the Holy Land, to Egypt and even Iraq. Carolingian contacts with Egypt and Iraq? This is what the ancient relic tags imply. Taken seriously, they invite us to begin rethinking much of what we believe we know about Mediterranean communications in the Carolingian age. It is easier simply to dismiss the humble tags' claims to such contacts.

But not wiser. Like it or not, scholars should begin to take early medieval relic collecting seriously. There is no arguing that some Carolingian travelers did go to the Holy Land, Egypt, and Iraq. The quite independent evidence of the treasuries of Sens and Chelles tells the same story, and more. *Were* the relics at Sens and Chelles really what they claimed to be? The answer remains unclear. But, disturbing though that may seem, there should now be little question that some of them at least *came* from where they implied. And some of them claimed to come from places that appear surprising in the pale light of the conventional wisdom. Let us turn from this unsettling evidence to another kind of object whose distant origins no one will contest: the coins issued by mints of the Byzantine and Arab empires and lost in the soil of Carolingian Europe.



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# 11

# *"Virtual" coins and communications*

In 1961, Polish archaeologists must have disrupted the flow of tourists from the *vaporetti*, the local water buses, to the splendid Byzantine mosaics of Torcello. The eleventh-century church on this island marks one of the oldest settlement centers of early medieval Venice. The church itself was rebuilt from a structure which, to judge from an inscription, the Byzantine governor had dedicated in 639.[1] Right next to the church, the Poles sank a sounding trench into the early medieval market square. This must be the very place that a tenth-century Byzantine emperor called the "great market."[2]

Among the objects that emerged from the mud were two damaged coins which had fused together (Figure 11.1). They still bore the imprint of the textile bag in which they had been lost over a thousand years previously. One was a silver penny (denarius) issued at Milan by Charles the Great between 793 and 812. The other coin was more badly damaged. But one can still make out its Kufic inscription: "There is no God but Allah . . ." It was a silver dirham, issued in the Abbasid caliphate around 800.[3] How did these coins come together at this place, in this time? What does their story tell us about the broader one of communications and commerce in the world of Charlemagne?

Solving the small riddle of the coins from the Venetian marketplace will take us a step closer to a much greater enigma, the origins of the European commercial economy. To get there, we will have to scrutinize the texts for what they tell us about a sudden influx of Arab coins into Europe during the very decades when the purse containing a dirham and a denarius was dropped. The clues will come from a young and inexperienced notary, from two brothers whose fortune was consumed by debt, and from the dying words of one of our travelers. These witnesses will make a strong case. But texts about coins are not enough. Our witnesses'

1 For places mentioned in this chapter, see Map 11.1. The inscription is reproduced, e.g. in Carile and Fedalto 1978, Pl. IV.

2 Constantine VII, *De adm. imp.*, 27, 1.118.93.

3 Appendix 3: A40.



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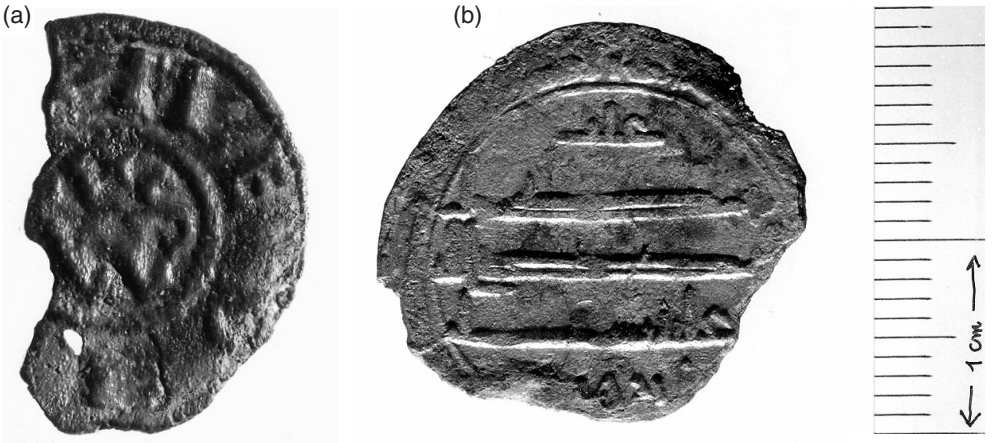


Figure 11.1. Arab and Carolingian coins excavated in the marketplace at Torcello (Venice). Although corroded by a thousand years in the soil and fused together when found, these two silver coins (enlarged) are still clear enough for experts to identify them with certainty. Coin (a) is a penny of Charlemagne, issued by his mint of Milan between 793 and 812. Within the inner circle, one can just make out Charles' famous cross monogram, the right arm of which ends in an "S." Around the outer circle run the damaged letters "M E D" (from "MEDIOL[ANO]"). Coin (b) is a dirham issued by the caliph in the opening years of the ninth century. This remarkable find silently symbolizes the connections which had sprung up between Carolingian Europe and the Islamic economy in Charlemagne's lifetime. Courtesy of the Museo archeologico nazionale, Venice.

words invite us to the metal coins themselves, made in the great cities of the Arab world or issued by Byzantium. If the stories told by these three kinds of witnesses should corroborate one another, the investigation of communications will have gained another guaranty. They will also contribute to resolving a long-standing debate in medieval economic history: while the presence of gold in the theoretically monometallic monetary system of Charlemagne founded on silver is now indisputable, its extent, economic significance, and sources remain open to discussion. Inevitably, the findings raise anew the related question of the contribution of the Muslim economy to the economic development of early medieval Europe.[4] Of course the debate feeds into the broader one launched by Pirenne.

But should we expect any foreign coinage at all? Historians concur that the quantity of coinage of any kind circulating in western Europe was not enormous, even if recent research indicates that monetization was greater than was once

4 For key stages in the debate on gold, see Monneret de Villard 1919; Bloch 1933, 8–24; Grierson 1954; Lombard 1972, 7–46; Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 328–31, and Rovelli 1992. For the issue of the contribution of the Arab economy, see in addition to the positive opinions of Lombard 1972, Bolin 1939 and 1953, Spufford 1988, 50–2 (who aptly summarized the data then available), the utterly negative one of Himly 1955, and the skepticism of Cahen 1979.



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believed, at least in certain favored regions. Archaeology generally bears out the relative rarity of early medieval coin deposits.[5] No less important, the Frankish kings established a surprisingly effective control over the money circulating in their lands: foreign coins were not legal tender there. It is startling, for instance, to observe that only one Anglo-Saxon coin has turned up in excavations at Dorestad, one of the two main gateways for English trade with the Continent.[6] In one sense, the Carolingians were continuing royal tradition, since careful plotting of Byzantine coin finds in Merovingian Europe revealed imperial gold issues all around the Frankish frontiers, but rarely inside them.[7] Foreign coins that reached Frankish territory were melted and restruck as Frankish currency. On the other hand, though a Frankish traveler attests in the 860s that European coins traveled to Egypt frequently enough to have given rise to a recognized rate of exchange, none have so far turned up there.[8] This too is unsurprising, given the limited numbers of Frankish coins issued, their lack of status inside the Caliphate, and the poor state of reporting common through much of the Middle East. Even so, a few Carolingian coins are coming to light in Muslim Spain.

Italy holds the key to the Venetian riddle and it will be the focus of this chapter. In the century before Charlemagne conquered them, the Lombard principalities had used a gold coinage derived from the Roman empire. The areas still under Byzantine control, including Ravenna and Rome, naturally continued to use the emperor's gold coinage; recent archaeological evidence now hints that small silver coins may have rivaled copper for daily exchange.[9] Strikingly, the gold coins issued by both Italo-Byzantine and Lombard mints appear to have evolved together, away from the heavier and stricter standards of Constantinople (Ch. 21.2).

A study of records which mention coins in Italy has emphasized that the shift to the Carolingian silver standard occurred rather differently in different regions; it produced a monetary situation which was more complicated than the silver monometallism generally imagined.[10] Even though his home territories

5 Rovelli 1993a, on the Crypta Balbi site at Rome, and 1993b, on the testimony of Italian documents in the light of archaeology.

6 Dorestad: see Ch. 22.4. In general, on Carolingian attention to their coinage see Grierson 1965b, 534–5; cf. for Louis the Pious Coupland 1990; cf. Cahen 1979, 118, on the unlikelihood that Arab coins would survive this practice.

7 For the Merovingians: cf. Lafaurie 1960, 180–1, 190, and Lafaurie and Morrisson 1987, 46, 54–5.

8 Bernard, *Itinerarium*, 6, p. 311.

9 See e.g., Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 66, and Morrisson and Barrandon 1988 on the recent discovery of mid-8th-C. silver issues from Rome; cf. Arslan 1998, 434–8. For small change in the Lombard territories, see below, p. 364.

10 Rovelli 1992 has made a strong case that references to coinage in the fine clauses of the documents of the abbey of Farfa are not purely formulaic and that, outside the Po valley, Italian documents show a greater tenacity regarding gold coins than has previously been recognized. I follow her in distinguishing these different zones,



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had used silver coins for a century, Charlemagne at first maintained a gold currency in his new kingdom of the Po valley, as is well known. The Lombard mints shifted to silver in 781; starting in 793/4, royal coins issued on both sides of the Alps remained tightly coupled for the next half century.[11] The new transalpine monetary system consisted of silver pennies (*denarii*, abbreviated as d.) reckoned twelve to a shilling (*solidus*, abbreviated as s.), with twenty shillings amounting to a pound. Shillings and pounds existed only as units of account; but the denominations would endure for more than a millennium.

The new silver coinage took most thoroughly in the Po basin. The lands controlled by the church of Ravenna, on the other hand, seem to have remained bimetallic, if not predominantly a gold zone, through much of the ninth century. There is some reason to believe that new Byzantine gold coins continued to reach Ravenna long after the Franks seized control of northern Italy.[12] Records from Rome are scarcer than hen's teeth, but what we have suggests that some gold circulated alongside Carolingian-style silver, which the pope began to issue soon after the Frankish conquest in 774.[13] In central Italy, Farfa's rich archives indicate that even though the new silver coins triumphed, gold maintained a place there longer than has been recognized.

Where was the gold coming from? Byzantium and the Arab world are the likely suspects. Both have been claimed as the source for the gold coins which, we now know, circulated in northern and central Italy after the Frankish conquest.[14] The last systematic inventory of Arab coins and the texts which mention them in the Carolingian west appeared more than forty years ago.[15] In the meantime, new coins have come to light, and some of the old finds have been republished in much improved fashion; numismatic advances invite redatings for others. The catalogue of documentary mentions of the coins includes only a fraction of the relevant data from the eighth and ninth centuries, and the value of penal clauses for studying coin circulation has recently been vindicated.[16] This chapter will analyze the "virtual coins," the Arab and Byzantine coins mentioned by people of the Carolingian age, from Rome northwards. The next will survey the actual Arab and Byzantine coins discovered in and around the Carolingian empire, based on my new inventories of

Footnote 10 (*cont.*)
although our opinions may differ slightly about the relative importance of gold in the case of 9th-C. Farfa and Rome. She consciously excluded the Veneto from her study (112n8).

11 Following Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 208. On coin circulation across the Alps, see below, pp. 681–7.

12 Rovelli 1992, 126–33; she accepts (128) the presence of contemporary Constantinopolitan gold issues in the Museo Nazionale of Ravenna as probable evidence for the continuing import of Byzantine coinage in the 9th C.

13 Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 263; cf. 638.

14 Rovelli 1992.

15 Duplessy 1956; cf. the much larger but rather uncritical list of documentary mentions in Monneret de Villard 1919.

16 Rovelli 1992.



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them (Appendix 3). The combined testimony of virtual and real coins will lead us across the Carolingian landscape. The result will be to unveil the chief corridors of west European communication with the more advanced economies of the Arab world and Byzantium. It will also open up three more independent streams of evidence on communications at the origins of the early European economy.

## 1. On the tracks of the mancosus

Scholars have been discussing the medieval Latin word *mancosus* (also written *mancusus*, or anglicized as "mancus") since at least the nineteenth century. Two main alternatives emerged to explain it. Some reasoned that the term derived from the Latin adjective *mancus*, "defective," and designated the lightweight ("deficient") gold coins struck by Italo-Byzantine mints in the eighth century. Others connected the word with the Arabic *manqūsh*, past participle of the verb *naqash* "to strike" or "engrave," which in the expression *al dinar al manqūsh* means "engraved gold coins." By these lights, "mancosus" is an Arabic loan-word, which entered the Latin west along with the Arab coins it designated.[17] The term has since been found on actual dirhams, Arab silver coins, from our period, and has been used in connection with gold ones, known as dinars.[18] Consensus has now solidified around the Arabic derivation. In texts from Carolingian Italy, the word "meant either a dinar or its value in Carolingian currency."[19]

That the word does indeed refer to an Arab coin raises important questions. Where and when do such coins show up? What can the documents teach us about their role, if any, in the Carolingian economy? And what does that tell us about communications and the early European economy? Such an investigation ignores at its own peril the formal and juridical ("diplomatic") characteristics of the records that mention the coins, even though a strong argument has been made that fine clauses (*sanctiones*), which are a very different beast from price clauses (*dispositiones*) in the same document, reflect real coins. The regional patterns of the coin's documentary attestation have already cast light on the Italian monetary scene, and more can be gained.[20]

17 For the first point of view and a history of the discussion, see Grierson 1954, 1059–60n2 and 1066–9; in defense of the Arab origin: Duplessy 1956, 111–19. For a stimulating study of the penetration of Arab coinage into the richer written record of Catalonia after the floodgates of Sudan's gold had opened in the late 10th C., see Bonnassie 1975, 1: 372–86, as Adam Kosto has pointed out to me.

18 On dirhams of 787/8 and 911–13, and in connection with dinars, Linder Welin 1965.

19 Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 327; cf. e.g., Spufford 1988, 50.

20 By way of deeper background, Toubert 1973, 1: 558–608, magisterially depicted from documents the systemic patterns of coin circulation in Latium from the 10th to the 12th C.



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The term "mancosus" occurs over one hundred times in Latin documents of the eighth and ninth centuries.[21] Linguistically speaking, the very earliest forms of the term fluctuate in a way consistent with its foreign derivation.[22] Only about half of the earliest attestations specify that this was a gold coin. In other words, its species was fairly unambiguous, but perhaps not universally familiar.

The word fairly bursts upon the scene. Within twenty-two years, it appears in four different regions of the Italian peninsula and in Anglo-Saxon England (Map 11.1; Appendix 2, nos. 1, 19, 49, 55 and 57). The Italian regions are the Adriatic rim (Sesto al Reghena, 778), the Tyrrhenian seaboard (Rome, 781/2), the duchy of Spoleto (Rieti, July 786), and the upper Po plain (Milan, May 799). In 786, Offa, the king of Mercia, vowed to send 365 *mancusas* to St. Peter's, and his successor Coenwulf made good the promise, at least partially. The Roman connection is clear in this case too. By standards of eighth-century documentation, this is near contemporaneous.

Is the appearance of this term so swiftly in four different parts of Italy due to an accident of source preservation or to real historical change? The four regions can be seen as linked pairs. Although more than 250 km distant from Sesto, Milan lies on the western reaches of the river system which shapes the ecology of the upper Adriatic. And Rieti is only some 80 km inland from Rome, while the nearby abbey of Farfa, whose records preserve the document from Rieti, came under the

21 Duplessy 1956, 135–6, offered seven attestations from the 8th and 9th C., whereas Monneret de Villard 1919 had already assembled a larger set of Italian references; Brühl and Violante's commentary on the *Honorantie*, pp. 48–9 (and who still accepted the Latin derivation), added another ten from the 9th C.; Rovelli 1992 focuses particularly on the crucial data from Farfa. See Appendix 2 for sixty-one mentions down to 850.

22 The oldest attestation occurs in an original (*Sesto in Sylvis*, no. 2; Sesto al Reghena, January 778) and gives the noun form *mancoseos*, in the accusative. The suffix *-eo-/-io-* is normally connected with adjectives describing materials (e.g. *aureus*), or with loan words (e.g. *lancea*), and was not very productive in the Romance languages: Leumann *et al.* 1963–5, 1: 205–6, cf. Meyer-Lübke 1923, 2: 492–4. This most archaic form is very rare: I know two further cases, both copies: *Sesto in Sylvis*, no. 5, Senigallia, 9 October 808 (12th-C. copy); *Farfa*, no. 247, Aachen, 28 April 820 (BM 719, 11th-C. copy). A nominal form with a feminine ending but which is treated as a masculine occurs in a papal letter of 797 preserved among the letters of Alcuin: *Ep.* 127, 189.1: "tantos mancusas"; also in the exchange between King Coenwulf of Mercia and Leo III from 802, *apud* William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum*, 1.89 and 90 (JE 2511). The phonetic equivalence of "o" and "u" in late popular Latin is commonplace; so too the form *macosus*, attested alongside "mancosus" at Treviso in the late 8th C., displays a common phonetic development and tells us nothing about the root: Väänänen 1981, 36–7 and 63 respectively. Six of twelve occurrences from the 8th C. treat the word as an adjective, modifying the (substantivized adjectival) noun *solidus*; all are copies. One is early, dated s. IX[1] by its editor: *Treviso*, no. 11; cf. *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.509.4–5; *Farfa*, nos. 141, 150, 164 and, probably, 175. Thereafter both nominal and adjectival forms are common.



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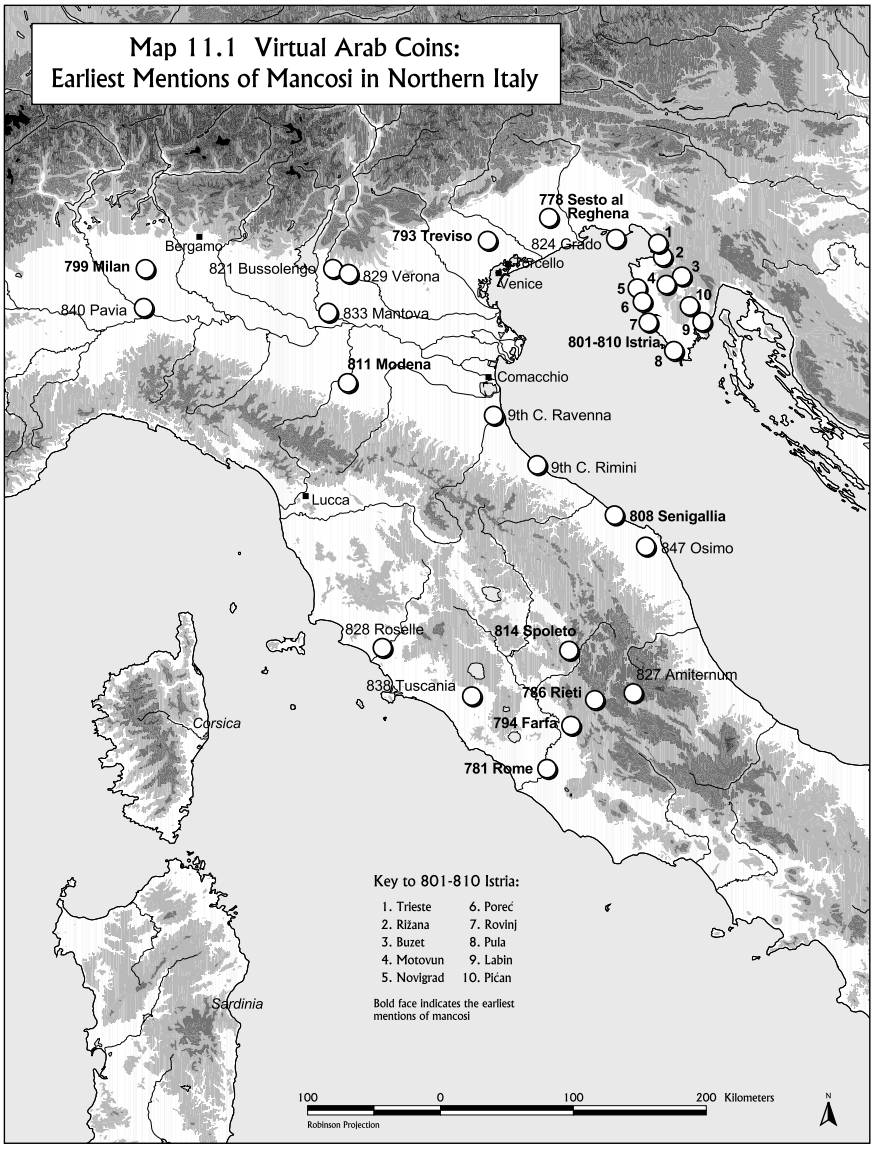




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control in 772 of the official in charge of the pope's wardrobe and other expenditures.[23] The quality of the archives varies greatly, from extremely poor in the Veneto and the duchy of Rome, to passably rich in the Po valley, and very rich in the southern reaches of Spoleto. The term appears earliest in the worst-documented regions. This combines with the near simultaneity and intervening distance to argue that coincidence of source preservation does not play a role here: something more interesting was afoot. The archival lode from the abbey of Farfa allows us to discern with unusual precision the circumstances in which the new coin appeared.

## *Farfa*

Right from the start, the mancosus and its variants occur most often in penalty clauses of private acts.[24] The clauses specify the fine to be paid by the offending party if the terms of a sale, rental agreement, or whatever, are not fully implemented. A large and continuous series of documents survives from Farfa. Although they are transmitted through an eleventh-century cartulary, thorough analysis and biting controversy have vindicated the care of its compiler, who emended and, occasionally, abbreviated his late Latin exemplars, but who substantially respected their content.[25] The relatively large number of acts (82, averaging 2.1 documents per annum) surviving from the duchy of Spoleto around the time that the new word appeared there invites closer scrutiny.[26] Three kinds of penalty formulas appear in Spoletan acts of the eighth century: spiritual, *poena dupli* (the penalty is specified as the double of the value of the transaction), and a monetary fine conveyed in a pecuniary clause. All trace their roots back to late antique documentary usage.[27] The pecuniary clause occurs most frequently in acts of sale and exchange, and also in agreements (*convenientiae*).[28] In this region,

23 See Ch. 21.3, on the Po economic corridor; *vestiarius* and Farfa: JE 2395, *Farfa*, no. 90.

24 Rovelli 1992, 113–19; cf. Appendix 2.

25 Zielinski 1972, 215. Kurze 1973 radically attacked Zielinski's conclusions, arguing from discrepancies between four surviving originals by certain notaries and analogous documents by the same notaries which are known only in the later compiler's transcriptions; Kurze assumed that the same notary always used an identical formulary. He observed possible abbreviations of penalty clauses by the compiler (439–41). Zielinski 1976 successfully defended his method and its essential conclusions. In any case the potential abbreviation of fine clauses does not affect what the compiler has preserved, viz., references to *mancosi*. Santoni 1991, 23–107 presents a good overview of the diplomatic characteristics of these records.

26 The number derives from Zielinski's count, from A.D. 775 to 787, nos. 64–104, and the first 42 items (A.D. 789–814) of his second list: 1972, 249–54.

27 *Ibid.*, 187–96. See also Santoni 1991, 26–7.

28 Zielinski 1972, 188.



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the actual phrasing of the pecuniary clause reached formulaic status only in the 790s. It then endured through the ninth century. In the nature of the beast, it is difficult to find fines that were actually collected. But they were taken very seriously indeed, as a few specific cases show.[29]

Despite their rather stereotyped character, systematic review of the monetary fines yields an important clue. From the beginning of the series in 718 down to the Frankish conquest, every monetary fine save two simply states the sum of gold coins which would constitute the penalty in case of non-compliance. The party who breached the legal agreement in question promised to pay various sums of gold coin (e.g., "we will pay . . . 20 shillings of gold") and still to comply with the terms of the agreement.[30] As late as March 772, the wording was unchanged.[31] The next fine clauses occur after the war and Frankish annexation, in property exchanges executed in 778. They are also the last pecuniary clauses prior to the appearance of mancosi at Farfa. Here the party which disturbs the agreement must pay to the other party fines of "one hundred *Luccan* shillings" and "forty *Luccan* shillings of gold," that is, not just gold coins but gold coins issued by the mint of Lucca.[32] After the conquest, Charlemagne continued for a while to mint gold coins in his Italian lands, including at Lucca. It is to these coins that the fines refer. Specifying from which mint the fine coins shall come is new. The new precision suggests new concern about the coinage. In fact, gold coins issued by the last Lombard king and by Charlemagne vary in their gold content.[33] Eight years before the mancosus appears in the Farfa documents, then, there was a new concern to specify the coinage in which fines might be paid in the future.

The first Farfa act to express a fine in mancosi is also a young notary's first document. Constantine drew it up in July 786 at Rieti to record a distinguished and

29 See the examples discussed in McCormick, "Coins in Documents."

30 "Componamus . . . auri solidos .xx." Zielinski 1972, 194; the two exceptions: the penalty was specified in pounds: *CDL* 5, no. 6: 2 lb. of gold, A.D. 745 or 749; no. 17, 40 lb. of silver (!), A.D. 752.

31 "Componam . . . auri solidos .xx." *CDL* 5, no. 58, charta offersionis, by the notary Stephen. Cf. *ibid.*, 5, nos. 1 (A.D. 718), 5 (745), 16 (751), 20 (753), 25 (757), 27 (757; on which see McCormick, "Coins in Documents"), 32 (761), 38 (764).

32 "Solidos centum lucanos," and "solidos auri quadraginta lucanos," *CDL* 5, no. 80 (=*Farfa*, no. 114) April 778, between Peter, bishop of Rieti, and Probatus, abbot of Farfa, and no. 85 (*Farfa*, no. 120) June 778, between the same Probatus and the notary Stephen, both drawn up at Rieti by the local notary Gudipert, on whom see Zielinski 1972, 129–30; the latter also (196) observed that after 774, in these documents penalty clauses with specific sums become increasingly identified with exchanges. This was perhaps intended to avoid disputes about the value of the property in question, which might have arisen if the double penalty were used.

33 Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 210; Grierson 1965b, 515; gold content in the Ilanz coins: Bernareggi 1977, 363–4; cf. 1983, 133.



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wealthy man's purchase of three houses from Farfa. He paid in cash and with a meadow which he had received from his brother, and he promised to pay a fine of "100 mancosi shillings of gold" if he failed to live up to the bargain.[34] In a time of uncertainty about the coinage, the abbey probably imposed this novel fine in Arab dinars on a young practitioner.[35] The end of the striking of gold tremisses in 781 does not suffice to explain why the notary used Arab dinars mancosi as the standard for the fine. Earlier Italian gold issues still circulated decades later.[36]

For at least the next half century, *all* pecuniary penalty clauses of Farfa documents involving alienations of property specify the fine in mancosi (Appendix 2, nos. 15–48), with two exceptions. The first is a settlement (*convenientia*) established at Rome, in the papal palace, to conclude a conflict opposing Farfa to one Maurus. Here the fine was so huge that much bigger units were needed: 30 lb. of gold.[37] The second, established at Rieti in 819 by a well-known notary (attested from 785 to 822), calls for a fine of "200 solidos franciscos."[38] These exceptions reinforce the conclusion that fine clauses were not empty formulas disconnected from contemporary economic realities. The substitution of "Frankish shillings" (i.e. value calculated in the newer Frankish-style silver pennies) shows continuing careful attention to the coinage of reference. By the same token, fines in Arab dinars are common, but not universal, in the seventy rent contracts preserved

34 The buyer Paul identifies himself as "falconer," and subscribes as "gasindius"; both terms indicate that he was from the royal or ducal entourage: *CDL* 5, no. 99 (*Farfa*, no. 141). Constantine's career continued for 45 more years, Zielinski 1972, 137.

35 *Ibid.*, 200–1, observes a slip in the formulary which points to Constantine's youth; such deviations were not unusual at the beginning of a notarial career (*ibid.*, 214). Constantine also used a fine in mancosi in a rent contract he drew up in January 792: *Liber largitorius*, no. 1.

36 Paul states that he had paid for the houses in gold (or possibly, some other goods) worth 150 Luccan shillings: "in auro appretiato solidos lucanos .cl." The old gold coins of Lucca continue to crop up in Farfa documents for a couple of decades, e.g., a fine of 50 "auri solidos lucanos," in 801: *Liber largitorius*, no. 2. Reckoning with gold tremisses from the mint of Lucca, if they weighed the maximum 1.1 g reported from surviving coins, a notional solidus would have weighed 3.3 g: ×150 = 495 g. Taking into account their very debased fineness which varied between 45 and 55 percent gold, they would have been equivalent, at most, to 222–272 g of pure gold. On the other hand, 100 dinar manqush at 4.25 g = 425 g. If the dinars were of the high fineness typical of the era, then in gold content the fine would in fact have approximated double the value of the Luccan shillings used in the purchase (but not the meadow). In other words, the penalty clause in mancosi could be construed to correspond to a more precise variant on the dominant formula of the *poena dupli* prevalent in preconquest documents from this series.

37 JE 2525, *Farfa*, no. 199, A.D. 813. Zielinski 1972, 196n322 accepts the opinion that fines in pounds suggest Frankish influence. It could equally reflect continuity with late Roman and Byzantine practice, or simply the very high value at stake.

38 Opteramus, notary at Rieti: *Farfa*, no. 239, 2 May 819; cf. Zielinski 1972, 136–7.



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from Farfa between 792 and 896.[39] When penalties are assessed in mancosi, moreover, the amounts vary, a further indication that they were more than mere formulas.[40]

Although private acts from Farfa continued to specify fines in gold mancosi down to the end of the ninth century, penalties in silver start appearing in 819. Silver fines grew increasingly common in pecuniary clauses.[41] After 850, the balance swung dramatically to silver, at first in the lease contracts and then, somewhat later, in other acts.[42] Even as gold dinars reigned supreme in Farfa's fine clauses before 850, they were almost totally absent from the numerous transactions using currency recorded by these same acts. The sole exception is telling.[43]

Sometime between about 790 and 802, two brothers obtained a hefty loan from Abbot Mauroald, in the form of 20 gold mancosi and 4 lb. of silver.[44] Late in 802 or in 803, the brothers took out a second loan from Mauroald's successor. It was even larger, comprising 6 lb. of silver and two textiles, valued at 60 mancosi. When they proved unable to pay up, the brothers were forced to cede almost all of their property to the abbey, on 18 February 804. From the brothers' misfortune we learn that the abbot had a personal hoard of dinars. Furthermore, this coin was familiar enough to serve as the standard for assigning value to the pieces of precious textile which supplemented cash or specie in the second transaction.

39 They alternate with fines expressed in *solidi Lucani*, *francisci*, *argenti* etc. For the latter, *Liber largitorius*, nos. 2, 5, 7, 9, 14, etc. Fines in mancosi: nos. 1, 8, 10, 12 etc. See in general Rovelli 1992, 114–24.

40 Rovelli 1992; Studtmann 1932, 348–52. The forty-six penalties assessed in mancosi between 786 and 898 come in sixteen different amounts; fines of 20 and 200 dinars occur most frequently (eight and seven times or 17 and 15 percent respectively), but the range runs from 10 (twice) to 5,000.

41 The first silver pecuniary clauses appear in a transaction involving the usufruct of property (*Farfa*, no. 239, 2 May 819 and *Liber largitorius*, no. 5, 3 May 819, which appear to be copies of the same act for, respectively, the monastery and the recipients). Gold nonetheless predominates in pecuniary clauses down to c. 850, the only fines in silver coinage, after 819, being ones specified in 828 and 848: *Liber largitorius*, nos. 7 and 14. Note, however, that *Liber largitorius* specifies fines in gold shillings of Lucca in 801 (no. 2) and in unspecified gold shillings in 835 (no. 9).

42 E.g., lease contracts: 850–75: nine in mancosi (including one in silver mancosi and one of unspecified metal: *Liber largitorius*, nos. 25 and 40) as opposed to twenty-two in silver *solidi*; 876–900: two in mancosi as opposed to sixteen in silver shillings, with four more in unspecified *solidi*. Cf. in general Rovelli 1992, 120–1.

43 The sale to the abbey in 874 of property at Carsulae (some 10 km northeast of Terni) is for 2 *silver* mancosi: *Farfa*, no. 312; on which see below, n45.

44 *Farfa*, no. 175; nos. 157–8 (12 August 802 and undated) are surely connected with this transaction, since the brothers bequeath their very substantial property to abbot Mauroald if they should not return from the impending campaign against Benevento.



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So Arab gold coins are mentioned in a document drawn up at Rieti in 786. Real dinars certainly reached the area, since the abbot of Farfa lent twenty of them around 800. Their value was too great for the kind of transaction which was recorded most commonly in this area; maybe they were not abundant enough in any case. But this would only have enhanced their deterrent power as fines. Farfa's records show that Arab dinars served as a kind of reserve coinage which people hoarded. Their entry into the legal formulas of acts occurs at a time and place when the elite whose deeds survive in the Farfa documents were worried about the coinage. They had recently begun to specify what kind of coins would be acceptable for resolving fines, as political and probably economic change too rippled through the southernmost area of Charlemagne's new empire. All of this hints that the coins had been long enough in the region to command respect; but not long enough, or in number enough, to supplant the established order, until that order wavered. In the second half of the ninth century, they became rarer and rarer in the documents, suggesting that they were also becoming so in reality. Their role was increasingly supplanted by silver coinage, including a money of account connected with the mancosus.[45] But Farfa was not some isolated outpost. It had close personal ties with a key administrator of the wealth of the church of Rome. What is more, the abbey lay between two key routes linking Rome to the Adriatic coast, the Via Salaria and the Via Flaminia. Both of these connections are significant for the story of the mancosi.

## *Dinars on the Adriatic rim*

The basic pattern is clear: fine clauses in gold mancosi, a local function as a kind of reserve or savings coinage, acknowledged status as a commonly shared standard of value, and finally diminishing importance, as "silver mancosi" and other silver coins or units of account replace it. Few other microregions of Carolingian Italy are so richly and continuously documented, but we may wonder whether the pattern recurs where mancosi show up at the same time. Around the Adriatic rim (Map 18.1), the pattern does indeed hold: mancosi first appear as a fine coinage at Sesto al Reghena. Even after centuries of alluviation, the abbey still stands only 26 km from the Adriatic, on a rise 15 m above sea level, halfway between Jesolo and Grado. These dinars are documented barely a year after Charlemagne had

45 A penalty was fixed in silver mancosi for the first time in Farfa documents in 859: *Liber largitorius*, no. 25. As Carolingian rule evaporated, we find in 874 the first purchase recorded for the sum of 2 silver mancosi: *Farfa*, no. 312. But these silver mancosi represent something quite different from the gold dinars of the 8th C., a money of account, i.e. silver coins to the value of a gold mancosus: Rovelli 1992, 119; see also McCormick, "Coins in Documents."



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swooped into Friuli to crush a revolt arising in this very region. The next three fines fixed in dinars crop up about 50 km away, in the Carolingian border post of Treviso, between 793 and 802 (Appendix 2, nos. 1–5). On the other side of the frontier was Venice.

Dinars also functioned as a standard of value. Sometime between 801 and 810, leading inhabitants of recently annexed Istria (mod. Croatia) testified to Charlemagne's special envoys about the abuses that had attended the transition from Byzantine to Frankish rule.[46] Much of the criticism was directed against the Frankish-appointed duke John. According to the locals, he had continued to collect the old taxes which their towns used to pay under the Byzantines. Now, however, he pocketed them, even as he exploited the population without restraint. The cash values of the different taxes are calculated in terms of gold mancosi. The plea transmits to us the late popular Latin of the locals' oral testimony. It was manifestly a tense situation.

Heading 9: where you asked us about the fiscal payments of our Lords which the Greeks used to control until the day when we came into the control of our Lords [Charlemagne and Pippin, king of Italy], we're telling the truth: from the city of Pula (It. Pola), 66 mancosi shillings; from Rovinj (Rovigno), 40 mancosi shillings; from Poreć (Parenzo), 66; the Trieste *numerus*, 60 mancosi; from Labin (Albona), 30 mancosi; from Pićan (Pedena), 20 mancosi; from Motovun (Montona), 30 mancosi; from Buzet (Pinguente), 20 mancosi; the chancellor (*cancellarius*) of Novigrad (Cittanova), 12 mancosi, which together adds up to 344 mancosos. In the days of the Greeks, one took these shillings to the palace [in Constantinople]. After John became duke, he got these shillings for his own use and he didn't say they were fiscal payments of the palace. Similarly he has the estate of Orcio . . . with many olive groves . . . And he has fisheries whence he gets more than 50 mancosi shillings per year, not to mention plenty for his table. All these things the duke controls, except the 344 shillings as written above, which ought to go to the palace.[47]

46 *Rižana Plea*; see also McCormick 1998b, 47–51. The penalty clause for the settlement imposed by Charlemagne's *missi dominici* reads (*Plea*, 68.5): "componat coactus in sacro pallatio auro mancosos L. nouem." which the editors take to mean "9 lb. in gold mancosi." The unique MS witness is late, the s. XVI Codice Trevisano, Venice, Archivio di Stato, cc. 21–3, and is reproduced by Petranović and Margetić.

47 The entire series of complaints directed against John begins at the end of the *capitula* against the bishops: *Rižana Plea*, 60.26–66.19. The quotation comes from 60.26–62.4: "VIIII Capitulo. Unde nos interrogastis de justitiis dominorum nostrorum quas Greci ad suas tenuerunt manus usque ab illo dies quo ad manus dominorum nostrorum peruenimus, dicimus veritatem: de ciuitate Pollensi solidi mancosi sexaginta et sex; numerus Tergestinus mancosos sexaginta; de Albona mancosos triginta; de Pedena mancosos XX; de Montauna mancosos 30; de Pinguente mancosos XX; cancellarius Ciuitatis nouę, mancosos XII, qui faciunt insimul mancosos 344. Isti solidi tempore Grecorum in pallatio eos portabat. Postquam Ioannes deuenit in ducatu ad suum opus istos solidos habuit et non dixit quod iustitia pallatii fuissent. Item habet casale Orcionis cum oliuetis multis . . ."



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That the Istrians mentioned mancosi in sworn testimony about taxes dating back to the period of Byzantine rule was once taken to mean that these coins dated from that period and hence were not Arab dinars at all.[48] Since the meaning of mancosus has now been settled on independent evidence, that interpretation is clearly not correct. On the contrary, the list of Byzantine tax payments heads all the traditional sources of income which *were still going* to John. These the locals list, in order to underscore the unjustified nature of John's new exactions which had never existed under Byzantine rule.[49] Combined with the Istrians' assertion that the fiscal payments in dinars "ought to go to the palace," it seems clear that these traditional payments were still being made (or at least demanded by John) at the time of the inquest. This explains why they were levied in the new coinage of mancosi, rather than the old Byzantine gold shillings (*solidi*). The dinars moreover represented a clear standard of value in the eyes of these early ninth-century Istrians, since they appraise in terms of *manqūsh* the substantial annual profit the duke was currently deriving from his fisheries. On the eastern edge of the Venetian duchy, Arab dinars had become the money of reference and real payments in the opening years of the ninth century.

We already know Fortunatus of Grado. He figured prominently (and controversially) at this very inquest. He also sheds more light on the currency of Arab dinars in the Veneto. Around 824–25, apparently while still in Francia, the dying patriarch dictated his will.[50] Even as his final hours approached, Fortunatus was proud of his expenditures and recalled the value of his various gifts with a precision which, one suspects, was not unrelated to a desire to shield whatever assets he may have been able to transfer to his family. Table 11.1 recapitulates the precious metals he mentions and indicates the personal wealth of one of the richest and most influential men in the Veneto. The role of Arab dinars in that wealth is revealing.

Footnote 47 (*cont.*)
Properties and the fisheries whose revenues the duke enjoyed conclude the Istrians' account of the duke's continuing imperial taxes or *iustitiae* and incomes; the Istrians then make their final complaint with a list of new exactions John was extracting by force. "Piscationes vero habet unde illis veniunt per annum amplius quam quinquaginta solidi mancosi absque sua mensa ad satietatem. Omnia ista dux ad suam tenet manum exceptis illis 344 solidos sicut supra scriptum est, quod in pallatio debent ambulare. De forcia unde interrogastis . . ." I take *portabat* as a 3rd person active of indeterminate subject; a phonetic deformation of *portaba<n>t*, "they took," or even an identification of the subject with John are also philologically defensible interpretations. Cf. Väänänen 1981, 129.

48 Grierson 1954, 1071.

49 E.g. *Rižana Plea*, 64.8–66.9: "Ista omnia ad suum opus habet dux noster Ioannes *quod numquam habuit magister militum Greçorum* . . ." 66.14: "Omnes istas angarias et superpostas quae praedicte sunt violenter facimus quod *parentes nostri numquam fecerunt*."

50 See Pros.; cf. above, p. 258. See for silks in this will: Ch. 24n120.



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TABLE 11.1
Precious metals mentioned in the will of Fortunatus of Grado, c. 824–25

| Coins or metal | Object | Item no. |
|---|---|---|
| 20 mancosos | paid for textiles purchased from bishop Christopher | 1 |
| 31 solid(os) auri mancosos | to enlarge a small censer of gold and silver | 2 |
| 70 s(olidi) | value of gilded and silver-plated vessels | 3 |
| 40 s. | value of a curtain received for free | 4 |
| 15 s. | price of a textile | 5 |
| 3 or 4 <lb.?> of silver | to make liturgical furniture | 6 |
| 10 lb. (gold) | paid for a *capsa* purchased at Constantinople | 7 |
| 12 lb. (gold) | for gilding | 8 |
| 15 lb. (gold) | paid at Constantinople for another *capsa* | 9 |
| 10 lb. silver | given to bishop Agaocor | 10 |
| 30 lb. silver | gift to monastery of the Virgin | 11 |
| 2 lb. silver | to monastery of St. Julian | 12 |
| "worth more than 50 or 60 *mancusi*, God knows" | 12 horses | 13 |
| 33 *manchosos* by weight | *auro facto* | 14 |
| 72 lb. silver (61 lb. here with me) | *argento facto de mesa* | 15 |
| 114 *manchosos* by weight | a small and poorly made chalice | 16 |
| 50 *manchosos* | with good gems, sent to Frankland to improve that chalice | 17 |

*Source: Documenti di Venezia*, no. 45, pp. 75–8.

Because they are not more precisely identified, items 3, 4 and 5 might conceivably have been in Byzantine or Frankish shillings, although it seems more likely that, just as in the Rižana Plea they would have been in the only other coin which Fortunatus specifies, gold *solidi mancosi*. Items 7 and 9 will have been in Byzantine *solidi*, the sole coinage which could have been used at Constantinople for these purchases. Leaving aside these questionable cases, of the six explicit mentions of dinars, two (items 14, 16) are used as measures of weight, as is common for coins in pre-modern economies. Two more (items 2, 17) designate actual coins meant to be melted down and incorporated into works of art (and also to pay for the work?), one (item 1) specifies the coins actually paid for a



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textile, and the other (item 13) serves a standard for appraising horses. Like the abbot of Farfa and the Istrians, Fortunatus was accustomed to value expensive objects in terms of dinars. He also had a supply of them on hand, which he recycled into works of art. He had sent 50 mancosi to Frankland to supply gold for one of his liturgical vessels. Finally, Fortunatus had actually spent mancosi, just as the Istrians paid them as taxes. Arab dinars circulated inside the duchy of Venice, as well as on its edges. Indeed, in the 820s it was they that supplied the standard of reference for appraising goods, *not* the Byzantine coins one would expect, given Venice's political identification with Constantinople.

Only two Venetian acts survive from the earlier ninth century. Neither explicitly mentions dinars, but a third document shows that in 840, Venetians still reckoned value in mancosi. The treaty with Emperor Lothar regulated Venetian relations with their neighbors. It derives in some measure from similiar, earlier treaties established with Charlemagne and Louis the Pious, if not still earlier ones with Lombard rulers. The pact refers repeatedly to coins for fines, but they are identified only as gold *solidi*.[51] Only toward the very end do mancosi make their appearance, when the number of oaths required in a conflict is determined by the value of the object at issue, as determined in mancosi. Articles worth less than 6 dinars require one man's oath; articles valued at from 6 to 12 mancosi require two oath helpers, with one additional man for every 12 dinars.[52]

A few decades later, dinars were still available just across the border. The Carolingian margrave of Friuli bequeathed 100 to his son, according to his will, drawn up in the county of Treviso in 863/4.[53] Mancosi also served occasionally for

51 *Pactum Hlotharii I*, Pavia 840, 130.14; 132.14, 17 etc. The two Venetian acts in question are the foundation act of 819 of the abbey of St. Hilary, later Sts. Hilary and Benedict, *Ilario e Benedetto*, no. 1, which mentions no coinage, and Doge Justinian's will of 828/9 (*ibid.*, no. 2), which deals mostly in sums far too large for individual coins to be mentioned. The sums are nonetheless mostly identified explicitly as silver: 160 lb., 60 lb., 100 lb., 50 lb., (p. 22–3; cf. however 200 lb. and 1,200 lb. which are not so identified, p. 21). The only coins mentioned are the famous *laboratorii solidi* which the doge had invested in a merchant voyage.

52 Up to 12 lb. "Veneticorum," which is supposed to add up to twelve men. Although the text seems unclear, it was repeated in subsequent treaties without alteration. It appears to suggest that in 840, mancosi were or could be reckoned constituent coins of a Venetian pound. Could this mean that we are already dealing with silver mancosi here? *Pactum Hlotharii*, 135.26–31. Venice certainly issued silver coinage under Louis the Pious: Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 217. Another possibility is that the text is unreliable or interpolated, notwithstanding BM 1067. Precisely this detail of "Venetian lb.," along with the presence of mancosi, helped lead one scholar to the conclusion – not otherwise accepted in the literature – that the document could not come from the 9th C., but was rather a 10th-C. act due to Lothar II of Italy, son of Hugh of Provence (931–57): Papadopoli 1893, 26–30.

53 *Cysoing*, no. 1, cf. Krahwinkel 1992, 261–5.



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payments of rent or sale further south on the Adriatic rim, at Ravenna.[54] Some 150 km inland, in 811, a long-term lease scheduled annual payments to the church of Modena of one mancosus "in gold or silver," one of the earliest instances in which the Arab coin served as a unit of account for other, possibly less stable currencies.[55]

At the foot of the Alps, the powerfully fortified episcopal town of Verona guards the entrance to the Brenner pass complex. It lies on the fringes of the Adriatic region, from whose shore it is about 100 km distant; the Adige river and the Roman roads made for easy connections to the sea. Verona's numerous records show a light presence of the new coins. Mancosi crop up here and there in penalty clauses. For instance, the only use of a fine in mancosi among Lothar I's diplomas of unchallenged genuineness occurs in a court plea which is rendered in the form of a privilege. This act restores to the abbey of St. Zeno a local wood which the count had usurped.[56]

## *Dinars elsewhere in Italy*

Carolingian monometallism was strongest in the Po valley. Accordingly, the mancosus makes only a brief appearance far up the Po and that involves Farfa once again. Outside royal diplomata, I have found it only in May 799, in a rent agreement drawn up in Milan between a resident of that city and the abbey of Farfa. Once again, dinars are used as a reliable future standard of value at a moment of great political uncertainty. The renter promised to make an annual payment equivalent to 10 mancosi in gold, silver or textiles.[57] Otherwise, mancosi occur in this rather well-documented region only in penal clauses of diplomata, and only after 850.

Along the Tyrrhenian seaboard (Appendix 2, nos. 49–54), the mancosus first appears in Rome in a senior church official's bequest. This Mastalus had left his

54 *Breviarium ecclesiae Ravennatis*, nos. 50, 103 and 162 (1–3 *mancosi*); *Papiri diplomatici*, no. 126 (damaged; sale for 300 mancosi). The metal is not specified, so it is not impossible that these refer to silver mancosi. Gorini 1985, 65–6 and Rovelli 1992, 128 believe that the first three designate gold dinars.

55 *Modena*, no. 4.

56 D Loth I, no. 11 of 833, 1000 *mancusi auri obrizi*; Cf. D Ch III, no. 76, of 883, issued at Verona and concerning property in the valley of Paltena, just north of Quinto di Paltena, 11 km from Verona. An early case of a similar penalty whose exact location is unclear concerns an Italian property of an abbey in the Swiss Alps: *St. Gall*, 2, Appendix, no. 15.

57 *Farfa*, no. 163. The contract was established in the weeks following the toppling and mutilation of Pope Leo III on 25 April. Mauroald, abbot of Farfa, subscribes and is apparently present at Milan. He may therefore have been one of the unidentified church and lay leaders who traveled north with the deposed pope and referred to in the *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.5.29–32.



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property to Pope Hadrian I. His heirs completed the gift by selling their remaining shares of the property to the pope for 200 gold *solidi mancusi* and then giving the 200 *mancusi* to the pope, in late 781 or 782. The phrasing suggests that coins changed hands: Arab dinars were used for very high value transactions among the social elite of the duchy of Rome, even after the papal mint had begun striking silver coins.[58] Dinars were still being used in the same way half a century later, since one of the exceedingly rare archival documents from Carolingian Rome documents the sale of some local properties for 150 mancosi.[59] In 857 and 866, two more acts reveal in Rome itself annual rents of 2 and 4 gold solidi, which may refer to mancosi.[60] Further north in the papal territories, mancosi crop up twice in penalty clauses of substantial transactions involving Monte Amiata.[61]

All of this shows that Arab gold coins were known in Italy, and that they saw limited use for certain kinds of transactions. They supplied a recognized standard of value, they were the kind of reserve coinage that wealthy individuals hoarded in relatively small numbers, and they were familiar enough to supply a recognized and painful standard for penalty. Only in the Veneto do they appear to be extensively and even regularly used. So far, the total of "virtual" gold coins we have actually encountered *outside penalty clauses* numbers more than 1,200. They are all in Italy, or in Anglo-Saxon documents connected with Italy. North of the Alps, references to the coins are very rare. The Carolingian courtier Theodulf of Orleans nonetheless expected his audience in the royal household to appreciate

58 *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.509.1–5: "Huius denique temporibus defunctus Mastalus primicerius reliquit pro anima sua in potestate praedicti almi pontificis pauperibus Christi de sua propria hereditate erogari, quatenus ex uno consensu heredes praedicti Mastali dederunt atque venundaverunt eidem magni [!] praesuli fundis [!] atque casalibus una cum ecclesia sancti Leucii portionem eis conpetentibus, posita via Flamminea, miliario ab urbe Roma plus minus V, in auri solidos mancusos numero CC, quos et pro anima iamfati Mastali heredes eius Christo dederunt," etc. The transaction is recorded in the segment of the papal biography dedicated to the indiction which ran from 1 September 781 to 31 August 782. For the date see Geertman 1974, 12–13; cf. Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 263 on papal coins.

59 *Subiaco*, no. 60, A.D. 837: "auri solidi mancusi boni ebritias." The last word is a corruption of *obryzum*, i.e. "refined gold." For a similar combination of these terms, see the penal clause of D Loth I, no. 11.

60 *Subiaco*, nos. 87 and 83, respectively.

61 They are a very small fraction of the numerous documents which have survived from this house. The one is a loan of 5 lb. of silver, June 828, Roselle (some 6 km north of Grosseto) with a penalty of 200 mancosi; the other transaction (March 838), connected with Tuscania, is of unspecified value. But its formulation and exceptionally capable notary suggest special concerns, while its 1,000 mancosi fine is very high for a non-royal document: *Monte Amiata*, nos. 107 and 117 respectively; on the notary of 117, editor's note. Although the former document does not specify gold, the sum and occurrence in a penalty clause suggest that such is the case.



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his elegant, if elliptical, allusion to dinars.[62] In Italy, the dinars first appear in times and places rife with political change and uncertainty, when appeal to an external coinage of great value and reputation was particularly desirable. They occur in the northern Adriatic, and along the Tyrrhenian seaboard and in places closely connected with these two areas. And, as our merchant of Venice has shown (Ch. 9.1), these are places that enjoyed commercial contacts with the Arab world. With respect to the broader discussion of the presence of gold, it is important to remember that Arab gold was not alone in northern Italy. In the documents, Lombard and Carolingian gold issues continue to show up for a generation after they ceased to be struck; in the territory of the former exarchate of Ravenna, documents refer exclusively to rents in gold *solidi* until around 816. Silver began gaining ground there c. 818–34. Ravenna's gold *solidi* were presumably (but not certainly) mostly Byzantine, whether or not the old monetary stock was reinforced by new coins arriving from the southern Italian provinces which remained Byzantine, from Constantinople, or even the Lombard principality of Benevento, which stuck to gold.[63]

## 2. Silver mancosi

The question of foreign silver coins is more complicated. So far only one payment referring to Byzantine silver coins (*miliaresia*) has come to light in Carolingian territory, and that is from the Po valley. It too probably reflects contemporary anxiety about the coinage.[64] Beginning in 828, Italian documents refer to "mancosi of

62 For Theodulf's dinars, see Ch. 12.2. The inventory of the monastery of St. Trond (Sint-Truiden) of 15 August 870, preserved c. 1114–15 by Rudolph of Saint Trond, in his *Gesta abbatum Trudonensium*, I, 3, *MGH SS* 10.231.6 (on which work see McCormick 1979, 223–6), reports 5 mancosi weighing 6 d., which appears impossible (but sustained by the MSS: Bloch 1933, 14n2), and has prompted efforts to emend the text or interpret mancosus differently. The oft-cited *Sermo de relatione corporis beati Vedasti* (*BHL* 8516), 4, *MGH SS* 15.1.402.40–1 is less helpful, since this rather rhetorical sermon calls the saint's relics "more precious than all Arab gold," "pretiosiorem omni auro Arabico." The phrase may have a contemporary connotation but surely reflects the Bible, e.g. Ps. 71, 15, and the association of the Queen of Sheba's gold with Arabia (3 Reg. 10, 2). The gloss on Prudentius' *aureos* which Du Cange 1883–7, 5: 209, attributes to Iso of St. Gall may actually be by Remigius of Auxerre (d. 871): Worstbrock 1983, 427.

63 Rovelli 1992, 118 and 126–33; cf. the make-up of the hoards of mixed gold issues: Appendix 3, A23, A32, A34, A38.

64 *Codex diplomaticus Langobardiae*, no. 68, 10 May 795, in the vicinity of Bergamo, in which the price for the sale of land is fixed at 43 silver shillings, further specified as "per unumquemque sol(idum) miliaresis sex." Cf. Rovelli 1992, 135. This means that the Byzantine *miliaresion* was certainly familiar at this time and place. Whether it also means that the payment occurred in *miliaresia* is not so clear. The date suggests



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silver."[65] One or two probably refer to Arab dirhams. But on most occasions, "silver mancosi" means a unit of account which was the equivalent in Carolingian silver pennies of one gold *dinar manqūsh*, and which would become prevalent in the tenth century.[66]

Documentary references to silver mancosi fall into two phases. The earlier precedes the bulk of the evidence by two decades and comes in Verona (Appendix 2, nos. 9, 10, 15, 54, 60). The second phase begins toward mid-century, and centers on Rome and the Sabine. The very first act to mention silver mancosi is a loan agreement which had been entered into no later than the opening months of 821. A man had pledged his land to the priest of Bussolengo (a small town some 6 km up the Adige river from Verona) in return for 2 silver mancosi and 20 silver pennies. When he failed to repay the sum within the specified four years, he was forced to sign over the land.[67] This sounds as if the borrower of 821 had actually received two silver dirhams. A few years later, in 829, a deacon purchased for six mancosi what must have been substantial property in Verona. This is the earliest text I have found which gives what would become a traditional equivalent in Carolingian currency: each mancosus, we are told, is worth 30 silver pennies. The exchange rate makes abundantly clear that here the real or notional mancosi are of gold.[68] The wide discrepancy in intrinsic value, making 30 d. (i.e. roughly

Footnote 64 (*cont.*)
an explanation. In 793/4, the Lombard kingdom switched over to the new, heavier weight Carolingian silver penny of 1.7 g. Early in 795, they probably still circulated next to the old silver pennies, weighing c. 1.3 g. To clarify which of the identically named Carolingian coins were used in this sale, the notary specified the approximate weight in terms of a recognized, independent silver coin, the Byzantine *miliaresion*. The theoretical weight of 6 *miliaresia* (6×2.27 g=13.62 g) approximates the theoretical weight of 1 shilling of the old light pennies (1 s.=12 d. at 1.3 g each, i.e. 15.6 g) closely enough to make clear that it is they that are meant, rather than one shilling of the new pennies (1 s.=12 d. at 1.7 g each, i.e. 20.4 g).

65 Expressed variously as "argento mancusos," "argenti," and "in," "de," or "per argento [!]." For suspicion of the 815 document cited by Rovelli 1992, 119n24, see below, n68.

66 Rovelli 1992, 119, and 1993, 555–6, developing the observation of Toubert 1973, 1: 566–8n1 for 10th-C. records.

67 *Verona*, no. 124, February 825. The text reads: ". . . et pro ipsa fiducia recepit ego antedictus Gisulf<u> [!] da ipso Gisem<pa>ldo presbitero <argento mancuso>s duos et <dena>rios XX . . ." The original is damaged; the complete text is nevertheless preserved in two independent 18th-C. copies which appear unobjectionable. The money is referred to later in the text as "ipso argento."

68 *Verona*, no. 131, 7 September 829: "precio finito mancosos sex et per unumquemque mancoso denarios treginta." The deacon Gisulf mentioned here is presumably not identical to the Gisulf mentioned in *Verona*, no. 124. The only other equivalence that I know at so early a date gives the same rate and comes in a diploma of Louis the Pious issued at Aachen in 815, according to which the monastery of St. Zeno of Verona owes the local bishop an annual census of 20 *manculos* (surely to be emended to *mancusos*) or 50 silver solidi, *Verona*, no. 117; cf.



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1.7 g×30=50 g of silver) the equivalent of one Arab coin rules out the possibility that this *manqūsh* is a silver dirham, which would have weighed no more than 2.97 g. The deal furnishes welcome insight into gold and silver ratios.[69] The text leaves open whether the Veronese were referring to a unit of account or actual gold coins. However, the fact that the sum is not given in the round Carolingian units of account to which it equates (i.e. 15 shillings), reinforces the possibility that actual gold mancosi changed hands here.[70] But even if we are looking at gold *manqūsh*, the equivalence and its identity with the tenth-century rate show that a standard exchange rate between gold mancosi and silver pennies was gaining ground. This was the necessary first step for a unit of account. The same notary, the subdeacon "Valenti" who writes in the local Veronese script, established another document of sale in 832. In this act payment was made in goods, but the unspecified goods are evaluated at 2 mancosi and 10 d. The fact that this transaction is *not* paid for in coins, and that the value is calculated to a fraction (10 d.) proves that (gold) mancosi as a recognized standard of value have become a unit of account.[71]

Why a unit of account distinct from the standard Carolingian ones of shillings and pounds – the same value could have been expressed as 5 shillings and 10 pence – should have come into use in the region of Verona in the 820s and 830s is unclear. One tempting explanation would be that real dinars were sufficiently common for expensive transactions to compete with Carolingian issues when people imagined value. As has been observed, this exchange rate offered a handy bridge between the Arab gold coins and the Carolingian silver ones.[72] It also lent itself to easy division by either two or three (which is probably why the monetary system of the Romans, medievals and early moderns was duodecimal in the first place).

Finally in 847, another sale was recorded at Verona for five mancosi "*argento*." The transaction among relatives concerned a vineyard, usually one of the most

BM 597. But the original does not survive, and the diploma has been tampered with (cf. BZiel 1991, 112). This passage, of obvious interest at Verona, does *not* occur in the confirmation by Louis II, D L II, no. 13, 24 August 853. It must be reckoned suspect, pending further investigation.

69 The equivalence of a gold coin which weighed 4.25 g to 50 g of silver yields a gold to silver value ratio of 1 to 11.76, which confirms Spufford's deduction that Charles the Bald's measures reveal a ratio of 1:12: Spufford 1988, 51; cf. also Rovelli 1993c, 555–6.

70 At this rate of exchange, 6 mancosi were the equivalent of 180 *denarii*. 180 d. were the exact equivalent of 15 (silver) shillings, the Carolingian unit of account which is used elsewhere in Verona documents, which would have been just as easy to specify as 6 mancosi.

71 *Verona*, no. 135, 5 October 832: "pretio finito per merce ualente <mancosos duo et> denarios decim." The key words were lost when the original was damaged in the flood of 1882; again, they are preserved in two independent and careful copies of the 18th C. and are unobjectionable.

72 Rovelli 1993c, 555–6.



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expensive properties in this period. This would imply that (gold) mancosi were again used as a unit of account for silver coins.[73] The existence of these sales for mancosi of silver pennies makes uncertain whether a handful of other rents and ambiguous mentions of mancosi in northern Italy refer to dinars, dirhams, or a unit of account. In any case, the undoubted use of gold mancosi as a standard of value in silver coins reflects Verona's relations with the Adriatic rim, where gold dinars circulated freely. This north Italian unit of account would be taken over in the papal territories at mid-century, and go on to have a long life.[74] In other words, although some few instances of silver mancosi around the Italian peninsula may reflect the presence of silver dirhams, most of them refer to a money of account derived from the silver value of the gold mancosus. This money of account would flourish in the tenth century.

The archival riches of Carolingian Italy document with considerable precision the sudden appearance of Arab gold coins in the last quarter of the eighth century, in several different (but linked) regions of the northern half of the peninsula. Silver dirhams are less well recorded, but present. Copper coins of any sort fell below the threshold of value which it took to achieve documentary commemoration in this time and place; they are utterly absent from the records.

In the Veneto, dinars appear to have been an important part, perhaps even the mainstay of the currency circulating around 800, notwithstanding Venice's ancient links with the Byzantine empire. If we may judge from the Plea of Rižana and Fortunatus' will, people estimated values in dinars, they paid for things with dinars, and they hoarded dinars. Along with the fact that the earliest mention occurs precisely in this poorly documented region, this offers a first and important reason to conclude that Venice was the new coins' main port of entry. Outside Venice, they are present, but less prevalent, which must mean that their numbers are relatively smaller. If Farfa's rich testimony can be construed to reflect its privileged relations with the Roman church, then that reinforces the scattered hints that Rome represented a kind of second level of penetration of the new coins, followed perhaps by the lower Po basin.[75]

73 *Verona*, no. 184, 5 April 847: "precio finito sicut libenter inter nos statutum fuit per argento mancosos quinque." In the absence of a systematic study of prices in Carolingian Europe, it is difficult to form a clear idea of value, so that one wonders all the more about price formation in an undermonetized economy. In intrinsic value, 5 dirhams (5×2.97 g of silver) might be the equivalent of 14.85 g of silver. This is the equivalent of just under 9 d. Carolingian, and would seem a small sum to pay for a vineyard. Riché 1978, 119 reports a sheep valued at 12 to 15 d., 1 cow, 14 d., a sword at 60 d.

74 See Rovelli 1993c, 555–6; Toubert 1973, 1: 566–9n1; McCormick, "Coins in Documents."

75 Cf. Rovelli 1992.



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The appeal to foreign currencies was more than simply a matter of supply, although it certainly was that. Outside the Veneto, the intrusion of mancosi into the local monetary system coincides with a time of concern about change in the local coinage. The same pattern probably holds for the solitary mention of Byzantine *miliaresia*. When the local currency was in flux, people looked to a stable outside coinage. But this inevitably means that supply was not an issue: the foreign currency was available for that purpose, south of the Alps. North of the Alps, royal control of the currency seems far more effective: archival mentions of Arab coins more or less cease at the mountains.

We can detect some ways in which Arab dinars and, probably, dirhams, functioned in the Lombard and Roman economy. Were Carolingian minters not supplying enough coins? Was the economy expanding and demanding substantially more coinage? Perhaps some combination of the two for a time fanned demand for the foreign coins, especially when the local issues were suspect. Outside the Veneto, Arab coins filled a special niche. They served as a standard of value for appraising the most expensive items, and as a kind of reserve coinage that people of means salted away or used for the most costly purchases. It is striking that, everywhere except in the former exarchate of Ravenna, they seem more prevalent than the gold coinage of Byzantium which had been the dominant local coinage in so much of the Peninsula for so many centuries, and indeed, which remained so in the south. Unambiguous mentions of silver mancosi coins, i.e. dirhams, are rare. Still, the image around 820 of the local priest of Bussolengo doling out twenty Carolingian silver pennies and two dirhams to a desperate peasant powerfully evokes the supplementary role these foreign coins played for a time in the coinage of Italy. So too the appearance of a unit of account, consisting of the number of local silver coins reckoned as equivalent to one gold dinar – also first attested in Venice's further hinterland, in Verona – testifies to the impact the influx of gold dinars exercised on the Italian monetary imagination. The final panel of the picture which issues from the archives is the chronology: Arab coins appear suddenly in four different regions beginning in 778. They become less common, perhaps starting in the 830s. The latest, passably unambiguous reference to coins (rather than a unit of account) comes from the 860s.

With respect to the great debate about Arab gold (and silver) and the Carolingian economy, the documents permit some preliminary conclusions. As Rovelli has argued, Carolingian Italy abandoned the ancient gold standard more slowly than is sometimes imagined. The decades around Charlemagne's imperial coronation witnessed an influx of Arab gold which was perceptible in most of the areas under Frankish hegemony; there is even one case in Milan in 799, involving the abbot of Farfa. The gold flow was significant, but fell short of



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massive.[76] At least this was the case outside the Veneto, which may have been the first stop for most of the dinars entering Italy. The overall economic role of the Arab coins therefore will have varied. Outside the Veneto, dinars were a significant but secondary constituent element of money wealth (as opposed to land, or bodies). Inside the Veneto, they were much more. Next to the gold dinars, Arab silver cuts a decidedly more modest figure in the written sources. Does this hint that there was less of it around? In any case, the "virtual coins" speak clearly for intensifying communications with the Arab world, beginning c. 778. Are we to think that the Arabs were giving the coins away? The "virtual coins" take their place next to the travelers and the relics. To push this part of our inquiry further, we must turn to the coins themselves.

76 Of course, no one has attempted to appraise the potential value in dinars of gold artwork commissioned in this period, although Fortunatus' will proves that dinars were so recycled. The gold of the altar in Sant'Ambrogio in Milan comes to mind.



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# 12

# *Real money: Arab and Byzantine coins around Carolingian Europe*

Actual coins deepen the documents. In 1955, a French scholar inventoried fifteen finds down to about 900. Since then, more Arab coins have come to light; further research has clarified the contents of certain finds and the circumstances of others. The evidence has tripled, even allowing for the removal of a few errors. A more recent overview emphasized that some Arab coinage moved into western Europe under the Carolingians, but that its pattern differed from the later Middle Ages: around 800, it maintains, both Spain and gold dinars played only a minor role, while Venice played the major one, with silver coinage coming from Africa and the Middle East.[1] The documents suggest a first correction, for they emphasize dinars. Moreover, some European hoards of Arab money include Byzantine coins. They suggest that we should extend our investigation to these other tokens of Mediterranean wealth, even though they are almost absent from documents written outside Ravenna. The likelihood that Byzantine gold coins continued to circulate in Muslim Egypt at least into the early eighth century makes that extension imperative.[2]

Coin discoveries first exploded in the nineteenth century. Old coins turned up as Europe catapulted into the industrial age, developing and building everywhere. The new railroads, with their gradients, bridges, and tunnels, disturbed soil and rocks deep along ancient and modern communication routes. A second wave of discoveries is just now under way, thanks to amateurs hunting for treasure with metal detectors, a decidedly mixed blessing. If their finds are at least recorded and made known to specialists, they will soon render my inventories obsolete. The coins turning up now will improve them, and test the findings laid out here.

1 Tabaczyński 1977, 283; see also, in general, Spufford 1988, 49–52.

2 Bates 1991, 50n26; an official Egyptian weight for the Byzantine solidus survives from 709–14 (cf. *ibid.*, 61); for the possibility of new arrivals of Byzantine coins even later, 62. I am grateful to Jodi Magness for alerting me to this important study.



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## 1. Arab coins

I know of fifty-four finds of Arab coins issued between the late seventh and early tenth centuries and discovered in forty-two places in the Carolingian empire and its neighbors.[3] The total number of reported Arab coins approaches 600; of them, 176 are recorded in greater or lesser detail.[4] By species, they included 447 dinars (of which over 400 are lost), 104 dirhams, and 25 copper coins. By find type, they comprise twenty-nine single finds and twenty-five hoards (including six mini-hoards of two coins). The average number of Arab coins in the larger hoards – which sometimes include substantial numbers of non-Arab coins – is about twelve coins (leaving aside the exceptionally large San Lorenzo hoard), and range between three and thirty-six coins. These amounts are on the smaller side of some payments recorded in Venice, in Istria, and Rome; they do approximate the amounts mentioned for rents, loans and the like in Rome, Milan, perhaps in Ravenna, and Farfa. This hints that the size of deposits identified to date represents only imperfectly the amounts that circulated in some regions. On the other hand, the biggest hoard comes from Venice, precisely where the written records mention the largest sums of mancosi. And, if we translate those dinars into silver dirhams at the Carolingian rate of gold to silver exchange, that one hoard is the equivalent of over 6,800 dirhams.[5]

When we map the finds, they disclose arresting patterns. The patterns deepen when the Arab coins are considered together with the Byzantine coins that made their way up the rivers and across the mountains of Europe from the sea coast. By characteristics and place of deposit, the coins fall into half a dozen major groups. Two are distinctive in that they feature, practically, only Arab coins. In the other

3 The exact count of finds is a matter of judgment, given the insufficiencies of some reports. I have counted each stray find separately; however, in some cases, where the report is unclear but identifies a few identical coins found in the same spot, I have combined and counted them as hoards. My totals may therefore have undercounted finds. For details of the Arab and Byzantine coin finds, see Appendix 3. Find sites of Arab (or mixed Arab and other coins) are numbered A1, A2, etc., in alphabetical order. Byzantine ones are numbered B1, B2, etc.

4 Something is known about only two of the more than 400 dinars of the San Lorenzo hoard, A37. More, perhaps many more dirhams were probably present among the several thousand coins reported lost from the Biebrich hoard; more dinars were probably also present among the some sixty coins gone astray from the Reno river hoard: A5 and A34, respectively.

5 Over 400 dinars, at 4.25 g each = 1,700 g AV, the equivalent of 6,868 dirhams of 2.97 g at 1:12; at the official rate in the Caliphate (1:10) the dinars work out to 5,724 dirhams. For the exchanges: Rovelli 1992, 119n24 and Spufford 1988, 51.



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four, Byzantine coins from the same time period crop up in the same places, and the understanding of both Arab and Greek coins gains from their being pursued together.

For most groups, single finds predominate. The great problem with them is that the date of the coin furnishes only a date after which the coin was lost. One Roman coin discovered in Massachusetts scarcely proves that the emperors explored the New World; it is more likely to have been lost by a returning tourist or a harried professor late for Roman history class. Nonetheless, a pattern of *multiple* single finds has effectively revealed other historical communication routes. This is particularly so when specific characteristics of the coins – dates, mints, denominations, alterations made by users – link the various finds. Overlapping hoard and single finds strengthen even more powerfully deductions about such routes.[6] Although earlier publishers of coins were inattentive to locating the archaeological context from which they came, there are, in addition to the hoards, at least several cases where the archaeological circumstances indicate that the single coins were deposited shortly after minting.[7]

Whether we are looking at hoards or single finds, interpretation opens up a second danger zone. The simplistic assumption that money automatically means trade elicited a landmark essay from Philip Grierson. He reminded historians eager to identify coins with commerce that, judging from contemporary historians, in early medieval society coins were as likely to move because they had been stolen, freely given, or paid as a ransom, subsidy, or salary. This is another way of saying that even when seeing a spatial or temporal pattern is easy, interpreting that pattern may not be. We shall return to this question at the end of this chapter.[8]

## 2. The Spanish and Viking groups

The Spanish group is the most obvious, though only one text hints at its existence. In it, an advisor to Charlemagne versified the memorable efforts to corrupt

6 On the matter of method, see Grierson 1966, vii, who observes the superiority of strays for this kind of inquiry; cf. the remarkable illustration in Berger 1992, esp. 212–16.

7 This is especially clear at Mikulčice and Osvětimany, B30 and B34, respectively.

8 Grierson 1959. Grierson's conclusions are necessary reading for any historian who would use coins. However, it has been little noted that a test of his observations against the massive numismatic evidence of Gotland in the 10th and 11th C. did not uncover any evidence of his non-commercial categories of explanation, in these perhaps special circumstances: Hatz 1987, 99.



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him. This scene, so Theodulf of Orleans sings, recurred throughout his inspection of the region between Marseilles and Carcassonne (Map 17.1).

> A great assembly often crowds us,
> Every age and sex has something to say:
> Child, aged, youth, father, teenage girl, bachelor,
> Elder, young man, grandma, man, wife, minor!
> Why hesitate? People promise presents, insistently;
> Every want a done deal, if only they pay, they think.
> They try to topple the wall of character by this device,
> To make the mind yield, slyly slammed by the battering ram.
> This man promises both crystal and eastern gems,
> If only I allow him to snatch another's fields.
> That one holds out coins of precious gold in heavy number,
> Which the Arab tongue and script furrows,
> Or whose white silver the Latin pen impresses,
> If only he gets farms, fields, houses![9]

Predictably, historians have differed on what to make of the sole text to refer to an influx of Arab coins into the Carolingian borderlands with Spain. For Marc Bloch, it showed that Arab coins circulated in Gaul: a gold coin evoked Arab script, a silver one, Latin. For Himly, it was just an isolated anecdote. A coin in Latin must come from ancient Rome (!). Besides, these coins were not really money: they were just precious objects, like the expensive textiles, gems, and Cordovan leather goods others tried to press on the judges to buy their favor.[10]

The coins themselves prove that Theodulf knew what he was talking about when he wrote of his own family's region. Today the numismatic context comprises fifteen mostly stray finds, spanning the years 692/4–844/5, and numbering twenty-two coins in all three metals. The coins crop up along the routes leading into France from Muslim Spain. This is obvious for the coins struck in Ifriqiya (North Africa) and al Andalus (Muslim Spain) between c. 715 and 820 and discovered at Château–Roussillon. Visigothic refugees fleeing the all-conquering Arabs repopulated this ancient settlement on the Via Domitia, the Roman road to Spain. It lay a day's travel north of the Frankish customs station that probably monitored a key pass through the Pyrenees (Ch. 22.1).

9 Theodulf of Orleans, *Carmen* 28 ("Contra iudices"), 163–77, *MGH Poet.* 1.498, which ends: ". . . Hic et cristallum et gemmas promittit Eoas,/ Si faciam, alterius ut potiatur agris./ Iste gravi numero nummos fert divitis auri,/ Quos Arabum sermo sive caracter arat,/ Aut quos argento Latius stilus inprimit albo, /Si tamen adquirat predia, rura, domos." See on this poem Fuhrmann 1980, who uncovers its deeper links with Isidore of Seville and Charlemagne's reforming efforts.

10 Bloch 1933, 14; Himly 1955, 62–3. Himly seems to believe that in Carolingian poetic diction, "Latius" refers exclusively to ancient Rome.



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TABLE 12.1
Arab coins: Spanish corridor, by phase and from south to north (Maps 12.1 and 20.1)

| Find* | Date | Mint | Nature of coin |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Phase I* | | | |
| Château-Roussillon (A9a) | ? | ? | 2 dirhams, 1 copper |
| Château-Roussillon (A9b) | 715/16 | Ifriqiya | dinar |
| Château-Roussillon (A9c) | before 756 | al Andalus | copper |
| Château-Roussillon (A9d) | before 756? | al Andalus? | 4 copper |
| Bizanet (A6) | 713/14 | al Taymara | dirham |
| Narbonne (A29b) | before 750 | ? | 3 copper |
| Douzens (A16) | 715/16 | Ifriqiya | copper |
| Crèze (A12) | 714/15 | Istakhr (Iran) | dirham |
| *Phase II* | | | |
| Barcelona (A4) | 844/5 | al Andalus | dirham |
| Château-Roussillon (A9e) | 811/12 | al Andalus | dirham |
| Château-Roussillon (A9f) | 820/1 | no mint | dinar |
| Marseillette (A25) | 792/3 | al Andalus | dirham |
| Lagrasse (A24) | 806/7 | Cordova | dirham |
| Chaunay (A10) | 780/1 | al Andalus | dirham |
| Contres (A11) | 777/8 | al Andalus | dirham |

*Note:*
*Number in parentheses refers to Appendix 3.

The Spanish connection is also obvious for the discoveries from the environs of Carcassonne and Narbonne, not to mention Barcelona, conquered by the Franks in 801. The find from Chaunay is on the road from Poitiers to Angoulême. As a whole, the group reaches north as far as Contres, some 20 km south of Blois. Most were surface finds, though the Contres piece came from a medieval tomb. The burial was Carolingian and the coin showed little wear according to de Longpérier. The Lagrasse piece is called a "beautiful drachma," which equally suggests no lengthy circulation. Chaunay, on the other hand, was worn, as were the copper coins from Château–Roussillon and Narbonne. Some of the latter pieces seem to stem from mini-hoards, but the reports are unclear. Nonetheless, the fact that they fit well with others excavated from the Carolingian settlement at Château–Roussillon encourages confidence (A8). The discovery of Frankish coins at Cordova reinforces the pattern of communications in the opposite direction. A hoard of over 170 coins comprised mostly dirhams struck in al Andalus between 773/4 and 910/11 (A.H. 157–298). But the jar in which they had been concealed in a Muslim cemetery also contained some twenty Carolingian pennies or fragments



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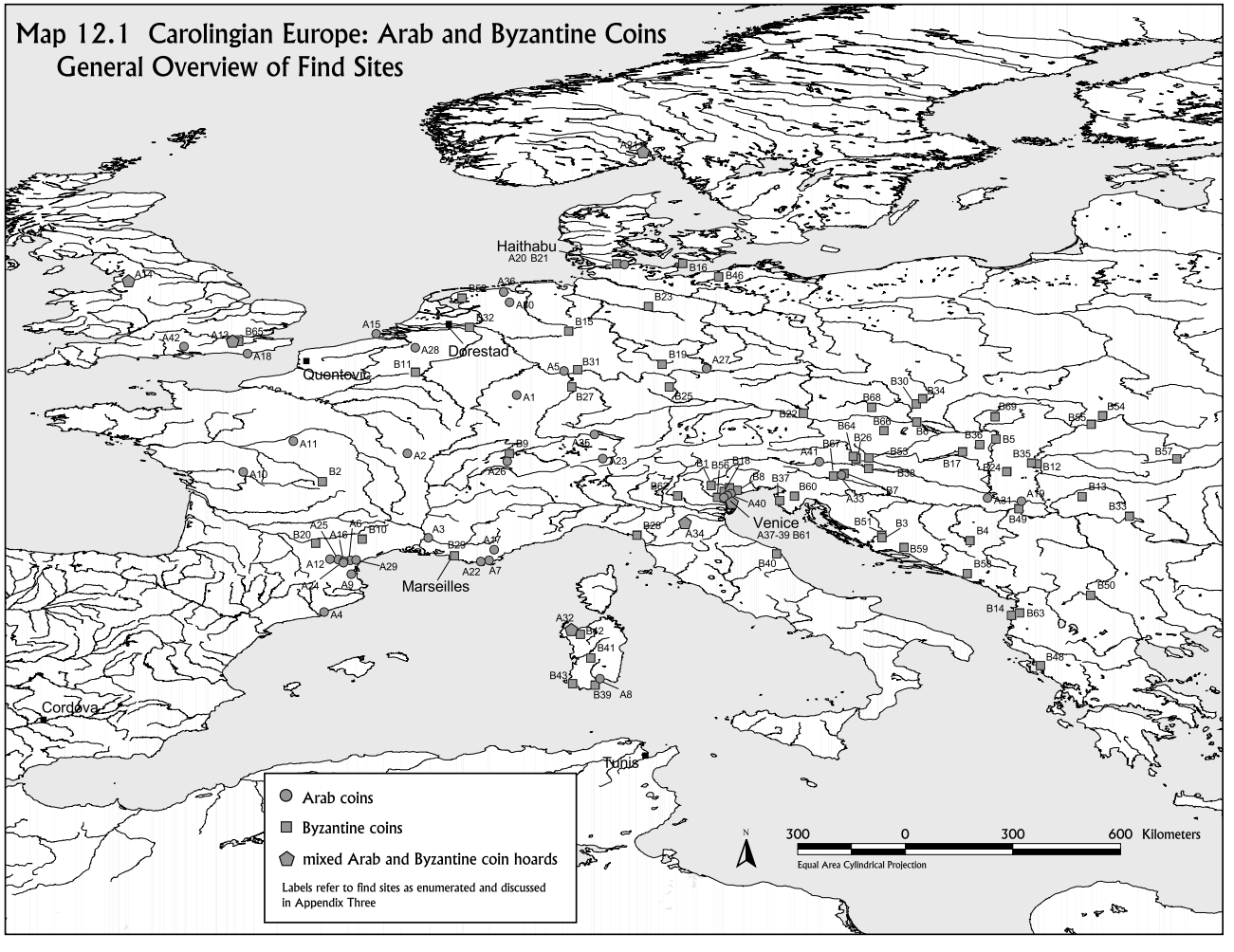


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(some of which were halves) issued at Toulouse and Arles by Louis the Pious (*Christiana religio* type) and Charlemagne or Charles the Bald.[11] The most striking illustration of cohabitation comes from Barcelona, in the form of an Andalusian dirham into which a cut Carolingian penny was inserted (A4).

Taken all together, the chronology of the coins suggests two main phases in movements out of Spain. The first came early in the eighth century: seven certainly were issued before 756, and the precisely dated coins come from 713–16. This was the time of the fall of Spain, the flight of Visigothic refugees, and the flux of Islamic power into southern France. The Arabs occupied Narbonne and raids ranged far and wide until the 730s, when the Carolingian victory on the road between Poitiers and Tours shifted the momentum and started Frankish expansion toward the south.[12] The homogenous mint pattern speaks just as clearly. The earliest coins were made in Muslim north Africa (Ifriqiya) and the eastern mints; al Andalus appears only toward the end of this group. This is exactly what coins conveyed from Spain should show, since the Visigothic kingdom was conquered and colonized from Africa, and in the early decades of Muslim rule, coins struck in eastern mints dominated the coinage circulating in Spain.[13] In other words, the early set of coins reflects the movements of armies and, perhaps, refugees and colonists.[14]

The second set of Spanish coins begins in 777/8 and continues to 820/1, with an outlier in 844/5. All were struck in Muslim Spain. The initial date moved one numismatist to link that coin with Charlemagne's famously disastrous invasion in 778. Plunder could indeed explain the movement of coins out of Spain through the first decade of the ninth century, when several campaigns hammered out a Carolingian enclave on the southern side of the Pyrenees.[15] Thereafter, however, another explanation is probably called for.

The second group of Arab coin discoveries differs distinctively in its geography and its internal characteristics. It emerges very clearly along the Carolingian empire's northern rim. Five hoards and three single finds delineate the Viking group, which is summarized in Table 12.2.[16] The coins are exclusively of silver, and the mints are mostly from the eastern and central Caliphate: Tashkent, Afghanistan, Armenia (Arminiyah), the Hindu Kush, and Baghdad are typical of this group. The thirteen imitations may also point to the northeastern Muslim marcher lands.[17] The Islamic west is represented only by one coin from Spain,

11 De los Santos Jener 1956.
12 Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 1: 53–65.
13 Barceló 1983, 5–6 and 10.
14 A final, early Spanish coin is so far north that it points to a link between the Spanish group and, probably, the Rhône or Rhine corridors; see below and A36.
15 E.g., Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 1: 178–85.
16 I have not included here the hoard found at Hon in Norway (A21), which shows every sign of stemming mostly from coins circulating in western Europe (and probably the Carolingian empire) and which is therefore treated below, in section 5.
17 Lowick 1976, 24.



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TABLE 12.2
Viking group: Arab dirhams, arranged by find types and date (Maps 12.1 and 20.1)

| Find* | Date | Mint | Quantity | Other coins |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Muizen (A27) | c. 867 | Arminiyah | 1 | 72 Carol. d. (unknown loss); jewelry |
| Croydon (A13) | c. 872 | Abbasid, Balkh?, ? | 3 | 175 Anglo-Saxon pennies, 7 Carol. d.; c. 70 coins lost; ingots; hack-silver; 1 Byzantine? |
| Odoorn (A30) | c. 895 | ? | 2 | 1 dirham mounted; unknown number of Carol. d. (including from Italy); silver rings |
| Haithabu (A20) | c. 904 | al Shash, Baghdad, Samanid | 14 | |
| Cuerdale (A14) | c. 905 | al Banjhir, Andarabah, al Andalus, Arminiyah, Baghdad, Bardha'ah, uncertain Abbasid, imitation Abbasid | 36 | c. 7,000 Anglo-Saxon, Arab, Byzantine, Carolingian and Viking coins, silver ingots and hack-silver |
| Domburg (A15) | after 821 | Isfahan | 1 | |
| Domburg (A15) | after 866 | Dvin | 1 | |
| Winchester (A42) | after 900 | Samarkand | 1 | |

*Note:*
*Appendix 3 number in parentheses.

which is pierced. The Arab components of the hoards are on the small side, averaging about eleven Arab coins each, with a range between one and thirty-six, and the hoards mostly comprise much larger quantities of Frankish or Anglo-Saxon silver, hacked up silver objects and even ingots. The hoards all date from the later ninth century, and two of the three stray coins were struck then. The coins themselves are overwhelmingly of the ninth century. Were it not for the unusual subgroup of the Haithabu shipwreck (A20) – nine of the ten Baghdad coins are in mint condition, show die overlap, and may even have been struck in succession in 803/4, moving their publisher to conclude that they traveled together to Haithabu directly from Baghdad in a sealed container – the predominance of the Muslim east and late ninth century would be overwhelming. The associated finds strengthen their identity, and the find spots can sometimes be connected with specific events in the Viking invasions. Occasional markings scratched on the coins confirm the other indications: these are Viking coins, the most studied group in Islamic numismatics. Our Viking group is the westernmost ripple of the



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waves of eastern Muslim silver coins which issued, ultimately, from the great silver mines of Asia and the Muslim marcher lands of Bulgar, past the kingdom of the Khazars. Borne by raiders and traders who trekked home along the great rivers where Rus civilization was being born, these dirhams flowed into the Baltic zone and thence, probably, into northern Poland and northeastern Germany.[18] The coins have spilled over into the North Sea region and up the streams which prolong it into Frankland. This is the numismatic face of the "northern arc," the Viking communications world which extended from Ireland toward the Caspian Sea. Although the chronology is not free from controversy, the flow of coins westward probably began reaching Scandinavia in the earlier ninth century, and gained speed thereafter.[19]

## 3. Byzantine coins in and around Carolingian Europe

The remaining zones where Arab coins turn up also yield Byzantine ones, sometimes in the same hoard. As we have already seen, Byzantine gold coins are virtually absent from Merovingian hoards of Frankland. Sanctions on foreign coinage meant that the gold of newly arriving Byzantine coins was added to the local stock and restruck as Frankish coins. Beyond the Frankish borders, Byzantine coins were less likely to have been recycled in this way (see Chapter 11).

Copper coinage was another matter. None was made locally, so there was no pressure to recycle Byzantine coins in this metal. Their modest persistence in seventh-century Frankish finds, it has been argued, indicates more truly than gold continuing commercial contacts with Byzantium's economy in the seventh century. The number of copper pieces found in Gaul which were struck at Carthage reflects, moreover, the critical role of Byzantine Africa in what long-distance links persisted.[20]

Even so, copper also shows that the broad spectrum of mints that supplied Byzantine coins to Merovingian Gaul contracted over time. In the sixth and early seventh centuries, coins had reached Gaul from around the Mediterranean: Alexandria, Antioch, Kyzikos, Nicomedia, Seleukeia (mod. Silifke, Turkey) and Thessalonica, in addition to the preponderant mints of Constantinople, Carthage, and Byzantine Italy.[21] By the later seventh century, only Carthage, Italy,

18 Bolin 1953; Noonan 1991 (with further references to his work); see Kropotkin 1971 for a useful list of 19th- and 20th-C. finds in the former Soviet Union; for the excellent Polish surveys, see below, n63. Bálint 1981 contests many assumptions about the northern flow of dirhams.

19 Callmer 1980.

20 Lafaurie and Morrisson 1987, 53–4; Morrisson 1999.

21 Alexandria: Lafaurie and Morrisson 1987, 67 (at Chabrillon); Antioch: 67 (at Chinon), 68 (Escales), 69 (Graulhet), etc.; Kyzikos: 70 (Gruissan); Nicomedia: 66 (Bort-les-



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and Constantinople still supplied coins. The monetary pattern closely parallels the contraction of Byzantine cults in Sens, and stems from similar root causes, the loss or decline of the places where the coins had once been struck and the end of minting there. In general, the coins reinforce what we have already observed from ceramics and cohere with the texts which suggest a regular shipping route that ran from Constantinople to Marseilles, via Carthage and, probably, the Byzantine outposts along the Tyrrhenian and Ligurian coast.[22] Just like the pottery and the texts, the Byzantine coins, whether of copper or gold, peter out in the seventh century's final decades. It is the pattern to which we have grown accustomed. But the end of one story introduces the beginning of another.

"Virtual" Byzantine coins are quite rare in Carolingian documents (above, p. 337). Not so real coins. In and on the approaches to the Carolingian empire, there have been at least 113 finds of Byzantine coins dating from the late seventh century to the early tenth: my research has catalogued the coins issued from the reign of Constantine IV (668–85) to that of Leo VI (886–912) found in territories that slipped out of imperial control, and Venice.[23] The total of 113 finds includes six hoards in which Byzantine coins jostle Muslim ones.[24] Several times, the coins have disappeared without leaving clear traces. The identity of 363 can be recovered.

Singletons constitute about 80 percent of the finds (eighty-nine single finds, mostly strays, against twenty-four hoards, including five mini-hoards), but the great majority (76 percent) of the coins occur in hoards (274 as opposed to 89 in single finds). The hoards are typically small (averaging under eight coins each) as befits an age of modest economic capacities, although a couple of very large deposits have disappeared in Sardinia (B10 and B43). Gold coins are most numerous (55 percent), followed by copper (39 percent) and silver (5 percent); gold and silver of course predominate by value.[25]

The spatial distribution is revealing. Less than a tenth of the finds occurred in the Carolingian heartland, even broadly construed. And most of those were struck before or after the apogee of Carolingian power. Of the four issued after 751, only one (B15) is in gold; to this should be added the Hon treasure (A21) from

Footnote 21 (*cont.*)
Orgues), 70 (Gruissan), etc.; Seleukeia and Thessalonica: 70 (Gruissan), etc. (Maps 4.1, 7.3 and 8.1).

22 Ch. 4.5; cf. Lafaurie and Morrisson 1987, 54.

23 Extending the research back into the reign of Constans II (641–68) would have increased the finds by more than twelve: cf., e.g. Lafaurie and Morrisson 1987, 98. Some of Constans II's coins undoubtedly were deposited in our period, but most probably had traveled on the last wave of ancient trade and communications that petered out around 700.

24 See Map 12.1. The mixed hoards are Croydon(?) (A13), Cuerdale (A14), Hon (A21), Porto Torres (A32), Reno river (A34), and Venice, San Tomà (A38).

25 142 copper, 200 gold, 19 silver, and 2 uncertain.



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Norway, most of whose dinars and Byzantine gold coins probably reached the Viking north from the Carolingian empire.[26] The spatial spread is not likely to be an accident based on reporting patterns.[27] In a manner reminiscent of the Merovingian pattern, the Carolingian finds cluster along the edge of Frankish power. From north to south, they congregate northeast of Carolingian Saxony on the Baltic shore, in Italy, and on the Adriatic façade of the Balkans and the eastern fringe of Carinthia. The difference with the Merovingian pattern is that the center of gravity lies much farther to the south and east. These finds cluster on the boundaries between Bavarian colonization and the Slavlands, and, clearly, around the Adriatic rim.

Like the Arab finds, the Byzantine ones typically follow lines of communication, major or minor. One late-ninth-century coin comes from the "Aquitanian isthmus," on a route leading from the Mediterranean toward the Atlantic mouth of the Garonne at Bordeaux. It might hint at renewed movement along an axis which had become quiescent around 700. Another, from around 877, lies farther north, along a route which seems to have gained in prominence in the eighth century, the corridor linking the Mediterranean with the Atlantic via the Loire river.[28] On Italy's west coast, the seven copper coins from Luni postdate the Byzantine evacuation of that enclave in the seventh century. All were issued in Sicily, mostly in the ninth century, and probably testify to a shipping link along the Tyrrhenian and Ligurian shore under the Carolingians (B28; Ch. 17.3–4).

The other Byzantine finds overlap with the Arab coins. One (Hon: A21) cannot be more specifically localized than western Europe, although chances are strong that it stemmed from western Frankland; one scholar has gone so far as to suggest that it originated as a Viking ransom raised by the Parisian abbey of St. Denis. If that were true, it would illustrate the kind of foreign coins available in the Seine basin around the middle of the ninth century, and it has in fact been taken as a window on international trade.[29] This would indicate the presence there of new Byzantine gold issues (from Syracuse and Constantinople), as well as old Roman and pseudo-imperial issues of Marseilles, alongside ten dinars *manqūsh*, issued at Baghdad, Fustat (Egypt), and Marw. Nine of the dinars match closely the dates and mints most common among Arab coins in the Carolingian world (A21).

26 The finds are: B9, B11, B15, B19, B25, B27, ?B31, B32, A21, and B2. Except for the last two, they are all single finds.

27 Because the Austrian surveys extend well into Carolingian Bavaria, and the thorough German surveys (not to mention those of Holland and Luxemburg) cover much of the Frankish homeland. Duplessy 1985 catalogues no Byzantine coins at all from French finds of this period.

28 Finds B20 and B2, respectively; cf. Rouche 1979, 305–8. See Appendix 3 for more details.

29 Morrisson 1998.



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TABLE 12.3
Sardinia: Byzantine and Arab coin finds (Map 12.2)

| Deposit date | Find* | Type | Total coins | Mints |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Period I* | | | | |
| Southern and central Sardinia | | | | |
| after 668–81 | Pula (B39) | Byzantine AE | 1 | Carthage |
| c. 685–95 | Sardinia 2 (B45) | Byzantine AE | 37 (+ 1) | Carthage, Constantinople, Constantine, Rome, Sardinia, Syracuse |
| after 705–11 | Cornus (B10) | Byzantine AV | 1 + (over 100?) | ? |
| c. 692–749 | Cagliari (A8) | Arab AE | 3 | Ummayad |
| c. 692–749 | Cagliari (A8) | Arab AE | 2 | Baalbek |
| after c. 692–749 | Cagliari (A8) | Arab AE | 1 | Baalbek? |
| Northern Sardinia | | | | |
| c. 713–41 | S. Giovanni di Ossi (B42) | Byzantine and Lombard AV | 19 | Sardinia, northern Italy |
| c. 713–41 | Sardinia 1 (B44) | Byzantine and Lombard AV | 10 | ?, northern Italy |
| *Period II* | | | | |
| after 776–7 | Cagliari (A8) | Arab AE | 1 | Abbasid |
| c. 776–89 | Pula (B39) | Byzantine AE | 4 | Syracuse |
| after 778–83 | Cagliari (A8) | Arab AR | 1 | al Abbasiyya |
| after 774–87 | Cagliari (A8) | Arab AR | 2 | al Abbasiyya |
| c. 820 | Ruinas (B41) | Byzantine AE | 12 | Catania, Ravenna, Syracuse |
| c. 884 | Porto Torres (A32) | Arab, Byzantine AV | 40 | N. Africa, Constantinople |

*Notes:*
AE – copper; AR – silver; AV – gold.
*Appendix 3 number in parentheses.

## 4. Sardinia

Among groups of finds, the Sardinian is distinctive. Numerous Arab and Byzantine coins were discovered there in the nineteenth century (and, probably, later), but only a fraction have been recorded. We know chiefly what a nineteenth-century archaeologist was able to buy for his museum.[30] The only other Arab find actually recorded from Sardinia occurred, probably not coincidentally, next door to the watchful eyes of a garrison full of Carabinieri, the state police.[31] The fourteen hoards and stray coins from the Caliphate and Byzantium cluster in two main, early groups, with two outliers in the ninth century. The earliest deposits prolong a

30 See Oman 1968, 117n7, on a "recent" purchase from a jeweler at Assemini.

31 A32; see below, Table 12.3 and discussion.



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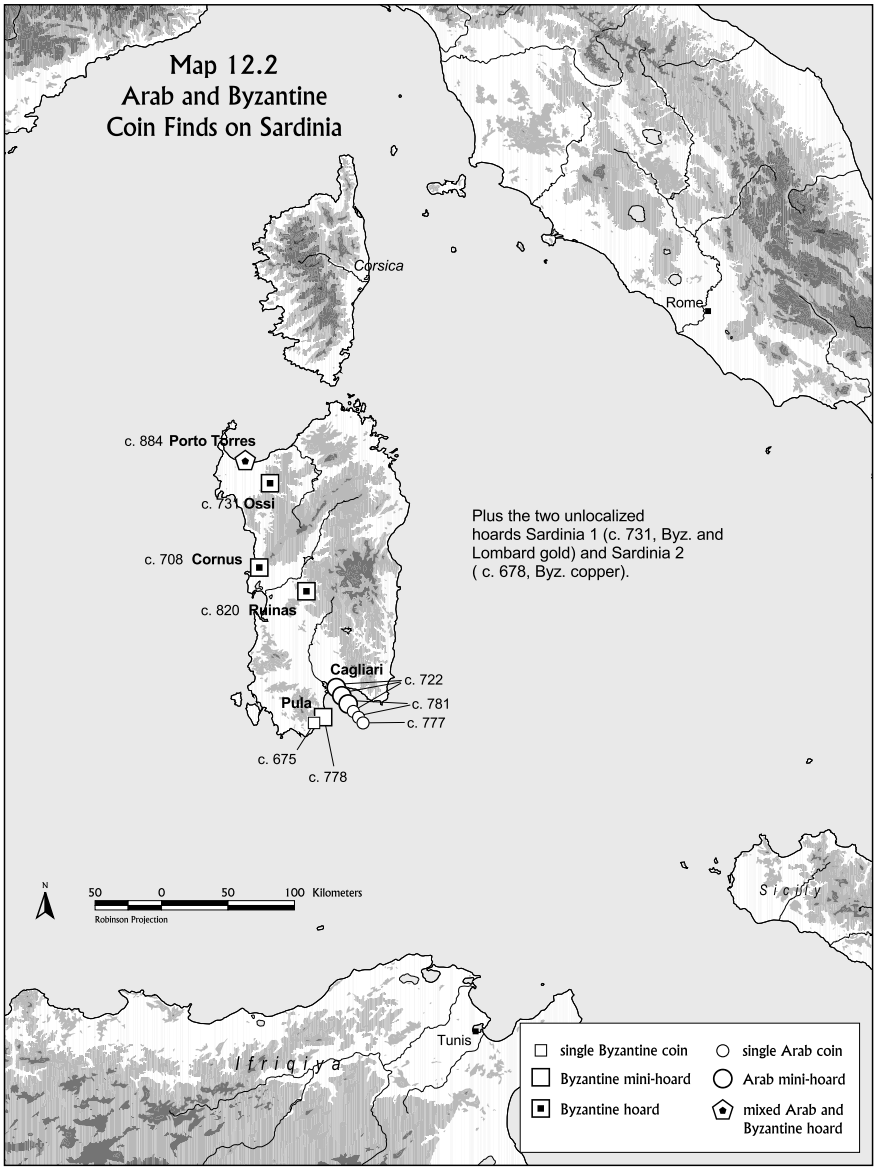




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seventh-century pattern. In them we witness the Roman defeats which culminated in the fall of Carthage, first in 695 and then, definitively, in 698. Some African Byzantine personnel, notably of the imperial mint, were evacuated to Sardinia, since the mint's peculiarly Carthaginian traditions continued for a short time on the island. The coins themselves confirm the African connection.[32] What looks like the numismatic trail of the same flow of refugees has recently come to light even farther north in France.[33] Whether they stem from raids or more peaceful contacts, the six Ummayad copper coins (A8), including two or three made in Lebanon, point to the continuing contacts of the island's southernmost part with nearby Africa and through it, the rest of the Caliphate (Ch. 17.3). Around the same time, northern Sardinia was receiving coins from the kingdom of Pavia (B42; B44). In a territory at least nominally under Byzantine control, the mixing of Byzantine and Lombard coins in two different and contemporary hoards speaks the same language as the converging weight standards of Lombard and Italo-Byzantine coins (Ch. 21.2), even as those standards diverged from the norms of Constantinople. Both say something about contacts and even exchange between the two political zones. At the beginning of the eighth century, Sardinia's role at a crossroads of sailing routes had diminished, but not died.

The second period of finds comes in the closing quarter of the eighth century, when the southern tip of the island again produces coins from Muslim Africa and Byzantine Sicily. At this time Sardinia was closely connected with the Byzantine administration of Sicily. It was also an era of peace with Africa, so warfare probably does not explain the movement of dirhams north across the Sardinian channel.[34] The penultimate find marks in copper the continuing connection with Sicily on the eve of the African invasion. The latest deposit is a round sum of forty gold coins and some gold objects. It came from the northwest tip of the island; the mix of older but fresh-looking coins from Constantinople and worn but newer ones from Muslim Africa hint of new currents. It was a time when there were Christian merchant ships off the island to tempt African raiders, and a slave

32 B45 includes coins from Carthage and Numidia. For the Carthaginian fabric of some Sardinian issues, *DOC* 2: 44.

33 A hoard of twenty-five copper coins from just before the period examined here was discovered buried next to the corner of an early Christian church at Cazères (Haute Garonne), on the Garonne river upstream of Toulouse. All the coins come from Carthage and were buried after c. 660: Lafaurie and Morrisson 1987, 67. The earlier stages of this emigration have left tracks in Rome and in England (Abbot Hadrian, the companion of Theodore of Tarsus and Canterbury); its last gasps and northernmost reaches may have spilled over into our period and places, but I have uncovered no prosopographical evidence. On 7th-C. movement from Africa to Rome, e.g. Sansterre 1983, 1: 26–9; to England: Bischoff and Lapidge 1994, 82–132. For another case of African migration toward Byzantine Italy: Luzzi 1993, 180–5.

34 There seem to have been no raids on Sardinia between 751 and 807: Ch. 17.2.



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TABLE 12.4
Arab and Byzantine coins: coastal route toward Marseilles, and Rhône corridor (Map 12.3)

| Find* | Date (after) | Type | Mint |
|---|---|---|---|
| Draguignan (A17) | 734–42 | Arab AE | Egypt |
| Bormes-les-Mimosas 1 (A7) | 692/4–750? | Arab AE | |
| Bormes-les-Mimosas 2 (A7) | 750/1 | Arab AE | Egypt |
| Hyères 1 (A22) | c. 785–805 | Arab AE | Ifriqiya |
| Hyères 2 (A22) | early 8th C. | Arab AE | Egypt? |
| Marseilles (B29) | 681–5 | Byzantine AE | Sicily |
| Same group? | | | |
| Avignon (A3)** | 692/4–750 | Arab AE | Middle East? |
| Autun (A2)** | 692/4 | Arab AV | Damascus |
| Eastbourne (A18) | 724–43; ? | Arab AV, ? | ? |
| Westerham (B65) | 717–41 | Byzantine AV | Syracuse |

*Notes:*
AE – copper; AV – gold.
*Appendix 3 number in parentheses.
**The date and mints of the coins found at Avignon and Autun allow the possibility that they were lost in the course of Arab raids on these places in the early eighth century: cf. Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 1: 55, 59 and 63.

market had sprung up there which was certainly fed by the Byzantine navy, and maybe the Arabs as well (R514 and 625).

## 5. The Rhône and Rhine corridors

Another zone where Arab and Byzantine coins occur together is somewhat less sharply delineated, for it comprises only single finds, a few of which may have reached the area under disparate circumstances. Nonetheless, they command our attention for their find sites, their distant origins, and their very early dates. If the Arab coins got there under the same conditions as the Byzantine – carried by peaceful travelers rather than raiders – they undermine the most cherished tenet of Pirenne's thesis. The finds mark the coastal route toward Marseilles from the Middle East, as well as its inland prolongation, the Rhône corridor – precisely the artery of long-distance commerce on which the Belgian scholar focused. Earlier Byzantine finds certainly show how this corridor functioned in the communications system of Merovingian Gaul, down to the middle of the seventh century (see key to Map 12.3). The finds listed in Table 12.4 may represent the last gasp of late



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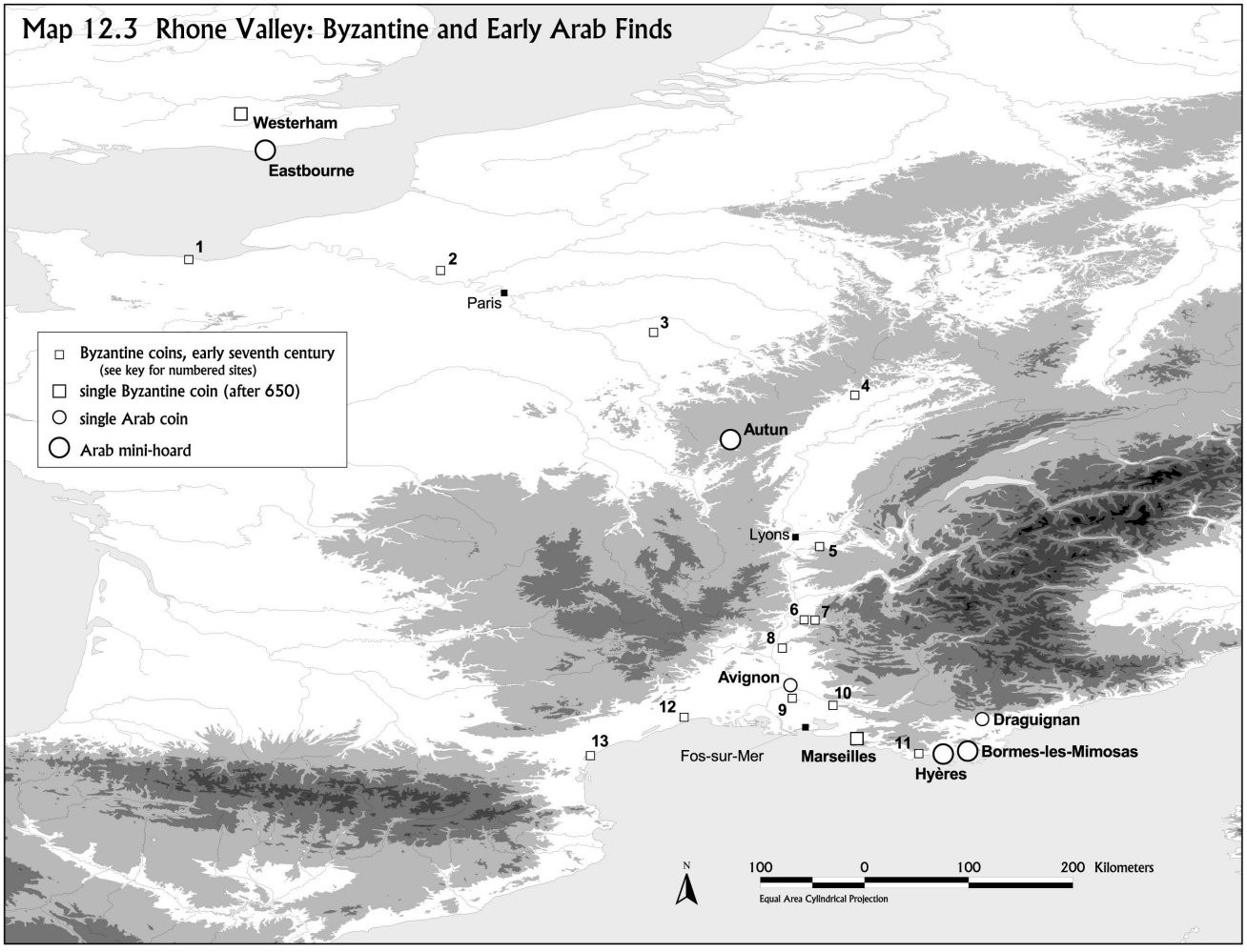


Map 12.3. Key to early seventh-century Byzantine coin deposits, Rhône valley group

1 Hermanville-sur-Mer, single, copper, Heraclius (610–41) no mint.
2 Genainville, single, copper 30n, Heraclius, 629–30, Constantinople.
3 Saint-Lupien, minihoard, 2 copper 20n of Heraclius and Constans II (641–68), Carthage.
4 Saint-Seine-sur-Vingeanne, single, gold solidus, Phocas, 607–10, Constantinople.
5 Oytier-Saint-Oblas, single, copper 20n, Phocas (602–10), no mint.
6 Chabrillan, single, copper 12n, Heraclius and Heraclius Constantine (613–41), Alexandria.
7 Crest, hoard, 5 copper 40n, ?Heraclius, Constantinople.
8 Granges-Gontardes, single, copper 20n, Phocas, 602–6, Carthage.
9 Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, minihoard, copper 10n, Heraclius, Carthage.
10 Alleins, single, copper 20n, Constans II, 643–7, Carthage.
11 Toulon, single, copper 20n, Phocas, 606–7, Carthage.
12 Lattes, single, copper 40n, Heraclius, 624–9, Carthage.
13 Gruissan, hoard, 101 copper, 40n (1 20n), Antioch, Constantinople, Kyzikos, Nicomedia, Seleukeia, Sicily, Thessalonica, deposited c. 631 aboard the shipwreck Grazel B (see Table 20.1).

*Source:* Lafaurie and Morrisson 1987.

antique communications. Two stray finds in southern England might conceivably extend this same current across the English Channel. The generally early date of the coins suggests that they could have been lost then. External evidence strengthens this conclusion, for the route along which they are strewn withered away in the eighth century (Ch. 3.3). Should these coins indeed reflect the last gasps of what had been antiquity's royal highway into Gaul, then the very predominance of Arab issues tells us that reality was very different from what Pirenne believed.

The corridor constituted by the Rhine and Meuse river basins supplanted the Rhône as the main axis of north–south communications. Byzantine and Arab coins paint exactly that picture in the Carolingian age. Ten finds stud that route and its branches, from the North Sea fringe to the Alpine passes descending into the Po valley.[35]

Spatially, these discoveries depict about as coherent a picture as one could hope. At the north end, Sneek is on what was once the Almeer, the great inland sea into which a branch of the Rhine emptied. It happened also to be the branch which flowed past the trading town of Dorestad. Ten Post is not far distant. At the southern end, Colombier and Moudon mark the threshold of the Great Saint Bernard pass toward Aosta. Similarly, Steckborn overlooks the Rhine, downstream from the Chur pass complex to the Po valley; Ilanz is deep within that mountain route, just south of the Carolingian customs station of Chur. Couvin is near the Meuse, astride a route which heads west in the direction of the newly discovered emporium of Quentovic; Auenberg is on a tributary of the Moselle.

Chronologically, the single finds suggest that this corridor was active across the entire eighth century; the hoards all come around 800, and underscore that this route was functioning at that time. In Roman times, goods moved up the Rhône and then overland to the Rhine for further transport (Ch. 3.3), so, conceivably, some of the earliest finds in Table 12.5 could have entered Frankland via Marseilles. The Arab coin at Ten Post is an obvious candidate. But the dirhams of the hoards deposited around 800 traveled north in the company of coins struck in Rome and the kingdom of Pavia. If the point was not already clear from the find spots of the last four items on Table 12.5, this numismatic fact shows that the Rhenish Arab coins entered the Frankish empire through Italy. What is more, the hoards do not possess very lengthy age structures: the spread of the dates of their coins is not very wide. At Ilanz, the oldest coins were between forty-nine and thirty-two years old at the date of deposit, at Biebrich, about a decade, and at

35 Two more finds of gold coins might conceivably belong to this group: a Byzantine solidus (B24) of Michael III (after 865?) from Eringerfeld, in Westphalia; and one issued from Syracuse, supposedly from the Roman site at Nida (B44), about which, however, there is some uncertainty.



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TABLE 12.5
Rhine–Meuse corridor from the North Sea to the Alps: Arab and Byzantine coin finds (Map 12.4)

| Find* | Deposit date | Type | Mints | Total quantity |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ten Post (A36) | after 726–7 | Arab AE | Cordova | 1 |
| Sneek (B52) | after 676 | Byzantine AE | ? | 1 |
| Nijmegen (B32) | after 675 | Byzantine AV | ? | 1 |
| Couvin (B11) | after 741–75 | Byzantine AE | Constantinople | 1 |
| Biebrich (A5) | c. 800 | Arab, Lombard, Frankish AR | Ifriqiya, Rome, Lombard kingdom, Frankland | 48 + ? |
| Ludwigshafen (B27) | after 695 | Byzantine AV | Constantinople | 1 |
| Auenberg (A1) | after 695 | Arab AE | Egypt? Trier | 2 |
| Colombier (B9) | after 677 | Byzantine AV | Byzantine Italy | 1 |
| Steckborn (A35) | c. 800 | Arab and Frankish AR | Bedaa, Ifriqiya, Melle | 23 |
| Moudon (A26) | after 787 | Arab AR | al Abbasiyya | 1 |
| Ilanz (A23) | c. 795 | Arab, Frankish, Lombard, Anglo-Saxon AR; Lombard AV | al Abbasiyya, Tunis, Lombard kingdom, Frankland, England | 132 |

*Notes:*
AE – copper; AR – silver; AV – gold.
*Appendix 3 number in parentheses.

Steckborn, between about eleven and twenty-two years old. No hoard showed coins as old as the late seventh century. This suggests, again, that the early pieces had already passed out of circulation before c. 800, and so were probably lost before that date. The fact that around 800 the hoards mixed foreign and local coinages is also intriguing, and indeed, at Ilanz, it is noteworthy that the oldest coins are the European ones. In general, the Byzantine coins on Table 12.5 are earlier than the Arab ones. Whether that betokens shifting currents in broader patterns of communications is unclear.

## 6. The Adriatic rim

The Rhine corridor takes us to the threshold of the Po river basin and its delta at the head of the Adriatic. The texts have already proven that Arab coins surged into



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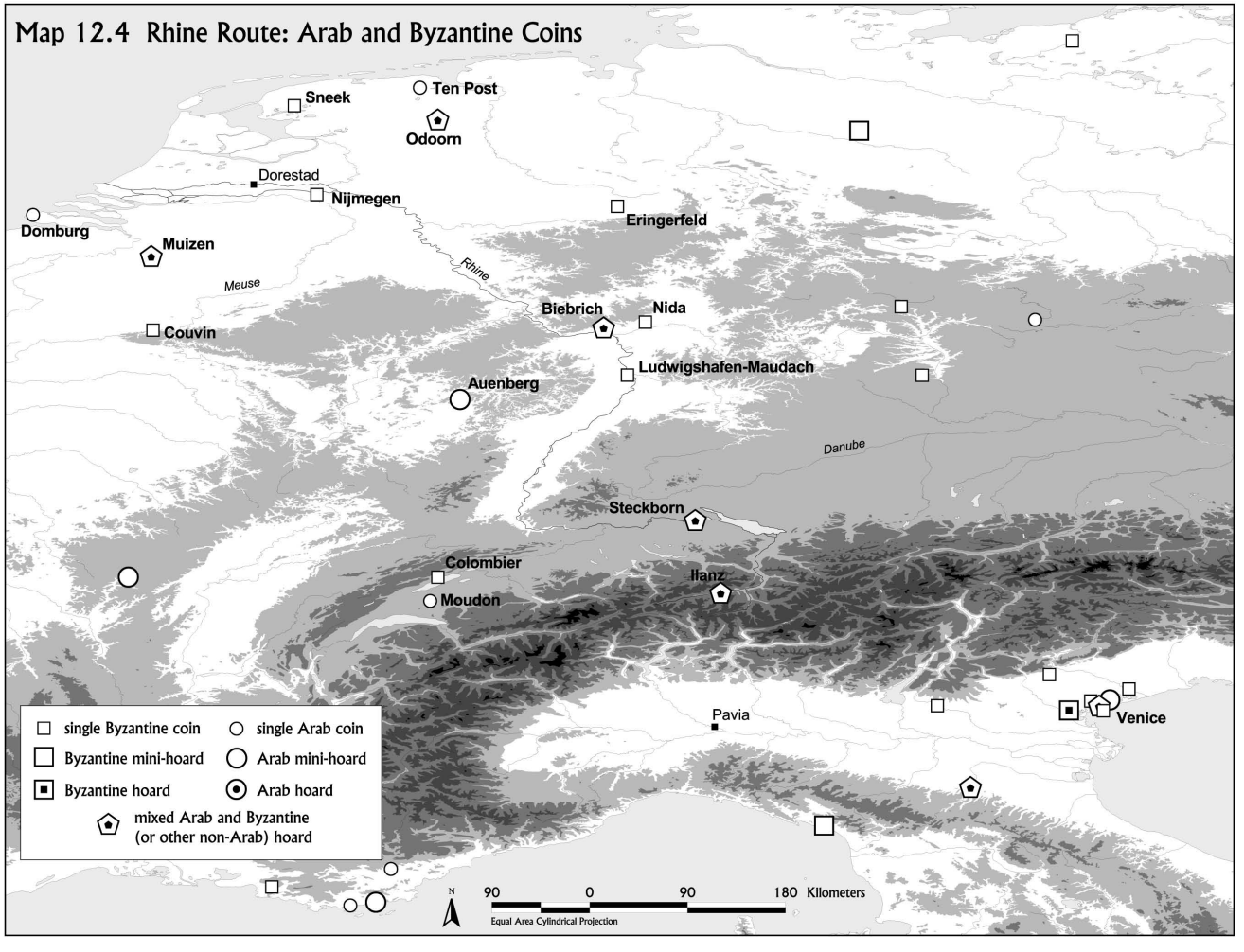


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TABLE 12.6
Adriatic rim 1, Italian segment: Arab and Byzantine coin finds (Map 12.5)

| Find* | Deposit date | Type | Mint | Quantity |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Recanati 1–2 (B40) | c. 668–9 | Byzantine AV | Constantinople | 2 |
| Recanati 3 (B40) | after 674–85 | Byzantine AE | Rome | 1 |
| Recanati 4 (B40) | after 713 | Byzantine AE | Ravenna | 1 |
| Recanati 5 (B 40) | after 720–32 | Byzantine AV | Constantinople | 1 |
| Recanati 6 (B40) | after 744 or 749 | Byzantine AV | Ravenna | 1 |
| Recanati 7–8 (B40) | after 751–75 | Byzantine AE | Syracuse | 2 |
| Recanati 9 (B40) | after 828–31 | Byzantine AE | Constantinople | 1 |
| Recanati 10 (B40) | after 830–42 | Byzantine AE | Syracuse | 1 |
| Recanati 11 (B40) | after 842–67 | Byzantine AE | Syracuse | 1 |
| Recanati 12–15 (B40) | after 886–912 | Byzantine AE | Constantinople | 2 |
| Reno River (A34) | c. 806–11 | Arab, Byzantine, Beneventan AV | Abbasid west, Abbasid, Egypt, Benevento, Constantinople, ? | 39 (c. 60 lost) |
| Verona 1 (B62) | after 692–5 or 705–11 | Byzantine AE | Syracuse | 1 |
| Verona 2 (B62) | 705–11 | Byzantine AE | Syracuse? | 1 |
| Verona 3 (B62) | after 732–5 | Byzantine AE | Constantinople | 1 |

*Notes:*
AE – copper; AV – gold.
*Appendix 3 number in parentheses.

this region in the last quarter of the eighth century. The coins themselves confirm this, and show that the influx had not ended c. 840. Much of the coastal area had been Byzantine until recent decades. Venice, at least nominally, and the Balkan shore from Zadar south, effectively, remained so. As Map 12.5 shows, thirty-four finds make Arab and especially Byzantine coins well attested around the Adriatic rim, even after the Byzantine overlordship had largely lapsed. Shipping criss-crossed the gulf of Venice; then as now, for longer voyages, vessels kept to the Balkan coast, bringing a kind of unity to the very different landscapes that circled the head of the Adriatic. We can look at the finds in three steps, corresponding to three segments of the uneven horseshoe of the upper Adriatic shoreline: the Italian, the Venetian, and the Balkan.



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The Recanati finds come from the Adriatic hinterland south of Ancona. As a group they may be the most recent set from this part of the coast; they certainly seem to show that Byzantine coins continued to enter the area into the ninth century, long after the empire lost control of the territory. The Verona coins came from excavations of an eighth-century deposit in the heart of the city. They tell the same story, only earlier. The fact that all were copper coins may seem problematic in a place where the presence of the imperial administration was nil. But Verona and other cases like it are challenging the conclusion that the early medieval towns of Italy were devoid of small change. The general lack of Lombard issues in copper once induced historians to think that routine monetary transactions – buying bread, for instance – ceased. New finds argue, on the contrary, that old or foreign copper coins served as small change even in areas where none was newly minted. In a few major towns, some token coinage, chiefly of bronze, was certainly circulating in the eighth century.[36] In this way Verona now resembles the nearby exarchate of Ravenna. Imperial copper issues were certainly still circulating in early eighth-century Ravenna, while Aistulf's copper coins (struck there after he conquered the town) document at least a short-lived Lombard continuation down to 753. Verona and other finds hint that Aistulf's copper may have been more than mere symbolic bravado. The texts suggest that the old imperial gold issues still circulated there under the new regime.[37] That one or two of the Verona coins came from Syracuse fits the more general picture. After the fall of Carthage, Sicily replaced Africa as the dominant supplier of Byzantine coins in and around the imperial provinces of the west, until the Arab conquest.[38]

The Reno river hoard came from just west of Bologna, at what looks like the site of a shipping incident. The tragedy occurred around 806–11, about 100 km

36 For Verona, see more details in Appendix 3; for small silver coins: Arslan 1998, 439–44; cf. Rovelli 1993a, 391 (until the Carolingian period in Rome); 1993b, 333–4. See in general the cautious and well-documented study of Saccocci 1997, which leaves little doubt on the persisting use of imperial copper coins under the Lombards.

37 Excavations (1975–82) of the Byzantine port at Classe uncovered some 500 coins, but only about a tenth could be identified. Four bronze coins from Constans II (659–68) to Tiberius III (698–705) document continued circulation in this area of the port; all were struck at Ravenna. Their presence is striking in light of the fact that the port's overall activity seems to have been dwindling away in the 8th or 9th C. Curina 1983, 212; cf. 204, as well as Maioli 1983, 65. Coins of all species in the National Museum in Ravenna since the last century are presumed to come from local finds. They attest in any event the minting of copper at Ravenna virtually to the Lombard conquest: Ercolani Cocchi *et al.* 1984, 99, no. 249 (four specimens); Aistulf's copper coins (i.e. down to 753): *ibid.*, 117, no. 336 (two specimens). The collection may also attest the continuing influx of Byzantine coins from Constantinople, Syracuse and Rome in all three metals in the 8th and 9th C.: *ibid.* 99, no. 250–103, no. 265; cf. Rovelli 1992, 128.

38 Morrisson 1998.



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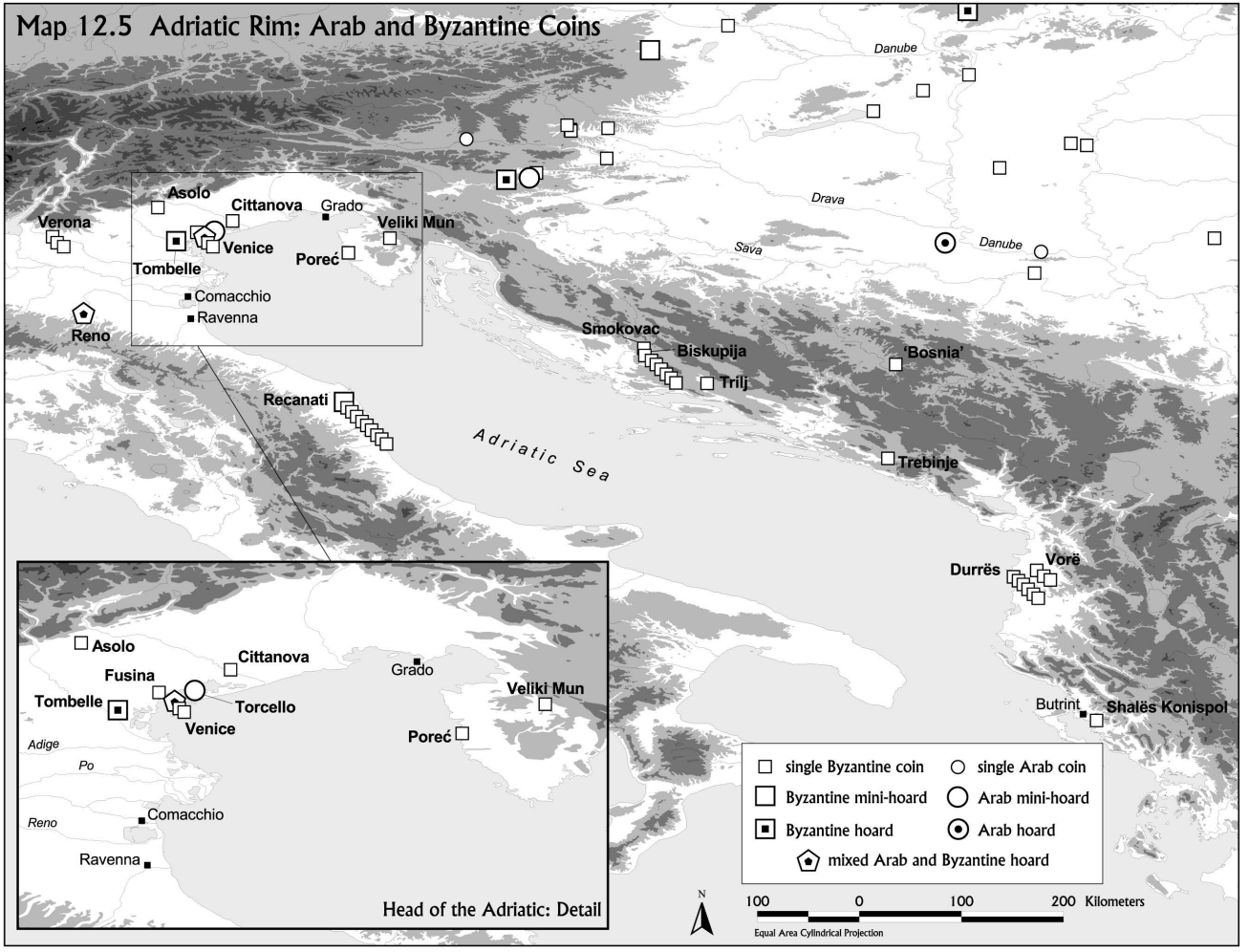


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TABLE 12.7
Adriatic rim 2, Venice: Arab and Byzantine coin finds (Map 12.5)

| Find* | Deposit date | Type | Mint | Quantity |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cittanova (B8) | after 732–7 | Byzantine AV | Constantinople | 1 |
| Venice, S. Pietro (B61) | after 720–41 | Byzantine AE | Ravenna | 1 |
| Venice, S. Lorenzo (A37) | after 761 | Arab AV | ? | 2 (c. 400 lost) |
| Fusina (B18) | after 802–11 | Byzantine AE | Syracuse | 1 |
| Torcello (A40) | c. 800–20 | Arab, Carolingian AR | Abbasid, Milan | 2 |
| Tombelle (B56) | c. 811? | Byzantine AE | Syracuse | 4 |
| Venice, S. Tomà (A38) | c. 838–42 | Byzantine and Arab AV | Constantinople, Naples, Baghdad or Marw? | 7 |
| Venice, S. Marco (A39) | after 750–900? | Arab AR | Abbasid | 1 |
| Asolo (B1) | after 886–912 | Byzantine AE | Constantinople? | 1 |

*Notes:*
AE – copper; AR – silver; AV – gold.
*Appendix 3 number in parentheses.

inland from the river mouth at Comacchio, which trading port had the misfortune of being Venice's earliest rival, and which the Byzantine fleet attacked in the winter of 808–09 (R284). The river hoard provides tangible proof that the dinars that we tracked through the documents reached this region. Metal, size, the fact that it mixed Arab dinars with Byzantine and Beneventan issues, and that the imperial gold came not from Sicily but from the Bosporus, all show that we are dealing with the purse of someone with far-flung connections, and who may have died with his money close to hand. The mixture of different coinages proves that this was not some government gift or disbursement. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the man who lost his wealth, and maybe more, in the Reno river that day was a merchant. In any case, he was traveling with gold that had reached him from Egypt, Constantinople, and perhaps Africa.

Nine finds stem from Venice and its immediate hinterland. They document the monetary circulation and, indeed, the precocious monetization of this unique ecological and economic region. The circulation of Byzantine coins in the territory of Venice is to be expected, given the offshore society's ambivalent but real connection to that empire, even if the existence of a Carolingian mint which claimed to be Venice remains unexplained.[39] The presence of copper probably

39 Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 196 and 217.



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TABLE 12.8
Adriatic rim 3, Balkan façade: Byzantine coin finds (Map 12.5)

| Find* | Deposit date | Type | Mint | Quantity |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Veliki Mun (B60) | after 741–75 | Byzantine AV | Syracuse | 1 |
| Poreć (B37) | after 711/13 | Byzantine AV | Ravenna? | 1 |
| Biskupija (B3) | c. 800–50 | Byzantine AV | Syracuse | 6 |
| Bosnia (B4) | after 830–40 | Byzantine AV | Constantinople? | 1 |
| Smokovac (B51) | after 868–79 | Byzantine AV | Constantinople | 1 |
| Trilj (B59) | c. 800–50 | Byzantine AV | Syracuse | 1 |
| Trebinje (B58) | after 830–42 | Byzantine AV | ? | 1 |
| Durrës 1 (B14) | after 830–42 | Byzantine AE | Constantinople? | 1 |
| Durrës 2 (B14) | after 870–9 | Byzantine AE | Constantinople | 1 |
| Durrës 3 (B14) | after 879–81 | Byzantine AE | Constantinople | 1 |
| Durrës 4–6 (B14) | after 886–912 | Byzantine AE | Constantinople | 3 single finds |
| Vorë 1 (B63) | after 869 | Byzantine AE | Constantinople | 1 |
| Vorë 2 (B63) | after 899 | Byzantine AE | Constantinople | 2 |
| Shalës Konispol (B48) | after 803 | Byzantine AE | Constantinople | 1 |

*Notes:*
AE – copper; AV – gold.
*Appendix 3 number in parentheses.

indicates that even small purchases could be made with money in this dynamic new economic center.[40] But the huge hoard of dinars discovered at San Lorenzo in the sixteenth century signals in tangible form the influx of new coinage that appears in the written records seventeen years after the earliest possible date of that hoard's burial. The San Tomà find shows that the dinars were still coming in around 840, along with fresh gold coins from Constantinople and Naples. These real coins fit perfectly next to the virtual ones of the scant surviving Venetian records. The dirhams, on the other hand, provide the first proof of what we would have expected even though the documents are taciturn: that Arab silver accompanied gold aboard homebound Venetian ships. The Carolingian silver penny to which the dirham of the great market at Torcello had fused adds a third element to the money trap that was early medieval Venice.

As we travel south along the Balkan coast and peer across the mountains into the hinterland, Byzantium looms larger. From Veliki Mun (Croatia), on the neck of the Istrian peninsula, all the way down to Konispol (Albania), a series of single

40 The Carolingian stratum which produced the Milan penny and dirham produced also two copper coins, one of which could be recognized as late Roman: Tabaczyński 1977, 272 and 282–3.



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finds or, perhaps, mini-hoards appears to reflect the penetration into the hinterland of coins from the Byzantine strongholds on the coast. The Poreć coin could very well have been deposited while Istria was still under Byzantine governance, and so is less illuminating for our theme. This is less likely for the Veliki Mun piece; it is outright impossible for the Biskupija coins. These six Syracusan solidi were discovered in the graves of men who dressed like Carolingian Franks and died near Knin, inland between Zadar and Split. An identical coin was found some 75 km down the road at Trilj, in the burial of an aristocratic woman of similar date. One wonders how these early ninth-century aristocrats were connected with Byzantine Italy.[41] One gold coin of Theophilus turned up somewhere in Bosnia and another has been identified from a find at Trebinje, about 30 km inland from Dubrovnik.[42] Six copper coins from the Byzantine bastion of Durrës-Dyrrachium find an echo 22 km inland in the three copper coins of 868–70 and 886–912 discovered at Vorë.[43] The Shalës-Konispol find is a copper coin from 806–15 and occurs about 20 km from Buthrotos (mod. Butrint), itself just across the narrow strait of Byzantine Kerkyra.

Overall then, Byzantine gold and copper predominate among foreign issues around the Adriatic rim. Copper coins continued to be used in the coastal towns still controlled by Byzantium or once again under its control. They also seem to have circulated in Venice, and even in one or another town under undisputed Frankish or papal rule. As far as mints are concerned, Syracuse (as many as eighteen coins) and Constantinople (up to twenty-eight) far outstrip Naples and nearby Ravenna. Insofar as we can judge, in the source of its Byzantine money the Adriatic rim parted company around 775 from the rest of western Europe and

41 Note the fourteen other identical or nearly identical coins preserved at the same museum but of unknown provenance. The fictional *Vita S. Pancratii* (BHG 1410) describes a Sicilian force's military attack on the area of Dyrrachium which produced a rich booty of slaves, and which purportedly occurred in the Apostolic age (below, p. 745). More probably the author was projecting into the past some otherwise unknown military exploit of his own time, the 8th C. Service with or against such a campaign might explain the coins' presence in the family treasury.

42 A similar coin which has turned up some 200 km further inland, at Skopje (B50), is less likely to belong to this group, since the roads to Skopje run through mountains and lie mostly parallel to the sea. Other gold coins of Theophilus in local museums in the region with uncertain provenance may reflect the movement inland. Cf. Metcalf 1979, 32n21, who connects these coins with tribute payments by the Dalmatian sea cities to Slavic tribes of the interior reported by Constantine VII. Similarly Metcalf 1960, 437, no. 101, on another Theophilan solidus at Sisak on the Sava, as well as a copper coin of Leo VI at Osijek on the Drava (anc. Mursa), presumably found locally before 1906: Metcalf 1960, 436, no. 87.

43 Albanian museums have another dozen or so copper coins of similar date, as well as a few gold coins, whose provenance is not specifically attested, though they are likely to be local: Spahiu 1979–80, 385–7.



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Byzantine Italy. Into the ninth century, Sicily continued as the main supplier of Byzantine coins to Europe.[44] Scrutiny of circulation patterns in Byzantine Calabria has suggested that the supply of coins was interrupted from around 775 to 811, but that production at the Sicilian mint resumed and continued on a large scale from Leo V (813–20) to Theophilus; Italian issues in other words, were available until c. 842. Subsequently Constantinople loomed increasingly large in southern Italy, until it became the sole supplier of coinage after 878.[45] In the Adriatic, on the other hand, Constantinopolitan coins begin to dominate permanently from 775.[46] The Adriatic's shift away from Byzantine Italy set in a generation or two before the Arabs invaded Sicily, and so cannot have been caused by that event.

Arab coins, both gold and silver, concentrate at the head of the lagoon, at Venice. But west of Bologna, the Reno river shows us real dinars such as the records mention. The hoards converge with the documents to depict an influx of Arab coins in the three or four decades on either side of the year 800. This influx happens to coincide with the shift away from Sicily to Constantinople as the main supplier of Byzantine coinage in the vicinity.

## 7. The Amber Trail

So far, so good. A trail of Arab and Byzantine coins led us up the Rhine–Meuse basin and into the Alps, toward the European source. On the Mediterranean side of the Alps, we have observed continuing arrivals of Byzantine coins; a few surviving witnesses of the influx of Arab gold and silver cluster at Venice. The last point is precisely what the written records showed, when they showed it. This is exciting in itself, for it provides a first indication that coins followed – and that they therefore confirm – lines of communication. Movements of coins do not always and everywhere mean movements of commerce. Yet a trail of coins that leads to Venice strengthens precisely that interpretation. But there is more. There is another trail.

44 Morrisson 1998.

45 Guzzetta 1986, 275–6. Note, however, the danger of the argument from silence when founded on single finds: Grierson 1965a, xii. Cf. on the role of local production in 8th-C. Ravenna, above, n37. Note too that the Class 3 of Theophilus' Constantinopolitan solidi which supplies the find B50 and probably also B4 and B58, was a particularly abundant coin. For further examples, see below. To these considerations we could add the lack of numismatic consensus on mint distinctions: some non-Constantinopolitan issues may be lurking under the Constantinopolitan attribution of some 9th-C. coins: cf. *DOC* 3: 74–91; Hendy 1985, 421–6.

46 Only four of the eighteen Sicilian coins were issued *after* 775; only eight of the thirty-four Constantinopolitan coins were struck *before* 775.



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When I began researching coin finds, I did not stop at the part of Europe actually controlled by the Carolingians. Almost imperceptibly finds began to accumulate in another region to which I was paying little attention. Yet when all the finds were plotted on a map, a new trail emerged. This one also starts out from Venice, and it too crosses the Alps. But the twenty-odd discoveries of which this trail consists lead in a different direction: they stream eastward, into the heart of the uncharted and much disputed Slavlands along the Frankish empire's eastern boundaries. The trail they map was not new. On the contrary, they trace one of the oldest, most famous ways of Europe: the Amber Trail, by which, from prehistoric times, the fossilized resin which abounds on the Baltic shore traveled south across central Europe to the workshops of the Adriatic. Now archaeology shows that the amber route had closed down in the final centuries of the Roman empire, when the Avars settled athwart it.[47] Around the time that Charlemagne's armies destroyed their kingdom, our coins show that life returned to the southern reaches of the ancient Amber Trail.

A chain of finds stretches through modern-day Slovenia, north across the eastern Alps, and toward the Danube and the ancient site of Carnuntum. On the other side of the great river, they look west, north and maybe east. Another branch route might have run closer to the Danube. To the southeast, coins cluster around the confluence of the Sava and the Danube. Table 12.9 lays out the finds, roughly from north to south, and west to east.[48]

The finds stem from the Adriatic. One or another Byzantine coin may have worked its way westward across the Balkans, but the mixture of Arab and Byzantine coins makes the Adriatic connection obvious, for the imperial authorities would scarcely have tolerated the free circulation of foreign coins in their territory. The fact that the flow of coins began before trans-Balkan travel revived (Ch. 19.1) confirms that connection. The mints – North Africa for the dirhams, and Sicily for the Byzantine copper – drive the point home.[49] Conversely, the

47 E.g. Jankuhn 1986, 18–19.

48 A few finds from this general part of Europe differ so much by their date, nature, and location that they cannot claim to belong to this set, although they appear in Appendix 3, for the sake of completeness. The most important is Zemianský Vrbovok (B69), which seems to be an Avar deposit of c. 674–81. The second group consists of coins from what are probably Magyar graves dating from the 10th or 11th C.; the coins usually display characteristic perforations, and are accompanied by typical grave goods: see in general, Kovács 1989, 134–45, and B12–13, B35, and B55; for a few ambiguous cases, below, n65. A third find site might reflect a distant echo of the main Amber Trail developments: B54.

49 By way of example, the excavations of the church of St. Polyeuktos in Istanbul yielded some 500 copper coins for the same period; the overwhelming majority were from Constantinople, and none came from Italy: Hendy 1986, 278–373, nos. 223–736; cf. 279. It is, in other words, unlikely that Italian coins reached the Amber Trail from Constantinople.



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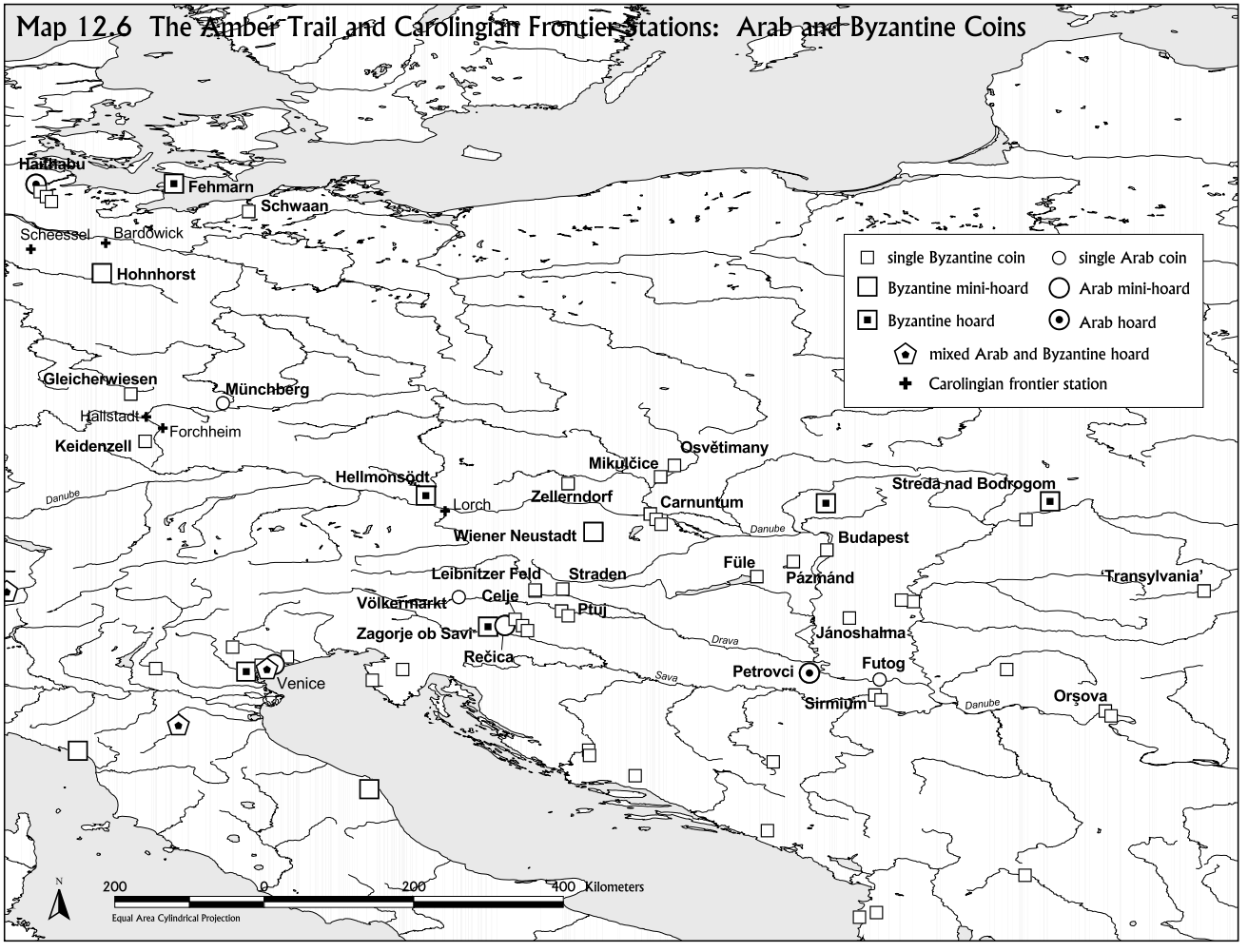

TABLE 12.9
The Amber Trail: Arab and Byzantine coins (Maps 12.6 and 12.7)

| Find* | Deposit date | Mint | Type | Quantity |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| North of the Danube | | | | |
| Western branch | | | | |
| Zellerndorf (B68) | after 751–75 | Syracuse | Byzantine AE | 1 |
| Hellmonsödt (B22) | c. 695? | ? | Byzantine AE | 4 (+?) |
| Eastern branch | | | | |
| Osvětimany (B34) | c. 840–900 | Constantinople | Byzantine AV | 1 |
| Mikulčice (B30) | after 856–67 | Constantinople | Byzantine AV | 1 |
| From the Danube to the Sava | | | | |
| Carnuntum (B6) | after 886–912 | Constantinople | Byzantine AE; Arab coin mold | 3 strays |
| Wiener Neustadt (B66) | after 813–20 | Constantinople, Sicily | Byzantine AE | 2 |
| Straden (B53) | after 813–20 | Syracuse | Byzantine AE | 1 |
| Wagna (B64) | after 886–912 | Constantinople | Byzantine AE | 1 |
| Leibnitzer Feld (B26) | after 886–912 | Constantinople | Byzantine AE | 1 |
| Völkermarkt (A41) | after 777–8 | Ifriqiya | Arab AR | 1 |
| Ptuj 1 (B38) | after 751–75 | Sicily | Byzantine AE | 1 |
| Ptuj 2 (B38) | after 886–912 | Constantinople | Byzantine AE | 1 |
| Rečica (A33) | after 788 | al Abbasiyya | Arab AR | 2 |
| Celje 1 (B7) | after 751–69 | Constantinople | Byzantine AE | 1 |
| Celje 2 (B7) | after 802–11 | Constantinople | Byzantine AE | 1 |
| Celje 3 (B7) | after 830–42 | Constantinople | Byzantine AE | 1 |
| Zagorje ob Savi (B67) | c. 870/9 | ? | 1 Roman AR, 3 Roman and 1 Byzantine AE | 5 |

*Notes:*
AE – copper; AR – silver; AV – gold.
*Appendix 3 number in parentheses.

prevalence of Constantinopolitan issues that we have already observed in the Adriatic after 775 means that later coins from this mint scarcely militate against an Adriatic provenance. An Italian connection of a different sort follows from more recent excavations at Mikulčice, one of the northernmost of our sites. Archaeologists have uncovered three late Carolingian pennies issued at Milan; these particular coins may well have come north thanks to the Magyar raids down the same corridor into Italy, and which began in 899/900.[50] Finally, the chronology of the Arab component fits the influx of dinars and dirhams into the Veneto.[51]

50 Cf. Kovács 1989, 93n519; cf. discussion B30.

51 See also the date of the hoard at Petrovci, below, Table 12.10.



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The main Roman road to this part of the Danube heads eastward into the Julian Alps from Aquileia, 11 km from its offshore competitor at Grado; another, secondary route, ran northeast from Trieste (Map 12.7). Both Grado and Trieste were awash in Arab coins, according to the documents. Inland, these two routes met at the heavily fortified pass, "At the Pear Tree" (*Ad Pirum*, mod. Hrušica), about 65 km from Aquileia and 40 from Trieste.[52] From there the Roman road ran directly to Ljubljana (anc. Emona), some 40 km to the northeast. The next major find site on the Roman road is 70 km past Ljubljana, at Celje (ancient Celeia, which owed its early growth to the amber trade), followed by Ptuj (ancient Poetovio), another 60 km distant. From Celje or Ptuj, several Roman roads ran north toward the Mur river, whether along the westerly routes that passed Klagenfurt and Völkermarkt, or the important road on which medieval Graz grew up. This last cut through Leibnitz (Flavia Solva) and joined the Mur at Bruck an der Mur (Poedicum).[53] From Bruck a secondary Roman road headed northeastward up the Mürz valley to the Semmering pass and then down along the Leitha toward Wiener Neustadt, and hence to Carnuntum and the Danube.[54] The travel infrastructure here underwent considerable development in the booming twelfth century, but as early as 860, Louis the German granted three benefices along the core of this route to the church of Salzburg; the gift illustrates how the Carolingians secured key routes with ecclesiastical concessions.[55] This road ran west of the Burgenland hills and avoided the old lowland road from Ptuj to Scarbantia (mod. Sopron, Hungary) which the Romans had favored when traveling to Carnuntum.[56] From Carnuntum, the ancient amber route crossed the Danube and ran north toward the Baltic.[57]

Comparing the road network with Table 12.9 and Map 12.7 underscores how closely the find spots of Byzantine and Arab coins follow it. The first step is probably the hoard at Zagorje, at which point a traveler who had come from Grado or Trieste would be about halfway from Ljubljana to Celje. Zagorje lies 13 km south of the main Roman road, at the mouth of a stream which flows under that road and empties into the Sava. Some 35 km – about a day's journey (Ch. 16.2) – from the stream the traveler reaches Celje, in the valley of the Savinja, a tributary of the Sava

52 See the thorough discussion of this part of the road system and late Roman stations in Ulbert *et al.* 1981, 3–11. For the overall road system, see *Tabula Imperii Romani*, L33; map in Pavan *et al.* 1990.

53 On this road see also Mondrijan 1974, 25–31.

54 Czendes 1969, 242–4.

55 *Ibid.*; D LG 102, no. 20, November 860 (preserved in the original): in the Mürz valley, at Bruck, and at Strassengel (note the name "Strazinolum"), which delineate this stretch of the route rather nicely. On the Carolingian policy of securing routes in this way, see Ch. 13.1.

56 Another trail may have skirted the eastern Alps before heading north toward Wiener Neustadt, also following a Roman route via Hartberg, Anspang, and Pitten; Czendes 1969, 272–5.

57 Freising 1977, 33–53.



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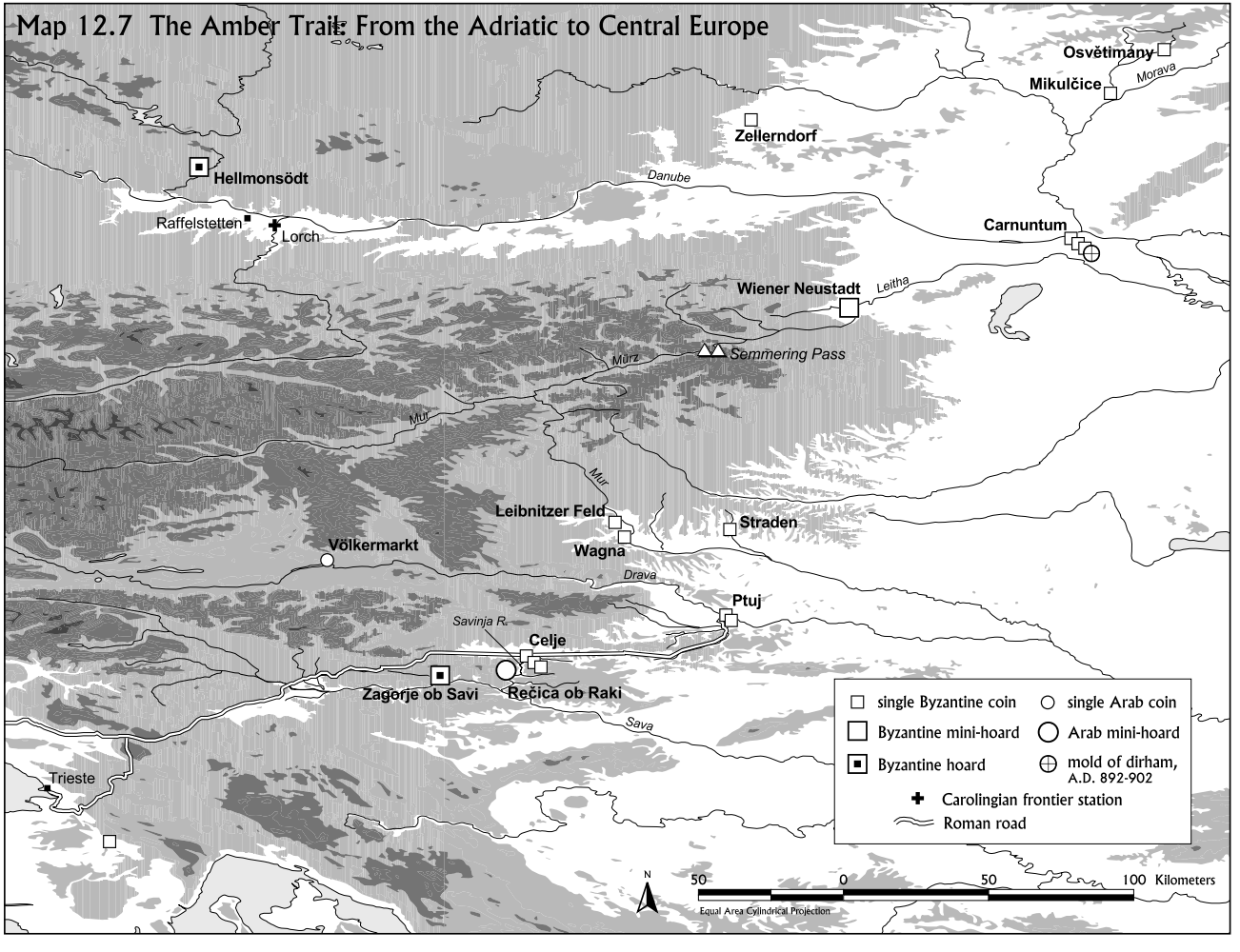


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river. From that Alpine tributary came three stray Byzantine coins of the later eighth and earlier ninth century. But 13 km before Celje, a crossroad by the old Roman cemetery leads up into the Savinja and Reka river valleys and the mountains. Ten km from that crossroads, at Rečica by the side of the Reka creek, someone hid two "well-preserved" dirhams struck at al Abbasiyya, North Africa, in the name of Harun al Rashid in 787/8. Rečica is a third of the way to the westerly Roman road north to the Mur, past Völkermarkt, 50 km away, on the Drava river. This last town's twin names were first written down in the twelfth century, as "Volchimercatus" and "Forum Iudeorum," that is, "Fulk's Market" and "Market of the Jews." They long ago led scholars to conclude that the place was a station for early medieval merchants traveling between central Europe and the Mediterranean. Now an eighth-century dirham struck in Africa has turned up there.[58]

The Roman road continued 40 km from Celje to Ptuj, which produced a Sicilian coin and a Constantinopolitan issue. The road north to Bruck yielded two more Byzantine coins, one 3 km before Leibnitz at Wagna, and another in the river plain of the Mur, near Leibnitz, some 25 km downstream from Bruck and the diagonal route toward Carnuntum. Yet another Sicilian coin hints at a parallel route, about 25 km to the east, via Straden. The next finds appear only on the Danubian side of the Semmering pass, at Wiener Neustadt, where a Constantinopolitan issue of the early ninth century was discovered with a Sicilian coin of the seventh. Some 65 km away, following the Leitha river, one came to a key juncture on the Amber Trail, Carnuntum, with its strays of Leo VI, and the Danube.[59] Whether or not its later medieval fair had early medieval roots, excavators have discovered there a jewelry mold made from an Arab coin dated A.D. 892–902. It may well indicate very far-flung contacts as early as c. 900, while cowrie shells and other exotic goods have turned up in a nearby cemetery dated to the tenth or eleventh centuries (B6).

Beyond the Danube, some coins trail the amber route into modern Moravia. The Osvětimany solidus was buried in a grave in a ninth-century ring fort that overlooks two major branches of the Amber Trail; archaeologists have assigned the fort's material culture to the "Great Moravian" civilization, one of whose major sites, Stare Město, lies half a day's journey to the east. The Mikulčice solidus comes from a Christian cemetery in another "Great Moravian" ring fort, which was also built next to a branch of the Amber Trail.[60] To the west,

58 For more on the problematic testimony of Carinthian place-names, see below, ch. 25n136.

59 Freising 1977, 35–9.

60 It is barely conceivable that the hoard of Streda nad Bodrogem (B54), from an apparent destruction layer which included the solidus of Basil I and unidentified silver coins, is a very distant outlier of this group. It lies about 300 km due east of these sites, in the foothills of the Carpathian mountains. The geography argues, however, for connections down the Tisza/Theiss to the Danube.



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Zellerndorf is washed by an east-flowing stream which, ultimately, empties into the Danube near Carnuntum.[61] The westernmost end of this transdanubian trail comes at Hellmonsödt. Its Byzantine copper hoard was buried halfway (14 km) between Linz and a tributary of Vltava river, which flows north to Prague.

The trail ends in Moravia and in Lower Austria. One small deposit on the Baltic might just represent the northernmost end of this stream of coins. An Italo-Byzantine – mostly Sicilian – hoard was discovered in the nineteenth century on Fehmarn Island (B16). It appears to have been deposited in the first half of the ninth century and could have taken the Amber Trail north. The ninth-century Constantinopolitan coins found at Haithabu and a solidus of Constantine V and Leo IV which turned up at Schwaan may point in the same direction (B21; B46). But there is no obvious way to exclude the possibility that the coins reached the Baltic with some traveler trekking westward over the northern route via the Rus, or indeed, through the Rhine and the Frisian trade diaspora along the North Sea coast.[62] On the other hand, the abundant Viking and Polish dirhams from the Muslim far east apparently failed to percolate southward into the Moravian zone. This suggests that contacts across the Carpathian mountains involving coins were quite limited.[63] The scarcity of contemporary Byzantine coins in Poland points in the same direction.[64] This region had little to do with the Mediterranean, directly. Along the amber route, south of the Carpathians, on the contrary, Mediterranean connections predominated.

61 Another find comes from south of the Danube, from the reign immediately preceding that of Constantine IV: a copper coin struck at Constantinople in 655/8 was discovered c. 55 km due south of Zellerndorf, at Neulengbach (Hahn 1990, 241), on the road north to Tulln, a significant stopping place in the 9th C.: e.g. R549.

62 Theodosius 3 Baboutzikos' contact with Haithabu is contemporaneous with the Fehmarn hoard, and would fit with some of the stray evidence from Haithabu: Pros. "Theodosius 3." Haithabu's contacts with Constantinople c. 840 could in other words have traveled another route, perhaps the Amber Trail, along whose southern reaches other Byzantine coins are strewn. For an intriguing attempt to link the Haithabu coins, Baboutzikos, the "Rhos" travelers from Constantinople to Louis the Pious' court (Anons. 221–2), and the Rus settlements, see Shepard 1995a.

63 On 9th-C. Baltic and Polish dirhams, as well as the apparent Carpathian barrier see Bálint 1981, 113–14, and the remarkable series of Polish inventories, documenting some two dozen hoards from the 9th and early 10th C. What these hoards make clear is that the Polish material is overwhelmingly Arab; the mint and date features connect it with the Viking links reaching to Baghdad and the eastern areas of the Caliphate, e.g. Slaski and Tabaczyński 1959.

64 For instance, a detailed archaeological survey of "Little Poland," the southeastern quarter of the modern state, turned up only seven Byzantine coins; after three of Justinian I there is a hiatus until John I Tzimiskes: Żaki 1974, 308–10. Nonetheless a hoard of some twenty gold solidi assigned to around the 9th–10th C. is reported to have been found at Wilków (Kielce) c. 1905 and dispersed: *ibid.*, 558, no. 62. Contrast this with the two hoards of c. 700 Arab silver coins and odd single finds, from the same region in our period: *ibid.*, 310.



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TABLE 12.10
Arab and Byzantine coins around Sirmium (see Map 12.6, where the sites are identified by their find number)

| Find* | Deposit date | Mint | Type | Quantity |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Petrovci (A31) | 790 | Abbasid | Arab AV | 11 |
| Futog (A19) | after 708 | Caliphate | Arab AV | 1 |
| Sirmium 1 (B49) | after 821/9 | Constantinople | Byzantine AE | 1 |
| Sirmium 2 (B49) | after 886/912 | Constantinople | Byzantine AE | 1 |

*Notes:*
AE – copper; AV – gold.
*Appendix 3 number in parentheses.

Three further clusters of coins may relate to those strewn along the Amber Trail. The northernmost runs parallel to the Moravian–Carnuntum–Wiener Neustadt route, but lies about 150 km further east, on either side of the Danube. It could conceivably indicate a corridor of ninth-century movements along the 250-km stretch where the Danube heads due south.[65] A couple of Byzantine stray finds are more distant, and probably point more to direct communications with Constantinople than with the Adriatic. In the later ninth century, St. Blaise ran into trouble with pirates as he headed up the Danube toward Rome (Ch. 7.3); this probably happened in the Iron Gates. Two late ninth-century Byzantine coins emerged from a Danube cove in just this stretch of the river and show that Blaise was not the only "money man" then traveling in those parts.[66]

The third cluster is another matter. A scattering of coins occurs around the site of ancient Sirmium (mod. Sremska Mitrovica) on the Sava. Whether or not Cyril and Methodius were active in this area, one could imagine different ways in which the Byzantine coins that crop up here might have reached this area more or less directly from Constantinople. The dinar found 40 km north of Sirmium at Futog on the Danube, however, scarcely traveled to its place of deposit from the

65 But these single finds might also stem from Magyar burials of the 10th or 11th C., though they do not seem to display the typical perforations with which the newcomers adapted coins to their decorative use; for pictures of such holes see Kovács 1989, illustrations 1002–5; 1025–8, etc. For three out of the four, almost nothing is known about the coin. Of course, even finds from certifiably Magyar cemeteries could potentially testify to coins that traveled north along our route and were acquired in the Magyars' new homeland. But to be certain that we are not seeing coins they brought westward from their old dealings with the Byzantines, more information would be needed on mints. In any case, the finds which are not certainly Magyar are: B5; B17; B24; and B36.

66 Found at Orşova, Romania: B33; Map 12.1.



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Byzantine east; the same is true in spades for the hoard of Abbasid dinars hidden at Petrovci around 790, about 100 km west of Sirmium, near Vukovar, some 50 km downstream from the confluence of the Drava and the Danube.

At first glance, the cluster around Sirmium seems isolated enough, since Petrovci is about 270 km east of Ptuj. But from Ptuj and Celje, Roman roads flank the Sava and Drava as the rivers flow eastward toward the Danube and these coins. If, as seems likely, contemporary Byzantine coins known at Sisak (some 120 km downstream from Zagorje) on the Sava and Osijek (200 km downstream from Ptuj) on the Drava are of local provenance, they would link the Adriatic and the Sirmium-area finds.[67] Sisak was certainly in communication with the Adriatic in 821, since one of our travelers was accused of supplying stonemasons to build castles for Liudewit, the Slavic princeling who headquartered there. The accusations were sufficiently well founded to drive Fortunatus to Byzantium, and a Frankish army sent from Italy forced Liudewit to flee Sisak the next year.[68] If the site of the Methodian mission were indeed in the vicinity of Sirmium, as some have contended, relations with Italy would be quite well documented in the second half of the ninth century. So the presence of Arab dinars on the route toward the Bulgarian empire and Sirmium may well indicate another important trail leading to the Adriatic.[69]

The westernmost segment of the Amber Trail coins introduces one last set of strays. Their distribution along the northeastern fringe of Carolingian power is not so random as may first appear. We have already observed that the Hellmonsödt hoard lies 14 km north of the Danube and Linz, on a route toward Prague. In terms of ninth-century geography however, the most salient landmark in the immediate vicinity lay 15 km downstream from Linz, on the south bank of the Danube, at Lorch. There stood one of the trading posts or toll stations to which Charlemagne assigned a monopoly of trade "for merchants who travel to the country of the Slavs and Avars."[70] In fact, from north to south, *all* stray finds of foreign coins on the northeastern edge of the Carolingian empire occur within 30 to 80 km of the authorized transit points for merchants (Map 12.6). This represents one to two days' travel (Ch. 16.2), along a frontier that stretched approximately 1,000 kilometers from Jutland to the vicinity of Tulln.

They also happen to lie in natural corridors for long-distance travel.[71] The finds bunch up in the sector Hallstadt–Forcheim, due west of Prague. The

67 See above, n42, on these coins, a solidus of Theophilus and a follis of Leo VI respectively.

68 *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 821 and 822, pp. 155–6 and 158.

69 Yet another dinar from the first half of the 10th C. was reported from Popinci, 15 km east of Sirmium: see A31.

70 "De negotiatoribus qui partibus Sclavorum et Avarorum pergunt," *MGH Capit.* no. 44, 7, 1.123.13–21, A.D. 805; see also below, pp. 604, 644 and p. 647.

71 See the details for each find in Appendix 3.



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TABLE 12.11
Northeastern frontier of the Carolingian empire: Arab and Byzantine coins (Map 12.6)

| Hoard* | Station | Deposit date | Mint | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hohnhorst (B23) | Bardowick | after 720–41 or 912 | Constantinople, Antioch | 3 Byzantine AE |
| Gleicherwiesen (B19) | Hallstadt | after 668–73 | Carthage | AE |
| Münchberg (A27) | Hallstadt | after 787 | ?Abbasid | dirham |
| Keidenzell (B25) | Forcheim | after 829–42 | ? | Byzantine AE |
| Hellmonsödt (B22) | Lorch | c. 695? | | 4 + ? Byzantine AE |

*Notes:*
AE – copper.
*Appendix 3 number in parentheses.

obvious inference is that these coins too are connected with Carolingian communications with the Slavic world, and that we have a very early indicator of the route toward Prague which would become so important in the tenth century.

◈

Chapters 11 and 12 have introduced three more independent sets of data that throw light on patterns of communication linking Carolingian Europe to the outside world. From the archives of Italy came "mancosus," which early medieval speakers of Protoromance borrowed from Arabic *manqūsh*. From the ground came coins struck in the Islamic world and deposited in the soil and waterways of Europe. From the ground also came the third group of foreign objects, independent in their origins if not in the circumstances of their loss, the coins struck in the Byzantine empire. We may debate how these words and things got to western Europe, whether their movements were due to trade or to some other human activity; we may in some instances even debate when they got there. It is no longer possible to debate that they did get there. Each group of coins has authorized a discrete set of conclusions. But what do they tell us when they are put together?

The easiest conclusions concern communications; commerce is more complicated. Real Byzantine and Arab coins cluster along routes: roads, rivers, and mountain passes typify find sites. That foreign coins favor the edges of Carolingian power reflects well-known Frankish efforts to control the coinage circulating inside the kingdom. Three cases aside, the geographic groups of Byzantine and Arab coins overlap. The exceptions are the Viking and Spanish groups, from which Byzantine coins are more or less completely absent, and the southeastern segment of the Adriatic rim. Arab coins so far are lacking along the Balkan coast south of Istria.



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As Arab and Byzantine coins dropped along the Rhône dwindled away in the eighth century, those from the Rhine corridor grew. They string together a route that reaches from Adriatic Italy's doorstep to the North Sea. South of the Alps, texts give deeper voice to the muffled gold exhumed from the earth. The real coins stack up well against the virtual coins whose existence and nature surfaced in the archival documents. Judging even from its own rare records, the Veneto was the center of gravity of the flow of dinars into Italy. A wealthy Venetian patriarch had held in his hands, in the first quarter of the ninth century, a minimum of 248 such dinars, not to mention larger sums of unspecified denomination adding up to at least 37 lb. of gold (the equivalent of some 2,800 more dinars), and 114 lb. of silver. Fortunatus of Grado records transactions involving mancosi at home, in the Veneto, as well as others in Constantinople, involving Byzantine solidi. His dealings are the documentary counterpart to both the San Tomà and the Reno River hoards – respectively about a decade before and after Fortunatus' will – which mix Arab and Byzantine coins. The mancosi were raw material for golden works of art or liturgical furniture even as they functioned as a standard of value and of weight. And you could buy things with them in the Veneto. Thousands of kilometers from Baghdad and Cairo, taxes and other dues were acquitted in *dinar al manqūsh* by the good Christians of Istria. "Virtual" silver mancosi, or dirhams, are more elusive. A few seem nonetheless attested in the sources, and the real coins certainly reached Carolingian Europe, for a good number even escaped the rigorous recycling of foreign coinage that characterizes Frankish administration around 800.

The power of Arab gold over the minds of contemporary Italians was great enough to spawn in the local silver coinages a gold mancosus of account, as early as the 820s. Land transactions around Ravenna continue to mention Byzantine solidi in the early ninth century. Some Byzantine copper coins also continued to circulate in the towns, especially in the Veneto. Taken all together, real and virtual coins prove that the coastal areas of northern Italy were, well into the ninth century, an intermediary zone between the monometallic, silver-based coinage of the north, and the more complex coinage systems of Byzantium and the Caliphate, founded on the classic triad of gold, silver, and copper.

Dinars in documents closely parallel the dates of the surviving Arab coins. Gold mancosi show up in the aftermath of the Carolingian conquest, at a moment of political and economic transition in northern Italy. When the future was uncertain, the elite sought to guarantee their high-value transactions by appealing to an external and indisputable coin standard. The new coins appear first in the Veneto, in Treviso in 778. In Rome, the last unambiguous payment in dinars is attested in 837; gold mancosi were still used in Venice c. 840, but disappear subsequently from documents and hoards. But some such coins were still around in the second half of the ninth century when Eberhard, the Frankish



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margrave of Friuli whose jurisdiction surrounded the Veneto and controlled the overland access to the Alps, referred to a private stash of 100 mancosi of unspecified metal.

Over space, the documents converge nicely with the density of finds in the Veneto. But they extend our knowledge of the penetration of these coins into the Italian economy as far south as we have pursued them, in Rome, and as far west as Milan. The documents fill in the blanks in our coin maps, and unveil the influx of Arab coins on a level of detail which actual coin finds probably never will equal. The total of "virtual" gold coins used in payment which we have encountered *outside* penalty clauses amounts to around 1,200 dinars. Even beyond the Veneto, they saw certain but limited use for some kinds of transactions. They supplied a recognized standard of value, they were the kind of reserve coinage that wealthy individuals hoarded, and they were familiar enough to supply a recognized and painful standard for penalty. Inside the Veneto (and in Rome) they were used routinely for important financial transactions. Even more importantly, the double approach to mentions of coins and actual coins illuminates the representativeness of the coin finds on the ground. The contrast between the virtual coins of the Italian records and the places at which dinars and dirhams have been reported shows just how exceptional it was for coins to be lost and their finds recorded. Italian notaries knew and mentioned Arab coins in at least twenty-nine different places in northern Italy; a thousand years later, actual coins finds are recorded from only three places, as a comparison of Maps 11.1 and 12.5 will emphasize. The find spots and numbers reveal only a fraction – a tenth – of the range and density of these Arab coins' real presence on the ground.

This pattern of Arab and Byzantine gold, silver, and copper coins extends into an eastern Alpine corridor reaching up into Carinthia and the Slav lands, along the path of the ancient "Amber Trail," and the "Sava branch." The eastern arm of the Adriatic influx has never before been observed. The fact that the Byzantine coins deposited along the amber route are mostly copper poses another problem. Medieval Byzantine copper is not generally imagined to have circulated much as an international coinage. Its value seems to have been fiduciary, rather than intrinsic.[72] Whatever their value, the region in which the copper coins have been found is reckoned to have had a monetary economy of a very limited nature, at best.[73] So what were Byzantine copper coins doing there?

The fact that copper, gold, and silver all circulated in the towns of the Veneto, and that copper flanked silver or gold in some towns on the shores of the Adriatic supplies the answer. These coins were lost by travelers, individuals who had spent

72 *DOC* 3: 72 on counterfeits; cf. Hendy 1985, 500 with n253; Morrisson 1979b, 615.

73 Kos 1986, 232. On the non-monetized situation in Moravia: Kučerovská 1980.



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time in towns where the bronze coins were in use.[74] The single coins along with the hoard from Hellmonsödt (B22) must reflect travel, and connections of some sort with territories where copper coins circulated. They must reflect links with the fledgling towns of the Adriatic rim.[75]

In sum then, the distribution pattern of Arab and Byzantine coins largely mirrors certain communication zones. Each zone displays a distinctive physiognomy reflected in the characteristics of the coins, and where they were found. The Spanish corridor transported two waves of movement, one early and one later in our period. The first clearly corresponds to military expansion, the second, perhaps, to more peaceable contacts, for it was a time when Theodulf of Orleans shows us Cordovan goods in southern France. A later communications zone that comprises mainly Arab coins is the European extension of the Viking circuit that connected with the Middle East and Transcaucasia via the "northern arc." Its mints are almost entirely in the central and eastern Caliphate, as distant as the Hindu Kush; its coins are exclusively in silver, and it reaches Carolingian Europe in the second half of the ninth century.

Within the Mediterranean, Sardinia parallels in part the picture from Spain, as far as chronology and probable connections with broader historical events go. Around 700, Byzantine copper and gold document the fall of Carthage and the flight of refugees to this last corner of the imperial province of Africa; Arab copper from the same period on the island's southern coast probably stems from contacts with Africa which were mostly hostile. In the first decades of the eighth century, on Sardinia's northern face, people whose purses held both Byzantine and Lombard gold hid hoards that prove new contacts with northern Italy, as well as old ones with the Byzantine south. A second phase got under way, again in the last quarter of the eighth century. In a time of peace, Byzantine and Arab copper rubbed shoulders with African Arab silver. The last deposit, from the later ninth century, combines Greek and Arab gold, along with jewelry, and probably heralds a new era.

The hoards place the peak of coin movements across the Alps in the last quarter of the eighth century; the coins come, particularly, from Africa and the Middle East, and are in all three metals. The hoards typically mix coins from different countries. Their European trail starts in Italy. Around the Adriatic rim, an arc of Byzantine and Arab coins centered unmistakably on Venice. Constantinople and Sicily prevail as the mints for Byzantine finds; Arab coins come from Ifriqiya, the

74 Copper could also have been carried north for its metallic value, as a source of the raw material, but one would then expect more hoards, and clear associations with metal-working sites.

75 Cf., mutatis mutandis, Berger 1992, 187–96, about the stream of copper coins from the 4th-C. Roman empire into barbarian Germany; in this case, he conjectures a connection with government service.



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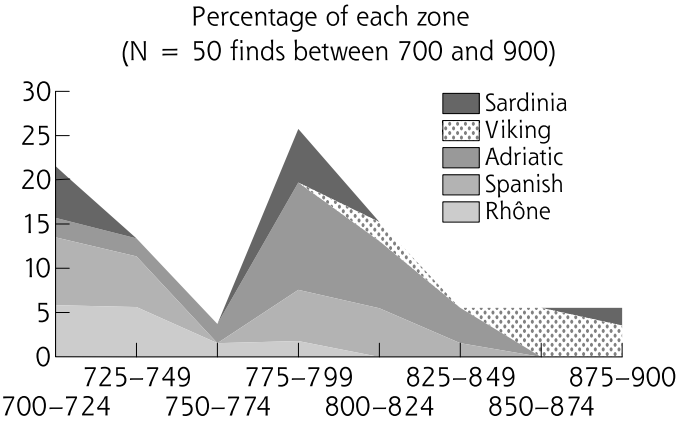
Chart 12.1. Arab coins entering Europe




Abbasid west, and probably from Baghdad. The chronology of Byzantine coins, in gold and copper, continues in an unbroken stream from the time of Greek overlordship; the real Arab coins, in gold and silver, begin to arrive in the last three or four decades of the eighth century, just like the virtual ones of the documents. The same stream, with similar characteristics and chronology, percolates across the Julian Alps and toward central Europe. There it stops.

Chart 12.1 makes a few things quite clear, starting with the overall peak between 775 and 825; it emphasizes the different chronologies of the five major zones, even as it underscores the simultaneity in the peak period of developments along the Spanish corridor, Sardinia, and the Adriatic (which includes its extensions into the Rhineland and central Europe), as well as the preponderant role in that peak of the Adriatic coins. At the beginning, Arab attacks in southern Gaul and on Sardinia make the leading contribution in the surprisingly high total of the first quarter-century – though the predominance of copper there casts a misleading shadow, as far as value is concerned. The Vikings' contribution dominates in the last half-century. The chart shows clearly the dwindling of the Rhône corridor in the eighth century; outside the Viking wave in the second half of the ninth century, the virtual cessation of arrivals provides further food for thought.[76]

The Adriatic group is the dominant component of this Arab peak between 775 and 824. Anchored as it is by three hoards, its chronology is secure. And the

76 The Byzantine coin finds come overwhelmingly from the Adriatic rim and its northern and eastern extensions, so there is little point to graphing the different layers which contribute to the overall rise and fall of finds.



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distribution is entirely supported by the independent data of the Arab coins mentioned in Italian documents. What is more, if we were to rework these charts for value, this peak would be even more pronounced. But why do the arrivals of Arab coins leap in the generation or two around the year 800? They surely reflect changing trends in Mediterranean communications. But how and why did they change in these decades? These are questions that must be pondered in the light of our overall findings.

In any event, the patterns of coins certainly reflect patterns of human movement, of communications, in the Carolingian era. Foreign coins have turned out to be better indicators of movement on the margins of the Carolingian empire than inside its more monetized regions. And we have only begun to scratch the surface. It would be worthwhile to consider this new evidence against the broader backdrop of the movement of exotic goods along certain of our corridors. For instance, some familiar sites along the amber route have yielded enigmas whose significance grows in the light of the trail of Arab and Byzantine coins. A coconut shell emerged from a "tenth-century" grave at Katzelsdorf, on the banks of the Leitha, 4 km upstream from Wiener Neustadt. Cowrie shells were discovered in graves similarly assigned to the tenth century at Ptuj.[77] In this light, one would be exceedingly curious to know what if anything the trace elements of the numerous Carolingian coins struck at Treviso or Venice might tell us, in comparison with dirhams from Africa, Egypt and Baghdad. A few dirhams and dinars certainly entered the Frankish empire intact, as our finds and records tell us. How many more dirhams may have been restruck as Frankish pennies? And what sorts of movements brought them to the Frankish frontiers? The question of commerce follows the fact of communications.

77 Mitscha-Märheim 1955, 41–2.



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# *Things that traveled*

Some 200 foreign relics, over 100 documentary mentions of mancosi, more than 500 Arab coins and 250 Byzantine coins have expanded, dramatically, the evidence which bears on the great question of Mediterranean communications at the origins of Europe. In their circumstances of preservation and origin, they are mostly independent of the 669 travelers whom we got to know in Part II.[1] Close scrutiny of five different sets of things has yielded five patterns over time and space. They overlap in a number of important ways, and we can no longer entertain the idea that those convergences result from some strange coincidence of source preservation. They stem from the medieval reality to which each series of witnesses independently testifies.

The oldest and largest set of relics from Sens allowed us to glimpse the currents that conveyed holy objects, or at least knowledge of shrines, across the Mediterranean toward north central France. In the Merovingian age, these currents linked to Gaul ports of Asia Minor, Africa, and the Levant. In the eighth century, most Byzantine ports vanish: only Constantinople and Ephesus remain. At Chelles, eighth-century communications with Byzantium look similar, though with special accents that may reflect special links between the Frankish and Byzantine dynasties. But the most striking element is certainly the role of the Caliphate in suggesting or supplying cults to both Sens and Chelles in an era when historians reckon communications with the Middle East to have been at rock bottom. The relics match, moreover, what completely independent data have indicated about Carolingian travelers to the Holy Land; a tag or two even echo known travelers' itineraries. As we have seen, the cults collected in France in

1 Charlemagne presumably gave some of the relics at Chelles to his sister, and we know from Angilbert's testimony (ch. 10) that ambassadors were expected to seek out relics in the course of their diplomatic voyages. Thus, some of the Chelles relics from Byzantium and the Middle East may well have traveled with envoys catalogued in Part II. A few links between known travelers and other relics from both hoards are possible, but there will not have been many.



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the later eighth and ninth centuries reach beyond the Holy Land, to Egypt and even Iraq.

Coins, virtual or real, signal more than one convergence with the testimony of the relics. Most striking is the inward surge of Arab gold and silver in Charlemagne's generation, particularly around the Adriatic rim. The coins did not get there by themselves. The early Spanish and Sardinian groups surely reflect warfare and political expansion. But the sudden and imposing concentration at Venice around 800 points in another direction. It points ineluctably toward commerce. The presence of one or more coins in a particular place need not automatically imply that commerce was conducted there, although in some cases, like the Torcello marketplace, that was, on other evidence, surely the case. But the easiest explanation for most of these finds on the Rhine and the Amber Trail is that they were lost by people who carried foreign currency, people who dealt with foreign places in some capacity. One or another of the finds inside the Carolingian empire might conceivably have been dropped by an ambassador or returning pilgrim.

But these explanations hold no water along recognized trade routes on the margins of Frankish power and the pagan Slavlands. There the people who lost the coins were most probably traders, on their way to or from some business. Outside the Veneto and a few privileged cases, like the Biebrich or Reno hoards which the coins themselves make it hard to imagine in terms other than trade, in other words, many of our coin finds are best explained as indirect witnesses to the passage of traders, of men who moved about on business. But what business? Was it amber that was moving across the Danube and the Alps and flowing toward that market square in front of the church of the Virgin at Torcello? The Polish archaeologists whose careful excavation uncovered the dirham fused to the Carolingian penny in that little marketplace report none of the substance for which their homeland is still renowned. What then was traded in that market square, and sold across the Mediterranean at such prices as to warrant Venetian merchants returning home with purses full of dirhams and dinars? But that is to anticipate the final segment of our inquiry.

These findings breathe new life into the controversy triggered by Bolin's hypothesis of an influx of Arab silver into a Frankish empire that acted as a middleman with the Arab world, conveying the forest products of the far north to the south. They affect also the related position of Hodges and Whitehouse, that the "northern arc" connected the Frankish economy to that of the Persian Gulf. They are particularly germane to Lombard's assertions of a massive influx of Arab gold, an influx which he did not demonstrate, but to which he assigned the weightiest of consequences. The new findings leave no doubt that the influx occurred. It was important, but its single most significant impact was concentrated in time, certainly, and space, probably. Bolin would probably feel that the



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chronology of the new evidence adduced here comforts his thesis, that the Carolingian empire grew rich by exporting to the Arabs, until Scandinavian competition across northern Europe undercut Frankish trade, essentially as middlemen, of northern goods through southern Europe. But he thought this was mostly an affair of dirhams, not dinars.

In terms of scale, the numbers of coins may not appear impressive, compared with the hundreds, indeed thousands that survive from ninth-century Scandinavia. But in terms of value, the northern coins are silver; our southern coins are mostly gold, some 1,200 dinars actually attested in records as changing hands, and 447 dinars reported from the earth. At the local rate of exchange, the 1,647 documented dinars are the equivalent of 28,281 dirhams. The influx we have discerned affected first and foremost Venice, and it did so in the time when the Carolingian empire was at its peak of power and prosperity. Through Venice, directly and indirectly, it affected all those who dealt with Venice: the Rhine and amber routes make this clear. How, and how much? To circumscribe what we can really find out about its nature and impact will require us first to return to the broader issues of changing patterns of communications, and then to address anew the whole problem of long-distance commerce in the Carolingian age.



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# PART IV
# THE PATTERNS OF CHANGE

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# *Part IV. The patterns of change*

Intrepid early medieval men and women carried to Europe the coins, relics, and things yet to be discovered. What was it like to travel? This is really two questions: the experiential one, which is best answered in anecdotal fashion, and the analytical one which seeks broader, sometimes latent patterns over space and time. Taken individually, an Amalarius' travels or the Mediterranean coins lost in the Rhine are striking but isolated anecdotes. Whether they are exceptions or the rule is the crucial historical question which has gone unanswered. Viewed against the backdrop of hundreds of other movements, their paradigmatic significance becomes unmistakable. It is time to capitalize on this new evidence for the light it throws on the universe of communications in the nascent Mediterranean economy. For that is what the evidence reveals. Thanks to the hundreds of individual and small group movements that have been uncovered and are described in Parts II and III, it is now possible to pose basic questions about the structure and dynamics of long-distance communications in the early Middle Ages. The sheer volume and diversity of the new evidence guarantee the value of those questions, and enhances the interest of their answers. Ineluctably this will draw us to the broader economic shifts incarnate in these very movements.

The questions can be articulated in their temporal and spatial dimensions, which are interlocked. Chapters 14, 15, and 16 address time and timing in Mediterranean communications. Seasonality and seasonal rhythms figure prominently here, alongside speed. But even more primordial is how patterns changed *over* time, whether in the aggregate volume of movement or the shifting configurations of individual trips. The answers open up surprising new questions. Responding to them requires examining communications over space, in Chapters 17, 18, and 19.

The temporal dimension of early Europe's communications in the Mediterranean helps uncover the key *routes* of communication and prove that the patterns detected in Parts II and III were real. Even at this early stage, the new approach discerns clearly some of their salient traits. Most surprisingly – fatally –



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for the notion of a Mediterranean reduced to prehistoric levels of communication, we will be forced to recognize change on both the vast, international scale, as major new routes open up, and the intimate, local level. Power shifts and security concerns allied with economic forces to push the flow of people and objects into new routes, rather than choking it off as many have thought. For that flow was more powerful than the barriers thrown up against it. Like some growing river, when it ran into immovable objects, it pushed its way into new channels.

But before we count, analyze, and compare, we need to explore the experience. To do otherwise would be to lose sight of our travelers' humanity and the dilemmas they faced, as individually and in small groups they rebuilt communication networks out of the Roman rubble. The enlightening anecdote leavens the understanding, so long as it does not substitute for it. Every trip involved some land travel, so we need to evoke the main features of overland communications. But it was the sea that contemporaries regarded as most distinctive of Mediterranean travel. It has also proved most controversial over the last half-century of research, and it is there we will concentrate. We begin with a picture of land and sea travel. Then we can probe the aggregate picture of early medieval travels in the Mediterranean in their temporal and spatial dimensions. The result will be to raise once again the vexed question of Carolingian commerce. But we will do so on the broad, firm, new ground of the world of communications and contacts of which this commerce was a part. And now on to our voyagers' experience of travel, and the temporal and spatial patterns revealed by their movements, in their hundreds.



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# 13

# *The experience of travel*

"Fun" was not the first word that came to early medieval minds when they thought of travel. Labor, toil, and fatigue are better candidates.[1] In fact, one might seek a formal blessing from the church, just as in time of war or pestilence.[2] But this general perception, rooted at once in cultural attitudes and real experience, does not exhaust what it was like to travel across the Christian world in the eighth and ninth centuries.

Our travelers' life-stories combine with other veins of testimony to evoke the broader experience of travel.[3] A look at land movements will remind us that the period saw new opportunities as well as old constraints, particularly in the routes leading east and south from the western European heartland. But the sea commands the lion's share of our attention. What were the ships like, how accurately are they described, how were they powered? How big were they, how many men did it take to man them, did they travel alone or in groups? Describing what it was like to sail in these smallish vessels discovers changes since antiquity in the style of navigation. They in turn will lead us to the issue of coastal sailing, which is usually opposed to deep-sea navigation in blue water. Once we have a feel for what it was really like, we can turn more alert eyes to the deeper, and hitherto hidden patterns of early medieval communications unlocked by the movements of hundreds of travelers and objects.

1 A few examples from many: Isidore of Seville, *De differentiis*, 1, 401, p. 266; cf. comm., *ibid.*, p. 400; John VIII, *Reg.* 18, JE 3069, 16.29–31 or *Reg.* 55, JE 3098a, 50.18–19. From the Greek- speaking world, e.g., Sabas, *Vita S. Ioannicii* (BHG 935), 41, *AASS* Nov. 2.1.368A; Peter, *Vita S. Ioannicii* (BHG 936), *ibid.*, 42, 408B or 54, 416A. Symptomatically, classical Greek *skullein*, "to trouble," "bother," etc., is used to mean "to come" in the 9th C.: *Vita Davidis, Sym., et Georgii* (BHG 494), 8, 218.8. For later Byzantines' negative ideas of travel, see Galatariotou 1993.

2 E.g. *Liber sacramentorum Gellonensis*, *CCL*, 159.299–300, nos. 2098–9, "When one goes out on a trip" and "When one boards a ship"; cf. from the Byzantine world, the "Prayer for someone leaving on a voyage," *Euchologion*, p. 684.

3 For early medieval transport and travel in general, see Leighton 1972 and Janssen 1989.



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## 1. Land

The sea dominated early medieval thoughts about travel to Constantinople, the Holy Land or north Africa (Chapter 17). But for many travelers, especially those who lived away from the coast, a land leg was inevitable. Sometimes the weather so dictated for all travelers. This was probably what happened to Pope Constantine, on his way home from Constantinople in 711. The season was already advanced when his ship put into Gaeta, and he decided to cover the last stretch by road, reaching Rome in late October. Weather probably also figured in the land legs of Theodore Studite's itinerary into exile in the late winter of 797.[4] A similar reason probably pushed Liudprand of Cremona to begin his late autumn journey to Italy overland; he probably stuck to terra firma again, once his ship finally landed at Otranto (R828). In certain cases, the route itself dictated land travel. There was, obviously, no option for northern Carolingian envoys or for a Beneventan envoy to Constantinople (R167). Sometimes the choice seems to have been as much pyschological as anything else. After a violent storm beached his ship between Reggio and Naples and almost drowned his companion, St. Gregory the Dekapolite simply may have felt safer continuing on foot (R422). Other times, there is no clear logistical reason why one route was preferred. Even though they had been stowed aboard a ship bound for Constantinople, the monk Anastasius decided to abandon his possessions and accompany an imperial official on the dangerous overland route from Thessalonica, because his spiritual advisor so intimated. But why was the imperial official traveling overland, when the monk was sailing to the same destination? Later in the same trip the motivation for another change is clearer. By taking ship at Maroneia for Constantinople, this group could avoid enemies along the last stretch of the road (Map 7.3). Later Gregory himself twice traveled the same route by sea.[5] We could multiply the examples, but the point should be clear. Even along routes which we think of as maritime ones, Mediterranean communications could mix land legs with sea stretches. In other words, we need to cast a glance at land travel.[6]

4 R79. Theodore was transported overland through Asia Minor from the vicinity of Proussa (mod. Bursa, Turkey) perhaps as far as Lampsakos (Lapseki), before boarding a ship; with numerous stops he sailed as far as the westernmost point of the Chalkidike peninsula, where they again disembarked and traveled the last 80 km overland to Thessalonica: R234; Map 7.3.

5 *V. Greg. Decap.*, 18–19, 62.16–63.14. Last stretch: 19, 63.7–8; 20, 63.15; Gregory's trips: 28–9, 71.16–20.

6 See the excellent starting point furnished by the royal travels, as analyzed by Brühl 1968 1: 61–7; cf. for the 10th C., the important analysis of Müller-Mertens 1980. For a vivid picture, see Riché 1978, 14–23; cf. Adam 1996, 74–100, and for the 10th C., Fichtenau 1975–86, 3: 1–79. On the economics of transport in the Middle Ages in general, Cipolla 1944.



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Land travel means animals and wagons, and we have already seen the broader changes that, at antiquity's close, affected the relative importance of each (Chapter 3). Land travel, and wagons in particular, also mean roads, and their exact history is only in its infancy.[7] It is widely assumed and probably even true that many Roman roads remained in use. But this oversimplifies, for routes are not immutable ribbons of road. Careful scrutiny has already uncovered a few important changes, for instance in the famous Via Flaminia, the ancient Roman road that ran across the Apennines and tied Rome to the exarchate of Ravenna.[8] The routes that ran across the Alps are another case in point: Roman and medieval travelers left enough traces along the way to suggest shifting patterns of use. Some of today's best-known passes, like the St. Gotthard, opened only long after the Carolingians, while others such as the Splügen, which was well-attested under the Romans, show little life in the early Middle Ages.[9] The Alpine Walensee, a major route linking the Rhine via Zürich to the pass complexes centering on Chur, featured more activity around 850 than it would a century later (Map 13.1). This was the key route from the Carolingian west toward Chur.[10] *Ten* royal vessels (*naves*) were permanently available there to ferry travelers the 15 km to the other end of the lake (perhaps a six-hour trip). This speaks to the volume of movement, as does the fact that the Frankish treasury expected the ferries to make £8 a year.[11] From Chur southward, settlement patterns, stray finds and Carolingian documents trace several routes running into Italy, particularly via the Julier–Maloja passes.[12] Archaeologically, it is possible to uncover in towns early medieval resurfacing of ancient roads. At least this is what Luni suggests, where the multiple surfaces of the early medieval street running through the Forum were clearly visible to visitors in the winter of 1988–89. At other times, medieval roads broke new ground.[13]

7 On medieval roads, Denecke 1979 is fundamental for methods and bibliography. More generally, see Bautier 1987, and his late medieval case studies: 1961 and esp. 1963.

8 Bullough 1966b. Thomas Szabó's forthcoming study will clarify the history of the Via Francigena.

9 Exemplary discussion in Schneider-Schnekenburger 1980, 113, and, in general 111–21; cf. also Overbeck 1982–1973, 1: 229–39; Wyss 1989.

10 Clavadetscher 1955, 19–20n83, deduced from the *Imperial Polyptych* that traffic was about twice as frequent as occurred a century later. Archaeology confirms the general picture of greater Frankish activity: Schneider-Schnekenburger 1980, 111–12; cf. 108–9.

11 *Imperial Polyptych* ("Reichsurbar"), 383.3–5; for the speed of Mediterranean ship movements, see Ch. 16.4–6. The lake vessels presumably used sweeps against the wind, and so would have done at least as well as seagoing vessels relying on sail. If archaeologists were to recover such an Alpine vessel, it would allow an evaluation of volume.

12 Schneider-Schnekenburger 1980, Tafel 68–74.

13 Thus a paved "medieval" road replaced a nearby late Roman road; it was suitable for pack animals and ran through the Julian Alps towards Bukovje: Ulbert *et al.* 1981, 25–7.



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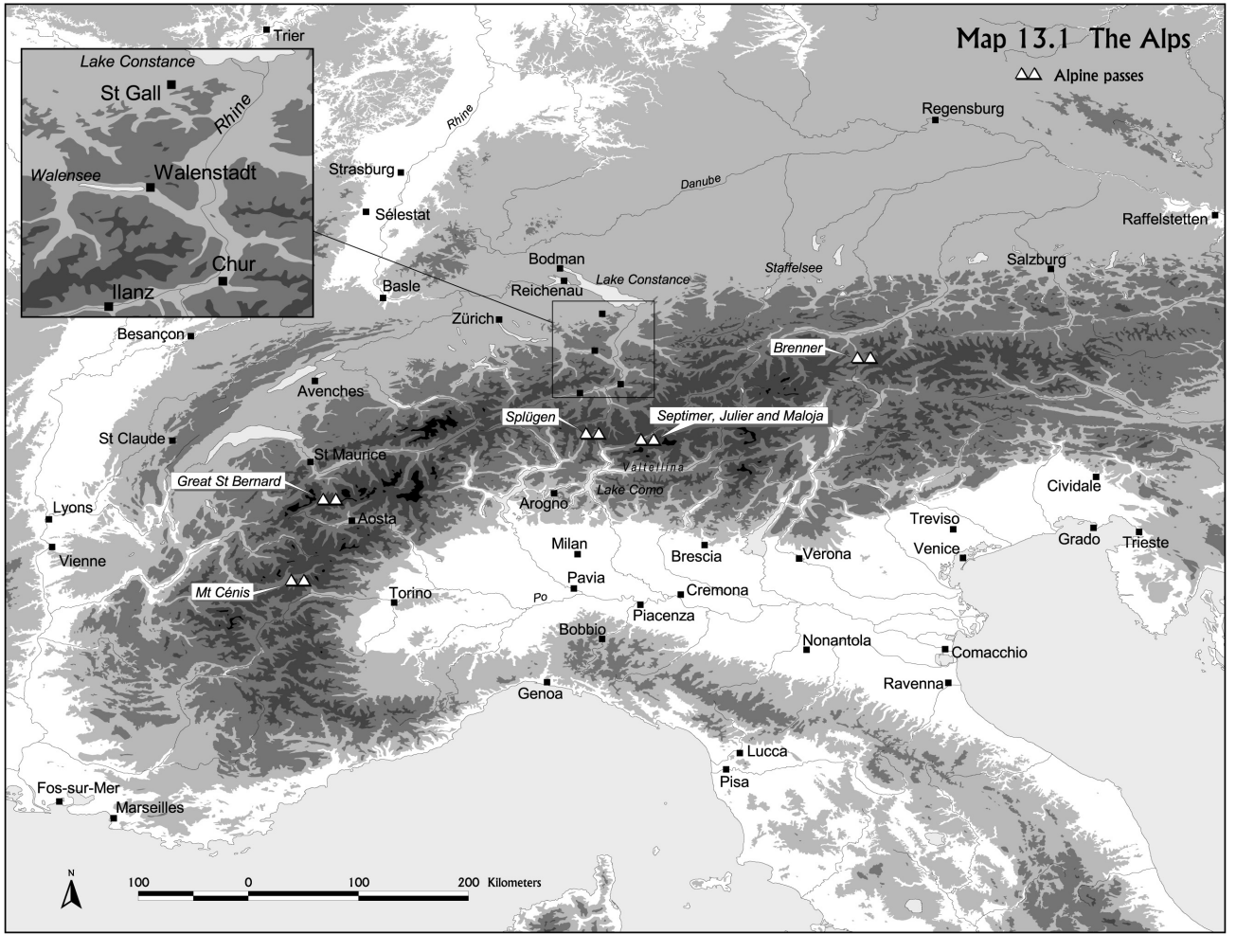


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A few new routes developed or saw their supporting infrastructures grow. War and religion encouraged routes that ran toward the northeastern fringe of Frankish power and south across the Alps. Frequent military movements toward Saxony obliged Charlemagne to build a new road to the war zone.[14] Another new road linked the palaces at Aachen and Frankfurt.[15] The extent to which Carolingian-era roads were wooden, as in nearby Denmark, beaten earth, or in some way paved is unclear but is now coming under sustained scrutiny.[16] Another eastward road which shows signs of greater activity started further south and ran past Erfurt, into Slavic territory.[17] When the Frankish juggernaut swallowed Bavaria in 787, the eastward expansion which had already begun there scarcely skipped a beat. This earliest *Drang nach Osten* brought with it a changing pattern of Frankish overland communications toward the Danube, and we shall return to it later (Ch. 19.1). Along the edges of the marcher lands, Frankish routes met prehistoric tracks that also continued to function or came back to life, as the Byzantine and Arab coin finds have shown for the ancient Amber Trail (Ch. 12.7).

But the biggest changes pointed south. The first thing to remember about Frankish travel between the Mediterranean and the north is the combined effects of the Carolingian religious affinity for St. Peter and the subjugation of Italy. By early medieval standards, an astonishing volume of travelers crossed the Alps. From 754 to the 890s, military movements alone entailed tens of thousands of men and beasts.[18] With or without armies, Carolingian kings and their entourages rode south to Italy over thirty times.[19] Even leaving aside diplomacy, imperial business sent many other men south, some to stay permanently, but many

14 Brühl 1968, 1: 63–4; for an interesting effort to use early maps and geology to reconstruct Charlemagne's movements across the moors, Wöhlke 1954.

15 Janssen 1989, 224.

16 For the remarkably well-preserved plank roads of northern Germany, dating from prehistory into the Middle Ages, see Hayen 1989.

17 Gockel 1984, 105–6.

18 For example, over half a dozen military expeditions entered Italy in the second half of the 8th C. alone: see the partial list of royal trips south in Oehlmann 1879, 305–6. There is no consensus on the size of Carolingian armies. Brühl 1968, 1: 526–33 estimates the somewhat later German armies in Italy at c. 12,000–25,000, including camp followers. If we presume Carolingian armies to have been of similar size, this would imply more than 72,000 to 150,000 warriors traveling to Italy in the second half of the 8th C. alone. Werner 1984, 377, on the other hand, believes that the armies were very much larger, which would multiply this number accordingly.

19 Oehlmann 1879, 304–8 tabulates some twenty-five trips. To these must be added those he excluded: Pippin king of Italy's four trips back from Francia between 790 and 806 (Brühl 1968, 1: 401n247), the 5 trips of his son Bernard (*ibid.*, with BM 515b), Lothar's 7 trips south before 840 (BM 868a, 881a, 895a, 904a and 1033, 1045c, and 995a) and that of 847 (Zielinski 1990); those of Lothar II, etc. On royal retinues: Brühl 1968, 1: 428–9.



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others on round trips and sometimes on multiple missions.[20] The only attempt to count the fraction of the northern pilgrims whose eighth-century passage is documented approaches one hundred, but there can be no doubt that there were very many more.[21] To these must be added half a dozen trips north of the Alps undertaken by popes from 754 to 878, as well as papal envoys' numerous missions to the northern courts, not to mention the travels of Frankish clergy on church business in Rome.[22] In short, the Carolingian period saw a tremendous increase in the volume of transalpine travel to and from Italy. Change on this scale must have driven changes in the infrastructure that facilitated that travel.

The most favored transalpine routes shared a number of characteristics. On the Italian slope, royal installations known as *clusae* barred their narrow valleys, to check on travelers and collect tolls.[23] Growing pilgrimage to Rome spun a network of hostels along the routes south, including in the Alpine passes themselves; it also elicited hospitality measures at the great abbeys and cathedrals along the way. Churches helped, or were supposed to help, in the logistics of the crossing by providing food and shelter, guides or guidance, and even currency exchange.[24] A Carolingian legal collection from Italy reiterated an old Gallic canon against bishops who kept hounds. Not only was barking no substitute for chant, those who sought hospitality at the episcopal palace all too often came away with nothing but vicious dog bites.[25]

The royal hand is unmistakable in forging the critical link in the chain of stations leading across the Alps to Italy and Rome. Pope Hadrian sought Charlemagne's help in defending the hostels situated along the mountain passes leading to Rome.[26] Louis the Pious built a hostel in the desolate Mont Cénis pass and endowed it with properties in order to "to sustain the *daily* affluence of the poor people of Christ."[27] A surviving piece of the emperor's polyptych lifts the

20 Hlawitschka's prosopography documents some 178 northerners in the Frankish colonization of Italy. It includes only the highest level of lay officials (down to vice-counts) north of the Apennines, excluding e.g., royal *fideles*, vassals and retinues: 1960, 98–9.

21 Zettinger 1900, 109–10.

22 Popes: Stephen II, Leo III (twice), Stephen IV, Gregory IV, and John VIII. For papal legates, see the extensive but uncritical account of Riesenberger 1967; cf. Schieffer 1935.

23 Duparc 1951; on the sporadic Lombard and Frankish attempts to control travelers: Tangl 1958 and Schneider 1987, 41.

24 Lupus of Ferrières, *Ep.* 66–7 (76), 72.11–22. See in general Lesne 1910–43, 6: 96–151 and the reconstruction of the facilities indicated on the Plan of St. Gall: Horn and Born 1979, 2: 23–77 and 139–67. On the Frankish response to the increasing pilgrim traffic: Schmugge 1984, 4–8, 12–14 and 40–4; Schneider 1987, 38–9.

25 *MGH Capit.* no. 113, 6, 1.231.16–21, from *Concilium Matisconense*, a. 585, c. 13, *CCL*, 148A.245.242–51. On the MS (Sankt Paul im Lavanttal 4/1, c. 816/25, northern Italy), Mordek 1995, 685–95.

26 *Cod. Car.* 87, JE 2471, 623.22–31.

27 D Loth I, no. 4, 14 February 825: p. 61.43: "... sufficeret diurnus pauperum Christi concursus tolerari."



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veil on the system of inns (*tabernae*) which studded the route through Chur into Italy, and shows that there was more than piety and strategic self-interest behind them: the inns returned a tidy profit to the imperial treasury.[28] Reliable monasteries received land grants in critical corridors. Nine months after the conquest of Italy, for example, the Parisian monastery of St. Denis got the entire Valtellina. This put control over a critical entrance to Italy – the subalpine valley ends at Lake Como, and dominates the southern exits of the Chur passes toward Milan and Pavia – in the hands of an abbot who was always one of the king's closest collaborators.[29] An imperial estate at the Bavarian entrance to the Brenner pass was equipped with eleven households which owed horseback messenger services "anywhere they are commanded."[30]

In Italy, the Lombards had enforced or developed late Roman provisions for maintaining critical bridges, for instance across the Po at Pavia. The Franks followed suit.[31] Although royal intervention may have been sporadic, kingly ambition to improve the infrastructure at certain choke points is unmistakable. The great wooden bridge Charlemagne built across the Rhine river at Mainz was a ten-year project and manifestly aimed at facilitating communications in one of the more densely populated crossroads of his empire. It also happened to be a node in the king's travels. When fire destroyed it, Charles planned to replace it with a stone structure.[32] Even more grandiose – if failed – the Fossa Carolina project, a canal connecting the Danube and Rhine rivers, underscores Charles' vision of the eastward extension of his empire (Figures 13.1 and 13.2).[33] Charles the Bald's great stone bridge undertaken at Pîtres and recently identified by an archaeomagnetic study is yet another example, although in this case a defensive intent is clear.[34] Magnificent failures though they were, such projects let us sense the scope of royal concern to improve the infrastructures of empire.

28 *Imperial Polyptych*, 394.12–20; cf. Clavadetscher 1955.

29 DDKar 1, no. 94. Quierzy, 14 March 775; for other examples and discussion: Störmer 1968 and Störmer 1987.

30 Staffelsee: *MGH Capit.* 1.252.16–20, no. 128, 8; cf. Störmer 1987, 392.

31 Szabò 1984.

32 Mainz bridge: Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, 17, 20.16–21 and 32, 36.10–15; for the Rhine–Main confluence and economic communications, below, pp. 664–7.

33 Hofmann 1965 reveals the scale of the enterprise. He estimated (444–7) at around 6,000 men the labor force required for the part that was finished, and suggests that war captives must have been pressed into service. They would have consumed (*ibid.*, 450) about 5 tons of flour and 107 hl of beer per day. For excellent illustrations and more recent literature, Keller 1993. Pecher 1993, 12–16, simply dismisses Hofmann's estimates. He equally dismisses (10–11; 17–19) the more detailed account of the failed undertaking in the revision of the Royal Annals (*Ann. Ein.*, a. 793; p. 93; cf. *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 92) written at Louis the Pious' court, which conforms precisely to the revisor's general tendency to emphasize the father's failings. Having discarded the most important Carolingian evidence, Pecher is inclined to attribute the site to the Romans.

34 Lot 1905; Dearden and Clark 1990.



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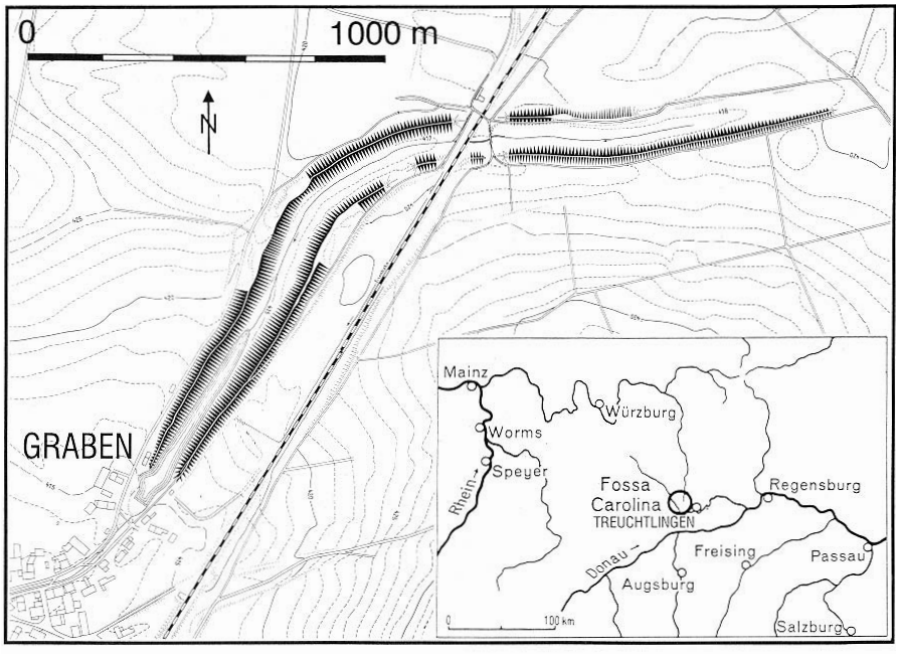


Figure 13.1. "Fossa Carolina": "The Carolingian Canal." In 793, Charlemagne tried to link the Danube and the Rhine river systems by digging a canal. The part that he finished required the labor of some 6,000 men. The canal was meant to allow boats to travel between two tributary rivers, the Rezat which flows into the Main and hence into the Rhine, and the Altmühl, which empties into the Danube. Although the local soil characteristics condemned the attempt to failure, it gives the measure of the ambitions that the Frankish ruler brought to his empire's infrastructure. Courtesy of Walter E. Keller and the Bayerisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege.

With or without canals and major bridges, the rivers of northern Europe offered comfortable travel for people and cheaper transport for bulk goods. Charlemagne and his family sailed down the Rhine, Frisian merchants were towed up it, and countless lesser streams bore boats. Such traffic stimulated the growth of small riverbank settlements, the *portus*.[35] Freezing winters turned waterways into roads for later medieval travelers' sleds; early medieval travelers probably did no differently (Ch. 15.1). As a charter of Lothar I observes, goods moved by carts, pack-animals, mens' backs, and boats.[36]

35 For Frisian and other vessels on the Rhine, see below, Ch. 22.4. The streams could be very small indeed; this probably explains how Ebo evaded the Frankish troopers sent to arrest him at Rheims, by boating along streams well known to his Viking associates and boatsmen: Flodoard, *Historia Remensis ecclesiae*, 2, 20, *MGH SS* 36.184.13–19. See in general Suttor 1986; Ellmers 1989; on rivers, trade and towns, see Ch. 22.2.

36 D Loth I, no. 91, Aachen, 13 June 845, for Novalesa, on the Mont Cénis pass route.



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Figure 13.2. Fossa Carolina, today, looking toward the Danube end. Only this quarter of what was actually dug still has water in it today. The canal is about 30 m wide; notice to either side the trees growing up the slope of the high mounds of excavated dirt. The photo furnishes some idea of the scale of the project. Courtesy of Walter E. Keller.

When no appealing lodging awaited them at sundown, early medieval travelers camped. Those who had the means carried tents, which they pitched in meadows outside towns and settlements; perhaps this explains the Arab coin that turned up in a meadow on the road from Italy (Appendix 3, A26). Sometimes markets sprouted up, as in the fields of Rouen or Pavia.[37] Servants preceded the

37 Thus Willibald's family pitched their tents on the bank of the Seine, by the market at Rouen: Hugeburc, *V. Willib.* 3, 91.10–12; Ceolfrid's large group of English pilgrims was camping in a meadow outside Langres when he died: Anonymous, *Historia abbatum* (*Vita Ceolfridi*, BHL 1726), 35, p. 402. Merchants at Soissons: Heiric of Auxerre, *Miracula S. Germani* (BHL 3462), 64, PL, 124.1236D–1237A; Rainald of Marmoutiers' party, next to Pavia, in 847: *Historia translationis S. Gorgonii* (BHL 3622),



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main party to pitch camp and have dinner waiting for well-born wanderers.[38] Men on royal business could and did requisition food, supplies, and lodging.[39]

The issue of security in overland travel is complicated and under-researched. The normative evidence suggests that early medieval travel could have been almost as dangerous as walking through American cities was in the 1980s. In the later ninth century, the freebooting that attended internecine warfare fostered a climate of insecurity.[40] But few if any traveled alone. In fact, traveling parties tended to be big, approaching 100 in some instances. There was certainly safety in numbers. And the situation varied dramatically depending on when and where one was traveling, as the pilgrim Bernard explicitly observes.[41]

## 2. The sea

Exploring the experience of sea travel in the early medieval Mediterranean is a little more complicated. One smells more schoolroom than salt in much Carolingian writing about the sea. Except for the scarce Venetian records or some Byzantine texts, data on sea travel often come from landlubbers. They suffer from the imprecisions and stereotypes that attend secondhand testimony about a technical matter, and the laborious learning of the Bible or Virgil has left its mark.[42] The handful of texts learned by rote so suffused the written culture that their phraseology tinges even the most vivid eyewitness accounts. Amalarius, for instance, made a very seasick member of his party echo the Acts of the Apostles.[43]

Footnote 37 (*cont.*)
4, *AASS* Mart. 2 (1865).56C and, in a meadow next to a monastery, at Orleans, *ibid.*, 6, 56F; also at Pavia: Count Gerald of Aurillac: Odo of Cluny, *Vita Geraldi Auriliacensis* (*BHL* 3411), 1, 27, *PL*, 133.658B–C. One wonders whether their careful archaeological prospection would be rewarding.

38 E.g. Einhard's servants preceded him: *Transl. Marcellini et Petri*, 3, 19, 255.8–35.

39 *MGH Capit.* no. 32, 27, 1.85.20–5; no. 40, 17, 116.10–11; no. 57, 2, 144.8–11; and esp. *Form. imperiales*, no. 7, 292.29–37, commanding that the emperor's vassals be granted specified daily rations. See on these documents Ganshof 1928; cf. Ganshof 1971, 137–8n20.

40 For instance Nithard, *Historia*, 2, 8, pp. 60–2, on the miraculous arrival of royal insignia without an armed escort. Brigandage was a recurring problem: e.g. *MGH Capit.* no. 82, 1.180–1; cf. Ganshof 1970, 75.

41 Bernard, *Itinerarium*, 23–4, pp. 319–20, contrasts travelers' security in the Arab world, the kingdom of Pavia, and Roman territories. Lupus, *Ep.* 104 (101), 101.27–102.2, informs an expected visitor of the threats he would encounter in Lupus' region, and he urges him to travel in a large enough group to deter danger. Not coincidentally, both anecdotes date from the second half of the 9th C.

42 For Virgil, see below, e.g., on Agnellus of Ravenna; for the Bible, below, n198.

43 Amalarius, *Versus marini*, 427.18–19: "Hinc non surgam, nisi *fixa*/ Haec *puppis maneat*"; cf. Acts 27, 41.



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Even so, the richness of scriptural sea descriptions supplied writers with valuable tools for describing their own ideas and their experience.[44] Despite its shortcomings, the evidence more than suffices to begin a sketch.

## *Terror of storms: environment and technology*

Storms, and the terror that they caused, dominated early medieval writers' attitudes toward the sea. It would be profitable to write a cultural history of storm description and there are ample materials to hand for such an enterprise in the early Middle Ages.[45] Let one description stand for many:

> When we found a ship going up to Byzantium, we boarded it. Once we had left Sicily behind – it was a fine day and the wind was favorable – and we were sailing along nicely in the Adriatic [i.e. Ionian] Sea, a strong wind hit us – one rightly called Euroclydon [cf. *Acts* 27, 14] – and it awakened huge and irresistible seas. So the sea was raised up to a great crest by the violence of the wind. The sailors took in the sails, pulled in the steering oars and loosened cables over the bow [sea anchors?], allowing the ship to be borne along in the sea. And storm-tossed that we were for three days and three nights, we were in continuous distress and anguish, as we called on the Virgin with God and all the other saints, including St. Phantinus, since he was our own special saint . . .[46]

The scene described the effect a Gregale wind from north-northeast worked on the Ionian Sea between Italy and Greece (Map 16.1).[47] Like so many others, this description emphasizes the unpredictability of a sea which fooled even experienced mariners, and the sailors' powerlessness. The sea and its devastating might serve as a kind of morality tale for life and a testing of faith. The Christian is buffeted by forces beyond human control until he appeals to a saint. The storm provided an opportunity for the devotees of St. Phantinus to prove their special patron's power. The tempest continued until Phantinus appeared in a deacon's dream and struck the sea, calming it. When the deacon relayed the news, everyone felt better, and ate some food. Presently the sea became calm, and the ship smoothly resumed its course.

The hagiographer's urge to glorify his saint explains why we have so many stories of storms and their miraculous calming. But tempests were more than the

44 For instance, the hagiographical novel *Vita S. Leucii* (BHL 4894) constantly identifies the home port of the ships which its hero boards, surely inspired in this by Acts, e.g. 27, 2, and 6.

45 The rhetorical models for such descriptions would require close scrutiny. See on the broader topic of ship metaphors as a literary device, e.g. Curtius 1963, 128–30.

46 Peter, *Miracula S. Phantini* (BHG 1509), 72.1068–74.1108. Early medieval Greek and Latin texts follow ancient custom in extending the name Adriatic well into the modern Ionian Sea. Cf. Hugeburc, *V. Willibaldi*, 93.12, and Theophanes, A.M. 6224, 1.410.8–9 with R139.

47 *Mediterranean Pilot* 1978–88, 3: 32 (1.189).



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tremulous fantasies of landlubbers. The seventh- or eighth-century Byzantine law of the sea ("The Rhodian Sea Law") constantly discusses the danger of storms and shipwrecks from the hard-nosed perspective of financial responsibility.[48] Sailors' cults reflect a contemporary reality. Through the pensmen, we can still feel the need of seamen to find supernatural helpers in the struggle against natural forces beyond any human's skill or power.[49] The Greek liturgy was attentive to their needs, whether it was a matter of blessing the building of a ship, a warship's departure for combat, or a prayer during a tempest.[50]

## *Ships and their equipment*

Ships meant different things in the mental world of the early Middle Ages. The "ship of state" also did duty for the church. It is the most famous and most positive metaphor.[51] But elite attitudes toward ships had other facets. There was, for instance, something sinister about them: their dark shapes slicing through the water made men think of snakes, and vice versa.[52] An easterner echoed ancient fathers when he described the miseries of greed and commerce; commerce bred disaster: jealousy, murder and shipwreck.[53] As in late antiquity, so once again in

48 E.g. jettison: *Sea Law*, 3, 9, or 3, 35, 16.1–17.18 or 31.1–4; 3, 27, foresees partial indemnification for a captain whose ship is lost in a storm (ζάλης γενομένης) en route to picking up cargo, 27.4–7; cf. 3, 44, 36.1–37.8. On the date, L. Burgmann, *ODB* 3: 1792; for jettison in an early 10th-C. Arab treatise on chartering ships, Christides 1993, 82–4.

49 For a few examples from many, see the storm descriptions in Anastasius Apocrisiarius, *Relatio motionis Maximi* (*BHG* 1231), 15, *PG*, 90.129A–B; *Translatio Heliani*, 581.17–582.10; *V. Madalvei*, 15, 197; another storm in Peter's *Mir. Phantini* 65.891–900; Amalarius, *Versus marini*, 427.10–26; *V. Eliae iun.*, 38, 58.772–82; Theosterictus, *V. Nicetae Medicii* (*BHG* 1341), 45, *AASS* April. 1 (1865), app., xxvii. Sailors' cults of saints: Makris 1988, 148–50. Two months before I wrote these lines, when the first officer of a modern Greek cruise liner was showing me the bridge of his ship with its magnificent computers, radar and satellite navigational system, I could not help but notice that above the helm, in a place of honor, stood a fine and holy icon.

50 Building: *Euchologion*, p. 559; dromon: p. 684; *chelandion*: p. 685; tempest: pp. 636–7, with fascinating emphasis on moral disorder causing natural disorder (*ataxia*).

51 Rahner 1964, 304–405 and 432–503.

52 The Greek word *chelandion*, which designates a new type of Byzantine warship in the early Middle Ages, probably derives from words for "water-snake" or "eel": Kahane and Kahane 1970–6, 412–13; a snake sliding into the water evoked a ship: Sabas, *Vita S. Ioannicii* (*BHG* 935), *AASS* Nov. 2.1.361A.

53 Ignatius the Deacon (?), *Vita Georgii Amastridos* (*BHG* 668), 33, 51.1–7; cf. above, Ch. 4. For the discussion about the Life's date and author, see A. Kazhdan, *ODB* 2: 837. Acute observation of affairs of the sea characterizes also Ignatius' Life of Gregory the Dekapolite, and, I think, reinforces Ihor Ševčenko's attribution (1977, 121–5) to him of *BHG* 668.



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the ninth century: the other side of the coin was that ships meant profit. In a mannered metaphor, one of our travelers avers that the benefits a saint delivered to his brethren were greater than the profits brought home by a great merchant ship.[54] We have already seen that a western writer – a Venetian no less – had a cruder, or perhaps simply more precise vision of the same thing: for him ships meant slaves (Chapter 9, n9).

Just as western illustrators of ships seem mostly to echo ancient models, Latin-speakers are often not much help about the craft in which they traveled.[55] They avoid or do not know vessels' specialized names: they are just "ships."[56] Occasionally, they misuse their names.[57] Greeks can be just as vague.[58] But the sea so permeates their language and the medieval Greek experience, for all its emphasis on Asia Minor and fear of the sea, that greater precision was sometimes unavoidable.[59] Occasionally a more technical term slips into the writing. Warships such as dromons and *chelandia* are attested from late antiquity and the eighth century, respectively, and these terms entered Latin, at least in Italy, in our period.[60] A *chelandion* (*zalandria*) was certainly something new to the experienced eyes of Venice, since a reliable witness records the novelty of the first two constructed on the lagoon in the 850s.[61] Galleys also make their appearance.[62] The vocabulary relating to merchant ships seems poorer in this period, a difference which may be significant.[63]

54 Methodius of Constantinople, *Vita Theophanis confessoris* (BHG 1787z) 28, 19.12–14.

55 Villain-Gandossi 1987, 84–8.

56 *Naves*, or *navigia*, the latter esp. around Rome; e.g. *Liber pont.*, Mommsen, 222.20; *Codex carol.* 59, JE 2426, 585.15–23; Bernard, *Itinerarium*, 4 and 5, pp. 310–11.

57 E.g. Agnellus, *Lib. pont. eccl. Rav.*, 111, 350.13–14, which calls ships freighted with grain "dromons."

58 *Naus* or, less classically and more commonly, *ploia*; also *karabia*. A few examples supplied in seconds by my copy of A. P. Kazhdan, A. M. Talbot *et al.*, *Dumbarton Oaks Hagiography Database* (Washington, DC, n.d.): *Ploion*: Sabas, *Vita Ioannicii* (BHG 935), 31, 361A; *Vita S. Macarii* (BHG 1003), 18, 162.28; *Vita Antonii iunioris* (BHG 142–3), 21, 202.3. *Naus*: e.g. *Vita Euthymii iunioris* (BHG 655), 25, 190.17.

59 For Byzantine aversion to the sea, Kazhdan 1976.

60 *Dromōnes*: e.g. R536; R573; R652. For Greek ship types see, in general, Ahrweiler 1966, 408–18; on the dromon see the important study, in preparation, by E. Jeffreys and J. F. Pryor. *Chelandia* are more complicated: the term appears to be sometimes a synonym for *dromōnes*, and sometimes a distinctive kind of warship: Ahrweiler 1966, 410–14. It is hard to believe that the terms are mere synonyms in the imperial navy records which seem to distinguish them, for instance, in 949: "three chelandia and four dromons, each with 220 men, have been sent to Africa with the prōtospatharios and asēkrētis John," Constantine VII, *De cer.* 2, 45, 665.4–6.

61 *Chronicon Venetum*, 115.13–17.

62 R627; R777; see also the forthcoming study mentioned above, n60.

63 Other technical terms for ships occur in the context of warfare, e.g. *katēnai* R93; R627: *kombaria* (alibi *koumbaria*) and *saktourai*, though they seem to refer primarily to Arab round ships: cf. Ahrweiler 1966, 414; cf. R677 on the capture of many *karamia* (i.e. *karabia*).



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Anastasius' Latin translation of a seventh-century Greek source calls a boat which traveled down the Tiber to the sea a *levamentum*, a "lighter." This is probably a local Roman term.[64] *Holkas* means "merchant ship" in classical Greek; it is not, however, always obvious that our authors are using it so precisely.[65]

The nature of the surviving records means that we see ships owned mainly by institutions, especially cathedrals and monasteries. Though the pattern is better known north of the Alps, it also recurs in Carolingian Italy and beyond its borders.[66] Fortunatus of Grado or his church had four ships and they received toll-free status in all of Charlemagne's dominions. The patriarch subsequently gave one vessel with all its gear to a monastery.[67] In 822, Lothar granted total toll-free status to Farfa for a ship engaging in commerce ("causa mercimonii") anywhere in his kingdom's maritime or fluvial districts (R373). How far did these "ecclesiastical" ships range? Perhaps only very locally, but we do not know for sure. In fact, a ninth-century hagiographical novel shows a ship belonging to the bishop of Palermo in a Libyan port on business.[68]

The vessels had limited lifespans. Brand new ships were considered safer than older ones.[69] The Sea Law distinguishes valuations of new and old ships for indemnification purposes. New ones are rated at 50 gold solidi per 1,000 *modioi* of capacity, old ones at the lower rate of 30 s. Although gauging worth opens up opportunities for error, it is useful to have a rough idea of the value of ships. At 41–49 metric tons (Table 13.1), a new, fully equipped ship like the seventh-century Saint-Gervais B is reckoned at a capacity of 6,000–8,000 *modii*. If the equivalencies are correct, this would imply that it would have been worth between 300 and 400 gold s.; older ships were discounted 40 percent.[70] For what it is worth, 360 s. seem to have been the salary of military governors of the lesser military provinces

64 *Collectanea* (CPG 7969), *PL*, 129.590A and B. Semantically, the etymology parallels the English "lighter." The word could well be a local linguistic fossil from late antiquity, since its derivative *levamentarius* was a technical term for, apparently, harbor lighter operators of the *annona* service: *Cod. Theod.* 13, 5, 1, 1.747.1 (A.D. 314), referring probably to Rome. Casson 1995, 336.

65 It does mean merchant ship in Methodius, *V. Theophanis* (*BHG* 1787z), 28, 19.13–14.

66 See on the north, in the context of intraregional transfers, Johannek 1987, 44–55.

67 DKar 1, no. 201 (?803). The diploma is interpolated, but that seems to bear only on the extension of this privilege to all of Fortunatus' successors; gift: *Documenti di Venezia*, p. 77.

68 *V. Greg. Agrig.*, 19, 164.1–7.

69 Hence Anastasius Bibliothecarius' pointed statement about the ship which sank in the Adriatic, drowning Photius' supporters. It was newly built and the victim had selected it for himself: Anastasius Bibliothecarius, *Ep.* 5, 408.15–16; cf. Nicetas David Paphlagon, *Vita Ignatii* (*BHG* 817), *PG*, 105.544C and R573.

70 On the life expectancy of ships, McCormick 1998a, 71n72. Ship values: *Sea Law*, 2, 16, 3.7– 11; for the conversion of the wreck's tons into *modii*: Parker 1992, 373 (no. 1001). On Byzantine officials' 12th-C. procedure for evaluating a ship's capacity in sea *modioi* from its dimensions, Schilbach 1970, 95–6 with n6.



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in the Byzantine government under Leo VI (886–912). This much cash could purchase some 3,600–4,800 "sea bushels" of wheat, in ninth-century terms or, in modern terms, 46–61 metric tons.[71] Merchants who freighted heavy or expensive cargoes aboard old ships were not entitled to indemnification.[72]

Our witnesses do not make much of the traditional distinction between the "long" and the "round" designs, associated with war and commerce respectively, believed to have obtained in the Christian Mediterranean of the early Middle Ages. Whether or not this reflects a functional interchangeableness of most ships is unclear, although on general grounds that seems not improbable. When a Byzantine naval commander gave to a church the ships he had captured from Arab raiders, this probably means that the ships were suited to more than warfare.[73] A second major distinction between ships of war and commerce lies in the greater importance of oars in propelling the former. Not unconnected with this is a further difference: warships carried large, fighting crews, merchantmen small crews.[74] A big Christian merchant vessel captured off Sardinia by Arab raiders illustrates both points. The captured ship, manned by twelve of the raiders, headed separately to rejoin their fellow raiders at a friendly Christian port. But unfavorable winds caused it to arrive at the rendezvous more than twenty days after the raiding ships. Clearly, the combination of the small crew and the delay due to winds mean that the Christian ship relied on its sails, while the raiders were able to continue pillaging and still get to the rendezvous. The warship, in other words, could use oar power (R514). A ninth-century saint's life describes a ship, apparently a merchant vessel, arriving "under full sail" at a coastal monastery on the Black Sea (R415).

Nevertheless, merchantmen seem sometimes to have used oars or sweeps.[75] Thus, a ship transporting a bishop back to his see on the Black Sea coast and overtaken by bad weather rowed into a turbulent river mouth for safety.[76] Observers were alert enough to note that ships used oars when they approached or left port and required precise maneuvering under shifting wind conditions.[77] Whether a ship traveling under both oars and sails is pure literary

71 Constantine VII, *De cer.* 2, 49, 697.4–9. Cheynet *et al.* 1991, table 3. 1: a "sea bushel" (*modios thalassios*, 12.8 kg wheat) sold for c. 1/12 s. in the capital in the 9th C.: *ibid.*, 360–1. There is no Byzantine data on salaries for the period: *ibid.*, 370.

72 *Sea Law*, 3, 11, 18.1–5.

73 Theoph. Cont., 5, 63, 304.12–14; cf. R675. See below, Table 13.1 on the dimensions of some excavated early medieval merchant mariners.

74 See in general, Pryor 1992, 25–39; on oars: 32.

75 Kreutz 1994, 350.

76 There is no reason to think that Bishop George was traveling in a warship c. 800. Ignatius the Deacon(?), *V. Georgii Amastridos*, 36, 54.10–55.9.

77 Notwithstanding the Virgilian echoes, when Agnellus depicts a fleet approaching Ravenna on a punitive expedition c. 709 using oars as it entered the (tributary of



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reminiscence of the classical idiom for "full speed" is unclear.[78] Amalarius implies that the ship in which he traveled to Constantinople was equipped with oars, since he seems to say that they needed more oars near Aigina (Map 5.3). In fact a sailing ship might encounter difficulties there from the *meltemi* or, in its absence, from daytime sea breezes, not to mention the eddies southeast of that island.[79]

The triangular lateen sail was well acclimated in the Mediterranean by our period. Graffiti and frescoes at Alexandria reveal that Egyptian ships already sported the new rig in the seventh century.[80] It is generally reckoned to provide superior sailing capacities against the wind.[81] Caulking was indispensable for the hull: a volcanic eruption on Lipari (Map 16.1) caused the seawater to boil, which melted the pitch caulk of ships in the vicinity and sank them.[82] Some ships had decks, under which one could keep lamps lit.[83] Another kind of superstructure resembled a very large pallet, and may have been a kind of cabin.[84]

Ships had smaller boats aboard or in tow.[85] The boat found with the Agay

Footnote 77 (*cont.*)
the) Po, he might be drawing inspiration from scenes he had actually seen: *Liber pont. Rav.*, 137, 368.6: "navis vicina facta est litoris et expansis remis Eridani ripam *sulcavit*." Cf. e.g., *Aen.* 5, 158 or 10, 197. Conversely, he shows ships leaving port without oarsmen as though it were something unusual: *ibid.*, 145, 373.3–4 ("relicto *sine remige portu*": cf. *Aen.* 4, 588). In the English Channel, Hugeburc, who herself reached her Continental home by ship, ineptly echoes Virgilian language as her uncle's oared ship left Hamwic: "Remigiis crepitantis [!]," *V. Willibaldi*, 3, 91.6–7; cf. also in the Atlantic, the departure of the ship taking Adalhard home from exile: "levantur vela tandem, remigia impelluntur": Paschasius Radbertus, *Vita Adalhardi* (*BHL* 58), 47, *MGH SS* 2.529.35.

78 Agnellus, *Lib. pont. Rav.*, 145, 372.43–4: "iussit ventis dari vela et remis *expandere alas sulcantes pelagus*": cf. *Aen.* 3, 520 and 5, 158 or 10, 197.

79 *Versus marini*, 427.27–8: "palmas augere satis per tempora longa," where *palmae* is a poetic expression for oar blades: *Thesaurus linguae Latinae* 10.1 (1982): 148.76–9. On the winds in the Gulf, *Mediterranean Pilot* 1978–88, 4: 155; cf. the chart on 31; eddies: 153. Recent research indicates that the winds of antiquity were substantially the same as those of today: Murray 1987, concerning Greece, and, more widely, for the eastern Mediterranean: Murray 1995.

80 Basch 1993, 28 and Figure 23–5.

81 Pryor 1992, 33–5 with important qualifications. Occasional references to sails in our text shed no new light on the issue.

82 *BHG* 1432n, *Syn. CP.*, 642.37–39; cf. an Arab fleet's similar fate in the Aegean: R98.

83 Called a *solarium* at Venice: *Transl. Marci*, p. 258.

84 Pope Martin I was left exposed "in grabato navis" to the taunts of people on shore, after his ship docked at Constantinople: Theodore Spoudaios, *Commemoratio* (CPG 7969), *PL*, 129.592C; cf. *V. Martini graeca*, 6, p. 258.

85 Thus the Venetian ships apparently had a small boat called *scapha*: *Transl. Marci*, p. 257. This may also be the implication of the description of the Slav pirates aboard a *lembos* who preyed on passing ships in a river mouth near Christopolis: Ignatius the Deacon, *V. Gregorii Decap.* 10, 54.23–55.3; 12, 55.26–56.9 is ambivalent. The *Sea Law* calls them *karaboi*, e.g. 3, 11, 19.10. Theophanes, A.M. 6209, 1.397.6–7 calls the small boats of the Arab fleet *sandaloi*,



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wreck (Map 20.3) from the tenth century was 8–10 m long.[86] The Sea Law implies that sailors might make part of the voyage aboard such a ship's boat and perhaps that additional cargo was carried in it.[87] The later Cairo documents make clear that such "barges" – for which the Arabic term (*qārib*) is etymologically the same as the Greek *karabos* – were towed by a larger ship and carried cargo and even passengers.[88]

Baskets and sacks held food and travelers' personal effects. Along with amphoras and barrels, they also conveyed merchandise.[89] Aside from warships fitted out with flame throwers and Greek fire, for defense sailors carried bows and arrows, and javelins. Amalarius speaks of his crew readying spears or javelins (*tela*) and bows against Moors and Slavs. A spear head has in fact been found on a wreck along Amalarius' Adriatic route.[90]

while Nicephorus' higher style (*Brev.*, 54, 122.33) calls them *lemboi*. The term is sometimes used more for literary effect than technical accuracy: thus Martin I went from Porto Romano to Constantinople in a *navis*, according to Anastasius Bibliothecarius' version of the Greek text of his letter (JE 2079), *PL* 129.590B–C. A contemporary account, addressed to the faithful in Rome and Africa, in Anastasius' translation, calls the same ship a *lembus*: Anastasius Bibliothecarius, *Collectanea*, *PL*, 129.592A and 593A. By its manner of condensing, the Greek Life seems not to distinguish vessels. It says simply that the pope was put in a πλοιάριον and apparently refers to the same vessel as ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ, *V. Martini graeca*, 5, p. 257. On these sources, see below, pp. 483–4 n58.

86 Parker 1992, no. 8.

87 *Sea Law*, 3, 46, 37.1–7; here τὰ ἐφόλκια might mean the (towed) burden or load (cf. Glare and Thompson 1996, 140) or, possibly, fittings of the boat, rather than the "rudders," as Ashburner (*Sea Law*, 118) thought. In 3, 43, and 3, 44, 36 (line 3 in both cases) the word might have the ancient and modern Greek meaning of "ship's boats."

88 Goitein 1967–93, 1: 305–6, whose documents date mostly from the 11th and 12th C.

89 That merchandise was transported in baskets appears to be the implication of *Mir. Genesii*, 2, p. 10, about how the relics of St. Genesius were divided and hidden: "membratim cesa [*sc.* ossa] propter insidias gentilium, in duobus cophinis ad hoc ipsum praeparatis, ossa sanctorum condidit martyrum, mercibus cuidam nauclero datis, atque in navi se illius cum suis componens." Baskets also held the crew's food: *Transl. Marci*, p. 257. For traveler's sacks: Amalarius, *Versus mar.*, 426.3. Grain was transported in sacks in antiquity, and presumably in the early Middle Ages too: Casson 1995, 200; cf. the grain which was found loose, in the hold of Saint-Gervais B as well as one barrel: Pomey *et al.* 1988, 12. Such baskets and sacks occur often in the Genizah documents: Goitein 1967–93, 1: 334. For amphoras etc. see below, Table 20.1, etc.

90 On Greek fire: E. McGeer, *ODB* 2: 873. Venetian ships traveling from Africa to Sicily destroyed two Spanish Arab ships by fire: R321, but these were not likely warships, nor were the Venetians likely to have had access to Greek fire, one of the Byzantine state's most closely held secrets. Amalarius on weapons: *Vers. mar.*, 428.60–3. A few decades later, a large Byzantine ship, apparently a navy vessel from Syracuse with very skillful *peltai*, overtook an Arab slave raider: *V. Eliae iun.* 8, 12.14. Rossi Taibbi translates εὐστοχώτατοι πέλται (12.143; cf. p.13),



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As the weapons suggest, life aboard ship was not a bowl of cherries. Baggage was loaded in advance of departure, and travelers were apparently expected to feed themselves.[91] The typical fare was hardtack, although Venetian merchants also ate cabbage and pork.[92] Fishing gear is found regularly aboard well-preserved wrecks. A steady diet of hardtack explains why passengers were tempted to make fires for their own fish fry, and its prohibition by Byzantine sea law. The danger of fire aboard a wooden ship whose timbers were coated with pitch is easy to imagine, and even to document.[93] Travelers were deprived of baths so long as the ship did not put into shore, and drinking water, of course, was at a premium.[94] In these small ships' close quarters, the stench of bilge water must have been inescapable. Travelers aboard a ship sailing to Constantinople from Cyprus knew they had some mighty impressive relics aboard when the bilge began to smell like perfume.[95] Against heavy weather and rain, travelers covered themselves with animal skins.[96] By law, Byzantine captains were obliged to provide good quality skins to shield textile cargoes from spray, and skins were reckoned a standard part of a ship's gear, along with the mast and yard assembly, sails, anchors, hemp ropes, ship's boats, and good steering oars.[97] But sea travel was not pure hell: there were opportunities for improvised liturgical services, complete with lighted lamps and incense – perhaps taken from cargo loaded at Alexandria? – and Amalarius even drafted one of his treatises aboard ship.[98]

Footnote 90 (*cont.*)
as "archers." The ancient word is used by the Byzantines to mean "spear": Du Cange 1688, 1145. Byzantine warships were in fact equipped with javelins, as well as bows and arrows: Constantine VII, *De cer.* 2, 45, 669.19–670.2. For the spearhead, see Parker 1992, no. 1250. The 11th-C. wreck at Serçe Liman produced 50 javelins and 12 spears: Schwarzer 1991, 328.

91 Ignatius, *V. Greg. Decap.* 18, 62.19–20, 22 and 29–30. For one case when a holy man demanded food from the skipper: see *Vita Eustratii Agauri* (*BHG* 645), 32, 389.6.

92 Biscuit: "frangere dente/ Crustas et tostas micas," Amalarius, *Versus mar.*, 426.3–426.4; for Venetian provisions, above n89.

93 Parker 1992, p. 29, on fishing tackle found aboard merchantmen; *Sea Law*, 2, 10, 2.5–6. For one early medieval ship destroyed by fire, see Parker 1992, no. 97.

94 See Martin I's complaint about baths, JE 2079, *PL*, 129.590C. Even as he was being brutally transported into exile, Theodore Studite was able to bathe twice during a trip lasting some six weeks: *Ep.* 3, 1.14.82–3 and 15.115–16. For the drinking water, *Sea Law*, 2, 12, 2.9.

95 *Translatio et miracula S. Therapontis* (*BHG* 1797), 9, 125.6–8; R27.

96 *Pelliculae*: Amalarius, *Versus mar.*, 428.65.

97 Διφθέρας καλάς, *Sea Law*, 3, 34, 30.2; cf. for protecting grain cargoes in heavy weather, 3, 38, 32.2; standard gear: 11, 18.7–19.11. Against Ashburner, *ibid.*, p. 92, I think that *histokeraia* literally "mast-yard" is a copulative compound, such as is common in early medieval Greek, e.g. Browning 1969, 71. Cf. the enumeration of gear in *Sea Law*, 3, 2, 12.9–10.

98 *Transl. Marci*, p. 258; Amalarius' *Missae expositionis codex*, according to the letters about this he exchanged with Peter of Nonantola: *Opera liturgica*, 1.229.8–11 and 230.1.



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## *Convoys and fleets*

Convoys were the rule.[99] In good weather, merchantmen sometimes sailed so close together that sailors conversed across the water, and the Sea Law forsaw collisions.[100] The miraculous perfume of the relic ship could be smelled aboard the ships sailing behind it and to either side, up to three Roman miles away.[101] Convoys offered obvious advantages in case of marauders and shipwreck. Often, when we might otherwise expect only one ship, more than one is mentioned: for example, when Pope Constantine traveled to the capital or when Archbishop Felix returned to his see (R73; R83). Two or more Venetian ships transported Arab ambassadors from Africa to Sicily (R321). A group of Beneventan or Amalfitan ships went to investigate an Arab raid on Lipari.[102] But convoys were especially the rule for merchant ships. Around 800, such a convoy from the Levant put into Porto Romano; the next year, the chief of Charlemagne's writing office raised a convoy (*classis*) in Liguria to transport the famous elephant and other gifts across the Mediterranean; and c. 840, Joseph the Hymnographer set out for Rome from Constantinople aboard a ship which was traveling in convoy.[103] A Byzantine commander raiding in the vicinity of Sicily captured so many ships loaded with merchandise and especially olive oil that the price of the latter collapsed (R677). This implies that the Arabs were traveling in convoy and freighting similar goods.

How large were the convoys? Ships did travel in twos or threes, so every mention of multiple ships need not swell the roster of early medieval fleets.[104] In

99 A few seeming exceptions: a lone Byzantine warship intercepted Elias the Younger's slaver heading to Africa: no companion ships are mentioned: *V. Eliae iun.* 8, 12.140–6; Liudprand seems to imply that 1 Venetian merchant mariner was about to leave Constantinople: R825. But they may weigh silence too heavily.

100 *Transl. Marci*, 258.9–22; when the *Sea Law*, 3, 36, 31.1–4 specifies that the ship which is hit must be at anchor or have slackened sail to be entitled to indemnification, it clearly implies that collisions which occurred when both ships were under sail are a different matter.

101 *Transl. et mir. Therapontis*, 8, 124.12–16.

102 R442: according to the Beneventan *Translatio S. Bartholomaei* (*BHL* 1010), 12.9–10, written shortly after the event (*ibid.*, 52, cf. 49–50), more than one ship "of the Lombards" went to investigate; the contemporary *Transl. Bartholomaei* (*BHL* 1009), 6.4–5, which is from Gaul but was also close to the event, mentions only one ship. On the ships' home port see below. The popes requested that Byzantine warships be deployed off the Roman coast: R678–9 and R703.

103 *Mir. Genesii*, 2, p. 11; *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 801, p. 116; John Deacon, *Vita Iosephi Hymnographi* (*BHG* 945), 17–18, *PG*, 105.956A. So too the imaginary papal convoy which transported grain from Sicily to Rome, "Leontius," *V. Greg. Agrig.*, 219.23–4: cf. comm., *ibid.*, pp. 381–2. For further examples see below.

104 A large Christian merchantman captured by Arab raiders was escorted to port by one of the four warships: R514. Bernard attests that the six ships he saw loaded



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the earlier ninth century we hear of merchant convoys comprising five, eight and ten ships.[105] The estimated Arab fleets of 400 and 360 *katenai* loaded with supplies which arrived at the siege of Constantinople from Egypt and Africa respectively in the spring of 718 are far and away the biggest groups of round ships mentioned in our period (R94, R5). Otherwise large early medieval ship formations were involved in military operations.

From around 700 to 970, we hear of military fleets comprising between four and 3,300 ships. The number of war fleets whose ships were evaluated by contemporaries in round hundreds might incline one to suppose that fleets dwarfed commercial convoys in the period and that, in aggregate, most of the shipping in this era was military. Divine intervention is reported to have wrecked so many huge war fleets that one might also conclude that Christians and Arabs launched many thousands of warships in the eighth and ninth century, and that little room or wood remained in the Mediterranean for more peaceful vessels.[106]

Some accept these figures at face value.[107] A closer look shows that most of the highest numbers come from Arab historians. But the total of 2,560 Arab vessels Theophanes and Nicephorus claim for the siege of Constantinople also strains belief, like the 997 Arab ships the Byzantine navy supposedly destroyed at Cyprus

Footnote 104 (*cont.*)
with slaves sailed in three pairs: R577–9. Two imperial warships: R573; similarly, Liudprand was supplied with two small ships which were supposed to transport him from Greece to Otranto, *Legatio*, 58, 207.15–17; cf. R828. Three warships transported John VIII from Rome to Arles: R652. Thus too the Byzantine navy deployed a squadron of two *chelandia* and two or more *galaiai* sent to reconnoiter the Syrian coast: R777; while Bertha of Tuscany dispatched an unknown number of her ships on a raid: R736. For a pair of Arab raiders, *V. Euthymii iun.*, 25, 189.14; cf. 190.20–191.1.

105 R333; R362, where their identification as merchant ships may have been fraudulent, but shows at least that such a figure was plausible at the Frankish royal court; and R406.

106 There are more than a dozen reports of war fleets comprising more than 100 ships: the initial fleet which lay siege to Constantinople is alleged to have counted 1,800 ships, including, certainly, many supply ships: R93; 180 Arab ships: R126; 360 Byzantine vessels: R143; over 300 Byzantine warships: R165; more than 100 Arab ships: R319; more than 100 Arab and Byzantine ships attacked Sicily: R398; they were joined by over 300 more ships: R414; a newly built fleet of 400 dromons: R457; 300 Spanish ships: R490; three Byzantine squadrons of 100 ships each: R509; a Byzantine fleet of 300 ships lost 100 ships: R532; another of 100 *chelandia*: R591; 400 Byzantine ships appeared off Bari: R593; 169 Byzantine ships attack an Arab fleet: R677. This is not to mention the numerous wrecked fleets whose numbers are not supplied, e.g. that of Manes sent against Italy: Theophanes, A.M. 6224, 1.410.4–9.

107 Thus, for example, Eickhoff 1966, 36 or Fahmy 1966b, 119 on R126 or Eickhoff 1966, 75 on R414; Bragadin 1978, 403 on R821.



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in 748, and so forth.[108] Compared with the sixth century, such fleets would represent a quantitative leap which is tantamount to a qualitative one. Justinian is reported to have sent 592 or 500 ships to reconquer Africa in 533, while the Vandals, who had been a major naval power in the preceding century, fielded at least one fleet of 120 fast ships.[109] The fact that Justinian's crews were recruited from Egypt, the Aegean, Cilicia, and Constantinople suggests that his fleet was stretching the resources of the Roman empire, which at that date were still quite substantial.

It is hardly reassuring that contradictory figures are given for some of the same early medieval fleets. A later chronicler who often uses good sources evaluated the Arab fleet sent against Constantinople at 5,000 ships, while one Arab source about a raid on Damietta mentions 85 ships, and another, three squadrons of 100 ships. For an engagement off Sicily, an Arab reports 139 Byzantine ships, while a Greek records 45 vessels.[110] One suspects that in all these cases, the larger numbers, at least, exaggerate.

Conclusive evidence comes from internal financial and logistical memoranda of the Byzantine navy. These documents detail the resources deployed in the tenth century, as the Byzantine empire approached its medieval zenith. Probably in 911, Constantinople mounted a huge expedition to reconquer Crete. A memorandum survives that enumerates the detailed order of battle, listing the ships and crews supplied by the Imperial Fleet (stationed in the capital), and the ships levied from the various provincial fleets. All told, the invasion fleet comprised 102 or 112 dromons and 75 *pamphyloi*, warships apparently of a type associated with the province of Pamphylia.[111] The scale is entirely in keeping with other data from the same source. The order of battle for the invasion of Crete in 949 states that the Imperial Fleet at that date consisted of 100, 150 or 250 ships depending on how

108 R93–5; cf. e.g., Guilland 1959, 119. R156; R821 on which see the skepticism of Schlumberger 1923, 52; also Eickhoff 1966, 342n6. Contrast Treadgold 1992, 142–3.

109 Procopius, *Bella*, 3, 11, 13–16 and 23, 1.362.14–363.3 and 363.25–364.3. The differing total for Justinian's fleet depends on how one construes the Greek.

110 Michael the Syrian: R93; Yaqubi and Tabari, respectively, R509; Ibn Idhari, *Bayan*, and *V. Eliae iun.*: R677.

111 Constantine VII, *De cer.*, 2, 44, 652.10–654.4; cf. 776. The individual entries for dromons total 102, while the document itself calculates the number at 112. A transcription or mathematical error appears more likely to me than a textual accident which omitted one entry, since most entries include both dromons and *pamphyloi*, and the total for the latter is correct. So too Treadgold 1992, 102. On *pamphyloi*, Ahrweiler 1966, 415–17. These memoranda are discussed, and some emendations proposed, by Treadgold 1992, 110–41 and 146. Treadgold (111) further deduces from the troop contingents that the Imperial Fleet alone supplied 32 dromons, and 20 *pamphyloi*; see also Makrypoulias 1995.



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one construes the Greek.[112] The expedition sent against Crete in 949 actually numbered fewer ships than that of 910, some ninety-four vessels of all types.[113] If these are the kinds of numbers the Byzantine empire could deploy in 910 and 949, we must conclude either that the fleet had been inexplicably decimated since the ninth century or that the Arab historians greatly exaggerate the largest ship numbers. Measured against official records, the Byzantine historians' figure of some 3,300 ships for the invasion of Crete in 960 would imply, for instance, nearly a twenty-fold increase in the number of *chelandia* in eleven years . . .[114] The largest figure after the siege of Constantinople and before the reconquest of Crete comes from George the Monk, a notoriously bombastic ninth-century historian.[115] Among Latin sources, the highest figure (400 ships) comes from Hincmar of Rheims, who, though usually well informed, was far from the events; the second highest (300) comes from a pope transmitting a rumor and impressing on a Frankish king the magnitude of the danger, and the third (more than 100), probably from a rumor conveyed informally from Africa to the court of the stratēgos of Sicily (R593; R165; R319, respectively). In other words, except for the data from 717–18 and 960, in each of the most egregiously exaggerated ship totals in Greek and Latin sources, particular circumstances explain the exaggerations.[116]

112 *De cer.*, 2, 45, 664.7–13: If one construes οὐσιακὰ χελάνδια ρ´ (664.8) as a subset of οὐσίαι ρν´ (664.7), and assumes that *ousia* refers to ships, the total will be 150. If one construes 664.8 as an additional set of ships, under the same assumption, the total will be 250. If one rejects this meaning of *ousia*, the total will be 100 ships. Scholars diverge on the meaning of *ousia* in this text and hence on the totals of ships. Eickhoff 1966, 137, Treadgold 1992, 134 (150 ships) and Makrypoulias 1995, 154–5, all accept that *ousia* refers to a type of ship. R. J. H. Jenkins, in Constantine VII, *De adm. imp.*, 2.195–7, concludes that the word means "crew." Ahrweiler 1966, 416–17, argues that the term originally meant "crew," but came to mean a type of ship in the 10th C.

113 Sixty-four *chelandia*, twenty dromons (each with two *ousiai*, for a total of forty *ousiai*, where the meaning "crews" seems most compelling: cf. Jeffreys and Pryor, forthcoming study, above, n60) and ten or more galleys: *De cer.*, 2, 45, 664.7–665.19. Treadgold 1992, 134–41, with Table VI, calculates 150 ships certainly attested and conjectures another ninety-five from the provincial fleets; he also concludes that the 949 invasion fleet was smaller than the earlier one.

114 Treadgold 1992, 142–3, recognizes the gulf between the official memorandums and the historians; he seems nonetheless to accept the 960 figure of 3,307 ships, conjecturing that the emperor sent 307 regular warships "and requisitioned many small civilian vessels." This contradicts the letter of the Greek texts, which (e.g. Ps. Symeon Mag., 758.20–2) explicitly identifies 3,000 warships (2,000 *chelandia* equipped with Greek fire and 1,000 dromons) and 306 (Theoph. Cont. says 307) transport vessels. Cf. R821.

115 R457; A. Kazhdan, A. Cutler, *ODB* 2: 836.

116 One possible but very uncertain reference to a raiding squadron of 200 ships (*karaboi*) might occur in a financial document of 709: P. Lond. 4.1450.5; cf. P. Lond. 4.1337.



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What about the smaller numbers given mostly by other, perhaps more sober, sources? Of twenty-two such cases from the ninth century, round numbers and larger fleets still predominate in the Arab and, to a lesser degree, the Byzantine historians; the Venetian chronicler commonly identified as John of Venice also liked round numbers, but they are smaller, except for a disastrous operation against Taranto. The Frankish and papal records as well as Liudprand's diplomatic report to his ruler supply numbers which tend to be both smaller and less smoothed.[117] They compare most closely with the Byzantine administrative records from the tenth century.[118] This suggests that the smaller, more irregular numbers are more reliable.

There is one final consideration. We may strongly suspect that the Byzantine historians have overstated the total of 2,560 Arab ships that are supposed to have besieged Constantinople in 717–18, as well as their complete destruction by the Byzantines. But it is clear that a very large number of Arab ships engaged in one of the greatest military operations of the early Islamic era, and that many were lost (R98). A good proportion of the fleet surely comprised supply vessels, that is ships suitable for commercial activity, and perhaps commandeered for the campaign. This implies that the Arab defeat of 718 must have caused at least a temporary contraction of the merchant marine based on the southern rim of the Mediterranean.

## *How big were the ships?*

The consensus today is that early medieval ships were smaller than the largest ships of antiquity and of the later Middle Ages. We have already seen that that is chiefly a question of the relative proportions of different sizes of ships in the late antique merchant fleet (Ch. 4.3). Early medieval merchant ships are reckoned to have weighed under 250 tons dead load.[119] That estimation is borne out by the dimensions of early medieval wrecks (Table 13.1).

While no documents state explicitly the size of the ships aboard which our travelers sailed, some do give the number of people – passengers or crew – a ship

117 R275: thirteen ships; R308: forty; R310: seven and thirteen; R318: eight; R321: more than one, two; R325: seven; R362: eight; R434: eleven; R450: sixty; R514: four; R527: forty and twenty; R530: sixty-two; R560: thirty-six; R627: c. fifty-four; R636: thirty; R675: sixty or forty-five; R714: twelve; R747: thirty; R826: twenty-eight. Is it a coincidence that ship numbers – these are mostly military groups – are larger after 850?

118 R777: four or more ships; R778: 177; R808: eighteen ships; the Imperial Fleet apparently had 100 *chelandia* in 949: *De cer.*, 2, 45, 664.7–13; R815: over ninety-four ships.

119 Pryor 1992, 26–8.



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TABLE 13.1
Estimated sizes of early medieval ships, arranged in ascending order of length (Map 20.3)

| Length (m) | Width (m) | Draught (m) | Capacity (tons) | Wreck name (and number*) | Date | Parker no. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15–18? | 6 | < 2?** | 41–49 | Saint-Gervais B (3) | 600–25 | 1,001 |
| 20 | 5 | | | İskandil Burnu A (21) | 575–600 | 518 |
| 20 | 5 | 1.8 | 37–58*** | Yassı Ada A (22) | 626 | 1,239 |
| 20+ | 6+ | | | Le Bataiguier (18) | 950 | 97 |
| 20–25 | 7 | | | Agay (17) | 950 | 8 |
| 30 | ? | | | Pantano Longarini (5) | 600–50 | 787 |

*Notes:*
*As given on Map 20.3.
**Parker 1992, 373, describes the depth of the hold as 2 m; it presumably was not entirely below the waterline.
***The ship was actually carrying loaded amphoras weighing at least 37 tons; extrapolation from the number of amphoras which it could have carried yields c. 50 tons; the structure implies a carrying capacity or burden of 51–58 tons: Parker 1992, 454–5.

carried, and so furnish another rough standard for size. But again, not all the data are equally reliable, as inspection of this table will immediately suggest. It shows that Bernard's figures are seriously out of line. In fact, when we consider that each person will have required several liters of water per day to survive, that the trip lasted thirty days, and that even under more technologically advanced conditions, Atlantic shippers to the Americas disembarked an average of some 274 slaves per vessel, we must conclude that this Carolingian ecclesiastical observer had no experience at estimating large groups.[120] Otherwise the largest contingent consists of the 220 enslaved Italians who were being transported to Africa c. 835 along with Elias the Younger. It appears to be very large, too. But such a ship is not perhaps implausible, as we shall see in a moment.

120 This is a better explanation than concluding that he was simply "innumerate"; for innumeracy and the debate on early medieval western writers' attitudes toward numbers see Murray 1990, 141–57. Sonntag 1987, on the contrary, after detailed scrutiny of Gregory of Tours and Regino of Prüm, finds that, aside from a tendency to round off, they are careful with numbers. The sole exception concerns army sizes, which are exaggerated; Gregory's distortions appear to be conscious, Regino's are not certainly so. In this respect, Bernard seems closer to the mark in evaluating the crew (see below), and is careful about exchange rates and financial matters involving smaller sums. Atlantic slavers disembarked an average of 273.4 slaves in 9,376 voyages; shipboard mortality was significant. See D. Eltis *et al.* in press, Intro., Table 4, whom I thank for advance access to this work. David Eltis further informs me that the largest slaver he knows did carry 1,500 slaves, but that this occurred only in 1862; letter of 9 April 1998.



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TABLE 13.2
Numbers of persons attested aboard ninth-century ships

| Number of persons | | Number | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Per ship | Total | of ships | Category of person | Date, comments | Register |
| 53 | 53 | 1 | passengers and crew | before 815; all survive shipwreck | R341 |
| 63* | over 500 | 8 | enslaved captives | *Ann. regni Franc.* a. 813 | R318 |
| 221* | 221 | 1 | enslaved captives | 835, V. *Eliae iun.* | R431 |
| 34* | 2,920 | 85 | enslaved captives | 853, Yakubi's version | R509 |
| 50–100 | 50–100 | 100 | crew | 853, Tabari's version | R509 |
| 6* | 600 | 100 | enslaved women | | |
| 1,500* | 3,000 | 2 | enslaved prisoners | 867, Bernard: to Africa | R577 |
| 1,500* | 3,000 | 2 | enslaved prisoners | 867, Bernard: to Tripoli | R578 |
| 1,000* | 2,000 | 2 | enslaved prisoners | 867, Bernard: to Alexandria | R579 |
| 60 | 60 | 1 | crew of Bernard's ship | | |
| 50 | 150 | 3 | Arab crews | 898–9, Letter of Bertha | R736 |

*Note:*
*Not including crew.

How big were the crews? The underwater archaeological record (personal effects discovered on board wrecks, etc.) suggests that most ancient merchantmen carried a crew of only around a half dozen. The remains of at least three adults have been discovered in one early medieval wreck.[121] Insofar as merchant ships shifted to lateen sails, they may have required somewhat larger crews than did the square-riggers of antiquity.[122] That large Christian merchant ship captured off Sardinia took twelve men to man; this hints that she was lateen-rigged. The Byzantine law of the sea distinguishes seven ranks aboard a merchant mariner: master, helmsman, master's mate (*prōteus*), ship's carpenter, bosun's mate (*karabitēs*), and cook, which suggests that at least some merchant ships carried crews of that size, or a little larger.[123] The numbers of our examples are nonetheless very much higher. In the case of the Byzantine squadron which attacked Damietta, we are looking at warships. What about the last two examples from our table?

121 Le Bataiguier, Parker 1992, no. 97.
122 Parker 1992; Unger 1980, 65.
123 *Sea Law*, 2, 1–7, 1.1–7. See above, p. 266n102, for a ship's carpenter.



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The Byzantine naval memoranda specify warships' crew and troop transport capacities. In 911–12, individual dromons from the Imperial Fleet were manned by 230 rowers and 70 marines, while *pamphyloi* were manned by crews of 130 to 160 men, plus an average of some 17 Scandinavian (Rus') fighters each. Although they were oared, they show that, if anything, the crew sizes reported for the Byzantine raiders on Damietta, as well as for Bernard's ship and the ones captured by Bertha of Tuscany's raiders, were on the small side. In part this may be because the administrative records are concerned with invasions, when as many potential fighters as possible had to be crammed on board. But it is also possible that raiders, whose main prey was slaves, or slave transporters needed to balance sufficient numbers to capture and terrorize the slaves with their carrying capacity.[124] Bernard's crew size of sixty is also very large if we presume that it was a merchant ship, although this time his number is within the realm of plausibility. Is it possible that a raiding ship was being used for slave transport? Or that slavers routinely used larger crews to control the captives? Although the administrative documents are for oared ships, they suggest that there was no technical or economic impediment in the early tenth century to building other types of ships which could have transported as many as two or three hundred souls. Given that Bernard was unable accurately to judge the quantity of slaves being transported aboard his ships in 867, and that the Life of Elias the Younger shows another slave transport conveying over 200 captives around 835, it is not impossible that the newer, bigger ships were being built a generation later. If so, we may suspect that the slave trade encouraged this development.

## 3. Operational issues

### *Landings*

Connected with size is the question of how ships berthed. It is of no small importance for gauging the overall tenor of sea travel in this era. Despite some spectacular cases of harbor decline, such as Carthage or Ostia, the major seaside towns and many of the minor ones still had port facilities inherited from late antiquity.[125] Even so, in at least some of the latter, the relative importance and

124 Constantine VII, *De cer.*, 2, 44, 652.10–14; cf. for 949, the similar breakdown of *De cer.* 2, 45, 670.3–6. Jeffreys and Pryor (above, n60) conclude that *pamphyloi* were also oared ships and that, because of the invasion, the ships would have been packed. See also Treadgold 1992, 110–21. The Arab raiders who carried off the population of Ischia slaughtered their own horses on the beach, clearly implying that they could not take both them and their captives home, and that human beings were, economically, more valuable than horses: R308.

125 See in general, Lehmann-Hartleben



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function of the ports changed. Recent archaeology documents this process at Ravenna, and the texts indicate important changes at Constantinople.[126] Once in a while we can see ships putting into such ports, for instance, the ship which transported a captive pope, Martin I (R19). Even at Constantinople, regular maintenance may have slackened, although we do hear incidentally of the dredging of a major port in 698.[127] There were clearly problems if, when it approached its berth in Constantinople's Julian port, a ninth-century ship hit an underwater obstacle which punched a hole in its bottom.[128]

But ancient ports are only part of the early medieval story. The Mediterranean has virtually no tides, and two well-preserved ships which appear typical drew under 2 m when loaded. Is it possible to tell whether ships were beached, docked or anchored? A substantial number of small ports – sheltered anchorages flanked by a settlement – can be advanced for the western Mediterranean on the basis of archaeology, contemporary written sources and later medieval navigational texts.[129] River mouths also attracted the smallish ships of our period, for they afforded shelter and fresh water.[130] One hagiographical romance shows a ship putting into a stream in order to draw drinking water.[131] Another saint's life depicts how sea conditions and freshwater current combined with a land breeze to cause extreme turbulence for a ship attempting to put into the mouth of the Sangarios river (mod. Sakarya), as it made along the coast of the Black Sea en route to Amastris (mod. Amasra; Maps 7.3 and 20.3).[132]

1923; Rougé 1978; Ahrweiler 1978 and esp. the gazeteer-survey in Schmiedt 1978. On Carthage's dwindling communications inferred from the changing ceramic record, Fulford and Peacock 1984, 2: 260–2; the small section of the port so far excavated and published has been less revealing on the end of activity: Hurst 1994, 109–16; Ostia's decline: Meiggs 1973, 90–100; Paroli 1996, 256–7, equally inferred from changing ceramic, coin and inhumation patterns. This contrasts with the continuing functioning of the neighboring Porto Romano: Coccia 1996.

126 For Ravenna: Maioli and Stoppioni 1987, 35; Constantinople: Mango 1985a, 37–40 and 53–6.

127 Mentioned only because it supposedly triggered an outbreak of the bubonic plague: Theophanes, A.M. 6190, 1.370.25–7.

128 *V. Eustratii Agauri* (*BHG* 645), 36, 391.19–392.9.

129 See, e.g. Schmiedt 1978. Along with an African preacher (Ch. 4, n5), the comparative evidence argues strongly that such minimal ports, river mouths, and beaches were important, perhaps even predominant, landings already in antiquity: Houston 1988 and McGrail 1981.

130 Charlemagne ordered defensive measures in all his Atlantic ports and navigable river mouths, and then extended them to the Mediterranean: Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, 17, p. 21.

131 Leontius, *V. Greg. Agrig.* 5, 149.4–6.

132 This will have occurred between George's elevation to the episcopate c. 790 and his death c. 807. See Ignatius, *V. Georgii Amastridos* 36, 54.10–55.9. The mention of a land breeze points to early morning or evening. For the breezes, see *Black Sea Pilot*, 29 (1.156 and 1.158).



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In fact, some of these "technical" landings were already beginning to grow into "commercial" landings. The development was important enough that new or revivified commercial landings attracted the wrath of the Frankish ruler of Italy. In 823, Lothar I commanded that seaside (*infra mare*) commerce be conducted only at established "porturae," in order to protect his customs income (*iustitiae*) (R381). A little over a decade later, the prince of Benevento specified that Neapolitan ships (including those from Sorrento and Amalfi) could put into the Patria (now the Patria lagoon), Volturno and Garigliano rivers (Map 16.1), or indeed, draw their ships up (*subducere*) on any beach of the principality for short periods; if however they wanted to do business there, they had to pay the long-established fee.[133]

As the treaty implies, early medieval sailors routinely beached their ships or anchored them offshore. The Sea Law assumed that ships anchored either in port or on a beach.[134] Where circumstances permitted, they could tie up to, say, a stylite saint's shoreside column.[135] Shipping in the Tyrrhenian Sea abundantly illustrates beaching. In a notorious episode shortly after the Arab sack of St. Peter's, Neapolitans allowed the Africans to draw their ships up (*subducere*) on the shore near Gaeta when a storm threatened. As soon as the good weather returned, they shoved off, only to be overtaken by another violent storm.[136] A few years earlier, Beneventan (or Amalfitan) ships had sailed off to the familiar island of Lipari to investigate the devastation wrought by Arab raiders.[137] After taking what were purported to be the relics of St. Bartholomew, the sailors headed for home. Even with enemy ships in the vicinity, the local sailors' habit was so ingrained that they pulled their ship up on the shore, because the crew wanted to sleep. The captain (*nauclerus*) was awakened by a miraculous warning that an enemy ship was approaching – presumably at night – and they immediately sailed off, reaching their home port (*patrius portus*) safe and sound.[138] Around the same

133 *Pactum Sicardi*, 13, 220.17–27: "Barcas, quae ibidem ad hora canseverint vel pro tempestate subduxerint aut applicaverint per tota ipsa plagia"; *tempestas* may mean "storm," but it is just as likely a clarification of the preceding clause, and used in the sense of "time"; on the technical meaning of *plagia* in the ancient and medieval Mediterranean as "a shore suitable for beaching ships," see Schmiedt 1978, 252–3. Cf. R432.

134 *Sea Law*, 3, 1, 10.1: ἐπὶ λιμένα ἢ ἐν ἀκτῇ; 3, 2, 11.2–3, and 3, 15, 20.2–3, which adds "towns" to the enumeration.

135 Thus a ship from Smyrna, in a port on the south shore of Lesbos: *V. Davidis, Symeonis et Georgii*, 13 (*BHG* 494), 225.11–18.

136 John of Naples, *Gesta episc. Neap.* 60, *MGH SRL* 433.13–20; cf. Amari 1933–9, 1: 506–7; R478.

137 *Transl. Bartholomaei* (*BHL* 1009), 5.1–16; cf. R442; Beneventan sailors' frequent trips to the shrine: 6.8. Lipari is about 215 NM from Salerno via the coast and the Aeolian Islands.

138 *Transl. Bartholomaei* (*BHL* 1009), 6.23–7.10; *BHL* 1010 lacks these details. For places frequented by early medieval ships along this coastal stretch, Schmiedt 1978, 180–4.



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time, a Greek pilgrim traveling to Rome from Ephesus boarded a ship from Naples at Reggio; as they headed north, they encountered a squall, the ship was beached and the travelers went ashore.[139] Two generations later, a saintly monk who resided near Reggio di Calabria concluded a pilgrimage to Taormina by taking ship to Amalfi. Along the way, the ship put into a landing (*hormētērion*) "for a little rest." The only reason we know about this banal incident of sea travel is because a viper bit one of the sailors, and the good monk miraculously cured him.[140]

So the southern Tyrrhenian sea well illustrates the frequent landing, and even beaching, of ships. But the phenomenon was not confined to that region. Ships put in readily almost anywhere, to judge from casual references. Late in the ninth century, a hermit living on a mountain path between Messina and Taormina was inspired to make the pilgrimage to Rome. Going down to the shore he found a ship there by divine providence, and embarked straightaway.[141] So too the legendary St. Nicon stumbled onto a ship and its crew on Chios' shore, as he had earlier done on the beach in his native region of Naples.[142] If these ships were drawn up in a cove or other sheltered spot, the authors felt no need to specify it. A ninth-century biographer shows a holy stylite sitting on a Black Sea beach, working on a fishing net and reciting the Psalter, when a boat carrying two senatorial ladies and their retinues pulled into shore.[143] Another Sicilian hagiographical novel depicts a ship sent from Constantinople to find a magician. The skipper spied him walking along the shore, and commanded his crew to beach the ship on the spot.[144] So too, when the convoy bearing the relics of St. Mark made its way back to Venice from Alexandria, God spread word of their marvelous cargo and people appeared to venerate the relics every time the ships "put into the ports or beaches of the regions" they traversed.[145] It is no wonder that sunken ships have come to light in small coves and bays around the Mediterranean.[146]

139 This is what I make of the complicated phraseology of Ignatius Deacon, *V. Greg. Dec.*, 12, 55.25–56.9; cf. R422.

140 *V. Eliae iun.* (*BHL* 580), 52, 80.1090–1096.

141 *V. Eliae speliot.* (*BHL* 581), 8, *AASS* Sept. 3(1868).851A: κατελθὼν ἐν τῷ αἰγιαλῷ.

142 *Passio Niconis* (*BHG* 1369), 6 and 5[!] *AASS* Mart. 3.16B–C: ἐπὶ τὸν αἰγιαλόν and ἐν τῇ παραλίᾳ, respectively. On the date of this work, see McCormick 1998b, 37n39.

143 *V. Davidis, Sym. et Georgii*, 19, 235.6–10.

144 *V. Leonis Cataniae* (*BHG* 981): ὁρῶσιν τὸν Ἡλιόδωρον περὶ τὸν αἰγιαλὸν βαδίζοντα, ἔνθα Ἡρακλείδης τὴν ναῦν ἐκέλευσεν ἑλκυσθῆναι, 90.9–11; for the Catanian work's composition c. 813–40, *ibid.*, 54.

145 "... dum naves ad portus vel litora regionum accederent ..." *Transl. Marci*, p. 259.

146 Two examples: the wrecks at Mljet A, in a small bay south of Cape Stob, from 850–1000, Parker 1992, no. 703; and at La Palu (actually L'Anse de la Palu, Ile de Port-Cros) from 500–600?, *ibid.*, no. 782; cf. Map 20.3.



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## *Styles of navigation*

So the early medieval ships were small and maneuverable enough that they could put in at all kinds of landings. When a storm threatened, when the crews were tired, to take on water, or just for a rest and perhaps some dinner, into shore they went. Frequent landings were a part of sea travel on imperial business in the seventh century as they were for important travelers in the ninth.[147] Byzantine sea law worried about the master and crew members sleeping off the ship, though the mention of a Syracusan lady who specialized in entertaining sailors reminds us that sleep may not always have been the sailors' top priority.[148] Mediterranean coastal tramping as a way of life, the cabotage so memorably described by Braudel, clearly had a long history behind it. The anecdotes lend concrete detail to the general belief that early medieval shipping was concentrated in coastal routes, and made frequent landings.[149]

All this suggests a kind of shipping which placed a premium on knowledge of coastlines – where it was safe to put in for a rest or in a hurry. As anyone who has handled even a small boat knows, this puts emphasis on local experience. It would have encouraged many sailors to stick to the waters, or rather, the coastlines they knew best. Such a nautical culture would naturally have fostered zones dominated by local shipping organized around some main "hub." From the perspective of long-distance shipping, such regionally constrained horizons look like a limiting factor. But they might mean something else from the point of view of sailing opportunities. A skipper sure of where the next safe cove lay and confident that he could slip his ship into it, might not hesitate to venture out when conditions were changeable enough to deter a blue-water mariner.

That some ships readily put in does not mean that they always did so, nor that all ships did likewise.[150] A miracle claims that it occurred "toward the

147 Cf. the frequent landings and relaxation enjoyed by the crew but denied to their papal captive between Rome and Constantinople in 653: R19 and Ch. 16.5, and the words of the *Transl. Anastasiae* (*BHL* 402), p. 34, describing the return of the bishop of Zadar and the doge of Venice from Constantinople: "navigantes, cum saepissime insulis, villis, oppidis, et civitatibus applicantes, in eas descendissent cause recusationis [*an* recreationis?] humanae . . ."

148 *Sea Law*, 3, 26, 26.1–27.7; the "sleeping" occurs at day or night; Syracusan, see below.

149 See e.g. Claude 1985b, 58–60; Pryor 1992, 54–7; Braudel 1972, 1: 103–8.

150 For instance, the *V. Davidis, Sym. et Georgii*, 26, 243.10–31 appears to contrast two different ways of sailing in two brothers' dreams: as Symeon falls asleep, sailing from Herakleia on the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara, he sees St. Anthony walking across the water to him; his brother, who was sailing north from Lesbos, has a similar dream, but he sees St. Spyridon at



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middle" of the Black Sea, on a course between Constantinople and Cherson.[151] There were circumstances when the size of the vessel and the wishes of the passengers dictated frequent landings, for instance when St. Symeon of Lesbos moved from his home island to the Bosporus in the 820s, to escape the Arab raiders who were then proliferating in the Aegean. He traveled in a small vessel (*akation*) along the shore of the Sea of Marmara, and stopped frequently so that he could visit the monks who resided along its Asiatic coast.[152] There are plenty of cases of coastal navigation and daily landings even in the heyday of Roman long-distance shipping, as St. Paul's voyage from Assos to Miletus reminds us (Acts 20, 13–16).

Certain distant destinations obliged early medieval sailors to sail around the clock at least part of the way. Byzantine sea law assumed that a ship might be under sail at night.[153] Detailed descriptions of storms occasion some mentions of night sailing. When Bonus' Venetian convoy was returning from Alexandria, for example, a squall overcame the ships as they sailed through the night. It made them go so fast that they covered far more distance than the sailors realized; in the poor visibility, the ships were about to run aground when the saint came to a sleeping passenger and ordered him to tell the sailors to drop the sails. They did so, and when the sun rose, one of the Strophades islands appeared nearby (Map 18.2).[154] These coordinates reveal a blue-water crossing of the central Mediterranean. An eighth-century ship sailing from Apulia to mainland Greece also was overcome by storm. It spent the entire night at sea before arriving the next day at a "very safe port" on the opposite shore.[155] Sailing to Constantinople, a Sicilian delegation was tossed about for three days and nights crossing the same Ionian Sea.[156] Storms are not the explanation why these ships were at sea at night. In all three cases, the courses taken covered such large bodies of water that there

Psalidion walking on the shore along which his ship is coasting. In a story from the 660s, a crew member was sleeping in the middle of the night while his ship approached Gaul from across the sea; this ship sailed around the clock, perhaps over blue water: *Mir. Art.*, 27, 39.17–21.

151 *V. Nicetae patricii* (*BHG* 1342b) 30, p. 347. The sailors had put into the saint's shrine, near Daphnousia (mod. Kefken Adası: *TIB* 9: 149) on the Asiatic coast. The date of the *Life* is not certain; most of it is a revision of a lost life written by the saint's nephew; the MS is s. xii: *V. Nicetae*, pp. 310–11 and 329, app. Depending on the exact date, hostilities with the Bulgarians could have dissuaded the sailors from a coastal route; but it is more likely that the blue-water route was customary, notwithstanding the violent storms which can arise on the Black Sea. Cf. R78.

152 *V. Davidis, Sym. et Georgii*, 18, 233.26–234.3.

153 *Sea Law*, 3, 36, 31.5–32.12.

154 *Transl. Marci*, p. 258: "Stroalia"; cf. *TIB* 3: 266.

155 *Transl. Heliani*, 581.15–582.10; on the probable points of departure and arrival, see R167. The details in any case imply a blue-water course of over 100 NM.

156 Petrus, *Mir. Phantini* (*BHG* 1509), 72.1077–81; translated above.



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was no alternative to twenty-four-hour sailing; the storms were incidental. The unusual circumstance of the storm accounts for us hearing about a relatively banal occurrence.[157] It is unclear whether the sailors who fell asleep during St. Constantine the Jew's crossing from Attaleia to Cyprus did so at night, but the distance implies at least an overnight sail (Map 7.1).[158]

Inevitable deep-sea crossings do not explain all night sailing. Probably in July 813, Amalarius' ship was heading southbound in the vicinity of the Strait of Otranto when one of his fellow travelers, the monk Gregory, became too seasick to join his companions at table for dinner. He swore he would never pick himself up off the boards (*tabulae*) until the poop stopped moving. Unfortunately for him, the ship kept heaving and pitching all night long and he couldn't get a wink of sleep. In the morning, strong winds began to blow from the south and eventually drove the ship back to Dyrrachium. This was bad luck for Gregory, since southerly winds blow there only some 15 percent of the time in July, but when they do, they produce rough seas.[159] Amalarius' good humored depiction of Gregory's suffering (after all, if Christ's disciples got worried in a storm, why shouldn't his?) is also good luck for us, because it shows that this ship was sailing at night, apparently a matter of routine – along a coastal route. For Amalarius had been in Zadar on 28 June, and the south wind forced him back to Dyrrachium. He was surely heading for Kerkyra en route to Constantinople.[160] Another coastal trip which continued deep into the night covered the 27 NM from Constantinople west to Athyras.[161] Both cases underscore that landing for the night was a custom more observed by some sailors and in some places than others.

A literary flourish confirms that night sailing was familiar in Byzantine waters. Unless they had seen helmsmen steering their ships at night by the stars, how would early tenth-century readers have made sense of a hagiographer's metaphor, that St. Theodore Studite was "a bright star . . . guiding the steering of that spiritual ship of the brethren," that is, the monastery of Stoudiou?[162] Gregory the

157 Another case describes how invoking a saint calmed a 9th-C. lightning storm one winter's night: *V. Petri Atroae* (*BHG* 2364), 40, p. 155; cf. *Vita retractata* (*BHG* 2365), p. 115.

158 R498. From Attaleia to the western most point of Cyprus is some 130 NM as the crow flies; on speed of travel, see Ch. 16.4. See too R810.

159 Wind frequency chart: *Mediterranean Pilot* 1978–88, 3: 29 (section 1.182.3); 161 (5.167); and 167 (6.8). Amalarius, *Vers. mar.*, 427.10–26; cf. 427.7: "turbidus Auster."

160 Pros.

161 *Miracula tria S. Nicolai* (*BHG* 1353–6), 2–4, 1.186.1–188.9; composed around the second half of the 9th C.: Beck 1959, 560.

162 *Vita Nicolai Studitae* (*BHG* 1365), *PG*, 105.869B; the phrase conceivably echoes Ignatius' prologue to his *Vita Nicephori* (*BHG* 1335), 139.18–19. On the *Life* and its date, A. Kazhdan, *ODB* 2: 1471. For Isidore of Seville on sailors and stars, see Claude 1985b, 61.



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Dekapolite's biographer indirectly reinforces the importance of non-stop sailing in Byzantium. On the saint's last trip to Constantinople he was ill, Ignatius writes, so the ship which transported him advanced "little by little," as though this were something unusual on the route between Thessalonica and Constantinople in the 830s.[163] Along some stretches of coast, including this one, hostile activities encouraged ships not to put in to shore except under the most dire circumstances. Amalarius mentions just this reason on his homebound voyage.[164]

## *In port*

When the ships put into ports, the sailors and merchants did the usual things. For instance, they visited whores who specialized in seafaring men. Thus a woman who seduced youths and men from the sea lingered around the port of Syracuse.[165] Among the indignities inflicted on Pope Martin I when he was left exposed on his ship in the Julian Port at Constantinople, was taunting from dockside bystanders who sound like pimps or male prostitutes.[166] But early medieval mariners and merchants also visited shrines and venerated relics – of St. Mark at Alexandria, for instance.[167] So too the future doge John had visited Jerusalem at least once in his younger years. That inspired him to imitate the church of the Anastasis when he decided to build a shrine for the new relics of St. Mark.[168] Byzantine sailors crossing the Black Sea believed that they survived a storm thanks to a relic they had acquired at a saint's shrine during a landing.[169] Mariners naturally also bought provisions.[170] They loaded and unloaded cargo, transacted business (about which we have little data), and they killed time for reasons that are usually not stated.[171] It was not just a matter of waiting for the right wind. The Sea Law seems to provide that a captain need not wait more than twenty days at an appointed time and place for a merchant's cargo to arrive for

163 Ignatius, *V. Greg. Decap.*, 29, 71.19–20.
164 Below, n193.
165 Ignatius, *V. Greg. Decap.*, 13, 56.23–57.2.
166 Theodore Spoudaios, *Comm.* (CPG 7969), *PL*, 129.592C: "varii homines, quos propter ferales mores lupaces dixerim." *Vita Martini gr.*, 6, 258. On the interrelation of these various texts, see below, pp. 483–4n 58.
167 *Transl. Marci*, 249.21–3; cf. above, Ch. 9.1.
168 Pros. "Iohannes 14."
169 *V. Nicetae patricii* (BHG 1342b), 30, p. 347.
170 *Transl. Marci*, 257.3–9.
171 Heading for Constantinople c. 763, Gualtari was lucky to find a ship in an Apulian port loaded and ready to go ("ulterius transmeandi") *Transl. Heliani*, 581.16–17; cf. R167. A few decades earlier, Willibald had to wait "multos dies" for his ship to be prepared ("quando parata fuerat") at Tyre for a winter voyage to Constantinople: Hugeburc, *V. Willibaldi*, 101.16–17.



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loading, and that during such delays the merchant had to pay for the crew's rations.[172]

## *Aboard ship*

We hear of a ship leaving port at daybreak and, a little more frequently, of night departures. The latter are best attested in fiction, and might in fact crop up more frequently precisely because they were unusual.[173] Nonetheless, around the Mediterranean the land breezes that in summer prevail before eight in the morning and after six or seven in the evening would have made those time slots most propitious for many departures.[174]

Discipline aboard merchant ships was not impressive, to judge from the Sea Law's concern about theft on board – with or without the captain's connivance – not to mention quarrels and fights.[175] Sailors also drank a lot, even on board. Inspired by the fine weather they faced, one crew sailing between Attaleia and Cyprus had a little party. They got so drunk that they fell asleep – such was sailors' wont, we are told – and could not be awakened by a terrified passenger when the ship sprang a leak. Fortunately St. Constantine's prayers proved more powerful than seawater and wine, and the ship was saved.[176]

Beyond drunken sailors and terrified passengers, what were the ships carrying? The Byzantine administrative memoranda for the invasion of Crete provide exhaustive accounts of the spare parts, gear, weapons, food, drink, and raw materials supplied to each warship. They deserve a specialized study in themselves.[177] For merchant mariners, the evidence is more fragmentary and complex. Travelers' accounts say little directly on this subject, but what they do say is precious and can be fitted with other evidence which testifies indirectly to cargoes.

172 3, 25, 26.1–7, with Ashburner's discussion, *ibid.*, pp. 103–4. Cf. too 3, 22–3, 25.1–4, on conditions for filling out cargoes.

173 An imperial convoy leaving a Sicilian port at dawn: *Liber pont. eccl. Ravenn.*, 145, 373.3–4. On night departures, Claude 1985b, 60–1; Martin I was spirited into a boat and away from Rome in the middle of the night certainly for secrecy: see Ch. 16.5. Urgency or stress on the emperor's despotical power might explain Heliodorus' nocturnal departure: *V. Leonis Catan.*, 89.1–90.8; the papal fleet left Agrigento at night for secrecy, according to the editor: *V. Greg. Agrig.*, 65, 222.8, cf. comm., p. 383; a nocturnal vision led some monks straight to the Tiber port of Rome, where they found a ship preparing to leave for Carthage: *ibid.*, 24, 174.25–8.

174 *Weather* 1962, 92–5.

175 *Sea Law*, 3, 2–3 and 5–7, 11.1–8 and 12.1–15.7; these are among the first problems treated in the Law.

176 *V. Constantini Iudaei* (*BHG* 370), 29, 636A–C.

177 See in the forthcoming study of Jeffreys and Pryor, above, n60.



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The Byzantine sea law assumed that Greek bottoms of the seventh and eighth centuries carried slaves and textiles, especially linen and, apparently, silk (*vestē*) garments.[178] But they also transported bulk cargoes: grain is mentioned twice, and wine and olive oil also occur.[179] Otherwise they loaded ballast.[180] Passengers might be carrying gold, silver, silk or pearls.[181] Shipwrecks are now beginning to deepen the testimony of texts, but what they have to say about cargoes is best viewed in the broader perspective of routes and economic circuits (Tables 20.1–20.7).

Like the owners and merchants, the sailors themselves probably stowed some personal freight of their own. At least this venerable maritime tradition was familiar in the later Middle Ages.[182] Such personal freight or a system of sharing the money made on the voyage explains how a seventh-century ship's carpenter realized great profits on a voyage from Constantinople to Gaul (R24). Passengers also transported commercial freight, as we know from our travelers who paid for their pilgrimages by some kind of trading (above, pp. 240ff).

Whatever the ships were carrying, they often loaded too much of it. This must be the explanation for the practice of jettison, throwing cargo overboard to avoid swamping by high seas. It is carefully regulated by the Sea Law: the master was required to consult with the passengers and take a vote, and the liability for "contribution," that is payment to indemnify each other for losses, was specified for all ranks aboard ship, down to and including slaves, whether or not they were being transported for sale.[183] When jettison was decided, the merchant traveling with his cargo was required to throw the first piece over the side.[184] The number of references to the practice indicate not only that it raised complex issues of liability, but that it arose often enough to generate considerable conflict. The root of the problem is revealed by another provision of the Sea Law. This required a merchant in advance to have formally accused, before three witnesses, the master of overloading the ship with cargo additional to the merchant's own, in order for the master to bear chief liability for jettison. And this was in cases where the merchant had contracted for transport of a full load.[185] Whatever the inherent seaworthiness of early medieval ships, the tendency was to load them up to and beyond a safe limit. This habit, which was not unknown in antiquity, can only have encouraged those who hugged the coastline, even as it was bolstered by the exceptionally stable sailing climate which prevails in much of the Mediterranean

178 *Sea Law*, 3, 9, 16.9–11; 3, 34, 30.1; cf. Trapp *et al*. 1994, 275.
179 *Sea Law*, 3, 38 and 39, 32.1 and 33.1.
180 *Ibid*., 3, 21, 24.5–6; Ignatius uses a simile founded on an unballasted ship's heaving in the waves and passengers' discomfort to make a point in his *V. Nicephori*, 181.19–24.
181 *Sea Law*, 3, 40, 34.2–7.
182 *Ibid*., pp. clxxiv–clxxvi.
183 *Ibid*., 3, 9, 16.1–11.
184 *Ibid*., 3, 38, 33.8–13.
185 *Ibid*., 3, 22, 25.1–9.



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summer.[186] In fact another of Ignatius Deacon's similes suggests that in his mind, the need for jettison was due not to the ships of his age, but to human errors of seamanship.[187]

## *Danger*

From all that we have found, it is clear that merchant ships plied the Mediterranean in this era, notwithstanding what has been written about the impact of warfare and raiders. Byzantine sea law speaks of the "dangers of the sea" as a matter of course, and mentions in the same breath piracy, fire and shipwreck.[188] Crews, captains, and passengers were well aware of the perils they faced. As far as life aboard ship was concerned, danger reinforced the need for consensus. The biography of Gregory the Dekapolite shows how crews and merchants played a role in deciding whether a ship took a course which might be considered particularly hazardous at a particular moment. The crew (*nautai*) of Gregory's ship at first refused to set sail for Sicily from Corinth, out of fear of the Arabs then threatening the region.[189] Merchants hesitated to put to sea from Ephesus one spring, because of nearby Arab pirates. In both cases, the saint overcame their trepidation.[190] These hagiographical vignettes are entirely in keeping with the provisions of the Sea Law, which assigns liability for losses due to sailing into areas known to be infested by pirates according to the consent of the passengers or captain.[191] But the very fact that consent and opposition to risky voyages were explicitly treated in the Sea Law shows that dangers were not so overwhelming as to prevent the search for profit at sea.[192] And when there were good reasons for sailing, the awareness of danger looks as likely to precipitate a change in route or in habit as to curtail sailing altogether. Amalarius is quite clear when he implies that, on his return voyage from Constantinople, his ship simply stayed away from

186 On antiquity, see *Digest* 14, 2, pp. 219–21. On the Mediterranean's distinctively long spells of good weather, *Mediterranean Pilot* 1978–88, 1: 15.

187 Writing about how the patriarch's helm of orthodoxy guided the storm-tossed church through seas of heresy to the safe port: *V. Tarasii* (*BHG* 1698), 418.10–21. Jettison is referred to almost as a regular procedure in heavy weather, e.g., *Sea Law*, 3, 35, 31.1–4; 3, 9, 16.1–17.18.

188 "Dangers" in general: *ibid.*, 3, 30, 28.2; cf. 3, 31, 29.2; pirates, etc.: 3, 28, 28.3, and 3, 29, 28.3.

189 Ignatius, *V. Greg Decap.*, 11, 55.12–14.

190 *Ibid.*, 9, 53.18–27.

191 It further absolves master or passenger of liability if a ship comes to grief at a non-contractual landing which either opposed. *Sea Law*, 3, 4, 13.17; 3, 39, 33.1–34.15.

192 See e.g., the shipowner who sailed from Methone to Demetrias, and was enslaved by the Arabs en route, while St. Blasius and his disciples miraculously escaped: R729.



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land even under inclement weather, in order to avoid the well-attested danger of Slav pirates.[193]

Although we have no precise data on the cost of passenger or goods transport, the fares do not seem to have been cheap. When Gregory the Dekapolite was contemplating sailing from Reggio to Rome, he demonstrated his sanctity by turning down the gift of a gold coin, even though he needed it for the voyage.[194] Bernard and his fellow passengers paid their fare, apparently of two gold pieces each, when they disembarked from his slave transport in the port of Alexandria.[195] For what it is worth, these fares do not look out of line with what Goitein has found around 1100.[196] So too the legendary St. Nicon took lots of money with him when he found a ship to transport him to the east.[197] In fact, Latin hagiographers rarely miss the opportunity to state that their heroes paid the "ship fare." Was this because it was a rare chance to show off a Greek loan-word which occurred but once in their Bible? Or because of a desire to reassure their readers that the saints in question were not non-paying travelers, that is slaves, aboard the vessels which took them to the Middle East?[198]

And so, we can reconstruct substantial parts of the experience of travel in the early medieval Mediterranean. On land, infrastructures were changing for the better, strengthening communications between the Frankish northwest and eastern Europe with Italy, particularly across the Alps. Texts like Amalarius' *Versus marini*, the fictional Life of Leucius or, indeed, the substantial Byzantine hagiography of the eighth and ninth centuries add a number of new and revealing details to the picture of early medieval seafaring. Whether we are interested in hardtack, the availability of incense aboard Venetian ships, or baskets of goods, careful scrutiny of the Latin sources alongside the Greek joins with archaeology to illuminate the implications of previously isolated texts. The result is a vivid picture of shipping, both peaceful and otherwise.

193 Amalarius, *Versus mar.*, 428.64–5: "Sta procul a terra, Sclavorum litora linque, / Pelliculas tendant fratres pluviasque repellant." Adriatic: the Narrentani along the Neretva river: see e.g. R428 and R601; Aegean: R34; cf. Ignatius, *V. Greg. Decap.* 10, 54.23–55.3.

194 *Ibid.*, 11, 55.15–18. For the interpretation of τὸ χρυσίον, cf. *ibid.*, 17, 62.5–6 and 8. On Muslim ship fares of the early 10th C., Christides 1993, 82.

195 *Itinerarium*, 5, p. 311.

196 Goitein 1967–93, 1, 339–43, where the sea transport of a bale of "purple" (and the person who accompanied it: 341) from Alexandria to Tunisia cost a little over 4 contemporary dinars, not including customs and gratuities.

197 *Passio Niconis*, 5, 16B.

198 *Naulum* occurs in the Vulgate in Jonas 1, 3. Cf. e.g., Hugeburc, *V. Willibaldi* 91.6–7; *V. Madalvei*, 14, p. 197; *V. Leucii*, p. 364; north of the Alps: Willibald, *Vita Bonifatii* (BHL 1400), 4, *MGH SRG* 16.8.



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This picture gives us some insight into cargoes, sizes of ships, and groups of ships. We listen in on sailors talking between ships as the wind speeds them gently home on a blue-water course from Egypt, and watch the passengers don waterproof skins as the rain begins. The biggest commercial ships we have met seem to be slavers, and we have noted that the ease with which early medieval ships were beached encouraged a proliferation of landing places, which sometimes developed into markets. But there is much that this picture does not tell us. It hints of changes in the intensity of communications, in the geographic and ethnic backgrounds of the ships and crews that frequented the northern shores of the Mediterranean, in the culture of coastal shipping. But the hints are often ambiguous: once again, so much depends on how we construe them and on the overall context in which we view them. To look behind the anecdotes, we must count, if even in a rudimentary fashion, to see if the frequency of communications shows any rhythms, over the years and over the seasons. To detect discrepancies, we must identify, compare, explain seeming inconsistencies in the evidence which emerge only from more abstract evaluation, and point the way to deeper, more difficult truths, or make simpler ones less uncertain. We shall attempt this in two ways: in the next chapters we shall grapple with the problem of the aggregate and hitherto hidden patterns of early medieval communications over time; thereafter we shall examine them through space.



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# 14

# *Secular rhythms: communications over time*

PART II UNCOVERED a surprisingly large number of people who traveled in the early medieval Mediterranean region. Impressive though their numbers are, close scrutiny showed that it was their travels, not their individual numbers, that promised broader patterns of communications. Their trips document many movements which reached beyond the micro-regional level. To these personal movements the narrative records add a few more instances of communication, chiefly letters and arriving news. In these cases the persons conveying the information cannot be clearly discerned. They nonetheless imply movement which is very specifically situated in time and space, and so testify also to patterns of communication.[1] In all, both kinds of evidence document substantially more movements in the early medieval Mediterranean than have ever before been observed or considered. They reveal at least 410 instances of more or less peaceable communications in the eighth and ninth centuries, ranging in geographic scale from voyages between Sicily and Rome to trips linking Sweden and Francia, via Constantinople. The aggregate data derived from this mostly prosopographical research is referred to as the "core movements." The Greek, Latin, and Old Church Slavonic evidence for each of these trips has been scrutinized in detail; erroneous hypotheses, datings, or interpretations have been eliminated insofar as was humanly possible. The results of these studies have been summarily catalogued in Appendix 4, the "Register of Communications."

The investigation has focused on long-distance travel. This is reflected in the dominant pattern of these core movements, over 340 of which covered more than 500 km to east or west. The greatest single group of movements that traveled fewer than 500 km to east or west falls into what we might call longer distance regional or interregional travel, and stems from southern Italy. Most of these

1 Such movements are listed in Appendix 4, the Register of Communications.



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shorter-distance communications concern contacts between Rome and Sicily or southern Campania.[2]

## 1. New data, new questions

The sheer amount of evidence uncovered invites questions rarely posed in early medieval history. First and foremost: are the trips uniformly distributed over the entire 200-year period? The short answer is no. The patterns that emerge look striking, which raises the issue of how to test them. To that end, I assembled a second, complementary series of movements. It derives largely from other scholars' work, at least as far as Arabic evidence is concerned. It catalogued chiefly military and some diplomatic relations of the Islamic world with Christendom in this period, as well as internal movements that linked the western provinces of the Byzantine empire to the capital. This complementary approach adds another 210 movements to the picture. Most of them are "military" in nature, consisting of raids and naval movements. Even so, the economic dimension of a slave-gathering raid will escape no one.[3] The complementary movements are doubly interesting. Their mostly Arabic origin guarantees that their transmission to us is quite independent from the triply diverse circumstances of the Latin, Greek and Old Church Slavonic sources which have supplied most core movements. Their second advantage goes to the heart of one of the main assumptions behind the conventional wisdom on Mediterranean communications in the early Middle

2 For more on these regional communications, see Ch. 17.3–4. As always, I have attempted to count in the most conservative way. Whenever there is a plausible case that two travelers moved together, that is counted as only one movement. Thus my numbers here, as elsewhere, probably underestimate the actual ascertainable quantities of movement. Given the thrust of the argument, this appears preferable. The precise breakdown is 410 movements of which 346 certainly covered more – usually substantially more – than 500 km east or west. Of the sixty-four movements which I have classified as "shorter," thirty were confined to Rome and southern Italy. Most of the remainder surpassed the 500 km mark also, in terms of combined east–west, north–south movement. As the reader will have divined, these observations were derived from plotting the movements catalogued in the Register on longitudinal and latitudinal scales; they were processed in a data base executed in Paradox 4.5 for Windows.

3 For the complementary data, I have relied chiefly on the standard works of Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68 and Amari 1933–9, both of which include substantial extracts of translations of the Arabic sources on which their narratives are founded, as well as the monographs of Eickhoff 1966, Ahrweiler 1966 and Fahmy 1966a and 1966b. The reader will discern easily the different data sets by consulting the Register. Because I cannot vouch personally for the philological and historical accuracy of this secondary material, it is used only in a complementary fashion; deductions founded on it are so characterized throughout.



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Ages: the idea that endemic warfare severely disrupted and depressed shipping. If that assumption holds true, then these mostly military movements should correlate inversely to non-military trips. When military activity rises, peaceful activities should decline.

Part III assembled a third kind of data for comparison with the core set of trips. This set of data is smaller than the first two but, for three reasons, it is no less precious. First, the Arab or Byzantine coins dropped or hidden on the approaches to the Carolingian empire certainly traveled there from distant places, which the coins themselves mostly specify. Next, the date of manufacture of the Arab coins is generally known with considerable precision, down to the year. They therefore supply secure dates after which they were lost, although that advantage is tempered somewhat in the case of stray finds. (The production date of the Byzantine coins is less precise, and that will complicate their testimony.) The third advantage of the coins is that the conditions which have preserved and transmitted them to us are utterly independent of the circumstances by which we know the other movements. The Arab and the Byzantine coins thus constitute two additional and independent streams of evidence on communications and their rhythms over time. Finally, although the lesser precision of palaeographical dating prohibits us from directly comparing the chronology of relic acquisition to the other data, its broader outlines nonetheless offer yet another series of independent indicators against which to test any patterns that emerge from this analysis. In other words, to address the crucial issue of whether Mediterranean communications changed in intensity over the two centuries under review, core and complementary motions join Arab and Byzantine coins to constitute four independent sets of evidence. And we will be able to make at least a general comparison with a fifth set of data derived from Carolingian relic collecting.

## 2. The ebb and flow of Mediterranean movement

In terms of types of recorded travel, it is obvious why previous scholars have judged the inland sea to be devoid of commerce in the eighth and ninth centuries. For our core group of movements, the breakdown roughly parallels that of type of travelers, from whose prosopography it essentially derives. Nonetheless, the inclusion of communications (as represented by, e.g. a letter, or a merchant convoy) in which no individual is visible, leads to slightly different totals in some categories. As far as the real relative frequency of different types of travel is concerned, Table 14.1 is, of course, more *directly* revealing of the curiosity of our sources than the reality of shipping and travel. Indirectly, the story may be different. As we have seen, pilgrims, immigrants, and even diplomats on some occasions are explicitly attested as sailing on commercial vessels. Letters, news,



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TABLE 14.1
Types of movements in recorded travel (core group)

| Type | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Ambassadors | 177 | 43 |
| Letters | 59 | 14 |
| Pilgrims | 55 | 13 |
| Exiles, refugees, and prisoners | 43 | 10 |
| Merchants[a] | 22 | 5 |
| Immigration | 15 | 4 |
| News | 15 | 4 |
| Business | 14 | 3 |
| Missionaries | 7 | 2 |
| Uncertain | 2 | < 1 |
| Disease | 1 | < 1 |
| Total | 410 | 100 |

*Note:*
[a] This total illustrates the point made above: it differs from Table 9.1 because it includes traces of merchant voyages in which individual merchants cannot be distinguished: see R109, R201, R321 (I presume the Venetians were in Africa on a merchant voyage), R362, R417, R428, R577–8 (where R579, Bernard's crossing, could also have been counted, but I have counted his trip under pilgrims).

refugees, and disease are as likely to have traveled aboard merchant ships as aboard military ones.

The movements are not evenly distributed over time. Only a quarter of them occurred in the eighth century. The overwhelming majority of core movements comes from the ninth century. Table 14.2 shows that the number of attested movements increases with every passing half century.[4] The tabulation suggests a dramatic increase in attested movements after the year 800, when they almost triple with respect to the preceding half century; the change from the first half to the second half of the eighth century is not negligible either. But ninth-century Christian sources are far more numerous than eighth-century ones. Are we not therefore seeing changes in the survival rate of documents rather than changes in reality? According to this hypothesis, communications still *might* have increased, but we are not entitled to conclude so with certainty. Although there is at present no reliable and exhaustive way of quantifying the evidence which survives from

4 104 movements before 800 (25 percent); 306 movements (75 percent) from 800 and later.



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TABLE 14.2
Distribution of core movements by half-century

| Period | Number of movements | Percentage | Percentage change |
|---|---|---|---|
| 700–49 | 46 | 11 | |
| 750–99 | 58 | 14 | +26 |
| 800–49 | 139 | 34 | +140 |
| 850–900 | 167 | 41 | +20 |
| Total | 410 | 100 | |

TABLE 14.3
Distribution of core movements by quarter-century

| Period | Number of movements | Percentage | Percentage change |
|---|---|---|---|
| 700–24 | 25 | 6 | |
| 725–49 | 21 | 5 | −16 |
| 750–74 | 18 | 4 | −14 |
| 775–99 | 40 | 10 | +122 |
| 800–24 | 89 | 22 | +123 |
| 825–49 | 50 | 12 | −47 |
| 850–74 | 85 | 21 | +70 |
| 875–900 | 82 | 20 | −5 |
| Total | 410 | 100 | |

various periods, no one would blanch at the notion that ninth-century sources are thrice as numerous as eighth-century ones (cf. Ch. 6n10). However, when the movements are reclassified by quarter-century, another pattern emerges. When the chronology of movements is refined, the pattern that emerges is considerably more dynamic. Table 14.3 suggests a low and declining level of communications in the first three quarters of the eighth century. Things changed dramatically in the last quarter of the century: communications nearly tripled with respect to the preceding period. Over the following twenty-five years they more than doubled again. During Louis the Pious' later years communications slackened swiftly, but not definitively. Beginning around 850 they recovered to the level they had displayed at the beginning of the century. Then, as the century ended, they become somewhat rarer. Yet they remained at a level higher than at any time in the eighth century, indeed, twice as high. Is this but a mirage, thrown up by the survival rate



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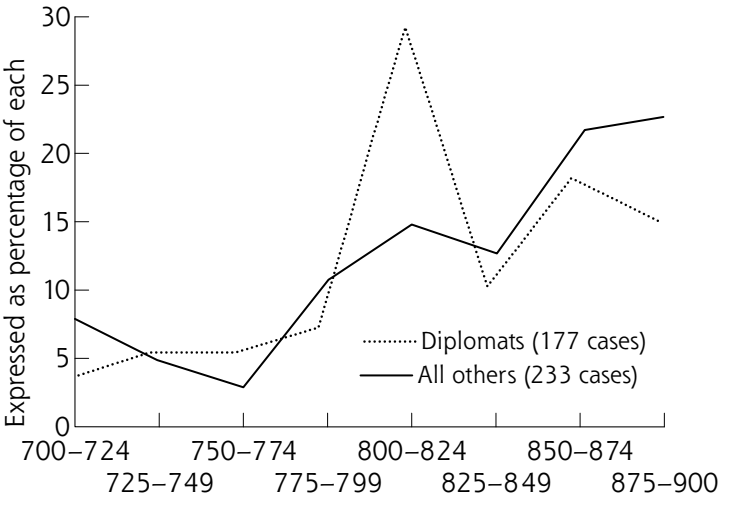
Chart 14.1. Ambassadorial and other core movements: comparison by quarter-century




of documents? Or is it possible that we are seeing the real ebb and flow of communications, indeed, that we are feeling for the first time in a thousand years the pulse of a lost economy? A mirage may have beckoned when the data were viewed in fifty-year segments. That appears less likely in the twenty-five-year perspective. It might seem plausible that the amount of surviving source material grows steadily from 700 to 900, but no one has suggested a punctuated evolutionary pattern like this one. Still, it would be imprudent to rule out such an evolution of the documentation at this early point in our exploration.

If we play the devil's advocate, we can imagine another possible explanation for this strikingly dynamic distribution of movements over time. Aristocratic ambassadors make up the lion's share of movements in the core data base. Could this imply that the vagaries of diplomacy explain the jump in the 770s, and the dip after 825? When the Carolingian empire peaked in power, it was also at its peak in foreign diplomatic exchanges. Separating ambassadorial movements and comparing them with the other core trips answers this question.

Chart 14.1 does indicate that ambassadorial movements jumped in the first quarter of the ninth century. But that spurt does not explain the broader movement, for non-diplomatic movements also increase. The main difference in trend occurred down to c. 775: while diplomatic movements increase gently or stagnate at a low level, those of all other forms of communications decline. Then both sets of movements exhibit the same general trend. Both rise at the same time, in the final quarter of the eighth century, although the non-ambassadorial communications increase much more strongly. Both sets of movements continue to



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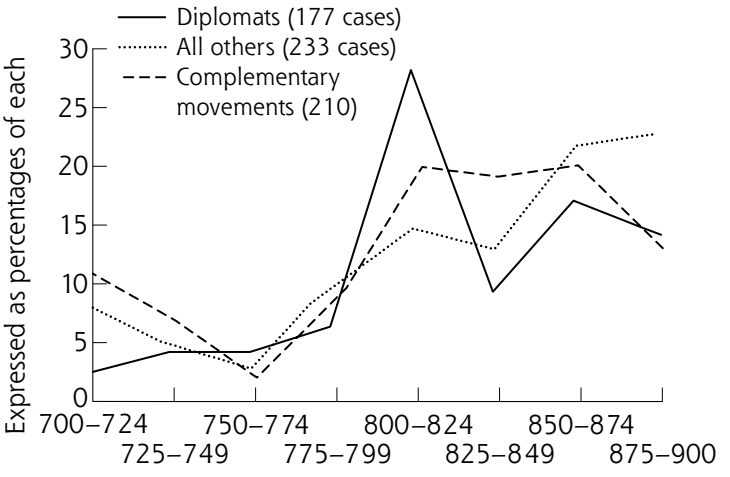
Chart 14.2. Comparison of ambassadorial and western non-military movements with complementary Arab and Byzantine military and administrative movements




increase in the early ninth century, although the jump is much sharper for envoys' movements. Both dip in the second quarter of the ninth, before recovering in the next twenty-five years. Finally, diplomatic travel experiences a minor decline in the late ninth century, while other forms of long-distance communication increase. In other words, there is an underlying common trend to both sets of movements. This trend *might* reflect broader quantitative patterns of source production and preservation, but it cannot reflect merely the vagaries of diplomacy. According to the former hypothesis, this broader quantitative pattern would have to affect the Greek, Latin, and Old Church Slavonic sources on which the Register of Communications is founded, in similar and synchronous fashion, to produce similar results. Is this really plausible?

A further test comes from our second, complementary set of data, derived from the internal and military Mediterranean travel of the Byzantine empire and the Islamic polity. Chart 14.2 repeats the previous one, but adds the complementary data.

The similarities are striking, to say the least. The complementary movements parallel almost exactly the non-diplomatic communications deduced chiefly from the movements of persons around the Mediterranean Sea. Both decline noticeably in the first three quarters of the eighth century, and both shift sharply upward in the last quarter. Though the dip is shallower among the complementary movements, it still follows the tendency of the non-ambassadorial ones, and it also recovers, though less noticeably, at the same time. Their paths diverge in the last quarter of the ninth century, when the complementary movements observe a



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decline similar to those of diplomatic communications. Overall, the complementary movements echo the general tendencies of diplomatic communications from the last quarter of the eighth century, albeit with differing rates of increase or decline. Indeed, this is true of all three sets of data over the 100 years from 774 to 874. Given the large part played by Arabic sources in supplying the movements registered in the complementary set, believers in a coincidence of patterns of preservation of evidence must reckon that coincidence to hold for those sources as well. The possibility of a mirage produced by a clustering of source material is receding, for such a hypothesis surely strains credulity.[5]

The comparison of the three trends prompts a further, equally surprising observation. The overwhelming majority of the third trend, the complementary movements (160 of 210: 76 percent), are military in nature. They represent battles between fleets, sea-launched invasions and counter-attacks, and especially raids from the sea on coastal sites.[6] It is generally assumed that warfare strangled commerce and communications of all sorts in the early medieval Mediterranean. If Byzantine and Arab military operations really affected shipping dramatically, we should find an inverse correlation between the third trend and the first two: as military operations increase, peaceful communications should decrease. But, except for the last quarter of the ninth century, this is not the case. *Peaceable and military communications rise together*. The exception is also noteworthy.

This approach to communications in the Mediterranean basin suggests that there was considerably more going on than has hitherto been recognized by research which focused exclusively on explicitly documented instances of trade. Distributing communications over time reveals changing patterns which do not obviously correlate with conditions of source preservation. The apparent parallel with military and administrative activity is striking. One final set of chronological comparisons can be made with two more series of data which are equally independent of the patterns of preservation of the written sources. The numismatic evidence is not without shortcomings, but they are shortcomings which are quite different from those of the written sources of three continents.

Chapter 12 identified fifty-four finds of Arab coins in and around Carolingian Europe from the late seventh to the early tenth century. Fifty most probably fall between the years 700 and 900, and so lend themselves to comparison with our other forms of communication with foreign climes. The fact that Arab coins bear the precise year of issue, as well as the place, imparts exceptional chronological interest. More than half occur in circumstances which allow confidence that they were certainly lost or hidden in our period, and the coins themselves tend to have

5 Ninety-one (44 percent) of the movements are chiefly Arab in nature, and mostly documented in Arabic sources. Some Byzantine movements counted here are equally documented only in Arab sources.

6 See Appendix 4 for details.



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been issued in the period when they were buried. Most were valuable pieces of gold and silver, which of course are the ones people paid most attention to and lost least frequently. By its nature, the chronology of deposit of stray finds is less certain. But the fact that they cohere with what are certainly Carolingian deposits encourages confidence in the overall pattern.

For the question of changing intensity of communications, I have classified the coins by finds, rather than counted the numbers of individual coins. Each find, in effect, may represent an instance of communication, whatever the value of the hoard. Under these circumstances, the few large hoards would obscure the patterns in what is, relatively speaking, a rather small data set. Chart 14.3 reflects, insofar as is possible, the date of deposit or, at worst, the date after which the coins must have been deposited.

The Byzantine finds are more voluminous (113 finds, sixty-four of which fall between 700 and 900) and also more problematic. These coins are inherently less precisely dated than dirhams and dinars and a smaller share comes from the chronologically secure circumstances of hoards. Most are copper coins, so that the circulation and loss patterns naturally might differ from those of the typically much more valuable Arab coins. What is more, the copper coinage of Theophilus continued to circulate or to be struck in his son's reign: such coins could have been issued as late as 867. For reasons that are uncertain, his gold Class III is "extremely common" and unusually so in the western Balkans.[7] A further complicating factor comes from the abundant copper coinage of Leo VI, whose twenty-six-year reign reached well into the tenth century (912), which might well swell the apparent coins of the final years of the ninth century. With these reservations in mind, let us examine Chart 14.3. The chronology of the Arab coins is clearer and better assured. Their broad trend and its shifts echo in striking fashion the other aggregate patterns of communications we have uncovered, albeit with some interesting disjunctures. There is decline in the eighth century, sharp growth at its end, a renewed decrease in the ninth century; a plateau marks the end. Looking at the pattern more closely, we note a surprisingly large share from the outset of the eighth century. It is explained in large part by the Arab military and political presence in southwestern France and Sardinia (see Chart 12.1 for the differing performance in each zone). Even so, the overall pattern of the Arab coins' influx into the west parallels, substantially, the ebb and flow of the core and the complementary movements. Like them, the decline in arriving Arab coins from the early eighth century persists into the third quarter of the century. Like them also, the Arab coins do an about-face which is even more abrupt in the last quarter of the eighth century, reaching their peak perceptible presence in

7 Copper: *DOC* 3: 455–6; gold: *ibid.*, 409; cf. Metcalf 1979, 32.



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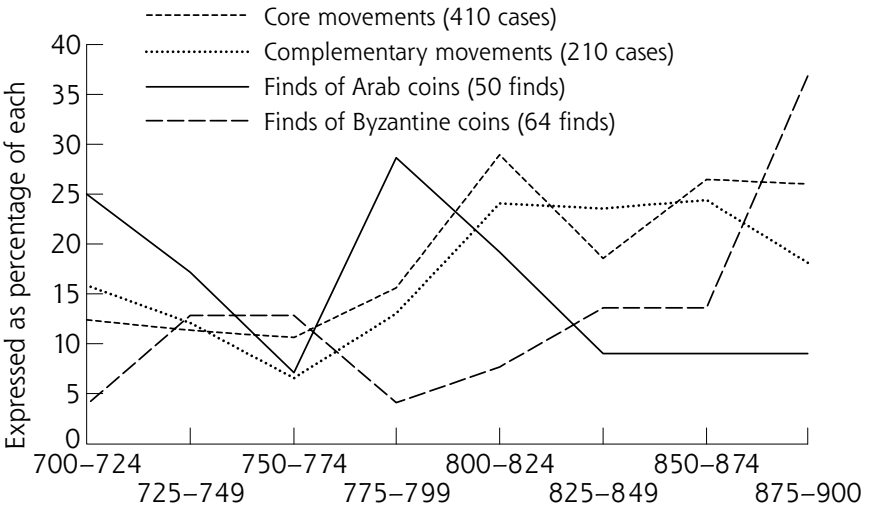
Chart 14.3. Comparison by quarter-century of core and complementary movements and Arab and Byzantine coin finds




Carolingian Europe in the 780s and 790s. Then they diverge in the first quarter of the ninth century, in that the entry of Arab coins slackens. Or at least the discernible presence of Arab coins drops, while other indicators of communications continue to increase. Subsequently they plummet as the core movements drop, and at the same time the complementary movements plateau or dip just slightly. They then plateau and continue to do so, as the core movements increase slightly.

The pattern suggested by the Byzantine coins converges less exactly with the other sets of movements in terms of quarter-centuries. In part, this might stem from their less precise chronology. Even so, like the core and complementary movements, they rise in the first quarter of the ninth century, but their increase, although it is gentler, keeps on developing toward the middle of the next century, if Theophilus' continuing issues are not distorting the trend. The increase at century's end is probably overstated by the abundance of Leo VI's copper coins, some part of which in fact were probably struck in the early years of the tenth century.

The way in which the Byzantine coins diverge from the Arab issues is striking. For at least half of this 200-year period, the trend in Byzantine coins is inversely correlated with the Arab ones: in the early eighth century they increase as the Arab arrivals decline; as the influx of Arab coins peaks, that of Byzantine coins sinks in the century's last twenty-five years. And as fewer and fewer Muslim coins survive in western Europe over the first fifty years of the ninth century, those struck by Byzantine mints grow. On the face of it, this would seem to suggest that



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communications which resulted in the arrival of coins in western Europe oscillated between Byzantium and the Arab world. When such communications with the Arab world grew, those with Byzantium declined. And vice versa, for five of the eight twenty-five-year periods documented here.

Of course, the numbers of coin finds are not large – barely more than 100 finds all told. In some respects, their chronology may require further refinement. But the coins are totally independent in their circumstances of production and preservation from the written sources out of which the other sorts of communications emerged. If in fact the ebb and flow we are seeing in communications is somehow mysteriously conditioned by the convergent ebb and flow of writing and preserving records on three continents, in five different languages, in the diverse libraries and archives of so many different cultures, then the production and import into western Europe of foreign coins also participated mysteriously in this gigantic pulsation. Compared with the option of admitting that we are seeing real rhythms in western Europe's relations with the more developed worlds to the south and east, that hypothesis seems fantastic. Or else we must recognize that the ebb and flow of the aggregate production of evidence is in itself a kind of giant proxy measure of economic activity.[8]

So the Arab coins conform strikingly with the picture we have deduced from hundreds of trips in the Mediterranean region. The Byzantine coins provide less precise support, although they do fit the overall picture, particularly the upswing in the late eighth century. As we have already seen (Chapters 11 and 12), the real Arab coins begin to show up on Carolingian soil in the very decades when they make a sudden and substantial appearance in the texts, providing yet another independent indicator of deep change in the last quarter of the eighth century. Relic collecting does not offer much in the way of specific support for the relatively fine chronology of movements that we have been looking at here, because palaeographical dating of such minimal monuments only rarely aspires to similiar precision. Yet what we can discern of the chronology of relic acquisition in no way contradicts what we have seen from the other sets of movements. At Sens, seven tags documenting eastern Mediterranean relics identified at probability one (see Chapter 10) can be dated palaeographically to the eighth century; ten such tags stem from the ninth century. An increase of this sort conforms to the broadest pattern of the other movements. At Chelles, eastern Mediterranean relic collecting was confined to the eighth century and the first years of the ninth. One tag can be dated to the first half of the eighth century, against twelve tags written

8 As a few historians have in fact suspected, e.g., Lopez 1987, 308–9.



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between c. 750 and c. 800. The upsurge in the second half of the century is unmistakable. In a word, the two independently constituted hoards of relics add two more voices to what is now a substantial chorus. Communications between Carolingian Europe and the far shores of the Mediterranean Sea increased, dramatically, in the time of Charlemagne. But that is not all.

At least since the time of Pirenne, warfare and raiding on the Mediterranean have been seen as the primary cause of a decline in commercial shipping. When we broaden our analysis to examine all kinds of communications, and attempt to record and tabulate precisely their numbers over time, the expected devastatingly negative impact of conflict on communications does not emerge. Chart 14.3 uncovers some chronological convergence, with slackening communications and a continuing high level of military activity over the years 825–50, but the possible impact falls well short of catastrophic. In fact, the stories of some of our travelers showed that communications were sensitive to security problems. Amalarius' ship stayed away from the Slavic shore and Gregory the Dekapolite's saintly charisma was needed to get Greek shippers to put to sea when raiders approached their waters. But the ships sailed anyway. From this diverse evidence, the links between insecurity and shipping seem more subtle and complicated than has previously been imagined. Could insecurity have affected travelers' routes more than it affected their numbers? If, furthermore, military activity mostly rises and falls in tandem with other communications, then we must consider another possibility. Broader economic trends may have affected the overall universe of communications, including military actions, more than military actions affected economic trends in the centuries before us.

The laborious collecting, sifting, and analyzing of so many independent pieces of evidence produces a pattern. Not a perfect one, as the case of the Byzantine coins shows, but one that is still clear. The 410 core movements of our 669 travelers, the 210 movements of Byzantine and Arab administrators and warriors, the fifty finds of Arab coins and sixty-four finds of Byzantine ones, flanked by additional evidence from before and after the years 700 and 900, are reinforced by the testimony of dozens of relics whose documents have survived intact in French sanctuaries since the days of Charlemagne. Communications between the Frankish empire and the eastern Mediterranean world surged in the final decades of the eighth and the first decades of the ninth century. They slackened in the second half of Louis the Pious' reign, apparently increased again after the middle of the century, before slowing somewhat in the last quarter-century. But never again in the history of Europe did they come close to the low levels that prevailed before 750.

Does the rise and fall of communications indicate *economic* change? Again, the overall pattern disclosed here bears striking comparison to the overall trend of *northern* European trade and economic development, whose tendencies and



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connections with the economy of the Persian Gulf have been argued on quite different evidence by Richard Hodges and David Whitehouse (1983; 1996): low levels in the early eighth century, boom in the age of Charlemagne, sharp decline in the second half of the reign of Louis the Pious. Whether or not one agrees with their explanation – a trading link between northern Europe and the Far East via the Persian Gulf and the "Northern Arc" of Scandinavia – one cannot fail to note the convergence of tendencies. But these tendencies are now documented in what most thought was a moribund Mediterranean.

Before we turn to our final question, that of the links between commerce and communications, there is more to be learned about the temporal rhythms of communication. There is more to be learned too about how communications changed over space. These other findings reinforce and deepen the basic patterns that have emerged here. Now let us look at how the rhythms of travel and communications changed, not over two centuries, but over the four seasons.



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# 15

# *Seasonal rhythms*

THE VOLUME OF communications changed over the long timescale of the centuries. It also fluctuated over the short one of seasons. Simply put, bad weather affected man, beast, and ships. On this, and the winter hiatus of shipping, the conventional wisdom looks solid.

Yet a glance at land travel, particularly during the winter, will show that it is not merely a matter of snow or rain interrupting land communications. Even at sea the situation is more complicated than might first appear. We have already met the smallish ships, the prevalence of beaching, and the apparent ascendancy of the local that characterized navigation. They figure in fact in some accounts as prime villains in the desolate economic conditions of the early medieval Mediterranean. But might they not equally suggest something else? That more daring sailors could risk sailing outside the fine weather for which the Mediterranean summer is famous and the northern tourist today grateful? It is possible to test one of the most famous of ancient and medieval navigational phenomena, the *mare clausum*, the closing of the Mediterranean Sea during the rough weather of winter, against the aggregate evidence of our travelers' movements. And why not do so, if it confirms not only whether or not normal communications ceased, but when they did so, and when they resumed? Even if there seems little reason to doubt the conventional idea that the impact of winter on communication patterns (and therefore on economic ones) remained unaltered since antiquity, it is not a bad idea to compare general precepts with actual practice. A clearer understanding of the seasonality of shipping leads moreover to further issues of fundamental importance: the speed of communications and the history of the routes linking the different parts of the Mediterranean.

We shall begin with a quick look at seasonal variations in land communications. But we shall concentrate on the patterns at sea, where the comprehensive study of movements affords a look at monthly patterns of arrivals and departures. A first series of surprises will lead us to scrutinize more closely the marginal months of April and October. This will force us to probe more deeply the problem



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of winter sailings. In the end, we will find that there is much to be said for the conventional wisdom. And some things to be said against it.

## 1. Seasonality of land travel

Seasonality affected first and foremost sea travel, but it was not without incidence on dry land.[1] Obviously, crossing early medieval Europe was more pleasant in fine weather, when it was also easier to fodder one's horses and mules.[2] Autumn seems to have been particularly favored for royal movements, and an effort may have been made to avoid the dog days of summer.[3] Lack of fodder made winter travel difficult for large groups of mounted men. Nonetheless the royal court did move, as a few examples from the 770s show. To start with the movements of the turbulent winter of 771, when Charlemagne pounced on his brother's kingdom: in December, he reached Corbeny from Longlier. He moved on to Attigny for Christmas, then went to Blanzy in the Ardennes on 13 January 772. Finally he was off to Herstal for Easter (29 March).[4] The next winter he celebrated Christmas at Herstal, moved on to Longlier by 20 January and then spent the rest of the winter at Thionville. Similarly in 778, the king was at Aachen on 6 December and at Douzy (Sedan) for Christmas.[5]

For smaller groups, winter travel was less difficult, if still no pleasure. Officials were on the road in the snowy season at the king's behest and also for their own reasons. Einhard, for instance, answered a royal summons to Aachen on 1 December 829 and reached Wiesbaden the next day. The year before he had been traveling from one estate to another in January when a royal mandate called him to court; he set out from Mühlheim am Main to the palace at Aachen in mid-January 828; he arrived there "a few days later," covering 300 km in the coldest weeks of winter without comment.[6] Charles the Bald's uncle Rudolf returned to the west Frankish court from an embassy to Regensburg on 11 December 863. Officials traveling to the palace at Pavia enjoyed exceptional rights to requisition shelter in winter time, a sign that they slept mostly out of doors in the good weather.[7]

1 There is no study of the seasonal rhythms of land travel in the Carolingian or Byzantine worlds. See nonetheless Brühl 1968, 1: 61–7.

2 Problems of getting fodder led Lupus of Ferrières to counsel against spring travel, *Ep.* 20, 4 (Levillain, *Ep.* 8, A.D. 837), 26.18–21, shortly after 29 April; cf. *Ep.* 63, 2, (41, A.D. 845), 68.29–69.6, shortly after 7 April.

3 Zielinski 1991, 40n16.

4 BM 142a–143a.

5 BM 150a–152 and 213–213a, respectively.

6 Einhard, *Transl. Marcell. et Petri*, 3, 19, 255.5–7 and 1, 15, 245.20–4. Cf. also R385. The mysterious envoy Lazarus left someone's court on 4 January: Pros. "Lazarus 1."

7 *MGH Capit.* no. 94, 4, 1.199.3–4, A.D. 787.



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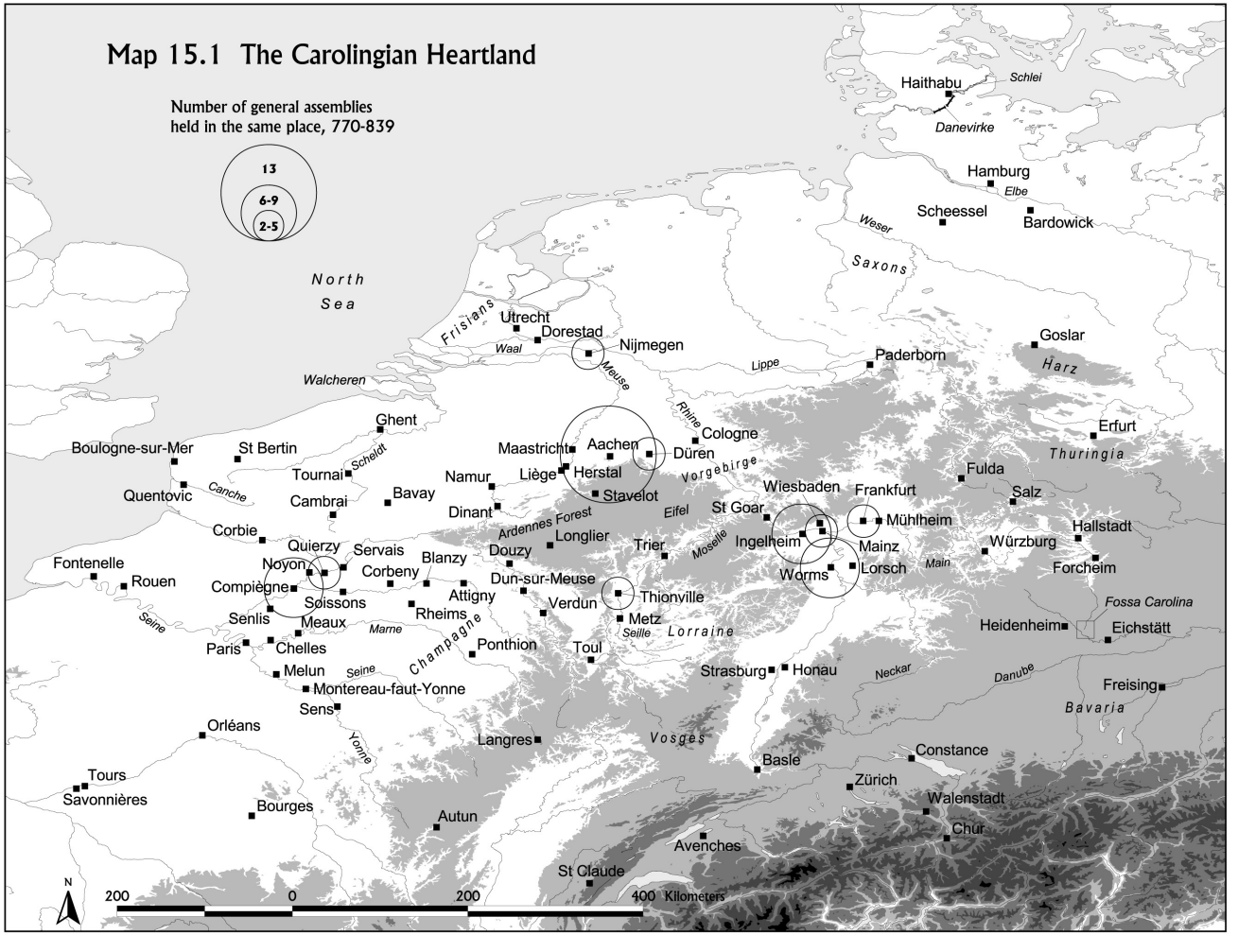


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The freezing of waterways could turn them, literally, into highways. Carolingian merchants adapted quickly to such conditions. The extreme cold of the winter of 859–60 froze the northern edge of the Adriatic for the first time in memory, and merchants who had always used boats to move their goods to Venice transported them to the sea city by horse and cart.[8] We may wonder whether frozen waterways explain the fact that a message from the distant Bulgars, near the mouth of the Danube, arrived at the wintering Carolingian court (R385). In winter it was always incomparably easier and safer to travel over land than over water, although in 968–69, Liudprand of Cremona combined both modes of travel between October and January (R828).

Anyone who has ever crossed an Alpine pass knows that summer is better than winter; eighth- and ninth-century travelers naturally preferred good weather and we may presume that the volume of traffic was greater at that time. But it would be wrong to imagine that the bad weather sealed Italy hermetically, for winter crossings of the Alps are surprisingly well attested. Smaller groups and messengers did so when urgent circumstances dictated.

Analysis of papal correspondence has already demonstrated that, once the land road became the main route north, documents were in fact issued for northerners during the winter months (Ch. 3.1). Eighth- and ninth-century contacts over the more than 1,500 km separating the papal from the Frankish court were frequent by early medieval standards, and deserve a closer look. A preliminary impression of the intensity of contacts comes from the *Codex Carolinus* which preserves forty-six letters sent by Hadrian I to Charles the Great from late 774 to 791. This works out to a letter roughly every four months, not even counting Charles' presence in Rome in 781 and 787.[9] In certain circumstances letters went north during the winter. Thus the desperate plea of Stephen II, written on or about 24 February 756 to Pippin and the Franks during Aistulf's siege of Rome, was sent north in three separate dispatches to insure arrival; two at least went *by sea* with Stephen's envoys, to avoid the Lombard attackers.[10] Similarly, at the time of the mid-winter crisis of 772–3, Pope Hadrian I's ambassador Peter traveled to Marseilles by sea and he reached Thionville between 20 January and 7 March.[11] Several letters were sent in December.[12] To an angry Charlemagne Leo III dispatched a letter on the last day of

8 *Ann. Fuld.* a. 860, p. 54.

9 *Cod. Car.* 49–95, pp. 567–643; BM 235b, 282a and 285–286b.

10 *Cod. Car.* 8–10, JE 2325–7, pp. 494–503, esp. 495.43–496.1 and 497.28–35; 499.36–8.

11 *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.493.12–16, JE 2396, BM 152b and Classen 1985, 16. Cf. too *Cod. Car.* 82–3, JE 2461 and 2463, pp. 615–16, of which the first at least appears to have been written shortly after the events of 22 January that it describes.

12 JE 2549 (5 December 817; to Bernard, archbishop of Vienne); JE 2644 (after 8 December 853; to Lothar I); JE 2772 (11 December 864; to Ado of Vienne); JE 2945 (26 December 871; to the bishops of west Francia). Another winter letter seems to be



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December 808, and we know of a Frankish envoy who, in January, headed north from Salerno toward Charlemagne's court.[13] In 877, John VIII's envoys to Charles the Bald left for France bearing letters dated February 10 and 13, along with palms for Palm Sunday.[14] March too has left a few letters of which one at least arrived in the north in late May.[15]

But it was more than just intrepid messengers. Larger groups followed suit when dire circumstance dictated. At a moment of extreme crisis, Pope Stephen II and his entourage traveled from Pavia to Ponthion in late November and December. Between November 823 and the following February, a papal legation traveled back to Rome from Compiègne. And this was a particularly harsh winter.[16] Notwithstanding what must have been a logistical nightmare, Frankish troops traversed the Alps on numerous occasions.[17] Thus Charlemagne himself swept south in the winter of 786, reaching Florence by Christmas.[18]

Footnote 12 (*cont.*)
that of Anastasius Bibliothecarius to Ado of Vienne, surely dispatched after Hadrian II's accession (14 December 867) and received in time for Ado to send the letter requested by Anastasius and elicit a response from Hadrian on 8 May 868: cf. Anastasius, *Ep.* 3, 400–1; JE 2907, 714–15.

13 JE 2517, *MGH Epist.* 5.92.33; *Cod. Car.*, 82, 616.10–14.

14 *Reg.*, 31–3, JE 3077–9, pp. 29–33; cf. *Ann. Bert.*, s.a., p. 212. The urgency in these letters lay in John VIII's request for military support. Other papal documents for Frankish recipients and dated February include JE 2894 (2 February 868), JE 2895 and 2898 (12 February 868), and JE 2902 and 2904 (23–5 February 868).

15 JE 2905–6, dated 8 March 868, addressed to Hincmar of Rheims and Herard of Tours, which were carried north by Actard, bishop of Nantes, who arrived at Servais shortly after the second Rogation Day (25 May 868): *Ann. Bert.* s.a., pp. 143–4. John VIII wrote JE 3340 to Louis and Carloman on 4 March 881, *Reg.*, 268, pp. 236–7. Stephen II appears to have sent *Cod. Car.*, 11, JE 2335, to Pippin in March or April 757: 504.21–3 and 506.4–7. This letter was carried north by Fulrad of St. Denis, George, bishop (of Ostia?), and John sacellarius, who participated in Pippin's assembly at Compiègne. Gorze's foundation act implies that the assembly was taking place on 23 May: cf. BM 84a–85a. A third papal letter appears to have been sent off shortly after 25 March 808, and certainly before 16 April 808: JE 2515, *MGH Epist.* 5.87.30–88.11. Note too that Counts Helmgaud and Hunfrid, Charlemagne's envoys to Leo III, had arrived at Rome a few days before 25 March ("post modicos <dies>," *ibid.*, 87.30), indicating a departure from Aachen no later than c. 24 February.

16 *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.446.17–447.18; *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 823, p. 162, arriving back at Rome a few days before the pope's death on 11 February 824 (*Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 3.121). On the harsh winter, *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 824, p. 164.

17 Tyler 1930, 40–6, discusses difficulties medieval armies faced when crossing the Alps. Zielinski 1991, 40, emphasizes that troop movements across the Alps in winter were more common in the Carolingian period than is imagined.

18 BM 279a–281. To crush the Lombards, Charlemagne also crossed the Alps sometime after Christmas 775, when he was at Sélestat, and before 14 April 776, when he had already conquered Treviso: BM 198a–200e; he took an army with him to Italy again in the winter of 786–7: BM



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October and November were surprisingly well traveled.[19] Certainly travelers arrived in Rome from the north outside the fine months of summer, particularly in autumn.[20] Lupus of Ferrières, for example, planned to reach Italy at the very end of summer, at the earliest.[21] John VIII ascended the Mont Cénis pass in late November 878, arriving at Turin on the twenty-fourth.[22] Why was the autumn so favored? After all, unexpected delays then could lead to winter travel or worse.

The answer is fear. Awareness of diseases connected with warm weather encouraged northern travelers to plan Italian travel for cooler seasons. The archbishop of Rheims, for instance, seems to have considered June a bad time to leave for Italy.[23] His reason emerges when he describes Lothar II's fatal fever and the illness that decimated the royal retinue in August, during the trip from Rome to Lucca.[24] Pope Hadrian I was well aware of Frankish fears of "fever."[25]

The papal correspondence and the movements of kings and armies converge: while it was certainly preferable to make the great journey across the Alps in good

279a. Arnulf crossed the Alps in January 894: BM 1892b–1893.

19 October: JE 2251 (29 October 739; to St. Boniface); JE 2274–5; and probably Gemmulus' letter of 31 October 745 (*apud* Boniface, *Epistolae*, 62, pp. 127–8); JE 2415 (27 October 775), containing urgent and sensitive news was sent to Charlemagne that very day: *Cod. Car.*, 54, 576.26–31; JE 2879 and prob. 2882 (23 and 24 October 867, to Hincmar and Charles the Bald; which arrived on 13 December: *Ann. Bert.*, a. 867, p. 140); JE 2883–6 (31 October 867), to Louis the German and his bishops); JE 3054 and, presumably, JE 3056 (28 and 31 October 876), to the church of Bourges and Charles the Bald. It is striking that all these letters are dated in the last week of October. November: JE 2174 (22 November 726; to Boniface); JE 2271 (5 November 744; to Boniface); JE 2291–3 (4 November 751; to Boniface); JE 2416 (775; to Charlemagne: Hadrian insists that he has been expecting throughout September, October, and November the envoys he requested that Charlemagne send in the autumn, clearly indicating the normalcy of travel from the court south in those months: *Cod. Car.*, 55, 578.15–26); JE 2526 (11 November 813; to Charlemagne); JE 2527 (25 November 813; to Charlemagne with urgent news of a usurpation attempt against Leo V); JE 2698–704 (23–4 November 862; accompany bishops Radoald and John to Francia); JE 3061–6 (14–16 November 876; to Charles the Bald, etc.); JE 3114–15 (877; to Carloman and Theotmar of Salzburg).

20 Thus Willibald (Ch. 5.1). An annotation in a calendar in Vatican, B. Apost., Pal. lat. 1448, f. 69$^{r}$, suggests that an individual or group associated with Louis the Pious' court and Lorsch reached Rome on a 24 November in the earlier 9th C. (cf. Bischoff 1974, 116). In March 808, Charlemagne's envoys arrived at Rome after having passed through the court of King Pippin: Leo III, JE 2515, *MGH Epist.* 5.87–8. They necessarily left the northern court in February or earlier.

21 *Ep.* 67 (76; A.D. 849), 72.20–1.

22 John VIII, *Reg.*, 147, JE 3202, 125.16–17.

23 "Tempore inconvenienti," says he, about Lothar II's trip to Italy: *Ann. Bert.*, a. 869, p. 153.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 156.

25 To which he alludes when referring to plans to attack Benevento in the spring of 778: *Cod. Car.*, 80, JE 2460, 613.5–17. On the seasonal spike in late antique mortality due to malaria and the intestinal diseases which peaked in the Italian hot weather, see Ch. 1.3.



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weather, urgent messages as well as emergency troop deployments could and did move between the two regions in winter. Not a few northern travelers consciously avoided the fine weather of summer. The sheer number of these kinds of movements, in bad weather and good, reinforce powerfully the evidence of improving routes and facilities linking northern Europe to Mediterranean Italy (Ch. 13.1).

## 2. The seasons of the sea

Afloat, the state of the weather is far more critical. Specialists in ancient travel have laid heavy emphasis on the seasonality of sea travel. Byzantinists have sometimes elevated it into an analytical tool for dating papal and patriarchal correspondence.[26] Indeed, this aspect of seasonality in communications seems so obvious that it has escaped closer scrutiny. For ancient Mediterranean travelers, it is believed that winter weather generally halted blue-water sailing from November 10 to March 10; conditions after 14 September and before 27 May were regarded as risky.[27] This "closed sea" (*mare clausum*) pattern seems to have held into the early Middle Ages and beyond. In the numerous documents of Jewish traders from the Cairo Genizah, there appears not a single reference to ships "setting sail for the high seas" from November through March.[28]

Anecdotal evidence confirms that winter closure of the seas was familiar to Franks, Italians, and Byzantines. Every year during the naval siege of Constantinople from 674 to 678, warfare ceased from October to April even though the Arab fleet was established close by in the Sea of Marmara (R31). In 800, envoys from the Holy Land reached Charlemagne at Rome; they stayed there until April 801, when the Frankish ruler dismissed them and they presumably found a ship for home (R248; R253). In 807, Charlemagne sent envoys of the caliph and of the patriarch of Jerusalem to Italy; there they would await "the sailing season" for the trip home. Around 885, Pope Stephen V requested Basil I to station a Byzantine warship (*chelandion*) off the papal coast from April to September. Clearly, he expected that Arab pirates would remain inactive outside these months.[29] On the first day of December, Pope John VIII rather testily observed that no one was

26 To cite only three examples: egregious and explicit use of the winter hiatus: Dvornik 1948, 20 with n2 ("Traffic between the two cities [of Rome and Constantinople] being suspended from October till March . . .") or 171, rightly criticized by Raasted 1981, 131n23; implicit use by Dölger e.g., nos. 273 and 533, both dated "summer" without evidence; so too, e.g., Grumel² no. 467; cf. here R535.

27 Rougé 1952 and 1966, 32–3; Casson 1995, 270–3, and above, Ch. 4.3.

28 Claude 1985b, 31–4; Pryor 1992, 87–8; quote from Goitein 1967–93, 1: 316–17.

29 "Tempus navigationis," *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 806, p. 124; JE 3403, *MGH Epist.* 7.374.29–31 requesting a *chelandion*.



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sailing from Venice to Constantinople before the meeting he was trying to arrange for February: "neither your custom of sending to Constantinople nor the season escapes us."[30] These dates in themselves, however, hint at a shorter winter interruption than the most prudent classical precept.

Sea closing has important implications for the seasonal quality of movements in the early medieval Mediterranean. As in late antiquity, communications which traveled predominantly by sea ebbed and flowed with the seasons, and this fluctuation may have further varied within and among the many smaller seas of which the Mediterranean was composed. As in antiquity, however, sea closure was not an absolute rule.[31] Exceptions to the ending of travel in the winter need to be understood for the light they throw on the urgency of certain communications, and on more profound shifts in the infrastructure of communications between eastern and western Christendom. Besides, there is more to the problem of the seasonality of travel than winter closing. The fundamental climatic phenomena which shaped and to some extent continue to shape navigation in the Mediterranean mean that even within the window of fair weather, prevailing winds vary substantially and typically with the season. For instance, in the bay of Haifa, the prevalence of easterly winds needed to propel a sailing ship westward exceed 4 percent of all winds only from March (24 percent) through May (15 percent) and in October (11 percent), suggesting that experienced mariners may have favored these months for departures for the west from this part of the Levant.[32] Such meteorological conditions imply that rhythms of travel would not have been consistent even in the fair weather.

30 Writing to Ursus, the doge of Venice, John first supposed on 24 November 876 (JE 3067) that if Bishop Peter of Jesolo had not yet left on his proposed embassy to Constantinople "and is not expected to leave before February" ("si nondum abiit, nec abire cis Febrarium mensem speratur"), he could attend a synod at Rome in February 877: *Registrum*, 20, 19.17–20. This seems to leave open the possibility of a November sailing – or an alternative means of reaching Constantinople – (ch. 19). A week later he insisted that a Roman synod on 1 February was no impediment to Peter's embassy since "Constantinopolim mittendi nec mos vester latet, nec tempus," (JE 3069) *ibid.*, 18, 16.22–24: no one would be sailing – the Venetian custom alluded to – for Constantinople between December and sometime in February.

31 Rougé 1952, 321–4; and esp. Meijer 1983.

32 This example comes from the work of John H. Pryor who has exemplified the application of modern navigational data to the written evidence of the Middle Ages, and so deepened considerably our understanding of medieval shipping. It implies – and detailed analyses seem to reinforce – substantial continuity in climatic phenomena in the Mediterranean since at least the 5th C.: e.g. Pryor 1989, 275. How this can be reconciled with growing evidence of historic change in the climate of the northern hemisphere remains to be seen. For the case in point see Pryor 1992, 1–3, on the sharp nautical observations of 12th-C. traveler Ibn Jubayr and the data supplied by the Israel Meteorological Services on Haifa Bay.



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TABLE 15.1
Monthly rhythms of Mediterranean communications, c. 650–970: departures and arrivals

| Month | Monthly total | Departures | Arrivals | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| January | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| February | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| March | 9 | 6 | 3 | 6 |
| April | 18 | 10 | 8 | 12 |
| May | 11 | 5 | 6 | 8 |
| June | 16 | 6 | 10 | 11 |
| July | 14 | 8 | 6 | 10 |
| August | 21 | 13 | 8 | 14 |
| September | 14 | 6 | 8 | 10 |
| October | 15 | 6 | 9 | 10 |
| November | 8 | 3 | 5 | 6 |
| December | 12 | 6 | 6 | 8 |
| Total | 145 | 72 | 73 | 100 |

## *The monthly patterns of movements*

To date, most research has focused on general statements of practice about sailing made by the ancients and medievals themselves, and on the kind of anecdotal evidence we have just seen. This has yielded results which do not become less interesting if they are tested against the actual practice of travel. Our research has uncovered 145 arrivals and departures in the Mediterranean dated to the month between the seventh and tenth centuries (Table 15.1).[33] Most of the dates are arrivals or departures, so it would be fair to say that they reflect most directly the seasons of activity at ports, and, somewhat indirectly, navigational activity. Most are substantial movements of more, often considerably more, than 100 kilometers. A few movements are known from precisely and explicitly dated statements of texts. Others are furnished by the dates of imperial letters which were conveyed by ambassadors. These will usually have traveled within a week or two of the date of their delivery.[34] Still others can be deduced from the movements of

33 This table excludes movements which occurred almost entirely overland, as well as arrivals and departures north of the Alps. It excludes moreover all of the conjectural dates advanced by Dölger and Grumel in their registers. The research from 700 to 900 has aimed at exhaustiveness; the data from the 7th and the 10th C. does not. Movements are catalogued in Appendix 4.

34 E.g., Liudprand of Cremona received an imperial chrysobull from Nicephorus II on Thursday, 17 September and, despite imperial impediments to the logistics of his departure (the government refused to



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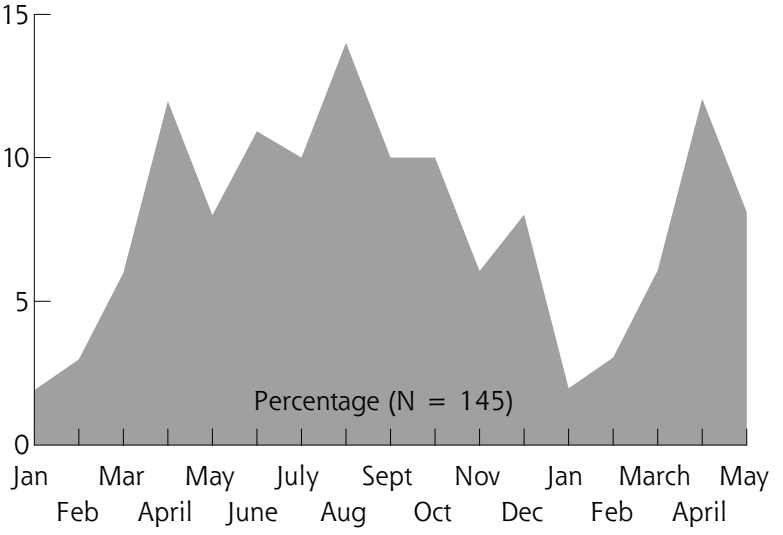
Chart 15.1. Monthly rhythms of communications, late seventh–late tenth centuries




This graph shows the changing monthly rhythms of 145 arrivals and departures in the Mediterranean basin from the late seventh to the late tenth century. April and August were the most active months, January and February the least active. Although a few probable or certain land legs of longer sea trips slightly overstate the percentages of October, November, and December for sea travel, the graph also includes ships that certainly landed or departed in these months (see pp. 458–67 for details).

travelers.[35] Finally, most of these data are new. It is impossible to know how many such movements actually occurred in the period, although there can no doubt that our sample is relatively small.[36] Even so, Table 15.1 marks a first step beyond mere impression. Chart 15.1 makes clear that early medieval practice followed ancient precept in a general way, even as it introduces a new element of complexity.

furnish pack horses for the land leg) he left Constantinople on Friday, 2 October 968: *Legatio*, 56–8, 206.8–207.17. The sheaf of letters sent to Constantinople in spring 878 offer an exception that proves the rule. The earliest document is dated 26 February 878 (JE 3118); the latest group (JE 3130–5) is dated to 16 April. Shortly after the earlier letters were written, Lambert of Spoleto invaded Rome and besieged St. Peter's for thirty days, manifestly disrupting the dispatch of this embassy as well as other business: John VIII, *Reg.*, 107, JE 3142, 99.26–35.

35 See e.g. the departure of Amalarius from Constantinople or the travels of Basilius 4, Pros.

36 While Liudprand was looking to leave Constantinople in the summer of 968 he was apparently keeping track of ship movements involving Italy; he mentions one Venetian merchant mariner in June, a major military movement in July and the arrival by sea of papal envoys in August, suggesting a minimum of a ship movement a month in the good weather between Constantinople and Italy at this date: *Legatio*, 14, 183.30–1; 31, 191.30–2; 47, 200.20–33.



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Arrivals and departures clustered in the good weather months. 81 percent of movements got underway or concluded in the 66 percent of the year between March and October, inclusive. But this tabulation of actual arrivals and departures does more than deepen the testimony of precept. It reveals rhythms which have escaped detection until now; it also suggests some differences with antiquity.

First of all, communications did not continue evenly throughout the good weather. On the contrary, April and August form unmistakable twin peaks in arrivals and departures of Mediterranean travelers. If these data reveal the monthly pulse of movement, August was the busiest time in the ports, followed closely by April. From the perspective of the "valleys," May looks like the slowest month for ports, once travel had begun again. Was this because so many ships and travelers were already under way? Furthermore, to judge from our sample, the second half of the year witnessed more activity than the first. This remains true, even when one corrects for the larger number of sailing days classical precept allotted to the second semester.[37] And what about the smaller but still substantial number of movements in the period of the closed sea? Let us begin on the margins.

## *Two marginal months: April and October*

April and October are surprises in more than one way. In late antiquity, Vegetius had considered April, May, and October risky months, especially for military movements.[38] But the late Roman state itself defined the sailing season of the African grain fleet expansively, in the interest of feeding the capital and army. It ran from 13 April to 15 October (Chapter 4, n62). In the early Middle Ages, the appraisal of risk appears more in line with the African sailing season. A papal pronouncement of the late ninth century suggests that the Venetians were sailing to Constantinople as early as March.[39] The new evidence of travelers' movements

37 Sixty-one arrivals or departures can be assigned to January through June, and eighty-four to the rest of the year (Table 15.1). This disproportion holds if one adds movements which can be assigned only to a semester to movements which can be dated to the month. Most importantly, an imbalance still occurs when one reckons the average departure per sailing day in the two periods: the 112 sailing days in the first semester (10 March–30 June) yield 0.54 movements per day, while the second semester's 133 sailing days (1 July–10 November) yield an average of 0.63 movements per day.

38 "Uncertain" (*incerta*, with a nuance of risk) 10 March to 27 May, and 14 September to 11 November: Vegetius, *Epitoma rei militaris*, 4, 39, 1–7, 246.711–248.729. Still, the prudent Vegetius had recognized that merchants might brave the risks of the sea well before the 15 May that he recommended for the start of military operations. Between the "natalis navigationis" (i.e. the *ploiaphesia* of 5 March, I presume) and 15 May: *Epitoma*, 4, 39, 8–10, 248.732–9.

39 Above, n30.



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proves that the spring months of March and April alone account for almost a fifth (18 percent) of the movements that we can assign to a particular month. October, similarly, was as active as September. The marginal months require a closer look.

April and October were clearly significant months for sailing. In fact, in the early – April – weeks of the sailing season, arrivals roughly equal departures, suggesting that while some ships were getting under way, others had started out earlier still. Toward the end of the season, in October, arrivals are half again as numerous as departures, clearly implying, on the other hand, that shipping was winding down. Closer scrutiny of the movements recorded in these months shows that, while some of the datings are not unassailable, enough are certain to justify the conclusion that April was a significant shipping month, and that a fair number of the movements are unmistakably long-distance ones. Let us put our cards on the table, as it were (Table 15.2).

One might quibble with some interpretive decisions.[40] But there is no way to dismiss the direct and explicit evidence of half of them (nos. 5, 9–11, 14–18) which claim arrivals or departures on or about the dates indicated. Except for Willibald's trip from Gaeta to Naples, most are substantial voyages, involving, according to the hypothesis of the shortest possible sea travel, a trip of 76 NM (140 km) across the open sea in the strait of Otranto (no. 6; see below). The early medieval Mediterranean was alive in the month of April.

October looks remarkably similar. If anything, the data for this month are even more secure. Again, one could quibble with some interpretations.[41] In seven

40 Perhaps I have underestimated the time it took Willibald to reach Naples (nos. 1–3) and the arrival and departure of the Egyptian ship occurred a week or so later. Nonetheless, Gaeta was only four to six days' *walk* from Rome; from Gaeta to Naples was a quick sail of some 50 NM. See Pros. for the chronology of Willibald's movements. And when did the Egyptian ship shove off from its home port? Opinions also might differ about: the exact date on which the Arab ambassadors reached Marseilles in 768 being unknown (no. 4); the genuineness of the diploma of 870 (no. 8); the assumption that Peter did not travel overland through hostile territory in spring 779 (no. 13; or perhaps the letter is to be dated a year later; he then would have reached Rome in March).

41 The Spanish ambassadors, for instance, could have arrived before their audience on 24 October, since some envoys cooled their heels at Constantinople. But the emperor had solicited their visit and was eager for an alliance, and an eyewitness seems to suggest they were freshly arrived. Cf. the treatment accorded the papal envoys in 869, who also had come at Byzantine initiative: other obligations kept the emperor from receiving them the day after their arrival; they apparently were granted an audience immediately thereafter: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.189.20–9; R594. Other potential differences of opinion: Liudprand did not board a ship in October; he did, however, board ships en route home in December and January. We do not know for sure the date on which a dying Pope Constantine disembarked from his ship at Gaeta, although Gaeta was less than a week's *walk* from Rome: see n40.



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TABLE 15.2
Sailing movements dated to April (cf. Table 15.1)

| Date | Movement(s) | Location | Place of origin or destination | R no. | Item no. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 723 | Willibald takes a ship | Gaeta | to Naples | 108 | 1 |
| c. last week in April 723 | ship had arrived before; then it departed for Calabria, etc. | Naples | from Egypt; to Calabria, Sicily and points east | 109 | 2–3 |
| after 10 April 768 | Pippin III's audience of Arab envoys around Easter; then they went to | Marseilles | to Damascus | 175 | 4 |
| 774 | Adalgis fled from | Salerno | to Constantinople | 183 | 5 |
| 879 | ambassador had already arrived at this date | Bari or Otranto | from Constantinople | 660 | 6 |
| 927 | Romanus I's privilege | Constantinople | to San Vincenzo | 805 | 7 |
| 3 April 870 | Louis II's envoys reached | Venosa | from Constantinople | 602 | 8 |
| c. 6 April 727 | Willibald arrives | Constantinople | from Tyre | 117 | 9 |
| 7 April 809 | Arab raid | Corsica | from Spain | 290 | 10 |
| 7–21 April 866 | Byzantine fleet departs | Constantinople | for Crete | 554a | 11 |
| 10 April 824 | date of imperial letter | Constantinople | to Frankish court | 383 | 12 |
| c. 11 April 779 | envoy Peter arrives | Rome | from Naples | 191 | 13 |
| c. 13 April 814 | Amalarius leaves | Constantinople | for Frankish court | 330 | 14 |
| c. 15 April 781 | Theophilus leaves | Constantinople | for Sicily | 196 | 15 |
| c. 16 April 724 | shortly before Easter Willibald reached | Paphos | from the coast of Asia Minor | 111 | 16 |
| 18 April 727 | rebel fleet had arrived at | Constantinople | from the Aegean | 120 | 17 |
| 16–28 April 878 | John VIII's letters | Rome | to Bulgaria via Constantinople; to Constantinople | 650 | 18 |

cases, the October date is explicitly given in connection with arrivals and departures, and it is unmistakable in most of the others.

So the early medieval evidence is strong for early and late season sailings in April and October, when antiquity had counseled against it because of the risky weather. What is more, the arrivals and departures are not confined to the last weeks of April, or the first ones of October: travelers set out and arrived from beginning to end of both months, as Tables 15.2 and 15.3 show. Of course, in all



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TABLE 15.3
Mediterranean movements occurring in October

| Date | Movement(s) | Location | Place of origin or destination | R no. | Item no. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 681/7 | Arculf arrives | Alexandria | Jaffa | 42 | 1 |
| 801 | convoy with elephant lands | Porto Venere | from Africa | 256 | 2 |
| 829 | Arab fleet meets and defeats Byzantines | Thasos | presumably from Crete | 411 | 3 |
| 829 | Byzantine fleet meets Arabs | Thasos | from Constantinople? | 411 | 4 |
| 888 | Arabs defeat Byzantine fleet at | Milazzo | from Constantinople | 720 | 5 |
| c. October 888 | Elias 1 flees impending Arab attack | to Patras | from Reggio | 719 | 6 |
| c. October 888 | Elias returns as soon as Arabs leave | Reggio | from Patras | 719 | 7 |
| 911 | Himerius and Byzantine fleet attack | Crete | from Cyprus | 778 | 8 |
| 2 October 968 | Liudprand leaves | Constantinople | for Italy | 828 | 9 |
| 5 October 709 | Pope Constantine leaves | Rome | for Constantinople | 73 | 10 |
| shortly after 5 October 709 | Rizokopos leaves Naples | for Rome and Ravenna | from ?Sicily and/or ?Constantinople | 74 | 11 |
| 12 October 711 | large Byzantine fleet sets out | from Cherson | for Constantinople | 78 | 12 |
| 24 October 711 | Pope Constantine | reaches Rome | from Constantinople, after landing at Gaeta | 79 | 13 |
| 24 October 949 | ambassadors' audience | at Constantinople | from Cordova | 818 | 14 |
| 26 October 785 | date of Hadrian I's letter | Rome | to Constantinople | 208 | 15 |

periods, when its supreme interests were at stake, servants of the state did sail. That might account for one or another voyage (e.g. Table 15.2, no. 6). But, however eager Charlemagne was to see his elephant, transporting the beast across the Mediterranean was scarcely such a case (Table 15.3, no. 2); nor was Elias' return to Reggio after the Arab raid, nor Arculf's trip to Alexandria (Table 15.3, nos. 7 and 1, respectively). Nor can one argue that these are all very short hops. For October movements, the shortest sea stretch implied by these movements is the strait of Otranto; the rest are longer, usually much longer. Indeed, in



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one instance (no. 14) the voyage ran from the Atlantic Ocean to the Bosporus. So how do we explain this trend?

Technology may have had a hand in it. Climate too. The lateen sail was now at home in the Mediterranean (see above, p. 408) and gave ships superior sailing abilities against the wind. Compared with ancient ships, the new rig therefore made sailing easier in periods of unstable weather. It is precisely shifting winds that tend to mark the end of the Mediterranean summer. Although the debate is only in its early stages, it is, moreover, beginning to seem that the early medieval climate was different. Notwithstanding the apparent sameness of some ancient and modern winds and the accuracy of modern navigational aids in describing early medieval conditions in certain times and places, it is still too early to rule out some differences at the margins.[42] But even more important, probably, were characteristics we have already noted (Ch. 13.3) and which will find further support in the analysis of routes. Early medieval ships were small; they easily put into the mouths of minor creeks, tiny coves, or even more or less sheltered beaches. Joined with the tendency for early medieval sailors to stick to regional waters, and therefore to know every nook and cranny of the local shoreline, this made it much less risky to sail in the changeable weather of spring and fall for most of these travelers. When, thanks to long experience of familiar cloud or wave formations, the sensation of atmospheric pressure, or the behavior of sea birds, local sailors felt trouble approaching, they usually were but a long stone's throw from the safety of dry and familiar land, aboard ships that could beach almost anywhere along a coast they would have known like the palm of their hand. Paradoxically, precisely the most decried aspects of early medieval navigation, its small ships and local leanings, best explain its advance with respect to ancient sailing, at least as far as lengthening the sailing season is concerned.

## *Winter*

The winter months raise a final issue. About them Chart 15.1 suggests several observations: the first is, as one would expect, that activity decreased during the traditional closing of the sea, from November to March. The second is that activity nonetheless was taking place: almost a fifth of all movements occurred during the winter months. The third observation is more interesting still: the winter months present a two-tier level of activity: the nadir, in January and February, and the low but active levels of November, December, and March.

42 One might imagine with respect to antiquity, e.g. more stable weather for somewhat longer or different periods in some parts of the inland sea. See nonetheless for the applicability of modern navigational data, above, n32, and below on the strait of Otranto.



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The first reaction is to scrutinize the data more closely for special features which might explain the surprising levels of activity. Some part of the proportion of our early medieval travel in marginal seasons reflects in fact the very anomalous character of such travel: observers tend to mention the unusual rather than the routine, and the overall pattern of arrivals and departures has shown clearly that winter movements were unusual (Chart 15.1). Several December movements reflect special circumstances also: they come from the rich series of miracles associated with St. Nicholas, which naturally tend to cluster around the saint's feast day (6 December).

By classical precept, the sea closing, however reckoned, always included the months from November to March. This was when sailing was extremely dangerous, both because of storms – in medieval as in ancient and modern Greek the word for winter (*cheimōn*, etc.) means also "storm" – and because of the quieter, but deadly danger of poor visibility: short days, long nights, thick clouds, and fog, not to mention rain and snow storms, all added to the risk of winter sailing.[43]

Again, one could quibble with one or another of these datings, but that would not affect the larger picture. Two of these movements occurred after a major shift in the infrastructure of communications to which we shall return. It suffices to note here that they probably do not reflect sea travel, at least in the initial legs (Table 15.4, nos. 3 and 13; see Chapter 19), and so do not concern the sea closing. Another three (nos. 4–6) cluster right around 11 November, the classical date for the closing of the sea. What is more, they took place in the same year, so here we might be seeing only exceptionally fine weather. The significance of the papal envoys' arrival just before Christmas (no. 15) is uncertain, since they were just then returning from captivity among the Croatians. They presumably crossed the Adriatic by ship, but it is conceivable that they traveled some more roundabout way. One trip (no. 22) may have covered only a few miles along the southern shore of Constantinople: for that kind of short hop, one needed only to await a break in the winter weather. However, Demetrius' pilgrimage from Constantinople to Athyras was an annual custom he kept for St. Nicholas' feast: there is no hint that the fact that he traveled by sea that year was exceptional. The ship sailed well into the night, covering a distance of some 27 NM, and it provides a first clue of what was happening in other cases.

Three winter movements certainly involved more substantial, and dangerous voyages. All nevertheless fit the ancient pattern for winter sailing: something which was very risky, but not impossible if the stakes were high enough. This describes the arrival of news of Constantine V's death (no. 23), for transitions of

43 For the word, e.g. *Sea Law* 3, 43, 36.1; for, e.g. *acheimastos*, "storm free": *V. Nicetae patricii* (BHG 1342b), 30, p. 347. Visibility, particularly, and storms, e.g. Vegetius, *Epitoma*, 4, 39, 7, 248.729–32; Pryor 1992, 87.



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TABLE 15.4
Movements occurring in the period of the "closed sea" (cf. Table 15.1)

| Date | Movement(s) | Location | Place of origin or destination | R no. | Item no. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| November 839 | Byzantine envoy reaches | Cordova | from Constantinople | 445 | 1 |
| November 901 | Byzantine naval raid | Syrian coast | from the Byzantine empire | 748 | 2 |
| 10 November 871 | Letter of Hadrian II | to Constantinople | from Rome | 614 | 3 |
| c. 11 November 813 | Arab raid | Reggio | from Spain or Africa? | 325 | 4 |
| 11 November 813 | papal envoy returns | to Rome | from Sicily | 325 | 5 |
| after 11 November 813 | papal ship brings news from Constantinople | to Rome | from Byzantine Italy or further afield | 326 | 6 |
| 20 November 968 | Liudprand boards ship | from Naupaktos | to Offidaris (mod. Euenos) river | 828 | 7 |
| 30 November 726 | Willibald boards ship | from Tyre | to Constantinople | 117 | 8 |
| 2 December 968 | Liudprand sails | from Offidaris | to Leukada | 828 | 9 |
| 3 December 819/890 | Arab raid | on Sicily | from Africa | 361a | 10 |
| 5 December 824/900 | Arab raid | on Myra | from Crete | 386a | 11 |
| 5 December 850/900 | Demetrius pilgrim | from Constantinople | to Athyras | 386b | 12 |
| 11 December 867 | Basil I writes | from Constantinople | to Rome | 573 | 13 |
| 14 December 968 | Liudprand sails | from Leukada | to Kerkyra | 828 | 14 |
| 22 December 870 | papal envoys finally reach | Rome | from Constantinople via captivity in Croatia | 606 | 15 |
| 23 December 800 | Zachary reaches | Rome | from Jerusalem | 248 | 16 |
| 7 January 969 | Liudprand sails | from Corfu | for southern Italy | 828 | 17 |
| c. 20 January 788 | Byzantine officials land | at Agropoli | from Sicily and ?Constantinople | 217 | 18 |
| c. 20 January 788 | Byzantine officials send news | from Naples | to Constantinople | 218 | 19 |
| February 781 | Elpidius sent | from Constantinople | to Sicily | 195 | 20 |
| February 911 | Leo VI's privilege at | Constantinople | for Monte Cassino | 776 | 21 |
| 7 February 868 | Basil I sent a grain ship | from ?Constantinople | to Stoudiou, at Constantinople | 582 | 22 |
| c. 7 February 776 | news reaches | Rome | from Constantinople, via Naples | 185 | 23 |



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power in Constantinople were always dangerous, fraught with the potential for civil war and usurpation. The January arrival of envoys from Sicily and, probably, Constantinople is equally impressive, as is dispatch of news to Constantinople from Naples (nos. 18–19). But these too were matters of utmost gravity for the state. The arriving envoys were charged with laying the groundwork for Byzantium's impending invasion of Italy. The news they sent in the other direction was no less momentous: the critical local ally had died, throwing the whole plan into jeopardy, just as war with the Franks was about to break out.

Even with these trips factored out or explained in traditional terms, there remain the other, indubitable voyages that occurred during the season when the seas had theoretically closed, and which no supreme political interest explains. So far as we can tell, Willibald had never been in a hurry to get anywhere, yet he found a ship which sailed all winter long, from Tyre to Constantinople. Zachary's remarkable trip home from Jerusalem was doubtless a matter of some prestige for the king, but it is hard to conceive that it was a matter of life or death. Besides, both of these travelers had to content themselves with the means of transport available to them, which means that some shippers were sailing outside the traditional parameters. Liudprand was traveling with the help, or rather the hindrance, of the Byzantine state. He had unpleasant news, but the fate of Ottonian power probably was not riding with him. The Arab raiders may have been fortified by religious zeal in the course of their attacks, but the details of what they did on them shows that they were mostly slave-gathering enterprises. They aimed at profit, not suicide. In sum, some early medieval ships plied the Mediterranean over lengthy courses even in the dangerous weather of winter for purposes which fell short of life or death.

These communications prove that, unless our understanding of late antique shipping patterns requires substantial revision, early medieval sailors were more likely than their ancient forebears to brave the wintry sea. Two Byzantine navigational treatises from the end of our period confirm that the ship movements that we have observed in November, early December, and February were a real part of early medieval practice. These treatises warn of the most dangerous times for storm. In keeping with contemporary cosmology, they ascribe storms to the rising of particular stars or constellations.[44] The list of dangerous days is long.

One treatise is ascribed to the wisdom of the Mardaites. These Byzantine seadogs had fled the mountains of Lebanon to the coast of Pamphylia, where they bore the brunt of the early naval war against the triumphant Muslims, under the commander of the naval province of the Kibyrrhaiōtai. Between 25 March and 14 November, this treatise lists many dangerous days and weeks when one could

44 The "Mardaite" and the Anonymous Prōtospatharios have been dated to the second half of the 9th or the first half of the 10th C.; on their date and characteristics: Dagron 1990, 150–6.



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expect storms, as well as particularly serene weather. For this author, almost any time at sea was dangerous. But only from 14 November to 15 February did "no *chelandion* or galley sail."[45] Early November was in fact a good time for sailing.[46] In other words, this author's conception of sea-closing ran considerably shorter than the ancient one. The second treatise is ascribed to an anonymous Prōtospatharios and military governor of the Kibyrrhaiōtai. It describes many of the same dangerous stars and their storms. It too signals 15 November and the setting of the Pleiades as the beginning of very stormy weather.[47] But the "Prōtospatharios" limits this most dangerous period to forty-nine days: it ended on 6 January. And he declares that sailors sail from that day until 20 March, since the sea in that period is neither prone to much storm nor perfect tranquillity.[48] He then catalogues the successive phases of the sailing season from 25 March in a way that recalls the Mardaite wisdom.[49]

By their ascriptions and some of the details they provide on the Arabs, these treatises are redolent of the seafaring world of southern Asia Minor in the ninth or tenth century. The navigational conditions which obtained there perhaps do not automatically apply to the rest of the Mediterranean. They nonetheless supply a context which confirms what our other evidence suggests: the period in which the sea was reckoned to be closed for all but emergency sailings in the early Middle Ages was shorter than that which appears to have obtained in antiquity. Sailing came almost or completely to a standstill in December according to both eras. They differ on how soon thereafter it might resume, but it is clear that even though one could sail in January, the conditions were reckoned at least moderately difficult. All in all, the testimony of actual ship movements and navigational treatises is mutually reinforcing. This is particularly so for the case of Willibald's long haul from Tyre to Constantinople, which began in late November and lasted all winter and into April: his ship was sailing precisely in the home waters from which the two treatises stem.

## *Winter sailing close up*

The best picture of what winter sailing was usually like comes from Liudprand's voyage from central Greece to Italy. Each leg presented specific navigational

45 "Mardaite," *Navigational Treatise*, 171.11–173.14; quote from 173.13–14. These are both of course warships; this leaves open whether the author thought other ships were at sea.

46 *Ibid.*, 173.7–12.

47 Anonymous Prōtospatharios, *On the Stars Observed by Sailors*, 174.1–15.

48 *Ibid.*, 174.20–24; the author even seems to assume that some sailing might occur in the forty-nine days of frequent storms, since he warns that the "star of St. Nicholas," i.e. 6 December, also causes a storm: 174.18–19.

49 *Ibid.*, 174.2–176.3.



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conditions (Map 18.2). Liudprand kept closely to the kind of coastal sailing that seems so characteristic, regardless of the season. From a small port or a river mouth, his ships watched for a break in the weather, then scooted along the coast to the next stop, where they put in and awaited the next good weather.[50] This meant three days' waiting at Naupaktos followed by two days' travel to the river Euenos, and then another week of waiting, due to the bad weather and anger of St. Andrew, whose shrine Liudprand had failed to visit this time around. A break in the December weather let him make the next leg, arriving at the Ionian island of Leukada after a four-day sail. He stalled again in Leukada, this time for eight days. Then it was off to Kerkyra (Corfu), which he reached after another four-day sail. He was stuck on the island for twenty days; he ascribes the delay this time to the sheer evil-mindedness of the local governor. These three hops measured approximately 20 NM each, and about 70 NM each for the next two legs (Table 15.4, nos. 9 and 13). The way Liudprand describes the four-day voyage from the Euenos river to Leukada (no. 9) confirms that his ships sailed mostly when the weather was fine, and waited on shore when it was not. Over those four days, the sea was perfectly calm and the only navigational problem they faced was that of turbulent currents at the mouth of the Acheloos river. This confirms that Liudprand's ship hugged the coast; strong currents at the river mouth are scarcely surprising during the rainy winter season.[51]

But hugging the coast could get you only so far. The most dangerous leg of Liudprand's trip offers insight into extremely specific conditions within yet another of the many small seas which, in Braudel's vision, constitute the greater Mediterranean. It came when the ambassador took another ship across the strait of Otranto (Map 16.1). Presumably the vessel was local and its crew expert in these treacherous waters. Liudprand set sail from Kerkyra, surely for Italy, on 7 January.[52] A very close counterpart to this tenth-century crossing occurred during the winter of 709–10, as Pope Constantine's convoy was struggling eastward toward Constantinople.

General climatic conditions in the summer produce prevailing winds from west to east which make sailing eastward in the Mediterranean much easier than the opposite. Toward the winter, the situation shifts somewhat, especially in the

50 *Legatio*, 58–65, 207.8–212.38. The coastal character of his movements follows from his explicit statement (59, 207.22–5), the lengths he gives, and a detail about turbulence, below.

51 *Legatio*, 66–8, 208.30–210.25; on Leukada, see *TIB* 4: 195.

52 The end of Liudprand's report is lost, but his reference (*Legatio* 58, 207.16–17) to his trip home to Otranto, along with his diatribe on the status of that see and the usual sailing route (see below) show he went there from Kerkyra. Leo *koitōnites* thus is an official in Byzantine Apulia. A possible candidate is Leo, *patrikios kai stratēgos Langobardias*: von Falkenhausen 1978, 85.



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eastern Mediterranean.[53] Liudprand and an earlier papal envoy probably profited from a local variation on this broader winter pattern. The winter weather had prevented the papal retinue from crossing the Ionian Sea eastwards, blocking Pope Constantine's ships at Otranto. Precisely during the delay ("Dum . . . moras faceret"), a papal envoy arrived at Otranto from across the sea, traveling westwards from Constantinople.[54] The fact that the papal ships stalled at Otranto is not surprising, since in this season it would be normal for the prevailing winter wind at the exit of the Adriatic Sea to be a cyclonic sirocco blowing east-south-east to south-south-east, that is, in just the opposite direction from that required by an eighth-century ship to sail southeast across the strait. Conversely it was perfect for the envoy who needed to sail west across the strait, toward Otranto.[55] The papal envoy who made that winter crossing, Liudprand, as well, probably, as the Byzantine envoys who had reached southern Italy by April 879 (Table 15.2, no. 6) all benefited from identical local winter sailing conditions, which ran against the prevailing summer wind patterns.

## *Another factor*

The strait of Otranto is something of a special case. But detailed research will probably reveal others. For instance, specific geographic features characterize the Bosporus, with its narrow channel, and the land- and peninsula-studded waters of the Sea of Marmara and especially the Aegean, where one island so often stands in sight of others and a stone's throw from the mainland. Here too the scope for coastal sailing is great, even in winter. Then as now the very topography of the Byzantine capital invited quick, short boat trips between the city's different neighborhoods, and to the suburbs across the Golden Horn and the Bosporus when good winter weather beckoned: the transport on 2 February of grain by boat to a monastery in the westernmost sector of the capital is a case in point (Table 15.4, no.22). Ship movements, rare and more dangerous, but nonetheless real, even in the winter, were part of the fabric of life in the central sea corridor of the Byzantine empire that ran from the Black Sea and through the Aegean.[56]

53 See Pryor 1992, 15–21.

54 The envoy was bearing an imperial mandate upgrading the logistical level of their transit facilities to that accorded the emperor himself: R75.

55 Simovic *et al.* 1986, 14–15.

56 In addition to the more precisely dated trips summarized in Table 15.4, middle Byzantine sources mention a number of such trips assigned only generally to the "winter." Invoking a saint calmed a terrible lightning storm at sea one winter's night in the 9th C.: *V. Petri Atroae* (*BHG* 2364), 40, p. 155; cf. *V. Petri Atroae retractata* (*BHG* 2365), p. 115. During Lent (i.e. sometime between 2 February and 24 April, the earliest and latest possible days of that liturgical season, depending on the year), a disabled ship was being driven toward shipwreck on the southern shore of the Sea of Marmara when Theophanes' prayers saved it: Methodius, *V. Theoph. Conf.*, 23,



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TABLE 15.5
Sailing movements dated to March (cf. Table 15.1)

| Date | Movement(s) | Location | Place of origin or destination | R no. | Item no. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| March 868 | Byzantine fleet with army reaches | Sicily | from Constantinople | 584 | 1 |
| March 911 | navy squadron sent to reconnoitre | from Attaleia | to the Syrian coast | 775 | 2 |
| 18 March 843 | Byzantine fleet leaves | Constantinople | for Crete | 462 | 3 |
| 18 March 862 | Pope Nicholas I writes | at Rome | to Constantinople | 542 | 4 |
| well before 25 March 773 | papal envoys land | at Marseilles | from Rome | 181 | 5 |
| 25 March 901 | Arab fleet leaves | Palermo | for Messina | 742 | 6 |
| 25 March 919 | Romanus I arrives with a fleet | at Constantinople | from less than a day's sail away[a] | | 7 |
| 29 March 840 | Arab slave raid | at Osor | from Taranto | 449 | 8 |
| c. 1–20 March 797 | under arrest, Theodore Studite sails | from Lampsakos | to Embolos, via Abydos, Lemnos, etc. | 235 | 9 |

*Note:*
[a] Theoph. Cont. 6, 12, 393.18–394.1.

Yet outside the protected waters of the "Sea of Marble" and the Aegean's narrow channels, or those where special conditions might prevail, winter sailing remained dangerously exceptional, and sometimes miraculous. Thus, around 800, when Bishop George of Amastris (mod. Amasra, Turkey) on the Black Sea learned that some merchants of his town faced execution in Trebizond, he braved the winter weather and sailed some 400 NM to deliver them. The sea was miraculously tranquil during the holy man's voyage.[57]

The remaining trips in Table 15.4 uncover another, special circumstance which especially fostered sailing in marginal weather. What this circumstance was becomes clear when we examine the ship movements catalogued for the month of March, when ancient observers also considered the seas very risky.

The only movements which concern normal, peaceable communications were the papal letter and the transport of Theodore Studite and other prisoners from Bithynia to Thessalonica (Table 15.5, nos. 4 and 9). The papal envoys of 773

25.6–15. Another winter we hear of a ship with many passengers aboard, apparently sailing on the Sea of Marmara: *V. Constantini Iudaei* (BHG 370), 54, 643E–644A.

57 R225; on the two ports: *TIB* 9: 161–70; on navigation along the northern shore of Asia Minor, which affords little shelter from weather sweeping across the Black Sea, *TIB* 9: 135–7.



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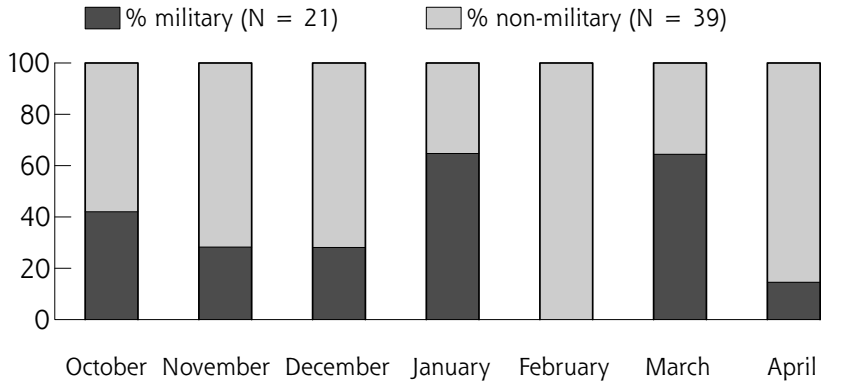
Chart 15.2. Comparison of military with non-military ship movements, October–April




This graph shows the substantial proportion of military operations among the ship arrivals and departures recorded between October and April. Naval activity, as opposed to other types of shipping, peaked in October and March. Reckoning by percentages of each month's activity overstates the significance of the evidence from January and February.

exceptionally took a ship along the Italian coast because the Lombard king was threatening Rome: this was indeed a matter of life or death. All the other ship movements are military. Of the sailings which occur on the fringes of the normal sailing season, a large part are connected with issues of war and peace, and indeed, mostly war. This emerges clearly from Chart 15.2.

We may perhaps attach little importance to the starkly contrasting proportions of January and February, since movements slowed in any case to the point that the value of the tiny number for each month (three) is overstated by the translation into percentages. That exception aside, the chart shows clearly that military movements were a large proportion of all movements during the bad weather months. They were a clear majority in March. When one looks at the more traveled months of October, November, and December, military movements constitute a significant share as well. The reason becomes clear when we recall that the pope solicited Byzantine warships to guard the Italian coast from April to September: he expected no defense of his coast between October and March. Many of these bad season naval operations were raids: hit and run attacks made the tactical element of surprise a fundamental condition for success, and that is what winter sailing allowed.[58]

For instance, the retaliatory mission of John against the church of Rome resulted in the execution of a number of high church officials. One now sees that it

58 For another possible case of a raid in November, see R63.



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was probably *scheduled* for sometime in October 709, when the town might be taken unawares (Table 15.3, no. 11). The tactical element of surprise must surely have played a role in the timing of the major Byzantine raid on Syria: the news reached Baghdad on 27 November 901, implying that it happened slightly earlier in the month (Table 15.4, no. 2). The landing of Byzantine military and political officials at Naples on 20 January 788, which in turn prompted the emergency communication to Constantinople of urgent news, was the prelude to a large-scale Byzantine invasion of Italy (Table 15.4, nos. 18–19). On the other side of Italy an Arab squadron raided Osor and the northern Adriatic, beginning on 29 March (Map 18.1).[59] One early Byzantine attempt to reconquer Crete set out from Constantinople on 18 March. In March 868, the Byzantines tried a major landing in Sicily, launched apparently from Constantinople, which again implies a departure very early in the spring, or even in late winter (and, probably, exploitation once again of the special winter wind conditions in the strait of Otranto). On a regional level, an Arab land and sea operation against Messina set out from Palermo on 25 March 901 (Table 15.5, nos. 3, 1, 6, respectively). From a military perspective, there was often much to be gained from ventures at risky times: thus the internal government report on Himerius' failed invasion of Crete in 910 notes that a squadron was sent to the Syrian coast in March, to scout out enemy military preparations on the eve of the great undertaking. In this instance, the need for timely intelligence is stressed, but one may surely suppose that Arab coastal surveillance was looser in the early spring. In a sense, the element of surprise in these unseasonable military movements confirms the rule of a substantially slackened shipping in the early medieval winter. And they underscore the shift from late antiquity, when sailing ceased longest precisely for military operations.[60]

Early medieval land and sea travelers moved in all seasons. Very local and short coastal movements certainly continued, even in December or January. But longer-distance sea travel in the worst weather months, December and all or part of January, was chiefly confined to the most urgent political or military matters – chiefly, but not exclusively, as Willibald's winter trip from Syria to Constantinople

59 Table 15.5, no. 8. It had followed immediately the defeat of a Venetian squadron which had joined a Byzantine fleet in attacking the Arab stronghold of Taranto, sometime between 22 February and 29 March 840: R450.

60 Why this difference? One possible explanation is the development of more seaworthy warships, exemplified perhaps by the transition from ancient liburnae, still emphasized in Vegetius, to the dromons, on which see the forthcoming study of Jeffreys and Pryor (ch. 13, n60). Another may be that the appearance of permanent enemy fleets around the Mediterranean changed profoundly the nature of naval operations, with respect to late antiquity.



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shows. Sailing in the bad months was not fast, and therefore not very efficient. But it could and did happen more than we are used to thinking. In general, early medieval seamen appear to have set sail more commonly in the higher risk periods of early spring and late fall than is believed to have been the case in antiquity. From an economic perspective, these early spring and late fall sailings are likely to have been more significant than deep winter voyages, which were mainly military. Byzantine navigational practices are better documented than western ones, and they confirm the evidence of actual ship movements, that the period of winter closing was shorter in the early Middle Ages. This might have been made possible in part by technological change (the lateen sail) and perhaps also by climatic change. But it was surely encouraged by two characteristics which are often cited as prime shortcomings of early medieval navigation. Ships tended to be small, and so could easily keep to shallow waters near shore and beach. Then they could run for shelter in a cove or river mouth when the weather changed, as it was apt to do between mid-September and early May. That many ships and seamen probably tended to ply more regionally circumscribed routes (Ch. 18.3) means further that the sailors knew better where those safe refuges were, and how to exploit or avoid the special and highly local weather conditions of their home waters. Paradoxically, in other words, the rather small scale of early medieval shipping fostered lengthier sailing seasons, and therefore the opportunity for more numerous ventures. At least on the margins, change characterizes the seasonal patterns of early medieval navigation.



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# 16

# *Time under way*

How long did it take to move from point A to point B? The speed of travel has usually attracted scholars seeking to understand and reconstruct particular events. But its implications are critical for evaluating the economic significance of communications patterns around the inland sea: the velocity of circulation of people and things is essential to their economic potential.[1] Once we detect the speed, or speeds, of travel, we can ask whether they changed. Moreover, the speed of travel and communications sheds indirect light on other important matters, such as the state of the infrastructure.

But it is not an easy issue. Direct, explicit early medieval evidence on travel times is scarce and scattered. So much so that Liudprand of Cremona's valuable Mediterranean testimony has served the discussion of nautical speeds in the very different cultural, climatic, and navigational setting of the northern seas.[2] Of even more consequence to analysis is the fact that both the evidence which has long been known and the new data made possible by this study are very disparate. This makes a few distinctions essential, since the kind of travel described might affect both speed and routes. Between ships, for instance, pilgrims did not necessarily follow the same schedules as merchants, and we have already seen that reasons of state compelled officials to take seasonal travel risks that merchants might have avoided. While pilgrim accounts certainly throw light on the infrastructure of early medieval travel, unless we know that the pilgrim boarded and remained on a particular ship, they are not necessarily reliable evidence on typical speeds between two distant points, especially if there were sights to see or relics to venerate in between. Willibald's famously nonchalant tour may well correspond more to his sightseeing plans than to the exigencies of contemporary shipping infrastructures; using it *alone* as evidence on the slowness of connections between Italy and the Aegean or Levant is a dicey proposition.

1 The point is well made in another context by Langdon 1986, 270–2.

2 Ellmers 1972, 250.



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Secondly, the speed of *movement* is not necessarily identical with the speed of *travel*. While recorded voyages of ancient and medieval ships seem to show remarkable consistency in their normal range of speed of movement (c. 3.3–8 knots), speed of travel – the duration of a trip between two points – was affected by factors beyond the vagaries of weather and the technical capacities of the ships.[3] Coastal travel, for instance, differs from blue-water sailing in more areas than the courses followed; it could also imply frequent nightly beaching and interruption of travel. The organizational infrastructure of travel also weighed heavily. For example, the overall travel times will probably have varied substantially if, to use modern airline parlance, one was obliged to sail from hub to hub, changing ships several times in the course of a long-distance itinerary, rather than taking one ship from point of departure to destination. Although our main focus remains the sea, we have seen that it is unwise to isolate land from sea transport if one wishes to understand early medieval communications. Research into overland travel is more advanced, and will allow us to be briefer on this score.

## 1. Duration of embassies and speed of travel

Some of the most valuable and inherently interesting information comes from the relatively well-documented embassies of the early Middle Ages. Yet it calls for circumspection. The distinction between speed of movement and of travel is quite germane here. The overall duration of ambassadors' absences cannot translate directly into travel time, since negotiations, unexpected absences of principals, the seasons, and the complexity of early medieval decision-making could all stretch the time involved. Absent principals were an obvious issue for envoys looking for itinerant Carolingian kings: a royal advisor had to insist that the palace should always be suitably staffed, in case envoys arrived unexpectedly. But the problem was not unknown in Constantinople, Rome, and Baghdad.[4] Moreover, even diplomats and officials had a hard time saying no to a good relic shrine.[5] Then as now a

3 See on this crucial distinction Udovitch 1978, "Discussion," 557. Ship speeds are always given in knots, that is, in nautical miles (NM) per hour. A nautical mile equals 1.852 km. A speed of 2 knots therefore equals 3.704 km per hour. See further below, section 4.

4 Hincmar of Rheims, *De ordine palatii*, 5, 78.410–16; cf. Ganshof 1971, 197n152. Amalarius seems to refer to this: "Tunc sero rediens basileus Leo," *Versus marini*, 46, p. 428, and it was certainly true for Liudprand's 968 embassy, *Legatio*, 38, 195.31. John VIII's trip to Francia in 878 also delayed the embassy of Jerusalem monks: R648 and R663. For a possible case in Baghdad, see below. The expected arrival of a specialist or more precise information could also string out embassies: for the first: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 817, p. 145; the second is demonstrated by Louis' treatment of Bulgar and "Praedenecenti" envoys in late 824: BM 793d.

5 The Frankish ambassadors to Harun al



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long journey might imply a multiplicity of legs, each with the potential for delays.[6] Weather, political disturbances or illness all affected our diplomats and complicate assessing speed from the length of embassies. The special circumstances of Carolingian foreign policy, which often imposed political and diplomatic coordination with the far-away popes, scarcely simplified matters.

Frankish embassies to the Caliphate demonstrate the potential disparity between embassy length and travel speed. Pippin III's embassy lasted "three years" while those of Charlemagne both lasted about four years (R169; R254; R261). Arduous and long as the trip to the Middle East might have been, it did not necessarily require two years in each direction. The longest, most difficult part of it, the leg between Europe and Syria or Palestine, in fact could be covered much more quickly. Charlemagne's envoy Zachary traveled from Aachen to Jerusalem *and back* to Rome in some eight to twelve months, and Bernard reached Italy from Palestine in sixty days (R248; R580). And it is clear from the judgement of someone who traveled part of the way with the envoys of 797 that something went wrong at the Baghdad end of that mission.[7] We may, in other words, suspect that some Frankish ambassadors' lengthy absences in the Middle East are due more to local circumstances than to the contemporary state of travel.

The suspicion is fully confirmed by what we can learn about the length of embassies to Byzantium. Nearly a dozen cases can be tracked with some precision. Table

Rashid in 797 had detoured to Jerusalem on their way to the Abbasid court, and were expected to do so on the way home: *Miracula Genesii*, 2, p. 10; Borgolte 1976, 64–5. Wandalbert of Prüm claims that St. Goar almost sank Charlemagne because he failed to visit the martyr's shrine when sailing past it one day: *Miracula S. Goaris* (*BHL* 3567), 11, pp. 55–8. Liudprand of Cremona had visited St. Andrew's relics at Patras outbound, but he had hesitated to do so as he hurried home, and the anger of the saint at this "sin" caused bad weather which delayed his voyage: *Legatio*, 59–61, 207.22–208.31. Byzantine ambassadors did likewise: e.g. Nicetas Magistros' detour to a shrine while on an embassy to Crete: *Vita Theoctistae Lesbiae* (*BHG* 1723–4), 3, *AASS*, Nov. 4.226A.

6 Liudprand's closely documented travel shows this clearly: he had nearly a three-week layover in Venice before his ship left for Constantinople in 949, *Antapodosis*, 6, 4, 153.27–154.2.

7 When the anonymous author of *Mir. Genesii*, 2, p. 10, offers this detail, he seems to echo a participant's testimony, explaining that the relic bearers headed back to Europe alone, since they grew impatient waiting at Jerusalem for Charles' ambassadors, who tarried at Baghdad: ". . . reditum illorum quia [*sc.* missi domni Caroli] diu demorati sunt, praestolari non poterant." In fact, the Franks may have had difficulty reaching Harun al Rashid, since in A.H. 181 (5 March 797–21 February 798) he led a raid into Byzantine territory and went on pilgrimage to Mecca (al Ṭabarī, *History*, 30.165–6), returning only in the following year (22 February 798–11 February 799), *ibid.*, p. 167. At the time of the second Frankish embassy, he made two pilgrimages to Mecca: A.H. 187 (late 802–early 803), *ibid.*, p. 216, and A.H. 188 (803–4); as soon as he returned from the second pilgrimage, he set out for the Caspian region: A.H. 189, *ibid.*, p. 253.



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TABLE 16.1
Duration of embassies between Constantinople and the west

| Duration | Year | Origin | Comment |
|---|---|---|---|
| less than 11 months | 743–4 | Pavia | expected maximum |
| 24–34 months | 785–787/8 | Rome | council; disrupted by a mutiny |
| 18 months | c. 786–8 | Frankish court | considered an inordinate delay |
| 12–16 months | 802 | Frankish court | coup in Constantinople |
| 14–17 months | 813–14 | Aachen | coup in Constantinople |
| less than 8.5 months | 869–70 | Rome | expected maximum; envoys captured by pirates |
| 6 months or less | 869–70 | Frankish court in Italy | if D L II, no. 50 is reliable for the circumstances of the act |
| 24 to 28 months | 878–80 | Rome | includes council, possible detention of papal envoys at Constantinople |
| less than 12 months | 879–80 | Rome | embassy of Peter, cardinal priest |
| more than 9 months | 949–50 | Pavia | Liudprand's first embassy |
| 7 to 9 months | 967 | Ottonian court in Italy | maximum |
| just over 7 months | 968–9 | Ottonian court in Italy | Liudprand's second embassy |

16.1 shows first of all that three or four diplomatic missions actually did travel from Italy to Constantinople, transact their business, and return home within six to nine months.

On other occasions, the mission might approach or even exceed twenty-four months. But all the missions to Constantinople which lasted more than eleven months met special circumstances which lengthened them. When Witbold's embassy from north of the Alps lasted eighteen months, it was explicitly reckoned to have been inordinately delayed (R210). At about the same time, the drawn-out papal legation of 786–8 was due to a military mutiny that disrupted the initial session of the second ecumenical council of Nicaea (R208–9). The Frankish embassy of 802–3 occurred in the charged atmosphere of Charlemagne's imperial usurpation and the coup which toppled Irene, its intended addressee (R260; R262). Likewise, the mission of 813 was surely not shortened by the defeat and abdication of the emperor to whom it had been sent (R316). The envoys of 878–9 patently ran into political difficulties. They were serious enough that the pope had to send a second mission to the aid of the first, which was unable or unwilling to leave Constantinople. If Peter's rescue mission lasted as long as a year, it will have



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been no doubt because of those very circumstances.[8] In other words, missions which lasted more than eleven months correlate with complicating circumstances. This suggests that a normal diplomatic mission to Constantinople from Italy or even the Frankish north would last under a year.

Finally, because they reveal contemporary assumptions about travel time, projected return dates of diplomats are particularly illuminating. In July 743, the papal and Lombard courts expected a mission sent around that date to return no later than the next 1 June, that is in about eleven months (R151). Little more than a century later, the papal court assumed that a mission which had left for Constantinople around 10 June 869 would be back at Rome for a synod scheduled on 1 March 870, in just eight-and-a-half months (R592). From Italy to Constantinople, then, even missions dealing with issues of considerable weight and complexity were expected to last about eight to eleven months, in our period. Although events did not bear out the expectations of 870, Suppo's trip of 869–70, and the missions of 967 and 968–9 prove that the expectation of an eight- or nine-month embassy was not unreasonable (R599; R816; R828). Even more important, ninth-century observers assumed a trip which was to take two-and-a-half months less than one undertaken 126 years earlier. Could the speed of travel between Constantinople and Italy have increased in the meantime?

A second strand of evidence strengthens the impression that diplomatic travel between Constantinople and the west grew easier in the ninth century. Six embassies lack complicating factors like coups and we can determine more or less precisely how long the envoys actually stayed at the host court, although we do not know the travel times. They divide evenly between the eighth and ninth centuries. Is it only coincidence that, in the eighth century, two of three such Byzantine embassies wintered at the Frankish court? Conversely, thrice in the later ninth century, envoys' stays at Constantinople and at Regensburg were measured in a few days.[9]

Diplomatic movements allow three conclusions. When political circumstances allowed – even in periods of tension, such as 968–9 – a round trip embassy to Constantinople from Italy need not have lasted any longer than six to eleven or so months. This is all the more impressive when we recall that the diplomatic traveling parties were substantial and therefore cumbersome affairs (Ch. 6.3). The second conclusion follows from the first: they took too long for there to be more than one round trip per year.[10] Finally, the many factors which complicated the length of embassies mean that the duration does not necessarily directly

8 R650, R663, and R669. The difficulties are evident even in Dvornik's account, which seeks to minimize them: 1970, 173–81.

9 R162–3; R170; R609 (Louis II requests Basil to dismiss his envoy within eight days); R732 (dismissed same day); R733 ("paucos dies"). Another wintering of Byzantine envoys at the Frankish court in 812–13 is uncertain: R311–12.

10 See the paradigm developed by Udovitch 1978, 513–14, in the context of commercial trips.



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illuminate the speed of travel between two regions. Even so, the changing expectation of how long an embassy to Constantinople might last suggests, indirectly, that between c. 750 and 870, something had changed in the patterns of communications linking Italy and the east. Of course, such an improvement may have been limited to diplomatic travel. The Frankish kings certainly sought to facilitate ambassadorial travel within their realm.[11] The Byzantine empire still possessed whatever was left of the late Roman *cursus publicus*, though we can perceive its functioning only dimly. What we can see in the territories close to the Frankish empire does not look too different from the Carolingian *tractoria*, essentially the right to requisition lodging and transport help.[12]

## 2. Speed of land travel

Speed over land has been much studied, particularly along the axes connecting the region between the Seine and the Rhine to Rome. From antiquity to modern times, scholars have distinguished several broad periods. They differ chiefly by the degree of development of the infrastructure of travel, which itself must reflect the number and purposes of the travelers, as well as the power of those who sent them. The infrastructure is both physical, in terms of the routes, roads, bridges, ferries, and so on, and human, in terms of institutions such as inns, changing stations for mounts, and taxation to construct or maintain bridges. Given the same infrastructure, individuals' speeds varied according to their physical stamina – rightly emphasized for tireless travelers like Charlemagne himself or Archbishop Eudes Rigaud of the thirteenth century – and that of their animals. Other critical factors included the urgency of business, the size of the party, the season, and the grade of the road. As one would expect, detailed travel accounts reveal higher speeds on downhill segments and lower ones uphill. Wet weather could mire the roads or swell the streams to be crossed; extreme heat and, to a lesser extent, extreme cold could tire horses and rider more quickly, and summer days were longer.[13] Travelers who moved by night obviously increased their daily

11 For instance, Spanish refugees who were settled in the Frankish border lands were required to quarter and transport ambassadors (*legati*) from Spain, and we hear elsewhere of the sheltering of foreign envoys or the failure to do so: BM 566, *MGH Capit.* no. 132, 1, 1.262.1–2, 1 January 815; *ibid.*, no. 150, 18, 1.305.43–306.11.

12 8th-C. Istrians had been subjected to yearly fiscal levies of sheep for imperial *missi* and *legatarii*: Rižana Plea, 64.4–66.10. A similar arrangement occurs at Patras, perhaps in 805 and no later than 886–912. The Slavs subject to the metropolitan were liable for lodging imperial officials and all envoys (*presbeis*) who transited via Patras: Constantine VII, *De adm. imp.*, 49, 1.230.65–71; for the likelihood that this was already so in 805, see Kresten 1977, 61–2n141a.

13 Renouard 1968, 2: 681 on Rigaud's stamina; on the size of parties, see Boyer



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distances.[14] Vehicles and the type of beast which pulled them will also have affected the rate of movement.[15]

Another factor was the trip's overall length, and whether the traveler was walking or riding. Without relays of fresh mounts, the longer a trip, the slower the average speeds obtainable on horseback, since horses, mules, or asses require substantial rest. Thus, after traveling from Rome to the Po, Einhard's envoys stopped for several days in a church he held in Pavia to rest their horses and themselves before crossing the Alps.[16] One finds travelers resting as much as one out of every four days on the road, and as little as one for every ten of travel.[17] Scholarly opinion varies as to the speed advantage over long distances of unrelayed mounts vs. travel on foot.[18]

Renouard distinguishes four basic periods according to the speed at which urgent messages could be transported: the Roman empire, the early Middle Ages, the twelfth–fifteenth centuries, and the early modern era. For him, early medieval speeds were the slowest, due mostly to the disorganization of the Roman road system (by which he presumably meant the institutional infrastructure) and general insecurity of travel. Roman and high medieval speeds were faster and probably about the same.[19] Elze, on the contrary, suspects that Carolingian communications were faster than those of the eleventh and twelfth century because, he believed, elements of the Roman postal network still survived in the ninth century.[20] To resolve this difference definitively would require a special study, but the dilemma itself shows that the problem of travel speeds needs more work. In any case, enough data are available for some first conclusions.

"Speed" means time as correlated with distance. The last element of the equation is ambiguous, given that early medieval road networks have been so little studied. Routes plotted "as the crows flies" offer only a rough yardstick for minimal speeds or time required for travel, since even modern roads through variegated terrain rarely follow straight lines.[21] Most scholars have attempted to

1951, 598–9, Elze 1980, 6n19; grade: Renouard 1968, 2: 691; cf. Elze 1980, 4; Charlemagne: Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, 22, 27.3 and 10–12, emphasizes his robust constitution and constant riding and hunting.

14 Renouard 1961, 115.

15 On carts, wagons and sleds, Leighton 1972, 65; 70–90.

16 Einhard, *Transl. Marcellini et Petri*, 1, 6, 242.42–5.

17 Elze 1980, 7; Nesbitt 1963, 172 observes that two crusader groups spent respectively 16 percent and 33 percent of their time resting or in other delays during the march across Europe.

18 Elze 1980, 10; Cauchies 1976, 311–14, makes a strong case that "runners" were the normal messengers in early modern times, even if their top speeds were below those of horsemen.

19 Renouard 1961, 115; Radke 1971, 60–1, lists examples of Roman daily travel ranging from 29.6 km to, in exceptional circumstances, 150 km.

20 Elze 1980, 7–9; he identifies the 14th C. as the period of change to faster speeds.

21 This technique handicaps the large collection of material of Ludwig 1897. See in general Denecke 1979, 454–5, on the great complexity of the problem.



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improve on this by taking distances from modern road maps.[22] This is better, although in many cases it probably yields distances which differ from what medieval travelers actually covered.[23] Finally, medieval travel time is most usefully expressed in terms of days. Calculating speed in terms of hours is a modern phenomenon reflecting the triumph of clocks and faster speeds.

## 3. Traveling to Italy

Renewed attention to infrastructures, the urgency of political and religious relations with Italy and, as we shall see, the lust for profit drove men, and some women, to cross the Alps in groups small, large, and huge. How long did it take to travel from the Frankish court to Rome? Here again, travel speeds varied widely according to the nature of the business and other circumstances. Later medieval travel between Rome and the north has been particularly well studied, and furnishes some remarkably detailed data. The best-known trips include those of Eudes Rigaud, archbishop of Rouen, who traveled to Rome for a canonical case, as well as religious and more general sightseeing. With his small party (estimated to be about ten people), Eudes took a total of 133 days to make the round trip from Rouen in the winter and summer of 1253–4.[24] For the entire trip, he averaged 33 km a day. On some days he made as much as c. 50–60 km. On others, he covered as little as 10–15 km. A century later, the merchant Barthélemy Bonis went on pilgrimage to Rome in gratitude for having survived the Black Death. Traveling with at least five others, he set out from Avignon and followed what looks like an organized pilgrimage circuit. Daily distances show no appreciable difference between mountains and plains, and average 54 km a day; individual stretches varied between 40 and 80 km per day.[25]

Closer to the Carolingians, the burning of the fuse that ignited the Investiture Contest illuminates some remarkable trips. In December 1075, a messenger carrying urgent news from Pope Gregory VII to Henry IV covered the distance between Rome and Goslar in twenty-three days, at an average speed of 74–8 km,

22 Boyer 1951, 598.

23 See e.g., Cauchies 1976, 307–12, for the difficulty of recovering the secondary networks in even privileged times and places; cf. Nesbitt 1963, 167n1, for a painstaking effort to determine the actual mileage. Müller-Mertens 1980, 108–13, concludes that railroad distances adequately approximate Ottonian royal travel.

24 This all comes from analysis of his trip in Renouard 1968, 2: 680–92. Rouen–Rome: 29 December 1253 to 11 March 1254, in rather leisurely fashion. The return trip was more direct, from 11 July to 9 September 1254. In the mountains: uphill, the group averaged 20–30 km/day; downhill, 30–40 km; over level terrain the daily rate varied from 10–15 km to 50–60 km. The shortest daily distances were due to the circumstances of lodging and planned stops.

25 *Ibid*. 692–7.



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a speed approached by a party of royal envoys sent in the opposite direction the following February. They traveled from Worms to Piacenza and thence to Rome in nineteen days, averaging about 70 km per day. Giving the lie to popular wisdom about bad news, word that Gregory had excommunicated the king and his bishops appears to have traveled slightly more slowly. It took perhaps thirty-two or thirty-three days, covering 54–6 km per day. Finally, in the harsh winter of 1076–7, the German king and his entourage rode from Besançon to Canossa via the Mont Cénis pass and Pavia in some twenty-seven travel days, at an average of just over 30 km per day. The winter days were of course much shorter than the summer ones.[26]

These speeds have been judged plausible for the ninth century as well.[27] In general, the Carolingian court's relatively well-known movements averaged about 20–30 km a day, it has been reckoned.[28] More detailed study of the German royal court's movements from the tenth to the twelfth century has added considerable depth and nuance to the picture. The upper limit of usual travel is now reckoned to be about 35 km per day; 36 to 60 km per day were unusual but realistic and repeatable achievements, while rates above 62 km per day were quite exceptional. The periods over which different speeds could be maintained have been more clearly discerned and it has become clear that seasonal, infraregional, and interregional rates of travel differed.[29] For the Carolingian period in particular, grandees' movements have been assumed to vary between 25 and 40 km per day.[30] As far as travel to Rome itself goes, one scholar deduced that a business-like traveler around 750 could cover the distance between Fritzlar and Rome in a month or slightly more, easily averaging speeds of 30 to 40 km per day, while faster speeds appear actually to be attested in exceptionally critical circumstances.[31] How does this stack up against the data we have found?

Carolingian evidence about travel times has never been systematically collected. It is rich, but scattered.[32] One expert believes that travelers then may have

26 Elze 1980, 4–7; he assumes days of departure and arrival follow and precede by one day the encounters, documents or feasts in connection with which they are mentioned.

27 Zielinski 1991 uses Elze's results to test the plausibility of datings of royal decisions and meetings concerning Arab raids on Italy in 846–8.

28 Brühl 1968, 1: 66; Nesbitt 1963, 181 comes out with a nearly identical 17–29.5 km average daily march for crusader armies crossing Europe.

29 Müller-Mertens 1980, 101–21, and esp. Reinke 1987, founded on 947 trips (234).

30 Riché 1978, 22–3.

31 Tangl 1919, esp. 26–7. Nonetheless, this study combines evidence from different periods (as late as 15th C.) to arrive at this result on the erroneous assumption that little changed.

32 One prime source is the detailed accounts of the translations of saints' relics which proliferated in this era. In addition to those that I have used here, two excellent sources for destinations other than Rome are the *Historia translationis S. Viti* (*BHL* 8718) and Aimoinus, *Translatio S. Georgii, Aurelii et sociorum* (*BHL* 3409).



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equaled the speeds of 70 km a day achieved by eleventh-century messengers.[33] This is certainly possible. For instance, Einhard details his secretary's trip through the Great St. Bernard pass to St. Maurice from Pavia (Map 13.1). In 827, this party hurried along this stretch, including the pass itself, at the surprising average clip of nearly 50 km per day.[34]

In his own stamping ground and later in the season, Einhard traveled more slowly (Map 15.1). In December 829, he arrived at Wiesbaden the day after he left Mühlheim am Main, which is about 40 to 50 km away: he was covering some 20 to 25 km per shorter winter day.[35] Over the longer days of spring or summer 828, Charlemagne's biographer took only six days to reach Mühlheim from Aachen, which works out to about 44 km per day by the modern road, so that his real speed may have been appreciably better.[36]

That some 40 km represented the normal range of Carolingian daily travel finds further confirmation in a pattern that protrudes from our Bernard's unconscious habit of calculating distances. Traveling within the Caliphate, he usually reckons in miles up to thirty, and in days from one day and longer. In other words, more than thirty miles means thinking in terms of more than a day's travel. Thirty (Roman) miles (44.3 km) represents about nine hours of walking at the usual speed of three English miles per hour, and less for a mounted traveler. This threshold between distance reckoned in miles and days implies that in Bernard's mind, the "normal" distance of daily travel was about 27.5 British miles, i.e. around 45 km.[37]

Another indication of mountain travel legs comes from the six inns (*tabernae*) that the Frankish imperial fisc operated in the Rhaetian Alps. They stood between some 15 and 33 km apart, with an average distance between them of

33 Zielinski 1991, 42.

34 Einhard, *Transl. Marcellini et Petri*, 1, 7, 243.2. The distance from Pavia to Aosta on the Roman road system was 125 Roman miles, i.e. 185 km (Radke 1971, 187–8). The modern road from St. Maurice to Aosta over the Great St. Bernard runs 100.4 km according to [Touring Club Italiano] 1981, maps 13–14 and 25–6. Oehlmann 1878, 234, gives the Roman distance from Aosta to the vicinity of St. Maurice as 62 miles, i.e. 92 km. Using the present distance yields an average speed of 47.5 km per day, including travel over one of the highest passes then in use; 46.2 km per day would be the average speed using the Roman measures to the vicinity of St. Maurice. The present road over the pass goes back to the late 19th C.: Hyde 1935, 39; for new light on the ancient road: Hunt 1998. This might overstate somewhat the actual speeds, since early medieval travelers sometimes preferred much steeper routes than later ones: Denecke 1979, 455.

35 Depending on how closely one follows the Main river, and if its course has remained relatively stable. The *Hallwag Süddeutschland* 1: 500,000 auto map (1989/90 edn.) gives the Autobahn distance from Wiesbaden-Mainz to Frankfurt as 37 km; *Transl. Marcell. et Petri* 3, 19, 255.5–7.

36 The Autobahn distance to Frankfurt is 260 km: *Hallwag Süddeutschland*.

37 See Ch. 5n54.



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about 26 km. The shortest stretch is at the most difficult segment, nearest the Julier and Septimer passes.[38] But the most compelling parallel to the eleventh-century feats of speedy travel comes from communication of the news of Charlemagne's death. Charles died on 28 January 814 at Aachen; from his winter quarters at Doué-la-Fontaine (Maine et Loire, arr. Saumur), Louis the Pious arrived at Aachen on 27 February, a day or so behind his elite warriors. This represents a distance of about 750 km each way, covered in a total of 26 days. Combined, the messenger bringing the news and Louis (with his warriors and entourage) averaged about 58 km a day. Since the messenger traveled night and day and surely made better time than Louis and his followers, he may well have exceeded 70 km in twenty-four hours.[39] Although these scattered cases will assume their full significance only in a comprehensive study of Carolingian communications, they suffice for our purposes to suggest the possible range of travel speeds by land. In general, the speed of overland travel in Carolingian civilization usually varied between about 25 and 50 km a day, depending on circumstances.

The intensity of Frankish relations with Italy has left tantalizing traces in the charters and narrative sources. Table 16.2 lays out some of the clearest evidence on travel time that I have encountered. What these data suggest are that, under normal circumstances, messages and also parties, including substantial ones, were expected to travel between the Frankish heartland and Rome in six to eight weeks. Much longer and contemporaries reckoned the trip terrible, which confirms that this travel time corresponds to ninth-century expectations. For example, a priest who traveled to Rome, apparently from Mainz, performed penance in more ways than one on his pilgrimage. He had a horrible trip, in part due to heavy rains. "I barely reached Rome in ten weeks," he complained.[40]

Once again, anticipated travel times illuminate assumptions, and reinforce the evidence of Table 16.2. In autumn 873, Pope John VIII commanded the archbishop of Cologne to come to Rome immediately. If he had not reached Rome within one to two months of the day on which he received the summons, the pope would excommunicate him. The deadline makes perfectly clear the facility of travel up the Rhine and across the Alps even as winter approached.[41] It falls squarely within the majority of travel times we have located. Table 16.2 also suggests that an unencumbered messenger could have accomplished the trip

38 Schneider-Schnekenburger 1980, Tafel 70.

39 I have calculated the distance by the most probable route, via Liège, Namur, Dinant, Rheims, Paris (attested on the way back), Tours and, as we know, Orleans. Louis spent four days gathering his forces before setting out. For the sources and data on which this is based, BM 519c–i.

40 Liutolf, *Vita et translatio S. Severi* (*BHL* 7681–2), 1, *MGH SS* 15.1.290.11–12: "variis incommoditatibus maximeque imbrium inundationibus nimiis praepeditus, vix decima ebdomada Romam perveni," about his trip of 858.

41 *Frag. Reg.*, 30, JE 2986, 290.28–31: "intra spacium [!] unius mensis sive duorum."



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TABLE 16.2
Travel times of Carolingian groups and messages between Italy and Francia (arranged in increasing order of maximum duration)

| Duration | Places | Comment | Dates | No. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ?15 days | Piacenza–Senlis–Rheims | urgent news of Lothar II's death probably already known to Hincmar of Rheims | 8–?23 August 869 | 1 |
| 31 days | Rome–Freising | Bishop Hitto of Freising, bearing relics | 30 May–1 July 834 | 2 |
| less than 46 days | Pavia–Lorsch | Charlemagne and his retinue | after 16 July–before 1 September 774 | 3 |
| 33–50 days | Rheims–Rome | pope and his retinue | 5/22 October–before 24 November 816 | 4 |
| 50–1 days | Rome–Rheims or Corbeny (Map 15.1) | papal letter to Hincmar of Rheims and Charles the Bald, not urgent | 23/4 October–13 December 867 | 5 |
| 53 days | Rome–Compiègne | papal letter and palm for Palm Sunday, not urgent | 13 February–7 April 877 | 6 |
| 52 days | Pavia–Ponthion | pope and his retinue | 15 November 753–6 January 754 | 7 |
| 41–63 days | Rome–Rheims | pope and his retinue | 1/22 August–2 October 816 | 8 |
| 66 days | Rome–Rheims | papal letter to Hincmar, not urgent | 5 January–11 March 876 (a leap year) | 9 |

*Sources:* 1. Schlesinger 1970, 460–1; an alternative explanation is possible. 2. *Translatio Ss. Alexandri et Iustini* (*BHL* 271), 1, *MGH SS* 15.1.287.24–40; relics entered Freising on 1 July, according to a Freising calendar reported by *AASS* Sept. 5.472D–E. 3. BM 167–169. 4. BM 634 shows Louis the Pious at Samoussy on 23 October 816; Stephen IV died 24 January 817, "tertio, postquam Romam venerat, mense, sed nondum exacto . . . obiit," *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 817, p. 145. 5. JE 2879 and almost certainly 2882; *Ann. Bert.*, a. 867, p. 140. 6. JE 3079; *Ann. Bert.*, a. 877, p. 212. 7. *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.446.17–447.18. 8. BM 633a; JE 1: 317. (Von Simson 1874–6, 1: 68n1, dates the meeting at Rheims to 2 October; although BM 633a is non-committal, Hahn 1975, 21–2, admits the Simson date as probable). 9. JE 3034.

much more quickly. If Hincmar's testimony (no. 1) has been correctly interpreted, it shows the great speed with which Carolingian couriers crossed the Alps when matters of life and death were at stake; it compares well with the report of Charlemagne's death and the eleventh-century evidence. Less urgent and more common papal communications traveled at about the same speed as large groups of travelers, including the popes themselves. Typically such trips lasted around fifty days. The fifty-three days that a papal letter took to reach Compiègne in 877



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is virtually identical to Eudes' direct trip between the same points, in fifty-two days, almost 400 years later.[42] We have already seen that Italy's main connection to the north had become overland around 700 (Ch. 3.3). This evidence shows that the communications over the Alps to the Frankish homelands far to the north were abundant and, in early medieval terms, relatively easy. Envoys, armies, and kings, popes, and pilgrims traveled back and forth between Italy and northern Europe in very considerable numbers. And they did so at rates of movement that compare well with those of the later Middle Ages. Are we to suppose they were alone on the mountain routes linking Frankish Europe to the Mediterranean?

## 4. Speed of sea travel

Evidence for the speed of Mediterranean travel in our period has been very scarce.[43] For antiquity, on the other hand, intensive scrutiny of the ancient sources and modern replicas of ancient ships have assembled a fair body of data.[44] Things are not too different for the northern seas.[45] Substantial written information has emerged from the sea cities of later medieval Italy and Egypt, although the development of experimental medieval replicas has made less headway in the south.[46] The design of medieval ships may have made them faster. Yet the evidence of actual sea travel has been taken to mean that whatever their capacities, early medieval voyages in the Mediterranean proceeded more slowly than in antiquity. This difference may have been due to some of the structural differences in early medieval sailing – different, especially coastal, routes, which naturally tend to be longer than more direct courses; more frequent and perhaps lengthier port stays, etc.[47] But the most important recent development in the study of medieval shipping speeds has been their systematic reevaluation in the light of modern hydrographic and atmospheric data. Given the intimate interdependence of technology, weather, and geography in shipping before the early modern period, each of the individual reports on which the various estimates of earlier scholars have been founded would require new and close scrutiny in the light of the specific circumstances of the route and ship.[48] The results to date look something like this.

42 Renouard 1968, 2: 684–5.
43 Claude 1995, 1985b, 62.
44 Casson 1995, 281–96; 464–5.
45 E.g., Ellmers 1972, 248–53.
46 E.g., Thiriet 1959, 188–9; Balard 1987; Udovitch 1978.
47 Smaller, faster ships: Unger 1980, 47; see on speed also, Claude 1985b, 62–6; Pryor 1992, 36; cf. Casson 1995, 281–91 and 464.
48 E.g., Pryor 1992, 1–24, 87–101; see particularly his study of Saewulf's pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1102: 1994; cf. also Pryor 1989.



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In antiquity, normal ship speeds of 3.4 to 6.2 knots are recorded for favorable conditions, whereas unfavorable conditions yield approximate speeds of 1.5 to 3.3 knots. The more complicated circumstances of fleet movements are perhaps of special relevance because, as we have seen, early medievals preferred to sail in convoys. They indicate speeds of 0.9 to 4.5 knots.[49] The modern replica of the Kyrenia wreck (c. 300 B.C.) averaged 2.85 knots.[50]

The data from the medieval north is roughly comparable. There, three classes of speeds have been distinguished in the sources: 29 to 37 "etmal" (i.e., sea miles per 12-hour day), which works out to an average speed of 2.4 to 3 knots; 55 to 74 "etmal" (i.e., sea miles per 24-hour day) which works out to the same basic speed of 2.3 to 3 knots; and 90 to 165 "etmal," or sea miles per 24-hour day, which equals 3.8 to 6.9 knots. Trips above 100 etmal are associated with long ships, that is, war vessels. Since days are so long in the northern summer, this indicates, roughly speaking, usual speeds of 2.3 to 4 knots.[51] In the medieval Mediterranean, careful examination of the movements of a Genoese ship sailing from east to west in 1184 has deduced speeds ranging from 0.75 to 3 knots, depending on conditions.[52] The average speed for a fairly representative group of long-distance voyages before the fourteenth century comes out to 1.16 knots against the wind, and 2.25 knots with it.[53] Though lower than the ancient speeds, this may simply be a more realistic sampling than what the ancient sources can supply.

The unique treasure trove of documents preserved by the Cairo Genizah offers a point of comparison for voyages involving the Muslim world, mostly from about 1015 to 1125.[54] Eighteen sea trips documented there yield calculated speeds ranging from 0.65 to 3 knots. Two thirds averaged between 1 and 2 knots.[55] When one considers the Cairo data in the light of prevailing winds, it turns out that trips made with prevailing winds traveled some two to three times faster than those made against them.[56]

A small handful of ship times have been gathered for Byzantium, including a good trip from Constantinople to Cyprus in ten days, a crossing from the northern shore of the Black Sea to Paphlagonia in three days (possibly an echo of an ancient source), a direct crossing from the Crimea to Sinope in five days and nights; and the expectation that it would take three days to sail from Attaleia to Antioch in the

49 Casson 1995, 282–8, including a number of late antique voyages; for fleets, *ibid.*, 292–6.

50 *Ibid.*, 464. For differing views on replicas, cf. Gibbins 1991 and McGrail 1992.

51 Ellmers 1972, 248–53.

52 Pryor 1992, 5–6.

53 *Ibid.*, 36.

54 Udovitch 1978, 507.

55 Assuming a twenty-four-hour sailing day; Udovitch 1978, 510–11. These speeds might actually be too low. To establish the distances, Udovitch relied on the *Table of Distances* 1943: see below, n63.

56 Pryor 1992, 36.



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twelfth century.[57] How does this data compare with the new material unearthed by the study of communications in the early medieval Mediterranean?

## 5. Reconstructing some early medieval voyages

Though widely scattered in the sources, voyages are numerous enough nearly to double the most comprehensive review to date, which was based on the exceptional wealth of the Cairo Genizah. If one includes ship movements of early medieval fiction, the file is even fatter. What we find concerns first and foremost speed of travel, not the speed of ship movements: the time it took to travel from one point to another, including non-specified layovers en route. Since layovers were often a normal part of the structure of voyages, they can and should be included in travel times. This means of course that, insofar as layovers are not specified in the evidence, we are not necessarily looking at the swiftest possible travel times. Rather we are seeing something that, historically, is more valuable: ordinary travel times. We shall begin by looking closely at a few of the best-documented trips and resolving some problems that they pose. Gross speeds calculated in terms of distance covered over time are, by themselves, less illuminating of the true face of travel than a consideration of individual ship movements in light of the sailing conditions along particular sea lanes. We will then work this detailed evidence into the broader context of other early medieval voyages. If change were afoot here too, this should allow new trends to appear. In translating these rates of movement into knots, I shall assume a twelve-hour sailing day. This reflects the consensus view on early medieval sailing; it also facilitates comparison of data from different voyages.

### *The transport of Pope Martin I to Constantinople, A.D. 653 (Maps 8.1 and 7.3)*

Detailed information on the arrest and transport of Martin I from Rome to his doom in the east stems, in a complicated way, from the pope's own autobiographical testimony. As I reconstruct it, the essential features of his trip shed light on a number of issues.[58] Overall, it lasted three months, according to the pope's

57 Kazhdan 1971, 177; Malamut 1988, 2: 552–5.

58 The reconstruction of the trip elaborated by earlier scholars requires modification. What Martin said about the trip comes to us indirectly and in complicated fashion, via two main sources, neither of which is always superior and preferable to the other. Each is complicated. They are:

1 The *Collectanea* translated from Greek by Anastasius Bibliothecarius. Anastasius' version of the collection comprises several different documents, including:



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own reckoning.[59] The exact dates of departure and arrival confirm this: Martin I was abducted from the Lateran on 18–19 June 653 (see below), and arrived at Constantinople on 17 September.[60] Martin's voyage seems to confirm the conventional wisdom about early medieval navigation and its tendency to hug the coast and make many stops. His own words show that the ship(s) frequently put into shore, where the sailors disembarked and relaxed.[61] The only caveat is that nothing unambiguously identifies the type of ship. The very fact of the frequent landings, and the dramatic circumstances of the abduction and trial of the pope, perhaps hint that he was being transported in a warship, a long ship of the sort whose special configuration obliged it to land very frequently and stick to coastal waters.[62] Plotting a plausible coastal course yields an overall daily travel rate of 15 NM for a twelve-hour day; this works out to an overall average speed of 1.25 knots.[63] The gross rate of travel can be refined.

Footnote 58 (*cont.*)

- letters from Martin I to his sympathizer Theodore, apparently Spoudaios, in Constantinople; one provides a detailed account of his voyage (JE 2079), in *PL*, 87 and 129.
- the *Commemoratio* (CPG 7969) addressed to the Roman and African churches, ascribed traditionally to Theodore Spoudaios c. 654 (who witnessed many of the events he describes), and preserved only in Anastasius' translation of the *Collectanea*. For a slightly earlier date, see P. Chiesa, *Aevum* 66 (1992), 456–9. Chiesa 1992, 212–13n4 has questioned the authorship.

2 The Greek biography of Martin I, *Vita Martini graeca* (*BHG* 2259), the attribution of which to 8th-C. Greeks at Rome (Mango 1973, 703–4; cf. Sansterre 1983, 1: 138–9), has been seriously challenged by Conte 1989, 238–49, who instead suggests Jerusalem. It appears to have abridged and sewn together the Greek text of several documents transmitted also in Anastasius' Latin *Collectanea*: Devreesse 1935, esp. 54–5n1. See Chiesa 1992; on the letters, Cremascoli 1992.

59 JE 2079, *PL*, 129.590C (*apud* Anastasius Bibliothecarius' *Collectanea*).

60 Theodore Spoudaios, *Commemoratio*, *PL*, 129.592B–C; *V. Martini gr.*, 6, p. 258.

61 JE 2079, *PL*, 129.590C = *V. Martini gr.*, 5, p. 257, cf. 6, p. 257; *PL*, 129.492B–C. See below for the details.

62 On these characteristics: Pryor 1992, 37–8 and 69–71.

63 I reckon about 1,390 NM from Rome to Constantinople as I reconstruct a coastal course which takes into account the places mentioned in the sources and early medieval custom along this route at this time. 1390 NM ÷ 91 days = 15.27 NM/day on a 12-hour schedule. Previous scholars have used *Tables of Distances between Ports*, such as that published by the US Navy in 1943: thus Udovitch 1978, 511n. However, as *Table of Distances* 1943, 3, states, they give the "shortest navigable routes" for 20th-C. (war)ships. For such vessels, with vastly different power, draft, and technology, "navigable" refers to a different world from the early middle ages. For instance, *Tables of Distances* 1943, 111, gives the distance from Civitavecchia (the modern, very small port of Rome, some 27 NM north of the Tiber) to Messina as 302 NM, yielding a distance from the Tiber to Messina of c. 275 NM. Measuring along the shore gives a coastal route of about 355 NM, i.e. a course which is a sixth longer. So too *Tables of Distances* 1943, 171, gives the distance from



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First we can reconstruct the river trip down the Tiber to Portus. The imperial officials charged with arresting Martin manifestly faced a dangerous situation, and avoided a public confrontation at Mass on Sunday, 16 June 653.[64] The correct date and hour of the pope's arrest and removal from Rome by small boat is midnight of the night of Tuesday–Wednesday 18–19 June. This reveals the hitherto hidden secret of the Byzantine officials' plan: there was a full moon. If the night were clear, as one would expect in central Italy in late June, the moonlight will have illuminated the Tiber as the small boat and its prisoner worked their way downstream, while imperial forces blocked the gates of Rome to prevent pursuit of the escaping arrest squad.[65] The river trip took ten hours and covered at least some 23 to 26 km, that is, 12.4–15 NM, yielding a river speed approaching 1.5 knots.[66] The boat will have been traveling faster if the twists and turns of the river made it longer in the seventh century. Although slow, 1.5 knots is not impossible: there is no reason to think late Roman engineering standards were maintained in the seventh century, so that the boatsmen will have had to watch carefully for mudbanks and logs. Whether locals or imperial sailors, they navigated by moonlight

Haifa to Alexandria as 294 sea miles. The blue-water distance between these two ports is about 270 NM as the crow flies. A coastal itinerary comes to c. 335 NM, i.e. it is about 15 percent longer. When dealing with coastal traffic, it is usually preferable to work out rough distances from charts and maps of the region, rather than to accept modern courses. This is what I have done. The naval tables are chiefly of interest for deep-sea courses.

64 JE 2079, *PL*, 127.588D.

65 *V. Martini gr.*, 5, p. 257, erroneously dates the abduction to a Wednesday 17 June (which is impossible), toward dawn (ἐπιφωσκούσῃ ἡμέρᾳ τετάρτῃ). Peeters determines (*ibid.*, pp. 235–6) the correct date of that Wednesday as 19 June, but mistakenly places the abduction toward dawn. JE 2079, in Anastasius Bibliothecarius, *Collectanea*, *PL*, 129: 590A–B, suggests rather the author's attempt to make clear that it was the night of Tuesday which turns to light at the dawn of Wednesday. Martin's own eyewitness testimony places his abduction in hour six of the night from Tuesday (18 June) to Wednesday morning, that is, midnight. According to 653's Golden Number, the new moon should have appeared on 3 June in 653, producing a full moon in the night of 18 June. For the Golden Number, etc.: Ginzel 1906–14, 3: 136 and 396. The type of boat was, according to Anastasius, a *levamentum:* JE 2079, *PL*, 129.590A–B, on which term, above, Ch. 13n64. This the Greek seems to render as *ploiarion*: *V. Martini gr.*, 5, p. 257.

66 Typically, even so simple a matter truly can get complicated. From the site of Portus to downtown Rome is c. 26 km by modern road; the Roman itineraries indicate 19 Roman miles (Radke 1971, 63), i.e. 15 NM. Procopius gives the distance as 126 stadia, i.e. 23 km (12.4 NM): *Bella*, 5, 26, 4–5, 2.128.6–13; it is unclear whether he is referring to the road or river distance, although his description suggests that the road may be the towpath described at *Bella*, 5, 26, 9–11, 128.25–129.14. The early medieval Tiber may have been longer, and it is possible that the ship awaiting Martin was still more distant, on the coast, which is another 3 or 4 km away today (Procopius identifies Portus as 15 stades from the sea in his time, i.e. 2.7 km). This would make c. 26 km in all.



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all the more gingerly for the fact that their lives would not have been worth much if they had run aground and been detected.

The next segment of the trip is the most precisely documented. The pope was transferred to another vessel at Portus (Porto Romano). It got under way immediately on 19 June, around 10 A.M., and reached Messina on 1 July (Map 16.1).[67] It took thirteen days to travel 355 NM, that is, 27 NM per day, yielding an average travel speed of 2.25 knots, if sailing was confined to daylight hours. At this time of year along this route, the prevailing winds and currents should have been favorable, and the use of the land and sea breezes would have made it an easy stretch.[68]

The next leg is less fully documented. Martin probably was put into another ship in Messina's harbor.[69] The trip to Constantinople took something under seventy-eight days. The 1,040 sea miles imply average daily distances of some 13 NM, for an average travel speed of about 1 knot. This travel speed falls considerably short of the ship speed however. We do not know how long the ship stayed at Messina, or at the numerous other landings to which Martin alludes, in Calabria (very probably Reggio, 6 NM beyond Messina across the dangerous strait, or Crotone, or both), on "many islands," or at Abydos (Map 7.3). The sailors disembarked and relaxed regularly.[70] A considerable delay occurred on Naxos. Given its location and the season, this very probably arose during a *meltemi*, that strong wind which stymies northbound Aegean sailing at this time of year.[71] From

67 After the fourth hour of the day. This seems late given the diurnal patterns of land and sea breezes (cf. above, p. 426). Does it hint that Martin was transported aboard an oared warship? Aside from the issue of ship size, Martin implies a transfer when he states that baggage which had been placed in the *levamenta* at Rome had to be left in Portus: JE 2079, *PL*, 129.590B.

68 See *Mediterranean Pilot* 1978–88, 2, Diagrams 2, 7 and 8, and p. 14 (1.98).

69 The letter's phrasing suggests Martin changed ships in Messina ("pervenimus . . . Mesenam in qua erat navis, id est carcer meus," JE 2079, *PL*, 129.590B–C), although Peeters prefers to see this as poor translating by Anastasius: 1933, 236. The Greek *Life* does not fit the phrasing of the Latin closely enough to support Peeters on this.

70 Stops in Calabria and "many islands," *PL*, 129.590C =*Vita Martini gr.*, 5, p. 257, cf. 6, p. 257.

71 Naxos: the Latin expression of Anastasius' translation of Martin's letter ("annum fecimus" in Naxos, *PL*, 129.590C) is manifestly a calque of the late Greek expression *chronotribēsantes* (*V. Martini gr.*, 5, p. 257), i.e. they "spent time," "were delayed." Cf. Peeters 1933, 236, who accepts the explicit statement of the *V. Martini gr.* 5, p. 257, that they sailed for forty-seven days after a delay on Naxos (*ibid.*), and they arrived in Constantinople on 17 September (6, p. 258). This is implausible. If they had indeed taken forty-seven days to sail *from* Naxos to Constantinople, the most substantial delay would have occurred *after* Naxos. But the pope singles out Naxos as the place where they were delayed, and the subsequent description of the Life becomes incoherent, as Devreesse 1935, 54–511 makes clear. The forty-seven days of the Greek Life seem to derive from Martin's statement on the day he wrote



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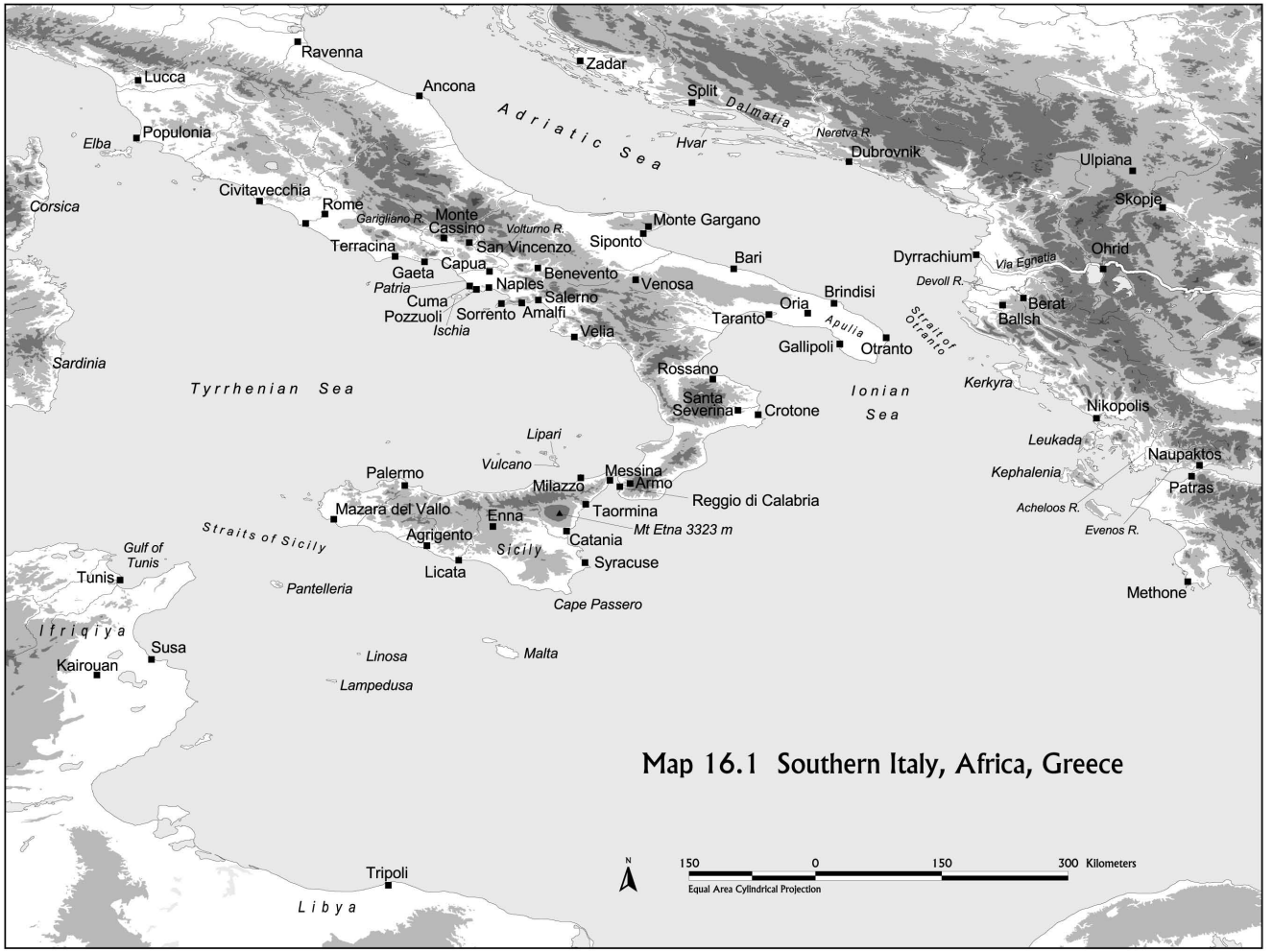


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Abydos a messenger hurried north to alert the emperor of the captive's impending arrival.[72] Finally, on 17 September, the pope's vessel put into port at Constantinople.[73]

## *Some other early medieval voyages*

One other voyage is almost as lavishly documented as Martin's, and parts of several more can be reconstructed in detail sufficient for our purposes. About a generation after Martin's arrest, the Gallic bishop Arculf took forty days to sail from Jaffa to Alexandria, a distance of some 290 sea miles along the coast. His ship therefore made an average of 7.3 NM travel per day, or 0.6 knots on the hypothesis of a 12-hour sailing day.[74] Arculf set out between 14 and 22 September, and his slow rate of advance reflects the relatively strong current (c. 2–3 knots) which in this stretch heads counter-clockwise along the coast.[75]

Notwithstanding the detail of his story, Willibald furnishes approximate dates of arrival and departure for only one part of his voyage in the 720s, and that is quite an exceptional leg. When he finally resolved various customs difficulties, Willibald was ready to continue his wanderings toward Constantinople late in 726, but his ship was not. After many days' wait, the ship at last shoved off on 30 November. It sailed all winter and arrived in the imperial capital c. 6 April 727 (R117). Although the biographer does not describe the course, the winter season, general conditions, and contemporary practice virtually guarantee that Willibald's ship hugged the Asiatic coastline from Tyre to Constantinople (Map 5.1). It will have traveled some 1,185–1,240 NM in ninety-seven days, a daily average of 12.2 to 13 NM. This implies an average speed for a twelve-hour sailing day of about 1 knot. Given the adverse conditions of the season, the certainty that

Footnote 71 (*cont.*)
JE 2079 that he had not bathed in 47 days, since he had left Naxos: *Collectanea* 590C. There is however no evidence that he wrote this letter on the day he arrived in Constantinople. On the *meltemi*, see Ch. 4n63.

72 Theodore, *Comm.*, 592B–C; at Abydos, the pope was abused: *ibid.*, 592B; cf. Devreesse 1935, 54. I concur with Duchesne that a word is missing at the beginning of the troublesome clause, e.g., "<nisi> in insulam quae vocatur Naxos." Chiesa 1992, 220n21, hesitates.

73 *Vita*, 6, p. 258; cf. Theodore Spoudaios, *Comm.*, 592C: "in portum juxta Euphemiam prope Arcadianon." The reference to Euphemia seems to be a gloss on the date (the day after the feast of St. Euphemia, a day laden with ideological resonance under the circumstances) that Anastasius misconstrued: Chiesa 1992, 216–17n10.

74 I count some 540 km, i.e. 292 NM along the coast, R41.

75 This current tends to strengthen precisely in August and September, when the Nile's outflows peak: *Sailing Directions* 1992, 44; cf. Pryor 1992, 119.



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some days at least must have been spent ashore awaiting better weather, and the fact that Willibald's ship was sailing against unfavorable winds much of the way, this is a respectable rate indeed.[76]

A century and a half later, another pilgrim to the Holy Land paints a dramatically different picture. Bernard also boarded a ship in southern Italy, but his large slaver sailed from Taranto and reached Alexandria in thirty days (Map 5.2). He traveled in the direction of the prevailing winds over this sector of the Mediterranean; if we imagine that he sailed along the coast of Greece and via Crete, his ship will have made about 29 NM per day.[77] Homebound, Bernard presumably boarded a ship at Jaffa, and certainly took twice as long to reach an unspecified port in the vicinity of Salerno – one is tempted to think of Amalfi. Bernard notes that the voyage was stormy, and he speaks as though he had been at sea continuously.[78] A course through coastal waters would imply somewhere around 35 NM each day, which is quite respectable indeed against the prevailing winds.[79]

That trips from west to east were usually faster than those against the prevailing winds is only underscored by the voyage of St. Blaise. When the holy man and his disciples immigrated to Constantinople around 892, their merchant ship covered the distance from Rome to Methone in twelve days. We do not know the season; a following wind is certainly possible both from Rome to Messina and across the Ionian Sea (Map 16.1); they had a stormy passage.[80] Assuming that they followed the usual coastal route, this works out to the remarkable sum of c. 63 NM per day, for an average speed of 5.2 knots on a 12-hour day.[81]

76 According to *Sailing Directions* 1992, 84, north winds prevail along Turkey's south coast from November to February, but local conditions vary greatly. On the other hand, the current will have been favorable. Short-term weather conditions may have allowed some short cuts. The *Table of Distances* 1943 reckons the distance between Beirut and Istanbul at 848 NM via the usual, shortest, high-seas route suitable for a 20th-C. warship. Tyre lies about 50 NM south of Beirut along the coast, yielding a minimal combined distance of 898 NM, so that even by this unlikely reckoning, Willibald's ship will have made c. 9 NM per day, or 0.8 knots on a 12-hour sailing day.

77 R580. I calculate a distance of c. 865 NM with the landfalls mentioned, i.e. 29 NM per day and an average speed of 2.4 knots on a 12-hour sailing schedule. See also Table 16.3.

78 Bernard, *Itin.*, 20, p. 318: "*Intrantes* autem in mare, navigavimus lx dies cum angustia magna valde, non habentes ventum serenum. Tandem *exeuntes* de mare, venimus ad montem Aureum . . ."

79 A traditional northern coastal route might have been as long as 2,085 NM. For 60 days, this implies 35 NM per day, i.e. c. 3 knots (on a twelve-hour schedule) which seems high, given that the prevailing winds were unfavorable.

80 *V. Blasii* 19, 666B: *perikluzomenoi*; see *Mediterranean Pilot* 1978–88, 2, diagrams 7–8 for wind patterns in April, July and October; cf. *ibid.*, 1: 18 and 3: 26.

81 I estimate the coastal route at c. 750 NM.



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Theodore Studite's eyewitness account of his voyage into exile details an early spring trip through the Aegean, and provides a qualitative assessment that enhances its value. The first sea stretch came in early March, after a week's delay due to unfavorable winds. The sail from Eleountes (class. Elaious, mod. Eski-Hisarlık, near Eceabat, Turkey, on the northern shore of the Dardanelles) to Lemnos was fast: the ship covered about 45 NM in nine hours. To Theodore, this speed of five knots was so fast it seemed as if they were flying.[82] If anything, the next leg was even faster: the wind whistled like an arrow through the air and drove them to Cape Paliouri in only twelve hours. A straight course from Hephaisteia would have covered c. 80 NM, implying a remarkable speed of 6.6 knots. Theodore anticipated that his reader would wonder at this non-stop sail, for he explains that they feared the people on the shore, surely a reference to the devastating attack that the Bulgars had inflicted on a Byzantine general in the Strymon area just a few years before.[83] As Theodore intimates, these were exceptional speeds, and they were kept up only for a few hours.

Liudprand of Cremona's trips to Constantinople complete the picture of precisely documented travel speeds along the routes of greatest interest to us. He treats his voyage from Venice in August and September 949 matter-of-factly, giving no hint of anything but a commonplace crossing. This twenty-four-day trip implies a daily performance of about 53 NM, and an average speed of 4.44 knots for a 12-hour day.[84] The return trip of Liudprand's legation of 968–9 has already thrown light on winter sailing. It also yields some precise speeds. From the Euenos river to Leukada required four days of calm seas in early December 968. Sticking close to shore (where the current would have been generally most favorable), the distance comes to about 70 NM. This translates into about 18 NM per day, or an average speed of 1.5 knots for a 12-hour day.[85] That this is on the

82 *Ep.* 3, 14.95–6: *epetasthēmen*. For the places and dates, *ibid.*, pp. 143*–146*. The reference to the bishop's hospitality implies that they landed at Hephaisteia, the island's capital; cf. R234.

83 Theodore Studite, *Ep.* 3, 15.99–102; Theophanes, A.M. 6281, 1.463.28–464.2. Theodore claims this was a distance of 150 miles. That is impossible with the standard Byzantine mile (1,574.16 m: Schilbach 1970, 32–6); it might fit roughly with the hypothetical mile of 1,217 m. deduced from the Hexamilion on the isthmus of Corinth (*ibid.*, 35–6), but, so far, without further support. That Liudprand's estimate of a sea distance errs in similar proportion (below, n85) suggests that there may have been a kind of Byzantine sea mile, whose existence has so far eluded detection.

84 R816. I calculate the distance as 1,280 NM, based on measuring the maps and the table of distances for yacht traffic in the Adriatic: Simovic 1986, facing p. 1. *Table of Distances* 1943, 457, gives 1,176 NM, while Ellmers 1972, 250 arrived at 1,310 NM.

85 *Legatio*, 59–61, 207.22–208.36. Current: *Sailing Directions* 1992, 148; cf. *Mediterranean Pilot* 1978–88, 3: 141–2. Liudprand reckons this as 140 miles, which is impossible in standard Byzantine terms. But see above, n83, on Theodore Studite's approximately similar miles.



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mark is suggested by the key coordinates of the next leg, which took Liudprand from Leukada to Kerkyra over four more days. The distance is again about 70 NM, which reflects the same daily rate and average speed.[86]

## 6. A ninth-century shift?

Although these eight voyages are among those which supply the most details about ship and travel speeds in the early Middle Ages, they are not the only ones. If we summarize their data, add to them other securely attested speeds of sea travel, and rank the result by increasing average speed, the whole suggests a shift in the ninth century (Table 16.3).

The lesser distances traversed in trips 1 and 2 clearly reflect unfavorable circumstances, just as the explicitly remarkable speeds of the short trips 16 and 17 are due to exceptionally favorable ones. Trips 3–8, with their average speeds of 1.25 to under 2.3 knots fit best with the general pattern observed by Pryor (average of c. 1.16 knots against the wind, and 2.25 knots with it) and the predominance of speeds of 1 and 2 knots in the Genizah materials. Trips 9–15, on the other hand, exceed both the first range and those later medieval averages with which trips 3–8 fit so smoothly. Generally speaking, this second group doubles the rates of movement of the first group. Unusually favorable conditions? This is possible but, except for trips 16 and 17, the sources do not tell us so. The loquacious Liudprand makes no comment on the speed of his trip in 949, and although its direction fitted that of the normally prevailing winds, Blasius' trip appears in fact to have been made under difficult, stormy conditions. Nor is any technological innovation known from the ninth century which could explain that ships could suddenly sail twice as fast.

The solution is much simpler. Two different clues point us in the right direction. One lies in the fact that the rates of movement of the second group approximately double those of the first group. Another emerges from closer inspection of the circumstances of the second group of voyages. Trip 13 is particularly noteworthy because it involved a fleet, which usually moved more slowly than individual ships: the slowest ship sets the pace. What is more, the necessity of maintaining a formation, indispensable in the case of a hostile landing, would suggest that these numerous ships added another complexity to the maneuvers. The explanation lies in the course. The invasion fleet sailed from the Bay of Susa to the mouth of the Mazaro river on the southern coast of Sicily. Whatever course one plots, the fleet was at sea for a minimum of some 45 and as much as 65 NM. The fleet had no choice but to sail day and night to cross

86 *Legatio*, 61–3, 208.30–210.25.



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TABLE 16.3
Average rates of travel for fifteen early medieval voyages, ranked in increasing order of average speed

| NM per day | Average speed in knots* | Date | Trip | NM | Duration (days) | Comments | Traveler | No. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 0.60 | 14 September–October c. 681–7 | Jaffa–Alexandria | 290 | 40 | east–west; against current, prevailing winds | Arculf | 1 |
| 12 | 1.00 | 30 November 725–c. 6 April 726 | Tyre–Constantinople | 1,185 | 97 | east–west; against winds? | Willibald | 2 |
| 15 | 1.25 | 19 June–17 September 653 | Portus–Constantinople | 1,390 | 91 | west–east; meltemi? | Martin I | 3 |
| 18 | 1.45 | 2–6 December 968 | Euenos river–Leukada | 70 | 4 | south–north; winter, calm sea | Liudprand | 4 |
| 18 | 1.45 | 14–18 December 968 | Leukada–Kerkyra | 70 | 4 | south–north; winter | Liudprand | 5 |
| < 26 | < 2.16 | c. 709 | Ravenna–Constantinople | 1,285 | > 50 | west–east; a miracle occurred on the 50th day of the voyage | Felix | 6 |
| 27 | 2.25 | 19 June–1 July 653 | Portus–Messina | 355 | 13 | north–south, with prevailing winds | Martin I | 7 |
| < 28 | < 2.30 | c. 692–708 | Ravenna–Constantinople–Ravenna | 2,570 | > 91 | west–east and back; estimated round trip: (somewhat) more than 3 months | exarch | 8 |
| ≥ 29 | ≥ 2.40 | 22?–26 August | Ischia–Rome | 115 | ≤4 | south–north; urgent message | news of attack | 9 |
| 29 | 2.40 | c. 867 | Taranto–Alexandria | 865 | 30 | west–east; large slaver | Bernard | 10 |
| < 35 | < 2.90 | 27 June 813–? | Zadar–Constantinople | 1,120 | > 32 | west–east | Amalarius | 11 |
| 35 | 3.00 | 867 | Jaffa–Salerno | 2,085 | 60 | east–west | Bernard | 12 |
| 48 | 4.00 | 14–17 June 827 | Susa–Mazara | 145 | 3 | south–north; invasion fleet | Asad | 13 |
| 53 | 4.44 | 25 August–17 September 949 | Venice–Constantinople | 1,280 | 24 | west–east | Liudprand | 14 |
| 69 | 5.75 | c. 892 | Rome–Methone | 830 | 12 | west–east; stormy weather | Blaise | 15 |
| 45 | 5.00 | March 793 | Elaiountes–Lemnos | 45 | 9 hours | "flying" | Theodore Studite | 16 |
| 80 | 6.60 | March 793 | Lemnos–Cape Paliouri | 80 | 1 | strong wind blowing northward | Theodore Studite | 17 |

*Note:*
*Assuming a twelve-hour day.

the straits of Sicily.[87] It suffices to recognize that, in like fashion, trips 14 and 15 kept to sea most days and nights, to understand the doubling of daily distances which they record. This is exactly the pattern in the contemporary northern seas, and is so explained in a record from King Alfred's court.[88] This was in any case inevitable for the part of voyage 15 that ran across the strait of Otranto. By the same token, the same explanation makes clear how Bernard's return trip from the Holy Land – for which he seems to say that he did not get out of the ship between the Levant and Italy – could log, against the wind, the remarkable daily distance of 30 NM. Reckoned on a twenty-four-hour sailing day, his sea speed drops to a more plausible 1.5 knots, in close conformity with Pryor's findings of an average speed of 1.25 knots against the wind.[89]

It is, moreover, notable that all the long voyages with consistently longer daily distances occurred in the ninth century or later. If the chronological distribution is reliable, the structure of navigation experienced another critical change. Alongside the purely coastal, mostly daylight sailing which appears to have prevailed in the later seventh and eighth centuries, twenty-four-hour sailing regains importance. Even if this sailing kept to coastal waters, it will have halved effective travel times. In this regard, while we may suspect that Liudprand boarded a merchant ship in Venice in 949, we can be certain that Blaise sailed aboard one c. 892 (R729). A type of sailing which had declined in frequency since the early seventh century, regained currency in the ninth.

The implication is important. We have already seen much of the more typical early medieval culture of navigation, a seaman's world in which ships were beached every night and dinner cooked on shore, and which supposes an intimate knowledge of the shorelines along which one coasted. But above all, this sailing style implies, almost inevitably, a greater regional specialization in

87 Even if the fleet stopped at Pantelleria en route to Sicily – not impossible though unrecorded – the shortest crossing from Cape Bon to Pantelleria is about 45 NM; if they did not call at Pantelleria (the shorter overall distance, which is what I have used for the speed calculation), the fleet will have been at sea for a minimum of 65 NM, from Cape Bon to Mazara del Vallo.

88 Ellmers 1972, 249, using the Old English Orosius.

89 Another 8th-C. voyage across the strait of Otranto shows high speed correlating with round-the-clock sailing, but the precise course is uncertain and yields only a range of speeds. A Beneventan ambassador sailed from some port in Apulia through a terrible storm, and arrived safely in an unspecified port on the next day and disembarked: *Translatio S. Heliani* (*BHL* 3799), 581.15–582.10. If the unnamed ports were Siponto and Dyrrachium the ship covered 162 NM, making 6.7 knots on a twenty-four-hour schedule; of course we do not know when on the next day he arrived, so the actual lapsed time could have been greater and speed somewhat less (e.g., arrival late the following day = 36 hours, 4.5 knots). A less likely alternative (see R167) is Bari–Dyrrachium or Siponto–Dubrovnik, 119 NM, i.e. 4.96 knots on a 24-hour schedule.



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navigation, a smaller operational radius, than a culture of navigation which confines its landings to a small number of distant ports. In such a regional world, the *system* of long-distance transport would consist of interlocking smaller spheres of navigation. But the study of the rates of movement of our ships alerts us to the reemergence of another culture of navigation. Let me be clear. The reemergence of continuous sailing will not have been a total novelty, nor will its success have been complete.[90] Indeed, in some attenuated form, tramping persists in the twenty-first-century Mediterranean. It is rather a question of the changing proportion of ships which are engaged in increasing stretches of continuous sailing, the first step toward a reemergence of blue-water sailing beyond the sight of land. In economic terms, such a trend toward more round-the-clock sailing would not have been inconsequential. For it would have increased the effective range of ships, as well as the velocity with which goods were moved. Both, potentially, might increase the profits the masters could make.

Southern Italy's hagiographical novels extend and deepen our knowledge of assumptions about normal travel times. Ten more trips come from the Life of St. Gregory of Agrigento.[91] The Greek-speaking author appears to have been a monk in Rome – he certainly knew the city and its churches – and was writing c. 800. Given Rome's frequent contacts with Sicily, we would expect him to be most familiar with shipping patterns linking the two regions, and he does show first-hand knowledge of southern Sicily. Although, as our prosopographical study has already shown, a Greek monk active at Rome at this time will have experienced first-hand the arrival of travelers from the east, his detailed knowledge of traffic from Constantinople or points further afield might be less authoritative.[92] For seven voyages mentioned in this Life, the most likely route is pretty clear; for three others (nos. 7–9), I have identified the most plausible among several possibilities (Table 16.4).

Broadly speaking, the data are coherent and compare favorably with the data we have found on actual voyages. According to the author, trip 1 involved delays, and it works out to the slowest average speed for a 12-hour sailing schedule. The trips about which the author must have been best informed are slow, given the generally easy sailing conditions down the coast of southern Italy. The two fastest

90 Claude 1985b, 60–1 has assembled the evidence for occasional early medieval night sailing. It is worth noting that all of his sources save one date from before c. 650. The exception is the *V. Gregorii Agrigenti*, on whose travel times, see below.

91 See already on the *Life*'s travel speeds Claude 1985b, 64 (who accepted the *Life* as an essentially valid historical source of c. 600); in his introduction to the *V. Gregorii Agrigenti*, Berger, pp. 51–2, also analyzed its data on travel conditions.

92 Thus Berger, *ibid.*, p. 51. Against his assertion (50n110) that every Greek monk in Rome – and thus this author too – necessarily came from Byzantine Italy, see above, Ch. 8.2.



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TABLE 16.4

Rates of movement: voyages in the *Vita Gregorii Agrigenti* (BHG 707; cf. Map 16.1)

| NM/ day | Speed* (knots) | Dates | Trip | Distance (NM) | Duration (days) | Comments | Reference | No. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| c. 13 | c. 1.08 | after 10 June–14 September | Agrigento–Constantinople | 1,210 | c. 96 | west–east; delayed | 232.15–17 | 1 |
| ≥17 | c. 1.42 | after 10 May–10 June | Rome–Agrigento | 530 | ≤31 | north–south | 232.11–12 | 2 |
| 18 | 1.5 | c. 10 August–10 September | Rome–Agrigento | 530 | 30 | north–south | 263.5–10 | 3 |
| 19 | 1.6 | 16 August–10 September | Rome–Palermo | 465 | 25 | north–south | 202.15–16 | 4 |
| 20 | 1.66 | 27 June | Licata–Agrigento | 20 | 1 | north–south | 164.7–9 | 5 |
| 26 to 40 | 2.16 to 4.5 | departs after 12 May, arrives before 15 June–20 July | Constantinople–Rome | 1,405 | 54–35 | east–west | 262.1–263.2 | 6 |
| 36 | 3 | 1–15 June | Tripoli–Licata | 540 | 15 | south–north; coastal route reckoned via Sfax, Malta | 164.1–6 | 7 |
| 58 | 4.8 | ? | Rome–Carthage | 580 | 10 | north–south; course reckoned via Sicily; "διὰ δέκα ἡμερῶν" | 174.27–8 | 8 |
| 68 | 5.6 | 30 June–2 July | Agrigento–Carthage | 205 | 3 | north–south; coastal route reckoned via Mazara and Pantelleria; favorable wind; "μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας" | 150.16 | 9 |
| 70 | 5.8 | c. 12 September–14 September | Palermo–Agrigento | 140 | 2 | north–south; "favorable wind," "δύο ἡμερῶν" | 203.17–19 | 10 |

*Note:*

*Assuming a twelve-hour day.

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rates of movement are also the shortest voyages (nos. 9–10), as was true for the historical trips of Table 16.3. What is more, the author explicitly recognizes them as favored by the winds. Outside these exceptionally fast and short voyages, the rates of movement again fall into two groups, of which the faster (nos. 6–8) approximately double the slower (nos. 1–5). Like the historical voyages, trip 7 both covers longer daily distances, and necessarily implies a minimum of two stretches of 75 NM without landfall that dictated a twenty-four-hour sailing schedule.[93] One of the fastest trips (no. 9) also fits this pattern, for even if a ship coasted along the southern shore of Sicily to Mazara, there was no escaping twenty-four-hour sailing for over half of the course, from Mazara to Pantelleria and then on to Cape Bon, distances of c. 65 and 45 NM respectively. What is more, this three-day crossing substantially corresponds to Table 14.3, trip 13, which also occurred in June, albeit in the opposite direction.[94] If the sea speed for movements 6–10 is reckoned on a twenty-four-hour sailing day, they fall back within the normal parameters attested by historical voyages. In trips 8 and 10, the exact phrasing of the Greek reinforces our conclusion about why they covered greater daily distances.[95]

In sum, the ten voyages described in the Life of Gregory of Agrigento conform to the general pattern of the historically attested trips. They also suggest that some twenty-four-hour sailing may already have been occurring in the decades on either side of 800. Like the earliest historical example from the ninth century, moreover, two out of three cases of likely twenty-four-hour sailing concerned trips which necessarily involved the high seas.

To round out this excursion into early medieval fiction, Table 16.5 gives the data from three more south Italian romances. One is inclined to suspect that most, and perhaps all, of these performances involved twenty-four-hour travel, the more so that trips 2 and 3 sailed into the teeth of the prevailing winds, trip 1 inevitably involved a lengthy leg of high seas sailing, and trip 2 explicitly included night-sailing, at least at the outset, and an imperial command to spare no effort for speed. Trip 4, which is the highest daily average I have yet encountered in this kind of source, perhaps involved a special display of divine favor. In any case, we are explicitly told this time that they sailed around the clock. This reduces the real

93 The blue-water legs are from Africa to Lampedusa and from Linosa to Malta.

94 As Leslie Dossey pointed out to me, the presumably late antique *Passio Felicis Tubzacensis* (*BHL* 2895), 270.14–23, preserves an account of a four-day voyage from Carthage to Agrigento. The itinerary thereafter is Catania, Messina, Taormina and Velia, and then overland to Venosa.

95 In both cases, the Greek suggests that the trip was accomplished through continuous sailing. *Dia* with the genitive in classical Greek carries a nuance of uninterrupted duration which is not entirely lost in modern Greek, e.g., Thumb 1964, 104. The other travel times are expressed by arrival and departure dates or, for trip 9, with the preposition *meta* (150.16).



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TABLE 16.5
Rates of movement: voyages in the southern Italian hagiographical novels

| NM/ day | Speed* (knots) | Date | Trip | Distance (NM) | Duration (days) | Traveler | Comments | No. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 30 | 2.50 | "apostolic age" (9th–10th C.) | Alexandria–Andros | 445 | 15 | St. Leucius | south–north; course reckoned via Crete | 1 |
| 39 | 3.25 | 9th C. (c. 815–29) | Constantinople–Catania | 1,175 | 30 | Byzantine official | east–west; sailed that very night, διὰ νυκτός and fast | 2 |
| 43 | 3.50 | iconoclast? | Naxos–Naples | 945 | 22 | St. Nicon | east–west | 3 |
| 113 | 9.40 | same | Chios–Mt. Ganos | 225 | 2 | St. Nicon | south–north; ship sailed for 2 days and 2 nights | 4 |

*Note:*
*Reckoned on a twelve-hour sailing day.
*Sources:* 1. *Vita Leucii* (BHL 4894), p. 364. 2. *V. Leonis Catan.* (BHG 981), 8, 90.1–91.9. 3, 4. *Passio Niconis* (BHG 1369), 10 and 6–7, respectively, *16F and B–C.

average speed to an impressive but still believable 5.2 knots. Reckoned on a twenty-four-hour sailing schedule, the 3.25 knots of the Life of Leo of Catania drops to about half that, and so approaches the pattern established for other voyages which, for long stretches, sailed against the prevailing winds.[96]

And so change affected the total number of shipping and other movements we can detect, it affected their seasonality, and it affected, for some ships, the rate of travel. The durations of embassies hinted that some things changed in the ninth century. Speeds of land travel, on the other hand, look unexpectedly stable throughout the Middle Ages, at least as far as the links with Italy are concerned. Historical sources yielded a surprising number of voyages whose rates of movements can be calculated. The hagiographic novels generally reinforce the historical data. Much sea travel moved at rates which are slow, implying daily distances of some 15–25 NM; less favorable conditions, naturally, produce lesser daily distances. A significant number of voyages record performances above, and even well above, that daily range. The highest performances are explicitly attributed to exceptionally favorable conditions. But there is reason to believe that a good part of the lengthier daily trajectories are due simply to the decision to stay at sea at night. This had the effect of doubling overall rates of movement at sea while requiring minimal technological change. Is it an accident that most of the evidence for longer daily stretches comes from the ninth and tenth centuries? It converges felicitously with the change in expected duration of embassies from Italy to Constantinople, which seems to have dropped from around eleven months in the middle of the eighth century to around eight months 100 years later. Of course, the move toward round-the-clock sailing only affected part of the shipping plying the early medieval Mediterranean; the older style of nightly landings persisted alongside the newer trend.

As movements increased, some also quickened. No major technological change, but rather a change in sailing culture allowed the acceleration: an increasing number of ships, on an increasing number of occasions, preferred to

96 Pryor 1992, 36. I have not included a rich but controversial source that offers remarkable data on sailing patterns in the eastern Mediterranean. John Kaminiates' *De expugnatione Thessalonicae* claims to be an eyewitness account of the capture of Thessalonica and transport of its population into slavery in July 904. A. P. Kazhdan (1978) maintained that its narrative style and realia are out of step with the early 10th C. and suspected it to be a 15th-C. fabrication inspired by the Ottoman advance; contra: Tsaras 1988. According to Christides 1981, a late Byzantine forger incorporated a lost authentic account, particularly for the navigational details. For now, it seems wiser to refrain from building on this source. Its raiding fleet mostly sailed on a twenty-four-hour schedule, averaged a fleet speed of around 2 knots when under way, and mixed coastal sailing with blue-water courses.



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sail day and night, and thereby doubled the distances they could routinely cover. We will need to consider what historical, and perhaps especially, what economic forces might have encouraged skippers who were not acting under imperial orders to shift toward a different structural pattern of their voyages, and what the consequences of such a growing shift might have been. Were there more cargoes that were more fragile? Was demand increasing on one or both sides of the water, providing an incentive to quicker trips? But first we need to scrutinize our early medieval travelers' movements from another angle, that of routes.



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# 17

# "Spaces of sea": Europe's western Mediterranean communications

In Charlemagne's day, travel to Constantinople meant salt water. "Crossing the spaces of sea," was how a court poet imagined the king's daughter would get to Byzantium, while *Sea Verses* seemed an apt title for a poem about Amalarius' trip a generation later.[1] The Mediterranean Sea has dominated scholars' investigations of early medieval communications no less than royal courtiers' imaginations. Rightly so, since the Roman communications that once coursed along the continental corridors of the Danube or the Via Egnatia had ceased entirely in the seventh century (Ch.3.2).

In the age of Charlemagne and Harun al Rashid, what *routes* funneled contacts between eastern and western areas of what had been the Roman empire?[2] Routes, we sometimes imagine, are predetermined by geography. Physical geography and climate do in fact define the possibilities. But they do so in complicity with human technology and culture, as historical developments affected which possibilities would be exploited. So far, the history of routes has played little part in the debate over long-distance trade in the early Middle Ages. Yet we have seen that routes changed. A systematic analysis of the spatial patterns of travelers' movements forces a new appraisal of the geographic structure of Carolingian communications. Data of varying and independent origins discloses some clear patterns. Development and growth are among them.

How people got from the western to the eastern areas of the former Roman empire changed dramatically between 700 and 900. The routes increased, from one main route to five or more, depending on how finely one distinguishes them. They also changed in nature, as what were mainly sea routes came to be flanked by

1 Peter of Pisa, *Carmina*, no. 12, 11, p. 62; cf. Paul Deacon's response, no. 13, 10, p. 67. Amalarius himself calls his poem "Versus marini": *Opera liturgica*, 1.231.19.

2 Four earlier studies merit mention: Pertusi 1964, esp. 82–92; Hubert 1964; the imaginative though poorly documented work of Lombard 1972, 73–94; and Micheau 1979. On the concept of routes, as opposed to roads (or, indeed, navigational courses), see Denecke 1979, 439–42.



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combined land and sea or almost exclusively overland routes. They may have changed, finally, in structure: we shall have to watch for their components, whether they be interlocking regional transport networks or long-distance carriers.

Around 700, such contacts as persisted between eastern and western Christendom were essentially seaborne. Just one great sea lane remained open, the ancient, northerly trunk route that linked Rome and Byzantium via Sicily and around Greece. We shall begin with that route and its traffic. The rest of this chapter will concentrate on the western Mediterranean. A swift glance will discern the quickening pace of communications along the southern rim, in the new Islamic polity that was rising out of the rubble of Rome. This will help us make sense of striking new developments in southern Italian waters. Further north, we will observe the increasing number of ships along the shores of Tuscany. In the course of the eighth century, communications will grow denser in each zone. And they will begin to spill over into the neighboring region, as new networks took shape along the edges of the empty spaces of sea.

## 1. The ancient trunk route from Italy to the Aegean

For much of the eighth century, a seaborne axis extending from Rome around Greece to the Aegean dominated Christendom's communications (Map 8.1). It skirted the coast of the Tyrrhenian Sea, struggled through the turbulent strait of Messina and crossed the deep and dangerous Ionian Sea to the Greek coast and the shelter of the Ionian islands. From there, travelers sailed around the Peloponnesus and north into the Aegean. Sicily was the crucial hinge. Whether or not it was smoking, massive Mount Etna guided westbound sailors securely toward the strait of Messina and Sicily's eastern seaboard, along which a branch of the main route ran southward, down to the provincial capital at Syracuse. Naples, Reggio di Calabria, Messina, the great rock of Monemvasia (Figure 5.1) and one or another Aegean island were the main ports along the lifeline linking Constantinople and Rome. And, as we have seen, a host of lesser settlements, coves and islands offered weary sailors respite along the way (Ch. 13.3). At either end, this great trunk route could extend northward. Some late Roman ships had plied past Rome toward Marseilles, while in the east ships worked northward through the Aegean toward Constantinople. A further extender ran east along the Asian coast, past the maritime district of Pamphylia, toward the Byzantine border town of Seleukeia, and across to Cyprus and the Levant.[3]

3 The route has been described many times over, from the Middle Ages down to modern *Sailing Directions*. See, for the Middle Ages, esp. Pryor 1992, 92–7; for the



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The central segment was ancient. It had been one of the main courses set by the great grain fleets of Alexandria that fed Rome.[4] Activity on the northern leg to Constantinople had surged and declined as the city mushroomed and shrank in late antiquity, but it never ceased. In one form or another, the Sicily–Monemvasia sector continues in use down to the present day. What was new in the seventh century was that the disrupted overland traffic and the withering of other shipping lanes gave this ancient axis a near monopoly on east–west communications.

Though it is easy to glimpse segments, few witnesses depict the whole trunk route between Constantinople and the west. Martin I's death trip from Rome to Constantinople, down the Tyrrhenian coast, to the layover in Messina and landings in Calabria, on "many islands," at Naxos and Abydos, has provided a clear conspectus (above, p. 486). Two excellent descriptions show that this seventh-century pattern lived on in the eighth. For this was the course Pope Constantine set to Constantinople over the winter of 710/11, and this was how Willibald and his companions sailed, in the spring of 723, toward Jerusalem.

The papal court boarded their ships at Porto Romano (Portus) and sailed to Sicily via Naples.[5] From there they reached Reggio and then sailed directly (*transfretavit*) across the Gulf of Taranto from Crotone to Gallipoli.[6] As we have seen, the winter weather prevented the papal convoy from crossing the Ionian sea immediately: the ships stalled at Otranto until the winds shifted (above, p. 463f). The next notable stop came in the Cyclades. On Kea, the patrician and commander of the Imperial Fleet welcomed the papal party as "they reached the region of Greece."[7] From there they sailed to the harbor of the Hebdomon ("At

experience of 14th-C. Genoese navigators, Balard 1974; cf. e.g. the 15th-C. Parma–Magliabecchi Portulan.

4 The other was the coastal way along Africa, Casson 1995, 297; cf. Rougé 1966, 86–99; and Ch. 4. Nonetheless, as Pryor 1992, 6–7, 90 and 99, makes abundantly clear, for navigational reasons, the more northerly trunk route normally must have been the preferred course.

5 R73; *Liber pont.*, Mommsen, 222.18–223.21. On Porto Romano, see Schmiedt 1978, 159–63; Naples: *ibid.*, 173–6. The pope may have sailed down to Syracuse to see the *strategos*, who was suffering from a fever, or the latter may have come to see the pope at Messina: the Latin ("occurrens pontifici," 223.10–12) is ambivalent, since it allows both a ceremonial *occursus* and actual travel to greet the pope.

6 Cf. the identical course of 14th-C. Genoese navigators, depicted in Balard 1974, map facing 248, and the difficult crossing from Crotone in Pellegro Maraboto's log, 1–5 October 1369, *ibid.*, 261. On the ports of Reggio, Crotone and Gallipoli, Schmiedt 1978, 185–6, 188–9 and 194.

7 Theophilus was stratēgos of the Karabisianoi. Mommsen's punctuation of this passage ("Unde [*sc.* Hydrunto] egressi, partes Graeciae coniungentes, in insula, quae dicitur Cea occurrit Theophilus . . ." *Liber pont.*, 223.18–20) rightly corrects Duchesne's (*Liber pont.*, 1.390.9–11). Although *coniungere* is often used intransitively when it means "arrive" at this stage in *Liber pont.* (e.g. Mommsen 223.16), a transitive usage was not unthinkable in 8th-C. Italy (cf. e.g. "coniunxerat . . . Romam" of the "A" class



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the Seventh Milestone") complex outside Constantinople.[8] Since the papal ships reached Greece only via the Aegean Sea, the convoy manifestly did not transit across the isthmus of Corinth; rather the ships circumnavigated the Peloponnesus. Willibald's voyage makes this explicit twelve years later. After a first, short sea link from Gaeta to Naples, he sailed to Reggio, over to Catania and Syracuse and across the Ionian Sea, and around Greece to Monemvasia. Then they crossed the Cyclades to Kos, Samos and Ephesus. Later, he would catch another ship in the Aegean and take the trunk route's eastern extender along the Asian coast to Syria, via Cyprus (Ch. 5.1).

These trips are exceptional only in that they are so well documented, for they followed the habitual route of their time. Infection is once again a precious informant. Like its fourteenth-century successor, the spread of the last great plague of antiquity maps with deadly precision the main route of contemporary shipping.[9] Its path proves that the trunk route was the usual one, some twenty years after Willibald's trip. From Italy to Constantinople, the contagion struck the imperial capital in the summer of 747 (R153). In a contemporary's words, it "started from Sicily and Calabria, spreading like some kind of fire to Monemvasia and Greece and the adjacent islands," before reaching Constantinople.[10]

The way the plague moved reveals more than the main shipping line between east and west in the 740s. The epidemic actually had begun much closer to Constantinople. It broke out in northern Mesopotamia in the winter of 743–4 and spread that spring. It seems to have hit Syria in 744, and it certainly returned in 745; it reached Egypt in 744. By 745, it had also infected north Africa, where it would recur regularly for seven years.[11] In other words, an exceptionally lethal strain of bubonic plague had been raging inside the Caliphate for more than three years *before* it made its way to the Byzantine capital. What is more, the course of the infection seems to defy geography: it traveled not from the Levantine provinces closest to Byzantium's Aegean heartland, but from the empire's extreme western edge. If we remember that shipboard rats were the prime long-distance vectors of the infected fleas which carry the bacillus, and that their preferred niche was the kind of cargo storage associated with bulk transport, the

Footnote 7 (*cont.*)
of MSS, *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.408.4 with the apparatus). The *partes Graeciae* correspond exactly to the Greek τὰ τῆς Ἑλλάδος μέρη which in the nearly contemporaneous *Miracula S. Demetrii* (*BHG* 516z–23), 2.156–7 with nn247–8, designates this region.

8 *Liber pont.*, Mommsen, 223.20–1: "A quo loco navigantes venerunt ad septimo miliario Constantinopolim." The Hebdomon port went back to Valens: C. Mango, *ODB* 2: 907.

9 On these correlations, see in general McNeill 1976, 101–2, 109–14, 128–31, Biraben and Le Goff 1975, Conrad 1981, 299–300, and McCormick 1998a, 52–65.

10 Theophanes, A.M. 6238, 1.422.29–423.5. The place of "Greece" in the sequence matches that of Pope Constantine's trip.

11 Conrad 1981, 293–9.



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implication is unmistakable. In 744 and 745, rare indeed were the cargo ships entering Byzantine space directly from its immediate Arab-controlled neighborhood. The Middle East, including Alexandria, the hub of Mediterranean shipping in late antiquity, was sending no ships to Constantinople in 745.

No source explicitly documents the transmission of the disease from the area of modern-day Tunisia 45 NM across the strait of Sicily. But chronology and circumstance make a powerful case that this was the course of the infection.[12] From Sicily, the Byzantine shipping network launched the contagion on its lethal route toward the capital. It was through its most distant margin, over the most circuitous sea route imaginable, that the Byzantine heartland connected to the Islamic economy around 745. A last striking feature is how gradually the plague spread within the Byzantine empire. This feature will tell us something about the structure of early medieval shipping routes.

Westbound ships sailing the main trunk route took a slight variant in the lower Tyrrhenian Sea, where eastbound travelers hugged the Italian peninsula. Navigational conditions imposed it. Late in the seventh century, the pilgrim Arculf had sailed from Constantinople to Rome, via Sicily and the Aeolian island of Vulcano; a generation later, Willibald returned homeward to Naples, via Syracuse, Catania, Reggio, and Vulcano (R43; R125; R214). The stop on the Aeolian islands (Map 16.1) underscores the exactness of these accounts. Prevailing winds thereabouts vary from southwest to northwesterly. It would have been very hard for early medieval ships to beat northward along the Italian coast against them. They had to skirt the islands with whatever winds came from the south, and then head northeastward toward the Calabrian coast.[13]

Only the old trunk route and its extensions connected Italy and Constantinople for most of the eighth century. Fleets dispatched from Constantinople to the western Mediterranean necessarily set this course. Between a failed reconquest of Africa in 697 and a squadron sent to relieve Messina in 901, warfleets moved along the trunk route at least fifteen times. They sailed more frequently as Byzantine Italy came under growing threats from the 780s.[14] But warships were not alone on the ancient route: an eighth-century relic tag seems to trace an unknown pilgrim's voyage along it.[15]

12 Thus already in Amari 1933–9, 1: 302; cf. Conrad 1981, 298–9.

13 *Mediterranean Pilot* 1978–88, 2: 203 (10.1); cf. Diagrams 12–13, "Wind distribution."

14 In these cases, the nature of the movements implies identity of the ships from beginning to end of the route – whereas travelers might take overland legs – and the practical absence of other routes rules out any ambiguity. See R52 and R56; R139; R198; R220; R310; R410; R439; R450; R604; R623; R653; R681; R701; R720; R747; another fleet was rumored to have been sent from Constantinople against Rome and Francia – which can only mean the Provençal seaboard at this date: R165.

15 At Chelles, *ChLA* no. 669, 35 may reflect relics collected in Gaul, northern Italy or Rome, and Ephesus: see above, p. 312.



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The route remained active. At least three more Holy Land travelers turned to it for the long haul to western Europe in the course of the ninth century.[16] Around 892, a merchant ship with business in the Aegean was still sailing it from Rome (R729). Glimpses of ships are pretty common. But it is rarely clear whether the segment we can see was the whole voyage, or only one leg in a longer trajectory. Passengers and goods crop up as they board ships, for instance, from Sicily to Rome, or from Reggio to the Peloponnesus, and, of course, from Sicily to Constantinople.[17] Historical fiction tells the same story. Ships move routinely along the ancient trunk route in the Italo-Greek novels written around 800: papal convoys travel to Rome from Sicily, bishops and monks naturally sail the same route, and the emperor commands his official to sail to Sicily and return to Constantinople within 60 days. Even magic can chart no other course: this was the only way to Constantinople and the east. A sorcerer's ship flies north from Catania to Reggio, then she streaks through the air to Crotone and zooms across to Otranto en route to the imperial capital, along the same sea lane the pope and pilgrim had sailed a century earlier.[18] Another hagiographer's hero hopped into a ship on the beach near Naples and sailed off to Constantinople, but then changed his mind and disembarked on Chios.[19]

In sum, for the eighth century, there is almost no hint of any other itinerary between Constantinople and Rome, even in the imaginary world of fiction. This makes it more than likely that communications between Rome and Sicily, or between old and new Rome which transited via Sicily, also sailed this sea lane when we do not get conclusive details of the route. Routine obviated mention of infrastructural details.[20] Once in a blue moon other routes may have been

16 Count Gebahard's deacon sailed home from Jerusalem to Rome: R242. This must have been the route Michael Synkellos had in mind when he set out for Rome from Jerusalem, via Constantinople: R286. Bernard almost certainly traveled this way when he went from Lydda to the vicinity of Salerno in sixty days; the time involved makes it virtually impossible that he could have traveled along the coast of Egypt and north Africa: R580. On the advantages of the northern route over the southern for sailing and oared ships, see e.g., Pryor 1992, 6–7, 90 and 99.

17 A few examples which certainly involved ships: the transport of huge beams from Calabria to Rome must have been over water: R45 and R90; Elias Speliotes sailed from Sicily to Rome: R692; Elias the Younger fled Arab attacks, from Calabria to Greece: R685 and R719; a mother and son sailed from Reggio to Naples: R742; Peter of Tauriana found a ship bound for Constantinople in Sicily and was able to carry out the mission entrusted to him by the local governor: R323.

18 Leontius, *V. Greg. Agrig.* e.g., 61, 219.23–4; 25, 176.29–31, 46, 202.15–17, respectively; *V. Leonis Cataniae*, 9, 89.1–90.6; 12, 93.1–17.

19 *Passio Niconis*, 5, *16B.

20 A few examples: documents and/or news R84 and R322; delegations and embassies: R132–3; R206; R208–9, where the legates presumably felt they could escape from Sicily to Rome or return to Constantinople as the tumultuous events surrounding II Nicaea dictated; R217 (presumably the *spatharioi* were coming, ultimately, from



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attempted, but they saw little or no regular traffic. Thus, writing c. 731–41, a member of the papal entourage blamed the stratēgos of Sicily for the repeated failure of Roman emissaries to reach Constantinople: there was no alternative to the main trunk route via that island.[21]

Early eighth-century western connections with the Levant also prolong this axis' seventh-century pattern in another way. So far as we can tell, western travelers usually transited via the Byzantine empire. This is not so obvious as it may appear. One might think that endemic warfare between Byzantium and the Caliphate might have made the old trunk route less appealing to neutral travelers like Aquitainians or Anglo-Saxons; it would in fact soon be supplanted. Nonetheless, all trips between the west and the Holy Land around 700 whose routes are known transited through the Byzantine empire. They follow the main axis we have described between Rome and Constantinople or Aegean ports like Ephesus. Further connections to or from the Holy Land ran via Cyprus or Crete and Alexandria.[22]

The great sea lane channeled more than just hagiographical heroes and pilgrims, even in the most obscure years of the early eighth century. It has been observed that all major naval engagements between Arabs and Christians were fought on the Mediterranean's major routes; most ninth-century battles occurred precisely along this one.[23] Many of the Greek immigrants to Rome must have boarded ships sailing some segment of this course, and some commodities, ideas, and books traveled with them. Traffic on this route helps explain immigration to Rome from Sicily, and probably also from Athens (e.g. R134 and R147). Along this ancient route the bishop of Monemvasia must have fled to Rome or, in the opposite direction, a cleric from Reggio gained appointment to the episcopal see of Kerkyra.[24] Whether by commerce or imperial command, coins struck at ninth-century Syracuse probably traveled this sea lane eastward and followed its northern extension all the way across the Black Sea to Cherson.[25]

Some developments had reinforced the main trunk's importance in the seventh and eighth century, while others diminished potential rivals. The African and Italian fiscal exports to Constantinople that swelled briefly around 655–70 must have increased trunk route traffic.[26] The short-lived transfer of the imperial headquarters to Sicily in the 660s dictated, however briefly, substantial reinforcement of lines of

Constantinople); R214; R237; R243 (possible).

21 *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.416.16–417.1.

22 Four trips from the 680s to the 720s: R42–3; Thomas' seven-year pilgrimage had taken him from Rome to Jerusalem by an unspecified route, but c. 720 he returned to Italy via Ephesus: R62; Willibald went in both directions via the Aegean and the Asian coast: R108, R110 and R117.

23 Pryor 1992, 106–11, making the point also that Islamic colonization followed the same pattern.

24 R339. Another possible case: R314. On contacts between neighboring regions of the empire, see McCormick 1998b, 41–2.

25 Sokolova 1965 offers no details; cf. Morrisson 1998.

26 McCormick 1998a, 78–80.



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communications leading back to Constantinople, as well as toward Africa and continental Italy and may even have left tangible traces in the Sicilian waters facing Africa.[27] The withdrawal of the imperial administration of Africa to Sardinia implies a resurgence in administrative contacts between that island and Constantinople; those contacts too traveled via Sicily and the main trunk route. The numismatic evidence bears this out: a hoard of Byzantine coins probably reflects someone's flight from fallen Africa to Sardinia c. 685–95 (Appendix 3: B20); tellingly, Sicilian coins figure alongside a majority of Carthaginian issues. A Sicilian deacon represented the archbishop of Sardinia at the ecumenical council in 787, ecclesiastics traveled at least sporadically between Sardinia, Sicily, and Constantinople in the ninth century, and Sardinian soldiers left their mark on Byzantine ceremonies.[28] As far as rival routes are concerned, the Slavs so dominated Greece that even the impregnable offshore fortress of Byzantine Monemvasia appeared to be "in Slavinia land" to Willibald.[29] The Arab conquest of the Near East blocked the overland route to Byzantine Africa through Palestine and Egypt. At the same time, expanding Arab control of the southern shoreline and growing naval power intensified for northern ships the inherent navigational disadvantages of southern Mediterranean shipping routes.

For a variety of reasons, the old sea lane from Rome to the east via Sicily and Monemvasia persisted almost alone as the Europeans' eastward route in the first decades of the eighth century. Yet within a generation or two of the nadir, change was in the air. Toward 750, other routes which fed into the main trunk line quickened again.

## 2. Southern rim: communications between the Maghreb and the Muslim center

While the northern sea lane maintained the precarious links between what was left of the Christian world, new communication patterns were solidifying within the Caliphate. Those that ran along the Mediterranean's southern rim linked the Maghreb, or "west," to the Muslim heartland in the Middle East, and their

27 On the route from Africa to Constans II's capital of Syracuse, the exceptionally large cargo ship found at Pantano Longarini (Parker 1992, no. 787), is dated by $C_{14}$ to A.D. 500 ( $\pm$ 120) and A.D. 622 ( $\pm$ 48); cf. Table 13.1. Two ships, reportedly of late 7th-C. date and of undetermined size, were discovered and looted at Punta Secca: Parker 1992, no. 968.

28 Pros. "Epiphanius" and Anons. 237–8; acclamations: Constantine VII, *De ceremoniis*, 2, 43, 650.14–651.12. See in general McCormick 1998b, 30n25; cf. for Sicilian coins on Sardinia, Appendix 3, e.g. B39, B41, B45; and Morrisson 1998.

29 "In Slawinia terrae" (sic), Hugeburc, *V. Willib.*, 93.12–13.



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significance reaches beyond the Muslim world, although western historians have so far paid them little heed. For now, the movements of immigrants, armies, pilgrims, scholars, and traders best sketch these communications within the Muslim world, but coin deposits are beginning to fill in the picture.[30] Specialists have started to recover their importance in the eighth and ninth centuries.[31] Ships certainly followed the coastline of northern Africa between Egypt and the Muslim west. For instance, a Visigothic king's granddaughter sailed from Spain to Ascalon en route to Damascus, showing that the Levantine shipping hub of late antiquity was still (or once again) functioning in the second quarter of the eighth century.[32] But it was a treacherous shore, and many more travelers must have done as our own Elias the Younger, and moved overland.[33]

In fact, the volume of traffic in the eighth century was big enough to leave tracks in the Christian north (Ch. 17.3). This suggests that the eleventh-century caravans tramping across Ifriqiya, Muslim north Africa, between Morocco and Egypt, began by the ninth century, or even earlier.[34] The annual pilgrimage (*ḥajj*) to Mecca was obviously capable of stimulating communications, although non-Muslims were not supposed to travel with its caravans. The late eighth century was a time of heightened investment and prestige for the huge pilgrimages to the holy cities of Arabia, and the annual religious caravans may well have had spillover effects on the broader transport system along the southern rim of the Mediterranean.[35] We

30 E.g. Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 1: 44–7, 81–5, etc. For an overview of 8th-C. immigration to Spain, see Tāha 1989, 110–65. In smaller numbers, it continued into the 9th C., e.g. the historian Ahmad al Razi's father, a trader who came to Cordova from Persia c. 864: Tāha 1989, 4. Cf. Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 3: 488–93, on 9th-C. intellectuals. On Spanish, Idrisi, and Aghlabid African coins found in the east, see Manzano Moreno (in press).

31 Most notably in an unpublished paper delivered by Olivia R. Constable at the Medieval Academy of America meeting in April 1999.

32 R113. On Ascalon and Gaza shipping in the 6th and 7th C., see above, Ch. 4.3. Many of the later voyages listed in Udovitch 1978, Table 1 seem to follow this course.

33 Pryor 1992, 21–4, on the difficulties of navigating along the African shore; it is unclear whether the Alexandrian envoy to Rome went overland from Egypt to Africa: R171. Isaac and the Carolingian delegation to Baghdad certainly did so: R254; also R674; and from the realm of legend, Leontius, *V. Gregorii Agrig.*, 9, 154.1–2; cf. 18–19, 164.18–3 (sic). One suspects that this was true of Frotmund, R521; whether he traveled by land or sea between Egypt and Carthage, his story clearly reflects this route.

34 For instance, Bell 1913 interpreted a Berlin papyrus to mean that *sailors* supplied by Antinoe in 712 were to travel overland to Cyrenaica, where they would join the fleet being prepared for the raid of 713; for the caravans, Goitein 1967–93, 1: 212; 275–81.

35 *Ibid.*, 281; see in general A. J. Wensick *et al.*, "Ḥadjdj," *EI* 3 (1971), 31–8 (esp. B. Lewis, 37–8); on the early Abbasid and, particularly, Harun al Rashid's enormous financial and personal investment in the Hajj, see Peters 1994, 69–71; an edifying parallel comes from the commercial dimensions of the Hajj under the Ottomans, Faroqhi 1990, 200–22.



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might even suspect that the great pilgrimages affected commerce directly: a few, better-documented, centuries later, the pilgrimage caravan transported more than pilgrims. The countless sacks of spices and other oriental wares it carried to Egypt from Mecca could be counted on to flood the Nile's markets.[36]

But peaceful land and sea communications along the Muslim shore were only part of a bigger picture. As the eighth century opened, sea raids surged across the straits of Sicily. They may well have been coordinated from Damascus. The Arabs had driven the Byzantine navy from Carthage in 698, and the caliphal governor quickly set about establishing a naval infrastructure in Tunis.[37] Between 700 and 710, five Arab squadrons are known to have sailed north toward Italy, hitting Pantelleria, Sicily (probably repeatedly), and Sardinia (R58, R63–4, R66, R76). Then came a lull of nearly two decades broken by only one expedition (R104), until raiders returned to Sicily in force between 727 and 735. After two more major spasms in 740 and 752–3, attacks ceased altogether for almost fifty years. The raids show a north African shipping world that was coming to life again with unpleasant consequences for Byzantine Italy; but it is the lulls that catch our attention.

There is good reason to believe that the clustering of attacks is real, rather than an artifact of source preservation.[38] That attacks on Sicily subsided between 711 and 727 is readily explicable. Other colossal enterprises absorbed the African Arabs' energies: the invasion of Spain in 711 and, less successfully, the great siege of Constantinople, which entailed such heavy losses of ships and men.[39] After

36 Goitein 1967–93, 1: 276.

37 R57. On state sponsorship of the early 8th-C. raids, Guichard 1983, 57–8.

38 The second surge in attacks might actually have begun in A.H. 107, A.D. 725–6: Amari 1933–9, 1: 297n2. The later Arab historians of Africa are our main witnesses, but their testimony receives sporadic confirmation elsewhere. The papyri from Aphrodito in Egypt provide contemporary evidence of a coordinated effort to support sea raids against the Byzantine empire from Africa, Egypt, and Syria, chiefly in 708, 709, and 710: e.g. P. Lond. 4.1349, 1351, 1353–5, 1392, etc. This fits well with the later Arab historians' account of the refurbishment of the naval infrastructure at Tunis, including the transfer there of Copts: R57. P. Lond. 4.1350 (A.D. 710), independently corroborates one of the raids on Sicily: R63. That raids continued against Sicily after the peace of 728 is known from a papal report of 813: R124. An ill-dated raid of the 8th C. described in Greek hagiography can plausibly be assigned to the first half, and might be identical with one of those recorded by the Arab sources: R59.

39 Amari 1933–9, 1: 296–7, observed the correlation with the conquest of Spain; on the fleet's possible role in Spain, see Ageil 1985, 147–57. The lengthy involvement there of naval forces seems now to be confirmed: R99, although the chronology raises the possibility of confusion with the return of whatever survived of the fleet sent against Constantinople; R95. An Arab and Greek papyrus of November 713 documents the levy of Egyptian sailors from Antinoe for a raid to be mounted from Africa in indiction 13, but whether the attack involved Spain, Sicily, some



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740, Arab attacks ebbed again, as civil disturbances in Ifriqiya and vigorous Byzantine defensive measures gained strength.[40] And of course the last great episode of the plague made the marshaling of ships and men especially difficult.

When they were occurring, there is no mistaking that the raids were war. They caused certain suffering and damage where they struck, and they unfolded against a backdrop of Arab imperial expansion. But from an African perspective, the violence had a positive economic dimension, for the attacks produced slaves and plunder.[41] In this sense, these slave- and booty-gathering expeditions foreshadowed the integration of southernmost Italy into the new north African economy. This is only made clearer by the fact that when peaceful commercial links between Italy and Africa reappeared, they concerned the same wares: Christian slaves.

## 3. Southern links: from Africa to the southern Tyrrhenian Sea

Africa's exports across the western Mediterranean died with Roman power. Early archaeological returns suggest that even to nearby southern Italy, they plummeted in the later seventh century and then ceased. Coins minted in Africa continued to make their way to eastern Sicily right up to the end.[42] At later seventh-century Naples, for instance, lamps manufactured locally (35.7 percent) and in Sicily (12.5 percent) together outpaced the African lamps (39.2 percent) which had once dominated there. African lamps disappear altogether from the early eighth-century strata.[43] Still undetected exchanges may have persisted

other place, or even occurred at all is unknown: Bell 1913; cf. Fahmy 1966a, 64–5. For the abatement of military activities after the disastrous siege of Constantinople, see also Ageil 1985, 159–60. Some raids were launched in these years, but those whose targets are known aimed at Sardinia and Corsica: R106, R112; those islands were presumably also the target of the raids of R107 and R115: cf. Ageil 1985, 168–9.

40 R159; Talbi 1966, 36–8; cf. Guichard 1983, 58–9 who argues strongly for an interruption after 752.

41 Slave-hunting seems to be the intention attributed to the Arabs by Peter of Taurinia, *Miracula Phantini* (*BHG* 1509), 18, 70.1031 (*leēlateō* and cognates are used to refer to captive-taking in medieval Greek: e.g. Theophanes, 2.757, s.v. *leēlasia*). Captives are explicitly attested for the raids of 720, 727, 730–1, 732 and 752: see Appendix 4 under these dates.

42 Morrisson 1999.

43 Panella 1993, 674, with n259, thinks a few lamps were still landing around 700. The recent results from Naples are less encouraging. Some of the African lamps are probably earlier, "residual" deposits which found their way into the later 7th-C. context, so the change may have been even sharper than the numbers suggest, judging from a relatively small sample (fifty-six useful fragments) in the Carminiello ai Mannesi excavation at Naples: Garcea 1994, 325. In any case, arrivals were approaching the vanishing point.



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between Africa and southern Italy right after 700, but they can have been little more than a trickle.

The slackening of Arab raids on Sicily appears to have been followed by better relations. We have already seen that the last wave of the bubonic plague to assail early medieval Byzantium entered the empire from Africa. The rats which conveyed the disease certainly did not swim across the straits. In other words, ships were traveling between Sicily and Ifriqiya in the summer of 745, probably loaded with cargo and certainly carrying rats.[44] The further implication is that the economic integration of Sicily into the Muslim world had begun over three-quarters of a century before it was politically integrated by military conquest.

The earliest explicit witness to renewed commercial links between Italy and Africa connects them with the resurgent Adriatic, about three years after some ship transmitted the plague from Muslim north Africa to Sicily. The last Greek pope – who himself must have traveled from Athens over the old trunk route – discovered to his dismay that many Venetian slave dealers had set up a market in Rome, where they were buying up Christian slaves to sell to Islamic north Africa.[45] Slaves were abundant enough in Rome around 748 to supply external markets; the demand for labor in Africa is obvious, given the plague that was still raging there. It was an unusual opening for foreign shippers, an opening seized by sailors from the upper Adriatic, a region not known to have had direct contacts with north Africa or western Italy, for that matter, since late antiquity. According to his biographer, Zachary put an end to the Venetians' enterprise and redeemed the slaves at cost. Whether or not he was fully successful, Rome was surely not the sole place in western Italy where the Venetians, who had come so far, were seeking slaves for Africa.

This incident was only the beginning of renewed communications between Africa and Italy. Around 767 the patriarch of Alexandria communicated with the pope and the Frankish king via the reviving route that connected Egypt to the Muslim west. He sent a monk to "Africa," where he caught a ship for Rome.[46] This contrasts, revealingly, with another religious traveler's itinerary half a century before. Back then, the pilgrim had followed the old trunk route in its most northern incarnation: to get to Rome from Alexandria, he had sailed to Crete and then Constantinople. About a decade after the Alexandrian envoy had reached Rome from Ifriqiya, the markets of Africa again look like the most likely destination of the Greek slavers who were collecting their human cargoes along the central Italian coastline and exporting Lombards to the Muslim world; it is no

44 Note that no African raids on Sicily are recorded between 740 and 752/3: Appendix 4.

45 Pros. "Zacharias 1"; R157; for more on the Roman slave market, Ch. 21.2.

46 R171. Pippin's ambassadors c. 768 *might* have traveled via Africa.



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coincidence that five years later, Arab gold coins materialize in Rome (R186; above, pp. 335f). A forgotten chapter of church history points in the same direction. Pope Hadrian I, during whose reign that Arab gold first reached Rome, was also credited with restoring Christian bishops to Africa (R181). He was but the first of the Carolingian-era popes to enter into relations with Africa (see below).

The African route was certainly followed by the envoys of Harun al Rashid and Charlemagne when they returned to Europe from Syria by traveling overland to Tunisia. There they found a ship bound for Pisa (R254–7). In the closing months of Charlemagne's reign, we catch another glimpse of shipping between Africa and Sicily – again, aboard Venetian ships – when ambassadors from Tunisia or, possibly, Morocco, visited the military governor of Sicily.[47] The same year, a Christian in Africa sent a letter to an official in Sicily.[48] All of this fits the picture of routine shipping links between Sicily and Africa drawn around the same time by the Italo-Greek inventor of the Life of Gregory of Agrigento, although he pretends to be depicting late antiquity.[49]

These travelers show us two very important things. The first is that Christian travelers began to avail themselves of the rising Muslim infrastructures of travel. This was true of Charlemagne's ambassadors. But it was also true of private travelers like the Alexandrian monk of 767 and Bernard. The latter's description of the camel renting service in Egypt (Ch. 5.1) exemplifies how western travelers naturally piggybacked on the locals' travel infrastructure. On a more personal level, in Charlemagne's lifetime it did not seem strange for a Christian and a Muslim to travel together as pilgrims from Egypt to Jerusalem, in order to venerate the shrines of their respective religions and, incidentally, take in some sights, notwithstanding the widespread opinion that early medieval people never traveled for pleasure.[50]

The second thing is that communications between Muslim Africa and Christian Italy were increasing *before* the Muslims invaded Sicily. The gradual conquest of the island and its forcible integration into the African polity and economy naturally expanded the emerging communications network, peaceful and otherwise. In fact slave raids from Africa into Sicily and southern Italy had

47 R321. Amari 1933–9, 1: 356–7, claims that an eyewitness account preserved in the *Riyad an-nufus* documents that the treaty provided for the free passage of merchants between Sicily and Africa, but his own rendering (*Biblioteca* 1.304–5) refers only more generally to a Sicilian agreement to free any Muslim who went to Sicily and wished to return home. As translated, the subsequent discussion mentions only Byzantine prisoners.

48 R320; their friendship means moreover that one of the men had probably traveled between the two places.

49 Leontius, *V. Greg. Agrig.*, 5, 149.1–150.16.

50 Leontius, *Vita Stephani Sabaitae* (BHG 1670), 99–100, *AASS* Iul. 3.543F–544B; the Muslim accompanied the Christian to Mar Saba for the sake of the view. Dr. Mattina McGrath kindly alerted me to this passage.



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resumed no later than 820, and probably as early as 812.[51] From 826 on, military or corsair squadrons criss-crossed the straits of Sicily. In later years, they expanded their activities to the coastline of the Italian mainland and beyond. But the violent incorporation of Sicily into the vast Muslim economy implied commercial contacts as well. In fact, the nature of slave raiding along the shifting Muslim–Christian frontier makes commercial and bellicose contacts even more difficult to disassociate than had been the case in the eighth century. Take for instance, the story of twelve-year-old Elias the Younger, whom we saw sold to an African Christian slave trader right on the beach near his Sicilian home (see above, p. 245f). For the boy and for the Byzantine warship that intercepted the slaver, this was doubtless an act of war; for the merchant, his crew, the slave hunters and disappointed slave markets of Africa, it was a risky commercial enterprise gone very sour.

The aggregate patterns of Mediterranean communications have already undermined modern scholars' supposition that warfare ended trade. Shipping links between Africa and southern Italy further challenge that supposition. Ships transporting slaves from Italy continued to sail to Africa throughout the ninth century and into the tenth (below, pp. 768ff). Muslim-sponsored depredations in fact involved economic and social interactions with Christians which were more complex than one might first imagine. These included communities in addition to the Neapolitans (and with them, we may think, the Amalfitans), whose collaboration with the Arabs was notorious. For instance they helped conquer Messina, and supplied food, weapons, and other support so readily to the Arabs that Naples looked like Africa itself, according to a Frankish ruler.[52] Some Christian pilgrims certainly and safely boarded ships laden with Italian slaves destined for the markets of Africa, raising the question of what sort of shippers transported Christians to the block in Egypt but respected the status of three Christian ecclesiastics and paying passengers (R579).

In fact, some non-belligerants sailed without difficulty between Italy and Africa in the midst of the raids, warfare, and slave shipments. Thus, in the 850s or 860s, a group of Frankish pilgrims returned to Rome from Jerusalem via Egypt and "Carthage" or, more probably, Tunis (R521). About twenty years later, another pilgrim, a manumitted Italo-Greek slave, made his way without observable difficulties from Antioch to Africa, and thence to Palermo, Taormina, and the Peloponnesus, even as he watched an Arab fleet preparing to sail against Byzantine towns, or fled an impending raid himself. A few years later, the same

51 R359; R308, where the Arabs are called "Mauri," which may point to Africa rather than Spain. See, however, Guichard 1983, 62 and 64–5, for the possibility that *Mauri* sometimes referred to Berbers settled in Spain.

52 R462 and Louis II, *Ep. ad Basilium*, 393.17–23.



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man, now living near Byzantine Reggio, received visitors from Arab Sicily who informed him of his mother's death in Palermo.[53] Communications had become so routine that around 892, an ecclesiastical legation traveled to Rome from Africa. They asked the pope to intervene in a schism which was developing in their church, and assumed he would be able to do so. So we are not surprised that an Italo-Byzantine abbot might send a monk to Africa to redeem five associates who had been carried off by Arab raiders. The monk was successful, and sailed home on an Arab ship (R502). Cases like these give substance to an African jurist's ruling that Christians sailing to Muslim ports on business were immune from attack (R514).

More than Tunisia was involved at the African end of this renascent shipping circuit. Whether or not envoys from the Atlantic imamate of Morocco traveled to Sicily, contacts grew with Libya. Early in the ninth century, Roman fiction with unmistakable Sicilian connections depicts late Roman Tripoli as a junction for land and sea routes linking Italy and Africa to the Middle East. There is little evidence of such a route from the final century or two of antiquity, although archaeology suggests that Tripoli was faring better than its sister cities of Lepcis Magna and Sabratha.[54] A few decades after the novel, in fact, papal correspondence proves Tripoli's new relations with Italy. In 853, the pope responded to reports reaching him from Tripoli by writing a critical letter to its bishop, Galerius (R512). A Greek monk, pilgrim, and small-time trader from Jerusalem took a ship to Rome from Tripoli a few years later (R519). Around 867, Bernard the Monk saw two slavers loaded with Europeans sail for Tripoli from Taranto just behind two ships, similarly loaded, that shoved off for "Africa" (R577–8).

## 4. Northern links: Tuscany, the upper Tyrrhenian Sea, and Liguria

A pattern of contraction and expansion also occurs further north, along the coast of Tuscany and in the upper Tyrrhenian. There the old shipping circuits had shrunk to a shadow of their former selves around 700. Early in the eighth century

53 Pros. "Elias 1."

54 Pilgrims traveled overland from Carthage to Tripoli en route to Jerusalem: Leontius, *V. Greg. Agrig.* 9–10, 154.1–155.1; pilgrims returning from Jerusalem traveled to Tripoli, where they found a ship belonging to the bishop of Palermo which had come there on business; they sailed aboard it to Licata and Agrigento, en route to Rome: *ibid.*, 19, 164.1–9. Hints of Tripoli's success, founded on its oasis and remarkable harbor, predate the Arabs: Mattingly 1995, 122–5; cf. the role Tripoli played in the Arab conquest of Roman Africa: e.g. Tāha 1989, 56–7. The 9th-C. nexus of shipping and the coastal road at Tripoli may have been reinforced by caravans arriving there from subsaharan Africa (with gold?) via Ghudāmis, if Lewicki 1980, 133–4, is correct; see however Devisse 1982, 173–82.



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we see an occasional ship or two sailing through the Tuscan archipelago, linking the Ligurian and Tyrrhenian seas. But we know that, compared with a century before, this sea lane had declined.[55] Still, the court of King Liutprand (713–44) at Pavia was able to send someone to Sardinia to purchase St. Augustine's relics – they had been moved there from Africa – and translate them to Pavia (R100). Coin hoards again confirm the pattern of contacts implied by the movement of relics: two separate finds on Sardinia (B42 and B44) mixed gold coins struck by the local Byzantine mint with tremisses issued by Liutprand.

By 754, the Lombards had conquered Corsica from the Byzantines, which means that there were enough ships along the coast to get them there from the mainland.[56] Although at the closest point it lies some 80 km off the Italian mainland, the island was sufficiently integrated into the continental economy that the eighth-century bishop of Lucca's family owned land there.[57] This also implies some local shipping linking Corsica to the coast, precisely via the Tuscan archipelago that centers on Elba. Around the same time, a family from the vicinity of Populonia regularly ran grain and salt up the coast in their ship; they later engaged to do so for the church of Lucca.[58] In 776, the pope assumed that the duke of Lucca had access to "many ships"; the duke certainly acquired land on the coast, near the mouth of the Cecina river, which it is tempting to connect with shipping.[59] A few decades later, a Corsican bishop joined the local prelate in presiding over an ecclesiastical court in Lucca (R317). Corsica was nonetheless isolated enough to serve as a place of exile (R380).

From 754 or, at the latest, 774, the popes expressed their interest in the island by laying claim to it, which would have been pretty pointless in the absence of sea links.[60] In the next century, Gregory IV and Leo IV – the latter repeatedly – intervened across the Tyrrhenian Sea in Sardinia about ecclesiastical discipline (R401 and 496). Leo IV also solicited armed retainers from a Sardinian leader and asked him to buy a sea dye for him there, even as he acquiesced in the leader's request for a canonical favor (R503). John VIII too wrote to Sardinia (R625).

The papal communications imply improving ship transport in the upper Tyrrhenian Sea. This is only underscored by Sardinian and Corsican immigration to the mainland in the mid-ninth century. A "Sardinian quarter" appears at Rome, and the popes eagerly recruited the islanders into their military forces and domestic service, a pattern of intraregional movement not unfamiliar even

55 R61, by ship, along the coast. On the shifting of sea vs. land routes from Italy to Gaul, see Ch. 3.3.

56 Schneider 1914, 79n3.

57 *CDL*, 1, no. 114, p. 335.12–14; cf. Schneider 1914, 79n3 for other mainlanders with property on the island.

58 *CDL*, 2, no. 223, 26 August 768; cf. Schneider 1914, 116n2.

59 R186; on Allo's coastal holdings, acquired in 782, and their connection with naval activities, Schwarzmaier 1972, 167–8.

60 Hahn 1975, 78–82.



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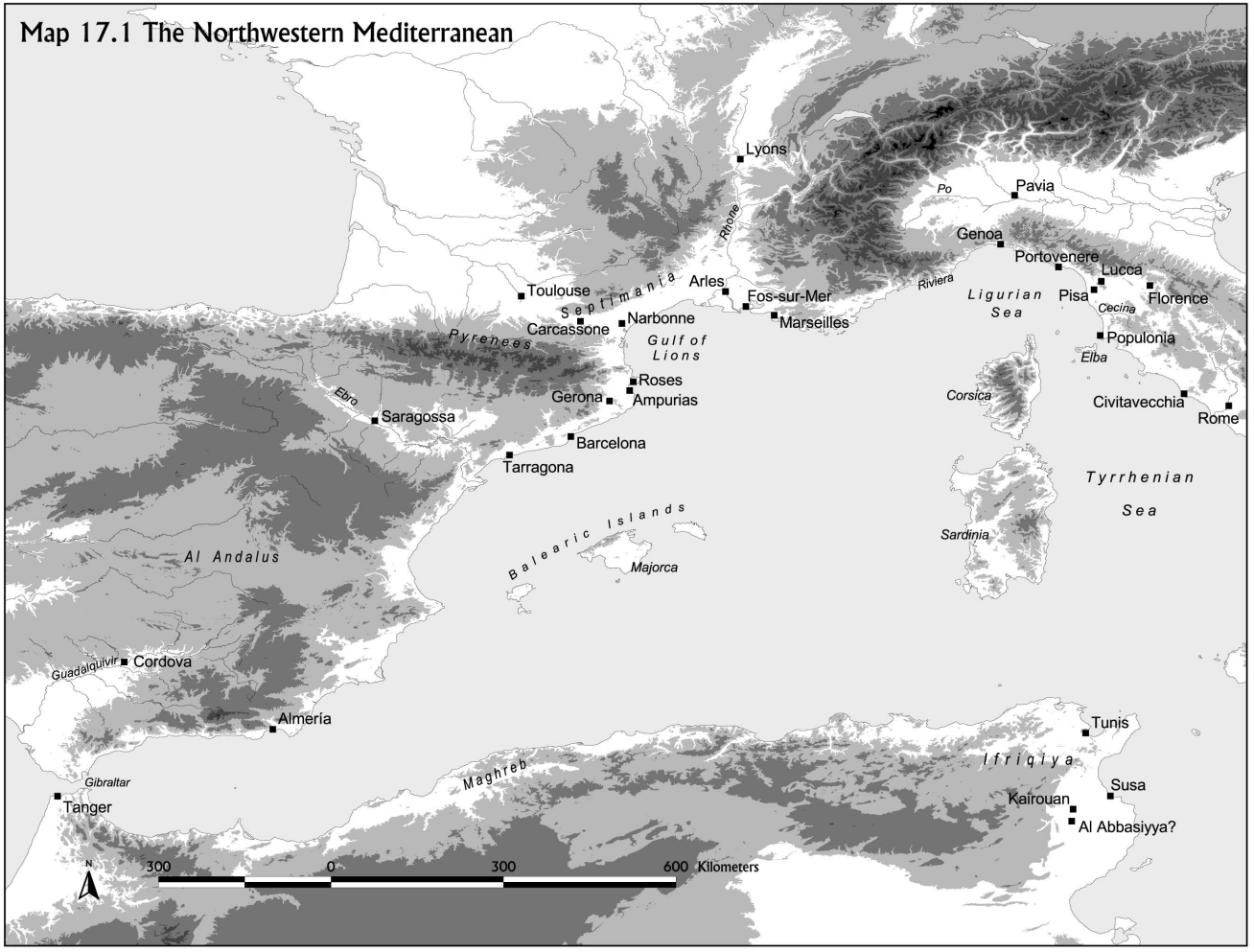


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today.[61] Immigration suggests a disparity of economic opportunity between the Italian mainland and the island, and proves that the ship movements existed to make migration possible.

It is very hard to see beyond the Tuscan archipelago into the Ligurian Sea and along the old coastal arc that had linked Spain to the French and Italian rivieras. The ship movements which had brought the "usual wares" as well as the plague from Spain to Gregory of Tours' Marseilles show few descendants for a long time. And we now know that around 700, land links replaced the old coastal route between Italy and Gaul. Maritime developments may have followed a different, later chronology from the Tyrrhenian littoral. Nonetheless, to the west, in 813 the count of Ampurias (Empuries) had access to ships to get to Majorca (R318). But more sustained signs of coastal merchant shipping set in around the 840s, when tolls were collected at Narbonne on merchant ships that frequented the French coast.[62] Then too Charles the Bald granted to the bishop of Gerona – whose diocese included the landings of Ampurias and Rosas (Roses) – a third of the royal tolls on "merchants of land and sea."[63] But the first hints that this western zone linked up with points east of Marseille come only in the 860s (Ch. 21.3).

In the ninth century, alongside the burgeoning land links, ship movements between the French and the Italian coasts increase somewhat. Envoys had sailed from Rome to Marseilles in 756 and 773, but in both instances, the sea route was considered exceptional (Ch. 3.3). As late as 820, travel between Italy and Spain was thought of in terms of roads, at least at Rome (R351). Two years later, however, we can detect a shorter, sea circuit. Louis the Pious granted to St. Victor of Marseilles the tolls on ships coming to Marseilles from Italy, a grant confirmed in 834.[64] Ceramic manufactured in central Italy was certainly reaching southern France by the tenth century; the flow may actually have started in the ninth.[65]

61 Pope Leo IV's reign displays particularly close relations with Sardinia and Corsica. One of his earliest gifts was to the "vicus Sardorum": *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.108.12–13; cf. e.g., 127.21–3; 128.8–9; he also restored a ruined monastery of the "Corsi," *ibid.*, 112.7–12; later he settled Corsican refugees at Porto: *ibid.*, 125.27–127.7. Nicholas I had "domesticos suos genere Sardos": *ibid.*, 2.162.12–13.

62 Accepting that the editors are correct, and that D ChB 1, no. 49, 20 June 844, is reliable at 1.142.21: "deinceps concessum est ab omni integritate, de quocunque commertio ex quo teloneus exigitur vel portaticus ac de navibus circa littora maris discurrentibus." Cf. Ganshof 1959, 16n41.

63 D ChB 1, no. 47, 11 June 844, St. Sernin of Toulouse; cf. on the phrase "telonei mercatorumque terre marisque," *ibid.*, 3.350, s.v. "mercator."

64 R372 and R426; it is unclear whether these particular revenues had already been granted by Charlemagne; the revenues in salt and "other *condiciones*" at "Leonio" may be the 9th-C. survival of the old Merovingian customs station at Fos, according to Ganshof 1960, 133.

65 Bonifay *et al.* 1991, 44.



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Further west, Arab raiders who were perhaps based in Spain's rebellious eastern seaboard operated in the northwest Mediterranean from 798 to 813, before they moved to the greener pastures of the eastern Mediterranean. Charlemagne's defensive measures along the Tyrrhenian shore were triggered by these raiders; the defenses involved ships and may explain the raiders' departure from the region.[66] Squadrons sent to protect Corsica successfully drove off Arab attacks in 806 and 807. That the count of Genoa was killed in the earlier battle shows that some of the ships came from that port.[67] Unless we assume a Lombard war fleet that no one has ever suspected, they must have been cargo vessels requisitioned for the cause. Defensive measures for Corsica continued in the 820s.[68] In fact, one Tuscan squadron even took the offensive, and raided the African shore. The ascendancy in Italy of the Bavarian family that commanded that raid owed much to Tuscany's naval development in those decades.[69] At the close of the ninth century, Tuscan ships were again preying on African ones (R736).

The overall picture which emerges suggests intensifying ship movements in the Tyrrhenian Sea. A good number were hostile, but even they entailed the buying and selling of booty, of slaves. Others were certainly mercantile, or at the least, non-commercial transport of goods. Raiding shows a subtle shift which confirms this picture. Earlier Arab forays looted coastal sites almost exclusively; the rare captured merchant ships of which we hear were Arab craft taken by the Byzantine navy (R159). In the ninth century, Arab raiders expanded their targets to include Christian ships as well as coastal settlements. The small crews of early medieval merchant mariners will not have produced large troops of slaves, so the ships themselves and whatever they were carrying must have been the prime attraction.

Like the Byzantine slavers of 776, some of the ships plying the Tyrrhenian waters in the ninth century were certainly merchant vessels. Notwithstanding some attacks, a lull in large-scale raiding in the northwestern Mediterranean may have set in for a decade or so after 813, if the Andalusian pirates who moved to Alexandria, and ultimately, Crete, had previously been operating in that area.[70] The Frankish court nonetheless claimed that Arab pirates captured and sank a convoy of eight merchantmen returning from Sardinia to Italy in 820.[71] A "large"

66 R241 and R275; Guichard 1983.
67 R269 and R276; see in general Schwarzmaier 1972, 364–7.
68 No one except Lewis 1951, 77–8, who claims that the Lombards gave "naval assistance" to Charles Martel in 738; his source, Paul the Deacon, *Hist. Lang.* 6, 54, 183.22–5, says no such thing: R388.
69 R404 on Boniface's raid on Africa; Schwarzmaier 1972, 172–3.
70 Guichard 1983, 66–8.
71 Even if this were an attempt to conceal a naval defeat, it is significant that trading ships could serve as a veil: R362.



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Christian merchantman captured by Arab raiders off Sardinia led to an African legal conflict in the first half of the ninth century (R514). The same Islamic jurist who resolved that case declared another time that Christian ships trading with Christian ports were fair game for corsairs, but that Christian merchants who were known to do business with Islamic ports were off limits, whether they were near or far from their Muslim destination. The fact of the ruling itself implies that Christian trading ships posed recurring opportunities and problems for Arab raiders, while its terms show that some specialization in routes was occurring.[72] As the century advanced, Sardinia served as more than a hunting ground for slaves. By 873 it was a market where Byzantine sailors were selling off Christian slaves they had recaptured from the Arabs (R625). Once again the economic implications of warfare are unmistakable. A gold hoard (A32) buried on the island about a decade later mixes thirty-seven solidi issued at Constantinople between 829 and 879 and three African dinars dating from 850–1 to 883–4, as well as some pieces of gold ornament. The assembly of these coins on Sardinia points to at least indirect connections with distant places.

Whether they involved intermediaries or long-distance carriers, some ship movements linked the northeastern and southern zones of the western Mediterranean. Sea raiders from Africa struck Sardinia in 710, the 720s, 732–3 and 752, the last time in conjunction with attacks on Sicily.[73] The threat had led the Lombard king to seek St. Augustine's relics, but it later subsided for a generation or two. Less bellicose shipping links with Africa are probably implied by the Greek slavers operating off Tuscany in 776; they are certain in the back-and-forth trips of Charlemagne's envoys in 801. When Isaac and the Arab envoys landed at Pisa, the head of Charlemagne's writing office assembled a convoy in Liguria which crossed over to Africa to fetch the famous elephant, and whatever survived of the Frankish delegation (R186; R254–6). Sicilian coins unearthed on the edge of Liguria and Tuscany tell a similar tale of contacts up and down the ninth-century Italian coast.[74]

About the same time that an Alexandrian ecclesiastical envoy sailed from Africa to Rome, Frankish ambassadors accompanied by envoys from Baghdad arrived at Marseilles; for the return trip, the Arabs returned to the same port (R175). A few Arab and Byzantine coins dribbled toward the Rhône still, or again (Table 12.4). Around 760 a large Byzantine fleet was rumored to be en route from Constantinople, via Sicily, to attack Rome and the Frankish seaboard, so the idea

72 It is just possible that the traditional port of the Arabs mentioned in 869 near Arles was or had started out as an emporium for Arab merchants: see R596.

73 R76, R106, R112, R121, R136, R159; cf. R107 and R116; Boscolo 1980 rehearses the events, based largely on Amari 1933–9; where the authors seem to differ, I have followed Amari.

74 Appendix 3, B28; six out of seven date from 821–56.



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of such ship movements was plausible (R165). Relics which were brought from Carthage by a Carolingian legation reached Arles by sea around 801 (R257). Spanish slave hunters touched the threshold of the eastern Mediterranean when they attacked the Byzantine monks on Pantelleria (R272). A pilgrim from Constantinople is supposed to have sailed to Sardinia from Constantinople via Africa a decade or so later (R333). In 828, a Frankish squadron commanded by Count Boniface circumnavigated Corsica. On Sardinia he found pilots who were knowledgeable enough to guide his ships to the Gulf of Tunis, which he raided (R404). This suggests that at this date, Tuscan sailors knew their way to the islands, but not to Africa, whereas Sardinia had stayed in contact with its former provincial capital. A pilgrim from the east reached Rome from Corsica and ultimately traveled on to France, via Genoa (R472). So, even without a rabbinical *responsum* which has been erroneously interpreted to reveal northern traders in Africa, long-range movements in the western Mediterranean were picking up.[75]

The renewed traffic within the Tyrrhenian Sea and its occasional extension to Africa is important in its own right. It is even more important with respect to the broader pattern of western European links to the Middle East. For it is difficult to imagine that links across the Tyrrhenian Sea and Sicily to Africa do not reflect, indirectly, communication patterns within the Caliphate, linking the Muslim Maghreb, or "west," to the east.

The traffic along the southern rim of the Mediterranean leads to yet another, more indirect route which came to link the Carolingian west with the Middle East. By the middle of the ninth century, one could reach the Frankish empire from the Levant via Spain. This was the route the monk George intended to improvise once he had reached Cordova from Palestine, and it may well have been the route followed, most of the way, by the Spanish pilgrim Hyacinth, traveling in the other direction.[76] George's body ultimately did travel all the way to Paris, in the care of

75 Agus 1965, 1, no. 1, p. 53 claims that Rabbi Paltai Gaon observed that Jewish traders from Germany traveled to Africa almost continuously in summer. I am grateful to my colleague Bernard Septimus for an enlightening discussion of this Babylonian *responsum* from the 840s. Among the numerous points he clarified for me, there is nothing to connect the text with Africa; the conjectural emendation of *Ashkenaziim* to *Arviim* is groundless; the text and its logical structure indicate that the *Ashkenaziim* in question are not Jews, but traders dealing with Jews; the meaning of *Ashkenaziim* is uncertain, since Paltai's text is about a century earlier than the first sure use of the word to mean "Germans." Another *possible* interpretation of the word might be "Slavs," so the text might point to trading contacts in central or eastern Europe. Babylonian scholars in this period had contacts with Jewish communities in Europe (Ch. 22.3). I wonder if this might warrant locating the addressees in Spain, to which we know that caravans of German traders were traveling in the mid-9th C. (below, p. 677)? Other options would include Italy or, possibly, central Europe, as well as the eastern terminus of the northern arc.

76 Pros. "Georgius 8"; "Hyacinthus."



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Usuard, whose detailed account illustrates the routes connecting Cordova and France (R528). An Arab observer explicitly notes that some traders traveled from Frankland to the Middle East (and beyond) via Spain and the land route across north Africa.[77] However many (or few) travelers or traders followed such a circuitous route from Frankland to the Middle East, it seems clear that interlocking communications and probably also trade zones provided yet another alternative in the ninth century for long-distance exchanges. Certainly Jewish and Christian traders as well as some diplomats traveled between Frankland and Spain. Their movements were probably reinforced by the powerful Frankish bridgehead around Barcelona.[78] Since most of this indirect route lies within the House of Islam, it is enough for us to have recognized its implications for our theme, and leave more exhaustive study to those who are better equipped for it.

Around 700, western Europe was joined to the Middle East only by sea, only through Byzantium, and only sporadically. A century or so later, shipping had become considerably less sparse in the Tyrrhenian Sea. Sea links between Italy and Africa, between the Tyrrhenian and Ligurian Seas, between Italy and France had come back to life. The north–south sea route connected western Italy to the major communications axis of the Islamic world that ran along the Mediterranean's southern rim. Within a generation, another almost entirely overland route was available through Spain. The birth or rebirth of these routes was important indeed. But the most dramatic change was occurring elsewhere. It was occurring in the once dormant Adriatic Sea.

77 Ibn Khurradadhbih, trans. Jacobi, p. 253; for the overland and sea routes linking Africa with Spain, see Yaʿkūbī, trans. Wiet, pp. 210–11 and 217.

78 On diplomats, El-Hajji 1970, 119–52; one suspects that this was the route by which a rabbinical letter traveled from Syria to Barcelona in the middle of the 9th C.: R526; for traders, see Ch. 23.3.



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# 18

# *Venetian breakthrough: European communications in the central Mediterranean*

THE VENETIANS' arrival on the western shores of Italy around 748 casts a sudden shaft of light on the central Mediterranean. The Adriatic returns to life in the eighth century amidst a flurry of ship movements. A couple of generations later, another communications corridor funneled into the Ionian Sea and reinforced it: the land and sea routes which converged at the gulf of Corinth. Tracing the return of shipping to these two great corridors will fill out our picture of the origins of medieval European shipping patterns and allow us to address their structure.

## 1. Venetian breakthrough

In the twilight of antiquity, local shipping in the upper Adriatic sputtered along.[1] As empire ended, the Roman population had fled offshore to security among marshy lagoons and islands; necessarily, boats moved them around their watery world. Some administrative traffic up the 740 km-long sea had persisted through the late seventh and earlier eighth centuries, running a lifeline to outposts like Ravenna or those along the Balkan coastline. But the ties that bound were stretching ever thinner.[2] No imperial

1 E.g., the duke of Friuli had sailed from Istria to Ravenna and then up the Po to Pavia in the late 7th C.: Paul the Deacon, *Hist. Lang.* 6, 3, 165.15–16, cf. Krahwinkler 1992, 53–4; the Venetians participated in an attack on Ravenna c. 732–3: R137.

2 For the deportation of prisoners and their return to Ravenna c. 709–12, see R70–2; an embassy from Ravenna to Constantinople, R91; on trading activity, Claude 1985b, 151–2 and on the administrative ties of Ravenna, Istria, and Constantinople in general, Brown 1984, 144–63. On present archaeology, the recently discovered port of Classe ceased functioning in the 7th C.: Maioli and Stoppioni 1987, 33–55. The chronology of other landings further east and north which may have supplemented this port is unclear: see Schmiedt 1978, 223–6 and pl. xlvi. The Rižana Plea,



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fleet appeared in the Adriatic between around 709 and 806.[3]

There is more than silence to the lack of direct long-distance movements from the Adriatic in the first half of the eighth century. Although Agnellus of Ravenna's grasp of its geographic details sometimes slips, he knows where Sicily is – his church had owned much land there – and he considers it a normal stop for travelers sailing to Byzantium around 700.[4] Another story makes the same point, when Agnellus depicts someone in a hurry to reach his Adriatic home from Constantinople looking for a "ship bound for Ravenna or Sicily."[5] Around the same time, a few officials traveled from Constantinople to Ravenna via Rome. This implies that they sailed first to Sicily and thence to Rome before traveling overland to Ravenna.[6] Finally, there is the positive evidence of early eighth-century spice imports. Some were reaching the Po thanks to the salt merchants of Comacchio. But the quantities were minute: only a trickle of trade flowed into the northern Adriatic via a route as uncertain as the number of intermediaries (R88). On the opposite shore at Split, the flow of eastern and Sicilian ceramic into Diocletian's old palace tells the same story, for it dwindled away in the course of the seventh century.[7]

Footnote 2 (*cont.*)
60.26–34; 62.3–4 and 64.4–66 documents shipments of tax payments and requisitions for passing governmental officials; 8th-C. Istrian notables traveled occasionally to Constantinople to obtain a state dignity: *ibid.*, 62.17–20; cf. McCormick 1998b, 45–51. The seal of an 8th-C. exarch of Italy has been discovered at Solin, Croatia: Cheynet and Morrisson 1990, 125; seals from the late 6th or 7th, and later 7th C., respectively, of Thomas stratēlatēs-magister militum and Anastasios patrikios have been discovered in the Veneto: Dorigo 1989.

3 Although Ravenna may have been the destination of the ill-starred expedition of 732–3: R139; see also R70; R270; a Byzantine attack on Ravenna or Treviso was rumored but never materialized in 788: R219.

4 Agnellus, *Liber pont. eccl. Rav.*, 137, 367.25–368.3, twice describes early 8th-C. trips from Constantinople to Ravenna via Sicily. He uses terms borrowed from the *Aeneid* 3, 699–708 and erroneously locates Trapani, Palermo, and Cape Tyndarides between Constantinople and Cape Passero, moving his editor to dismiss his testimony (*ibid.*, p. 368n1; 373n2); cf. *ibid.*, 145, 372.43– 373.6. Whatever we may think of his Virgilian pastiches – note that Palermo and Cape Tyndarides do *not* occur in the passage he seems to be emulating – Agnellus clearly means to tell us that travelers bound for Ravenna transited via Sicily. Agnellus on the Sicilian landholdings of the see of Ravenna: *Liber pont. eccl. Rav.*, 111, 350.3–28. Finally, this route seems not to conform to the situation in Agnellus' own time – he was writing between 830/1 and the late 840s – when Byzantine control over Sicily collapsed.

5 ". . . usum navis discurrentis Ravennae aut ad Siciliam," Agnellus, *Liber pont. eccl. Rav.*, 131, 364.18–22, with the commentary of Claude 1985b, 151n143.

6 Very probably R74; R85; also R83. Further examples may be the possible or certain itineraries of diplomats traveling between Pavia and Constantinople: cf. R149 or R158.

7 Dvoržak Schrunk 1989.



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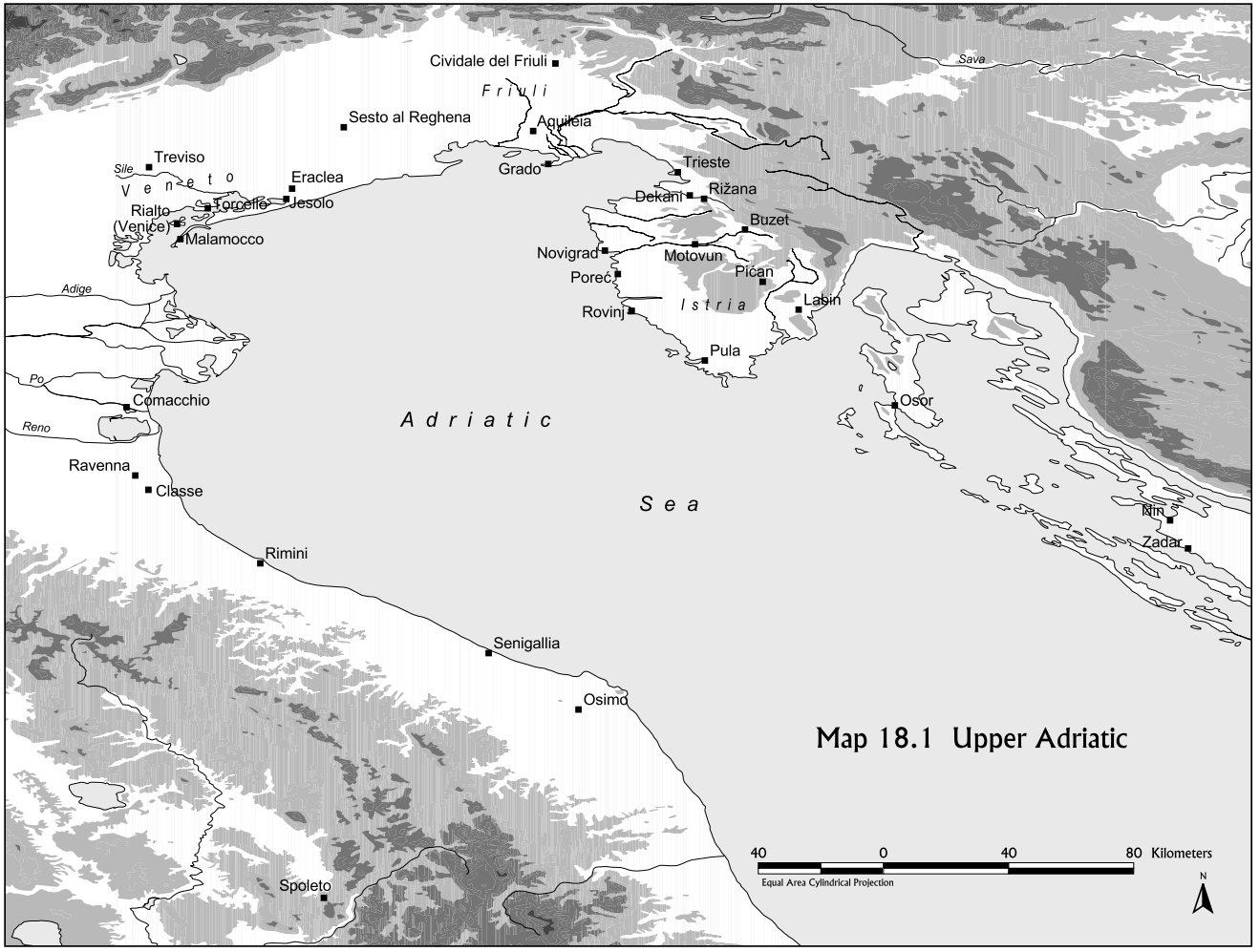

Things change after 750, whether we look at travelers, goods like spices (Ch. 24.3), or foreign coins. We find some travelers embarking at Apulian ports, in the lower Adriatic.[8] But the dynamic center of gravity, unmistakably, lies at the head of the Adriatic, in Venice.

Venice first appeared as a regional force in the 730s, in the wake of the first Lombard occupation of Ravenna.[9] Around mid-century, as we have already seen, the Venetians reached much further, since they were operating on the west coast of Italy and organizing the export of slaves from there to the Muslim world. They were probably traveling in their own ships. By 772, Venice was an obvious choice for a pope looking to ship an exile from Ravenna to Constantinople (R179). Early in 778, the rare documents that survive from the Veneto start mentioning Arab gold; by 799, knowledge of *dinar manqūsh* had reached far up the Po to Milan. When in about 783 the pope accused Ravennate officials of selling Christians into "pagan," that is, Muslim, slavery, we may suspect that Venetian bottoms were transporting the Italians across the sea, the more so that Venetian merchants were then entrenched in Ravenna.[10] A couple of sherds bearing Arabic graffiti excavated in the port of Ravenna may point in the same direction.[11] The written evidence of new commercial contacts with the Islamic world fits like a glove with the wholly independent data of the gold and silver coins discovered in the soggy soils of the Veneto and its approaches. The earliest possible date of deposit for the hoards is the 750s (Ch. 12.6). Despite an outlier in 837/8, the bulk of the eastern coins come from the second half, and especially, the last quarter of the eighth century. They were minted in Africa, Egypt, possibly Baghdad, and certainly Constantinople.

The indicators are scattered but independent. They take on substance in the light of a hagiographical text written in the 820s or 830s. The Miracles of St. Genesius prove that, no later than 795, Venetian ships were sailing regularly to Palestine. When the Frankish count of Treviso (in the Venetian hinterland) learned about some relics brought back from the Holy Land, he summoned the merchants who had transported them and asked to buy them. They advised Count Gebahard to request the relics directly from the patriarch of Jerusalem. The

8 R167; R180, certainly; R215; cf. the relics collected on *ChLA* no. 682, 9 with Map 10.1. Some diplomatic activity can also be detected along the Balkan façade: R187; cf. R183.

9 R137; that the Venetians unexpectedly fell on the Lombard occupiers joins with their offshore situation to suggest that they came from the sea.

10 R201 and R216; cf. too R213 about a report of a Constantinopolitan force landing in Calabria which reached the pope simultaneously from Gaeta and from the Po delta. In this case news traveled all the way around Italy to Rome via the upper Adriatic as swiftly as it mounted the more direct route of the western seaboard.

11 Fiaccadori 1983, nos. 23.9 and 10, there dated "7th–8th C. (?)"; the later date best fits the broader context.



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Venetians felt that he would probably respond favorably to a request – accompanied by gifts. These the merchants transmitted to the patriarch on their next trip. The patriarch acquiesced, but insisted that clerics be sent to transport the relics. Gebahard answered by sending his own priest and deacon to Jerusalem. In 797, Charlemagne's ambassadors to Harun al Rashid stopped in Treviso en route to Iraq, and Gebahard's personal envoys sailed with them. They parted company only after the group reached Jerusalem, and the royal ambassadors continued on to Iraq.[12] Whether or not the relics were genuine, the story makes two points of capital importance. Venetians were sailing regularly, even yearly, to the Holy Land. And the same merchants – men who had come to know the Christian patriarch of Jerusalem – were returning to the same place. Particular Venetian merchants had begun specializing in a particular Middle Eastern market.

The new pattern of direct long-distance communications between the head of the Adriatic and the Levant is confirmed in 806 by the return of more Frankish ambassadors from Syria. Despite the inimical presence of a Byzantine fleet, they traveled via the Adriatic and Treviso (R271). The Byzantine naval activity in the Adriatic in 806–9, the first in nearly a century, in itself testifies to the upper Adriatic's growing importance. What is more, Constantinople sent no mere provincial detachment: it was the main imperial war fleet that came to fight the Franks over control of Venice, and reestablish Byzantine power in the coastal enclaves of Dalmatia (R270–1; R274; R283; R295). In equally eloquent testimony to the Veneto's new-found value, the Byzantine government accepted the unthinkable and recognized the Frankish king's imperial title in exchange for uncontested sovereignty over Venice.[13]

From the later eighth century on, travelers, goods, and the ships that carried them sailed out of the Adriatic into the great world beyond. Members of the doge's family took ship to Constantinople (R305; R361; R371). The Byzantine emperor Michael II twice requested and received Venetian ships for the defense of Sicily (R376–8). Venetian vessels were sailing between north Africa – perhaps as far west as Morocco – and Sicily in 813 (R321). News of Leo V's assassination seems to have reached the Frankish court via Venice (R366). The Byzantine ambassadors of 824 certainly traveled to Rouen through Venice (R383). That the emperor Leo V (813–20) slapped an embargo on Venetian business in Egypt and Syria proves the importance of Adriatic shipping links with the Caliphate in his reign. As Bonus' story has shown, he and his fellow merchants sailed to Alexandria with a convoy of ten Venetian ships in the next decade, and this

12 R230; R233; R238, based on the *Miracula S. Genesii* (*BHL* 3314), 2, pp. 9–10, written at Reichenau between 822 and 838. Although the *Miracula* do not state explicitly that the third trip involved the same merchants as the first two, it is difficult to avoid concluding that the ambassadors sailed aboard a ship from the lagoon. Cf. Borgolte 1976, 49–54.

13 See Classen 1985, 91–3.



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Venetian merchant was clearly at home among the Christians of Alexandria.[14] The convoy was no flash in the pan. An Egyptian family which had agreed to emigrate to Venice with the relics and got cold feet simply took another ship for their new home on the lagoon the following year (R413). As the subsequent pattern of Venetian history amply demonstrates, these connections with Alexandria, Syria, and Constantinople were destined to grow and prosper. There is no sign of a break in the kind and volume of traffic that we have just described.[15]

The rise of piracy along the Balkan coast, particularly in the mouth of the Neretva river, tells a similar story. Shipping then as now preferred the eastern edge to the exposed western shore of the Adriatic. In the shadow of the Balkans, the sailing was easier and countless islands, coves, and lagoons provided shelter. They were also perfect for pirates. That piracy was appearing there tells us that enough ships carrying valuables were taking this route to make them attractive prey; that Venice counterattacked, repeatedly, tells us where those tempting merchant vessels were going (R428; R446; R633).

The evidence is strong that the surge in documented traffic out of the Adriatic reflects a true change in shipping patterns. The fact that so much of it was with the Arab world indicates that this surge was propelled by commerce. More than documents and coins make the point. After late antiquity, the record of shipwrecks along the sea lane toward Venice resumes in the ninth or tenth century (Table 20.3). Ambassadors' movements in the Mediterranean indicate that diplomats also began using the new route – instead of the old trunk route down Italy's west coast – around the same time that the other evidence indicates quickening communications. Between 781 and 803, the four Constantinopolitan embassies about whose itinerary we know something all appear on the west coast of Italy. This suggests that they traveled via the old route.[16] That changes around 810, when negotiations

14 Ch. 9.1. I cannot follow Cahen's suggestion (1980, 7) that a relic theft from a Christian church proves that the Venetians did not envision continuing commercial relations with Alexandria. See too R413.

15 Ship movements are documented in every successive decade of the 9th C.: R358; R361; R376–8; R408–9; R419; R421; R449; R452; R523; R550; R632; R635; R644–5; R657–8; R695–6; R700; R734. Conversely, Arab raiders first appear in the upper Adriatic in 840: R451; subsequent raids: see e.g. R454; R618; R628.

16 The circumstances make the two embassies of the 780s the strongest case: 781, whose audience was granted at Rome; and 787, at Capua; 802 and 803 probably used the old west coast route: R197; R211; R262; R264. Two more contacts, one originating in Sicily (799), and the other traveling from Constantinople to Aachen via the *stratēgos* of Sicily are ambiguous, since Sicily in the earlier 8th C. served as a hinge for the Adriatic as well as west coast movements, and the communications could have been forwarded from Sicily to e.g. Venice. However, the fact that the better-documented exchange of letters between the *stratēgos* of Sicily and Charles occurred in 813 via Rome and the pope, suggests that the two earlier contacts still used the western route.



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to resolve the conflict in the Adriatic began with a Byzantine embassy which traveled to Aachen via Pavia. Against the backdrop of the intensive Byzantine naval presence in the Veneto, ambassador Arsaphius' itinerary suggests that he took the Adriatic route. Apparently, when he headed home from Aachen, Arsaphius intervened in the internal government of Venice (R296–7; R299–300). Around the same time, two envoys from the Adriatic translated the relics of a saint to Zadar from Constantinople (R285). Two years later, Amalarius certainly took the new Adriatic route outbound, and probably returned home the same way.[17] The embassy of 824 also transited via Venice. But if all these independent indicators add up to change on this scale, would not such expanding activities leave tangible traces elsewhere, for instance in the tiny settlements from which these movements stemmed?[18]

Archaeological exploration of the waterlogged remains of early medieval Venice has barely begun.[19] Even so, first results tend to confirm the sometimes controversial written record on two critical issues. Offshore immigration had indeed gotten under way in the decades of crisis which ended antiquity. More importantly for us, however, in the key settlements around the lagoon, occupation intensified in the eighth and ninth centuries.[20] Renewed scrutiny of the ecclesiastical vestiges of early medieval Eraclea and especially Jesolo has equally indicated a first phase around 600, followed by new construction in the ninth century.[21] The beginnings of settlement growth around the present-day square of

17 R316. The return route is not so unambiguous, although the mention of Nonantola may also point to the Adriatic route: R330.

18 In its present unsettled state, the history of Venetian treaties with the mainland power does little to clarify this issue. Fanta 1885 argued that lost treaties can be deduced from the earliest surviving treaty (840) back to King Liutprand. With the exception of a few clauses without much implication for our theme, it is difficult to see what exactly would have come from where; Fanta nonetheless considered that pacts struck in 805 and 812 were essential stages in the development of the treaties. Cessi 1951, 175–243 adduced serious reasons for doubting many of Fanta's conclusions; cf. Rösch 1982, 7n4. But all would agree that the 9th C. saw significant development in Venice's treaty relations with the mainland.

19 For an informative survey of the (mostly later medieval) urban development of the lagoon, written before the archaeological evidence began to appear, see Goy 1985; on the early topography, Biason 1992.

20 The chronological insights gained from early core samples are valuable – the controverted ancientness of the lagoon is now established – and underscore that occupation of several key sites reached back to late antiquity; what is more, of twelve core samples from the area around San Marco's yielding $C_{14}$ dates from the first millennium, ten are from a 7th/8th or 8th/9th C. range. They confirm the traditional 9th-C. construction date for San Lorenzo in Venice, but do not much clarify the extent and nature of occupation: Ammerman *et al.* 1992 and Ammerman *et al.* 1995. On San Lorenzo, see the early report of De Min 1990, which detected the 9th-C. structure but had as yet located no new and firm dating criteria. This was of course also the site of the largest Arab treasure from our period, A37.

21 Dorigo 1994, 123–61.



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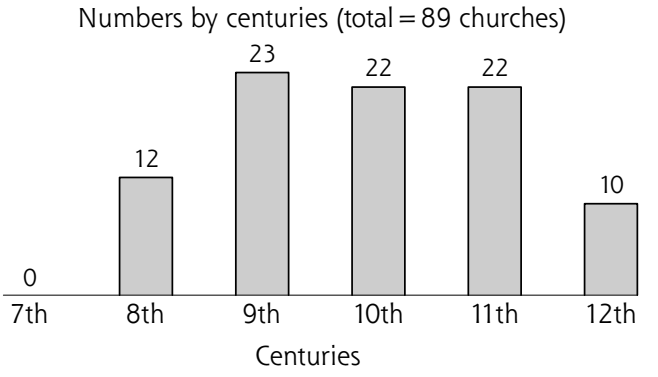
Chart 18.1. Church foundations in Venice, 600–1200




This chart shows the leap in church foundations in Venice between 700 and 800, which doubled again between 800 and 900. The ninth century saw more foundations than any other century before 1200. Where was the new money coming from?
*Source:* Dorigo 1983, 2: 494–5, Prospetto 28.

St. Mark's seem to build on late antique vestiges and certainly reach back to the early ninth century.[22] Torcello might have started in the fifth century, but again the key early phases appear to be around 600, when efforts were made to make the site more suitable for settlement, and then around 800, when the area around the cathedral began to look more like a town.[23]

Overall, church building is the best documented type of construction. It is also the most monumental and expensive. If we are right that wealth surged suddenly into the Veneto, it should have left traces here. In fact, in Venice church building jumped in the eighth and boomed in the ninth century, as Chart 18.1 shows. The picture remains essentially the same if we extend the comparison to other churches founded across the duchy of Venice prior to 1200.[24] Such sudden and massive investment in building churches may indicate a growing population. It surely testifies to a surge in the wealth available on the mud flats of the lagoon.

Movements of travelers, coins, and ships all intensify dramatically in the Veneto in the decades on either side of 800. New churches – the most monumental, best

22 See the overview in Agazzi 1991, 13–20; 25; 34; debate continues about the configuration and size of the original St. Mark's: e.g., Dorigo 1993.

23 Leciejewicz *et al*. 1977, 288–9, cf. 293; see also the 1983 excavation: Tombolani 1988, 206.

24 Dorigo 1983, 612–15, Prospetto 46, lists seventy-two churches for which written traditions of varying strength indicate that they were built before the early 13th C. Twenty-three of these report foundations in the later 8th or 9th C. (for four a second tradition also reports an earlier foundation date). In Dorigo's eyes, thirteen of these churches supply reliable monumental evidence for an 8th- or 9th-C. date.



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preserved, and best documented type of building – sprang up on the mud and sand spits of the lagoon in numbers unparalleled in any earlier period. In other words, multiple series of independent evidence document major changes in the upper Adriatic and its wealth, even as its communications networks burgeoned in the later eighth and early ninth centuries. And those networks stretched across the sea. Small wonder that in the 820s one of the wealthiest laymen in the Veneto had substantial cash invested in ships currently away on business. At the same time, one of the region's richest churchmen adorned his churches with imported silken textiles and Byzantine artwork, and estimated his own wealth in terms of Arab money. Another bishop's valuables included sacks of exotic spices.[25] And, like the coins, the trail does not end at the water's edge. We shall return to this crucial observation.

## 2. The reopening of the Gulf of Corinth

The final development of seaborne travel sprouted yet another ramification of the old main sea lane to the east. This new route comprised an important overland option which may have rivaled, or even outstripped, the traditional sea route north through the Aegean. Once again, the written and the non-written evidence converge, insofar as we first detect travelers using it in the 830s and the written evidence intensifies in the second half of the ninth century. Travelers' movements fit smoothly into a broader historical context, and archaeology confirms the general chronology of renewed movement on the long fjord that is the gulfs of Patras and Corinth, and which allowed travelers to bypass the dangerous seas around the southern Peloponnesus.

We have already met the earliest recorded east–west trip involving the Gulf of Corinth, when St. Gregory the Dekapolite got a ship there c. 831–3 (Ch. 7.3). Whether Gregory and his master traveled there from Thessalonica by land or sea we cannot tell. From Corinth Gregory sailed to Reggio, and hence to Rome.[26] The last legs of Gregory's voyage show how easily the new route fitted into the old

25 Pros. "Iustinianus," "Fortunatus." Cf. Table 11.1; ch. 24n53 and 120.

26 I think it improbable that in 813 Amalarius transited via Corinth, although he spent time on Aigina. He breathes no hint of a land leg before Attica on the way to Constantinople; and he certainly stresses that they avoided land on the way home. Besides, it would be very unlike Amalarius the name-dropper not to mention this important biblical site, if in fact he had visited it. A stop in Aigina, on the other hand, could have been conditioned by adverse weather conditions as his ship headed north in the Aegean. Lemerle 1963, 38n65 assumed that the Corinth route between eastern and western Mediterranean began functioning anew as soon as Patras was reconquered by the Byzantines in 805/6; he supplied no evidence.



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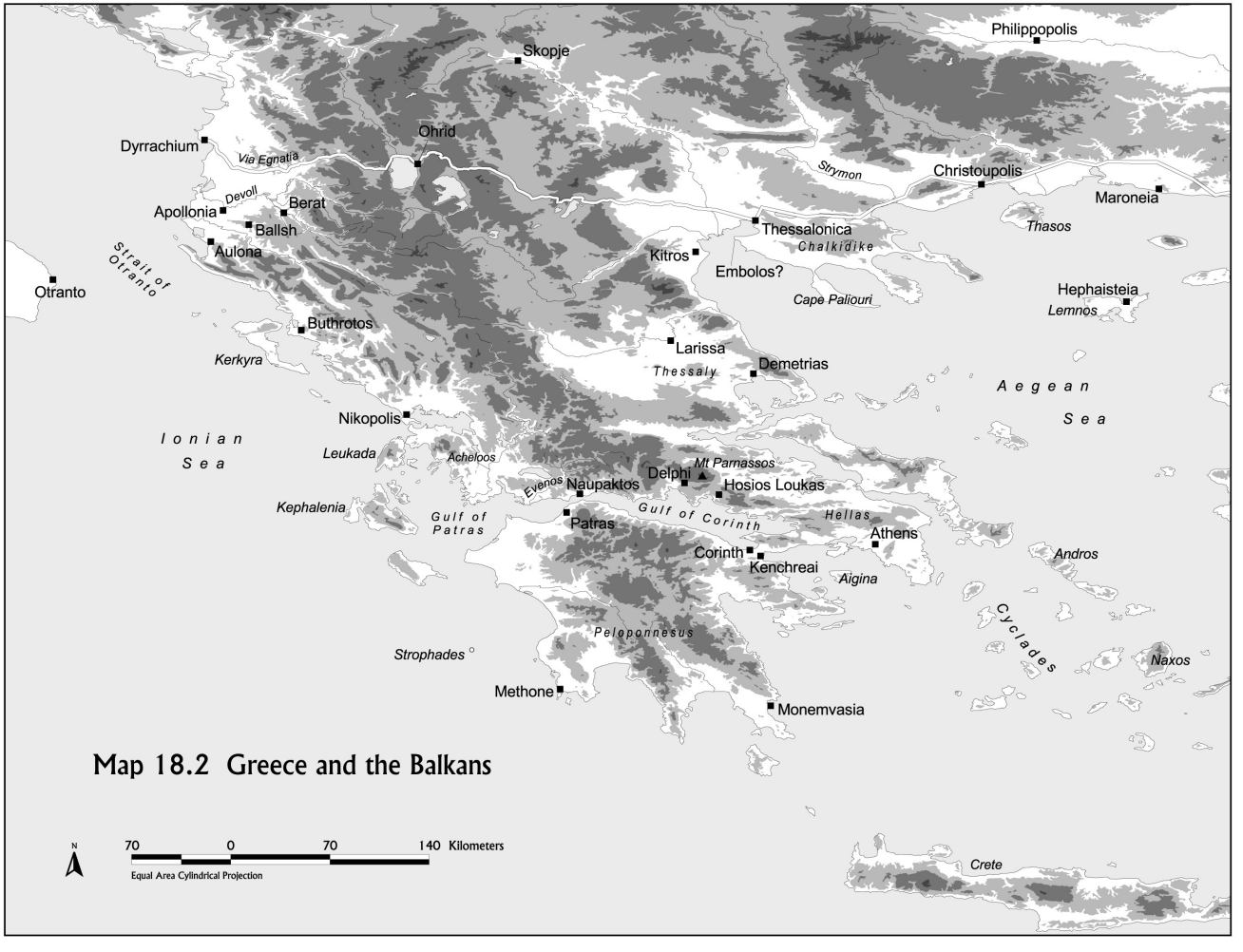

trunk route from Kephalenia or Leukada westward. A generation later, enough was going on in the gulfs of Patras and Corinth to attract Arab raiders all the way from Crete. This in turn gave rise to a celebrated naval exploit, when the Byzantine admiral Nicetas Ooryphas dragged his warships out of the Aegean and across the isthmus of Corinth to surprise and defeat the Arab raiders in the gulf. The extraordinary effort to defend the route confirms it must have been an interesting target indeed around 873 (R627).

The Byzantine end of this route allowed either sea passage up the Aegean from the eastern side of the isthmus or something novel: land passage. One important reason for increasing shipping out of the Gulf of Corinth lay in the development of a mountainous overland route toward Constantinople across Greece from the western reaches of the gulf. The earliest unambiguous use of this Greek route came around 877, when the widow Danelis traveled from the small fortified harbor and castle town of Naupaktos on the gulf to Constantinople and back, in a litter, and accompanied by hundreds of slaves. She repeated the exploit a decade or so later.[27] St. Elias the Younger's travels testify to Calabria's connections with western Greece and particularly the Gulf of Corinth (R719). By the early tenth century, travel between Italy and Constantinople routinely flowed this way. When Leo VI summoned Elias to Constantinople in the spring of 903, the holy man traveled from Reggio to Thessalonica through Naupaktos. This description of his trip implies that from Naupaktos Elias turned northeastward, traveling overland via Larissa toward Thessalonica, and bypassing Corinth (R759). A year later, some Italian pilgrims heading for Thessalonica probably followed the same route (R764). Around the same time, Byzantine pilgrims returning from Rome stopped on the north shore of the Gulf of Corinth, en route to Jerusalem via Athens (R775). In 953, a Paphlagonian eunuch and monk who was traveling to Italy stopped at Chryson, just west of Delphi, while about a decade earlier, two aged monks on their way to Rome encountered St. Luke on the bay of Antikyra.[28] Liudprand of Cremona followed the same route when he reached Naupaktos overland in the early winter of 968, going to Italy (R828). It occasions little surprise that one of the first buildings raised at the monastery of Hosios Loukas was a hostel for travelers.[29] Typically for a new and growing route, it ramified and provoked competitors. Thus a more northerly overland track also reached the Ionian

27 Theoph. Cont., 5, 74, 317.10–321.10. The date of the first trip follows from the statement that it occurred while the Nea Church was being built: Theoph. Cont., 5, 76, 319.10–14; the foundations of the new church were started in 877 or early 878: Jenkins 1965, 100. On the route: *TIB* 1: 95 and 97–8; on Naupaktos, *TIB* 1: 210–11.

28 R819; R809. For a lively portrait of this zone of transit in the first half of the 10th C., based largely on the *Life of Luke*, Oikonomides 1992a, 252–4.

29 *V. Lucae Iun.*, 81, p. 209: cf. Oikonomides 1992a, 254.



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Sea at Buthrotos (mod. Butrint), to judge from another trip of 904.[30] Whether they were expected to head overland from Naupaktos or cross the isthmus of Corinth, foreign ambassadors and other official travelers traveled through Patras frequently enough in the ninth century that the Byzantine government imposed the obligation of quartering them on the local Slavic population.[31] The only such envoys on this route would have been western Europeans from the Adriatic littoral and beyond. In fact their connection with Patras is demonstrated by both legs of Liudprand's 968 embassy to Constantinople.[32]

Objects found along the route extend and reinforce the travelers' testimony. The lead seals which once authenticated official documents survive when the papyrus sheets they hung from have decayed. Those that have emerged from the soil illuminate the flow through this region of the instructions of empire.[33] Toward the west, the seal of Theophylact, imperial prōtospatharios and archōn of Dalmatia, indicates Corinthian communications with the Adriatic in the ninth century.[34] One from Dyrrachium points in the same direction.[35] Others parallel the movement of travelers between Italy and the Corinth corridor.[36] Toward the east, seals document relations with the Cyclades, Strobilos on the Asian coast, and the church of Monemvasia.[37] Three seals of tenth-century Constantinopolitan officials have also turned up at Corinth.[38]

30 The group transporting Elias' relics back to Italy crossed Thessaly and Hellas, and boarded a ship at Butrint: R762.

31 Constantine VII, *De adm. imp.*, 49, 1.230.65–71, with Kresten 1977, 61–2n141a. Kresten admits some uncertainty, but believes that this provision appeared already in the *sigillion* issued by Nicephorus I in 805 or early 806; Belke 1996, 90–1, thinks that these dispositions were taken shortly after 805. Lemerle 1963, 39–40, on the other hand, observes that the provision certainly dates to Leo VI at the latest. This seems to fit our data on ambassadors better.

32 R824 and R828, although Liudprand did not actually stop there on his way home – note that he lacked the proper papers for the return trip's expenses (*Legatio*, 58, 207.17–21).

33 On the value of such evidence: Cheynet and Morrisson 1990.

34 Davidson 1952, 319, no. 2697. The elevation of Dalmatia to theme status by 878 places this seal before that date. Oikonomides 1972, 353; *CBSDO* 1: 46 and Ferluga 1978, 131–6.

35 Davidson 1952, 327, no. 2817.

36 A seal of George, metropolitan of Patras, dated s. ix[1] and found in Sicily has been hypothetically linked with the fall of Palermo in 831 and possible immigration from Sicily to Patras: Laurent, 5.1, no. 627. In any case the document to which the seal was once attached links both places, since the metropolitans of Patras appear to have resumed their residence in Greece by this time: Kresten 1977, 53n124a; for the seal of a 10th-C. bishop of Santa Severina in Calabria discovered at Corinth: Cheynet and Morrisson 1990, 121. Closer to home, a seal from Patras attests movement within the gulf: Davidson 1952, 319, no. 2705: cf. Cheynet and Morrisson 1990, 127.

37 Respectively, post-949: Davidson 1952, 319, no. 2704; *ibid.*, 321, no. 2727, cf. Cheynet and Morrisson 1990; and *ibid.*, 121.

38 *Ibid.*, 123.



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The movements these trips and seals evince make sense in the broader and regional historical context. From the close of the seventh century, Byzantium's imperial tentacles began once again to encompass at least the water's edge in the southern Balkans. The embrace tightened toward 800, as the establishment there of themes (military provinces) shows.[39] Bishoprics roughly parallel the secular administration.[40] Nicephorus I's 805 privilege concerning the Slavs of Patras demonstrates progressive Byzantinization of the region.[41] Growing administrative ties further fanned travel between the gulf and the capital: imperial officials, like the future emperor Basil I, the prōtospatharios Zenobius as well as other powerful individuals, such as Basil's benefactor Danelis and her escorts of hundreds of slaves, traveled back and forth between Naupaktos and the capital, although only in the latter case can we document the route.[42] Danelis' stupendous wealth c. 850 testifies to local economic development, which was rich in slaves and in the labor-intensive production of textiles. Her 4,000 freedmen transferred from the Peloponnesus to Italy also will have traveled along a segment of this route in the late 880s.[43] The imperial authorities may have recognized the route as an economic corridor, to judge from a *kommerkiarios*, Joseph, around 900. Such officials are usually reckoned to have collected taxes on trade. According to his seal, Joseph exercised these duties for Thessalonica and Kephalenia, that is, at either end of the Corinthian route.[44]

So texts and context suggest that use of the gulf route started around 830 at the latest and became a regular point of passage by the mid-tenth century. Archaeology further confirms that Gregory's voyage came at a time when Corinth was awakening. Unmistakable refurbishing of older structures in Corinth has

39 For a discussion of data demonstrating the imperial expansion, see Hendy 1985, 69–85. The themes along this route are, in chronological order of their establishment: Hellas, late 7th C., *CBSDO* 2: 22; Kephalenia: 8th C. (c. 750–75?), *CBSDO* 2: 1 (note a *kommerkiarios* of this theme, 9th C.: *ibid.*, no. 1.5); Peloponnesos (capital Corinth), c. 800: *CBSDO* 2: 62; and Nikopolis (capital Naupaktos): late 9th C., after 879; cf. *CBSDO* 2: 9; *TIB* 3: 53–4. For an unpublished seal of an *exartistēs*, i.e. a provisioner of the fleet, at Naupaktos, *CBSDO* 2: 18.

40 On the recovering diocesan order and promotion of older sees to metropolitan status see, in addition to Hendy 1985, 76–7, e.g. *CBSDO* 2: 49, 78, 83, 85, 90, etc.

41 Kresten 1977.

42 Basil: Theoph. Cont., 5, 11, 228.15–17; Zenobius: *ibid.*, 5,77, 320.16–19 and, for Danelis, above. On the role of administrative travel in connecting provinces to the capital, McCormick 1998b, 38–40.

43 A. Kazhdan, *ODB* 1: 583; McCormick 1998b, 35.

44 The point is only reinforced if he is indeed identical with the homonymous contemporary Joseph *vestitor*, *abydikos* ("controller of a checkpoint for maritime circulation") and *kommerkiarios* of Thessalonica, the west and the theme of Hellas: *Byzantine Lead Seals*, 2, no. 1075, and *CBSDO*, 2, no. 8.30. Given the identity of dignity, chronology, place and the functional overlap, the relatively uncommon name reinforces the identification.



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TABLE 18.1
Corinth excavations: bronze coins per regnal year, 775–959

| Coins per regnal year | Years | Reigns | Regnal years | Number of coins |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.2 | 775–802 | Leo IV–Irene | 27 | 4 |
| 0.6 | 802–29 | Nicephorus I–Michael II | 27 | 15 |
| **4.6** | **829–67** | **Theophilus–Michael III** | **38** | **175** |
| 15.2 | 867–86 | Basil I | 19 | 288 |
| 36.8 | 886–912 | Leo VI | 26 | 957 |
| 48.6 | 912–959 | Constantine VII "and family" | 47 | 2,284 |

*Source:* Metcalf 1973, esp. the totals on 186. From 775–912, Metcalf lists only one non-bronze coin, a miliaresion (216, no. 21) which has been subtracted from the total of Theophilus' coins. The 2,284 coins from 912–59 may include some non-bronze issues.

been dated to the tenth and possibly ninth centuries.[45] The coins found at Corinth are overwhelmingly copper stray finds, and are of particular value as indicators of activity on the site. Because the coins are reliably datable only to reigns, the ratio of coins found per regnal year offers the best standard of comparison. Theophilus' copper coins moreover continued to circulate under Michael III.[46] This means that combining the figures for the reigns of these two emperors yields a more accurate picture than their separate tallies, as indicated in Table 18.1.[47] The chronological progression is unmistakable, and it leaps ahead precisely in the generation during which St. Gregory transited through Corinth.[48]

Whether east–west movements took the mountainous overland route from Naupaktos or were entirely seaborne except for the isthmus of Corinth, they obviously were less suitable for bulk transport.[49] In the later Middle Ages, Venetian

45 Scranton 1957, 34–49; note the numerous prisoners' graffiti in the administrative building constructed out of the Roman northwest shops, tentatively dated to the 9th–10th C. (Scranton 1957, 46): *Corinth. Greek Inscriptions*, 8.1, nos. 199–220; cf. *ibid.* 8, 3, no. 722.

46 Cf. *DOC* 3.1: 456 and Metcalf 1973, 182–3.

47 If we were to separate the coins of Theophilus from those of Michael III, the increase in the 830s would be even more pronounced, but it would be followed by a misleading drop for the period 842–76. The separate counts would be twelve coins per annum under Theophilus (829–42), i.e. 156 coins over thirteen years; and 0.8 per annum under Michael III (842–67), nineteen coins for twenty-five years.

48 The most recent publication brings to light fewer coins further from the medieval town nucleus; its chronological distribution suggests that this zone of the town began to recover under Leo VI: MacIsaac 1987, 101. It should be noted however that this last set of coins has suffered loss (of presumably illegible specimens) of uncertain dimensions (97–8). Cf. too the cautionary words of Grierson 1986, 44–53.

49 The much smaller numbers of coins found at nearby Kenchreai (Hohlfelder, 1978,



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cargo ships continued to circumnavigate Greece into the Aegean, just like the merchant ship aboard which St. Blaise sailed late in the ninth century.[50] But some goods certainly did travel overland, as the story of Danelis shows, for she came to the capital laden with the gifts of hundreds of slaves, rugs, various textiles, and gold and silver vessels.[51] The overland leg in particular had some advantages, once imperial control made it relatively safe. It will have prolonged the traveling seasons, since the route around Mount Parnassos may have been passable much of the winter.[52] And it was presumably cheaper for a light traveler to walk than to pay the fare for a ship around Greece. Were there other, non-economic advantages to this route? We will have to remember the question when we seek to explain the changing gamut of routes by which communications flowed in the ninth century.

There is one final consideration. If they needed reminding, the emergence of even a partial land route to the west will have recalled to the authorities at Constantinople the advantages of overland communications. Sometimes, land travel was faster and more reliable than ships. In this sense, the Gulf of Corinth intimates one of the ninth century's most dramatic changes in the Mediterranean infrastructure of communications, for the substantial land leg from Naupaktos to Thessalonica was only one among the new overland routes that were springing up between east and west. The full bearing of the overland leg from the Gulf of Corinth becomes clear only in this wider context. But before proceeding to that vital issue in the next chapter, let us consider more fully the structure of the sea routes we have uncovered.

## 3. Home ports and the regional structure of shipping routes

Tracking the movements of early medieval travelers has uncovered the history of four major complexes of sea routes. One was inherited from late antiquity and remained in continuous operation. The other three were new; even if ships had used them in late antiquity, they were now reborn, in new form. But how were these routes structured? Did travelers board one ship and stay on it until they reached their final destination? Or did traffic fall into interlocking zones within which one or more regional centers dominated shipping? If so, what were the

4–50), i.e. the Aegean port which serviced Corinth *may* hint that much of the traffic that took ship at Corinth for the west had reached the isthmus from the east overland.

50 See the account of the Venetian routes in *TIB* 1: 101–2; R729.

51 Theoph. Cont., 5, 75, 318.3–19.

52 This may have been the path that Liudprand took when he traveled from Constantinople to Naupaktos in October and November: R828; United Kingdom, Admiralty 1944–5, 1: 99.



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zones, and where were the regional centers? Did longer-range couriers exist alongside them? Regional zones would imply frequent ship changes for freight and passengers traveling longer distances, which would have further implications for the economic characteristics of early medieval shipping. It is important to remember that this is not necessarily the same thing as the often observed early medieval predilection for coastal tramping, and which could take one ship over great distances, albeit with frequent landings. The sources shed little direct light on these issues, so that we must approach them somewhat indirectly; again, travelers prove a precious resource.

Several general factors militated for regional shipping zones. Overall, the western and Byzantine economies were fairly small and dispersed. The distances separating populations were substantial. Small and scattered population centers obviated the need for the massive transports of a few staples such as grain from a few centers of production to a few main centers of consumption, which had been so characteristic of the late Roman economy. A second factor was the kind of coastal navigation then practiced. As we have seen, it placed a premium on intimate familiarity with the shoreline, and so circumscribed some shippers' horizons (above, p. 422). So far as we can tell, navigation rested on oral tradition and personal experience. As late as 828, in order to raid the coast of north Africa, a Carolingian count shipping out of the Tuscan coast and bent on war was forced to find pilots in Sardinia (R404). In the relatively frail craft and underdeveloped maritime system of the early Middle Ages, it was safer to stick to the familiar waters of one's home region, even if it was broadly defined. This habit finds a lovely illustration in a tenth-century saint's life, about a ship from Italy in the Gulf of Corinth. Struggling through a storm in the dead of night, the Italians decided the safest thing would be to beach on a desert island. They had been there before, since they knew the hermit who lived on it (R810).

Another general condition which points to the prevalence of regional shipping zones is the disappearance of eastern merchant vessels from northwestern waters. We have already seen that the final centuries of antiquity witnessed a shift in the center of gravity of Mediterranean shipping. Commercial vessels shipping out of western ports declined dramatically, and eastern vessels from a few great eastern ports, especially Alexandria, came to dominate even in the western basin in the sixth and seventh centuries (Ch. 4.5). In the 660s, a Constantinopolitan observer described the profitable voyage to Gaul of a merchant ship whose home berth was in his city (R24). This is the last merchant mariner from Constantinople that I know of in the west. Things do not look much different for Arab ships, as we shall see in a moment.

The last great bubonic plague argues powerfully that most sailors in fact stuck to their home regions, at least in the 740s. The infection crossed over from Ifriqiya to Sicily and Calabria between September 745 and August 746, and



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reached Greece and the Aegean sometime during that same period. Theophanes' comparison of the contagion to the spread of a fire apparently does not imply speed. The epidemic moved rather gradually, for it traveled for the entire indiction, and did not not reach Constantinople until the summer of 747.[53] In other words, ships carrying the infection took at least eleven or twelve months, and perhaps as much as two years, to cover the distance between Africa and Constantinople. The infection crept from port to port along the main trunk line that ran from Sicily to the Aegean, via Calabria, Monemvasia, and Greece. This and the delay in reaching Constantinople suggest that not much direct shipping connected Italy and the Byzantine capital, the sort most liable to transmit the infection swiftly. The step-like progress of the infection describes a shipping pattern dominated by multiple interlocking zones of slow-moving regional traffic, rather than direct and speedy long-distance connections. A ship will have brought the infection from Africa to Sicily; another ship will have taken it to Calabria, and so on, from port to port until, almost a year later, it reached the local shipping zone of the capital. This contrasts sharply with the situation 200 years before, when the infection appears to have traveled from Alexandria to Constantinople within a maximum of about five *winter* months.[54] Although our knowledge of early medieval ceramics is in its infancy, the cargo discovered aboard early medieval wrecks so far also points mainly to regional transport.[55] Our travelers confirm these indications of regionally based shipping, and they begin to sketch the interlocking zones inside the Mediterranean, for the shipping of Europe's Atlantic coasts was clearly now a world apart.[56]

The Muslim southern rim had its own shipping systems. We can just make them out from Christian sources. We found an Egyptian ship, presumably from Alexandria, in port at Naples in 723, prolonging the pattern of late antiquity

53 Theophanes says δι' ὅλης τῆς ιδ' ἰνδικτιῶνος: R153.

54 The infection arrived in Alexandria in the second half of 541, possibly in October, and reached Constantinople no later than 1 March 542: Conrad 1981, 99–108; cf. McCormick 1998a, 53n27.

55 Tables 20.2, ship 12; 20.4, ships 17–19; 20.5, ships 22, 26, 28, 35 and 20.7, ships 45–6.

56 It is just possible that Arculf sailed from the Mediterranean to his home in Gaul through the straits of Gibraltar, since his ship was blown off course and wound up on the west coast of England or Scotland. But he may simply have been sailing along the coast of France after having traveled overland to the Atlantic coast: R44. Otherwise, only the Vikings crossed from the North Sea into the Mediterranean, and that was exceptional even for them: R471. The growth of Cordova nonetheless indicates traffic through the strait of Gibraltar. The Byzantine dromons which traveled there in 839 perforce entered the Atlantic, and the Viking attack seems to have led the authorities of al Andalus to develop their war fleet along the Atlantic: R445; R473; finally a 10th-C. shipwreck off the French Riviera may have loaded its freight at Cordova: Table 20.4, ship 18.



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(R109). Significantly, this is the last time we meet an Egyptian ship so far north in Italy.[57] Toward the middle of the eighth century, the Byzantine fleet of Sicily preyed on the occasional Arab merchantman. Such vessels were presumably following an east–west course along the African coast, in the straits of Sicily (R159). Beginning in the 820s, the Arab conquest naturally integrated Sicily's ports into the shipping patterns of the Islamic world.[58] In the late ninth and early tenth centuries, the Arab shipping linking Sicily, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt becomes visible in the excerpts of Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar (d. 912 or 923), and the first indications of undersea archaeology.[59] In 848, the emir of Cordova sent a fleet against Majorca to oblige the islanders to cease damaging Muslim ships which passed through its waters. Four decades earlier, the Carolingians had intercepted there Arab raiders returning to Spain, but these might have been merchant vessels. Ships passing Majorca will most probably have been on courses from Sardinia and Corsica.[60] Other ships from Islamic Spain headed further eastward, judging from a couple of texts and shipwrecks off southern France assigned to the tenth century (Table 20.4). We hear only rarely of merchant mariners from the Islamic world docking in non-Islamic ports.[61] A significant silence? Mentions of all kinds of ships in Italian waters increase considerably, but not of Muslim merchant ships. Of course, ships whose home ports are explicitly identified are the exception. Even so, enough have turned up to warrant the observation that, by the ninth century, ships out of western ports increasingly replaced eastern ships in the western basin of the Mediterranean.

The boundaries and structure of shipping zones in the northern waters of the Mediterranean's western basin are not yet clear. A series of regional shipping systems may have sprung up and overlapped along the coasts of Spain, Provence, and northern Italy. The easternmost system is the most clearly delineated by the quickening communications we have seen. But where were the ships' home ports? The merchant vessels which were docking at Marseilles in the 820s are just "Italian" (R372; R426). There is thin but sure evidence for Ligurian and Tuscan ships. Liguria supplied the convoy Charlemagne sent to Africa to get his elephant

57 A possible exception might be the vessel that transported the Arab merchants Anons. 125–6, to Rome c. 800, but we do not know its home port.

58 For the 11th C. on, see e.g. Goitein 1967–93, 1: 211–17.

59 Tr. Christides 1993, 92–3; cf. 66; see Clark and Tite 1994, for the deep-water discovery of two Islamic amphoras at separate sites north of Skerki Bank (Map 4.1), which presumably reflect ship movements linking Africa, Sicily, and perhaps Sardinia, and are dated by thermoluminescence to 915–1115 and 850–1080.

60 R490; cf. R246. On Majorca and sailing courses, *Ocean Passages* 1987, 189 (esp. section 8.23).

61 Naples would nonetheless become a congenial port for Arab raiders in the course of the 9th C., an exception that was decried: R514; cf. Louis II, *Ep. ad Basilium* I, 393.20–33.



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(R255); Genoa sent ships to defend Corsica.[62] Tuscan ships – presumably merchantmen adapted for the cause – allowed the Carolingians to stage their naval raids on Africa (R404; R736).

The southern Tyrrhenian Sea forms a distinctive and better-documented regional shipping zone. It looks like the center of gravity for Christian shipping in the western basin of the inland sea. From Gaeta to Amalfi, the Campanian coast (Map 16.1) was putting ships to sea by 800. In 812, when the Byzantine governor of Sicily needed vessels to defend the island, he turned to Naples, Amalfi and Gaeta.[63] Travelers' movements indicate that ships out of these ports mostly stayed within their home region. In 723, St. Willibald and his companions took one ship from Gaeta to Naples, where, after a two-week layover, they changed to an Egyptian ship and continued on to Reggio. This might suggest that the first vessel was a local one, plying very local routes (R108). A century later, when St. Gregory Dekapolites was heading in the opposite direction, he changed ships in Reggio. There he boarded a vessel out of Naples, for Rome (R422). It is possible that even the Byzantine navy had used different ships and crews for Tyrrhenian and Ionian navigation in the seventh century (Chapter 16n69). As we shall see, the ships of the Campanian sea cities transported goods and merchants around a zone which reached at least as far north as Rome and Sardinia and Corsica; to the southeast, they probably went as far as Taranto (Ch. 21.2).

Toward the end of our period, new regional shipping zones seem to have sprouted on the edges of the "Venetian gulf." Perhaps in part they responded to reemerging land routes leading to the lower Adriatic. In the same year, Frankish and papal legates returned from Constantinople overland as far as Dyrrachium. The Frankish party sailed across the Adriatic to Siponto, while the papal envoys' ship went north along the Balkan coast toward a crossover point to Ancona (R599; R601). It may be that Dalmatian ships were particularly active in this area

62 R269; Airaldi 1983 makes some interesting suggestions, but supplies no specific references; Airaldi 1981, to which she refers, is an Italian version which improves little on this score.

63 Of course, Naples and Gaeta were ports of call for ships of other or of unidentified origin much earlier: R73 and R79 (Roman ships?), R108, etc. 812: R310; only Naples balked. The only earlier reference I know to Amalfitan shipping is implicit and suspect: Leo III supposedly led an expedition of 120 dromons to "Campania, Naples, and Amalfi" for some kind of naval engagement early in the 8th C.: *Epistula trium patriarcharum* (*BHG* 1387), 11, *PG* 95.357C. Notwithstanding Hendy's optimism (1985, 668–9), there is little reason to trust this falsification (cf. A. Kazhdan, *ODB* 2: 1219–20 on the apparently earlier version *BHG* 1386). But it does show that Amalfi ranked already with Naples in contemporary Byzantine eyes. A Neapolitan ship: R422. The pact of 836 implies that Neapolitans and Amalfitans were selling Lombards "across the sea": R432; according to a Byzantine version of the *Translation of St. Bartholomew*, the "Lombard" ships which brought the relics from Lipari came from Amalfi: R442. See also R476.



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of the lower Adriatic. This, at any rate, is the implication of the Life of St. Leucius, which shows its holy hero switching to a ship from Dalmatia when he wished to sail the short distance from Otranto to Brindisi. The Dalmatian sea cities, Brindisi, and Otranto were Byzantine possessions when the Life was written, so we may be catching a glimpse of a Byzantine provincial shipping zone in the late ninth-century coastal waters of the lower Adriatic.[64] According to an account dating from the 950s at the latest, yet another shipping region overlapped this one (Map 19.1). In a passage generally reckoned to derive from the late ninth or very early tenth century, Constantine VII's confidential manual on foreign policy describes a Croatian shipping zone. The Croats, if attacked, mobilized for war both larger and smaller commercial ships (*sagēnai* and *kondourai*) with which they usually coasted along the gulfs of Pagania and Dalmatia as far as Venice.[65] Juxtaposed, these two accounts suggest that Dalmatian ships may have frequented the Byzantine ports on both shores of the lower Adriatic, while Croatian ones traded mainly in the ports of the upper, eastern edge of the sea. Political allegiances shaped these contiguous shipping zones.

From the Adriatic to the Byzantine heartland of the Aegean and the Sea of Marmara is nearly a blank as far as home ports are concerned.[66] But there are hints in the Ionian Sea of another regional shipping system linking the fringes of the western Mediterranean with western Greece and even the Aegean. Travelers' movements may suggest where many of its ships had their home port. Around 830, St. Gregory Dekapolite took one ship from Corinth to Reggio, where he found another, Neapolitan ship to continue his trip to Rome.[67] The Balkan junctures of sea and land routes may point in the same direction, for instance, when St. Elias the Younger's body was transported overland to Buthrotos and then placed aboard a ship for Rossano, en route to Reggio.[68] A detail in the romance of

64 *V. Leucii*, p. 364.

65 Constantine VII, *De adm. imp.*, 31, 1.150.52–7. *Ibid.*, 30, 144.104–6 makes clear that Pagania stretches north from the mouth of the Neretva River, at least as far as Makarska: cf. Dvornik, in *ibid.*, 2.122–3; the Gulf of Dalmatia presumably comprises the waters to the north, around the theme capital of Zadar. For the date of this segment of c. 31, *ibid.*, 2.99–100. A gloss believed to have been inserted in the 950s (*ibid.*, 100) mentions 80 *sagēnai* and 100 *kondourai*, bearing 40 and 10 to 20 men, respectively. If we may take these two statements together, they would imply that this was the total size of commercial shipping fleet in the 950s.

66 In 880 the Byzantine commander granted captured Arab ships to Methone: R675.

67 R422; that the saint had to persuade the sailors in port at Corinth to head to Sicily (and Reggio) implies that these were not their home ports. Ignatius, *V. Gregorii*, 11 and 12, 55.12–25.

68 R762; cf. R167 and R180, who took ships in Apulia for the Aegean and Constantinople; Liudprand who sailed from Kerkyra to Otranto: R828. Note too that in 653 Pope Martin may have changed ships in Messina, en route from Rome to Constantinople: R19. Unfortunately, none of these cases identify the ship's home port, so they remain inconclusive.



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St. Leucius reinforces the historical hints: en route to Brindisi, the saint found a ship from Reggio in the Aegean (at Andros), and sailed with it as far as Otranto.[69] Other Greek ships operating in the same zone could have shared the same home berth; at least, there is no evidence that they came from further afield. The tenth-century ship from Italy which one stormy night found familiar refuge on a tiny island in Gulf of Corinth has already illustrated the safety advantages of a regional shipping system. The ship was presumably bound for Corinth, and one is inclined to locate its home port in Byzantine southern Italy (R810). A few "Greek" ships show up in the Tyrrhenian zone and further north, off Tuscany in 776.[70] Greek merchant ships seem to have become a significant presence in the port controlled by the church of Arles in 921; although they could have come from anywhere in the empire, Byzantine Italy was nearest (R796). An Arab legal writer argued that Muslims should not prey on Christian merchant ships approaching Africa, whether they were near or far from the port (of their destination?), so long as they were merchants known for their commercial relations with the lands of Islam. One is naturally tempted to think of Venice, but Byzantine Italy was closer (R515). Until new light comes from the bottom of the sea, the picture here must remain faint.

However many ships entered its waters from abroad, the Aegean, with its northern extension, the Bosporus, functioned in many ways as the eastern equivalent of the pivotal Tyrrhenian Sea zone. This much is already clear from Byzantine naval organization.[71] The Aegean will have been home berth to not a few trading ships, as well as to the other vessels required for daily life in the island-studded sea. Though we glimpse it performing an act of charity, it is not improbable that the ship from Smyrna putting in at Lesbos with a load of grain, vegetables, and gold had a commercial vocation.[72] Another echo of the Aegean regional pattern of shipping comes from Willibald's travels. When he wished to sail east from Patara, on the southern shore of Asia Minor, he was forced to return into the Aegean, to Miletus, to find a ship to take him to Chelidonia and Cyprus (Map 5.1).[73] A century later, St. Gregory Dekapolite's spring convoy of merchantmen out of Ephesus for the Sea of Marmara probably illustrates a recurring pattern of Ephesian shipping (R417).

69 *V. Leucii* (*BHL* 4894), p. 364.

70 R186. One is tempted to think that the ship boarded by St. Elias the Younger and traveling from Rome to Demetrias was Greek, but there is no evidence to support this temptation: R729.

71 Naval organization: Ahrweiler 1966, 76–81; on Aegean shipping patterns, *TIB* 10: 99–108.

72 R202: the text does not allow us to conclude that the gift equaled the ship's carrying capacity.

73 Hugeburc, *V. Willibaldi*, 93.20–94.5. To Tobler and Holder-Egger, this appeared illogical, and they proposed emending the text to remove the back-tracking into the Aegean.



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In the written sources, Constantinople looms large and it is hard not to imagine that much of the broader region's shipping revolved around it. The capital and its environs were home to merchant ships throughout our period.[74] Given the great value of ships, it is no surprise to find three ninth-century brothers sharing ownership and operation of the same vessel, perhaps an inheritance from their father.[75] We know little indeed about the northern approaches to Constantinople and the Black Sea. The situation of the Byzantine seashore towns crouched at the foot of the rugged mountains of northern Anatolia, and growing Byzantine interest in the Crimea both made Black Sea shipping vitally important. It wove together the coastal settlements and constituted a lifeline to the capital.[76] Some ships which transported grain levies for the imperial treasury may have been based on an island off the Black Sea coast.[77]

On the empire's southeastern sea frontier, the waters around Cyprus constituted another zone. Certain ships specialized in the blue-water passage from Attaleia to Cyprus and presumably had their home port in one or the other place.[78] At least one Isaurian ship plied the sea between Cilician Seleukeia and Cyprus (R499). The presence of Willibald's skipper out of Cyprus in Emesa (Homs) indicates Cypriot ships' involvement in the eighth-century Caliphate.[79]

The diversity of home ports that emerges from this review is in itself striking, and tends to confirm that shipping was chiefly organized by regional zones. The two shipping zones or systems which look pivotal in their respective basins of the Christian Mediterranean are the Tyrrhenian Sea and the Aegean. Apart from them stands Venice. Structurally, this contrasts sharply with late antiquity, when the two Italian home zones had no real parallel. Another difference appears within most regional systems. In this early stage, one suspects that the polyfocal Campanian model prevails: a multiplicity of smallish port towns – Gaeta, Naples, Sorrento, Amalfi – rather than one main center dominate local traffic. From them only the occasional ship went deep into a neighboring zone, or even further. The

74 Justinian II collected ships or contributions from the shippers of Constantinople for his large expedition against Cherson: R78; a century later Nicephorus I levied special taxes on the shippers of Constantinople: Ch. 20n20.

75 Theosterictus, *V. Nicetae Medicii* (*BHG* 1341), 45, *AASS* April. 1, app., xxvii. The miracle is awkwardly appended to the end of another story; no place is given. If it is in the right place, the storm and miraculous preservation of the ship presumably occurred in the vicinity of the saint's incarceration, on the island monastery of St. Glykeria, off Cape Akritas (mod. Tuzlaburnu), in the Sea of Marmara across from Constantinople; see Janin 1975, 56–7.

76 *TIB* 9: 135–7; *V. Nicetae patricii* (*BHG* 1342b), 30, p. 347; R225.

77 Ignatius, *Ep.* 21, 68.11–70.52 with comm., *ibid.*, pp. 179–81.

78 R498. The former is perhaps the more likely, since it was a great naval center and its province of Pamphylia gave its name to a type of ship: C. Foss, *ODB* 1: 228–9; Ahrweiler 1966, 415.

79 Hugeburc, *V. Willibaldi*, 95.4–9.



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easiest thing for a traveler was to disembark and shift to a different ship out of a different port at key harbors, or hubs, along the route, just as we have seen Sts. Willibald, Gregory the Dekapolite and the mythical Leucius do. Whether or not a similar system of multiple and overlapping multifocal regional shipping systems also obtained in the southern, Muslim Mediterranean is a question it would be rash for us to answer, although some research may suggest that this was the case.[80]

The second striking characteristic is that the shipping systems were dynamic. In the first half of the ninth century, Frankish customs grants to southern French churches begin to mention Italian ships, while in the early tenth century, a similar grant refers to Greek ships. This seems to indicate that one zone at least widened as traffic intensified (R372; R796). The explosion on to the scene of Venice represents a major change with great ramifications for the overall pattern of routes, and probably also for the regional vocations of the other zonal systems. One wonders whether the distinctively long-distance horizons of Venetian shippers did not also contribute to the emergence of the more local Croatian and Dalmatian shipping operations late in our period.

This represents only a first sketch which future research will certainly improve. More research, especially into shipwrecks and the still uncharted coastal diffusion of durable wares will define more precisely the boundaries and interaction between zones. More sub-zones, and perhaps even change inside and among the zones, may appear. But for now, two things seem clear. Much, probably most, shipping in the Christian Mediterranean moved within geographically limited (although not inconsequentially small) regional systems. And some ships broke out of these regional systems. At the outset of the eighth century the ship we saw sailing around the southern Tyrrhenian Sea hailed from Egypt, and provided a very late survival of the ancient pattern. In the second half of our period, we meet a few long-distance couriers whose home port remains uncertain: the ship on which the relics of St. Genesius were transported from Palestine to Rome or, later, the slavers running their human cargoes from Taranto to Africa and Egypt; later still, the merchant skipper whose ship was supposed to travel from Rome to Constantinople via Methone and Demetrias (R242; R577–9; R729). But the greatest and most complete exception does have a name. That name is Venice, and it was exceptional right from the start, trading – and surely transporting – slaves between Rome and the Islamic world.

80 For the later period, Goitein 1967–93, 1: 211–13 (cf. 318–19), seems to be of two minds, since in the former pages he stressed the "overlapping of long- and short-distance itineraries," and in the latter, "the predominance of the long- over the short-distance routes," notwithstanding his own statement. I see no reason why the same methodology of travelers' movements I have developed here could not be applied to the richer documentation of later periods.



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The prevalence of regional shipping systems makes clear how extraordinary the Venetians' earliest seafaring exploits were. As we have already seen, Venice's sea ventures become visible in the eighth century, and Venetian ships are explicitly mentioned from the early ninth century onward.[81] But they are different from the other western European shipping systems in that they typically ranged further afield. When Campanian shipping was just beginning to come back to life, Venetian ships were already there in their home waters. Early on, the Venetian ships ranged astonishingly widely: from Rome to somewhere in the Caliphate, between Africa – perhaps indeed Morocco rather than Tunisia – and Sicily, to the Holy Land, to Egypt. All across the Mediterranean, the Venetian vessels were active. But predominantly, they sailed to the Islamic world, in contrast to the Byzantine harbors that would become their favored destinations a little later. Paradoxically, we see them only sporadically in their home shipping zone of the Adriatic.[82] One feature of Venetian navigation underscores its structural distinctiveness. In the Veneto, even the shortest and most banal of movements required a boat, so there was no shortage of navigational opportunities of a limited sort.[83] But Venetian shipping, if it was ever to surpass the local level, had to get out of the Adriatic. This meant that shipping was either very local, or very long-distance by nature, since just to exit the Adriatic required a voyage of 415 NM, and population centers were thin and far between, once one left the head of the Adriatic.

In 700, Christian long-distance communications in the Mediterranean were dominated by the ancient trunk route stretching from Rome to the Aegean, around Greece. Around 750, there are signs of renewed activity in the Tyrrhenian Sea, expanding an important new branch of the trunk route. Peaceable links with Africa increase then and would scarcely diminish with the Muslim conquest of Sicily. At the same time, we can detect movement along the Muslim coastal sea and land routes of Africa. By 767, it had become feasible to reach Rome by traveling to Africa and taking a ship there for the north, opening an alternative way to and from the Middle East.

81 For a Venetian attack on Dalmatia by ship: R267; two Venetian ships sailing between Tunisia or Morocco and Sicily: R321. Fortunatus of Grado's ships: below.

82 This is not to deny that Venetian ships were very active in the upper Adriatic: one has only to see the role of ships in, e.g. the local movements of a Fortunatus of Grado to grasp this. One possible instance is not certain: R428, the Venetian merchantmen attacked by Neretva pirates en route home from Benevento. These ships may have been returning from the eastern shore of the Beneventan principality, e.g., around Salerno, rather than the western shore, around Bari.

83 One wonders, for instance, whether the transhumance of sheep, from Aquileia to other pastures in Istria, might not have been effected by ship: DKar 1, no. 174, 4 August 792.



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The third major route opens with the resurgence of the Adriatic as a home zone of shipping and a launching pad for long-distance enterprises. The Venetians supply the first hint of significant Italian links to Africa around 748, but the evidence grows most dramatically from about 775 onward; shipping links with the Byzantine empire existed, but those with the Arab world appear to have grown more. The fourth major route, the Gulf of Corinth, sets in a generation or two later. By the 830s it was an important piece of the communications infrastructure, and certainly attracted some of the traffic which, in earlier decades, had circumnavigated Greece. From the isthmus of Corinth, one could continue by land or by sea, although the land route north to Constantinople may have gained the upper hand.

Aggregate movements, seasonal trends, rates of movement, and now sea routes: everywhere we look, the picture is one of change. We started out with one main sea route from west to east and end up with four. The major changes in routes occur within a generation or two of the year 800, precisely the era of maximum aggregate movements, precisely the era of the influx of Arab coins.

Even so, this was also an age of predominantly regional shipping zones. Some ships of course ranged much further, and none more so than those of Venice. For now at least, the data are lacking which would allow us to gauge the importance of Venice's long-distance ship movements, in quantitative terms of volume and value, relative to the regional shippers. But qualitatively, it is now undeniable that, right from the outset, Venice followed a different course, and that this course marked an important new departure for the future. Why this new departure, and why Venice? To answer these questions, we will need, finally, to turn to what these ships were carrying, to the broader and more controversial problem of early medieval commerce, on which routes and communications have already opened these new perspectives. But first, we must complete our survey of ninth-century communications by recovering one of their most distinctive features, the reemergence of long-distance land links.



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# 19

# *New overland routes*

As the dust settled after the epochal upheavals and creeping changes that had transformed Mediterranean civilization from around 500 to 700, new configurations of overland transport took shape around the inland sea. Some, like the shift from wheel to camel or donkey, had their roots in late antiquity; others, like the overland routes to Constantinople and the east, represented a kind of return to forgotten conditions that had prevailed before the end of antiquity. Ignoring these changes has obscured in this era new patterns of communication as well as commerce.

Twice over, as we have already seen, sea lanes linked up with land routes, and the latter naturally help explain the former. In the Byzantine world, ship traffic between Italy and the Gulf of Corinth fed into the land route across Greece toward Constantinople. In the western reaches of the Caliphate, the overland route linking Spain and the Middle East along the coast of Africa connected with ships sailing between Italy and Africa. The complex dialogue between land and sea communications is only deepened by what we have seen of the shifting routes that linked Gaul to the western Mediterranean. The main axis of communications between Gaul and the Mediterranean had shifted eastwards toward Italy, across the Alps, and away from the Rhône valley (Ch. 3.3). The cultural and commercial implications of such a change were very great indeed. In the eighth century, Switzerland and the Rhine valley replaced Provence and the Rhône river as northern Europe's main intermediaries with the Italian Mediterranean world. As unlikely a place as Saint Gall, on the slope above the Lake of Constance, emerged as a major way station that relayed Greek culture into northern Europe.[1] Commercially speaking, the eastward shift in itself had sounded the death knell of low-value, high-bulk Mediterranean imports into Frankland, for it represented the triumph of land travel over water transport. The backs of animals and men replaced boats and barges on a central part of the path north. Regardless of

1 Kaczynski 1988.



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the disposable wealth of Frankish society, irrespective of the rise and fall of empires far to the east, such a shift constituted a dominant fact in the patterns of transport of goods between the Mediterranean world and transalpine Europe.

The land route north only gained importance from the establishment by the Franks first of a protectorate and then of direct government of northern Italy. Most Carolingian traffic between Italy and northern Europe went overland, across the Alps. The growth of land links responded to political and cultural developments that were in part independent of those which had diminished the old sea route to the mouth of the Rhône, and the processes were mutually reinforcing. Even as the rise of the land route extended that traffic by making it viable all the year round, it changed and restricted its character, especially as regards bulk goods.[2] By the ninth century, the old importance of Rome and western Italy as a relay for seaborne contacts with the Middle East was also challenged by the expansion of the great new emporium and shipping hub. Venice lay further east still, and closer to the Rhine artery that irrigated the heart of the Frankish empire.

In other places too, land routes were appearing alongside sea routes. They only widened the options open to travelers. In this chapter we will focus on three complexes of routes which experienced deep change: the two overland corridors to the east, that is, the central European one that capitalized on the Danube and, further south, the corridor that crossed the Balkans; and the "northern arc" that came to link Scandinavia to the Byzantine empire and the approaches to central Asia.

## 1. The revival of the Balkan and Danube routes

Winter 866 saw a stunning development in the progress of the faith and communications with Constantinople, according to Nicholas I. This pope, a privileged witness if ever there were one, wrote about it a year later. He had been deeply depressed by the Photian schism and by the difficulty of communicating with the elite of Constantinople against the wishes of a hostile imperial government.

> The sea voyage seemed to us very difficult and quite redoutable, given the Greeks' well-known intrigues. And so, when on all sides we were distressed by these anxieties and oppressed by great cares, behold! Suddenly envoys of the . . . king of the Bulgars were announced to us. Who could express with how much joy, with how much exultation we were filled? This was both because we recognized their saving conversion by the riches of

2 See Ch. 24.2, on the implications for our understanding of the distribution of papyrus.



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God's goodness and because we learned that men who, though they are far from us in body, yet have become present to us by faith, had sought out the doctrine of the holy Apostle Peter and of his See. But also because we grasped that, through their kingdom, an easy, overland route to the land of the Greeks lay open to our envoys.[3]

The significance of this observation is in no way diminished by the likelihood that one of our travelers shaped its wording. Anastasius Bibliothecarius probably composed the papal pronouncement. He was western Europe's foremost authority on Byzantium and soon would know the route firsthand.[4] The *Liber pontificalis* sounds the same note of novelty when it describes the mission and route for its contemporary Roman audience. This biography, also composed by Anastasius or under his influence, displays a rare interest in infrastructure. The biographer *explains* that there was a land route to Constantinople across the Bulgarian kingdom: envoys to the khan could travel with other diplomats continuing on to Byzantium, "since a route runs overland to Constantinople through the Bulgarian kingdom."[5] The novelty of the new trail is unmistakable.

For the first time in over 200 years, most of the trip to Constantinople could be accomplished on dry land (Ch. 3.2). The pope's biographer intimates that the suggestion to use the new route came from the Bulgarian embassy which had just reached Rome, and perhaps, through them, from the Byzantine emperor.[6] The

3 *Ep.* 100, JE 2879, 602.36–603.9: "Videbatur enim nobis iter navale satis difficile et propter eorundem Grecorum expertas insidias valde cavendum. Cum his itaque anxietatibus undique coartaremur et ingentibus premeremur angustiis, ecce subito legati iam fati regis Vulgarum nobis adesse nuntiantur. Unde quis est, qui dicere possit, quanto gaudio vel quanta exultatione simus repleti . . . sed et quia per eorum regnum facilem ac terrenum missis nostris ad terram Grecorum accessum patere perspeximus."

4 Ertl 1938, 87–90.

5 *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.164.26–7: ". . . quoniam per Vulgaricum regnum iter usque Constantinopolim terra tenus tenditur." On Anastasius' authorship, Pros. "Anastasius 4." For composition and sometimes even circulation of the *Liber pontificalis*' biographies beginning right after the new pope's consecration: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.iii. The papal letters carried by the envoys are dated 13 November 866: R559.

6 An imperial injunction transmitted, if not invented, by the Bulgarians, urged the papal legates to travel to Constantinople via Bulgaria: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.165.6–7: "Sed et idem imperator [Michael III] legatis regis Vulgarum ita fertur dixisse: 'Nisi per Vulgariam missi sedis apostolicae venissent, nec faciem meam nec Romam diebus vitae suae viderent'," as the biographer protests, when describing how the Roman legates were blocked at the Byzantine–Bulgarian border. The phrasing makes clear that Michael's purported message was transmitted orally, and that the writer has it on the authority of the Bulgarians. Contrast Nicholas I, as discussed in R559. The subject of *viderent* is clearly the papal legates; the message only makes sense if it were conveyed to Nicholas I by the Bulgarian envoys in 866. This means that the phrasing is careless, since the predicate has a slightly different meaning for the second object: the legates will never get to



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point is reinforced by Pope Hadrian II's words – likely also dictated under Anastasius' influence – concerning the Byzantine embassy of 867. A year later, he emphasized that the Byzantines had traveled "not only by sea, but also by dry land."[7] The reopening of regular land communications between Constantinople and the west must surely be reckoned one of the most dramatic developments in ninth-century communications. Yet it has passed almost unnoticed.[8]

That first mission of November 866 failed to reach Constantinople. Michael III commanded his local official to turn the ambassadors away at Byzantium's borders. But this failure owed nothing to the route itself. In fact, Michael immediately capitalized on the new route. He responded to the papal embassy in a letter to the Bulgarian khan which reached Boris while Nicholas' ambassadors were still with him, and they carried it back to Rome (R559; R570). Communications flowed frequently between Bulgaria and Rome over the next twenty years.[9] With Constantinople, contacts explicitly traveled overland five times in the first six years.[10] The advantages were sufficiently obvious that papal diplomats trekked to Constantinople in the summer of 869 (R592). Such a fair-weather trip means that land travel was immediately competitive with the traditional sea route, at least for diplomatic purposes. Within two years, in other words, the continental route had become more than just a bad-weather alternative for exceptionally important communications seeking to avoid imperial censure.

What is more, this solves the enigma of Basil I's winter mission to Nicholas I in 867 (Table 15.4, no. 13; R573). Like papal missives dispatched across the Alps in winter, these envoys too traveled overland, and so could quit Constantinople in mid-December. It is worth stressing that Roman expressions of the route's novelty coincide exactly with the sudden frequency of winter departures and the first attestations of east–west communications transiting via Bulgaria. In other words, the silence on eastern winter communications with Rome before 866 is no accident of source preservation. And explicitly continental travels to and from the Byzantine empire continue thereafter (R684, and below). This increases the

see Michael's face, nor would they ever even live to see Rome (again) if they came to Constantinople via the traditional sea route.

7 JE 2913: "non solum per mare, sed et per aridam gradiendo," 753.33–4; cf. R559; Ertl 1938, 87–93.

8 Lewis 1975, 359–62, deserves credit for asserting that a new avenue of communications became possible after Charlemagne destroyed the Avar kingdom, but he did not try to prove that it was used. Obolensky 1988a, 53–9, first observed and advanced evidence for this development, on the basis of Dvornik's speculative reconstruction of the route followed by Constantine and Methodius, and of the papal mission of 869.

9 R558–9; R571–72; R574; R607; R621–22; R649; R665–6.

10 R559 (Michael III's letter was conveyed to Pliska and thence to Rome); R592; R599; R601; R622.



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likelihood that certain other Constantinopolitan trips whose destination and season fitted, also took an overland route.[11]

In retrospect, the new route had been a long time coming. Formidable, if not impassible, physical barriers discouraged overland contacts. The rugged southeastern European mountain ranges run mostly from northwest to southeast across travelers' paths. Along the way lay trackless forests and wastelands, malarial marshlands and wild stretches of the Danube. The great river would require epic engineering between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries to regain its Roman status as a royal highway from central Europe to the Black Sea.[12] The political geography was even more important. Large, more or less organized political structures were not indispensable for long-distance communications – witness the Varangian Rus' penetration to the threshold of Central Asia. But political stability surely favored such communications. The unified late Roman political and transportation structures connecting east and west had largely dissolved at the end of antiquity. In their place a welter of small "Sklaviniai," Slavic territories, had sprung up across the Balkans. When Charlemagne was born, the eastern reaches of Frankish territory were still separated from Byzantium by political–ethnic barriers: beyond the restless duchy of Bavaria lay the dreaded Avars, and beyond them the Protobulgarian empire, then expanding over a great swath of central Europe, from roughly the modern-day Republic of Moldova down into Greece. Greater and lesser peoples, chiefly of Slavic culture, filled the interstices. Difficult transit conditions may well have prevailed in zones controlled by no authority. Nor was that all. On the eastern end, the Byzantine empire may have already begun a policy of frontier deterrence by surrounding its European borders with the wide swath of barren, inhospitable wasteland noted in the twelfth century by William of Tyre.[13] At its border, the Bulgarian empire observed even more drastic customs, at least until 866. A system of frontier guards was in place; if any person, slave or free, escaped their detection, the guards were immediately put to death.[14] Even thereafter, another barren wasteland (O.E. *westenne*) separated Bulgarian territory from Frankish Carinthia, as we will hear from an Old English witness. The expanding territorial control of the great powers nonetheless fostered travel through their lands, once permission was secured to cross their borders.

11 E.g. R616. I suspect also R624; R732–3 are both less clear, but certainly possible.

12 On the geography, ecology, and medieval vegetation patterns of the Balkans, see the succinct account in Hendy 1985, 21–5 and 35–9; on the malarial marshes which "almost immobilized" the opposing armies of World War I, see e.g., United Kingdom, Admiralty 1944–5, 1: 272–6; cf. the reed banks described by Harun ibn Yahya, trans. Wiet, p. 143.

13 *Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum*, 2, 4, *CC, Cont. Med.* 63.166.24–39; cf. Hendy 1985, 39.

14 Pope Nicholas I counseled Boris to temper this death penalty: *Responsa*, JE 2812, 25, *MGH Epist.* 6.579.29–580.4.



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Rather than there being one royal way between the threshold of Asia and Carolingian Europe, travelers' movements disclose, dimly but unmistakably, different overland routes across the Bulgarian empire. For many trips we know only the points of departure and arrival. But, taken all together, ninth-century movements indicate corridors which seem to fall into two broad swaths in terms of where they reached western Europe. The northernmost we may term the Danubian or central European corridor. Travelers along this set of routes entered the Carolingian orbit at various points between the Danube and the head of the Adriatic. The second, Balkan corridor began some 200 km further south and appears more diffuse. It reached the Adriatic or the Ionian coast at several widely scattered points between Nin and Dyrrachium. Though the bulk of movements along these corridors came after 860, their roots reach back a generation or two, and the soil in which they grew, further still.

## *The Danubian corridor*

From Charlemagne's day, Frankish power had expanded relentlessly to the southeast no less than in other directions. Bavaria, once subjugated, served as a launching pad for the destruction of the Avars and for Frankish penetration into Carinthia. As Charlemagne's outposts edged ever eastward, they came closer and closer to the Bulgarian empire. The latter was itself expanding northwestward, and claimed equally to have destroyed the Avars.[15] Contact and collision were inevitable. The question was when, and with what consequences.

The Protobulgarian empire has been little known to western medievalists.[16] Founded by Turkic Bulgars between the Danube, the Black Sea, and the Balkan mountains in the later seventh century, this multiethnic society incorporated the local Greek and Slav inhabitants into its vigorous expansion southward, toward Constantinople and Greece, and westwards along the Danube. Right from the start Bulgarian power connected and collided with Byzantine. A crushing defeat inflicted on the Byzantine army north of the Danube in 680 ushered the Bulgars across the river and into the region which would form the nucleus of their empire in coming centuries. Byzantine tribute purchased an uneasy status quo.[17] Relations would oscillate between war and peace for the next three centuries and more. Armies swept south and north according to the vagaries of war and treaty; the Bulgarian khans intervened in imperial politics at the highest level, from

15 On the Carolingian assault on the Avars, Pohl 1988, 308–23; the Bulgarian attack: *Souda*, 1.483.29–484.12; cf. Beševliev 1981, 235–6. Eggers 1995, 58–60 challenges this interpretation; I am not convinced.

16 See now Shepard 1995b.

17 Theophanes, A.M. 6169, 1.358.11–359.21; Nicephorus, *Brev.*, 36, 88.1–90.29; Beševliev 1981, 173–82.



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Tervel, who was crowned as Caesar in Constantinople after helping Justinian II regain the throne in 705, to Symeon, whom the patriarch crowned outside Constantinople in 913.[18] Numerous Byzantine captives joined whoever had stayed on in the old imperial provinces after the Bulgar conquest, deepening Byzantium's impact across the new borders.[19] In the second half of the eighth century, pro-Byzantine spies reported on developments at the Bulgar court, and Constantinople sheltered deposed khans.[20] So deep were the links that when the khans raised triumphal inscriptions for their victories over the Byzantines, the language they used was Vulgar Greek.[21] Strategic considerations probably led the Byzantines to refurbish the infrastructure of overland transport toward the Bulgar frontier in the eighth century.[22] In a word, relations between Constantinople and the Bulgarian empire were intense. After both powers agreed on a thirty-year peace in 815–16, relations seem generally to have been good, notwithstanding brief flare-ups.[23] When Frankish power impinged on the khan's therefore, it brought Byzantium so much the closer to western Europe. And this time, communications with Constantinople ran overland. The history of Frankish diplomatic relations with the Bulgarian empire allows us to detect some of the earliest medieval travelers overland between the Black Sea and western Europe. They sketch the prehistory of the new land route to Constantinople.

Early contacts between Bulgars and Franks soon may have followed the destruction of the Avar kingdom which had separated them.[24] In any event, Franks colonizing Carinthia carried Carolingian political hegemony ever further to the east, creeping down the slopes of the Noric and Julian Alps.[25] At the same time the Bulgarians pushed the khan's influence westward up the river valleys of the Drava and Danube; peoples lodged between the two great powers were increasingly squeezed by their mighty neighbors. By 818, former allies of the Bulgarians appeared on the banks of the Meuse river, petitioning Charlemagne's son for support; Frankish military operations along the Drava and into Pannonia ensued.[26] The first direct communications between the courts came early in 824.

The emissaries of the Bulgar khan Omurtag presumably departed from his capital, Pliska, some 70 km from the Black Sea. Alternatively, the ambassadors of 824 may have started out from Silistra on the Danube, where Omurtag

18 See in general Browning 1975, 45–69.
19 See Venedikov 1962 and Browning 1988.
20 Beševliev 1981, 206–28.
21 *Nadpisi*; cf. e.g., R. Browning, *ODB* 3: 1744.
22 Mango and Ševčenko 1972, 384–93.
23 *Nadpisi*, 276, 290–1, 296–7; P. A. Hollingsworth, *ODB* 1: 310.
24 Beševliev 1981, 235–6; cf. Pohl 1988, 322–3.
25 On the expansion eastward, Wolfram 1995, 211–47; cf. Bowlus 1995, 46–89 and Eggers 1995, 31–49; also above, Ch. 7n65.
26 Beševliev 1981, 280–1, 284–6; R354, cf. R360; R364–5; R367; R375, etc. Cf. BM 707 for the telltale sign of ecclesiastical concern about confirming diocesan boundaries along the Drava river.



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constructed a splendid palace as his second capital.[27] In any case, they crossed Europe to reach Louis the Pious, who was then wintering in France. The novelty of an embassy from this part of the world struck the Frankish court, which responded by sending a Bavarian back with the Bulgars (R382). The ensuing diplomatic exchange produced no satisfactory resolution of the boundary issues between the two empires. In 827, Bulgars in boats attacked up the Drava river and established governors there, apparently briefly. After a Frankish counter-attack, they returned in 829 (R385; R387; R392; R400; R407; R412). For a decade and a half thereafter matters on the eastern edge of empire got lost in the political upheavals which then roiled the Carolingian core lands.[28]

Bulgar envoys appeared before Louis the German at Paderborn in 845, and at Mainz in 852, for purposes that are unclear (R474; R506). In the same months that Khan Boris' legation reached Rome and delighted Nicholas I, another, similar party met with Louis the German at Regensburg. It followed in the footsteps of an embassy which, two years earlier, had apparently encountered the king at Tulln on the Danube, some 400 km downstream from Regensburg (R549; R557). Louis sent the missionaries requested by the Bulgar envoys, but, with Boris' approval, they returned home when they found Bulgaria filled with Roman evangelizers (R576). This new route the envoys traveled lies behind the vision of eastern Europe documented by the entourage of King Alfred the Great (871–901). According to the Old English Orosius, "Then to the east of *Carendre* land (Carinthia) beyond the uninhabited district is the land of the *Pulgare* and east of that is the land of the Greeks."[29]

The central European corridor surely involved the Danube and, at least in some cases, the Drava and perhaps Sava rivers. Bulgar boats ascending the Drava hint that the war parties may have moved on the Danube despite the navigational difficulties, and St. Blaise certainly traveled by boat up the lower Danube, probably to the Iron Gates.[30] Far upstream, along the upper Danube, the late Carolingian inquest held at Raffelstetten, just south of the Danube near Linz, certainly describes active local shipping and carting at the close of the ninth century, and implies more distant connections. That some merchants paid the same toll that they had paid under earlier kings shows that their presence reached back at least

27 Beševliev 1981, 459–71; cf. 446–7. On the road system in this area, Schreiner 1986; for the Balkan roads as they related to the Bulgar empire, Tăpkova-Zaimova 1979, nos. XXVI–XXVII.

28 I have been unable to confirm Beševliev's (1981, 286) claim of another embassy in 832.

29 "Þonne be eastan Carendran londe, begeondon þæm westenne, is Pulgara land, & be eastan þæm is Creca land . . .": *Old English Orosius*, p. 17.

30 R400 and R622. On Danube traffic, see Todorova 1984, 39–45; for the early Middle Ages and upper Danube, see H. Knittler, in H. Jäger *et al*. "Donau," *RGA* 6 (1986): 7–54, here 28–30.



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to the time of Charles III (882–8).[31] But activity on even long stretches of this greatest of European rivers need not imply navigation from one end to the other.

In fact, an incident in 892 reveals that beyond Carinthia and the eastern Frankish border, the usual route was not down the Danube but on land (*terrestre iter*). Travelers typically crossed Pannonia southward somewhere to the west of the Danube's sharp turn to the south, but war with the Moravians blocked Frankish envoys from taking this usual route to Bulgaria. Instead, they traveled a more circuitous path by river, to the Kupa to Sisak, where the Kupa flowed into the Sava, and hence downstream by boat to Belgrade and Bulgaria.[32] In staying well to the west until they entered the river system, they probably followed part of the Amber Trail. That coin finds are scarce along the middle Danube between Carnuntum and Futog probably confirms that travelers heading east usually left the Danube at Carnuntum and followed the Amber Trail south to the Drava or the Sava, which they could then have taken down to their confluences with the Danube (Maps 12.6 and 19.1). Variant routes probably converged around Belgrade. It is also worth noting that traveling alongside the Danube may have been as common as traveling on it. This seems to be what St. Clement of Ohrid did, when he and his companions from the Methodian mission had been abandoned in the wilderness by their Frankish persecutors. They struggled along until they reached the middle Danube, which they then followed downstream to Belgrade. From there, the local Bulgarian official sent them on to Pliska (R698).

The overlap with the Amber Trail is significant. Geography of course funneled human movements between northern Italy and central Europe. The Lombards had originally invaded Italy through the mountain passes of Friuli, and raiding parties periodically rode across them in the seventh and eighth centuries.[33] Via this route Lombard rebels against the Carolingian order once fled to the provisional safety of the Avar khan, and the Frankish host followed suit.[34] What the new evidence of travelers from Bulgaria and Byzantium adds to that of Middle Eastern coins is that this ancient north–south passageway between the Mediterranean and central Europe was now, in the second half of the ninth century, discernibly connected eastward to far more distant regions, on the edges of the Black Sea. When Peter and his fellow envoys from the khan made their way

31 *Raffelstetten Plea*, 1–3, 5, 7–8, pp. 250–2; cf. R761. Ganshof 1966, 214–15n69, tentatively identified the *Rugi* mentioned here with the Rus, which would be very interesting indeed. Franklin and Shepard 1996, 88–90, consider the identification unproblematic. However, in the 5th C., Odoacer attacked and supposedly destroyed a people called the *Rugi* in this general area: e.g., McCormick 1977, esp. 216.

32 R728; they returned by the same route: R731; cf. the discussion of this embassy in Bowlus 1995, 228–9. The mention of the Odra river is hard to understand.

33 E.g., Krahwinkler 1992, 29–31, 39–44, 48, etc.

34 Pros. "Aio"; Krahwinkler 1992, 147–52, 179–97. Other studies which illuminate the route complex centering on the southern Amber Trail and routes inland and toward the Adriatic: Weber 1990; Plesničar-Gec 1990; Fitz 1990.



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to the shrine of St. Peter in 866, they too entered Italy through Friuli, since they left their names in the Memorial Book still preserved in Cividale. A year later, Constantine and Methodius followed in their footsteps, en route from their mission somewhere on the western edges of this corridor, for they traveled from Pannonia to Rome via Venice (R395; R558; R575). The best indication of the status of Venice within this constellation of overland routes running toward the Balkans and deep into central Europe comes from a late ninth-century traveler. This Arab who had set out overland from Thessalonica entered Italy at Venice (R684a).

## *The Balkan corridor*

The southern swath of land routes linking Carolingian Europe to the east begins further down on the Adriatic coast in the vicinity of Nin, or Klis and Split. The most detailed description comes from Harun ibn Yahya's trip from Constantinople to Rome. Unfortunately the toponyms are unclear and the text may be defective. Setting out from Thessalonica, Harun seems to have reached the sea first at Split, before continuing for another month through similar territory to "al-Bandaqis" (Venice).[35] Another vital clue on the Adriatic gateway to the Balkan route comes from a sheaf of letters which John VIII sent in June 879. The pope hoped to obtain Croatian help for his envoy's journey to the Bulgarian court. The places ambassador John expected to visit en route to Bulgaria from Rome are revealing: he carried letters for Theodosius, bishop-elect of Nin, and a circular addressed to the bishops of the Byzantine towns of Split, Osor, Solin (Salona), and Zadar.[36] That the pope asked Branimir, duke of the Croats, to help John reach Bulgaria, suggests that the land route began in his domain.[37] Dalmatian Croatia reached at least some distance inland and it appears to have had a common border with the Bulgarian empire.[38]

35 R684a. Harun's route ran from Thessalonica to "Qutron" or "Qitrun" (Marquart and Wiet correct thus the MS "Mutran" and propose Kitros, which is known as a fortress town later: A. Kazhdan, *ODB* 2: 1131–2). From there Harun traveled for a month through wooded marshes inhabited by Slavs to "Balatis," apparently Split. Thus Marquart 1903, 243; cf. τὸ τοῦ Ἀσπαλάθου κάστρον, i.e. Spalato, Split in Constantine VII, *De adm. imp.*, 29, 1.122.7.

36 JE 3259, 152.35–9; JE 3255, p. 153, and the circular, JE 3262, p. 157. Cf. JE 3261, pp. 153–4.

37 JE 3259, 152.35–9.

38 The political geography of Dalmatian Croatia and everything concerning this territory in this period is obscure: Fine 1983, 255–63; 256 on the common border. Such a border in the 9th C. seems to be implied by the war mentioned by Constantine VII, *De adm. imp.*, 31, 1.150.58–67; cf. F. Dvornik, *ibid.*, 2.128–9, who dates it to 854/60. The healthy skepticism of Tsankova- Petkova 1960, underscores Bulgarian dynamism, and emphasizes (143) that Bulgarian expansion into present-day Macedonia is a 9th-C. phenomenon.



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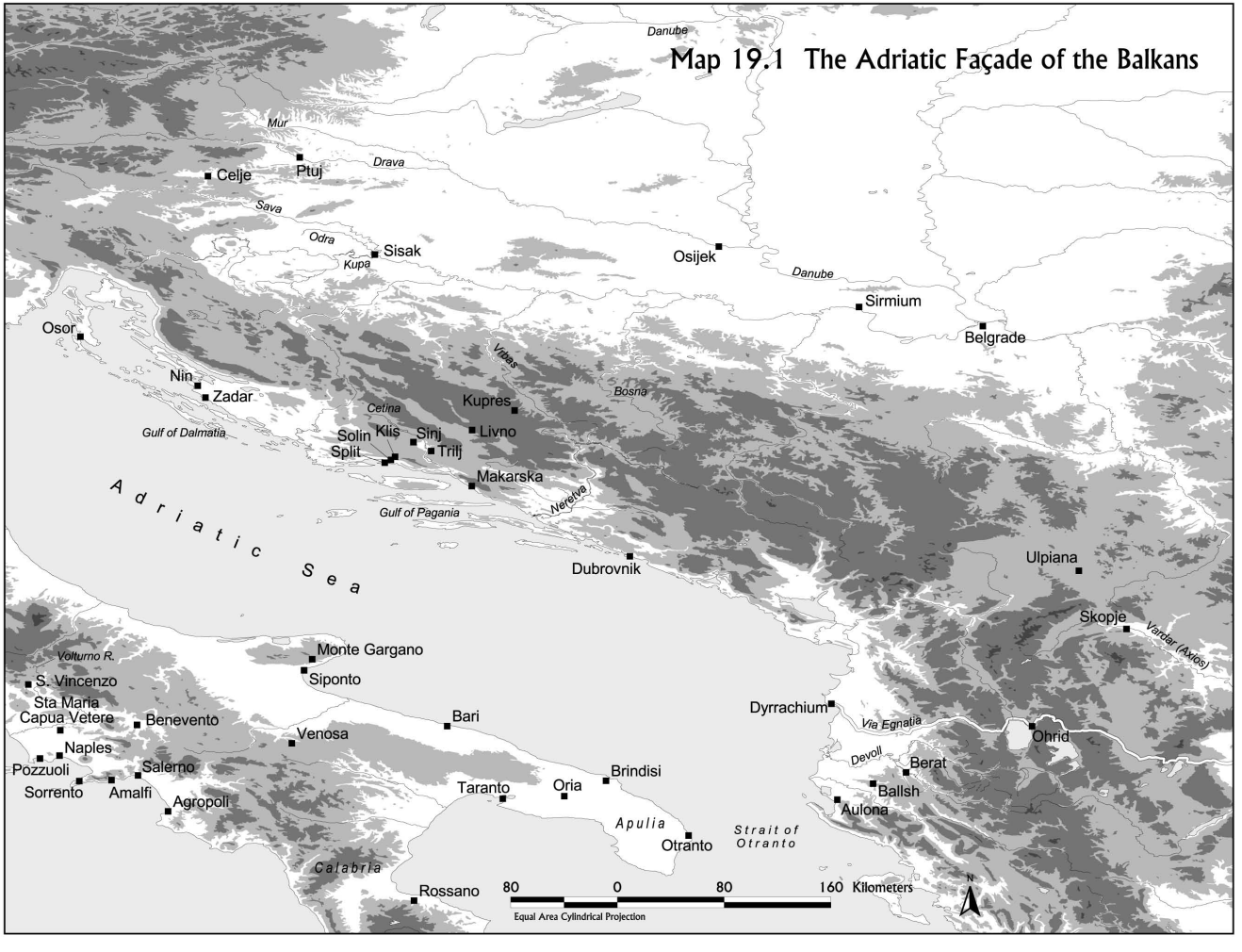


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The earliest hint of this southern route comes from Godescalc's wanderings in mid-century, since he appears to have traveled to Bulgarian territory from Croatia, before working his way back into the Frankish empire through Pannonia and Bavaria (R479). Further south, bronze coin finds suggested renewed movements between Constantinople and Dyrrachium, whether by sea or land, no earlier than the reign of Theophilus (Appendix 3, B14). In 870, western ambassadors returning from Constantinople boarded ship there for the final leg home: Dyrrachium was then the western terminus of a new overland route across the Byzantine empire. The consequences of these new routes can be felt beyond the Balkans. For the emergence of this southern corridor of overland routes toward the west coast of Italy, mostly within Byzantine territory, helps to explain not only the resurgence of imperial activity at Dyrrachium, but also the renewed importance of a place like Bari or, much further north, Ancona. It is no accident that we have to wait for the later ninth century before finding an ambassador to Constantinople who was bishop of Ancona.[39]

At present, it is much more difficult to follow these early medieval trails inland, although the exemplary archaeology of Alpine routes offers hope for the Balkan future.[40] Later medieval travelers headed inland from Split via Klis and Sinj. That trail crossed the Cetina river directly towards Livno, but the ninth-century burial with a Sicilian coin at Trilj, 15 km SE of Sinj, might hint at a more circuitous route around the mountain flank toward Livno. From the latter point, later medieval travelers went to Kupres.[41] From there one might reach the Sava river via the Vrbas or the Bosna rivers, to name only those possibilities. Further south, the Adriatic port of Dyrrachium evokes the great overland highway toward Thessalonica which ends in the Golden Gate of Constantinople, the Via Egnatia.[42] Constantinople's growing concern with its coastal outpost of Dyrrachium can be read in the establishment of a theme in the first half of the ninth century; it perhaps left a trace in a votive image raised there which has been associated with the emperor Alexander, co-regent of Leo VI (879–912).[43] It would, however, be a mistake to assume that Byzantium controlled the entire route, for the expansion of Bulgarian power south- and eastward surely affected some stretches of the Egnatian Way. In fact, the lengthy prehistory of overland communications between Pliska and the Frankish empire, and the precise

39 Pros. "Leopardus."

40 See, for instance, Schneider-Schnekenburger 1980, 111–15 with Abb. 1.

41 Škrivanić 1974, 60–1; cf. 53–9 for the road inland from the Neretva river; on coastal roads: *ibid.*, 119–31; on roads to Constantinople and Thessalonica: *ibid.*, 82–102.

42 See on the ancient route the convenient overview in Hammond 1972, 19–58; for a likely medieval variant at the Albanian end: Ducellier 1981, 76–9.

43 On the theme *CBSDO* 1: 40; on the discovery of the mosaic: Ducellier 1981, 33–4.



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circumstances of the ambassadors' movements in 869 and 870, suggest that Bulgarian expansion followed by peaceful relations with Constantinople may have been the critical factor among several in precipitating a renewal of overland travel between Constantinople and the west.

A Protobulgarian inscription discovered at Ballsh (Albania) commemorates Boris-Michael's baptism in 865–6. If it originally stood where it was found, and if the identification of Ballsh with one of Boris-Michael's gifts to St. Clement of Ohrid is correct, 85 km south of Dyrrachium Bulgarian power reached to within 30 km of the Adriatic. In any case, Boris' entrusting Clement with evangelizing the region of the Devoll river, which runs through modern Albania, and the foundation of the Bulgarian episcopal and monastic complex at Ohrid, show unmistakably who controlled the western heights of the Egnatian Way around 886. Ohrid was in fact built right athwart the Via Egnatia, at a natural resting point between two north–south mountain ridges; a byway of the Way known from the eleventh century followed the Devoll.[44]

These developments illuminate our overland travelers' itinerary in 869. The papal envoys passed through Bulgarian territory (but not the Bulgarian capital) before entering the Byzantine empire at Thessalonica. This can only mean that they traveled via the southern, Balkan corridor.[45] Their return route went overland from Constantinople to Dyrrachium (R601). If the trip home mirrored their outbound itinerary, the combined force of the circumstances would militate for the ancient Via Egnatia, in whole or in part.[46] Whatever the route, it was not in good shape, as indeed we would expect given its recent reemergence: the papal biographer emphasizes the great difficulty of the road.

The Bulgarian diplomats who crossed the whole of central Europe in the 820s traveled in winter.[47] Nor were the Bulgarians the only winter travelers to the west

44 Inscription: *Nadpisi*, no. 15; gifts: Theophylact of Ohrid, *V. Clementis* (*BHG* 355), 16, 124.1–19. Cf. comm., *ibid.*, p. 157n119. The gift of "Glavinitsa" has been plausibly identified with Ballsh and certainly lay between Berat and Aulona, and so near the Adriatic: Ducellier 1981, 21–3; Obolensky 1988b, 23–4; and Obolensky 1988c; on the Devoll and the Egnatian Way, Ducellier 1981, 76–9; cf. 684; Pros. "Clemens." The Bulgarian ecclesiastical maneuvers were perhaps not unrelated with Basil I's dispatch of missionaries to the Adriatic hinterland further north: R682.

45 R592. Had they taken a more northern route nearer the lower Danube and Pliska, they would have arrived in the Byzantine empire far to the east.

46 But many other minor variants could be imagined, e.g. running south along the old Roman road toward Butrint and then inland along one of the routes apparently taken by Elias the Younger's relics in 904, or continuing south toward Nikopolis, and thence toward the Naupaktos–Gulf of Corinth route; cf. R762 and *TIB* 3: 88–93. Another might have gone northward toward Ulpiana (mod. Lipljan) and then southward toward the site of Skopje and along the Vardar-Axios river valley toward Thessalonica: Lemerle 1954, 276–7.

47 Position in the annual record – a criterion valid for some periods, but not all, in the



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overland, since we have already seen that Basil I dispatched an embassy to Rome in December 867 (R573). Once the continental route had opened up, land routes probably explain most other Byzantine embassies which arrived in Frankland during the winter. Thus, five years after the mission of 867, a Greek legation reached Louis the German around Epiphany (6 January); what is more, they seem to have set out for home before March (R616–17). Peoples accustomed to harsh winters learn to exploit the advantages they brought, notably for low friction transport across ice and snow. Frozen rivers may have served as highways, particularly across the trackless wastes of central Europe, and the right kind of snow and sled made possible the traction of heavy loads across a land without roads.[48] The continental climate which prevailed across the entire northern corridor and much of the southern one created precisely the kind of conditions favorable to winter transport.

So, we can be certain that in the course of the ninth century people began to travel overland between the Carolingian west and the Bulgarian and Byzantine east. They did so even, and perhaps especially, in winter. This raises a further question: how has such a crucial development attracted so little attention? Part of the answer lies in the nature of modern historical research itself. True to its nineteenth-century Romantic origins, most scholarship has focused on some cultural or political entity along part of the route – Frankish, Bulgarian, Byzantine, or even Austrian or Serbian. This kind of narrow focus has produced many triumphs of modern scholarship, but it has also impeded the observing of phenomena which cross modern national boundaries and so are clearly visible only from a transnational perspective. A second reason that the routes have attracted little notice lies in their brief blossoming. The new corridors of communication opened and flourished at a remarkable level, but only for a generation or two.

By the 890s, two connected chains of events began to disrupt them at the eastern end. The first was renewed warfare between the Byzantine and Bulgarian empires in 893, precipitated by changes in the terms of trade between them. The Bulgarians were in general victorious, to the point that Boris' son, the tsar Symeon, himself a former resident of Constantinople, could dream of capturing the imperial capital. The wars dragged on until Symeon's death in 927.[49] The

composition of the Royal Annals (cf. McCormick 1975, 48) – suggests that the 824 embassy arrived after Christmas 823 and before 5 March 824: R382; so too another probably arrived between Christmas 825 and 1 February 826: R392. As the text makes clear, Louis the Pious' order that the Bulgars await good weather before traveling any further was merely a ploy to allow their aggrieved neighbors to reach him first: R385.

48 On the extent of sled transport see Leighton 1972, 89–92, who observes that some places (e.g. Novgorod) are thought to have been easier to reach in winter than in summer for just this reason.

49 Browning 1975, 58–67.



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second chain of events was the Magyar invasion. During the first renewed war with the Bulgarians, the emperor Leo VI induced the Hungarians to attack Bulgaria from the north and so distract Symeon from his own invasion of the Byzantine empire. Symeon riposted by summoning the nomadic Pechnegs to assault the Magyars from behind, while he attacked them from the south. The result was to drive the Magyars westward in the vicinity of the central European corridor. After a raid against Moravia conducted jointly with the east Franks, they staged a devastating attack on Pannonia for the first time in 894. Then they returned to stay. They settled in Pannonia and launched expeditions which would range far west into the Frankish empire, and southwest into Friuli, following and disrupting precisely the corridors of communication which had sprung to life in the preceding generations.[50] The Magyar settlement disturbed travel for two or three generations, until the Ottonian victories and the emergence of a Christian Hungarian polity again opened the way, around the year 1000, for a dramatic resurgence of land traffic, notably of pilgrims and, later, Crusaders.[51]

## 2. The northern arc

There were good Roman precedents for the overland route to Gaul, for the central European corridor, and for the Balkan way to Constantinople and the Middle East, whether or not early medieval travelers followed exactly the paths laid down by the ancients. The last route to the east is emblematic of the originality of the early Middle Ages, for any travelers along it in Roman times are lost in the mist of unwritten prehistory. This new route ran far to the north, through the Viking world of Scandinavia to the threshold of Central Asia. The northern arc is far and away the best known of the early medieval land corridors, and consequently calls for least comment.

The scarcity of written records makes it nearly impossible to follow individual travelers along the northern arc.[52] The chronology of the entire route – as opposed to those of various of its segments – is still emerging. Because its history grows mostly from the geographic distribution of goods which were exchanged along it, it makes sense to discuss this route more closely when we turn to commerce (below, pp. 606–12). For now it suffices to note that its westernmost stretch, from the Rhine delta to the Jutland peninsula, assumed real importance

50 See e.g., Dümmler 1887–8, 3: 438–52; de Vajay 1968, 19–58 and, for the numismatic and archaeological data on the coin evidence of the settlement, Kovács 1989; for a general account with bibliography, di Cave 1995, 107–53.

51 Musset 1965, 61–71.

52 See in general Franklin and Shepard 1996, 3–70.



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in the eighth century in the form of the North Sea trading zone dominated by the Frisians. A portage over the neck of the Jutland peninsula reached the Baltic at the trading town of Haithabu (Map 20.4). Ships leaving its port and heading eastward along the southern coast of the Baltic passed the mouths of the rivers which streamed into the Baltic from the interior of central and eastern Europe. Up these rivers, particularly the Oder, the Vistula, and the Dvina, lay access to that obscure interior. From Haithabu, ships also set northeastward courses, toward the emporium of Birka (mod. Björkö) in Sweden and Staraya Ladoga in Russia.

From Staraya Ladoga two further routes led to the riches of the east. One ran south past Novgorod: on the other side of the watershed lay the Dnieper, which emptied into the Black Sea. The second famous trail trekked eastward past Beloozero toward the Volga. The mighty river's long course flowed past the trading town of Bulgar and through the Islamic marcher lands (that produced those imitation kufic coins we have noted in Viking hoards), before emptying into the Caspian Sea on the threshold of Iran and Iraq. We can first see the merchants who traded along this Volga route in the later ninth and tenth centuries, thanks to the Arab geographers.[53] The Dnieper route shows up several generations earlier. This will have been the way followed by the Rus who attacked Constantinople from the Black Sea in 860 (R534).

The very first stirrings of activity in the North Sea trading settlements which connected to the northern arc reach back to the later seventh century (below, p. 653). But the next major step, expansion into the Baltic via Jutland, gets going in the course of the eighth century. Recent discoveries at Ribe, on Jutland's Atlantic coast, show that a substantial part of that settlement was laid out in 720/1; barely a couple of decades later, newcomers from the west settled at Haithabu (below, p. 607). The individual nodes along the route began to coalesce in the later eighth and early ninth century. Scandinavians appear to have been present at the trading post of Staraya Ladoga in the 750s.[54] The chronology of archaeological materials is, in general, an approximate affair, but its most securely datable eastern component, the flow of dirhams into Scandinavia, probably begins in the ninth century. And, as we have seen, it reaches the Frankish lands with the Vikings in the century's second half (Ch. 12.2). Once again, archaeology and the texts converge rather closely, since Ibn Khurradadhbih described the Rus trading with the House of Islam in 885.[55] And we must emphasize that it is not only Arab observers who fit smoothly with the increasingly massive data from the earth. Our travelers first attest a connection linking Francia, the northern arc, and Constantinople in 839, when Swedish Rhos, who had reached Constantinople, accompanied Theophilus'

53 See below, p. 610; on the river system and portages, see Franklin and Shepard 1996, 100–1; cf. their Map 2, p. 402.

54 Franklin and Shepard 1996, 12–13.

55 Pritsak 1971, 243–4.



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embassy to Louis the Pious, via the more traditional Mediterranean route (R444). This shows that a few travelers were trickling along the northern arc, at least from its mid-point in Sweden – quite possibly, that is, from Birka – toward the Byzantine empire. The Arab and Byzantine textual evidence increases from 860 on, and so do the deposits of eastern goods in Scandinavia (below, pp. 610ff). The earliest Byzantine coins found at Birka are strays and grave deposits, precisely of Theophilus and Michael III.[56] Although it is probably premature to envisage a fine chronology for the volume of movements from zone to zone along the northern arc, nonetheless the broad trend across the ninth century is clearly toward growth.

Long-distance communications overland increased in the Carolingian age. The earliest such growth reflected the rising traffic overland between northwestern Europe and Italy. The Alpine corridor was certainly the favored link by the later eighth century; for a time, at least, it was the dominant link. Political stability and good relations between the powers which controlled the overland corridor provide a first reason why this particular route saw surging traffic, although the forces that stimulated the movement itself must be sought elsewhere.

Political developments equally played a critical role in resurrecting overland travel between western Europe and the Middle East insofar as the Danubian and Balkan corridors are concerned. How far other, external factors may have operated will be examined later. What is worth stressing now is the chronology. These two overland routes emerged in the second half of the ninth century, rather suddenly, and simultaneously. Far to the north, the last great link to the Middle East, the northern arc of interlocking exchange zones, appears remarkable for its mere existence. It becomes no less remarkable when it is viewed in the broader context of changing patterns of communications. Its general chronology bears comparison with what we have discovered in southern and central Europe. Within the space of a few decades on either side of the year 850, in other words, at least three new communications corridors opened up between Europe and the Middle East. They ran in whole or in part overland. This has obvious implications for the types and volume of transport, particularly of goods, which might be conducted over them, and to this too we will return. In itself, however, the fact of the new Danubian and southern passage is a phenomenon whose significance has hitherto not been recognized.

56 Hammarberg *et al.* 1989, 61–2, Finds 7–9 and 11, two miliaresia and two copper coins. For what may be a mini-hoard of two copper coins of Leo VI and Constantine VII, *ibid.*, Find 2.



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# *The patterns of change*

Travelers' movements have proven their value. They yielded evidence that is new, numerous, and worthy of further scrutiny – and improvement. The experience of early medieval travel painted a picture more detailed and vivid than one dared to expect. It also turned up some critical issues with deeper implications for the economic dimension of communications: the style of navigation, for instance.

Deduced from prosopographical and other research, the new data supplied information in amounts not usually associated with the early Middle Ages. And that information is directly and indirectly germane to the great debate about the state of Mediterranean shipping and commerce at the origins of medieval Europe. Separate sets of movements of quite independent origins display generally comparable patterns of ebb and flow. It is tempting to sense here the distant pulse of an ancient economy.

Scrutinizing the seasonal rhythms of early medieval travel made clear that, while all preferred fair weather trips, people moved about in bad weather as well. Shipping patterns, in particular, extended well into months that antiquity had counseled avoiding. Braving riskier weather can be explained in part by one of the very factors often cited as an inherent shortcoming of early medieval shipping: the importance of coastal sailing within more circumscribed, and therefore more familiar waters. Economically speaking, the implication is not without interest: a longer sailing season increased the productivity of the wealth expended on the ships, the most expensive capital good I can imagine for the early Middle Ages.

Yet another way of looking at the data on early medieval travel overturned the common opinion that early medieval travel by land was slower than that of the later Middle Ages. The speed at which contemporary ships moved generally corresponds to what has been established for later medieval ships. What looks to have shifted in the ninth century, for some ships at least, was the daily rate of movement. It doubled. This reflected a trend for change in the predominant culture of navigation. More ships sailed more often around the clock, rather than putting in for the night. The economic implications will have been marked for



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those ships, even in an age when coastal routes still prevailed. They will have been able to cover comparable distances twice as quickly, making them twice as productive. Was it new opportunity for profit that pushed some skippers in this direction? Or was some particularly fragile new cargo inciting at least those skippers to complete their course more speedily?

When the patterns of movement unlocked by our travelers' prosopography were plotted over space, fundamental change emerged again. Around 700, one main route funneled traffic between western Europe and the eastern Mediterranean (Map 19.2). That ancient trunk route never ceased to attract ships in the 200 years we have studied, but other sea lanes sprang up beside it, as shipping increased in the western Mediterranean. In the middle of the eighth century, the sea link with Muslim Africa injected the last great bubonic contagion into the shipping world of the Byzantine empire. It was still smoldering when Venetians were attempting to buy up Christian Italians and ship them as slaves to the labor-starved economy of Africa. Within a few decades, this sea link to Africa was transporting passengers who continued their trip eastward along the northern coast of Africa, usually overland on the caravan route. This European sea lane, in other words, was itself nourished by the internal infrastructure of communications of the Caliphate.

The second great new sea link heralded the arrival of a new western home port, also in the second half of the eighth century. After their debut at the slave market of Rome, the Venetians and their ships never looked back. Tunisia, maybe Morocco, Benevento, Sicily, the Holy Land, Alexandria, and Constantinople attracted the enterprising shippers from the lagoon. In its earliest stages, Venetian shipping was curiously unfocused, ranging far into the western Mediterranean as well as eastward. Its characteristic was distance, not regional specialization, unless one considers the Muslim world a "region."

The third new sea link, like the African one, fed into a set of parallel routes established inside a neighboring economy and polity. The Gulf of Corinth route was seaborne from Italy to the Gulf; from there it went either overland, through Greece, or by sea, through the Aegean. The land route appears to have been favored. The travelers' prosopography makes this route visible in the early 830s, and the general context as well as the archaeology show that this is about when it did in fact revive.

Of the three new sea links, the African and Corinthian ones were manifestly integrated into and prolonged by land routes. In a sense, that is also true of the third, since much of what was loaded or unloaded at Venice neither came from nor remained in the lagoon. Overall, in other words, the resurgence of overland travel went hand in hand with stabilizing political and administrative structures in the territories that overland travelers crossed.

Not far from Venice began one of the three new land corridors to the east. This central European corridor left the west between the Danube and the Adriatic end



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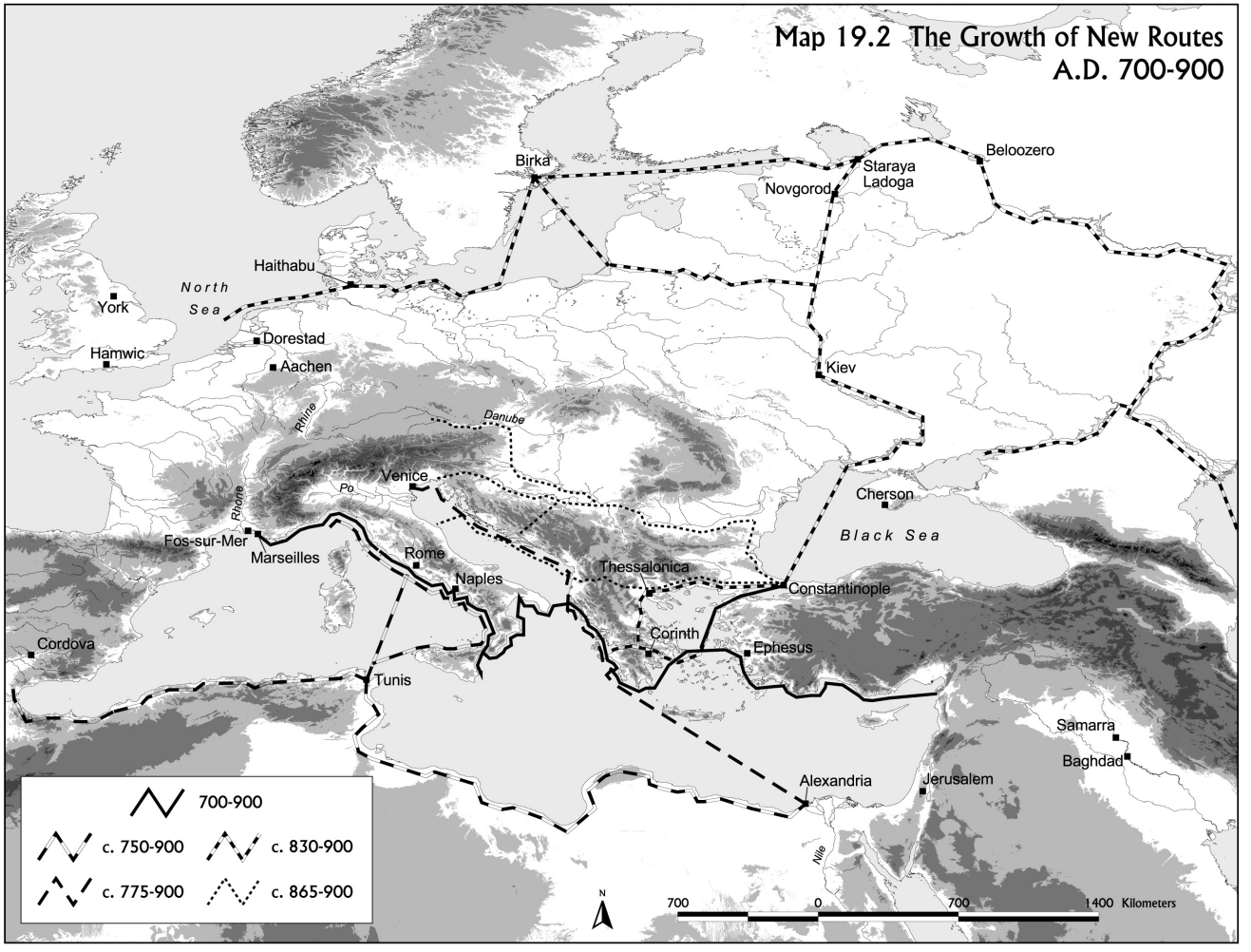


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of the old Amber Trail. Its distant exits lay in Bulgaria and the Black Sea, from which it was possible to continue to Byzantium and points east. The Bulgarian empire also played a role in the second, more southern corridor through the Balkans. Although the Byzantines controlled the eastern and western ends of this corridor, which centered on the ancient Egnatian Way, Bulgarian power lay athwart the route in at least one place, and maybe more. Byzantine and Bulgarian would have to cooperate if this corridor were to live. The third corridor lay far to the north and is better known. But the Viking communications world of the northern arc also came to link, even if indirectly, western Europe with the threshold of Asia. It is entirely possible that other routes will appear in the vast, obscure zone between the Viking and Slav Baltic and the Danubian corridor, perhaps criss-crossing the lands between these corridors, and perhaps also offering alternative routes to the east. But for these, there are as yet no texts. Archaeologists will have to do double duty for them.

We may debate the extent, the causes and the implications of some of these changes. It seems nevertheless hard to contest that, insofar as they affected western Europe and Byzantium, Mediterranean travel and shipping patterns were transformed in the eighth and ninth centuries. Most of these shipping or overland routes had existed once before, in antiquity. But there were three profound differences about the revived routes.

The first is the place of these sea transport and communication patterns within the overall system of shipping. It was fundamentally different by virtue of the maritime world which surrounded them. When ships had sailed these same routes in the fourth or fifth century, or even the sixth, they were but a small, ancillary part of a much bigger shipping world dominated by state-subsidized grain fleets sailing from south to north. Now the grain fleets were gone, and the ships sailing the revived or new routes were the dominant factor in the much smaller world of early medieval shipping, at least insofar as Christendom was concerned.

The second is that these ships sailed mostly from western ports, whereas eastern vessels had dominated the maritime world of a dying antiquity. The capital to build these new ships was raised in the west, and the money they made came home to the west, first and foremost to Italy. The third is that the new shippers were neither subsidized nor directed from above. They had to invent their courses and their routes, and they had to be flexible, tailoring their courses to profit, to changing conditions of navigation and economics, if they were to survive. There was no state treasury to repair their ships, guarantee them tax breaks, or buy their services, year in and year out. It was a new, more dangerous, but maybe also more profitable shipping world that was emerging out of the substantial ruins of the ancient world. It was one in which individual shippers ran greater risks, but also had more opportunity and incentive for discovering niches beyond the feeding of the super-cities of late antiquity.



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The seventh century does not look to have been very attractive for high-volume, low-value movements of goods. The eighth and ninth centuries probably did not innovate here. Such certainly is the implication of the reviving land routes if, as some evidence indicates, goods as well as travelers were moving across them. The economics of carrying olive oil over the Alps produce a very different equation from shipping oil along the coast and up the Rhône delta.

There is another similarity that is arresting and deep in meaning, for the similarity also implies, paradoxically, profound change. Over and over again, the most intensive shipping links we can detect in the eighth and ninth centuries are with the same areas which had been the economic dynamo of the late Roman empire: Africa, Egypt, and the Levant. They are not, in other words, principally with the economy of the Christian Byzantine empire. They are with the economy, or economies, of the Muslim world. That is where the money was in the eighth and early ninth centuries, and that is where the European shippers went.

The broad simultaneity of development is equally arresting. Europe's communications with the Islamic world and Byzantium increased between c. 750 and c. 900, and they did so via both the old Mediterranean trunk route and via the new routes which started opening up around 750. By the late ninth century, six different complexes of routes, stretching between North Africa and Russia, flanked the old solitary trunk route which had been the only game in town between western Europe and the Middle East c. 700. No one route obviously replaces and supplants another.

So patterns of communication changed, dramatically, between 700 and 900. But what exactly are the economic implications? If travel of the sorts we can detect along these routes implies the expenditure of wealth, then we must begin to wonder at the economic dynamism of western Europe in connection with the Islamic world of the ninth century. For whether through intermediaries or direct communications, Carolingian Europe had entered into relations with the much larger economy of the Caliphate.

But communications are not commerce. Or are they? We have met the travelers, face-to-face and in groups. We have scrutinized the objects buried in ancient church treasuries and in the soil of Europe. From them we deduce patterns of breadth, depth, and consequence. With our new knowledge of the evolving patterns of communications and infrastructures of transport and travel firmly in hand, it is time to revisit the old and vexed question of Mediterranean commerce in the age of Charlemagne.



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# 20

# *Early medieval trading worlds*

A few preliminary questions stand between us and the implications of Carolingian communications for the history of commerce. Were this almost any other period, the *potential* role of commercial travel in communications could be assumed. Not so for the Carolingian empire and the Mediterranean. We must recall why some historians have argued that there was so little commerce, and then sketch the broader trading worlds with which, potentially at least, Carolingians could have bought and sold.

## 1. Imagining trading worlds

Historians have imagined the trading worlds of the early medieval Mediterranean in very different ways. At one end of the spectrum are those who, like Pirenne, looked on the evidence with the eyes of the nineteenth century and assumed that the gold standard, foreign trade, cities, and professional merchants were indispensable criteria of advancing economies. Some have applied the assumptions and approach of Pirenne's era with considerably less circumspection than the Belgian scholar. At the other end stand those who have reacted against unsubtle anachronism and, like Grierson, warned historians against simply extrapolating from ancient objects and texts to modern-day economic understandings.

The result has been very different visions of Europe's commercial economy in the early medieval Mediterranean trading world. But, whatever the assumptions, the dominant tendency has run against the optimistic positions of Alfons Dopsch on the vitality of trade in and around Carolingian Europe. Maurice Lombard's more recent efforts to argue, with little real evidence, that dynamic trade with the Muslim world brought Islamic gold into Europe in exchange for raw materials, have few



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followers today.[1] Words like "dead" (or "still"), "almost prehistoric," "depressed," and, economically "absolutely marginal," have seemed reasonable epithets for European trade in the Mediterranean.[2]

So scholars posit a very low level and significance of trade for southern Europe. This contrasts sharply with the situation prevailing for northern Europe. There archaeology reigns supreme. Not coincidentally, the debate bears less on the existence of trade than on assembling the evidence into a coherent system. Competing approaches range from theoretical analyses inspired by "substantivist" methodologies invoking central place theory, market hierarchies, and the like, to markedly "formalist" work seeking to discern classic economic patterns in the numismatic and other evidence.[3]

At another level, debate centers on establishing the building blocks of a definitive understanding. Here excavation and, especially, improved classification of known artifacts drive deepening knowledge. Whether we look at systemic analyses or building blocks, the basic consensus exists that, however it is defined, exchange was critical to the historical development of the North Sea societies.[4] The contrast with scholarly opinion on Mediterranean trade is all the more paradoxical when one considers that the signal role assigned to northern trade occurs in a historical context which, compared with the Carolingian empire, must

1 See the appraisal of Lopez 1987, 307–8; Lombard 1972; against: e.g. Cahen 1980, 9; Verhulst 1993, 26; Grierson 1993, 48–9. Latouche's (1966) more modest and circumspect, but still positive, appraisal of Carolingian commerce emphasized internal trade: 155–75; 235–67; he recognized (306) a "trickle" of Muslim gold into the west, but reckoned it a "delayed-action" stimulus which did not change the economic situation of the 9th C. Doehaerd 1971, 277–81, observed some increase in trade with the Muslims but, on balance (350–2), reckoned it economically marginal to the impoverished, underproductive agrarian world of the Carolingians.

2 "Dead": Pirenne 1937, 77, and Lewis 1951, 177 (of the western Mediterranean's northern rim after Louis the Pious). "Almost prehistoric": Hodges and Whitehouse 1983, 75; cf. however, *idem*, 1996, 170, where Hodges summarizes recent archaeological evidence for persisting but reduced trade in the eastern Mediterranean in contrast with the west, where interregional commerce "practically disappeared." "Depressed": Lopez 1987, 312. "Marginal": Fossier 1981, 268–9, who is categorical and attributes more positive assessments to ignorance of the preceding centuries.

3 For appraisals of the broader theoretical debate between "substantivists" and "formalists," see Curtin 1984, 12–14; for a thoughtful discussion of the issues in a medieval context, A. E. Laiou, "Economic and Non-Economic Exchange," in *The Economic History of Byzantium* (Dumbarton Oaks, in press). An example of the substantivist approach is the stimulating if sometimes opaque discussion of Hodges 1989, ch. 1. At the other end of the spectrum, Metcalf 1996.

4 See, e.g., the role of international trade as an explanatory factor for major social and political developments, Randsborg 1980, 138–66; cf. 168–9. The radical critique of Himly 1955, who attributed virtually all coin finds to plunder, has had little success.



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appear economically and institutionally underdeveloped. The Frankish colossus displayed literacy, unified coinage, and political structures that were all bigger, more fully articulated and, in economic terms, more advanced, than in the north, not to mention the communications infrastructures we have traced. And it enjoyed the indubitable advantage of greater proximity to the two most developed economies of the day, the Islamic and Byzantine worlds.

The reasons why historians have discounted the historical importance of trade are diverse. Starting with Pirenne, the most frequent avowed or implicit motivation for dismissing commerce lies in the rareness of mentions of merchants and trade in the most eloquent sources of the era. This silence is matched by another one, reckoned equally significant: few manifestly eastern goods, it has been argued, are mentioned in eighth-century Francia.[5] These two negative observations have been cemented with disparate, but positive, evidence believed to signify the commercial underdevelopment of western Europe. The classic examples are the abandonment of the ancient gold standard and the belief that an economy featuring great estates betokens a domestic circuit of production and consumption that was closed to commerce and markets; trade cannot have been important in a world without cities.[6] With this evidence in hand, historians have hunted for an explanation. The causes for a world without trade have typically been located outside Europe, as historians have argued, mainly, that warfare killed commerce. For Pirenne and like-minded scholars, powerful Muslim navies or raiders eviscerated commercial contacts between the wealthy Middle East and northwestern Europe.[7] Another opinion contends that economic warfare and a stringent Byzantine blockade ended flourishing seventh-century commercial communications on the Mediterranean between 752 and 827, except for a few chosen outposts.[8] Finally, some scholars have looked inside Europe, and reckon the agrarian economy of western Europe to be so impoverished that the shift to silver or fluctuations in eastern imports were economically insignificant.[9]

5 See, e.g., Ashtor 1970, 166n4; Doehaerd 1971, 249, recognizes an increase in information about merchants in the 8th C., but draws no conclusion, except to observe sporadic signs of "feeble growth" of exchange (351).

6 For instance, both ideas remain implicitly important to Lopez's 1987 summation, 310–12, e.g., 311, Byzantium was "still a country full of gold solidi and lively trade." Cf. *ibid.*, 316, on the "persistence of urban traditions" and "economic leadership."

7 Pirenne 1937, 69–71; forcefully restated by Ashtor 1970, with more and better evidence.

8 Lewis 1951, 89–131; the Muslim triumph thereafter allowed Venice and the Campanian towns to "trade widely": 177–8.

9 Doehaerd 1971, 350–1; cf. Fossier 1981, 268–9; Duby 1976 (originally published in 1962), 44–6, observed that manorial structures fostered some trade in the 9th C., but reckoned "the few professional merchants seated at the crossroads of the Lombard trade routes" (58) to be a marginal phenomenon in the Carolingian economy; Duby 1978, 99–111, went further in recognizing the expansion of 9th-C. trade, but in



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We saw at the outset that the social and cultural profile of early medieval Latin writers made many of them indifferent to trade and its practitioners. The argument from silence carries even less weight than usual in proving the death of trade. Even so, merchants and markets are better documented in the written record than one might imagine, as we shall see in the next chapters. What is lacking is some obvious criterion – Syrian ethnicity is the most famous one – linking them with distant markets. Even the Frisian traders, whose role in long-distance commerce is universally recognized, make relatively circumscribed appearances in Frankish literary sources. That contrasts sharply with the archaeological record. It swells with every turn of the shovel, confirming and deepening this remarkable trading people's contribution to the rise of the North Sea economy in the eighth and ninth centuries (above, pp. 12–15).

As for the decline of foreign imports, and therefore, commerce, later research has essentially confirmed Pirenne's findings, with one very important difference. The timing of that decline has changed, so that it is now securely located in the seventh and eighth centuries, reaching a nadir probably around 700.[10] Both late antique shipping and early medieval communications fit fairly well, since they argue that decline set in toward the middle of the sixth century and reached bottom in the first half of the eighth century.

In other respects, the positions of Pirenne and his followers have not weathered so well. Even in Pirenne's time it should have been obvious that the great rise of European cities and commerce in the eleventh and twelfth centuries occurred precisely under the silver standard installed by the Carolingians, not under gold. Mints across Europe turned increasingly to gold only toward the end of the great medieval expansion, between about 1250 and 1350, as the relentlessly growing volume and size of transactions made ever bigger and more numerous silver coins less convenient.[11] In fact, while historians may argue the priority of chicken or egg, it is indisputable that the spread of northern European silver coinages went hand in hand with the first florescence of local markets and North Sea trading in the final forty years of the seventh century.[12] Far from Pirenne's token of an isolated Europe, the Frankish silver coinage, it has even been argued, was modeled on the Islamic one.[13] We also have learned that the great estates of the ninth-century polyptychs were not late Roman fossils. In their Carolingian

Footnote 9 (*cont.*)
the end deemed it "a mere surface ripple" (106), which nonetheless somehow connected obscurely with agrarian production. Paradoxically, he argues that Carolingian rulers' religious duties (to control the sinful activities of commerce and coinage) lead the sources to *overemphasize* trade: 1978, 97–8. Were it true, the observation would apply only to the royal capitularies.

10 Claude 1985b, 304–7.

11 Spufford 1989, 176–86, 267–88.

12 Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 93–7, 149–50.

13 Spufford 1989, 39–40.



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incarnation, the great estates were recent, expanding complexes of agrarian and even craft production which certainly sought to satisfy the needs of the proprietor, but also fostered local and interregional or, in at least one spectacular case, international markets (above, pp. 6–10). As for the notion that only a society predicated on cities can nourish trade, it has been summarily refuted by decades of intensive excavation in Scandinavia.[14]

Attempts to explain the contraction of long-distance trade in terms primarily of external causes disappoint in several respects. There is little sign of a successful Byzantine blockade of Christian commerce with the Muslim world. Arguments that Muslim military activities on the Mediterranean destroyed trade are doubly flawed. In the first place, they ignore the crucial element of demand. Was the market for eastern luxuries in Frankland the same around 700 as around 500? It is hard to believe that this was so, whether one looks at the evidence for changing population levels, distribution networks, disposable wealth, or the cultural history of taste, whose role in shaping demand has attracted scant attention.[15] Secondly, these arguments fall on chronological grounds. We have already seen that the Mediterranean transport infrastructure underwent sweeping change almost a century before the armies of Islam overran Rome's wealthiest provinces, and that those changes were only very partially connected with military action. Even when Islamic war fleets sailed the "Sea of the Romans" as *they* called the Mediterranean, the picture is considerably more complex, as the aggregate patterns of communications have suggested (Chapter 14). The fact is that warfare disrupted, complicated, drove up the cost of shipping but, alone, it did not end it. We have already seen that communications were *increasing* at the same time that Arab sea raids were beginning anew, the late eighth century. A rise in warfare and a decline in communications do coincide in the second quarter of the ninth and may well have been causally linked. But the decline was relative, and it was not permanent. Besides, the relation between warfare and commerce goes beyond simple antithesis.

Early medieval realities were no less complex than more modern ones. Plenty of Christian merchants made money buying and selling slaves to Muslims on the beaches of southern Italy (below, p. 771). One man's warfare is another's successful commercial venture. The eighteenth-century African slave, ripped by military violence out of his society and its comforting self-understandings,

14 See below, pp. 606–12. Callmer 1994 seeks to invert the proposition: although the Scandinavian settlements lacked other criteria that medievalists associate with cities, their trading vocation and their size made them "urban." But they remained for some time rather different from the European cities characterized by a "bundle" of criteria, in the classic formulation of Ennen 1987.

15 Military disruptions weighed less than broader economic developments: Claude 1985b, 294–8.



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including of slavery, doubtless had but dim consciousness of his "function" as an object of commerce and ultimately as a tool of commercial agrarian production in a highly developed capitalist economic network spanning four continents.[16] So too did an Italian boy snatched outside the walls of his town by Arab slave hunters and sold on the beach to an African Christian merchant. Like the later Africans, the boy and his parents experienced war, tragedy, and the abasement of enslavement. The hunters who kidnapped him made money; the slave trader who sold him in Africa made money too. So also did the boy's buyer. The owner obtained a compliant fifteen-year-old slave who probably spent the best years of his life developing his owner's leather trade. As he approached retirement, he capped his owner's productive investment by buying himself out of servitude (above, pp. 245ff). Even allowing for a Muslim jurist who ruled that attacks on Christian merchant ships serving Muslim ports were illicit, this is not to deny that raiders preyed on trade and caused disruptions that were sometimes serious, or that the need to raise war fleets might affect commerce in other ways (R515; Ch. 4.5). But to argue that war at sea simply ended commerce is, clearly, a major oversimplification.[17]

Those who maintain the overwhelming priority of agrarian production over commerce in the early medieval economies of Christendom will get no quarrel from me. But the fact that an economy was primarily agrarian, in terms of the value of its products or the number of its producers, does not negate the importance of commerce. Agrarian change probably occurred slowly and incrementally; commercial exchange will probably have shown more dynamism – swifter change for good or ill – compared with the gradual economic transformations arising out of the countryside. The potential speed and size of return on investment dwarfed that of agriculture; we get some sense of that from the large sums bandied about in a few Venetian wills (above, pp. 333f). Commerce could not only increase wealth more rapidly by transferring it from one place to another, it could stimulate greater economic specialization and, therefore, greater efficiency in the economies it linked. It could, in other words, exercise a productively destabilizing effect even in a predominantly agrarian economy, which is the only accurate way to describe most western economies until the early modern era. Moreover, the development of economic exchanges may reflect in some way that of the countryside: directly, in terms of the trade of agrarian products, and indirectly, insofar as a successful agrarian system could sustain a growing population, and therefore a growing economy, even as it generated profits that might in turn allow landowners to purchase goods they did not produce, were the goods and the means of exchange to hand.

16 See in general Curtin 1998; on the west African understanding and practice of slavery and exchange, Miller 1988, 42–53.

17 Claude 1985b, 295–6.



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Imaginative and informed scrutiny has suggested that the total taxes accruing to Byzantine rulers from commerce were, in absolute terms, small potatoes next to those that came from the land.[18] Yet it is also not hard to show that early medieval rulers, Byzantines no less than Franks or Danes, had a vital interest in the taxes they collected from commerce. The elaborate system of customs collection with which the imperial authorities bracketed the approaches to Constantinople tells its own tale, as does an Arab observer's report on the yield of provincial customs houses.[19] Before he became emperor, Nicephorus I had been a key financial official; he knew more about the imperial treasury than we will ever dream of. That he seems to have thought that increasing customs was a viable means of improving the Byzantine state's financial posture is also eloquent.[20] In fact, insofar as early medieval rulers could grasp such matters, the relative return on investment for stationing a few guards at a natural choke point and extorting a tenth or so of everything that passed must have seemed prodigiously superior to the enormous investment in surveyors, collectors, scribes, accountants, enforcers, and transporters required to extract the Byzantine land tax every year, or even to keep the kind of close tabs on his far-flung farms that Charlemagne laid out in his Capitulary on Estates or Examples of Inventories.[21]

No doubt western European kings lacked the complex conceptual tools of modern economists and administrators as well as the bureaucratic apparatus of their Byzantine colleagues. But they too had some real sense of commerce and its value. The court annalist matter-of-factly describes how the Danish king's military operations on the Carolingian frontier sought to restructure trade by force, to his own advantage. King Godofrid closed down one trading settlement on the Baltic whose "payment of customs duties had supplied great advantage to his kingdom," and moved its merchants to another one, strategically situated under his thumb. At the same time he built a wall – the Danevirke – just south of that new place, across the neck of the Jutland peninsula, on the frontier with Carolingian Saxony. Supposedly he left only one gate wide enough for man or wagon. By this Charlemagne's annalist probably meant that he sought to control north–south traffic, as well as east–west circulation, and collect tolls there too.[22] This place

18 For the relative total values of customs dues (around 5 percent) and the land tax in the imperial treasury, see Hendy 1985, 157–75 and 598–601; cf. 613–18 on the Ottoman budget.

19 On the capital and its customs system, see Ahrweiler 1961 and Antoniadis-Bibicou 1963; for the Arab report, see below.

20 Theophanes, A.M. 6293, 1.475.15–19 (Irene's customs reductions, ἐκούφισεν), to which A.M. 6302, 1.486.28–9 (τοὺς κου. φισμοὺς πάντας), is generally believed to refer. Cf. Bury 1912, 213; Ostrogorsky 1969, 187; Niavis 1987, 95–8, appears implicitly to reject this interpretation.

21 *Capitulare de villis*, *MGH Capit.* no. 32, 1.83–91; *Brevium exempla*, *ibid.*, no. 128, 1.250–6.

22 See Jankuhn 1986, 55–9, 62–5 and 120–8, on the ancient "military road" and Ko work; cf. Randsborg 1980, 102–3.



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was Haithabu (Figure 20.1), across the Schlei from Schleswig, its later medieval successor. Godofrid's action was a decisive step in the rise of this emporium which linked Scandinavia, the Baltic, and the North Sea economies. That the king did this, and that his risky application of violence seems to have worked, to judge both by the fortune of Haithabu and the utter disappearance of the old Baltic emporium, implies that the Danish king had at least a passing understanding of commerce and how to funnel it for his own profit. That the royal annalist tells the story in this detail, and that Charlemagne was angry about it, implies that both Franks also grasped the economic implications.[23] The point is only driven home two years later. When a Danish fleet attacked Frisia and collected one hundred pounds' tribute from the Frankish empire's trading people par excellence, the outrage finally drove an aging and ill Charles to the drastic decision of attacking Denmark directly.[24] Charlemagne's personal interest in commerce had already been made clear when he used it as an economic weapon against an Anglo-Saxon king ten years earlier. And it is hard for me not to see a practical grasp of the potential economic gain behind the complex and dangerous effort to subjugate Venice, even as the conflict with Denmark was escalating.[25] If one accepts that importantly, if not exclusively, Carolingian coins were meant for commerce, then the remarkable restoration of royal control over the coinage effected by Pippin III, Charlemagne, and Louis the Pious points in the same direction. Even if one doubts this position (on which more below, Ch. 23.1), there is no denying a probing analysis of Carolingian charters that touch on markets. So far as we can tell, the Merovingian kings and the first Carolingians were indifferent to markets. That changed with Pippin III and his successors, who got very interested in places of commerce, precisely because of the new revenues they supplied.[26]

## 2. Trading worlds beyond the Carolingian empire

The places with which we have detected communications are what, compared with Frankish Europe, we might call the "developed" economies of the early Middle Ages. The Islamic lands and to a lesser degree, the more deurbanized Byzantine empire were societies with a full panoply of well-developed currencies, and juridical and administrative institutions, and which boasted permanent markets and real

23 As well, of course, as they grasped the political issue of a satellite people who had been pillaged in the Danish expedition; *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 808, p. 126 ("quod [emporium] . . . magnam regno illius commoditatem vectigalium persolutione praestabat"), and a. 809, p. 128.

24 *Ibid.*, a. 810, p. 131.

25 Embargo on Anglo-Saxon merchants: *Gesta Font.*, 12, 2, p. 87; Venice: see e.g. R295. Contra: Latouche 1966, 166.

26 Endemann 1964, 38–42.



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Figure 20.1. Haithabu, aerial view from the south. This gives a clear idea of the nature of the site at the narrow base of the Jutland peninsula, on the long tongue of the Baltic known as the Schlei. The half circle of trees marks the wall put up in the tenth century; it enclosed an area of c. 24 hectares. The second founding of this trading town lit a fuse which exploded in war between Charlemagne and the Danes; the Frankish ruler's famous elephant died south of here during that campaign. In this place communications from an envoy and member of the Byzantine imperial family (Figure 8.1) arrived alongside freshly minted dirhams from Baghdad (A20 was discovered in a shipwreck just off the beach), and Carolingian missionaries and merchants rubbed shoulders with troops of enslaved Christians. Courtesy of the Archäologisches Landesmuseum der Christian-Albrechts-Universität, Schloss Gottorf, Schleswig.



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cities. They command our attention. But they were not the only societies with which the Carolingian empire was geographically disposed to trade, and not all roads to the developed economies led through sunny Italy or Spain. Some roads ran to the mistier trading worlds to the north and the east of the Frankish empire. The northern arc in particular, as we have seen, stretched toward Central Asia. To the southeast, the Danube and Balkan corridors cut through forests and mountains toward the Bulgarian empire, the Black Sea, and Byzantium's doorstep.

## *The south: Mediterranean trading worlds*

If much remains unclear about the directions, rhythms, and flow of trade in the Islamic lands in the eighth and ninth centuries, the situation is a little better for Byzantium. Our first task will be to characterize the main places and features of trade in both economies. We will then turn to the new evidence supplied by the sea bottom. Shipwrecks indicate some of the cargoes afloat on the early medieval Mediterranean, and supply new evidence that tends to confirm, in several instances, the changing patterns of shipping routes that issued from the entirely independent data of communications. They will show that goods traveled along at least some of the same routes as our travelers, strengthening the suspicion that the changing patterns of communications are connected with commerce.

By way of a very approximate order of magnitude, one estimate guesses that, a century or two after our period, in terms of inhabitated area and population, the Muslim economy was roughly double the size of that of Byzantium.[27] One suspects that Byzantium, then at its medieval zenith, had gained ground on the house of Islam since the ninth century. Recent historical work is developing a new vision of the Arab economic expansion which attaches less importance to the role of trade. In its place, scholars are emphasizing the Arab "green revolution" which boosted agrarian productivity. Even so, market-oriented industry, particularly rural and urban textile production in early medieval Egypt, is reckoned to have played an important role, against the backdrop of what is thought to have been a slow demographic increase in the Muslim world, from the seventh century forward.[28] And, whether or not we assign it the primary role, the signs of trade are unmistakable.

27 For an interesting discussion and rough estimates of the relative sizes and populations of the Arab and the Byzantine empires, see Issawi 1981, 392: though the gross areas of the 10th-C. Arab and 11th-C. Byzantine empires were very different (9 or 10 million sq km vs 1.2 million sq km), the inhabited areas were much closer (2 million sq km vs. 1 million sq km). He reckons the Arab population as 35–40 million (30–35 million? c. 750: p. 387) vs. 15–20 million for the Byzantines.

28 For a succinct description of this new vision, Shatzmiller 1994, 43–50, emphasizing the contributions of L. Bolens, A. Watson and G. Frantz-Murphy. See also below.



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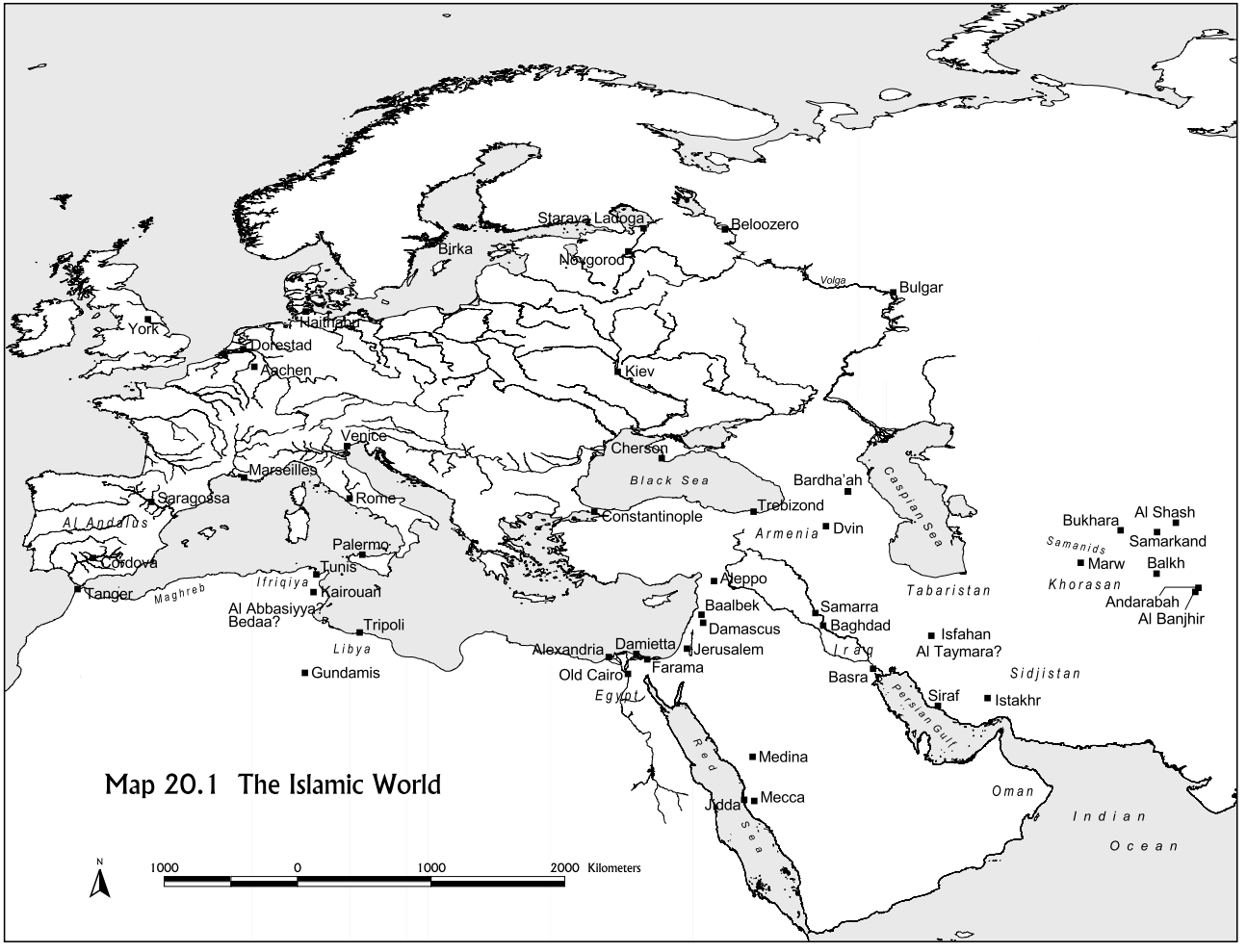


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It is easy to enumerate the main places of the Islamic world liable to link with the west.[29] The cities which lay on that world's northern fringe concentrated the wealth of their own regions and conveyed that of more distant ones. Large internal migrations from the Arab and Iranian heartlands helped fuse the far-flung edges of the new empire. The rise of locally specialized craft centers and general ease of communications, including the transport of raw materials "greatly stimulated long-distance trade in the prize products of the Muslim towns, such as textiles, metalwork, pottery and leather. Long distance trade in foodstuffs also developed, to service the large populations of the great cities."[30] The ease of communications suggested in the eighth and ninth centuries by Spanish, Maghrebin, and Egyptian rabbinical consultations with the Gaonic academies in Iraq foreshadows the intensive flow of information and letters mirrored in the later records of the Cairo Genizah.[31]

Al Andalus, particularly its northern city of Saragossa and its capital Cordova, would have been worthwhile destinations for European merchants interested in the products of the new economic and cultural empire. Saragossa lay less than 300 km from Barcelona, a Carolingian bulwark since 801, and so was especially inviting.[32] Across the Mediterranean, Tunis and Alexandria were important centers at the juncture of land and sea routes, not to mention other places springing up further inland, like the burgeoning garrison and government towns of Kairouan and Old Cairo.[33] What we can see in North Africa and Egypt suggests a

29 See in general Abulafia 1987; Constable 1996b, 1–51.

30 Abulafia 1987, 412.

31 See Mann 1917, 477–88.

32 In the period following ours, Almeria, a 10th-C. foundation, and Seville seem to have led Andalusian trading centers, followed notably by Cordova: Constable 1996b, 17–23. The Carolingian sources (below) scarcely allow us to see where merchants went beyond Saragossa, on which see M. J. Viguera, *EI* 9 (1995): 36–8; on Cordova and Seville: C. F. Seybold and M. Ocaña Jimenez, *EI* 5 (1986): 509–12, and J. Bosch Vilá and H. Terrasse, *EI* 4 (1978): 114–18. See also Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 3: 335–9 and 353–95. There may have been some kind of fair in Saragossa in mid-August: this would explain why Prudentius – himself of Spanish extraction – specifies that Bodo-Eleazar, who had already sold his companions as slaves, traveled to Saragossa *by that date*, "miserrima cupiditate deuinctus." *Ann. Bert.*, a. 838, pp. 27–8. The allusion to *cupiditas* seems otherwise inexplicable: cf. Blumenkranz 1963, 183n3. For a local Christian merchant at Cordova in 850, see Paul Alvarus, *Indiculus luminosus*, 5, 277.1–22; Eulogius of Cordova, *Memoriale sanctorum*, 1, 9, 2.377.4–29.

33 On Tunis, e.g. G. Jehel, *LMA* 8 (1996): 1092–5 and M. Talbi, "al-Ḳayrawān," *EI* 4 (1978): 825–32; on Alexandria in general, see S. Labib, *EI* 4 (1978): 132–7. A survey of one excavation there concludes that in the 8th C., imported pottery disappeared and was replaced by a flood of local Egyptian table ware, suggesting the stimulating effects on local production of changes in trade patterns: Rodziewicz 1982, 44–5. On Old Cairo, see the next note.



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prosperous economy.[34] Toward the middle of the eighth century, for instance, the merchants of the coastal towns of Alexandria, Tinnis, and Damietta presented an appetizing target for a governor looking for cash.[35]

In the second half of the eighth century, Iraq and the Persian Gulf experienced rapid economic growth. They stood at the center of an empire and economy which sprawled from the Atlantic eastward toward India and beyond. Persian ships and Muslim merchants sailed past Ceylon to China itself, while a Christian envoy traveled to Alexandria from India seeking a bishop from the Coptic patriarch.[36] Chinese ceramics begin to crop up in Old Cairo in the ninth and tenth centuries.[37] In the later eighth and early ninth century, the Persian Gulf port of Siraf took off. The combined presence of Chinese and Iraqi ceramics in its ruins testifies to the ambit of its commerce.[38] In the ninth century, Iraq became the empire's economic, as well as its political center of gravity.[39] Toward ancient Mesopotamia traveled a continuous flow of the merchandise of east and west, "from India, Sind, China, Tibet, the lands of the Turks, the Dailamites, the Khazars, and the Abyssinians," according to a ninth-century resident.[40] The list of goods imported there in the mid-ninth century is a long one. It includes Yemen incense, silk, cinnamon, paper, ink, and ceramic from China, sandalwood, ebony and coconut from India, fine textiles, papyrus, and Judaean balsam from Egypt, felt from the edges of North Africa and Armenia, prepared fruits and nuts from around the Muslim world, paper from Samarkand, slaves, chain mail and

34 There are gleanings in Talbi 1966, e.g., 41–4, on cultural links with the east. On Egypt and Old Cairo, see Kubiak 1987, whose topographical approach illuminates how this administrative city mushroomed (76–94), but only alludes to its economic circumstances, its harbors (whose toponyms hint of different arriving goods: 117–18), trading streets (e.g. the Saddlers', attested c. 785, 112) and the short-lived canal linking the Nile to the Red Sea (118–20); cf. Scanlon 1994. Brighter flashes of commercial life c. 810–20 come from the papyrus archive of textile merchants of the Fayum and Old Cairo: e.g. *Marchands d'étoffes*, 5.1.

35 The Arabic *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria*, 5.97, between 744 and 768. The often valuable Greek and Coptic materials for this history were translated into Arabic in the 10th C. and assembled in their present form in the 11th: Graf 1947, 300–6.

36 Ashtor 1976, 107–8; *History of the Patriarchs*, 5.36–7; on the commercial development of the Persian Gulf, e.g., Szymański 1991. On the impact of the Arab economy and trading links to India and beyond, Chaudhuri 1985, 34–52.

37 T'ang splash ware (from China), 9th-C. deposit, Fustat-B: Scanlon 1989, 40n49; two pieces from this "proletarian quarter," dated 10th C. and pre-1050: *ibid.*, 47–8; see also Gyllensvärd 1973 and Scanlon 1971.

38 Hodges and Whitehouse 1983, 134–41; cf. also, *idem*, 1996, 174–5, and esp. Rougeulle 1991.

39 See in general, Abulafia 1987, 402–23. On the rise of Iraq, e.g., Mantran 1991, 161–6; Ashtor 1976, 86–90, on its demographic growth; Hodges and Whitehouse 1983, 126–31 and 151–6 on the archaeological evidence.

40 Yaʿḳūbī, *Les pays*, tr. Wiet, p. 4.



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helmets from the Khazars.[41] We know from a Byzantine raid that merchants still congregated in Antioch in the first half of the ninth century, which hints at the continuing economic importance of Syria.[42]

The general economic tendency in this vast economy, or series of interlocking economies, probably swerved more than once between the seventh and the tenth centuries. The initial decades of conquest and reorganization must have seen important shifts, as large amounts of wealth suddenly changed hands. When the enormous Persian treasury and countless private and public treasures of the Roman empire fell to the victors, a very important dethesaurization probably triggered a sharp spike in demand.[43] Substantial numbers of Arab immigrants migrated to new lands and founded new cities, attracting to them also a service population comprising large numbers of natives, if one can judge from the case of Old Cairo.[44] Pilgrimage will have helped to sustain the immense patterns of movements set in train by the conquest and migrations. In the eighth century, settlement and industrial growth – metal and stone production – jumped sharply at the head of the Red Sea, according to the most recent archaeology.[45] The ancient fiscal structures of the Roman empire, not to mention the Sassanian inheritance of Persia, underwent redirection toward the top, if not at their base and in their human staffing: in the new empire's western lands, until the eighth century, accounts were kept in Greek by people who look to be the descendants of late Roman bureaucrats in language, culture, and religion.[46] Initial generations of improvization finally yielded a remarkable new and flexible monetary system that fused the Roman legacy of gold with the Iranian one of silver.[47] No later than the Abbasid dynasty, a general economic upswing was under way, a "boom," as it has been called.[48] When the economic expansion ended has been variously dated to the second or third quarter of the ninth century.[49]

The level of exchange sustained permanent markets in the main cities. Merchants are well attested inside the economy of the Caliphate, and its very size

41 The anonymous treatise attributed to Al Djahiz, *A Clear Look at Trade*, tr. Pellat. On this text, see Lewis 1977, 13, and Miquel 1973–88, I: 110–11.

42 R459; on the city's final decline, in the 9th and 10th C., Kennedy 1992, 194, 196–7; cf. too Ashtor 1977, 254–6.

43 For the traces left by the dethesaurization on 7th-C. monetary history, see Grierson 1960, 259–64.

44 Kubiak 1987, 79–82.

45 Avner and Magness 1998.

46 Theophanes, A.M. 6199, 1.375.31–376.7 and A.M. 6251, 1.430.32–431.3.

47 Grierson 1960. 9th-C. papyrus records from Egypt prove that transactions there involved silver coins as well as gold: *Marchands d'étoffes*, e.g., 5.1.10.4; 29.14–16.

48 Ashtor 1976, 70–114; "boom": 115; cf. Hodges and Whitehouse 1983, 130, about sea trade.

49 2nd quarter: Hodges and Whitehouse 1983, 149–51 and 160; 3rd quarter: Ashtor 1976, 115–21.



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and dynamism probably contribute as much as cultural factors to explain why so few Muslim traders were tempted to wander off to the far less developed European markets. Periodic markets supplemented the permanent markets, including one at a time and place which made it very attractive to westerners.[50] This was the fair of Jerusalem, the holy site toward which Willibald, Bernard, the future doge of Venice, and so many other western Christians traveled in our period. A European eyewitness of the 680s reported that the fair attracted an "almost countless multitude of different peoples from everywhere." It was still going strong in the ninth century.[51] That the fair was connected with the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross (14 September) meant that its conclusion coincided with the most favorable season for sailing to Europe against the prevailing winds.[52]

These markets featured some goods that were not otherwise available to the Frankish empire. None was really indispensable to life, so demand for them in the west had to be culturally conditioned. To that extent, demand was elastic. They were typically very high value items: silks and other textiles, perfumes, spices, incense, and the like. Exotic foods perhaps might also be mentioned, as new edible plants spread through the Islamic world on a schedule which is obscure but which might extend back into our period.[53] Then there were the new drugs that announced the birth of Arab medicine (Ch. 24.3). The southern Mediterranean also continued to produce and transport the ancient staples of oil and grain, which were regionally available also inside the Frankish empire (Tables 20.1–20.7). Egypt was still manufacturing and exporting papyrus on a substantial scale.[54] Linen was also a major export.[55]

Across the frontier, Byzantine economic expansion may have gotten under way in the ninth century. Things were certainly looking up by the tenth.[56] Trade

50 For an informative overview of cross-cultural and economic research into the history of periodic markets, see De Ligt 1993, 1–32.

51 Gil 1997, 241, citing Ibn Masawayh.

52 The Frankish pilgrim Arculf said it began on 12 September. Typically, his reason for telling us about the fair was less its economic significance than a miraculous rainstorm. This flushed away the dung heaps left by the merchants' camels, horses, donkeys, and oxen and which, he sagely observes, posed no small annoyance to residents' noses and feet. Adomnan, *De locis sanctis*, 1, 7–13, *CCL* 175.185.25–186.59; quote: "Diuersarum gentium undique prope innumera multitudo." Sailing season: above, p. 451.

53 Watson 1983; Al Djahiz, *A Clear Look*, 113, tr. Pellat p. 159, also mentions two plants which were reported to have been imported into the Caliphate from Byzantium.

54 Lewis 1974, 90–4. Grohmann 1954, 1: 63–71.

55 Mackie 1989, 82.

56 Opinions differ on this score. Kaplan 1992, 529–40, argues for demographic stability or growth, and extension of the arable down to the middle of the 9th C.; particularly in light of his arguments for technological stagnation, this implies that the



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played a part, particularly in the capital, toward which ships converged from the north, the east and the west, as one observer put it in 801.[57] The livelihoods that benefited from Irene's tax breaks sketch the main sectors of trade in the capital: poor hunters and fishermen, swineherds, sheep merchants, wine dealers, butchers, weavers, coppersmiths, leatherworkers, dyemakers, spice dealers and architects, woodworkers and goldsmiths all rejoiced at the new arrangements.[58] Then there were the large shipowners from whom Nicephorus I extracted forced loans.[59]

Although the volume is at present indistinct, scattered texts show that ships and commerce flowed along two main axes pivoting on the capital. One reached toward the north and the Black Sea, and seems to have developed considerably in our period.[60] By the later ninth century this stream branched off in three directions. Toward the northwest was the Bulgarian empire and the Rus traders beyond it. Northward, across the Black Sea, on the doorstep of the Don River and the Khazar realm, stood the fortified outpost of Cherson over which Theophilus (829–42) tightened Constantinople's grip.[61] We may well have heard an echo of the businessmen established there in a homily by St. Constantine-Cyril (Ch. 7.2). Overland trading links connected this region and its merchants to central Asia. We have already seen that, whether or not they were interested in trade, Jews immigrated to the Khazar kingdom from Baghdad, Constantinople, and Khorasan, and extended the network of connections.[62] Finally, toward the east, ships made along the southern shore of the Black Sea toward the Caucasus and its mountain passes leading into Iran. In the 790s, merchants from Amastris had been active further east at Trebizond, the meeting place of shipping and caravan

Footnote 56 (*cont.*)
general economic trend was broadly similar. But the conclusion has not found widespread acceptance: see Kazhdan 1994, esp. 87–8; Harvey 1995, 250–55, opposes to this recent archaeological surveys which point to demographic decline in 7th-C. Greece, and further evidence for renewed growth by the 10th C. See also Harvey 1989, 207–19, for the recovery of some towns and growing interaction with the countryside from the 8th and 9th C., and Haldon 1994, 79–80.

57 Theodore Studite, *Ep.* 7, 25.53–4.

58 *Ibid.*, 25.57–26.68.

59 On the conditions which funneled wealth to Constantinople: Hendy 1985, 554–69; on the possibility of a differing commercial regime in the provinces, see Oikonomides 1993, 658–9; commercial installations of the medieval city: Magdalino 1996, 19–25, and 58, on the beginning of Constantinople's recovery in the 8th C. Forced loans: Theophanes, A.M. 6302, 1.487.11–13 and 17–19; as an attempt to stimulate trade: A. Laiou, *ODB* 1: 489. Patlagean 1993 argues that Constantinople was a "port of trade" in the technical sense of Polanyi.

60 Lilie 1976, 276–9.

61 Constantine VII, *De adm. imp.*, 42, 1.182.27–184.54; Sicilian coins at Cherson: above, p. 507.

62 Zuckerman 1995a, 251; cf. Ch. 7.2. For a Jewish trading diaspora reaching toward China, see Haussig 1989.



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routes from the interior of Anatolia and Iran.[63] A generation or two later, a local man hailed Amastris as the market place where Byzantines and northern barbarians ("Scyths") met. Probably around 800, a hagiographer described a trip that reflects this shipping route along the southern coast of the Black Sea (cf. Map 20.3). His purpose was to investigate relics and St. Andrew's travels, and to escape the Iconoclasts. In so doing, he sailed to Nicomedia, Daphnousia, Herakleia, Amastris, "Dorape," "Karousia," and Sinope.[64] By the tenth century, customs duties on trade at Trebizond, particularly in textiles, were producing around a thousand pounds of gold for the imperial treasury.[65] In 911–12, the imperial authorities at Constantinople assumed that the bulk of precious substances used in the Byzantine fragrance trade entered the empire at Trebizond.[66] The history of textile production in central Asia appears also to reflect this Black Sea axis of trade. In the ninth or tenth centuries, the silks produced there underwent a marked transformation in decoration and technique which has been ascribed to the imitation of Byzantine textiles, presumably exported over one of these routes.[67]

The second main trading current reached south into the empire's maritime heart, the Aegean Sea and, probably, beyond.[68] It may have been gaining strength in the eighth century. By then the important fair at Ephesus had sprung up (R229). Slave sales in the Aegean were active enough around 800 to elicit a surcharge from an emperor looking for money (R303). From the Aegean, one suspects trading links along the southern shore of Asia Minor, toward Attaleia and beyond. Cyprus, which paid taxes jointly to the caliphs and the Byzantine emperors, must have attracted merchants from both empires to its neutral ports.[69] Early in the tenth century, taxes on imports and sales of Muslim booty and slaves in the Byzantine port at Attaleia were producing some 300 to 400 lb. of gold.[70] In the ninth century, a regional shipping hub linked Cyprus to the southeast coast of Asia Minor (Ch. 18.3).

These two currents of trade met at Constantinople. Together, they defined the main axis of maritime trade within the Byzantine empire of the early Middle Ages. As an Iraqi observer noted in the later ninth century, ships from the Black Sea and

63 Merchants: e.g. R225; R415; market: Nicetas David, *Laudatio S. Hyacinthi* (*BHG* 757), 4, *PG*, 105.421C–D.

64 Epiphanius, *Vita Andreae apostoli* (*BHG* 102), *PG*, 120.221B–224A; cf. Beck 1959, 513.

65 Ibn Hawqal, tr. M. Canard, in Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.2.416–17, with Vryonis 1971, 13–16 and Hendy 1985, 174–5; Oikonomides 1993, 652–4. The sum is apparently an annual one.

66 Leo VI, *Liber Praefecti*, 10, 1–6, 110.470–7.

67 Muthesius 1997, 94–100.

68 Malamut 1988, 2: 538–43.

69 McCormick 1998b, 41n9; and, in general on its status, Browning 1989, III, and Kyrris 1984. Cf. the anecdote from the later 7th C. preserved in al Masʿūdī, discussed by Canard 1964, 49–50.

70 Ibn Hawqal, tr. M. Canard, Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.2.414–15. Ibn Hawqal's first edition gives the date A.D. 913, the second A.D. 932.



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the "Syrian" sea plied the central segment of these two routes, between the Bosporus and the lower Aegean.[71] Archaeology does not yet yield so coherent a picture, but some of what can be discerned fits this pattern. Amphoras continued to be produced and shipped. But the general impression they make contrasts with the late Roman situation. In the eighth century, a multitude of small centers of production, many of which do not obviously continue the late antique ceramic series, appears to prevail.[72]

Some amphoras sustain the two main commercial currents that can be deduced from the texts. A late seventh-century Cypriot imitation of Syrian amphoras (type Bii) has been found both on Cyprus and at Constantinople.[73] A series of amphora types that runs from the ninth or tenth to the twelfth or thirteenth centuries documents the northern current. What appears to be the oldest type (Günsenin I) occurs all around the Black Sea and at Constantinople, and then trails out along southern Asia Minor as far as modern Alanya, about halfway between Attaleia and Seleukeia.[74] A ship that sank off Crete (Table 20.5, ship 31) also carried this type. The production site has just been located at Mount Ganos (mod. Gaziköy, Turkey) on the Sea of Marmara, where seven new shipwrecks loaded with tens of thousands of amphoras have come to light.[75]

The prominence of Cyprus and the links between Byzantine and central Asian silk weaving provide a first suggestion. This the customs' take at the Byzantine ports of entry of Attaleia and Trebizond confirms: trade linked the economies of the Muslim world and the Byzantine empire, at least in periods of peace.[76] Byzantine merchants seem to have been active on the Nile sometime between 715 and 718.[77] According to an eighth-century Syrian hagiographer, a Byzantine victory over the Arabs resulted in a seven-year truce, during which merchants from both states flocked to each other without interference and Byzantine pilgrims headed untrammeled for Jerusalem (R146). If this information is reliable, the merchants may have been traveling overland, for the fact that the last bubonic plague reached Constantinople from Sicily and Africa shows that direct shipping links with the Muslim Levant were not operative in 743–4 (Ch. 17.1). Abbasid legal treatises in any case imply that, after that date, foreign merchants

71 Ibn Khurradadhbih, tr. De Goeje, 76.

72 Although it must be conceded that a large proportion of the amphoras are still unidentified and typologies are incipient at best.

73 Arthur 1986, 659.

74 Günsenin 1989, 269–71.

75 Günsenin 1998, where she mentions dates of the 10th and early 11th C.

76 See in general the discussion of Canard 1964, 48–56.

77 *History of the Patriarchs*, 5.68–9, describes how the governor of Egypt hunted down "strangers," people lacking a passport, their boats, and Romans on the Nile, whom Canard 1964, 49, plausibly identifies as merchants. Canard's dating of the episode also explains it, for it occurred in the midst of the mobilization for the great assault on Constantinople, when there was good reason to curtail contacts with the enemy.



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were active in the Caliphate, and some enunciated measures to facilitate and protect their operations.[78] By around 850, the Byzantine empire had become the supplier of a series of highly desirable goods to the much larger economy centered on the caliphal capital. A list of the most select imports was drawn up in Iraq at that time:

> From the Byzantines' country [we import]: gold- and silverware, dinars of pure gold, medicinal plants, gold-woven textiles, *abrūn* [?], silk brocade, spirited horses, female slaves, rare copperware, unpickable locks, lyres, hydraulic engineers, agrarian experts, marble workers and eunuchs.[79]

The detailed discussion of how to discern different qualities of silk textiles – sheen, designs, colors – includes the imperial workshops' silk and shows the importance and value of the silk exports. It also suggests that Arab merchants encountered competing imitations, presumably from the same Byzantine source.[80]

We can detect the return flow of this commerce in the first decade of the tenth century, when the Byzantine silk trade with Syria and Iraq was closely regulated. Syrian merchants brought their textiles, spices, incense, and dyestuffs to the Byzantine capital. At the Byzantine end, other Syrian immigrés who had resided in Constantinople at least ten years were involved in the transaction. The merchants from the Caliphate were allowed to stay in the capital for up to three months, selling their wares and acquiring the kinds of goods we have just seen. The arrangement might have been new in the 880s.[81]

The caravans of Trebizond show that some part of the trade between Byzantium and the Muslim world traveled overland. Tenth-century Byzantine generals used as spies merchants who traded across the land frontier.[82] But some of these external and internal trading currents traveled in ships. The vessels themselves have recently begun to emerge from the sea and tell their own tale, beginning with their cargoes. Although the numbers are still relatively small, and the dates, origins, and many identifications uncertain, we cannot neglect these extraordinary new data. Since ceramic typology of the early Middle Ages – and therefore dating and provenance – is still developing, it is wiser to cast a wide net, without losing sight of the probability that some of the ships went down before or after our period. The recent corpus of shipwrecks lists forty-six vessels which probably date from between the seventh and the tenth century.

78 Discussion in Canard 1964, 50–1, confirmed for North Africa by Ibn Sahnun, R515.

79 Al Djahiz, *A Clear Look*, 14, my translation from Pellat's French, p. 159.

80 *Ibid.*, 12, p. 158.

81 Leo VI, *Liber Praefecti*, 5, 94.263–96.295, and Reinert 1998, 130–5, who stresses that the development was recent. For the range of goods of the *myrepsoi*, see also A. Kazhdan, *ODB* 3: 1627–8.

82 *De vellitatione bellica*, 7, 162.14. See also Canard 1964, 50, on Armenia; 52.



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The geographic distribution of the ships makes an important point. Notwithstanding the far superior archaeological recording that prevails in the western Mediterranean, Tables 20.1–7 show that most (59 percent: 27 of 46) early medieval wrecks occur in the eastern Mediterranean basin. This contrasts sharply with antiquity, when the western Mediterranean dominates overwhelmingly.[83] This sample thus reinforces the general opinion that the eastern Mediterranean was economically more developed than the western basin in the early Middle Ages. The ships also cluster along the northern rim. This reflects both ancient shipping patterns and those of modern prospecting.[84] Most wrecks present some evidence of cargo, chiefly in the form of amphoras: indeed, amphoras are sometimes all that remain. Ships carrying materials other than amphoras are archaeologically less visible, so that the wrecks do not give a true picture of the range of cargoes actually transported across the sea. Just as in antiquity, the textiles, lumber, grain, spices, or slaves will almost never show up on the sea bottom. Even so, this first summation strikingly conforms to some of the patterns of communication uncovered in Part IV.

Tables 20.1–20.4 summarize the evidence from ships which sank in the western Mediterranean. Tables 20.5–20.7 record the wrecks found in the eastern basin. Each table, save the last, corresponds to a shipping route or zone, as they emerged from patterns of communications; the ships are given in chronological order. When the cargo or other evidence indicates where the ship was last loaded before she sank, or when the crew's possessions or other evidence points to a home port or region, it has been possible to deduce all or part of the ship's route.[85] The numbered segments on Map 20.2 identify the route; the location of the individual numbered wrecks appears on Map 20.3.

Here the ancient centrality of the main trunk route running toward the eastern Mediterranean is obvious. The clustering of the wrecks in the first half of the seventh century corresponds to the penultimate stage in the contraction of the late antique shipping world. Significantly, four out of the five seem to have had home ports in the Byzantine east. Just as revealing, eastern ship 3 appears to have been carrying a west Mediterranean cargo and working what looks like a western regional circuit. One could not hope for a better illustration of our earlier conclusion that, as antiquity ended, eastern ships predominated even in western waters. So far no wrecks unambiguously document the persistence of this route in the

83 Cf. Parker 1992, 6–7.

84 Only three wrecks have been located along the southern rim: Parker 1992: Dor, no. 367, 600–700; Israel, no. 525, 500–600 and Marsa Lucch, no. 660, 500–650? On the superiority of northern courses, Pryor 1992, 20–4.

85 The 11th-C. vessel excavated at Serçe Limani, Turkey, shows how much well-preserved wrecks can reveal. Its broken glass, orpiment, dried fruit, recycled amphoras, pork, and weights allow Van Doorninck 1991 to deduce it was carrying Greek-speaking merchants from Syria.



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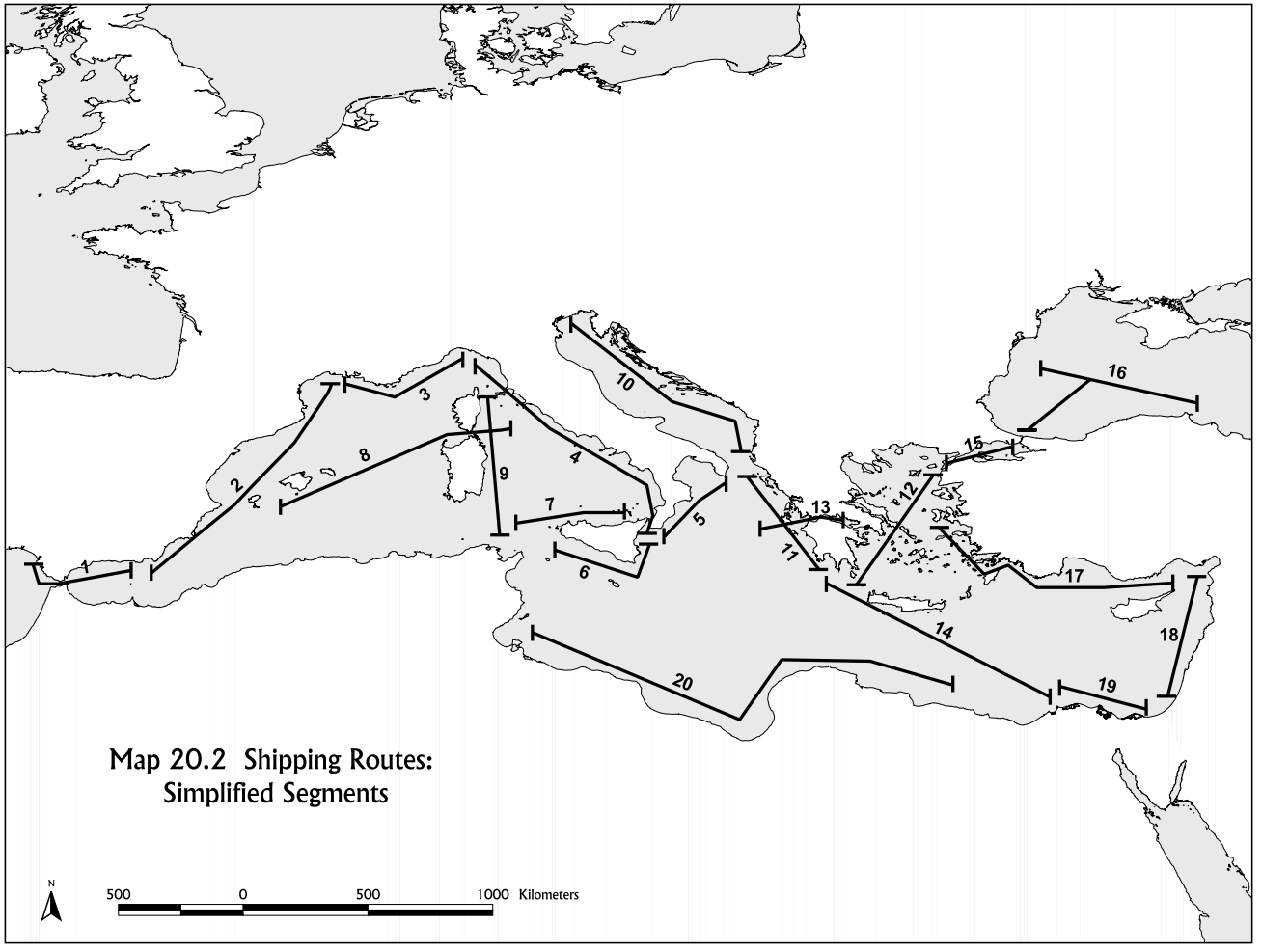


Map 20.2 Shipping Routes:
Simplified Segments

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TABLE 20.1
Western Mediterranean: early medieval shipwrecks and cargoes along the main trunk route (Map 20.2, segments 4, 5, 11 and 12)

| Wreck no. | Date | Name, location of wreck | Cargo | Cargo provenance | Route segments | Location of home port | Parker no. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 450–600? | Favaritx, Minorca | hundreds of bronze plates, keys, coins, ingots, etc. | Egypt or Syria? | Trunk + 8? | Egypt or Syria | 397 |
| 2 | 500–600? (c.550?) | La Palu, Ile de Port-Cros | amphoras Keay 62, one with Greek?; stoppers; much looted | Africa[a] | Trunk + 3 | ? | 782 |
| 3 | 600–25 | Saint-Gervais B | grain, conifer pitch, 41–9 tonnes? | S.W. Gaul, Italy, Spain or Africa | Trunk + 3; 1–2 or 6 or 9 | E. Mediterranean | 1,001 |
| 4 | c. 631 | Grazel B | metal objects, especially bronze; not all necessarily cargo; coin hoard | from Constantinople via Sicily[b] | Trunk + 3 | E. Mediterranean Greek scale | 483 |
| 5 | 600–50 | Pantano Longarini | ?amphora fragments; "large cargo ship"; $C_{14}$ dating | ship from E. Mediterranean; Greek ship name? | Trunk + 6 | E. Mediterranean | 787 |

*Notes:*
[a] On the north African origins of the amphoras Keay 62, including the exemplars from this wreck, classified as 62A, and the mid-sixth-century date, see Bonifay and Piéri 1995, 103.
[b] This is implied by the hoard of 105 bronze coins recovered from the wreck: Morrisson 1981.
*Source:* Parker 1992; item preceded by ? might have been ship's gear, rather than cargo.

lower Tyrrhenian Sea that patterns of movement disclosed for the eighth and ninth centuries.

The visible cargoes are also revealing of the tenor and tendencies of sea trade at the end of antiquity. From what we have already seen (Ch. 2.1), it is clear that the metal cargoes (ships 1 and 4) reflect a broader and older trend in long-distance trade, in which eastern Mediterranean metallurgy picked up the slackening western production and supplied coastal regions of the west. The amphoras point to the persisting trade in food staples: olive oil and perhaps fish products still flowed from Africa toward the northern Mediterranean in the well-documented late Roman pattern (Ch. 4.3). So far, the archaeological evidence for bulk grain shipping in the western Mediterranean ends early in the seventh century near the site of a Merovingian customs house, represented by the extraordinary find of the Saint-Gervais B wreck (3) off Fos-sur-Mer. Ship 4 tallies marvellously with two voyages mentioned in Byzantine miracle stories, and probably adds metalwork to the high-quality stone cargo documented by one of those stories.[86]

The large size of the group in Table 20.2 is interesting, but it may be an artifact of circumstance. Ship 12 and perhaps ship 7 most closely document the shipping of southern Italy which appeared from the analysis of changing routes. That the other ships cannot be linked with further route segments might reflect the local character of the ceramics found aboard them, but it is just as likely to stem from the poor state of reporting and recording characteristic of this part of the world. In any event, what can be discerned of the cargoes indicates foodstuffs and building materials. The "Byzantine" millstones evoke the western Mediterranean trade in querns and millstones which British excavators have detected at late antique Carthage.[87] The "Saracen" ship 13 displays a wider range of preserved cargo, but the lack of information and fuzzy date limit its testimony, which may turn out to be important.

Patterns of communications indicated that Venice launched a new long-distance shipping axis in the Adriatic in the eighth century (Ch. 18.1). Table 20.3 reinforces those findings from quite different evidence. Ship 14's date suggests that it was following the traditional sea lane that supplied the last Byzantine outposts on both shores of the northern Adriatic. If it really sank as late as the seventh century, then it would typify the last ships that supplied a besieged Ravenna with the sort of goods the salt traders of Comacchio peddled up the Po. Wrecks 15 and 16, on the other hand, occur when and where the analysis of communications patterns would predict. Most significantly, they (particularly ship 15) attest to renewed Adriatic integration into the broader Mediterranean

86 R24 and Mir. *Demetrii* (*BHG* 516z–522), 6, 313–14, 1.239.9–240.12, with the Latin version of Anastasius Bibliothecarius, *Miracula S. Demetrii* (*BHL* 2123), *PL*, 129.726A–C; cf. Ch. 4n104.

87 Peacock 1984, 27.



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TABLE 20.2
Western Mediterranean: early medieval shipwrecks in the southern Italian zone

| Wreck no. | Date | Name, location of wreck | Cargo | Cargo provenance | Route segments | Parker no. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 400–650? | Cape Passero | roof tiles; a ?Byzantine amphora | Byzantine empire | 6 | 245 |
| 7 | 450–650? | Taranto A | Byzantine millstones | Byzantine empire | 5 + ? | 1,131 |
| 8 | 400–700 | Syracuse B, Great Harbor | "Byzantine amphoras" | Byzantine empire | 6 | 1,092 |
| 9 | 400–700 | Marzamemi J | amphora fragments "of various Byzantine types"; ?ballast stones | Byzantine empire | 6 | 678 |
| 10 | 400–700 | Marzamemi K | amphora fragments; not a wreck? | | | 679 |
| 11 | 650–700 | Punta Secca A–B | Byzantine coin found in one of two hulls destroyed by looters | Byzantine empire? | 6 | 968 |
| 12 | 600–700? | Secche di Ugento C | 1 globular amphora, from Sicily or S. Italy? With Greek names | Sicily or S. Italy? | 5 + 6 or 4? | 1,068 |
| 13 | 800–1100 | Scoglio della Formica B | filter jugs, lamps, iron objects? | "Saracen" wreck | 7 + ? | 1,053 |

*Note:*
There is so far no evidence on the home ports of the ships in Tables 20.2–20.7.

economy. The presence of Byzantine amphoras means that all three wrecks were probably sailing into the Adriatic from elsewhere. Wreck 16 shows that, via the old trunk route, the Adriatic sea lane linked up with Byzantium's north–south axis of internal trade.

In Table 20.3, amphoras again testify to trade in foodstuffs in the ninth or tenth centuries. At least in the case of ship 16, they may have been loaded as far away as the Bosporus or the Black Sea, so that it looks like more than local trade. The iron in ship 15 was mostly tools (including, possibly, a plowshare and a crucible). If, as the plowshare suggests, the tools were not ship's stores, they indicate that more distant regions were still supplying tools to this region of ancient metal production. Even more striking is a cargo of roof tiles and amphoras (no. 15), apparently sailing north from Greek-speaking territory along the route which led ultimately to Venice. Around 800, the duke of Istria had had roof tiles or bricks (*tegorias*)



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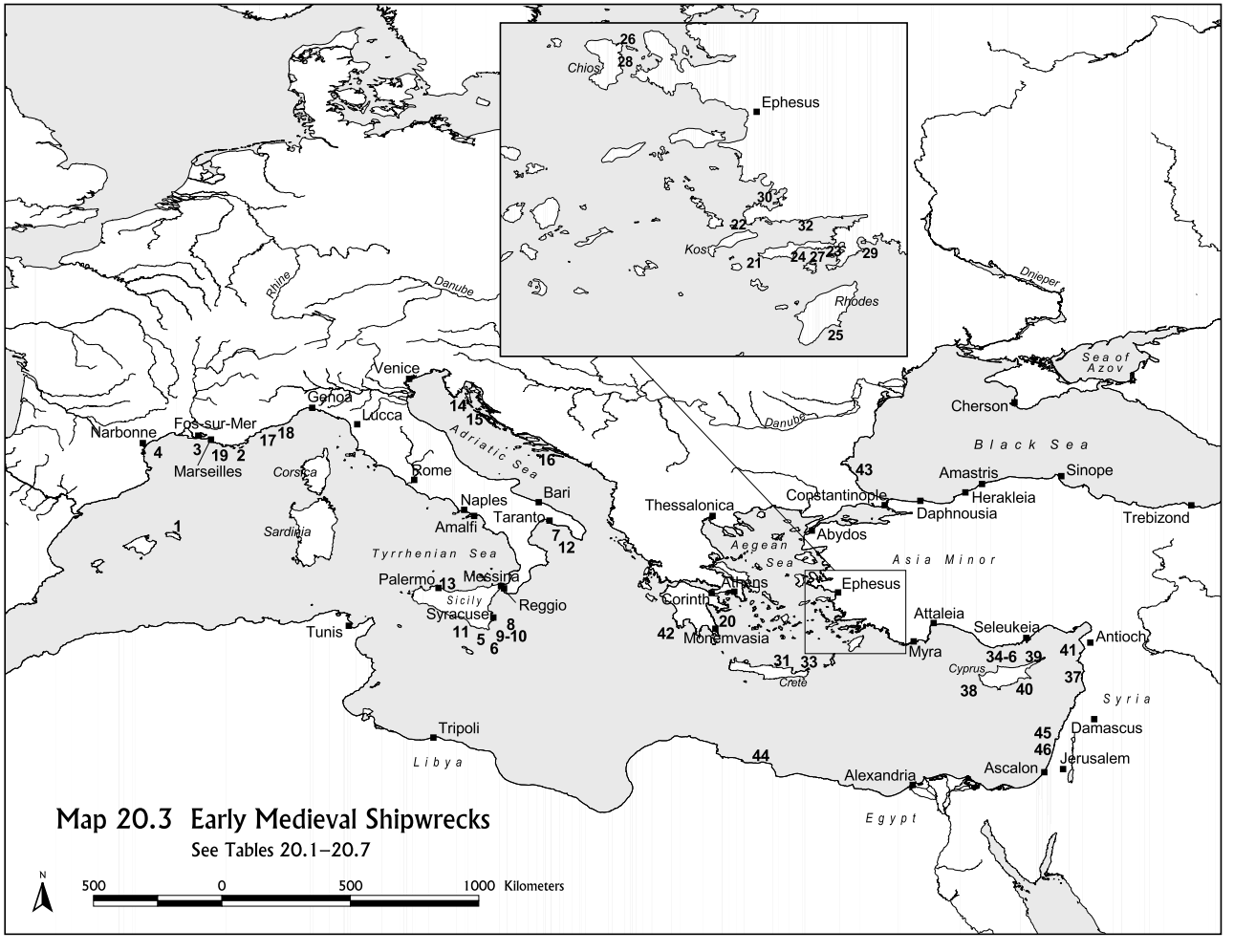


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TABLE 20.3
Western Mediterranean: early medieval shipwrecks on the Adriatic route

| Wreck no. | Date | Name, location of wreck | Cargo | Cargo provenance | Route | Parker no. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | 400–700? | Premuda Island B | globular Byzantine amphoras | Byzantine empire | Trunk + 10 | 902 |
| 15 | 800–1000 | Ždrijac, north of Nin | Byzantine amphoras, painted inscription; roof tiles; ?iron objects | Byzantine empire | Trunk + 10 | 1,250 |
| 16 | 850–1000 | Mljet A | amphoras with parallels at Constantinople and Black Sea; glass paralleled at Byzantine and Arab sites, 850–950 | ?Constantinople or Black Sea | Trunk + 10 + 15–16 | 703 |

made locally, presumably for his palace.[88] If what has been found is representative of the ship's original cargo, it raises the question of where exactly the profit lay. Were the contents of the amphoras and the presumably cheap foreign roof tiles sufficient to justify the voyage of ship 15? One suspects rather that the profits had been made on the outbound voyage, so that even marginally profitable bulk items like roof tiles were acceptable for the return trip, especially since they served as ballast. The fact that these ships were found off Croatia encourages the conclusion that we have here the earliest surviving ships of the nascent Venetian shipping empire. Then as now the normal route to the head of the Adriatic hugs the Balkan coast (Ch. 18.1).

Our last set of shipwrecks from the western Mediterranean takes us back to the Riviera, and a little further into the Middle Ages. Table 20.4 shows a shipping link from Spain, and even from Cordova and its Atlantic access, to the Riviera. Some Spanish traffic had persisted into the late sixth and seventh century, as Gregory of Tours and the presence of Cordovan leather in the seventh-century customs house of Fos-sur-Mer indicate.[89] The ships were clearly carrying Spanish cargo toward a French or, possibly, Italian (Ligurian?) landing when they went down. The excavators believe the ships are Arab.[90] No sure sign of this

88 *Rižana Plea*, 64.29; cf. 62.20–2 and classical Latin *tegula*.

89 Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 9, 21–2, 441.15–442.23; Chilperic II's confirmation of two 7th- C. diplomas: *Corbie*, p. 236.

90 See most recently Jézégou *et al.* 1997; cf. Brentchaloff and Sénac 1991.



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TABLE 20.4
Western Mediterranean: early medieval shipwrecks on the Spain–Riviera route[a]

| Wreck no. | Date | Name, location of wreck | Cargo | Cargo provenance | Route | Parker no. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17 | 950 | Agay, near Fraxinetum | Spanish amphoras; jars 1.4 m tall; 20 millstones; 1 brass, 250 bronze ingots | Arabic label, Spain? | 1–2–3? | 8 |
| 18 | 950 | Le Bataiguier, off Cannes | jugs, flasks, strainer jars etc.; big Arab jars; Cordova lamps; copper, glass vessels; ship destroyed by fire | Arabic labels, Cordova? | 1–2–3 | 97 |
| 19 | 900–1000 | Plane C, near Marseilles | corked jars; clay balls filled with asphalt (ship's store?); strainers; Spanish pottery; 2 millstones; ?iron tools | Spain | 1–2–3 | 821 |

*Note:*
[a] To these should be added a fourth, similar wreck, this one just off the presumed site of Fraxinetum at the Roche Fouras, off the Saint Tropez peninsula, that came to my attention too late to be fully included: Joncheray and Sénac 1995.

shipping route emerged from communications patterns of the eighth century. However, evidence from the market at Genoa hints at renewed contacts with Spain in 862 (Ch. 21.3), and Arab ships or cargoes on this route may signal an important new development. The inclination to see these ships as pirate vessels, or supply ships for the Saracen stronghold at Fraxinetum looks least implausible for ship 17; but the inclination may stem in part from the assumption that war at sea was incompatible with commerce, and that war set the tone for all relations between the House of Islam and Christendom. The ships were carrying some sort of foodstuff (oil?), raw materials, millstones, pottery, and again, high-value items in the form of glass and quantities of metal. The man found in ship 17's longboat was 25–35 years old, armed with a sword, and is reported to have had "slightly negroid features."[91] If any of these ships were engaged in commerce, they bring important new testimony to trade with Muslim Spain.

So early evidence from the bottom of the western Mediterranean confirms some patterns. The final stage in the late antique life of the main trunk route is distinct, along with the dominance of eastern ships in western ports in that era. The regional pattern also seems clear in the south Italian shipwrecks. The

91 Parker 1992, no. 97.



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Adriatic route looks just as the other evidence of communications would suggest: of the few ships overall that certainly went down after 800, they display most clearly the rise of a new shipping axis, and its implications for the vitality of the central segments of the ancient trunk route. The Spanish route also shows something new.

The eastern Mediterranean wrecks are, mostly, less well documented. Naturally, they give up fewer of their secrets. The total absence of wrecks from Alexandria and Constantinople, surely two of the most intensely visited ports, underscores how incomplete the undersea inventory remains. The rudimentary state of eastern ceramic studies means that early medieval typologies and production areas are even less well mapped than in the west. The result is that today we can usually see only zones where tomorrow may show us routes. Two main shipping zones appear, alongside four isolated wrecks. The Aegean zone is the best documented (Table 20.5; 14 wrecks), which is not surprising, given the convergence of modern recreational diving and the Aegean's position as one of the most active economic areas in the middle Byzantine period. The Cypriot zone (Table 20.6) is also well documented (eight wrecks), particularly given that it represents a much smaller area. This confirms the picture of the island's lively regional shipping; it fits with our information that, in periods of peace, Cyprus served the Byzantine empire and the Caliphate as a neutral meeting place, although the ceramics do not yet illustrate this process. Allowing for the uncertainties of dating, both the Aegean and Cypriot zones seem to display a continuous record of wrecks through the early Middle Ages. The fact that one of the best-studied types of amphoras (LR1, "Byzantine globular") was manufactured in many places between western Asia Minor and Cyprus makes it hard to detect movement between Cyprus and the Aegean. Wrecks 22 and 28 nonetheless point toward an eastern extension of the north–south axis of Byzantine trade. Within the Aegean itself we can twice glimpse eastern and northern extensions of the ancient main trunk route (wrecks 21 and 31). An isolated wreck off western Greece also points to the ancient trunk route (wreck 42). Shipwreck 31 was probably working the north–south route that we have examined from other evidence. When it went down off the north shore of Crete, it had transported across the Aegean amphoras that look to have come from the Sea of Marmara. Again, amphoras dominate, implying that much cargo consisted of foodstuffs. Wreck 22's wine cargo offers a contemporary eastern parallel to ship 3 with its grain and pitch. Manufactured goods occur too: the Byzantine plates (29), sarcophagi (36), perhaps glassware (39), and building materials like roof tiles (34). Much of what can be identified could be from the region where the ship sank, or neighboring ones. Some probably or certainly is (wrecks 22? 26, 28, 35, 46). One cargo may have come from as far away as Gaza (21). Contrary to what we find in the west, no eastern wreck has yet produced



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TABLE 20.5
Eastern Mediterranean: early medieval shipwrecks in the Aegean shipping zone, including those on trunk and north–south axis routes (shown in bold type)

| Wreck no. | Date | Name, location of wreck | Cargo | Cargo provenance | Route | Parker no. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 20 | 500–600? | Porto Cheli, Argolid | globular amphoras, ballast stones | | 12 + ? | 884 |
| 21 | 575–600 | **İskandil Burnu A, Datça Peninsula facing Kos** | wine amphoras Riley LR4[a] ("Gaza"), coarseware jugs, plates | Palestine; kosher cooking pot? Jewish captain or merchant? | **Trunk 12 + 17 + 18** | 518 |
| 22 | c. 626 | Yassı Ada A south of Bodrum | 900 Byzantine amphoras: Riley LR1–2; oil; wine; globular; labels: "lentils," "rice" etc. Some reused.[b] | Aegean/Cyprus/?Syria/?Cilicia | 17 + ? | 1,239 |
| 23 | 400–650 | Bozburun, facing Simi | Byzantine amphoras | | 17 + ? | 111 |
| 24 | 400–650? | Datça A, facing Rhodes | Byzantine amphoras | | 17 + ? | 351 |
| 25 | 400–700 | Pefkos, Rhodes, S. of Lindos | Byzantine amphoras, 1 globular; ?plate: internal green glaze | Aegean? | 17? | 795 |
| 26 | 400–700 | Pras(s)onisia, islet off Oinoussa, off N.E. Chios | globular amphoras (Riley LR2) | Aegean | 17 | 900 |
| 27 | 650–725 | Datça B | Byzantine globular and baluster amphoras (LR1 and LR2)[c] | Aegean ?Cyprus ?Syria ?Cilicia | 17 | 352 |
| 28 | 650–750? | Ayios Stephanos, islet off N.E. Chios | > 1,000 Byzantine amphoras, resinous lining, including Riley LR1 | Aegean ?Cyprus ?Syria ?Cilicia | 17 | 71 |
| 29 | 700–900 | Marmaris A, facing Rhodes | Byzantine plates | | 17 + ? | 657 |

TABLE 20.5 (*cont.*)

| Wreck no. | Date | Name, location of wreck | Cargo | Cargo provenance | Route | Parker no. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 30 | 900–1000 | Mandalya Gulf (S. of Miletus) | 3 or more layers of 50 pear-shaped Byzantine amphoras | | 17 + ? | 644 |
| 31 | 900–1000? | **Dhia B, Crete** | Byzantine amphoras like Günsenin I | Mt. Ganos | **12+15** | 360 |
| 32 | 300–1200 | Kerme Gulf, near Kos, Bodrum | 5,000 tiles, amphoras, coarseware | | 17 + ? | 543 |
| 33 | 500–1400? | Cape Sidero B, Crete | Byzantine amphoras | | 12 + ? | 215 |

*Notes:*

[a] Parker "LR3" is presumably a misprint.

[b] Van Alfen 1996, 201–10.

[c] Thus *ibid.*, 212–13.

*Source:* Parker 1992.

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TABLE 20.6
Eastern Mediterranean: early medieval shipwrecks in the Cyprus shipping zone

| Wreck no. | Date | Name, location of wreck | Cargo | Cargo provenance | Route | Parker no. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 34 | 400–650 | Cape Andreas A, east tip | roof tiles | | 17 | 202 |
| 35 | 450–650? | Cape Andreas C | amphoras Riley LR1 and LR1A | Aegean ?Cyprus ?Syria ?Cilicia | 17 | 204 |
| 36 | 450–650? | Cape Andreas E | "Byzantine baluster" amphoras, terracotta sarcophagi fragments | | 17 | 206 |
| 37 | 500–650 | Arwad Reef B, Syria | rilled, pear-shaped Byzantine amphoras | | 18 | 59 |
| 38 | 500–700 | Thalassinies Spilies, Cyprus | Byzantine globular amphoras (LR2?) | Aegean? | 17 | 1,145 |
| 39 | 600–700? | Cape Andreas B | Byzantine amphoras (like Riley LR13), tiles, ?glass vessels | | 17 | 203 |
| 40 | 600–800? | Cape Kiti A, near Larnaka | Byzantine amphora fragments | | 17 | 212 |
| 41 | 800–900? | Syria | jars 1.7×1.2 m; Arab 3-handled amphoras | Caliphate | 18 | 1,125 |

*Source:* Parker 1992

any cargo from the opposite, western basin. One ship (wreck 22) probably was from the Aegean Sea or Marmara region itself, judging from the cooking ware, while the possible evidence of a kosher pot might indicate a Jewish captain in a ship transporting Palestinian cargo (wreck 21). Some of the amphoras of wreck 22 were reused; it has recently been suggested that this ship was not a freelance merchant, but an ecclesiastical shipper and very late case of the state transport system.[92]

Texts and shipwrecks thus begin to delineate some main currents of trading in the two great economies which lay to the south of the Frankish empire. But there were other economies, whose stage of development more closely approximated that of Frankland, and to which the geographic obstacles to communication were perhaps less oppressive.

92 Van Alfen 1996, 208–13.



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TABLE 20.7
Eastern Mediterranean: various early medieval shipwrecks

| Wreck no. | Date | Name, location of wreck | Cargo | Cargo provenance | Route | Parker no. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 42 | 400–650? | Porto Longo, Sapiendza | "Byzantine potsherds" | Byzantine empire | Trunk (11) + ? | 889 |
| 43 | 500–625? | Neseber B, Bulgaria | amphora fragments, including 1 globular | Greek graffito | 16 + ? | 738 |
| 44 | 500–650? | Marsa Lucch, Libya | amphoras, Riley LR8a, over 6×2 m; pottery funnel | N. Africa? | 20? | 660 |
| 45 | 500–600 | Israel | pottery, 6th C.; ballast stones; 2 m high | | 18 | 525 |
| 46 | 600–700 | Dor, 40 km S. of Akko | local storage jars, on rope, straw | Palestine | 18 | 367 |

*Source:* Parker 1992

## *West and east: new trading worlds*

Across the Channel from Carolingian Frankland, the burgeoning Anglo-Saxon kingdoms had long welcomed Frankish exports. Hamwic was an important emporium in Wessex when Willibald and his family began their epic pilgrimage. There they boarded the ship that took them to a market at Rouen, the first stage in a long trip to the Levant (Ch. 5.1). Excavations have uncovered Hamwic's trading links to Frankland, and we shall see more of them shortly (Chapter 23). The Slavic lands to the east mostly lack written records. But, as Frankish power expanded eastward, they surely offered, at the least, the usual wealth of "forest economies," notably slaves. So far, this eastern trading world is visible chiefly through Frankish eyes, and we shall return to it as well in the next chapters. Further to the southeast was the growing power of the Bulgarian empire, toward and through which the new overland corridor connected the Frankish empire to the shores of the Black Sea. More than just ambassadors and armies marched along those routes.

For the central European corridor, the Raffelstetten inquest documents mostly local commerce on the upper Danube. It mentions salt, foodstuffs, wax, slaves, and horses as the goods that merchants and estate workers transported through this area around 900.[93] At the other end of the corridor, exchange between the

93 *Raffelstetten Plea*, 1, 4–7, 9, pp. 250–2; see Mitterauer 1964 on local trade and transport. For a *possible* allusion to Jewish traders in central Europe in the 840s, see above, ch. 17n75.



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Protobulgarian empire and Byzantium was sufficiently important that in 812 the khan added a clause regulating it when he proposed renewing an earlier treaty (c. 716). He suggested that traders dealing with both countries be recognized by means of documents and seals; any who lacked them would have their goods confiscated by the two countries' fiscal authorities. The treaty was rejected, but not because of its commercial provisions.[94] The khan's new proposal shows that Byzantine trade was important to the Bulgars and that money was to be made by placing it under stricter state control. A very similar treaty was finally signed three or four years later.[95] Early in the tenth century, Bulgarian merchants were importing linen and honey into Constantinople. There they purchased purple and other silk textiles, including, apparently, ones which had been imported into the Byzantine capital.[96] Bulgarian merchants seem also to have exported slaves to the Byzantines.[97]

In the light of the disastrous wars triggered by the exclusion of Bulgarian traders from the capital, the trade in honey, linen, and textiles shows that c. 900 at least, Constantinople was one pole of Bulgarian–Byzantine commerce, feeding the north–south current we have observed above. Debeltos (mod. Stari-Debelt, Bulgaria), just inland from the Black Sea on the southern bank of the Sredecka river, was an important frontier post staffed with Byzantine trade officials (*kommerkiarioi*) no later than 832/3.[98] A second pole was Thessalonica. Seals of *kommerkiarioi* established there begin in 712/13. By around 800, a new official appears. He was apparently modeled on the toll collector at Abydos for he was called the *kommerkiarios* and *abydikos* of Thessalonica, and his office implies that trade was voluminous enough to warrant taxing. The quantity of *kommerkiarioi* seals has been taken to reflect the town's economic activities. If this is so, they surge in the ninth century; the *abydikoi* and related seals end in the tenth.[99] Some of this trade may

94 Theophanes, A.M. 6305, 1.497.16–498.4; Beševliev 1981, 249–50; cf. 198–9.

95 Although its text is only partially preserved, the surviving segments have been taken to show that it essentially followed Krum's proposals, including those on trade: *Nadpisi*, no. 41 and Beševliev 1981, 276–9. Oikonomides 1988 has proposed an ingenious explanation of the 812 and 716 clauses, according to which controlled trade (not tribute) was the intent of the earlier one, and the proposals of 812 aimed to restore earlier commerce interrupted by war. Whatever the interpretation, the 812 proposals emphasize the importance of commerce at that date.

96 *Liber Praefecti*, 9, 6, 108.439–49; cf. too Koder's translation, *ibid.*, p. 109. Cf. *ibid.*, 5, 1, p. 94.264–6, which suggests that for some textiles, the Constantinopolitan merchants were acting as middlemen, retailing cloths produced in Syria or elsewhere in the Caliphate. On the Byzantine silk industry in general and the technical terms used in the Greek text, Muthesius 1995, 255–314.

97 Beševliev 1981, 414.

98 *CBSDO* 1: 172, with no. 76.2; Oikonomides 1988, 31; *TIB* 6: 234–5; *kommerkiarioi*: Ch. 18.2.

99 See *CBSDO* 1: 50; cf. Oikonomides 1992b, 247.



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have traveled southwestward via the Gulf of Corinth route, for an imperial fiscal arrangement around 900 seems to connect Thessalonica to Kephalenia (Ch. 18.2). Geography suggests that some trade also came from Bulgaria. In the tenth century, Constantine Porphyrogenitus reckoned Thessalonica a natural point of departure for the Danube and the Bulgarian town of Belgrade.[100] So too we have already seen that the papal envoys of 869 who entered the empire at Thessalonica had traveled overland via Bulgaria (R592). The clincher comes in the observation that two of the *kommerkiarioi* of Thessalonica known from seals of the late ninth or early tenth century, Cosmas and Stauracius, show exactly the same names as the two greedy merchants from Greece who schemed c. 889–93 to bar all Bulgarian commerce from Constantinople and shift it to Thessalonica so that they could unjustly tax it.[101] A brief florescence of *kommerkiarioi* seals from the main rivers of Thrace connecting with Bulgaria has suggested further commercial activity.[102] The trade was important enough that the Bulgarian tsar Symeon protested against the changes introduced by Cosmas and Stauracius. When Leo VI turned a deaf ear, Symeon began the invasions in which he would pile up victory upon victory for over a quarter of a century.[103] In sum, by the late ninth century, at the eastern end of the Danubian route a trading world had sprung up whose commerce was valuable enough to start wars.

## *The northern arc*

Scandinavia enjoys a unique archaeological tradition, reinforced by the circumstances of ancient pre-Christian burial practices and modern civic attitudes towards the law of treasure finds, not to mention the systematic exploration of the rich sites of Haithabu and Birka over several generations. All this makes the northern lands' long-distance communications with Asia, and also western Europe, the best studied of the early Middle Ages. The abundant archaeological and numismatic finds – more than 80,000 Near Eastern coins from the seventh through the early eleventh century (with significant deposits beginning c. 850) –

100 *De adm. imp.*, 42, 1.182.15–17; cf. Runciman, *ibid.*, 2.153–4, and Tăpkova-Zaimova 1979, no. XXVI, 169–70.

101 *CBSDO* 1: 66, no. 18.38, and 68, 18.44, with Oikonomides 1992b, 247 and Theoph. Cont., 6, 9, 357.22–33, κακῶς κου. μερκεύοντες, as punctuated by Oikonomides 1992b, 246. On the date and circumstances, Tsankova [=Cankova]-Petkova 1968, 88–97.

102 Oikonomides 1992b, 247, referring to *CBSDO*, 1:125 and 126, nos. 44.5, A.D. 822/3? (could the unusual imperial portrait be that of the usurpers Thomas and his adopted son? Adrianople was in their hands that year) and 44.6, A.D. 838/9?; 1: 133, no. 50.1 (s. ix[1]), and 1: 108, no. 39.5, with the references on 1: 107. About travel on the Thracian rivers, see Todorova 1984, 47.

103 Theoph. Cont., 6, 9, 357.30–4; cf. e.g., Browning 1975, 58–67.



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have been plausibly construed into a vast "northern arc" of pre- and proto-historic contacts and trade. Paradoxically, some contemporary experts seem more and more cautious about deducing trade from the increasingly abundant numismatic and archaeological remains. Reacting perhaps against simplistic assumptions of earlier generations, they see instead plunder, tribute, or simply more neutral "imports" in the foreign objects discovered in northern soil.[104] Others continue to see trade as the primary vector of goods.[105] Another important qualifier to earlier enthusiasms is the growing evidence that some Islamic-looking material presumed to come from the caliphal heartlands actually was produced on their marches, closer to the northern homelands.[106] It is growing clearer that the exchange networks (to use a neutral term) with the east were complex and, in many cases, involved uncertain numbers of intermediaries, as well as varying degrees of violence. Nonetheless, some of the abundant material remains of eastern origin surely came by way of trade. For this we need not rely on the later and controvertible evidence of the sagas. We can turn to the unimpeachable testimony of contemporary and well-informed Arab observers, as well as the provisions for Rus merchants active at Constantinople codified in the Russo-Byzantine treaties of 911 and 944, not to mention the growing number of excavated settlements whose features seem hard to explain in other terms.[107] The same is true for the relations with the west, since the Frisians seem to have linked Scandinavia to the Frankish empire. King Alfred's milieu and the Old English Orosius supply moreover the contemporary testimony of Ohthere and Wulfstan, two men who indubitably were northern traders.[108]

The webs of exchange began around the North Sea. A first network linked the southern reaches of England and the Continent to the Jutland peninsula. At the Frankish end, it reached into the lower Rhine and Meuse rivers, and particularly the Frisian trading settlements of Dorestad and of Domburg, whose Arab coins have already caught our attention (Ch. 12.2). In Jutland, it connected to the emporium of Ribe, on the west coast, and Haithabu, on the east. A very large market or craft zone (at least 200×50 m) was laid out at Ribe in 720/1; activities continued there into the ninth century.[109] The trading settlement at Haithabu was apparently peopled by travelers from the west c. 750–800, who settled there on

104 Oriental coins from plunder or tribute, not trade: Sawyer 1982, 124–6, and 123 on improving hoard evidence after c. 850; "imports," not trade goods: Jansson 1988, 566; *ibid.*, 569, on the number and general chronology of coins; see also Ch.12.2.

105 Most insistently Hodges and Whitehouse 1983, 101–68, and esp. the systemic overview in Hodges 1989. But see also, e.g., Steuer 1987a, 113–17.

106 Imitation Kufic coins, possibly from Volga Bulgars: Jansson 1988, 572.

107 For the Arabs, see below; Rus treaties: R780 and R811.

108 Frisians: Lebecq 1983, 1: 249–71; *Old English Orosius*.

109 Feveile 1994.



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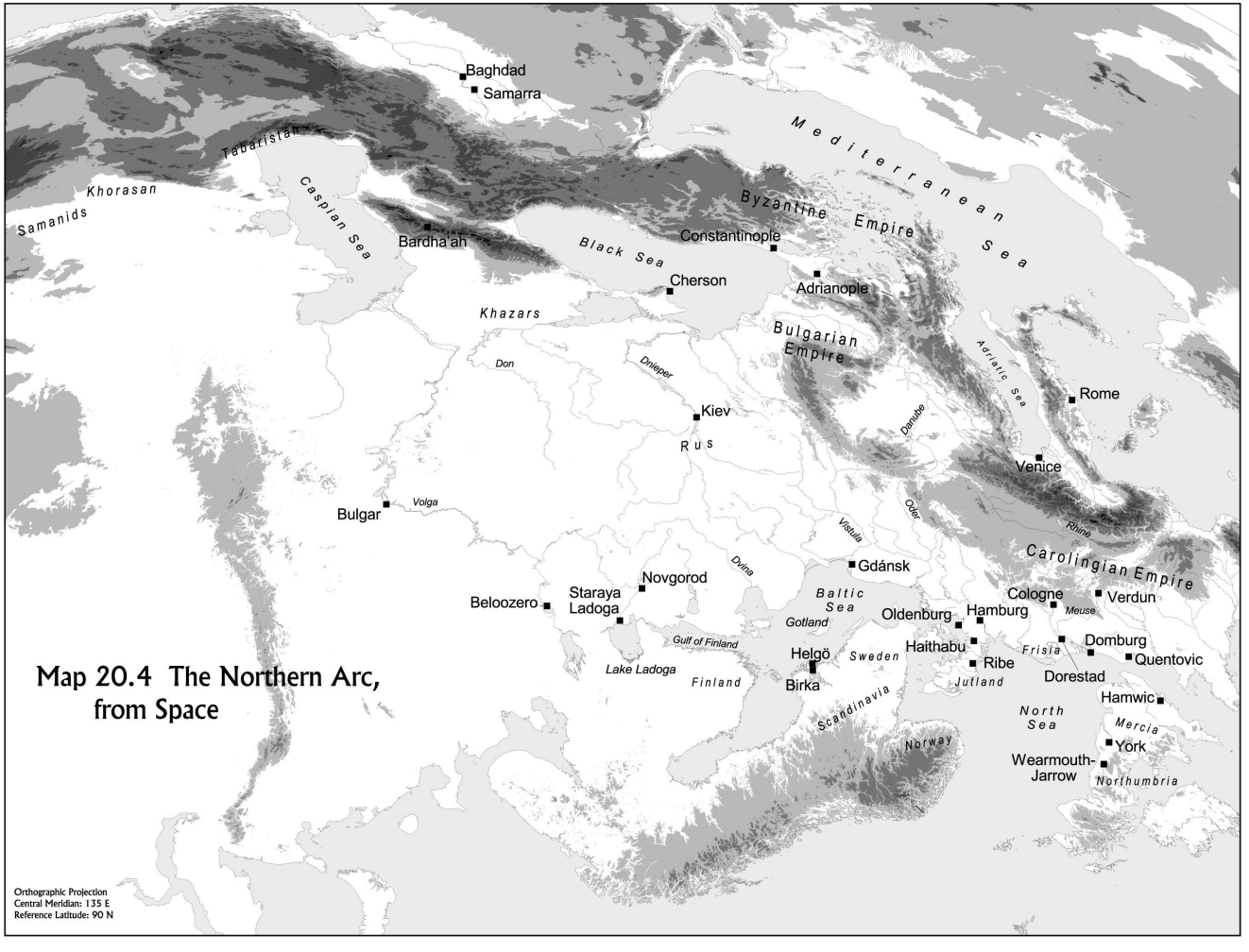


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the Baltic shore of the neck of the Jutland peninsula. As the presence of Ohthere and Wulfstan at Alfred's court makes abundantly clear – to cite only that example – even the southern reaches of Anglo-Saxon England were involved in this North Sea economy.[110]

The distribution patterns of traded or transported goods are especially distinct for raw materials, but, generally, they hold also for finished products. They reveal that the Dorestad–Haithabu route reflected a North Sea zone of exchange, even as Haithabu's Baltic connections are unmistakable and, in some respects, predominant. Western goods generally diminish as one moves east into the Baltic and north toward Sweden.[111] To judge from its cemeteries and overall archaeology, Haithabu grew steadily from the eighth century until its decline in the tenth century; at its largest it may have comprised 800 to 1,000 permanent residents, alongside a substantial number of transients.[112] Recognized Carolingian exports to Haithabu include wine and Rhenish ceramics.[113] The pottery, however, was more for the personal use of rather numerous visitors than a commercial commodity.[114] A later ninth-century Frankish visitor heard psalmody arising from a crowd of chained slaves who were being dragged past him at Haithabu. He recognized and redeemed a Christian nun.[115] These were probably not the only slaves for sale in the history of Haithabu. The Christian slaves on view farther east, at Birka, decades before, must have transited through the Jutland peninsula.[116] Some textiles might also have traveled toward Haithabu, but the natural conditions do not preserve them well; most of what has been found appears to be of local manufacture, except for grave goods and some possible imports from the west.[117] Querns from the Eifel region of Germany, glass and the

110 Lebecq 1983, 1: 139–163 and 225–47; Jankuhn 1986, 115–17; 119–83; 204–5.

111 Steuer 1987a.

112 Jankuhn 1986, 204–5.

113 *Ibid.*, 150–2.

114 Janssen 1987 stresses that imported Frankish ceramic is significant, but less voluminous than previously believed. Its use is confined mostly to what appear to be higher status zones of the site. Overall, Frankish import ceramic constituted 7 percent by weight (90 kg) of the total ceramic finds uncovered as of that date at Haithabu; the other 93 percent was made locally or comes from the Baltic. Janssen's careful evaluation leads him to conclude that these finds represent not an export ware *per se* but the residue of personal-use materials of a limited group of people present at Haithabu from the final decades of the 8th C. to the end of the 9th (and beyond). These people had strong connections to the Rhineland around Cologne.

115 *Vita Rimberti* (*BHL* 7258), 18, pp. 95–6. Cf. Jankuhn 1986, 142–3. The fact that she resorted to psalmody might mean that she spoke a different language from the Frankish prelate – Protoromance, Anglo-Saxon or Irish. A more sinister interpretation might suggest that the lord archbishop had turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of his enslaved countrymen until the woman signaled her religious (and social) status.

116 See below, n129.

117 Hägg 1991; Jankuhn 1986, 148–9.



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famed swords were also imported from the Frankish empire.[118] Conclusive evidence of grain imports is lacking, although some southern foodstuffs have turned up (e.g., walnuts, also used for dyeing). But it is for now impossible to go beyond the observation that Frisians purchased cereals along the Rhine, that a ninth- or tenth-century dock at Hamburg was covered with a thick layer of grain, and that during a famine, Charlemagne forbade the sale of food outside the empire.[119] Toward Haithabu flowed also raw materials and products from Norway, Sweden, the Arctic, and even the east.[120] The picture bears comparison with the west Slavic settlement of Starigard/Oldenburg, some 80 km to the east.[121]

The flow of eastern goods into the Baltic delimits a second zone. Here the main sites are Birka, Gotland, and various places along the Baltic shore, such as a recently published craft and trading settlement of the ninth century, near Gdańsk. Among the Polish finds were ten complete dirhams, two Sassanian coins and fifty-four fragments. The dirhams were issued between 767 and 815.[122] Such settlements communicated with the Slavic hinterland and the chain of trading towns associated with the Rus which, inland from the Gulf of Finland, ran south and east. In places like Staraya Ladoga and Beloozero, Scandinavians appear in the ninth century. Eastward these travelers continued down the Volga toward the Khazars and beyond them toward the Caspian Sea. Southward, the Rus boated down the Dnieper and took control of Kiev, en route to the Black Sea and Constantinople, which they first raided in 860.[123] Baltic amber seems to have been reaching Iraq toward 850.[124] Before 885, the Rus were already purveying beaver furs, black fox, and swords as far as Baghdad.[125] In the early tenth century, other Arab observers would add slaves, especially young women, to these merchants' wares.[126] If texts are so far the main source for exports to the Middle East, the earth has yielded a broad array of durable goods which traveled in the

118 *Ibid.*, 154–5; 158–9 and 161–3.
119 Lebecq 1983, 1: 26–8; Jankuhn 1986, 140; *MGH Capit.* no. 44, 4, 1.123.2–3.
120 Jankuhn 1986, 153–4; 156–8; 163–9.
121 Gabriel 1988 and 1991.
122 Jagodziński and Kasprzycka 1991.
123 See in general, Franklin and Shepard 1996, 3–138.
124 It is mentioned by al Kindi (d. 861), as quoted by al Biruni, as well as in a 9th-C. dictionary, and information on it increases considerably in the early 10th C., according to Lewicki 1963, 3–5, knowledge of which I owe to the thoughtfulness of Jonathan Conant.
125 Ibn Khurradadhbih, in Pritsak 1971, 256 (trans.); 253 (text). This segment of the text is in a jumbled position, within the famous account of the Radhanites, and was already so in his source: e.g. Pritsak 1971, 243–4. For the date of the treatise, see below, ch. 23n70.
126 E.g., c. 903–4, Ibn Rusteh, trans. Wiet, pp. 163–4 mentions the Rus' slave-hunting raids among the Slavs; cf. Ibn Fadlan, trans. Canard p. 115. The most comprehensive collection of Arabic material remains Jacob 1891, here 6–17.



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opposite direction. They include the tokens of trade: coins, folding scales, and weights. Oriental ornaments, rock crystal and carnelian (a reddish chalcedony) beads, silk and metal-worked textiles and probably even clothing, including, certainly, the Islamic innovation of buttons, figure next to double axes (which Scandinavians adopted with such relish that they served as the distinctive weapon of those in Byzantium's imperial service) and domestic utensils. Find sites of eastern wares diminish as one advances westward across the Baltic.[127]

They diminish, but do not stop. We know that ninth-century travelers, including Carolingians like the missionary St. Anskar and his followers, sailed to Birka. They presumably traveled via Haithabu, and so crossed from the western-dominated zone to the eastern one.[128] The Christian slaves they found at Birka must have come from the west; whether any of them were sold further east we do not know, but there is no evidence against it.[129] Brooches, buckles, and the like reached Haithabu from the eastern edge of the Baltic and beyond. A silver belt fitting found there seems to come from the land of the Khazars or the Volga Bulgars.[130] Folding scales of a type associated with the Caliphate spread generally throughout Scandinavia in the last decades of the ninth century, apparently in tandem with the large-scale penetration of dirhams. The connection between scales and Arab coins makes sense in terms of Bernard's eyewitness report that cash payments were always weighed in the Caliphate (Ch. 5.1). The scales have been found at Haithabu, where some seem even to have been produced.[131] Distinctive fine weights triumphed across Scandinavia at the same time. Over 100 such small polygonal objects have been discovered at Haithabu, some bearing pseudo-Arabic inscriptions.[132] Crystal and carnelian beads probably imported from the east are also well attested there.[133] Silk, eastern textile trim, and a button

127 See the systematic catalogue and discussion in Jansson 1988.

128 Rimbert, *Vita Anskarii* (*BHL* 544) 10–11, 14, 19–20, *MGH SRG*, pp. 31–3, 36, 39–46.

129 *Ibid.*, 11, p. 32: "Multi etiam apud eos captivi habebantur christiani, qui gaudebant iam tandem se mysteriis divinis posse participari."

130 Müller-Wille 1988, 741–62 and 778.

131 Steuer 1987b, 462–7 (his Type 3), with list 6, nos. 33–44 (p. 524).

132 Cf. Steuer 1973, 13 and 20, which states that they first appear in the late 9th C., at the earliest, but does not explicitly identify the grounds for this date; and Steuer 1987b, 470, Abb. 7. On the regional metrical considerations that explain the frequency of glass weights for coins in the Caliphate, Grierson 1960, 248–57; Bates 1991, 53–60.

133 In addition to Jansson 1988, 584–91, cf. von Müller 1970, who dates the Haithabu finds to the first half of the 10th C., because similar beads show up in two graves so dated in Sweden, and Arrhenius 1978, who gives stronger archaeological evidence for a date in the later 9th C. for Birka and argues, from technical grounds, for the presence of eastern gem cutters, noting also, however, the possibility of a Scandinavian source for the raw material. According to Al Djahiz, *A Clear Look*, 15, trans. Pellat p. 159, Iraq's best carnelian came from Yemen.



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have also turned up, though they are no more precisely dated than "Middle Viking" (c. 850–1000).[134] And we have already observed the Islamic coins deposited in Viking contexts of ninth-century Frankland and England (Ch. 12.2).

So goods flowed northward from western Europe and from the southeastern lands. To some degree, they overlapped at Haithabu. At least one distinctive product of western Europe made it across the entire length of the northern arc, to users in Baghdad: the famous Frankish swords (Ch. 25.1). With every decade, the picture of communications and exchange has grown more detailed. Excepting swords and Arab coins, few objects can be traced along the entire complex of routes, between the Frankish empire and Baghdad. But there is strong ninth-century evidence for a northern trading world comprising a series of interlocking exchange zones.

On every side, the Frankish empire was flanked by trading worlds which were coming to life. Whether we look to the great economies of the south, or the nascent ones of the North Sea and the northern arc, or Bulgaria, the pace quickens in the eighth and ninth centuries. It is true that, at least in the Byzantine world and along the northern route, the regional component of those trading worlds was pronounced, and perhaps predominant. One suspects something similar in the vast Muslim economy, or economies. Yet the economic regions overlapped. In the course of the ninth century, these different trading worlds began to intersect in new ways and in new places. The clearest example is the Black Sea and its hinterlands. Rus traders and raiders from the northern arc reached it and Constantinople itself, sailing past the shores of Bulgaria. Others trekked overland toward the Caspian Sea, beyond which lay Iran, and Iraq, the magnet for the wares of the world. Byzantines occupied Cherson on the northern shore of the Black Sea, while northerners crossed that sea to trade with Byzantines on its southern coast.

But this thickening web of connections, of commerce – of communications – was not confined to the Black Sea or Iraq. They merely happen to be the best-documented places. Syrian traders were immigrating to Constantinople by 900, and ships loaded with Cordovan and other Spanish goods were sailing along the Riviera at most a few decades later. The proverbial "big picture" of trade across the Muslim world, from Spain to the Persian Gulf, implies similar webs of trade, whether wide or narrow, linking the regions along the southern rim of the Mediterranean Sea. And, as the route by which the last bubonic plague reached Constantinople attests, these webs had taken shape since 746.

The southern and eastern places of prosperity in North Africa, Egypt, Syria–Palestine, Bulgaria, and Byzantium are the same ones to, from, or through

134 Jansson 1988, 639 and 640, with 606.



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which our travelers moved. In general terms, the cargo-laden ships that sailed along these routes and sank confirm what the aggregate evidence of communications depicts. This brings us a step closer to recognizing a link between communications and commerce. The Carolingian empire was surrounded by a series of distinct trading worlds which were now beginning to intersect and interweave. Are we to believe that it alone went unwashed by currents of trade? No one contests that the Frankish world traded to some degree toward the northern arc: people using pottery manufactured in the Rhineland sojourned at Haithabu; we know that the places that supplied relics to Frankish hoards changed between the seventh century and 800, and came to feature particularly the Arab Levant, Constantinople, and Ephesus; we know that suddenly, around 775, Arab coins began to flow into Italy, at the same time that communications in general surged with the distant shores of the Mediterranean. It is time to return to the Carolingian merchants.



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# 21

# *Where are the merchants? Italy*

By the 800s, new currents of trade washed around the Carolingian empire on all sides. If they touched Carolingian Europe, they did so through the agency of people, of merchants. Traders are among the least documented travelers that we have encountered. Not coincidentally, they have elicited more scholarly controversy than any other long-distance travelers of the early Middle Ages. What we have found so far sharpens the dilemma. On one hand, vigorous communications of all sorts surge in the supposedly moribund Mediterranean. Human movements were certainly substantial and they certainly changed. On the other hand, only a relatively small number of those movements are explicitly identified as merchant ventures aimed at crossing the Mediterranean. The first observation appears implicitly to comfort an optimistic view of commercial exchange, even as the second contradicts the first.

## 1. The problem of Carolingian merchants

At the least, one is entitled to deduce from the list of clearly documented commercial travelers (Table 9.1) that some long-distance commerce was occurring. What we can see suggests that the very structure of trade was shifting, as western merchants and shippers now took the lead in traffic involving their own coasts. We know also that early medieval sources underreport merchants; the thin textual evidence of merchants in the north only hinted at the amount and range of exchange now emerging from excavation. Might the same be true of the nineteen unambiguously commercial voyagers in the south?

To understand fully the testimony of the merchant voyages, one needs first of all to recognize what is most distinctive about these individuals: they are the merchants *whose movements* are least imperfectly documented. They are not the only merchants in Carolingian Europe. The second essential fact is that all save one trip begins or ends in Italy. Does this mean that Pirenne was fundamentally right,



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and that transalpine Europeans were sealed off from contact with the Muslim and Byzantine economic worlds?

These two observations set the agenda for the next three chapters. Do the nineteen merchants who clearly tried to cross the Mediterranean to trade stand alone? Do they, or the trading networks into which they connected, come to a dead end in Italy? Or might they have continued, through and beyond Italy, into a broader pattern of people and goods on the move, of communication and commerce?

Aside from the north's deepening archaeology, there is a not inconsequential body of written evidence from the Carolingian world, as well as some early archaeological evidence from the south. There is also, of course, a very considerable body of scholarship.[1] Even so, there is more to be learned. New texts demand to be added to the debate, and the old ones have not yet yielded every secret. Furthermore, it is essential to remember that what is unusual about our nineteen long-distance commercial travelers is not that they were merchants, but that they are merchants who are explicitly documented as having attempted trans-Mediterranean commerce.

Even though our sources are not keen on depicting traders, the nineteen individuals represent only a small fraction (about 6 percent) of the total number of merchants who show up in them one way or another. But the geographic range of their activity is usually unspecified.[2] When these men obtruded on the written record, there was mostly no reason to specify where their business took them, or of what kind it was. They are just "merchants." Because of the way they are mentioned, we cannot accurately judge whether a few, all or none of them ever traveled to the Byzantine empire or the Caliphate.[3]

"Merchant" (overwhelmingly *negotiator* or *negotians* in the sources) can cover a lot of ground. Early medieval Latin usually does not distinguish different types of merchants or levels of activity, but *negotiator* does designate someone who lived chiefly from trade.[4] We can discern at least one merchant who looks

1 Pirenne 1925, 21–4: "of steady trading carried on by a class of professional merchants . . . no traces are to be found" (23–4); more moderate: Sabbe 1934; Johanek 1987; Verhulst 1993.

2 On the blinders that circumscribe merchants' appearance in the written sources, see above, pp. 12–15. My non-exhaustive survey uncovered some 130 mentions of merchants in around ninety sources. These represent some 280 individual merchants attested in and around western Europe from c. 690 to c. 900, counting them in the same fashion as we have done for our travelers. About half the mentions give no clue on movements.

3 There are so far as I know no grounds for assuming (for instance), that because a 9th-C. individual is identified as Jewish, and also a merchant, that person must have traveled regularly to Baghdad or wherever. He *might* have done so, but it is wiser to refrain from speculation until we reach a consensus on the structure and scale of Carolingian commerce.

4 Claude 1985b, 167–70; this contrasts with the richer vocabulary of the Arabic sources: Constable 1996b, 52–4.



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like an itinerant peddler (and he is called *mercator*).[5] We also see two men who made the not inconsiderable sum of 12 d. one day at a local weekly market at Fleury. Everything about this story suggests that it is showing us two local craftsmen, selling their own products, possibly iron pitchforks.[6] But the ones we meet most often in the sources were more important people.

In other words, the Carolingian sources imply what a Lombard king formulates explicitly for Italy: there were enough merchants in Frankland for economic and social differentiation to have set in, even if the narrative sources' terminology is not rigorous in distinguishing them.[7] Some served a monastery or bishop, and might enjoy exemptions from various tolls and duties, a fact which scarcely detracts from their economic importance. Others, particularly in Italy, were involved in real estate and rubbed shoulders with lay dignitaries, royal vassals, and prelates.[8] So we have a tantalizingly large sample of professional merchants,

5 Sabbe 1934, 177–9 identifies 3 in 9th-C. sources: erroneously, except for a peddler of Orleans: see Ch. 22.2. Most of the more substantial individuals we will meet in the following pages are called *negotiatores*. Is the fact that the peddler is referred to differently significant? For Sabbe's second and third peddlers, see the next n. His fourth example says nothing about merchants of any rank, but it is good evidence for the use of money even by very poor people near Metz. An impoverished woman gave 2 d. to her poor neighbor to go buy *necessaria* for her: *Translatio S. Adelphi Mettensis* (*BHL* 76), 12, *MGH SS* 15.1.295.55–296.1; its date is not as certainly fixed between 826 and 855 as is often thought: Philippart 1982, 432.

6 Adrevald of Fleury, *Miracula S. Benedicti* (*BHL* 1123), 35, *MGH SS* 15.1.496.25–51 (= de Certain, pp. 77–8). Adrevald states quite clearly that this was a market of people who lived in the surrounding settlements (*villae*) who came together every Saturday to sell or buy goods ("ad distrahendas seu coemendas merces"). The two *compares* (which could well mean "colleagues") earned 12 d., "quos simul ex mercibus distractis acceperant, eosque inibi inter se dividere convenerat"; the earnings were "paupertatis suae laboriosus questus." That is approximately the value of a sheep or cow (Riché 1978, 119). When the one who had been holding the purse lied about it, his hand was paralyzed. He confessed and went immediately to St. Benedict's nearby shrine, carrying an iron pitchfork as a votive offering (which suggests to me what he may have been selling). He was immediately cured and, at the end of the day, discovered his purse in the middle of the market, after most people had gone home.

7 I have not knowingly included anyone who could be imagined to be a peddler in this and subsequent chapters. Lombard king: below, n52.

8 E.g., associated with: a bishop and abbot: *Subiaco*, no. 111 (A.D. 757–69); exchange with a royal vassal: *Codex diplomaticus Langobardiae*, no. 87 (812); an abbot: *ibid.*, no. 113 (830); *hypatos*, count and sons of counts: *Gaeta*, no. 5 (839), etc. Cf. Bullough's similar judgement, 1966a, 110. Januarius, a merchant who worked for Amelberga, abbess of San Salvatore in Brescia, as well as for himself, got toll-free status from Louis II, backed by a fine of 2,000 gold mancosi: DL II, no. 32 (10 January 861; original). He was of sufficient consequence to join the illustrious group who received liturgical commemoration in the *Liber memorialis* of San Salvatore: cf. DL II, pp. 43–7, esp. 44n157. Grierson 1959,



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about whom little has been written because little is known. What has been written is sometimes wrong: witness, for instance, the myth of Carolingian merchant guilds.[9]

There is nonetheless one thing that *is* known about them all. That one thing opens a way to squeeze these disembodied mentions of merchants for the history of communications and commerce. For all their brevity, the "snapshots" of merchants that crop up in acts, saints' lives and toll regulations usually show us *where the merchants were* at the moment they were mentioned. Analyzing the disparate mentions reveals that traders were not randomly distributed. They cluster in a small number of places, like customs posts and towns. In other words, they unveil nodes in a network of commercial communications. But for nodes to network, they need connectors. Once the clusters of merchants become clearer, the few documents that actually depict other merchants on the move take on a new significance, even when they do not reveal a complete journey. We can use them to see whether the smaller set of merchants who happen to be mentioned as moving link up with those whom we can perceive only in their static clusters. Sometimes wares also help uncover circuits. If the clusters do connect, then we will have gained clear evidence of interlocking spheres of commercial movements. In other words, even an accounting which falls short of exhaustive can help us determine whether a *system* lurks behind the chance mentions of merchants. We may yet be able to discern the commercial networks of the early Middle Ages, and understand less imperfectly the context from which our commercial travelers emerged, as well as the circuits through which their goods flowed. First, then, where are the merchants? In this chapter, we shall attempt to answer that question for Italy; in the next we shall turn to Frankland.

125, on the contrary, emphasizes that petty traders appear under the same names of *mercator* and *negotiator*. Of his two examples, however, the first is the peddler, called by the perhaps significant term of *mercator* (above, n5), and the second are the local tradesmen at Fleury (above, n6), for whom neither word is used. It would surely be hard to qualify our witnesses as petty traders. One often encounters them in the company of goldsmiths or moneyers, e.g. *Codex diplomaticus Langobardiae*, no. 78 (Milan, 804), a cleric's gift of a share of a house near Castelseprio – on a route to the Alps – to an oratory, witnessed by Petrus "filio quondam Alexandri negotiatoris" as well as "Domeneci et Petroni monetariis [!] civitates [!] Mediolani"; or *ibid.*, no. 105, Pavia, 824, a donation to Aurifusus *aurifex*, son of Aurifusus (of Lombard law), witnessed by Peter and Martin *aurifices*, as well as Dondonus and Landepertus *negotiatores*. On moneyers, see Lopez 1953, who nonetheless may have appraised the moneyers' economic and social status somewhat optimistically. For a resident of Mainz and benefactor of Fulda who has been plausibly identified as a merchant, see Ch. 22n65.

9 Disposed of by Oexle 1981, 348–53.



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## 2. Merchants and markets in southern Italy

From the viewpoint of northwestern Europe, Italy straddled the routes leading to the Caliphate and the eastern empire. Even in the eighth century, there is some evidence for commerce and it increases substantially in the ninth. Merchants and trade cluster in at least four zones: Rome, southern Campania, Byzantine southern Italy, including Sicily, and up the Po valley. Most of central Italy, almost the entire east coast and much of the interior of the peninsula show few if any merchants, even where documents exist. Significantly, the four zones of merchants coincide with two maritime communications routes that we have already examined. The first three merchant clusters are strung along the Tyrrhenian segment of the old trunk route, while the fourth leads to Venice.

The earliest of our clearly documented commercial travelers also signaled the resumption of communications with Africa (R156; Ch. 17.3). These "many" (*plures*) Venetians, who attempted to set up a market in Rome around 748, were selling merchandise and buying Christian slaves, whom they wished to export to the Muslims. Although Pope Zachary's biographer credited him with redeeming the slaves and putting a stop to this trade, we must wonder what attracted Venetian slave traders to come loaded with merchandise to Rome in the first place? Were they the only foreign merchants to visit the great pilgrimage center?

Although it shows up most frequently in our list of long-distance merchants (Table 9.1), Rome has rarely been mentioned among early medieval Italy's commercial centers.[10] We have already seen that the city's size shrank dramatically in late antiquity, and the flow of imports contracted as the population disappeared and state subsidies fell away. Archaeology suggests that the supply of eastern goods had dwindled further in the early eighth century, although the taste for them endured.[11]

Yet commercial activity cannot have been stilled entirely or permanently. The church of Rome alone will have generated predictable levels of demand. That its extensive patrimonies lay chiefly in Sicily initially oriented its management toward the south. The revenues of those patrimonies financed a substantial patriarchal palace, a large resident clergy, and numerous shrines which always needed maintenance and adornment, even after the Sicilian holdings were jeopardized

10 Guillou 1979, for one, has rightly emphasized Rome's role in acquiring and transmitting eastern luxury goods between the 6th and 9th C.

11 Thus an early appraisal of the ceramics in a deposit dated to the first half of the 8th C. (after c. 701–5 by the seal of one of our travelers, Theophylact) in the Crypta Balbi at Rome. L. Paroli, in Cipriano *et al.* 1991, 109, on local imitation of eastern forms, interpreted as testifying to cultural integration into the east, not economic.



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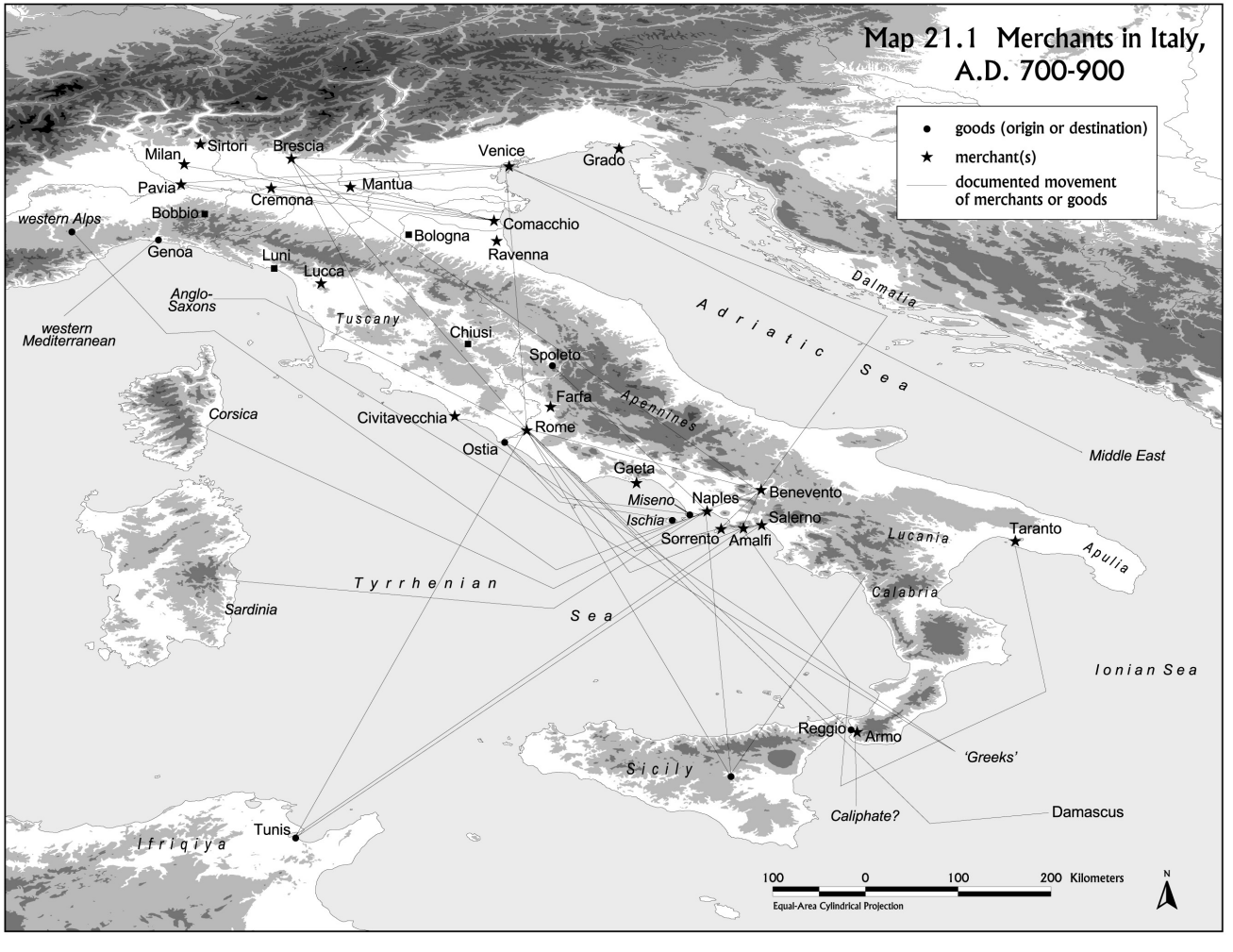

by political conflict with Constantinople.[12] This conflict should have hit the Roman church hardest at the outset, before new measures could be devised to compensate for the immediate losses. Yet even in these lean years, Pope Gregory III (731–41), annually spent more than 100–125 lb. of silver as well as some 8–10 lb. of gold, mostly on liturgical furnishings of silver or gold (solid or plate), gems, and silks.[13] By century's end, the same expenditures had soared, increasing about tenfold.[14]

We have already met the Greek population of the city and seen that some of them were judged "rich" (Ch. 8.3). The easterners among them will have hungered for the tastes of home, and they enjoyed the means to satisfy that hunger. Certainly spices from Somalia, southeast Asia or China (cinnamon), western India (pepper), and Kashmir (costus), as well as Levantine or Arabian sources (aromatic resin and incenses) were available at Rome in the very years the Venetians were setting up their market: high church officials sent packets of them across the Alps as presents to St. Boniface in Germany.[15] The Roman

12 Three imperial measures strained the relations between the Roman church and Constantinople: an increased tax burden, which Gregory II (715–31) already attempted to oppose (*Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.403.20–5); confiscation or diminishment of revenues of the critical Roman estates in Sicily and Calabria, amounting to "three and a half talents," i.e. 350 lb. of gold (cf. *DOC* 3.1: 239n29), mentioned by Theophanes among the events of A.M. 6224 (A.D. 732/3), 1.410.9–17; Guillou 1977, 397–407, esp. 403, proposes a fiscal interpretation of this passage which would make the consequences for the church less catastrophic. Finally, sometime before 787, probably before c. 748, Rome was stripped of its jurisdiction over the churches of southern Italy and the Balkans, the economic implications of which are unclear. On the tangled chronology, Sansterre 1983, 1: 131 and 2: 165n176–7, and von Falkenhausen 1978–9, 151–5.

13 These are minimal figures, since they make no attempt to estimate expenditures lacking metal evaluations. They derive from the benefactions catalogued in the *Liber pontificalis*: McCormick 1994b, 102–3n12, and divided by the eight fiscal years for which they are attested. The figures would be proportionately lower spread over the entire decade of Gregory's reign. I see now that analogous calculations were made and graphed by Delogu 1988. He extrapolated the values of metal used for items lacking them and proposed a total figure which, accordingly, is about 22 percent higher than mine for the silver. The gold total is the same.

14 Averaging annually more than 1,100 lb. of silver and 74 lb. of gold, by my count: McCormick 1994b, 102–3n12; cf. too Hodges 1993, 357–9. Delogu 1988 attributes this growth mostly to the gifts of the northern faithful, especially the Carolingians.

15 Between 742/3 and 748: Boniface, *Ep.* 54, 62, and 84–5, 97.4–7, 128.20–22 (the only time quantities are specified, viz., 4 oz. each of costus and cinnamon, 2 lb. of pepper and 1 lb. of the incense called *cozumber*); 189.15–17, 191.15–17. For the production regions, Casson 1989, 122–3, 220, 191–2, and 163–4, respectively; Groom 1981, 84–5, defends the classical sources on the Somalian origin of what they called cinnamon.



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church also consumed large quantities of silk which, of necessity, were imported. The same holds true for incense (Ch. 24.4–5). The numerous northern pilgrims only reinforced the local demand for expensive wares, for some of them were wealthy and combined business with religious pleasure. On the eve of our period, Benedict Biscop returned to England from his sixth trip to Rome, "*as always*, loaded with foreign merchandise." Some of that merchandise was sold in England.[16] At the end of the ninth century, a Frankish pilgrim felt guilty on learning about the advantages of doing business on the Roman textile market. To his horror, his expensive textiles (*pallia*) had cost him less at Rome than he would have paid at Constantinople.[17] It is possible that the European distribution of copper bowls that may have come from the Levant also reflects sales at Rome to northern pilgrims (Chapter 4n60).

Where there were such customers, can merchants have been far behind? We have more than deduction to go on, even if the Frisians' presence at Rome is inconclusive on this score.[18] In fact, two merchants (*negotiatores*), Paul and Christopher, of unspecified geographic horizons, witnessed one of the small handful of private acts to survive from eighth-century Rome. This land purchase by the abbot of a Greek monastery also resonates with what we can discern of demand, for the merchants signed just after one Anastasius, a worker in metal leaf or sheet, precisely a craft that must have been in demand for church decoration.[19] In the next century, other merchants show up in the dealings of the inland abbey of Farfa, which, as we know, was associated with the Roman church, and where Arab gold appears early.[20] Late in the eighth century, some merchants at

16 Anonymous, *Historia abbatum*, 15, 1.393: "peregrina merce, ut semper, onustus." Cf. Bede, *Historia abbatum*, 9, 1.373, who spells out some of the purchases: books, icons, and "inter alia, et pallia duo oloserica incomparandi operis," which Biscop later sold for land supporting three households. This trip home was in 679 or 680: *ibid.*, 2.360. For further examples, Guillou 1979.

17 Odo of Cluny, *V. Geraldi Auriliacensis* (BHL 3411), 1, 27, PL, 133.658B–C.

18 Lebecq 1983, 1: 25 cautiously rejects the undemonstrated characterization as "a merchant colony" of the *schola Frisonorum*, the Frisian colony at Rome, first attested by the *Liber pontificalis* at a ceremony in 799 (Duchesne, 2.6.17–24). He is surely right to insist that this group was first and foremost a pilgrim organization. But as we have seen, the line between merchants and pilgrims was often a fine one. The Anglo-Saxons, whose *schola* marched with the Frisians in that ceremony, were infamous in this respect: Ch. 23.2.

19 *Subiaco*, no. 111 (c. 757/67). Anastasius is called *petalarius*, which I take to derive from Greek *petalon* (metal plate or sheet, often of precious metal) and which is used of silver plating in Rome in the 7th C.: *Liber pont.*, Mommsen, 213.15–22.

20 See above, pp. 327–30. Farfa obtained toll-free status on the rivers and coasts of Italy for one ship, *causa mercemonii*, with further provisions making crystal clear that this craft would be buying and selling for profit: D Loth I, no. 1 (A.D. 822). The property of Flourus, son of John the merchant, located in the Sabine, had been ceded to Farfa: *Liber largitorius*, no. 68 (A.D. 888).



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least were evading Carolingian tolls by masquerading as pilgrims bound for Rome, and they may well have continued the ploy all the way to the Eternal City (below, p. 678). From Pope Marinus, King Alfred the Great obtained toll-free status for the Anglo-Saxon colony in Rome, and this surely implies that the English were trading there in the 880s (R696).

The opportunities in Rome attracted Campanian merchants also. This follows from a treaty established in 836 between the prince of Benevento and the nominally Byzantine sea cities of Naples, Sorrento, and Amalfi. It specifies that, so long as they paid the usual toll, merchants (as well as envoys and soldiers) from those towns could cross without hindrance the rivers on Benevento's frontier with the Roman duchy.[21] We will also see Campanian ships putting into Roman ports seeking trade. In the other direction, some Romans pursued commerce south to Benevento.[22]

So some kind of market in Rome attracted merchants from a neighboring region. We do not know where the merchants Paul and Christopher came from, although their Greek associations may awaken the suspicion of distant connections. But Venetians did travel there from afar and attempted at least to open a trading circuit with the Arab world; Greek merchants also had come to do business around 775 (below). Anglo-Saxon and Frankish pilgrims stocked up on luxury textiles and other imports when they visited the Holy City. One way or another, the oriental wares of incense, spices, and substantial quantities of silk reached the market in Rome. All of this indicates, indirectly, that there must have been markets in Rome, including one for slaves and one for luxury textiles. But beyond the Venetian attempt to establish a market directly linked to Africa, no explicit evidence of such a market has come to light.

Until now. Thanks to the help of a generous colleague, a remarkable text adds important new information about the markets of Rome and their overseas connections. The great Arabic geographical treatise composed in 1218–28 by Yāqūt ibn ʿAbdallāh preserves an extraordinary vignette of the early medieval markets of Rome. The story comes from al Walīd ibn Muslim of Damascus who died in A.H. 194 (A.D. 810). It therefore refers to the late eighth or early ninth centuries.[23] Al Walīd conveys what he learned about Rome from a Muslim merchant who had gone there on business in the time of Charlemagne. The text is so important, and so unknown, that I give here the translation prepared for me by Professor Irfan Shahîd, at Dumbarton Oaks.

And al Walīd ibn Muslim al Dimashqī said: "One of the merchants (*tujjār*) told me: 'We went on a sea voyage and the ship dropped us on the shore of Rome. And we sent to them:

21 *Pactum Sicardi*, 13, 220.17–25.

22 In 827: Einhard, *Transl. Marcell. et Petri*, 1, 3, 241.8–19.

23 See H. A. Juynboll, "Muṣannaf," *EI* 7 (1990): 662–3.



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"We have intended [to deal with] you and so send us an escort (*rasūl*)." After this we went out with him. We climbed a mountain on our way and, lo and behold, there was something green like the sea. So we said "God is great!" The escort said to us: "Why did you say 'God is great'?" We said, "This is the sea, and it is our custom to say 'God is great' when we see the sea." So he laughed. And he said: "These are the roofs (*suqūf*) of Rome, and all of them are made of lead (*muraṣṣaṣat*)." He said when we reached the city, "Lo and behold, its circumference was forty miles." In each mile of this wall there is an open gate. When we reached the first gate, lo and behold, there was the market (*suq*) of the veterinaries [or "farriers": *bayaṭira*] and something like it. Then we climbed a flight of stairs. Lo and behold, there was the market (*suq*) of the money changers (*ṣayārifa*) and those who sell textiles (*bazzāzīn*). Then we entered the city . . .'"[24]

The text smacks of authenticity. "Forty miles" for the circumference of the Aurelian walls is an exaggeration which uses a round number traditionally evocative of bigness. But it is an understandable one in view of the stupendous size of that circuit – some 19 km, 13 Roman miles. The clincher is the insistence on lead roofs. Charlemagne was a practical man and there is some reason to think he was particularly interested in roofs; he must have well understood that roofs were the critical element for the maintenance of any building.[25] We know that Charlemagne had promised to send lead or tin (*stagnum*) across the Alps on mule-back for the roofs of the churches of Rome, and that Pope Leo III actually did replace the roofs of St. Peter's and other churches (Ch. 24.1). The Arabic-speaking

24 Yāqūt ibn ʿAbdallāh, 2.868. On Yāqūt, A. Shboul, *ODB* 3: 2213–14 and Kračkovskij 1957, 330–42. I am deeply grateful to my friend for the time he took from his own labors to help me in locating and translating this text. Professor Shahîd observes that the reference in Ashtor 1970, 167n1, is wrong; the Arabic verb *al qatnā*, referring to the merchants' landing in Italy, and which Ashtor translated in the passive, has no connotation of violence and therefore does not refer to a shipwreck. The rest of the merchant's account is of considerable interest for the history of Rome, so I append it here, in Professor Shahîd's translation: "Then we entered the city and lo and behold, in its midst was a spacious great tower. On one side of it there was a church; the *mihrab* [presumably the sanctuary] was facing the west while its door faces the east. And in the midst of the tower there was a pool, the floor of which was made of copper out of which gushed forth all the water of the city, and in the midst of the pool there was a stone column. On it there was a statue also of stone and so I asked one of the inhabitants of the city, and said, 'What is this?' He said, 'The one who built this city said to its people: "Do not fear for your city until a people of this description comes to you, and they will be the ones who capture it"'." One can imagine some identifications: the apses of both St. Peter's and the Lateran Basilica may be described as facing the west, and the Castello Sant'Angelo and, especially, the Lateran baptistery might fit the tower. But I leave the closer scrutiny of the text to specialists.

25 I shall return to this subject: "Holy Land." In the meantime, see also above, p. 256.



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merchants' poetic reaction to the roofs is not inappropriate: the long, parallel roofs in greyish green lead may well have evoked waves.[26]

The new document's significance is multiple. It provides peremptory proof that, in the time of Charlemagne, Rome's special conditions did indeed foster a market place of international importance. There were several specialized markets, including one for animals and blacksmiths. This was a natural development in a civilization mainly driven by beast and human power, particularly since droves of overland pilgrims made Rome their destination. The existence of money changers is also significant, as is their association with the market for textiles. Recent discoveries have thrown sudden and unexpected light on the existence in Rome of a local, small-denomination coinage, suggesting that, in this town at least, the routine exchanges of daily life were still – or again – monetized. This implies some sort of money changers to supply the foreign pilgrims and locals with small change, even when the higher-value coins issued at Rome were aligned on the standard Carolingian silver penny. But money changers associated with a textile market visited and noted by a professional merchant from the Middle East hint at transactions of a rather larger and more expensive sort. The new Arabic witness to the textile market entirely confirms other, powerful evidence that Rome was an significant point of sale for textiles, particularly eastern imports (Ch. 24.5). And that the market was important enough to draw merchants from the Middle East.

Nor was the visit of these anonymous merchants probably the only time Muslim traders set foot in the ancient city: our informant seems to refer to a standard procedure for announcing the arrival of merchants from the Caliphate and arranging for their escort to the city from the port where they landed. One could not imagine stronger proof that, around 800, long-distance merchants had indeed found their way to the concentrated demand for luxury goods created by the special wealth of the Roman church and its visitors. Our study of communications uncovered more than a few trips which began or ended at Rome. The Arab dinars that appeared in Rome in the 780s, like the ship on which the deacon of Treviso sailed from the Holy Land to Rome around 800, like also the merchant vessel heading for Byzantium on which Blaise started his trip home three generations later, have now gained a clear economic context, thanks to these Muslim merchants. Whether our Arab merchants sailed directly to Rome from Syria, if that is where our Damascene informant knew them, or had traveled overland to Africa and caught a ship up the Tyrrhenian sea from there, their trip fits firmly

26 The "mountain" might suggest that the merchants had landed at Civitavecchia and had approached the city on the Via Aurelia, which might incline one to identify the church as the Vatican basilica. The description of the wall, on the other hand, perhaps hints at the Lateran.



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into the context sketched by the reviving communications networks discovered from our other travelers.

Archaeologists are starting to illuminate the regional patterns of trade into which this long-distance exchange nestled, by turning up objects of trade that moved between southern Italy and Rome, or even points further north. Campanian wine was probably shipped in amphoras made on Ischia and at Miseno in the eighth century. They reached Rome and, as one would expect, they occur at Porto and Ostia.[27] In the other direction, some eighth-century clay lamps might have come to Naples from Rome and perhaps even from Spoleto. A few stone vessels, perhaps commended by their cooking characteristics, seem to originate much further north, in the western Alps. They continued to arrive at various southern Italian sites into the ninth century.[28] But the Venetian traders' story shows that more than agrarian proceeds of the papal estates and clay lamps fed the market of Rome. Maybe the same wares attracted the Damascenes. For reasons that escape us, the supply of slaves in Rome was good enough around 748 to feed external markets. This appears to be new.

Rome's early medieval slave market has been even less noted than its textile trade. One easily imagines some low level of transactions to satisfy local demand, but there is evidence to suggest that the scope of its transactions grew in the eighth century. In the late sixth century, slave markets in southern Gaul and Naples – but not Rome – attracted Gregory the Great's attention.[29] By contrast, a hundred years later, the slave market in Rome was well stocked.

In 701, St. Bonitus, bishop of Clermont, who had earlier tried to limit the slave trade at Marseilles, came to Rome on pilgrimage. He bought up the slaves he found for sale there and took them home to Gaul.[30] The well-known story that Pope Gregory I first discovered the Angles specifically in the slave market at Rome

27 Patterson 1993, 313; cf. 320.

28 Garcea 1994, 325; cf. also Paroli in Cipriano 1991, 109; Arthur 1994b, 352 and 436.

29 In 595, Gregory the Great had tried to buy English slave boys on the market of southern Gaul and transport them to Rome for his plan of training missionaries, thoughtfully providing a priest to baptize any who might die en route: *Registrum*, 6, 10, pp. 378–9. This might suggest that they were not available at Rome, although it is true that Gregory was then trying to find some useful way of spending his Gaulish coinage. In 598, Jewish merchants were certainly buying pagan and Christian slaves in Gaul and transporting them to Naples for sale at the behest of imperial officials; it was expected that this would continue in 599, which suggests a regular trading circuit: *Registrum*, 9, 105 (olim 104), 657.1–15; *ibid.*, 6, 29, 402.17–18, does not explicitly mention Gaul, but it seems to be referring to the same circuit already in 596 : "si paganos, quos mercimonii causa de externis finibus emerint . . ."

30 "Captivorum . . . non modicam secum turbam reduxit." *V. Boniti Arverni* (*BHL* 1418), 25, 132.12–13). If the prefix can be taken seriously, these slaves had come from Gaul; slave trade at Marseilles: *ibid.*, 3, 121.3–6.



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tells the same tale. It goes back no further than Bede, and he clearly had reservations about its authenticity. The legend, as Bede received it, sheds no light on slave trading in the sixth century. However, his Northumbrian milieu was exceedingly familiar with contemporary Rome, so the story may well reflect conditions of Bede's own time.[31] Pope Zachary is supposed to have closed down the Venetian slave market and redeemed their purchases. This hardly marked the end of slave trading at Rome, however.

Charlemagne was well informed about events in Rome. In 776, when he had just left Italy (or was still there), the king heard that the Romans were selling slaves to the Arabs. Rather weakly, the pope countered that it was Greek slave merchants whose ships were docked in the papal harbor at Civitavecchia. Hadrian said he had never stooped so low, nor had he *personally* ordered such sales ("per nostram voluntatem"). He apologized that he really wanted to forbid this crime, but Charlemagne's man in Lucca had failed to obey the pope's orders and attack the slavers. For his part, he claims, he had burned the Greek slave ships and imprisoned their masters "for a long time." The pope voices no objection to a slave market as such: the problem was the export of Christians to the infidels.[32] Whether or not we believe the pope, the anecdote documents the transregional scope of the eighth-century slave market along the Tyrrhenian coast. The Greek slave merchants "always" sailed along the Lombard coast, and knew that slaves could be bought in the duchy of Rome. As the pope makes clear, the famine of that year had swollen the supply: some free men boarded the slave ships willingly, simply to survive. It may be that the concerns of Zachary and Hadrian actually bore fruit, for I know of no more explicit evidence of slave sales at Rome in the next century.[33] But other slave markets were flourishing down the coast at Naples, and further south.

There is thus a context for the four indisputably recorded merchant ventures which attempted to, or in fact did, reach across the Mediterranean toward Rome. That context reveals mostly consumer demand and regional supply networks. The two ventures which misfired, at least in part, indicate a different kind of supply available at Rome, as well as more distant merchants and markets. The

31 Bede calls the story an *opinio*: *Historia ecclesiastica*, 2, 1, pp. 132–4; cf. Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 51–2. The detail that the boys were for sale as slaves is lacking in the Monk of Whitby's version of the same story: *Vita Gregorii* (*BHL* 3637), 9, p. 90. As a great Bede specialist has observed, this "legend" is "probably a Northumbrian product": Meyvaert 1964, 7, cf. 24n39. Bede and Rome: see e.g., McCormick 1994b, 111–12.

32 Hadrian calls it "this crime" and makes clear that it concerns the sale of Lombards, i.e. Christians, to the Arabs, through the agency of the "unspeakable Greeks": *Cod. Car.*, 59, JE 2426, 585.9–23; cf. R186. Charlemagne was in Italy at least until July that year: BM 203.

33 The Arab prisoners enslaved in 849 were kept as laborers for the Roman church: R493.



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Venetian and Byzantine slave trading at Rome seems to have been the late phase of a slave market geared to export that began to develop around 700.

The trading centers in Campania, especially Amalfi, which sent merchants to Rome are often thought to have been precocious protagonists of long-distance trade. Though much has been made of Campanian commerce with the Caliphate and Byzantium in the early Middle Ages, that view is mainly sustained by later, tenth-century developments and documents.[34] Before that, the written evidence runs thinner than at Rome. A shipper and a merchant show up together in the best circles at Gaeta.[35] Other merchants crop up on a distinctly regional circuit linking the Tyrrhenian Sea with the sole of the Italian boot. That circuit probably included at least the east coast of Sicily and tallies with the broader pattern of communications (Ch. 17.3).

A well-known story depicts Amalfitan merchants selling ceramics and other wares in Beneventan Taranto as a cover for infiltrating that town in 839.[36] Though the story comes from a garrulous tenth-century chronicler – who also testifies to late-ninth-century commerce with the Arabs – an unimpeachable witness confirms the commercial link, if not the specific wares. The treaty of 836 specified that, so long as they paid customs duties for their trading, the sea cities' merchants and vessels had unrestricted access to the Beneventan principality including Lucania, on whose edge lay Taranto.[37] This and other provisions make clear that Campanian ships were then trading up and down the principality's coasts, as well as its rivers and streams. The goods mentioned by the treaty include horses, cattle, and men.[38]

The Campanian trading region spilled over into a fourth faintly visible trading region, from which it can scarcely be distinguished: the commercial world of Byzantine Italy and Sicily. The Salernitan Chronicler states that, before the Arab conquest, Byzantine Sicilians had been active traders along the borders of Calabria and paid tolls to the Beneventans for the privilege, and this too finds support in contemporary evidence. The Byzantine gold coinage of Sicily kept to a different standard from that of Constantinople: it was in symbiosis with the gold coins which Lombard Benevento kept issuing after the rest of the peninsula had

34 E.g. Citarella 1977, 11–64 or 1993, where virtually all specific references to trade with Africa, Egypt, and Constantinople are from the 10th C. or later. For interesting (and guarded) hypotheses on the development of Amalfitan trade in our period, see Kreutz 1988 and 1994.

35 *Gaeta*, no. 5, A.D. 839: Leo, "nauclerius, filio Basilii comiti," and Cristofarus, "negotiatori filio Andree," witness a document established by the rulers of Gaeta; cf. Skinner 1995, 27–8.

36 *Chronicon Salernitanum*, 79, p. 76.20–5; cf. e.g., Schwarz 1978, 22.

37 *Pactum Sicardi*, 13, 220.17–27. Archaeology should soon show whether the wares are accurately identified or a projection of 10th-C. practice.

38 *Ibid.*, 5, 219.7–12 and 15, 220.36–221.5; cf. also 8, 219.20–47 on resolving disputes.



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gone over to the Carolingian silver standard.[39] In quantities unparalleled outside Constantinople, Sicily's mints struck copper coins suitable for small transactions through the "dark age" of the seventh century, and Sicilian mints dominate the finds of Byzantine coins in western Europe in the eighth and early ninth centuries, as they do those of Calabria and Apulia.[40] The "Greek" slave traders who infuriated Charlemagne in 776 most probably came from Byzantine Italy. As Pope Hadrian says, they "always" traded with the Lombards, buying slaves from them by virtue of a treaty (*amicitia*), (R186). "Rosary-style" clay lamps apparently manufactured in Sicily were reaching Naples in the early eighth century.[41] A similar kind of lamp was diffused between Rome and Naples.[42] The wine amphoras shipped north to Rome in the eighth century also found their way south to Sicily and Reggio di Calabria.[43]

The Campanian traders whom we glimpse heading north in 836 were no flash in the pan. A generation later, the pope tried to strongarm the Amalfitans into defending the coast of Rome. He would exclude their trade from his territories unless they sent ships to protect the papal shore. If the ships did show up, the Amalfitans would get a previously agreed on sum, plus a cash bonus and a yearlong customs holiday in the papal port.[44] When another exasperated pope threatened to starve the Neapolitans into submission a few years later, he planned to destroy their harvest and block them from buying grain from Rome, Sardinia, and Corsica, as well as "the whole of Christendom." His threat implies that by the late ninth century, a regional trade in bulk commodities was already conceivable, and perhaps even a reality (R709). This regional exchange is the wider economic context in which we should view the Salernitan Chronicler's claim that an African merchant traded in Salerno, and that Amalfitan merchants did business in both Salerno and Africa around 871 (R610–11).

The claim is supported, once again, by the efforts of the 836 treaty to regulate the Campanian slave trade. Whether or not the slave market of extraregional range documented by Gregory I continued at Naples through the seventh century, it was certainly alive in the ninth, and probably earlier.[45] The terms of the 836

39 *Chron. Salern.* 60, 60.4–7; cf. Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 71; *DOC* 3: 25–6; von Falkenhausen 1978, 18–19; and Blackburn 1995, Fig. 1.

40 Morrisson 1998.

41 Arthur 1994c, 436; cf. Garcea 1994.

42 Paroli in Cipriano 1991, 109.

43 Patterson 1993, 313.

44 R670. Although there has been debate about whether John VIII meant to exclude the Amalfitans from all Christian ports or just those under his control, they surely realized that the pope could carry out the threat only in his own territory; cf. Schwarz 1978, 30n98.

45 Between 715 and 731, Duke John of Naples recaptured Cuma castle from Lombards. The *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.400.20–1, explains ominously how, after the pope had warned them of divine retribution, 300 Lombards were killed, and 500 were taken as captives (*captos*) to Naples. Given the custom of selling war prisoners in the Byzantine world (below, pp. 744–5) to which Rome



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treaty explicitly prohibited the Campanians from buying "Lombards" and sharecroppers (*terciatores*), putting them in ships and selling them "overseas." Export was nonetheless allowed for criminals guilty of homicide.[46]

The intensifying Arab raids in the later ninth century did nothing to diminish the trade. On the contrary, the Neapolitans allied with the Arabs, guiding them along the Italian coast and giving them sanctuary inside Naples. By 871, their port had turned into another "Palermo or Africa," in the words of the emperor Louis II. The Neapolitans were selling to the Arabs all the Christians they captured.[47] A generation later, the newly restored Pope Sergius III summoned ships from Naples and ordered the recalcitrant clergy of the Roman church to obey his wishes or else be sent south. His supporters spelled out what exactly "or else" meant: the Neapolitans would either sell the resisting churchmen to the Arabs or throw them into snake pits.[48] Perhaps the glazed Persian plate discovered at San Vincenzo al Volturno stems from these exchange networks.[49] Further south still, at Armo, near Reggio, we meet a rich Byzantine slave trader at the close of the ninth century.[50] Toward the northern end of the Tyrrhenian shipping zone, the Byzantine navy found a valuable slave market on Sardinia. The trouble was, again, that the slaves in question were Christians. They had been carried off by the Arabs, whom the Byzantines had subsequently defeated. Rather than freeing their fellow Christians, the Greeks were selling them, and the Sardinians were buying. Some they kept as slaves and some they seem to have resold for a profit; the pope's admonitions against this suggest that it was ongoing.[51]

The trading circuits described by these wares, coinage systems, and merchants centered on the Campanian sea cities and reached southward toward Taranto and northward to Rome, and even beyond. Individuals' movements and the home ports of ships have already documented in some detail a Tyrrhenian shipping zone centered on the Campanian sea cities and running north of Rome and south

still belonged when these lines were written, that is probably the implication here.

46 *Pactum Sicardi*, 3–4, 218.47–219.6 ("super mare" 218.47; "trans mare" 219.2); cf. in general Schwarz 1978, 18.

47 *Ep. ad Basilium*, 393.17–33, where the biblical phrasing "et si quos fidelium capere possunt, Saracenorum *manibus tradant*" surely does not imply the Neapolitans gave their valuable prey away for free. "Tradere in manus" or "in manibus" of enemies is a biblical phrase which occurs dozens of times in the Vulgate; the hands are often the enemy's, e.g. Ps. 77, 61, and 105, 41.

48 Auxilius, *In defensionem sacrae ordinationis papae Formosi*, 1, 1, pp. 60–1. The slave trade was only interested in younger people: above, pp. 250–1.

49 H. Patterson, in Cipriano 1991, 115, from the late 9th or early 10th C. It does not seem to be the kind of thing one would expect the Arab raiders who attacked the abbey to be carrying.

50 Elias 2; *Vita Eliae speliotae* (*BHG* 581), 18, *AASS* Sept. 3 (1868).855C–856D.

51 R625, where John VIII's words *lucra* and *merces ab hominibus* insinuate resale.



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to Otranto. Most ship movements were simply mentioned: the sources did not add why ships were available in these places for transporting our travelers. A few years before the Beneventan treaty, as we have seen, Gregory the Dekapolite boarded a Neapolitan ship to sail from Reggio to Rome. In the summer of 902, St. Elias the Younger sailed from Taormina to Amalfi (R422; R752). In neither case does the biographer bother to specify what was probably obvious to contemporary readers, that these ships were neither pleasure craft nor men of war, but sailed on commercial ventures. The Campanian and Sicilian trading circuits supply the explanation: they converge with the Tyrrhenian shipping zone because they are one and the same thing.

How far north beyond Corsica did the Campanians range in our period? The dromons which transported Pope John VIII from Rome to Arles came from Naples; even presuming that they were not Byzantine vessels stationed there, this was a highly unusual move. If Greek-speaking Campanians were the slavers against whom Hadrian I had requested the naval intervention of Duke Allo of Lucca, then they will have ranged as far north as Tuscany in a year exceptionally favorable for slave supply. And, since these shippers are accused of selling the slaves to Muslims, they must have transported them to Muslim purchasers. The nearest such markets were in Africa.

## 3. Merchants in northern Italy

Well to the north, merchants clustered more visibly, and earlier, in the Lombard kingdom. By 750, Lombard merchants (*negotiantes*) were numerous enough to elicit specific royal instructions on their military service. Economically, they were sufficiently differentiated to be classified into three tiers according to their wealth and the fighting gear required of them.[52] We have already seen that the eighth-century Greek slave merchants who "always" purchased Lombards probably ranged as far north as Lucca. This episcopal town constituted a critical outpost for the kingdom of Pavia, situated as it was across the Apennines. It marked the southern exit of an important mountain valley, straddled one of the main north–south routes linking the Alpine passes to Rome – the future "Via Francigena" – and lay not 20 km from the Tyrrhenian Sea. The mint of Lucca supplied a fair share of the Lombard and the Italo-Frankish coinage.[53] The town is also exceptionally well documented, boasting probably the greatest hoard of

52 *Leges Ahistulfi*, 1, 3, p. 360. The wealthiest should have a mail coat (*lorica*), helmet, lance, and horses; middling ones did not need the coat; the poorest brought only a bow, quiver and arrows.

53 On Lucca, Schwarzmaier 1972, 14–17, whose rich study nonetheless ignores merchants; mint: Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 61, 63–5, 208 etc.



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documents to survive from Italy in this period. The evidentiary wealth discloses at least five purveyors of real wealth who were active there in the eighth century; four occur in the same generation, between 742 and 769. And we get a glimmer of their substantial social status – buying land, founding churches, serving the king. Their names have survived because their real estate transactions concerned Lucca's churches, including the founding of a pilgrim hostel.[54] Although little useful material has so far been published from the later archives, the report that Abu Aaron immigrated to Lucca from Babylon indicates that the town was still economically attractive late in the ninth century (R740).

Across the Apennines, the Po plain abounded in productive land. The river network that criss-crossed its fertile fields drained eastward toward the different ecology of the Adriatic coast: the very lay of the land encouraged trade. The main signs of commerce cluster at the ends of the river system. To the west they bunch in a rough rectangle defined by Milan, Brescia, Cremona and Pavia; at the eastern end they crowd offshore in the lagoons that lined the Po delta. In 715, tiny quantities of exotic goods piggybacked on the salt trade of Comacchio and percolated as far inland as Pavia, paying tolls and docking fees as they went (R88). On the eve of the final campaign against Ravenna, in 750, the Lombard king Aistulf curtailed commercial contacts with any "Roman," that is, any imperial subject of the Byzantine coastal towns, including, surely Comacchio, and probably also places like Venice.[55] He sought further to regulate land and sea traders in his kingdom when he ordered that all merchants possess a royal document or make themselves known to local officials.[56] The Frankish regime of Charlemagne had originally attempted to raise fees, but the old privileges of the Comacchio traders on the Po river were finally renewed.[57] Between 769 and 899, records from the

54 All at Lucca: *CDL*, 1, no. 24 (c. 720), "Nandulus negudianti," one of a group that donated land and cash to found a *xenodocium* for pilgrims (the house is dedicated to St. Silvester, the pope credited with converting Constantine) and the needy; cf. no. 26 (March 720; where he is simply named); "Crispinulo (Crispino) negudianti," *ibid.*, no. 80 (October 742); cf. nos. 88 (December 746) and 102 (March 752), where his profession is not stated; very possibly the Crispinus who founded (*CDL*, 2, no. 179, 29 June 764) a proprietary church for his son, a priest, in the same *pieve*, on land abutting the heirs of the probable seller of no. 102. If the identification holds, it would be a remarkable indicator of this merchant's wealth and status. "Grasulus negudias," apparently of Lucca, was named to a team of estimators on behalf of the king for a property exchange with the church of St. Martin at Lucca: *CDL*, 1, no. 113 (July 754). "Fluripertus negutians" and "Peruli negotianti," *CDL*, 2, no. 229 (11 July 769). Full editions of later acts are lacking; see, however, "Ermiperti negudianti," *ChLA* 38, no. 1102 (Lucca, January 786).

55 *Leges Ahistulfi*, 1, 4, p. 360. For an 8th-C. Lombard like Paul the Deacon, Venetians were a subset of *Romani*: *Historia Lang.*, 6, 55, 183.26–184.6; we have already seen Venice's merchants at Rome c. 748, and its role earlier in recovering Ravenna from the Lombards: Ch. 18.1.

56 *Leges Ahistulfi*, 1, 6, p. 362.

57 DD Kar 1, no. 132 (A.D. 781).



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western rectangle, mostly property conveyances, name at least twenty-five individuals who were certainly merchants. A few are identified as local residents.[58] The company they kept and their involvement in real estate mean that we are not dealing with peddlers.

At the other end of the Po lay the seaside towns of the Adriatic. In places like Comacchio and nearby Ravenna, ninth-century residents told stories about local men who made a killing in commerce at Constantinople, and eighth-century church officials were accused of selling Christian slaves to the "pagans," that is, the Arabs. We also find merchants there around 800.[59] To explain a local place name, a Ravennate raconteur tells a wonderful tale about two men who used a holy image to guarantee a loan of 300 s. The borrowing merchant traveled here and there and finally to Constantinople where business went very well, so well in fact that he grew forgetful about his debt. But the icon finally forced his hand and he returned to Ravenna to pay off the loan with a 100 s. bonus.[60]

From 748 on, however, people from the offshore villages strewn along the Adriatic's northern edge dominate the scene. The Venetians' rising commercial power claims nearly half of the merchant ventures in Table 9.1, and supplied us with a rare face distinct enough to warrant even a thumbnail sketch. And, as Michael of Synada's mission showed (Ch. 7.1), what was happening there around 800 inflamed the covetousness of Frank and Byzantine alike.

Ship movements have located Venice at the epicenter of change around 800; the explosion of wealth can be read in the influx of Arab dinars and dirhams

58 These come from Milan (twelve), Pavia (five), Cremona (four), and Brescia (one). One is from Sirtori, on the road leading into the Alps (*Codex diplomaticus Langobardiae*, no. 76 (April 803), property there worth 120 s.). All except the Cremona men – whose lawsuit proves they are traders – are explicitly identified as merchants. See *CDL* 2, no. 232 (Pavia, 19 August 769); *Codex diplomaticus Langobardiae*, no. 69 (796); no. 78 (804; also witnessed by two *monetarii* of the city of Milan); no. 81 (806); no. 105 (824); no. 169 (850); no. 216 (861); no. 333 (885); DL II, no. 13 (840); *Novara*, no. 20. The others are cited above, n8, and below, Ch. 23n40.

59 *Placiti*, no. 1 (277.4), May 801, Comacchio; for an anonymous Jewish court merchant at Ravenna, Agnellus, *Liber pont. eccl. Rav.*, 143, 372.9–10. I have not counted the undated merchant Theodore and his wife Maria, who made a gift of land at Rimini to the church of Ravenna between the 7th C. and 983: *Breviarium ecclesiae Ravennatis*, no. 49, cf. p. xlii. The only other persons called merchants in that document whom I have noticed come in 960, *ibid.*, ii, 8 and 10. Note that the "Uitalis negotiens" mentioned in *CDL*, 2, no. 232, bears the name of Bologna's patron saint, and the author of the act which Vitalis witnesses owned land in this town.

60 Agnellus, *Liber pont. eccl. Rav.*, 30, 293.39–296.32. The anti-iconoclastic message shows that this form of the legend is no older than the 8th C. As told, the story reveals that Constantinople was believed to be a place where local merchants could make a lot of money; although we cannot be certain, it might reflect current or recent conditions. Agnellus says this is a story remembered by some old men. Slave sales: R201.



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(Chapters 11 and 12), and in the mushrooming churches (Chart 18.1). In the Veneto, everything smells of commerce. There the acts were drawn up on papyrus, of necessity imported from Egypt. Bishops purchased their reliquaries in Constantinople and counted their wealth in Arab dinars, 100-lb. weights of silver and sacks of spices. As the doge himself recorded in his will, at that moment he also had 1,200 lb. of silver outstanding in a maritime venture – ten times the sumptuary expenditures of the pope only a hundred years before.[61] Even a terrible winter could not keep merchants from converging on the rising town: traders (*mercatores*) drove wagons rather than boats across the frozen lagoon to bring their wares (*mercimonia*) to Venice in 860 (R533). Growing Venetian trade can also be read in the remarkable series of trade treaties they negotiated with Frankish rulers, the oldest surviving example of which goes back to 840, but which were preceded by other, lost treaties (R448). The treaties suggest that Venetian merchants were active up and down the Po axis, and their trading activities at Pavia, for instance, confirm that suggestion.[62] By 862, at least fifteen Venetian ships a year were expected to dock near Mantua. Their toll produced 6 s. cash, 3 lb. of pepper, 3 lb. of cumin, and 4 lb. of linen, each year. The lonely ship which still came from Comacchio, on the other hand, now yielded only salt and a few pennies.[63] Long-distance commerce fired the expansion of ship movements and the luxury expenditures of the Veneto.

In future centuries, Genoa would rival Venice, but its mercantile beginnings are generally placed later; we have already seen the slim signs of shipping there in the ninth century (Ch. 17.4). But one piece of evidence has been overlooked. Its importance is double, for it shows that by that date, a local market could link up to a wider Mediterranean economic world, and that the future trading port on Italy's northwest coast had already begun to tap into that world. The monastery of Bobbio supplied many of its monks' needs from its own estates. Nonetheless, according to a document of 862, its cell in Genoa purchased certain goods there each year "for the use of the brothers." This means that the goods were valuable enough to be hauled over the arduous Ligurian Apennines to Bobbio. The list reads:

61 Papyrus: act of May 819: *Ilario e Benedetto*, no. 1, of which the 10th-C. notary observes that he has copied the text "de tummo vetere" (p. 11); similar note on the will of Doge Justinian, 828/9, *ibid.*, no. 2, (p. 24), which also mentions the 1,200-lb. investment (p. 21). Spices: February 853, Bishop Ursus' will: *San Lorenzo*, no. 1, 600 lb. of silver and three sacks, one of pepper, one "de alivano," and one unspecified (p. 9). On "alivano," i.e. *olibanum*, see Ch. 24n53.

62 Notker, *Gesta Karoli*, 2, 17, 86.15–21. Whether Notker has a specific source here is unclear, so that his story about Venetians proposing wares to Charles' grandees at Pavia is certainly valid only for his own time, the 880s; cf. Odo of Cluny, *V. Geraldi Auriliac.*, 1, 27, *PL*, 133.658B–C.

63 *Bobbio Polyptych of 862*, 138.14–22.



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In Genoa, [Bobbio owns] a church dedicated to St. Peter; yearly one can collect there ten measures of chestnuts, eight amphoras of wine in a good season, 40 lb. of oil; for the use of the brothers, each year, are purchased hence: 100 strings (*restę*) of figs, 200 *cedri*, four measures of salt, two measures of fish sauce, 100 lb. of pitch; [the church] has six *massarii* tenants there who make the wine and carry the aforesaid rent (*census*) to the monastery.[64]

The fact that these goods were purchased at Genoa shows that they were available in a market in the port town, and that Bobbio could buy some specialty goods which the abbey itself did not produce. Bobbio's church was in fact just outside the gate that led toward the early marketplace of St. George.[65] That the wares did not stem from the abbey's several properties in the Genoa area hints that they were imports. Dried fruit, fish sauce and pitch had been traded along the coast of Gaul in the seventh century, while salt was a staple of Mediterranean trade from time immemorial.[66] Could the recurrence of these products in 862 testify to renewed trading circuits which fed the market at Genoa? Although garum, the spicy fish sauce of antiquity, theoretically could have been produced anywhere that fish were caught and processed, the great export region in antiquity had straddled the strait of Gibraltar. That the Frankish kings levied customs duties on garum in the later seventh century shows that it was still being produced abroad at that date.[67] Pitch might point to southwest Gaul (Table 20.1, no. 3).

64 *Ibid.*, 131.14–18. *Resta* is a vulgar form of *restis* which is still used in Italian for strings formed of plaited garlic or, indeed, fruit: Battaglia 1961, 15: 885, s.v. One can safely ignore on this count Niermeyer 1984, 916. On *cedri*, see below.

65 Grossi Bianchi and Poleggi 1980, 34, Figure 20; cf. 39, Figure 22. They also argue that the first city wall dates from the second half of the 9th C.: 33–40.

66 E.g., dried fruit and garum: privilege for Corbie of Chlothar III and Balthild of c. 661/4 quoted in Chilperic II's confirmation of 716, *Corbie*, no. 15. For the pitch, see below. Other properties in the vicinity of Genoa: *Bobbio Polyptych of 862*, 130.20–3 and 132.3–20.

67 Garum produced in Roman Italy: Curtis 1991, 87; for a remarkable repertory of the many dozens of industrial installations for fish processing which cluster along the approaches to the strait of Gibraltar, esp. on the Atlantic and Spanish coast, Ponsich 1988. Ponsich lists a large number of sites with ceramic evidence reaching the 6th C. The latest that I note as producing ceramic which Ponsich assigns to the 7th C. is the giant complex of factories at Lixus in Morocco: Ponsich 1988, cf. 121 and 129. Ponsich believes that the fish processing complexes which produced salt fish, as well as its subproduct garum – and which required fish (preferably tuna), abundant salt and fresh water, olive oil, and material for containers in order to function – declined precipitously with the Muslim occupation, but he notes that the highly specialized netting system (*almadraba*, from Arabic: J. Corominas and J. A. Pascual, *Diccionario crítico etimológico castellano e hispánico* 1(Madrid, 1980): 182) for trapping the tuna runs survived until the 13th C., when the Christian king granted privileges for operating them after he conquered the region (1988, 26–7). In fact, the Sevillan fisheries were still celebrated in the 10th C.: Amad al-Rāzī (d. 955), *Description of Spain*, 58, tr. Lévi-Provençal,



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The mysterious *cedri* strengthen the case for imports. In classical terms, this spelling would mean that 200 cedar trees were purchased at Genoa. Even leaving aside the strange intrusion of cedars into a series of foodstuffs, Bobbio's six tenants did not likely carry logs across the Apennines. Far more probably, we hear here the common popular Latin pronunciation of a much rarer word, *citrus*, which gave rise to medieval and modern Italian *cedro*.[68] The classical word means "citron" (*citrus medica*), the sole citrus fruit known to the ancient world. By late antiquity, the citron tree was cultivated in warm exposures of Sardinia and the Naples region; Isidore of Seville seems to have known it directly, and it is reported on the eighth-century shores of Lake Como.[69] The fact that the 200 *citri* were purchased at Genoa, rather than produced, again points to importation. We do not know whether citrons were still being grown in Sardinia in the ninth century, but we do know that merchant convoys connected the island to Italy.[70]

There is a further possibility, encouraged by the apparent availability of citrons in Italy. Although this would be the first instance in the Latin west, it is not impossible that the established name is used here to refer to a new, related and more exotic fruit: the sour orange (*citrus aurantium*) or even the lemon (*citrus limon*; cf. Fr. *citron*, Germ. *Zitrone*). The Bobbio *cedri* occur around the time of an important new development in the Islamic agrarian revolution. A late source attributes to Caliph Ma'mun (813–33) the introduction of the sour orange. Growing that sour orange was already discussed in an Arabic agricultural treatise from the first decade of the tenth century. This seems to indicate that, from northwestern India, it had reached at least the eastern reaches of the Caliphate in the ninth century; the sour orange was certainly cultivated in Spain in the next century.[71] The lemon

p. 93, which also emphasizes that the region still exported large quantities of olive oil to the east, as well as dried figs of exceptional quality. A garum establishment at Rosas in modern Catalonia seems still to have been operating until it was abandoned in the late 6th C., based on the diagnostic ceramic and a political event of c. 580/4: Nolla-Brufau 1984, 445–9; cf. Curtis 1991, 58, with n62. However the ceramic forms (Hayes 104B and 105?) in question continued in production until c. 600–25 and c. 625–50 respectively: Fulford 1984, 73–4. Recent prospection has doubled the Roman fish salteries along the African coast, esp. in Tunisia: Ben Lazreg *et al.* 1995, 104–16.

68 For the phonetic transformations in popular Latin: Väänänen 1981, 36 and 56. The modern Italian words for "cedar" and "citron" are homonyms: Battaglia 1961, 2: 942–3.

69 *Origines*, 17, 7, 8; cf. André's ed., pp. 89–91. Watson 1983, 44 judges that Isidore's detailed description reveals first-hand knowledge; Olck, "Citrone," *RE* 3 (1899): 2612–21, here 2615; Paul the Deacon praised Lake Como's odoriferous trees: *In laude Larii laci*, 15–16, p. 5.

70 R362. In antiquity, citron fruit was known chiefly as a medicine against snakebite and a kind of mothball, although it did find some use in the kitchen: Olck, "Citrone," *RE* 3: 2620–1.

71 For both sources, Watson 1983, 45.



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seems to have followed the sour orange through the Islamic world at about the same time or a little later.[72]

Whether the inventory's *cedri* refers to citrons or newer citrus fruit, the other goods to be purchased in the seaport of Genoa evoke nothing so much as the three slightly later wrecks found off the southern French coast (Table 20.4). All three carried cargoes from Spain, including from Cordova. One ship (no. 18) sank off Cannes, about 115 NM up the coast from Genoa. Another one (no. 19), apparently bearing east from Marseilles, went down when a storm drove it into a rock, wrecked its hull and scattered its cargo. It was loaded with corked jars, presumably containing some foodstuff, and carried clay balls filled with mineral pitch.[73] The convergence of Bobbio's purchases at Genoa with the archaeological evidence of these wrecks does not prove a trading circuit reaching, directly or not, from Spain to Italy in 862. But it surely suggests that, at this early date, Genoa was connected to trading circuits that stretched beyond the Ligurian Sea, toward the west.

The clusters of merchants and markets of Rome, Campania, and Byzantine Italy were connected. A link as far north as Lucca is plausible; Byzantine coins from Sicily traveled past Lucca to Luni in the ninth century. The Frankish kings granted to merchants in ecclesiastical service toll exemptions that applied to the entire realm. This assumes interregional commerce within the Carolingian possessions.[74] The privilege granted to the well-connected merchant Januarius in 861 presumed that he might trade in the Po valley as far east as Venice, and south into Tuscia, the duchy of Rome, and Benevento.[75] This Po merchant's southern connections are all the more noteworthy given that he was baptized with the name of the patron saint of Naples. The Po axis appears to be the most important of Italy's four main trading regions. That is not due simply to the north's superior archives, for the traders from the poorly documented Veneto appear in the sources of other regions as well. The Venetians competed in the Campanians' own backyard, trading at Rome and with Benevento. Around the same time, they may also have been doing business in Sicily.[76] The discovery of southern Italian

72 *Ibid.*, 46.

73 The excavators interpreted these balls as spare pitch for the ship's sides: D.R.A.S.M. 1985, 114, against Parker 1992, no. 821, who understands it as cargo. The original publication does not specify the number of containers, but indicates that the objects came from a sounding excavation of 3×2 m (Ximinès *et al.* 1976, 142), which may reinforce the interpretation as cargo.

74 E.g., DD Kar I, no. 201, for Fortunatus of Grado, A.D. 803; D Loth I, no. 1, for Farfa, 822.

75 D L II, no. 32.

76 Although in this, as in some other cases, the commercial nature of the voyage, however probable, is not explicit: R452.



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lamps from the ninth and tenth centuries on the Croatian island of Hvar substantiate such ship movements, for Hvar is on the sea lane running up to Venice.[77] The Venetians alone connected fully to all four of the main trading regions of early medieval Italy, even as they sailed to the Muslim world. Nor was Venice open only to the south. As the fate of Methodius' mission made clear, enslaved wares from Moravia were driven across the Alps toward the block in Venice (R700).

Italy's commercial connections with the south were broader still. A Byzantine slave merchant of Armo refused to heed a holy man's entreaties to abandon his evil trade for any other kind of commerce. When his widow purchased a mass in his memory, an angel appeared and physically blocked the holy man from commemorating the slave trader's name.[78] To whom had he been selling? It is easy to guess from the exceptional opprobrium attached to what was otherwise a well-established trade. But there is no need to guess, since a contemporary Beneventan monk tells us when he rages against the Greek merchants. Christians in name alone, he sputters, they were worse than animals. These Byzantine traders hunted down Christians ("omnes fidelium") or bought them from the Arabs. Then they packed the beaches of Campania with those they did not keep as slaves for themselves, and sold them. The unmistakable implication is that the captives they drove down to the beach were loaded into the ships that would transport them across the sea to lives of Muslim slavery.[79] Nor was it only Greek or Venetian Christians. African Christian merchants too sailed north and waited on the beach for squads of specialized slave hunters who prowled outside the walls of the towns of Sicily and southern Italy and brought them the children they had snatched (above, p. 246). Although they are less easy to observe with precision in the sources I have seen, Muslim merchants doubtless plied similar trades. When Bernard reported six shiploads of Christians sailing from Taranto to Africa and Egypt in 867 (R577–9), we might well suspect Muslim merchants at work there, in the prosperous new emirate of Bari.

We know from a North African jurist that Christian trading ships regularly visited African ports in the first half of the ninth century:

> As to the Christian ships which come [toward us], whether they are far from port or nearby, it is not permitted to capture them, if they are merchants known for their commercial relations with the Muslims, unless they are attacked in their home country and while they are heading toward a country other than the countries of Islam.[80]

77 Petrić 1990, 173–5.

78 *Vita Eliae Speliotae* (BHG 581), 18, AASS Sept. 3 (1868).855C–856D.

79 Erchempert of Monte Cassino, *Historia Langobardorum Beneventanorum*, 81, 264.23–31.

80 Ibn Sahnun, cited by Ibn A. Zayd (922/3–996), *Kitāb al-Nawādir*, translated and discussed by Talbi 1956, 291.



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The fact that Ibn Sahnun (d. 854) seems to be addressing a North African audience and envisages attacks on these merchants' home reinforces the likelihood that he is talking about Campanians and, perhaps, Italo-Byzantines, at least during respites in the war over Sicily.[81] Latins or Byzantines are attested at Kairouan in the later ninth century, although it is unclear whether they were native Christians, slaves, or resident foreigners.[82] With or without this text, Italy's commercial clusters of merchants and markets, their connections with each other and with the greater economies of the south and the east are unmistakable. The currents of trade bathed the Italian peninsula, and brought with them Arab coins, and even a few Arab merchants. In 774, the northern half of that peninsula entered the Carolingian empire, adding political structures to the social and cultural webs that had been thickening across the Alps for the last century at least. Did the trade reaching Italy dead-end there?

81 Nonetheless, two Arab attacks on the Veneto occurred in his lifetime: R451 and R454.

82 According to the interpretation of M. Talbi, "al-Ḳayrawān," *EI* 4 (1978): 825–32, here 828, al Yakubi (d. after 905) refers to Latins residing at Kairouan in the later 9th C., in a passage listing the ethnicities of the inhabitants, which Wiet translates: "enfin, des indigènes, Berbères, Grecs, ou autres": Yaʿḳūbī, *Les pays*, p. 210. The term *Rumi*, "Romans," is ambivalent, since it could refer to either Latins or Byzantines.



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# 22

# *Merchants and markets of Frankland*

Several different regions of Italy traded with each other, and with the more developed economies of the south and east. The commercial activity in the Adriatic and along Italy's southwestern shores overlapped with the developing shipping zones indicated by changing patterns of communications. So far, even Pirenne might have assented, although he would have been surprised by the amount of evidence, and the extent to which it points toward growth. In his opinion, however, some Italian trade could be dismissed as merely another form of Byzantine continuity, unrelated to the Frankish west: "The link with the East was broken and no connection was made with the Saracen shores: all was still."[1] No connections with the political colossus to the north, the Frankish empire, sprawling from the Alps to the Atlantic, from the Pyrenees and the Po to the Elbe?

In this chapter, we shall investigate commerce north of the Alps.[2] We shall begin by asking whether the king was as concerned with commercial connections as the Royal Annals have suggested (Ch. 20.1). His customs houses are the first place to look. This should let us see where the ruler thought goods entered and exited the country. From the customs stations, we will follow the routes that led early medieval traders into Francia, and look for clusters of merchants and markets, and the circuits of trade. We will find them, in the same sort of places as most Frankish mints were located, along the rivers which, as we have seen, played such a critical role in Carolingian communications (Ch. 13.1). The great river systems of the Seine and the Rhine in particular will command our attention. Along the one, the scrutiny of markets and their development will bring us to the fair of St. Denis, where new evidence will link Paris to the Middle East. Along the

1 Pirenne 1937, 75–7, esp. 77, from which I have translated the quotation.

2 See the good survey in Johanek 1987; Dopsch 1921–2 has admirably collected the material; cf. also Doehaerd 1971, 245–56. In addition to the works cited in these chapters, several studies on Merovingian trade are valuable and tend to continue into the 8th C.: Claude 1985a; Roth 1985; Berghaus 1985; Johanek 1985; Wilson 1985; and the new insights in Siems 1989.



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other river we will meet merchants, markets and wares, as well as the general assembly, an institution whose political role and vigor in this age are well known, but whose economic potential has received little attention. The Rhineland will open another new window on the Carolingian economy, since pioneering work there in early medieval craft production indicates the complexities of distribution systems as well as their transformations. It also affords insight into changing rhythms of production. Once we grasp the currents of exchange within Frankland, we can seek how the clusters of merchants and commerce inside the empire connected to the trading worlds outside of it.

## 1. Royal toll stations

The first clue comes from the *telonea* (the origin of our word "toll"), the taxes the Frankish king collected wherever trade was conducted or goods transported for commercial purposes. From Pippin III on, Carolingian law clearly and explicitly enunciated the principle that non-commercial transport was exempt from *telonea*. Tolls were *not* levied on goods produced and transported for one's personal use; goods *produced* for instance on distant estates and moved to the central institution were not normally subject to tolls. Goods *purchased* elsewhere, e.g., salt bought on the coast and transported inland for an institution or person's use, were another matter, unless the transporter enjoyed a special toll exemption.[3] In the very first year of his kingship, under the steep penalty of 60 shillings, Pippin ordered his men:

> About tolls we so command that no one take a toll from food supplies and wagon transports which is [!] not commercial (*absque negotio*); about pack animals, likewise, wherever they are going. And we establish likewise about pilgrims who, on account of God, go to Rome or anywhere else: let you not detain them under any pretext at bridges or the mountain checkpoints (*exclusas*, i.e. *clusae*) or on water transport, nor make a claim on any pilgrim on account of his baggage, nor collect any toll from them.[4]

Half a century later, his son reiterated the command in somewhat better Latin, even as Charlemagne revealed that new, unauthorized tolls were springing up in new places. That some people were trying to set up new tolls is a sure sign of increasing interest in commerce, and maybe more.

> About tolls, it is our pleasure that old and fair tolls be exacted from merchants, both from bridges and boats as well as markets. But let the new and unjust ones not be exacted where

3 The classic studies of Merovingian and Carolingian tolls are Ganshof 1958 and 1959 (on exemptions: 8–9; cf. 6n6); see also Adam 1996, 203–6.

4 *MGH Capit.* no. 13, 4, 1.32.5–10; cf. Väänänen 1981, 47.



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either ropes are stretched out [apparently to block boats], or boats go under bridges or in similar circumstances, in which no help is supplied to travelers. Similarly also, neither [let them be exacted] from those who, without commercial involvement, transport their own property from one residence to another or to the palace or to the army. If any case arises about which there is doubt, let the question be raised at the next assembly we will hold with our personal representatives (*missi*).[5]

This is about as clear as it gets in Carolingian administration. Tolls do not mean estate transports or transfers. They mean commerce. Insofar as the tolls were effectively collected, they constituted a significant structural disincentive to commerce, since it was systematically taxed, while autarky was not. That Carolingian commerce sprang up at all thus provides a first indication of the power of the economic developments then afoot. And we can be quite sure that, where there were tolls, there was commercial traffic.

Despite their distant Roman pedigree, by the Carolingians' time the royal tolls had taken on many new characteristics. Market dues, internal transit tolls and customs duties at frontiers were all lumped together as *telonea* although, beginning around 825, Carolingian administrators displayed growing awareness of the difference between market dues and import/export taxes.[6] Some of the Carolingian customs stations on the frontiers happened to be located in the vicinity of late Roman or Merovingian *telonea*. Often, however, that appears to owe as much to the dictates of geography and routes as to institutional continuity.[7] Their assessment rate is uncertain, although a 10 percent charge on goods crossing the Frankish frontier is plausible. What evidence there is suggests that the transit fees inside those borders, or the market taxes, were not so high. In any event, the same Frankish kings who vigorously asserted their new interest in market taxes reasserted their ancient prerogatives at the frontiers and inside them with no less enthusiasm.[8]

There was money to be made on tolls, if we may trust the highly original way in which a Carolingian poet depicted a Gospel scene in Old Saxon.

Christ chose the fifth [disciple] at a market place (*copstedi*) – one of the king's followers, an intelligent man. His name was Matthew. He was in the service of the nobility, his duty was to accept in his hands taxes and tolls (*tins endi tol<na>*) for his lord. He was a man of great

5 *Ibid*. no. 44, 13, 1.124.29–125.2; cf. the Raffelstetten Plea, 2, 251.5–7.

6 Ganshof 1959, 49–50.

7 A possible exception is the station at Fos, whose Carolingian incarnation nonetheless shows differences in location and organization from the Merovingian fiscal establishment. The latter can be linked plausibly to the late Roman customs house: Ganshof 1959, 16; Ganshof 1960.

8 Ganshof 1959, 11–13; see Mitterauer 1980, 236–9, on the value of the transit taxes specified by the Raffelstetten inquest; Adam 1996, 196–200, surveys the scant and disparate evidence; see Endemann 1964, 38–42, on new interest in markets and tolls.



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loyalty and noble appearance. He abandoned gold and silver, many gifts and precious jewels, and became our Chieftain's [Christ's] man.[9]

The toll collector was familiar to Frankish travelers, too. Or so we might guess from another unnoticed scene in a Carolingian biblical work. Christian of Stavelot clearly borrowed from his own experience to fill in the same Gospel scene in which Jesus "saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax office (*in teloneo*; Mt 9, 9)."

He was sitting because he was the chief (*magister*), and he had underlings who circulated around the market and collected the tax and brought it back to him; or else he was sitting inside because the market was located on the water, and he was collecting the tax paid on the ships, since that too is called "toll."[10]

Notwithstanding the ambivalence of the term *teloneum* suggested by these descriptions, the way they are treated in Carolingian administrative sources and their location along routes leading into the Frankish heartland differentiates tolls collected at major transit points for foreign goods from those paid in markets.[11]

Toll stations athwart the roads to Italy signify unavoidably that merchants and goods traveled between Frankland and the south (Map 22.1). Two *clusae* (the Lombardo-Frankish technical term, originally for an Alpine checkpoint) monitored traffic through the western Alps in the Val de Susa and the Val d'Aosta, which connected with the Mont Cénis and Great St. Bernard passes respectively.[12] A third controlled the central Alps, in the vicinity of Chur, and led to the Septimer and Julier passes. The local bishop seems to have run that station.[13] A fourth toll collection station was established at Walenstadt, on the Walensee in the middle of the Alps. That mountain lake marked a main route that ran east–west through the Alps.[14]

Other customs houses point to more trade routes entering the Frankish empire from the south. Tolls for traffic with Spain were collected, probably at Les Cluses (also derived from *clusa*) in the Pyrenees, and certainly at Barcelona and Narbonne.[15] On the Mediterranean seaboard, tolls were levied at Marseilles, probably at Arles, and at some place on the coast which seems to have been the successor of the late Roman and Merovingian tollhouse at Fos.[16] Facing the

9 *Heliand*, 1190–8, p. 48; trans. Murphy, p. 41.
10 Christian of Stavelot, *Expositio in Matthaeum*, 22, *PL*, 106.1335A.
11 Ganshof 1959, 8–18; Mitterauer 1980, 236–41, works out the different dues lumped together in the Raffelstetten Plea; Adam 1996, 194–200.
12 Duparc 1951.
13 Thus Alcuin, *Ep.* 77, 119.4, to Remedius, bishop of Chur: "et in montium claustris a *vestris* non teneatur *tolnearii*s constrictus . . ."
14 Ganshof 1959, 11–12 and 17–18; see further below, p. 761.
15 Ganshof 1959, 16–17; for a review of the individual toll stations down to the 8th C., Johanek 1985, esp. 221–7.
16 Ganshof 1959, 16; Ganshof 1960.



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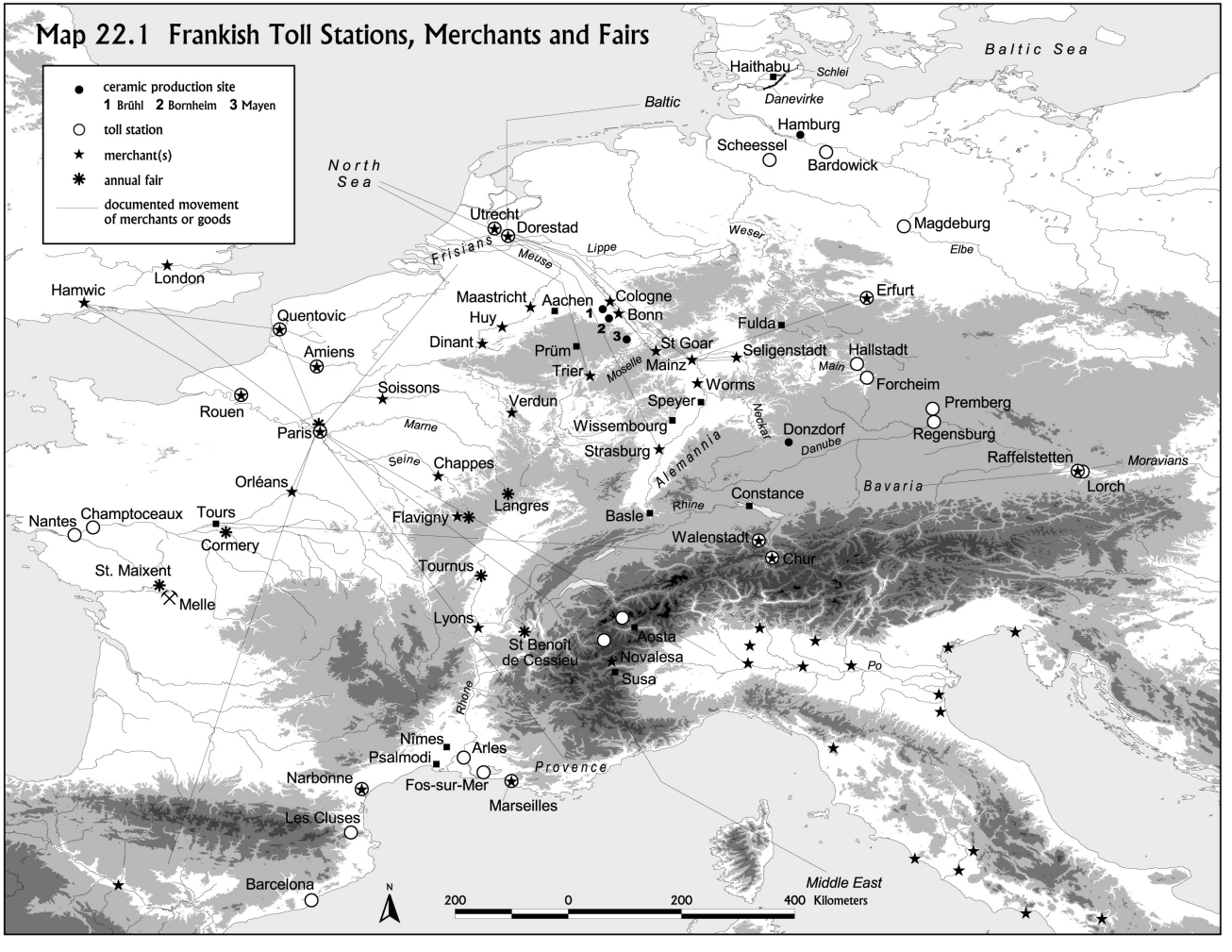


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Atlantic, at the entrance to the Loire river system, Nantes, and farther upstream, Champtoceaux, may have had toll stations. The importance of the Seine basin explains the likelihood of two major toll-collecting centers. Rouen watched over the mouth, while upstream, Paris was the scene of an important fair. Other stations controlled Amiens near the mouth of the Somme, and the recently identified Quentovic on the Canche river. There, over a settlement site that exceeds 40 hectares, the first sounding trenches are uncovering trading horizons entirely analogous to those of Dorestad. Tolls naturally were paid at Dorestad too, as well as at Utrecht, from where waterways led to the north.[17] We have already met (above, p. 378) the nine transit points which certainly checked for prohibited arms exports and probably collected tolls on inland trade with the Slavic regions east of Frankish power. They ran from Bardowick in the north, via Erfurt and Hallstadt, to Regensburg and Lorch on the Danube to the south. Whether they were meant chiefly as toll stations or trading posts, the measure certainly testifies to trade across the eastern frontier.[18]

## 2. Merchants, tolls, and rivers

Charlemagne was not the kind of king who wasted time putting toll collecting stations where no commercial goods moved. In fact, merchants appear at or near many of these places.[19] Byzantine and Arab coins illuminate this issue also, for

17 Ganshof 1959, 14–16; for Champtoceaux's connections, Johanek 1985, 226; on toll exemptions on the Loire and Seine, Adam 1996, 108–10; on Quentovic, see Lebecq 1993 for the written evidence; first reports on the site, east of Montreuil-sur-Mer on the south bank of the Canche: Hill *et al.* 1990 and 1992.

18 Ganshof 1959, 18; *MGH Capit.* no. 44, 7, 1.123 (A.D. 805); cf. Johanek 1987, 17–18.

19 The merchants of the monastery of Novalesa, located in the Mont Cénis pass itself, received toll-free status from Carloman: DD Kar 1, no. 47 (A.D. 769); for Chur, Alcuin, *Ep.* 77, p. 119. In the Pyrenees (?), below, pp. 674f; at Narbonne, Notker, *Gesta Karoli*, 2, 14, 77.1–9, which I take as valid evidence for trade there in the 880s; Marseilles: c. 690, Bonitus attempted to hinder the slave trade: *Vita Boniti* (*BHL* 1418), 3, 121.1–6; around 750: see below, Ch. 23n14. Rouen: Hugeburc, *V. Willibaldi*, 3, 91.11–12; Nithard, 2, 6, p. 56; Paris, below; Amiens: a 13th-C. copy of the full text of inventory of rents and dues of the abbey of St. Riquier of 831 mentions among the other *vici* dependent on the abbey a *vicus negotiantium* which owes the abbey one textile worth 100 s. every year: edited with Hariulf's *Chronicon*, pp. 306–8. Although the document is accepted as authentic (e.g. Lot, *ibid.*, p. xxvii; Johanek 1987, 54n257), I have my doubts. For 831, the size of the settlement ("2,500 mansiones hominum saecularium," i.e. households, which should mean a minimum of 10,000 people) and the yields look high to me. E.g., the weekly market produces 40 s., marriages produce 20 lb. per year, judgements of *forenses*, 68 lb. If genuine, the text offers very important testimony – by the numbers of craftsmen, division of labor,



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seven sets of finds occur around Carolingian toll stations. The Ilanz hoard with its Lombard, Arab, and Anglo-Saxon coins was discovered just down the road from Chur, while Byzantine or Arab coins crop up in the general vicinity of five of the nine authorized trading posts on the eastern edge of Frankish power (Table 12.11). Less than a day's travel north of Les Cluses in the eastern Pyrenees, on the Via Domitia, the abandoned ancient town of Ruscino (Château-Roussillon) offers a surprising number (eight) of the very rare coins of the last Visigothic kings, as well as eleven Arab dinars, dirhams and bronze coins struck in al Andalus or Africa between 715 and 821 (Appendix 3, A9). A small hoard of Charlemagne's pennies struck at Toulouse, Bourges, Pavia, Tours, and Narbonne, between 793/4 and 812 (Grierson Class 3) and including, oddly, an obol attributed to Charles the Bald, has also come to light there.[20]

Most toll installations overlooked the rivers that were the highways of the Frankish empire. We should therefore find merchants moving along them. And so we do. The Loire certainly transported them.[21] Thus the monastery of Cormery received the right for two vessels to trade toll-free in salt and any other wares, but the privilege was limited to the Loire and four of its downstream tributaries.[22] Boat traffic on the Rhône had declined considerably since antiquity, and we have seen that this river axis was no longer the royal road of Mediterranean goods and travelers into central and northern Gaul (Ch. 3.3). Nonetheless the presence of toll houses around its mouth and farther upstream means that there was still (or again) some commercial movement. In the 820s, at least five Jewish merchants resided in Lyons; they served the court and traded in slaves; we also hear of wine merchants there.[23] So too, and famously, the Meuse with its river ports: places like Maastricht, which, says Einhard, was "very crowded with inhabitants and

and monetization it implies – to the precocious economic development of a region which the Viking invasions would severely disrupt. See in any case for the undoubted commercial associations of this region around 800, below, Ch. 23.1. For Utrecht, below, n61. For merchants on the road that led through Erfurt: Gockel 1984, 105–6. Along the Danube: see below, n26.

20 Richard and Claustres 1980, 123–4. On the Via Domitia, Radke 1971, 270.

21 See the vivid description of a fiscal official's unjustified effort at Orleans to collect a toll from one of Fleury's four vessels that enjoyed toll exemption on the Loire, and which was returning from Nantes loaded with sea salt which it must have purchased: Adrevald, *Miracula S. Benedicti* (*BHL* 1123), 19, ed. de Certain, pp. 46–7; cf. Ganshof 1959, 3–6. Perhaps because its crew refused to pay, the ship was held "with [the] others" "in portu fiscali." The "others" must have been ships moving commercial goods, and therefore subject to tolls.

22 Mayenne, Sarthe, Loir, and Vienne: DD Kar 1, no. 192 (A.D. 800); for a survey of Loire exemptions, Adam 1996, 108–10.

23 *Form. imperiales*, 31, pp. 310–11; cf. Agobard's diatribes against the Lyons Jews, pp. 184– 234; on which see Blumenkranz 1963, 152–68 and Boshof 1969, 102–38; for more on the wine merchants, see below, n47.



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especially with a multitude of merchants." Perhaps Dinant also, and certainly Verdun. This last town probably marked the limit of navigation up the Meuse, at the crossing of a major road running east and west. The town's merchant tradition was closely connected with its bishops (one of whom traveled to Jerusalem) and was already 200 years old in Charlemagne's time.[24]

With their transport advantages, the river routes may have attracted the merchants who operated on the largest scale. In any case, in the one clear case of a small-scale merchant or peddler that we have, he operated on an overland circuit *between* important rivers. This man had only two capital goods, a donkey and a seven-year-old deaf-mute orphan whom he had picked up by the side of the road near Quentovic, where his previous owner had left him to die. He fed and clothed the child and used his little slave's back to lighten the donkey's burden. For years the small-time trader traveled from town to town, hunting for bargains in one to sell dearly in another. When we glimpse him, his donkey and slave were carrying a load of salt – presumably, as in antiquity, some 88–118 kg plus whatever the boy could handle – the 100-odd km from Orleans to Paris. He was not peddling along the way, as the story makes clear. The Orleans salt surely came from the pans at the mouth of the Loire, so we see one way in which Paris was provisioned, and connections made between the different river axes of Frankish trade.[25]

The history of communications has indicated that the Danube corridor developed as an important overland link between east and west only in the second half of the ninth century. Merchants are harder to see there. Nonetheless, around 905, a famous hearing into the tolls paid along its upper course describes a considerable traffic moving up and down its waters between Linz and Bohemia, and along the road which paralleled the river. True to the Carolingian estate system,

24 Einhard, *Transl. Marcell. et Petri*, 4, 13, 261.13–16 on Maastricht: "habitantium et praecipue negotiatorum multitudine frequentissimus." Dinant's 9th-C. topography seems to show an unusual level of subdivision and what look like substantial rents (Stavelot earned 32 s. from Huy and Dinant, and Lobbes 10 s. from Dinant); subtle though they are, these indices probably do point to a pre-urban, non-rural economy: Despy 1967. For Verdun, see Bertarius' early 10th-C. retelling of the royal and episcopal origins of Verdun's trading tradition in the 6th C.: Bertarius, *Gesta episcoporum Virdunensium*, 5, *MGH SS* 4.41.15–23; cf. a 9th-C. bishop's subjugation of the *Bracenses mercatores*, *ibid.*, 15, 44.35–7; see also below pp. 677f and, in general, Rousseau 1930, 62–74, and Suttor 1986, who implies (49) that Verdun was the probable limit for shipping before the 13th C.; Pros. "Madalveus."

25 Donkey burdens: Habermann 1990, 83; salt pans: Ch. 24.1. The map of urban or pre-urban economic development is a blank for this road in both Rouche 1985, 452–3, Maps 132b and 134a, and Parisse *et al.* 1994, 47. *Miracula S. Germani Parisiensis* (*BHL* 3475), 13–15, *AASS* Maii 6 (1866).782A–D. The slave, by the way, ran away from his owner, was miraculously cured by St. Germain, learned Latin at the monastery, and met his former owner on a return trip to Paris.



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certain travelers discussed in the plea drawn up at Raffelstetten (near Linz) were simply provisioning themselves at some distance from home, or moving goods among dispersed properties, and so were exempt from tolls. But others, Bavarians and Slavs (including some from territories beyond the Frankish empire) were conducting trade, and the mention of foreign and Jewish merchants points to more exotic connections.[26] The Bavarian salt which looms so large in this inquest was probably exported to the Moravians.[27] But the two best-documented axes of Frankish fluvial trade sprang back to life several generations ahead of the Danube. They ran east–west, along the Seine, and north–south, along the Rhine.

## 3. Expanding horizons: the Seine basin and the fair of St. Denis

Far beyond Paris, boats traveling along the Seine and its tributaries moved salt and foreign goods from the sea deep among the fertile fields of France. From those fields, whose productivity was rising thanks to investment and the new regime of bipartite estates, they transported downstream foodstuffs, particularly French wine.[28] Near Rouen, Willibald had visited a market early in the eighth century (Ch. 5.1). A hundred years later, an eyewitness of the daily scene just 800 paces from his monastery's door calls this a river "glorious with the traffic of ships."[29] The great monasteries of Paris of course had their own merchants who flaunted fiscal immunities.[30] St. Germain des Prés transported such large quantities of wine around the country that they can only have been intended for sale, both in Paris and abroad (above, p. 8). Close to the river's headwaters, the merchants of the monastery of Flavigny – which boasted its own fair – also enjoyed toll-free status.[31] And of course, traders availed themselves of the great river's tributaries, for instance inland at Soissons. There, in Charles the Bald's day, a hagiographer praised the piety of "twelve most famous merchants." Unsurprisingly, the famous traders are utterly unknown to us, though their cult of St. Germain of Auxerre hints that they came from that town on the bank of the Yonne, another Seine tributary. Local legend told how some time ago (*olim*) they

26 R761; cf. Mitterauer 1980, 235–77, and above, pp. 555f.

27 When hostilities arose between them and the eastern Franks, the latter attempted to prevent them from buying salt from the Bulgarians, far downriver: R728.

28 See Johanek 1987, 29–30 on the salt trade; for toll exemptions on the Seine, Adam 1996, 110.

29 "Commertiis nauium gloriosus": *Gesta Font.*, 1, 5, p. 7; on the date, Wattenbach *et al.* 1952–90, 345.

30 To cite only the earliest surviving privileges: St. Denis: DD Kar 1, no. 46 (A.D. 769); St. Germain: *ibid.*, no. 122 (779).

31 *Ibid.*, no. 96 (775).



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had built a shrine to St. Germain by the Aisne river, where they often pitched their tents during constant travels from kingdom to kingdom. They wanted to thank their patron saint for protecting them from "dangers on sea and land," which indicates their geographic range.[32]

The economic story of the Seine basin in the Carolingian era is one of commercial change and growth, highlighted by the history of the fair of St. Denis. Such periodic markets typically flourish in situations in which demand exists but is insufficient to sustain continuous purchases. This is often correlated with population density. Luxury goods constitute an important part of fair-type trading and fairs work best when they join contrasting economic zones. The classic example is the later medieval Champagne fair, in which Flemish textiles were exchanged against Mediterranean spices and other exotic goods.[33] Among the key criteria for assessing a fair are its length, its geographic drawing power, and its featured wares. On all three scores, St. Denis grew in the Carolingian era.

Just outside Paris, the annual fair went back at least as far as the seventh century; the tolls collected from this fair flowed into the coffers of the monastery of St. Denis on whose feast (9 October) the gathering occurred.[34] How many days a low-frequency periodic market lasted typically reflects the distances which merchants traveled to attend that market.[35] So it is revealing that this fair lengthened in the Carolingian period. Early in Charlemagne's reign, it lasted at least several days. By the beginning of the tenth century, the fair was being increased to four weeks.[36]

Expanding horizons are confirmed by the legal documents that buttressed the abbey of St. Denis' control of the institution and the profits it entailed. By c. 710, the fair had crossed the threshold from a regional to an interregional institution, since Anglo-Saxon merchants as well as those of other "nations" were making their way there. Of necessity, the Anglo-Saxons traveled more than 300 kilometers, a benchmark separating regional from interregional markets.[37] A generation later, the market had begun to attract Frisian merchants in such numbers that they merited explicit mention in a new privilege.[38] Notwithstanding the disruptions of

32 Heiric of Auxerre, *Miracula S. Germani* (BHL 3462), 64, PL, 124.1236D–1237A.

33 De Ligt 1993, 8, 15, 17 and 22.

34 Claude 1985a, 51–3; Devroey 1993a, 373–4.

35 De Ligt 1993, 15.

36 Several days at least: DD Kar 1, no. 88 (A.D. 774–5), with Claude 1985a, 52; extension to four weeks in the forged diploma of Dagobert I, DD Imp 1, no. 23. Although opinions on the date of the forgery range from the 8th to the late 9th C., the most thorough study, Levillain 1930, 14–37, dated it to the early 10th C.; cf. Devroey 1993a, 374n156. Johanek 1985, 241, promises a study which will argue that it testifies to the mid-8th C., but offers no further details.

37 *ChLA* 14 (1982), no. 589, p. 49, with Bergmann 1976, 173–5, no. 19; Claude 1985a, 52; Johanek 1985, 240–1. For this benchmark, De Ligt 1993, 15.

38 DD Kar 1, no. 6 (A.D. 753). Frisians may have become less frequent visitors towards the late 8th C.: Claude 1985a, 52. If this is so, it could reflect the double redirection of



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the Viking invasions, by the early tenth century, the monks who forged a diploma of Dagobert recognized – or hoped for – an expansion of the market's economic catchment area. The market was being extended to a month, says Pseudo-Dagobert, in order to accommodate merchants from Lombardy, Spain, and Provence.[39] Wishful thinking by a profit-starved forger? New texts indicate that, by the middle of the ninth century, the fair at St. Denis had begun to attract merchants of the broadest geographic horizons.

We have already seen how early medieval fiction illuminates the milieu that created it. So too when an early ninth-century Parisian presumed that a Merovingian king had a Jewish merchant overseeing markets in his city, and bragged about the royal gift of the tolls from the St. Denis fair ("annuale mercatum"). His imaginary Solomon tells us nothing about the seventh century, but much about his own time. In fact, it is entirely plausible that Jews served as market officials at the Carolingian fair of St. Denis. Despite Roman and canonical statutes prohibiting them from government office, Jews were appointed as royal toll collectors: they were in fact accused of corrupting some poor and ignorant Christian merchants "in more remote places" (such as the mountain check points?) by lightening their tolls in exchange for blasphemies.[40] The ninth-century historical fiction implies that the fair involved Jewish officials. On the analogy of a specialist on Anglo-Saxon England heading toll collection at a port that traded with England (Ch. 23.1), the rationale for such an appointment in Paris might appear to be that Jewish merchants traded at St. Denis in the 830s. But, alone, this new interpretation of an old text can only be suggestive, for no evidence has ever put Jewish merchants at that fair in the ninth century.

their trade: on one hand, the growing Quentovic would have been closer, and the Paris market was certainly linked with it by the time of the forged Dagobert privilege; on the other, if the Frisians are the westerners detected at Haithabu from c. 750 on (Jankuhn 1986, 116, on the south settlement), then the North Sea and even Baltic dimension of their activities, along with their presence on the Rhine, may imply that the main axis of their trading activities was shifting further east, as well as north. They are absent from the forged diploma of Dagobert.

39 DD Imp 1, no. 23: "Iubemus etiam, ut ipse mercadus per quatuor septimanas extendatur, ut illi negotiatores de Longobardia sive Hispanica et de Provencia ac de alias regiones illuc advenire possent."

40 Written between 800 and 835, the *Gesta Dagoberti*, 33, *MGH SRM* 2.413.4–6, depicts a *negotiator* of King Dagobert named Solomon overseeing certain *areae* – i.e. market places – of Paris. Fair: *Gesta*, 34, 413.9–18. Blumenkranz 1963, 151–2n2 claims the evidence is insufficient to identify him as Jewish. While it is true that biblical names were just beginning to gain some currency among Frankish Christians, nonetheless, to 9th-C. readers, a merchant named Solomon working for a Frankish king is unlikely to have seemed to have been a Frisian, Anglo-Saxon, Venetian or Frank. Jewish toll-collectors in remote places: Amulo of Lyons, *Liber contra Iudaeos*, 42, *PL*, 116.170D–171A. Cf. too the reflections of Bachrach 1977, 166n25.



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Until now. An unknown Hebrew text, knowledge of which I owe to a generous colleague, may document the exceptional expansion of the economic catchment area of the St. Denis fair in the middle of the ninth century, and so confirm our interpretation of the fictitious Solomon. A Jewish community of Christian Europe experienced a religious dilemma when they visited annual fairs, the tolls of which benefited the cult of Christian saints ("idolatry"), that is, a shrine. The phrasing indicates that the merchants frequented more than one such market, itself a precious indication of connections. The most obvious and important such market is that at Paris, the tolls from which went to St. Denis and whose collection was in the hands of a Jewish toll official according to fiction written in that very monastery. The learned head of the academy of Sura (Babylonia), Natronai (857–65), responded with this important opinion.[41]

You asked: There are places in which markets are established for the sake of [an] idolatry, once a year. Merchants come from all places to these markets and conduct business. When they depart, a tax is collected from them for the sake of [the] idolatry, and the market is called after its name. They thus say: "the market of such and such an idolatry."[42] Under such circumstances, may an Israelite go there to conduct business . . . ? Perhaps, because they are established on a yearly basis and collect a tax, and [the participant thereby] benefits the idolatry, it is forbidden.

If you say that because a tax is collected for idolatry it is forbidden, what of an Israelite who lives in that city? For their practice is that someone who comes from the outside, establishes a place[43] there, and buys and sells, is the one from whom they collect. But from someone who simply comes [i.e. without "establishing a place there"], they do not collect. Under such circumstances, is it or is it not permitted for a resident of that city, or for someone who [though not a resident] does not establish a place in it, to buy or sell [at the market]?

The following is our opinion: It is forbidden for an Israelite to go there to do business . . .[44]

41 On Natronai and the Gaonic literature in general, see now Brody 1998.

42 Bernard Septimus notes: "Perhaps the name of a particular saint is intended."

43 Professor Septimus observes that a variant reads "his place," and suggests that the clause may refer to setting up a stall or a shop.

44 Natronai bar Hilai Gaon, *Responsa*, 2.373–4. When he learned of my interest in early medieval traders, my colleague Bernard Septimus alerted me to this text and translated it. He then put me in touch with the editor, Professor Robert Brody of the Hebrew University, to whom I am indebted for an illuminating discussion about this important and hitherto unknown testimony. The fair is not likely to have been a Byzantine one (e.g. Ephesus, which also fulfills the conditions described here), since the Byzantine Jews seem then to have been oriented toward the Palestinian academy. The Babylonian academy, on the other hand was most influential among Jews of western Europe at this time, as Professor Brody informs me. Cf. Brody 1998, 134.



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Whether or not the Jewish merchants who raised this question were convinced by Natronai's answer to abandon the fairs in question, the new document proves that Carolingian fairs were attracting merchants who were in contact with Iraq. If the identification with the fair of St. Denis is correct, it throws a powerful beam of light on its expanding horizons. And those horizons are not diminished by the fact that Natronai was in pretty regular contact with Jews in both Spain and Frankland.[45]

The range of wares on offer which contemporaries considered noteworthy also changed. From beginning to end, the luxury of French wine founded the fair's trade.[46] The shipment of large quantities of wines, presumably in casks, will have encouraged an export geography of water routes, or land routes to nearer customers willing to absorb the comparatively much higher cost of wagon transport. The distribution of the wine concentrated at Paris was therefore probably geared to the Seine river network and the coastal regions beyond the river's mouth. Archaeology in fact points to exports toward Aquitaine; but it also confirms the texts' emphasis on Anglo-Saxons by showing a flow toward Hamwic of ceramic which has been connected with the wine trade.[47]

Featured products expanded beyond wine. By 814, the wagon loads of honey – the essential sweetener in a society without sugar – had become sufficiently important to be added next to wine in Louis the Pious' confirmation of his grandfather's privilege for the abbey that sponsored the fair.[48] Even more significantly, around 900, madder (*garantia*) joined the wine and honey as noteworthy wares at the fair. This plant was used to produce brilliant red dyes and it too was sold there by the cartload. A burial in St. Denis indicates that it had been known in Paris since at least Merovingian times; Charlemagne had called for it to be grown on the royal estates and used in their textile making.[49]

45 Thus, Natronai mentions both when discussing exceptions to the customary year-long mourning period which marked the deaths of distinguished scholars of the learned academy: *Responsa*, 2.424–5: "Therefore a distant place like Spain or Franja, and any place where the tidings arrive after twelve months, is exempt from eulogizing and closing the synagogues and the houses of study," kindly translated for me by Professor Brody. Cf. Brody 1998, 133–4.

46 E.g., Levillain 1930, 29; cf. Devroey 1993b, XI, 578–9, for the likelihood that St. Germain's vineyards also produced for this market.

47 Hodges 1977, 242–7. An interesting parallel comes from Lyons, whose Jewish merchants were selling wine to Christians, apparently at levels that surpassed the retail trade, since they had received "many pounds of silver" from court officials for the purchase of wine. Thus Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 194.114–19; cf. 193.73.

48 BM 552, *Saint-Denis*, Pièces justificatives, 68, pp. xlvi–xlvii. Charlemagne's charter does not survive; honey is not mentioned in Carloman's 769 confirmation of Pippin III's original charter: DD Kar 1, nos. 43 and 6, respectively.

49 Körber-Grohne 1987, 421; *Capitulare de villis*, 43 and 70, 87.8 and 90.10.



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The featured products all stemmed from the French countryside and so underline the connection between agrarian production and exchange. But the madder adds a new dimension. The sale of a craft ingredient in such large quantities testifies to the snowballing effect of this market, which appears to have precipitated the commercializing of new goods, or of old goods in new quantities. It reveals a new articulation and specialization in the economy. The eighth- and earlier ninth-century market had featured wine and honey, destined for consumption. The wagon loads of dye, on the other hand, imply the supply of a crucial ingredient in a transformation industry located elsewhere (also in England?), the craft production of textiles.[50] Those carts of madder signal a first stage in the proto-industrial interdependence of distant regions. Similarly, the efforts in the 830s of St. Denis to insure deliveries every twenty-four months of 4 *tons* of lead suggest that metal may have joined the wares whose marketing piggybacked on the basic demand for French wine (Ch. 24.1).

The nature of all these goods combines with the presence of merchants from the Mediterranean to show that the fair was reaching a higher order of trade as well, and to underscore the connection between rural and trading economies. Southern traders cannot have been much interested in exchanging their wares for wine, lead, honey, or, probably, wagon loads of madder, given the high cost of transporting such bulky goods overland. This means that whatever southern wares they brought to St. Denis were exchanged at least in part against the profits generated by the sale of the bulky goods. We do not yet know what the Anglo-Saxons brought to market to exchange for these goods: silver, slaves, textiles, and, maybe, tin are all possible.[51]

Between 700 and 900, the fair of St. Denis changed. It expanded. But its transactions did not simply show steady increase. Our sources are better than that, since they allow us to see occasional downturns that punctuated cumulative growth. Comital efforts to extract stiff surcharges from participants had led to a temporary contraction of the fair in the number and variety of merchants trading there, forcing the abbot of St. Denis to seek royal intervention in 753. The long series of Viking wars in the later ninth century must also have disrupted the fair, at least intermittently. But the merchants were still there when the Vikings infested the river early in 861.[52] The very next year the Vikings threatened but failed to disrupt the Seine merchants who had gathered far upstream at Chappes (Aube; cant. Bar-sur-Seine).[53] Rather than stifling trade, an unexpected consequence of

50 Madder was found stockpiled along with other dyes at York in the 10th C.: Körber-Grohne 1987, 421.

51 Pelteret 1995, 74–9, shows that there was an English export trade in slaves into the 12th C., and argues that the *Honorantie ciuitatis Papiae* reveals English slave and other exports to Italy in the reign of King Alfred (871–901). See below, pp. 679f.

52 *Ann. Bert.*, s.a., p. 84.

53 Lupus of Ferrières, *Ep.* 125 (119), 118.16–26.



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the Viking invasion was to drive merchants, commerce, and the markets they spawned deeper into the countryside. One wonders what the impact might have been on previously remote rural economies. In any case, within another generation, St. Denis was forging a document to justify expanding the fair to a month.

## 4. Ships and traders on the Rhine

The Rhine and its tributaries worked in much the same way as the Seine, only over twice the distance, and episcopal towns clustered more closely toward its middle. In its northern estuary lived the Frisians, strategically positioned on the threshold of the North Sea and the shipping routes to England and Scandinavia.[54] There stood one of the great trading settlements of the Carolingian empire, the aptly named Dorestad, "Gateway Place," on the threshold of "Austrasia," the "old" lands that were the heart of Carolingian family power. Texts mentioning merchants there are not inconsequential. But they are dwarfed by the archaeology of the site itself and its exports.[55]

The emporium mushroomed out of the marshy countryside along one of the arms into which the Rhine divides as it approaches the sea. Growth began in the late seventh century. At its peak around 825, Dorestad sprawled over at least 40 hectares.[56] By Charlemagne's time its wooden houses and storerooms crowded cheek by jowl along some 1,500 m of the river bank. They continued upstream, less densely, for at least the same distance again. A couple of hundred meters inland and the buildings were already blending into the rural countryside. The "Crooked Rhine," where the boats beached, was shifting progessively eastward, away from the docks, so the merchants of Dorestad kept extending their wooden decks to reach the water. By Louis the Pious' day, these structures projected 200 m from the warehouses and stretched the length of the densely settled zone. The many hectares of wooden decking seem to have served as loading platforms.[57] Between about 675 and 825, all this building felled several million trees, deforesting the settlement's surroundings.[58]

The objects preserved in the soil testify not only to the local craft industries, but to a lively interregional and international trade. Large numbers of barrel staves of silver fir (*abies alba*), the closest forests of which lay some 500 km up the

54 See Lebecq 1983 and, most recently, G. Neumann *et al.*, "Friesen," *RGA* 10 (1996): 2–69 and Lebecq 1996.

55 Etymology: Tiefenbach, in H. Tiefenbach *et al.*, "Dorestad," *RGA* 6 (1986): 59–82, here 60.

56 Hill *et al.* 1990, 54.

57 See the first two volumes of the excavation report: Van Es and Verwers 1980 and Prummel 1983; there is an excellent brief overview in Tiefenbach *et al.*, "Dorestad," *RGA* 6 (1986): 59–82.

58 Casparie and Swarts 1980.



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Rhine, document here too a flourishing wine trade, not all of whose barrels ended at Dorestad. The trail of craft production is equally clear: glass, pottery, and lava millstones all traveled downstream to Dorestad's docks, and from there to the North Sea.[59] Amber reached Dorestad from the Baltic, but other northern and western goods, whether wool or textiles, furs or slaves, naturally have left no archaeological traces.[60] Of the slaves, at least, we need have no doubt. At Utrecht, about 20 km upstream from Dorestad, inbound traders would probably see their first Frankish church – dedicated of course to the patron saint of the Franks, not the Frisians. The ever practical and pious Frankish kings helped finance that local cathedral with the tolls (*decima*) collected on sales of slaves, as well as other items.[61] A lead seal "for cloth" may testify to customs procedure, and iron slag shows metal production at Dorestad as well.[62] As one would expect at an international trading town, money was all over the place. By 1976, 313 silver Carolingian coins had turned up in hoards and stray finds from the two generations on either side of the year 800, when Dorestad was at its peak. But what is even more remarkable for an international port of entry, only one non-Carolingian issue, an Anglo-Saxon *sceatta* of the eighth century, has emerged from the excavated banks of the old Rhine.[63] Could one hope for better proof of the stringent control the Carolingian kings exercised over the money circulating in their dominions?

Over 1,500 km to the south – the many straightenings engineered since the nineteenth century have considerably shortened its course – the Rhine rose high in the Alps, near the bishopric of Chur, on the threshold of Italy and another Carolingian toll collecting point; its new waters flow right beneath the hiding place of the Ilanz hoard. In most places, the river helped even heavily laden boats move downstream toward Dorestad and the sea. But in the opposite direction, gangs of slaves marched along the banks of the river, towing their master's boat and its merchandise against the current.[64] One wonders whether the masters

59 Maps in Lebecq 1983, Figures 17–19; for a photograph of an apparently Frankish wine barrel at Haithabu: Jankuhn 1986, Abb. 66.

60 Amber: Van Es and Verwers 1980, 169.

61 DD Kar 1, no. 56 (A.D. 769; confirmation); on the famous Frisian purchase of a war slave at London, Pelteret 1995, 77.

62 Seal: Enno van Gelder 1980, 221; slag: Van Es and Verwers 1980, 187.

63 Enno van Gelder 1980, 221.

64 We learn about them thanks to an anecdote in Wandalbert of Prüm's *Miracula Goaris* (*BHL* 3566–8), 29, 74.10–76.1. A Frisian merchant was traveling upstream, accompanied by at least four slaves, one of whom stayed on the boat with him, while three or, to judge from the phrasing, more slaves, towed the boat, "as usual" ("ut moris est"). Another Frisian merchant, equally navigating upstream, was also accompanied by a group of slaves since, in a rage, he dragged one out of the shrine where he had fled and killed him on the spot: *ibid.*, 25, 70.6–15. On early medieval river navigation, see Ellmers 1972, 76–116, 253–4; against the current, from Rotterdam to Strasburg took about ten or eleven weeks in the 18th C.; downstream speeds of



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found it economical to feed the slaves for the easy return trip downstream. Might not some have been sold off with the boat's cargo at the southern end of the journey?

Upstream from Dorestad, merchants resided at Cologne. They are strewn along the middle Rhine, at Bonn, particularly at Mainz – just upstream from the huge silver hoard of Biebrich – and also at Worms.[65] Frisians certainly got as far as Strasburg. In the 820s a poetically inclined exile there insisted that the town owed its large population to trade. His personified Rhine refutes the Vosges' claim that their agrarian wealth alone sufficed for greatness:

> If people kept for their own use all
> That your lovely land produces, Alsace,
> A lively race would lie steeped in its wine
> And buried in its furrowed fields;
> Barely one man would be left in so big a city![66]

However small a "big" Carolingian town might appear by Roman or later medieval standards, one senses that this Aquitainian observer would have made short shrift of modern notions of agrarian autarky in the Carolingian economy, at least in this region.

Vessels also sailed the Rhine's main tributaries. Einhard notes that merchant boats from Mainz regularly headed up the Main river toward his estate at Seligenstadt. They bought grain and transported it for sale elsewhere.[67] Is there just a hint of boast in his report that, for the June feast of its patron saints, trading vessels sailed to his spanking new shrine from as far away as Cologne? The implication is probably that Einhard himself was trying to start a fair there, which casts

80–100 km per day are attested for the early Middle Ages: 263–5; and Lebecq 1988, with good discussions of towing.

65 Bonn: *Translatio Chrysantis et Dariae a.* 844 (*BHL* 1793), 21, *AASS* Oct. 11.492E–F; Cologne and Mainz: see Ch. 23.1 and below, n67 about grain merchants' ships based at Mainz. Notwithstanding the objections of Gockel 1970, 169–70, esp. n988 – which neglect the critical evidence of the location of the property outside the walls of Mainz, by the river bank, and the house's name "Ad hrachatom," i.e. "By the granaries" – I find attractive the suggestion of Borcher 1954, 75–6, and Büttner 1967, 54–5, that the benefactor of Fulda, Landfrit, who owned many slaves and unspecified amounts of precious metals, was a merchant: *Fulda*, nos. 190a (b), (15 September 791) and 219 (20 December 780/802). For serious microtoponymic and other evidence of the Frisian presence at Worms, Mainz and Cologne, Lebecq 1983, 1: 27–8 and 39–41. For the connection between granaries and merchants, see Siems 1989, 121–5.

66 Ermoldus Nigellus, *Ad Pippinum regem*, I, 115–18, p. 210. Frisians: *ibid.*, 119–20. The plowed fields (*arva*) imply grain exports: cf. *ibid.*, 107–9, p. 210. See too the toll exemption for merchants of the monastery of Honau, just downstream from Strasburg on the opposite bank: DD Kar 1, no. 137 (A.D. 781).

67 Einhard, *Transl. Marcell. et Petri*, 3, 6, 250.14–16. Cf. above, n65 on Landfrit.



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an unusual entrepreneurial light on the career of the statesman and intellectual.[68] He was not the only dignitary in those parts to be tempted by trade. In the Rhineland apparently, a bishop stored up grain in good years and made a killing selling it in a bad one.[69] The extent to which the microeconomies scattered along the tributary rivers like the Main and the Moselle were integrated into more distant worlds emerges from the story of Ibbo, a Frisian merchant who gave himself to a suburban church at Trier. In his own ship, Ibbo sailed across the sea ("ultra mare") to buy things for the community, and he did so in the company of six other merchant ships which were not dependents of the church. We learn about this is only because Ibbo's ship survived a storm thanks to St. Maximinus' protection. The story suggests – and is perhaps meant to suggest – that even without toll exemptions, merchants stood to gain by trading for churches.[70]

## *The economic lessons of Rhenish pottery*

Ceramics have already transformed our understanding of exchange in the late Roman economy. The same thing is beginning in early medieval history. Scholars should soon be able to compare the lively but anecdotal picture of the production and movement of goods drawn from the texts with the infinitely more detailed distribution patterns of Rhenish ceramics. The typology, chronology and kiln identifications are improving dramatically, but an abundance of riches has so far impeded detailed distribution maps. The sheer volume of sherds to be classified and analyzed in various German museums has overwhelmed the specialists.[71] Even so, the process by which the late Roman production and diffusion of ceramics contracted and fragmented has been well sketched for Alamannia and Bavaria. It provides the backdrop for grasping the new development of the Carolingian economy. Here, the areas in which early medieval wares circulated shrank to tiny zones by about 650.[72] The distribution of six or seven wares in those micro-zones shows clearly that the pottery moved along waterways,

68 Einhard, *Transl. Marcell. et Petri*, 4, 17, 263.44–58; in August other merchants took the cured woman home to Cologne: *ibid.*, 264.2–6.

69 Notker, *Gesta*, 1, 23, 31.4–32.12. On the place, *ibid.*, 27n5. Cf. Sabbe 1934, 181–2, who did not notice that the "avarus ille negotiator" was a bishop, as the end of the story and Notker's moral (not to mention that the anecdote is one in a string of stories about bad bishops) show.

70 *Vita Maximini*, 14 (*BHL* 5822), *AASS* Maii 7.24D; Lebecq 1983, 1: 28–9. DD Kar 1, no. 276, granting the exemption to St. Maximin, is a gross 12th-C. forgery which gives no sign of deriving from a lost original.

71 Janssen 1987, 14.

72 Hübener 1969, 1: 157–68, who suspected that the change reflected less contracting commercial systems of distribution than a shift from itinerant potters to resident ones; Roth 1985, 180, hesitates on this last point.



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essentially the middle Rhine and the Neckar rivers. Seventh-century finds cluster most densely in six or seven circles, the average radius of which is about a day's travel (35 km, see Ch. 16.1).[73]

When the distributions of eighth- and ninth-century wares are definitively mapped, they will show a very different picture. One suspects that multiple micro-regional producers and distribution networks faced increasing competition from larger production and distribution systems. This led (by a chronology which is uncertain) to a transformation of pottery supply. Compared with the tiny Merovingian zones, even early evidence shows dramatically expanded distribution. Moreover, internal expansion was matched by export outside the Frankish empire. Thus the dissemination of Carolingian-era Badorf ware can be reckoned in hundreds, not dozens of kilometers; "Tatinger" type pitchers are found from Mainz and Lorsch in the south, to York and Birka in the north, and Hamwic in the west.[74] But the economic lessons of Carolingian pottery are deeper still.

Contrary to what scholars assume about late Roman pottery (and more like what is known of the early Roman economy), ceramics were certainly, in and of themselves, an object of commerce in the ninth century. The cell of St. Goar, on the left bank of the Rhine, belonged to the abbey of Prüm which was itself, it is suspected, associated with the production of Mayen ware (see below). Shippers often stopped at St. Goar's for a prayer and a rest – and, the monks hoped, to make an offering for the saint's assistance – before braving the dangerous rapids upstream, the Loreley. Merchants and kings who were in too much of a hurry for these niceties suffered the wrath of the saint and the river. This was the fate of some unfortunate potters who refused to pray at the chapel, as Wandalbert of Prüm gloats. Their business was selling the jugs (*ollas*) they were transporting by boat; a woman and her little boy were traveling with them. At her request, they put into shore so she could pray. But they grew impatient waiting for her and resumed their journey, heading straight into the rapids a hundred paces upstream. Naturally, God took vengeance for the slight to his saint: he sank their ship and killed them all. The woman realized what had happened as soon as she returned from the shrine, when she saw their jugs (Figure 22.1) bobbing on the water. But thanks to her prayers, her son, who had stayed on the vessel, was miraculously saved.

73 Hübener 1969, 2, Tafel 233 with discussion on 168–9. I have not included the scattered outliers. The single ware of Karte 11 seems to fall into two circles on the middle and upper Neckar and I have so counted them. If they were consolidated into an oblong, it would measure about 150×50 km. In Karte 50, the largest circle (c. 45 km radius), is really very thinly spread. See also Roth 1985, 172–80, who develops this argument.

74 See the indicative map of the directions of Badorf exports in Janssen and Follmann 1972, 38 and cf. W. Janssen, "Badorf," *RGA* 1 (1973): 593–7, here 596; fully documented distribution map of Tating pitchers in Ring and Wieczorek 1979.



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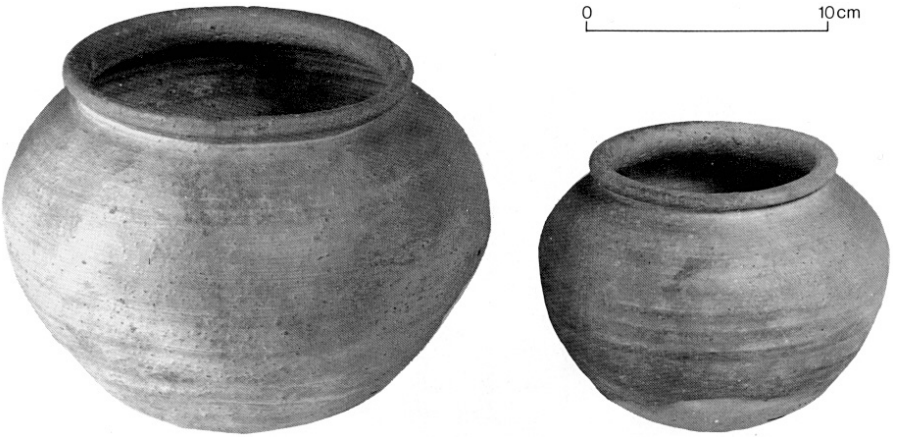


Figure 22.1. "Jugs bobbing on the water." One can easily imagine how pots like these might have bobbed on the surface after the ceramic merchants' ship sank in the Rhine rapids, according to Wandalbert of Prüm's description. This Carolingian pottery was produced in kilns such as the one illustrated in Figure 22.2. Courtesy of Werner Janssens.

Wandalbert handles his wide Latin vocabulary well, and his word usage is usually precise. He says that the potters (*figuli*) themselves were shipping their wares up the Rhine. He makes quite clear that the ceramics are for sale; indeed, the potters seem to be retailing them directly along the river.[75] There is no hint that the boat carries any wares other than the pottery. With the fact that the sellers were potters, this proves that ceramics themselves were an object of commerce, even upstream, and did not need to ride piggyback on other goods. The fact that the wares floated shows that they were "closed" wares, like pitchers or jugs. Open wares would have sunk, especially since they were presumably transported nested one inside another.

The potters themselves were probably Franks, for Wandalbert is much concerned with ethnicity and usually specifies non-Franks.[76] They came from downriver of St. Goar, probably, that is, from the great ceramic-producing region of the Vorgebirge, where so many Carolingian kilns have come to light. The story also indicates that distribution networks had not developed very far by 839 (when Wandalbert finished the *Miracula*), since the producers were marketing their wares directly. This raises the question of whether the kilns were fired seasonally, or whether a division of labor occurred within the potters' families. Finally, Wandalbert tells this tale for a purpose – to encourage travelers to stop at his

75 Wandalbert, *Miracula Goaris*, 21, 66.1–67.19, here 66.5–6: "cum . . . figuli ollas *praetio distrahendas* in nauicula ueherent . . ."

76 E.g., *ibid.*, 1, 43.6; 7 (the famous story of Germanic and Romance linguistic hostility), 50–2; 16, 63, etc.



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shrine before risking the rapids. The details of it surely were intended to strike fear into potters and their ilk, just as others were directed at Frisian merchants, Irish pilgrims, and Carolingian kings.[77] Like merchants, pilgrims, and kings, potters now were regularly sailing on the Rhine.

Archaeology provides a context which confirms that surmise. Notwithstanding the immense work that remains to be done, what is known permits three provisional but important insights. They deepen and complicate our understanding of patterns of exchange along the Rhine, and elsewhere.[78] The first two concern the distribution geography of ceramics, the means and lay-out of whose macro-regional distribution signal the broader waves of economic expansion and contraction we have witnessed in the human form of our Rhenish pottery merchants, and whose micro-regional distribution over time and space promises to uncover the workings of very small economic worlds. The third proves expanding production in the Carolingian age.

Rhenish ceramics display intriguing correlations on both the very local and the broader regional level. Pottery goes with political structures, major and minor. The micro-diffusion zones carefully mapped for ceramic wares in late seventh-century southwestern Germany correlate closely with the basic building blocks of Carolingian political geography, the *pagi* ("Gaue"), which appear in the sources of the eighth and ninth centuries. This seems to show convergence of economic and political structures at the base of early medieval society.[79] The changing distribution patterns of two more wares reveal an analogous correlation on a much wider regional level. Between the seventh and the early ninth centuries, with few exceptions, the general distribution of "older yellow clay (wheel-turned) ware" extends only as far south into the Rhine–Neckar region as the frontier between Frankish power and the independently minded duchy of Alamannia. Conversely, the "rough-walled (wheel-turned) ware," produced at Donzdorf, inside Alamannia, barely moved further north than that same imaginary line separating the two political entities. Brutally and definitively, Carloman crushed the Alamannian duchy's aspirations to independence in 746, and the territory was bound for absorption into the broader political structures of the emergent Frankish empire.[80] As Alamannia was assimilated over the course of the next century, the southern barrier to the "older yellow clay ware" melted away, and its ninth-century variant ("Runder Berg" type) traveled far south along the Neckar and crossed the watershed to the Danube.[81] The implication is inescapable.

77 E.g., *ibid.*, 11, 55–9; 16, 63; 28–9, 73–4.

78 Above, pp. 6–11; cf. e.g. Bleiber 1982; Settia 1993.

79 Hübener 1969, 168–9; cf. on *pagi*, Ganshof 1970, 27–8; given the nature of the evidence, it is quite plausible that the *pagi* are older than their first appearance in the written documents.

80 See e.g., Ewig 1976, 429–32; Fouracre 1995, 96.

81 Gross 1987, 194–7 with Abb. 1–3.



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Compared with the seventh and even the eighth century, the diffusion of this pottery widened, and it did so in tandem with expanding political structures. The Carolingian empire's spreading political geography enlarged economic geographies; distribution zones of products grew as political barriers in their way disappeared.

How exactly did such expanding economic geography happen? An important clue comes from recent work on one microstructure of pottery diffusion. This particular type of distribution overlaps with the locations of properties of major religious establishments which so often lay at the heart of the great estates. That is, pottery distribution correlates with institutional structures. For instance, some of the best-known Rhenish pottery was made on the middle or lower Rhine. It rarely appears further upstream from the seventh through the eighth century, probably, in part at least, because of the political structures we have seen. The exception is "Mayen ware," produced in the vicinity of Wandalbert's abbey of Prüm. This pottery reappears on the Neckar river in the Carolingian period, precisely in a small zone dense with properties belonging to the abbey of Prüm. A similar correlation has been noticed between the spread of an Alsatian ware and the properties of the abbey of Wissembourg.[82] In a third case, the pottery assemblage of an excavated settlement seems to change around 800, about the time the charters show that the settlement changed owners, passing from a count to the abbey of Fulda.[83]

The pattern is not unique to the Rhineland. Another end of the empire has been until now pretty much a blank on the economic map of Carolingian Europe. An unusual stripe-painted pottery occurs on the edge of the diocese of Nîmes, in the shadow of the abbey of Psalmodi. So far it has been found only in a narrow zone of villages some 18 km long by 7 km deep, strung along the edges and tributaries of a salt pond (L'Etang de l'Or), and an old road. Although the kiln remains unidentified, the pottery was clearly made very near this diffusion zone. The extreme points of this zone are about three-and-a-half hours' walk apart (a radius of 9 km). The furthest diffusion observed so far would be well within the natural catchment area – one or two hours' walk – of a periodic market held in some central place, if we accept the hypothesis of commercial distribution. In any case, once again, possessions of the nearby abbey dominate the diffusion zone.[84] If this type of diffusion, in which property correlates with pottery, should be confirmed, it would show that some ceramic distribution was enmeshed in estate structures: great estates affected and perhaps constituted the distribution structures of some ceramics in some places. The extension of such estates' holdings

82 *Ibid.*, 199–200 with Abb. 5 and 3, respectively.

83 *Ibid.*, 197.

84 Leenhardt *et al.* 1993, 213–15.



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into zones newly annexed by Carolingian power propelled the expansion of the economic range of ceramics, which happen to be one of the few goods which would leave tracks today. Are we seeing Toubert's "transfer economy" at work? The fact that these examples occur at opposite ends of the empire hints in any case that we are seeing an economic process which was embedded deep within the basic structures of the Carolingian empire. This just could be the archaeological manifestation of the growth of small rural markets which, increasingly, attracts historians' attention.

Finally, expanding production confirms that ceramic distribution widened. Good evidence of this comes from another great new story in early medieval economic history, the rise of the pottery industry of the Rhenish Vorgebirge. This region runs along the northern edges of the Rhineland massif. It was well watered, wooded, and stocked with clay, and it had been a notable producer of ceramics in antiquity. The quality and characteristics of the region's early medieval pottery lead archaeologists to suspect that some tradition of pottery-making survived from antiquity. But uninterrupted operations must have been on a tiny scale, since in this most densely exploited and relatively well-explored area, only at Mayen has ceramic production been documented continuously from late antiquity.

As Chart 22.1 shows, twenty-two sites are known to have produced pottery on a substantial scale between A.D. 500 and 1050.[85] Judging from the number of sites, production grew in the seventh century and dropped by half in the first half of the eighth. The second half of the eighth century witnessed sharp expansion: ceramic producing sites doubled, and finally peaked in the second half of the ninth century. The tenth century plateaued at the level of the earlier ninth. Finally, in the eleventh century, rapid expansion resumed, since the sites more than doubled.

Chart 22.1 further underscores just how new this growth was, in that it distinguishes fresh sites from continuously operating ones, and shows how long sites continued. With one exception, the Carolingian expansion comprised *only new sites*. Nor was it short-lived, since nearly half the new operations outlived the Carolingian dynasty and still made pottery into the eleventh or twelfth centuries. Impressive though the doubling of the number of production *sites* appears, it still does not give the full measure of the jump in production. For the size of the sites themselves grew. Whereas the Merovingian workshop at Huy (site 11) revealed two kilns, the Carolingian workshops at Brühl-Eckdorf (site 7; Figure

85 Janssen 1987, 77–115. Because he was looking for production centers that could have exported wares to Haithabu, his catalogue concentrates on the sites of some significant scale of production. This enhances the value of the sample for our purposes, since it focuses on the most important producers: the picture of the expanding scale of craft production is not distorted by proliferating minor centers.



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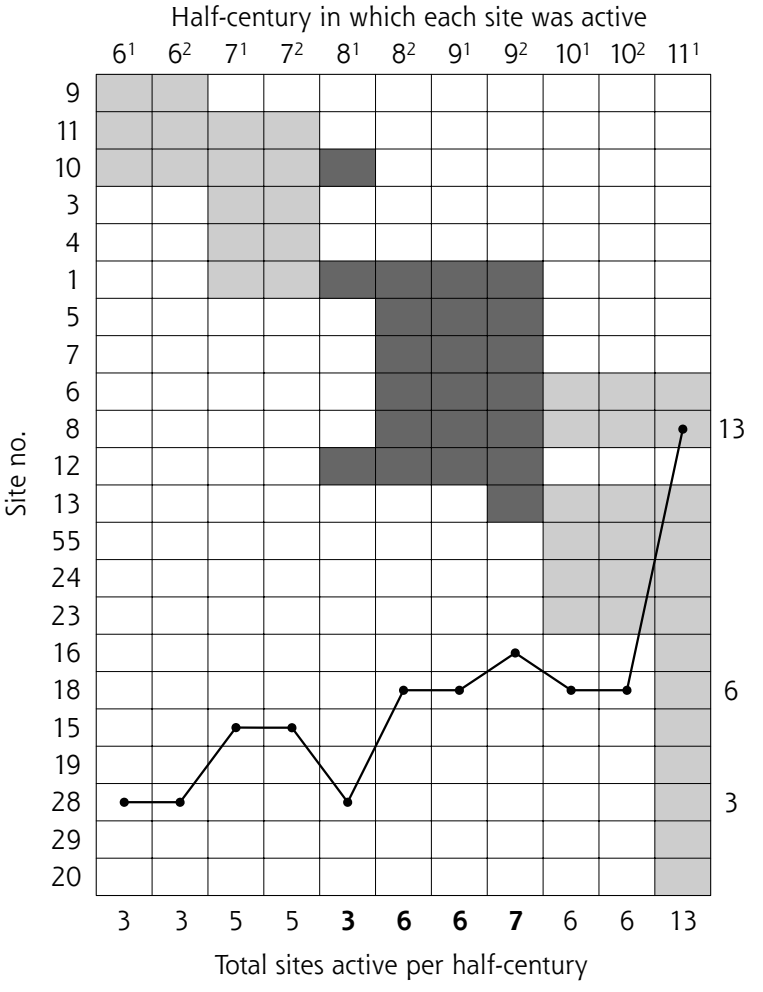
Chart 22.1. Rhenish Vorgebirge: periods of activity of pottery-making sites, 500–1050




●–● Plots the changing number of sites per half century.

*Source:* Janssen 1987, 77–115. Site numbers refer to Janssen's catalogue.

N.B. I have interpreted his approximate datings to "Carolingian" as 750–900.



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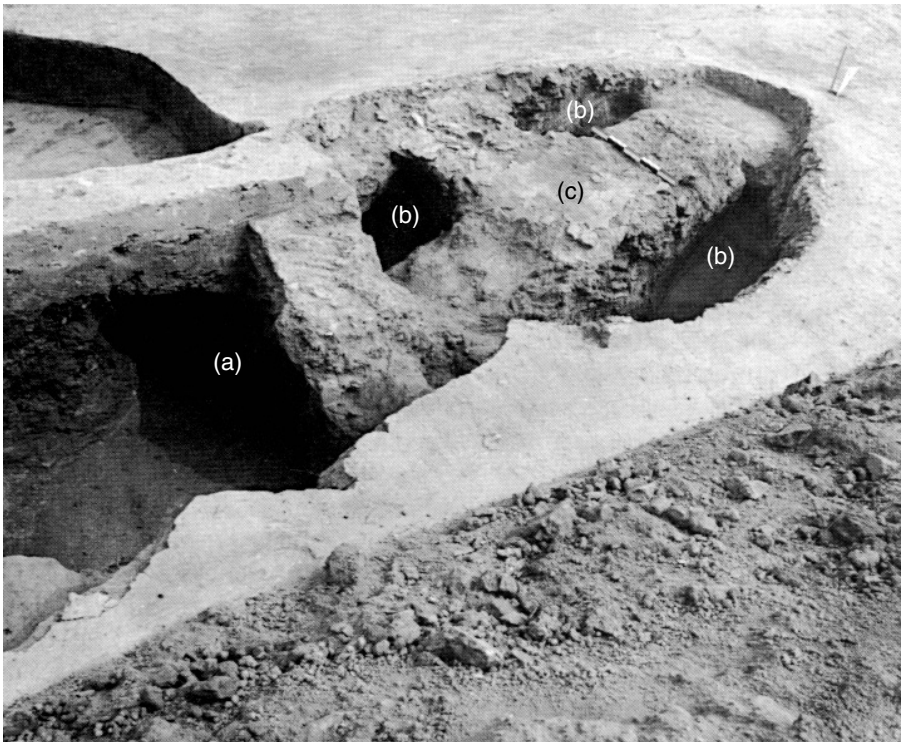


Figure 22.2. One of 17 Carolingian kilns at Brühl-Eckdorf (Chart 22.1, site 7; Map 22.1). This site is just south of Brühl and Badorf, near the present westbound exit ramp of A553, 6 km west of the Rhine. The photo shows substructures of one of the kilns graphed on Chart 22.1. This horizontal kiln was fired from the work pit (a). The hot air traveled through the twin tunnels (b), which run toward the upper right hand corner of the photo. Between them is the rectangular compacted clay floor (c) of the chamber, on which the pots were stacked for firing. The vault which closed off the firing chamber has disappeared. Courtesy of Werner Janssens.

22.2) and Bornheim-Walberberg (site 6) yielded seventeen and eleven kilns, respectively.

## *A movable market?*

In sum, archaeology allies with texts to show growth. Like the docks at Dorestad, production and distribution of some measurable goods expanded further up the Rhine. The circuits of trade, at least in bulk goods, availed themselves of the river transport system from its mouth (and beyond), as far as Strasburg. If Italy was the goal, the means of transport had to be able to cross the Alps. At some point, it



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would have been necessary to change from river boats to overland transport: wagons, pack animals, or bearers. One hopes that archaeologists might find that place. The cost of moving bulk goods must have soared from this point forward. Lively exchanges all along the Rhine do not necessarily prove that the river axis connected to Italy.

In any case, the pace of production was quickening in the Rhineland. We can see merchants on the move along the great river, as well as established in the towns, mostly bishoprics, along its banks. It is stimulating to consider this great axis of communications and exchange alongside that of the contemporary Seine. The comparison alerts us immediately to a striking difference. The Seine had Paris, perhaps already a place of exceptional importance in the ninth century. But it had especially the fair of St. Denis, whose commercial horizons look even greater now, thanks to the new Hebrew evidence. The Rhineland, on the other hand, boasted no such great, well-established fair. There were doubtless a number of smaller fairs, along the lines of what Einhard seems to have been attempting, or perhaps somewhat bigger. Might the seven episcopal towns along the Rhine in fact have constituted already markets permanent and interlinked enough that they, in conjunction with a succession of smaller-scale fairs, functioned like some spread-out version of the great fair of St. Denis?[86] That is plausible but as yet unverified. Something else might have helped. On a more irregular basis, for the space of two generations or so, another institution supplemented the town markets in a way that both resembled and differed from St. Denis: the movable feast of the Carolingian court.

Great wealth and an aching need for prestige fed demand for expensive and exotic goods in the royal household. Nor should we forget the gift-giving that greased the wheels of decision-making in a monarchy whose power depended on fashioning a delicate consensus within the elite. It is a little surprising that more has not been made of the fact that Charlemagne and Louis the Pious built three of their favorite palaces within a day's travel of major, permanent marketplaces. As Einhard pointedly noted, Aachen lay only "eight leagues" (32 km) from the emporium of Maastricht. The imperial palace on the bluff above the Waal (an arm of the Rhine) at Nijmegen stood about 40 km from Dorestad, on the Rhine. Further upstream, Ingelheim was similarly located overlooking the Rhine, about 25 km downstream from Mainz.[87] As the royal household traveled from palace to palace and beyond, the court itself periodically resembled a kind of circulating fair. Once or twice a year, the king's household ballooned when the elite of the Frankish empire converged to conduct political and military business at the highest level.[88]

86 The towns are Cologne, Mainz, Worms, Speyer, Strasburg, Basle, and Constance.

87 Einhard, above, n24; for imperial stays at these places, Brühl 1968, 1: 19–24.

88 Waitz 1874–85, 3: 555–643; Seyfarth 1910.



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Grandees who traveled to these general assemblies or the military expeditions which often followed them took the opportunity to transact private business too: surviving acts record their land exchanges and agreements established at the assemblies or on the ensuing campaigns.[89]

It is a fair conjecture that the general assemblies also offered a unique opportunity for merchants. Given what all historians think was an underdeveloped system of commercial distribution and marketing, the periodic assembly in one place of the wealthiest people from the far corners of the empire must have been irresistible. There are no explicit data on the size of the crowds that formed at these assemblies. The clearest statement comes from a meeting of Louis the Pious' successors at Savonnières in 862. To contemporaries it seemed quite large, since it combined the elites of the three kingdoms which had emerged from the old unitary empire north of the Alps. It gives an inkling of the size that assemblies may routinely have attained under Charlemagne and Louis the Pious. The rulers' advisers together numbered about 200 bishops, abbots, and laymen.[90] Since, as we have seen (Ch. 6.3), no Carolingian grandee traveled alone, this number must be extended by the kinsmen, vassals and servants who accompanied them. Attempts to limit the size of retinues of grandees on imperial business let us calculate that they were supposed to travel in groups averaging about twenty-nine persons. If this is correct, the total number of people who assembled at Savonnières may have exceeded 5,000.[91] Doubtless many of them were servants – cooks, grooms, priests, military retainers – and the like. But no self-respecting Carolingian grandee went traveling to court or to war without his kinsmen and friends.

Even if only one in ten attendees belonged to the empire's economic elite, ninth-century merchants would scarcely have found north of the Alps a bigger concentration of so many potential clients representing so much buying power for luxury goods or, potentially, for food and other supplies. What is more, the venue chosen for assemblies often concentrated this demand on the doorstep of an established trading settlement. Wherever they were held in the empire, the assemblies typically met on one of the great river highways. In fact, at the peak of Carolingian power, a large proportion of the assemblies convened precisely in the zones where we find a clustering of merchants. Of the seventy general assemblies summoned by Charlemagne and Louis the Pious between 770 and 839, the single greatest share (twenty-three: 33 percent) met in the middle Rhine zone (Map 15.1).[92] The second group (fifteen: 21 percent) concentrated in the middle Meuse zone.[93] A smaller number met well up the Seine system, on the Oise river (eight: 11 percent); a few assembled on the lower Rhine (four: 6 percent), on the Moselle (three), and on the Rhône axis (two).[94]

In more than half of the years between 779 and 839, the Frankish elite assembled within easy reach of the clusters of merchants we have observed on the



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middle Rhine, at Maastricht, and Dorestad. Periodic demand concentrated in precisely three of the most commercially developed zones of the Frankish empire as well as, once, at Lyons. About every other year, in other words, well-heeled demand ballooned. Nor did the Rhenish pattern disappear with Louis the Pious, since Louis the German held most of his assemblies in the middle Rhine zone.[95] Nonetheless, it must be observed that these assemblies differed from more traditional fairs in more than their mobility and somewhat irregular timing. They assembled in one place a large number of potential consumers of luxury goods. But there is no indication that these potential clients brought their own goods for sale to the assemblies. This would mean that the assemblies chiefly benefited merchants trading in luxury goods established in the region and those who catered to the court, who could respond quickly to the announcement of an assembly. Of course there was also money to be made by any who could help feed and shelter the large human group. If this economic dimension of the general assemblies is well founded, the changing political structures of the empire imply further changes over time. The break-up of the empire multiplied their number, even as it reduced their size and dispersed them geographically.

By their social characteristics and economic geography, then, general assemblies should have functioned in this way as great, fair-like markets catering to the rich and offering an additional if sporadic stimulus to the commercial structures developing in the regions where they occurred. But did they? One of Louis the Pious' privileges for merchants serving the palace implies that they did. The standard form granting imperial protection to these merchants exempted them from imperial requisitions and all tolls, except for a levy at the empire's major points of entry, Quentovic, Dorestad, or the Alps. This status was to continue in effect so long as the merchants appeared at the imperial court every year or two, at *mid-May*.[96] The reason for assigning a particular date is clear if one observes that Louis the Pious typically convoked a general assembly between May and June.[97] Mid-May assemblies were already well established when he ascended the throne.[98] Thus too the general principle that tolls were not due on goods trans-

89 See for Charlemagne, e.g., Bullough 1985, 281–2 with n2. The same holds for other Carolingian rulers: see e.g., BM 724, 976, 1372i.

90 Savonnières: BM 1297b–1298a, with *MGH Capit.* 2.165.8–10.

91 *MGH Capit.*, no. 141, 29, 1.291.30–7. The effort to limit the rations implies of course that the retinues tended to be bigger still.

92 The counts derive from BM. The middle Rhine assemblies were held at Worms (nine), Ingelheim (seven), Mainz (four), and Frankfurt (three), about 35 km from Mainz up the Main river. Ten more meetings seem to have been smaller-scale assemblies of key advisers, usually held in winter, and have not been counted: BM 175a, 219, 320b, 415a, 672h, 709a, 733a, 844a, 853c, 872g.

93 At Aachen (thirteen) and, on a tributary of the Meuse halfway between that river and the Rhine, at Düren (two).



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ported for someone's personal use was explicitly applied to travelers to the assemblies, which suggests that Frankish toll collectors had trouble distinguishing the grandees from merchants heading in the same direction.[99] Traders also followed the army, if we can judge from a report that crowds of them clogged the road and impeded a retreat during a battle between the brothers – which is the only reason they are mentioned in the first place.[100] Other merchants, both Christian and Jewish, maintained permanent residences at Aachen. A worried emperor ordered his officials to search their homes – along with those of his officials, prelates, and vassals – every week for male or female prostitutes.[101] Those merchants were manifestly well placed to profit from assemblies convened there or in its vicinity. Finally, the surviving privileges demonstrate that we are looking at more than one or two court suppliers. At least eight individual merchants were working for Louis the Pious' court in the 820s, and the fact that their privileges were copied to serve as models for others means that they were not alone.[102] The marketing potential of general assemblies helps us to understand why the Jewish

94 Respectively, Compiègne, six times, Quierzy, two; Nijmegen, three, and "Lippeham"; Thionville, two, and Metz. The other assemblies were scattered around the Frankish empire, with a cluster (six) in Saxony, on or near the upper Rhenish tributary, the Lippe, in connection with the wars there; Chalon-sur-Saône and "Stramiacus" near Lyons, localized at Tramoyes, c. 15 km northeast of Lyons: BM 941a.

95 Weber 1962, 61–2.

96 *Form. imp.*, no. 37, 315.2–5. We learn of these merchants and others mentioned in the same collection only because a scribe working in the imperial writing office copied this privilege into a model book for diplomas. The fact that the compiler felt that the privilege was drawn up frequently enough to warrant making this blank indicates that, recently, such privileges had been issued repeatedly. It is instructive, but not surprising, that no actual such document has survived among the Carolingian sovereigns' more than 2,000 preserved diplomas: the latter come from ecclesiastical archives which usually kept only institutional and real property-related records. My estimate of the number of diplomata derives from BM which enumerates some 2,070 items, including 300 some capitularies, some letters and forgeries, but which does not comprise the hundreds of privileges issued by "French" Carolingians.

97 Eight times between 820 and 830, as follows: 1 May 821, BM 735c; "May" in 823, 825, and probably 830: BM 771a, 794c and 874b; 24 June 824: BM 785c; June 826 and 828 (the year the model for the privilege was delivered): BM 829b, BM 852b; June/July? 827, BM841a–b. The significance of the date is the same whether or not the merchants were supplying the royal household or, in some sense, collaborating with the ruler in merchant ventures: cf. the differing interpretations of Laurent 1938, 281–9; Ganshof 1957, 109–12, and Claude 1987, 404–6. If the collaborative hypothesis is grounded, the ruler will have wanted to have his own trading stock on hand when the grandees arrived.

98 E.g., Alcuin, *Ep.* 193, 320.19–21, mentions to Arn of Salzburg that Charlemagne has summoned him to court for mid-May.

99 *MGH Capit.*, no. 44, 13, 1.124.32–125.2, A.D. 805; no. 139, 16, 1.285.1–3, from 818 or 819; 1.294.29–36, no. 143, 2, from 821; cf. Ganshof 1959, 28.



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merchants described by Ibn Khurradadhbih sailed from the Nile Delta sometimes for Constantinople, and sometimes for the Carolingian west, in order to reach the Frankish king and sell their wares "there" (Ch. 23.3). The concentrated demand of the normally very dispersed and very rich Frankish elite might well have made the general assembly a viable competitor with Constantinople for the sale of exotic luxury goods.

◈

So we can detect clusters of merchants at various places in Frankland: around the periphery at the principal points of entry, along the main rivers both in the vicinity of towns and in assembly places in the countryside, such as at Einhard's estate at Seligenstadt on the Main river. Merchants were sufficiently common by Louis the Pious' time that he instructed his counts to turn to them for routine information, apparently about coinage.[103] Even the preceding review, which lays no claim to exhaustiveness, suggests that at least some of these clusters of merchants connected to others inside the Frankish kingdoms. The merchants who periodically pitched their tents outside Soissons traveled from kingdom to kingdom and faced danger on some sea.[104] Privileges exempting monastic merchants from tolls often did so for the entire Frankish kingdom, implying a considerable range of action.[105] The original plan for the division of Charlemagne's empire forbade his sons from acquiring real estate in each other's kingdoms. But he explicitly exempted from this prohibition "gold, silver, gems, weapons, garments as well as landless slaves and those wares in which merchants specialize."[106] Merchants from Cologne and Mainz traveled up the Rhine and its tributaries, and the Frisians are attested along the Rhine from its estuary at least as far upstream as Strasburg.

Independent and growing evidence indicates not only that exchange was occurring, but that it was increasing. Whether we look at Carolingian pottery, at the fair of St. Denis, or the way in which royal privileges treat markets (not to mention the forgeries about markets), the increasing importance of the movement of goods and of markets is unmistakable.[107] Even more important from our point of view, local growth was linked with regional growth. One hint of this

100 *Ann. Bert.*, a. 876, p. 209. That shield sellers were among these merchants implies a kind of specialized production which is at odds with the conventional wisdom that Carolingian warriors satisfied their basic needs on their estates; it bears comparison with the less surprising swordsmiths, whose highly specialized wares are mapped with growing precision: Ch. 25.1.

101 *MGH Capit.* no. 146, 2, 1.298.8–15, attributed to Louis the Pious.

102 Counting only those merchants whose privileges specify that they are serving the palace, and construing ambiguous phrases for the minimal number: *Form. imp.*, no. 31, 310.7–8, five: David nunnum Davidis, Ioseph, "IMP" (undeciphered Tironian note), and "pares eorum"; no. 37, two: "praesentes fideles nostri"; no. 52: Abraham of Saragossa.



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comes from the weekly markets which began to be flanked by annual markets. By their very nature, weekly markets are quintessentially local in character. Annual markets, on the other hand, may reflect a broader catchment area.[108] A few very local markets blossomed into annual fairs.[109] As new agrarian institutions fostered increasing production, as expanding political institutions encouraged increasing communications, trade was developing smartly along the rivers of Frankland, even as production of one telltale craft industry jumped ahead. Like the Iraq connection of the St. Denis fair, the locations of emporia and toll stations on those rivers and near the frontiers show that internal exchanges were linked to more distant circuits.

103 *MGH Capit.* no. 147, 1.300.2–5. The text survives in one mutilated MS from s. ix $^{3/4}$: Mordek 1995, 546–9.

104 Above, n32.

105 E.g., DD Kar 1, no. 47 (A.D. 769); no. 137 (781).

106 ". . . excepto auro, argento et gemmis, armis ac vestibus necnon et mancipiis non casatis et his speciebus quae proprie ad negotiatores pertinere noscuntur." *Divisio regnorum* of 806, *MGH Capit.* no. 45, 11, 1.128.45–129.6.

107 Charles the Bald: Endemann 1964, 32.

108 De Ligt 1993, 4–15.

109 D Loth I, no. 50 (4 December 849), for Flavigny, of the market at Alise-Sainte-Reine, 2 km from the monastery; cf. Endemann 1964, 16–17; act of Charles,



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# 23

# Connections

So clusters and movements of merchants and goods can be traced in key regions of Italy and the Frankish north. The economic circuits of Italy connected to the bigger economies of the south and east. As the Parisian fair shows, at least a few merchants linked the Frankish traders and markets to distant lands. But those connections were even broader and stronger than what we have seen so far. They ran toward the north and, especially, toward the south, toward Italy and Spain, and beyond. Once again, exploring the more distant connections of the Carolingian economy will take us from the Frankish heartland to that of the Caliphate, to Iraq.

## 1. Northern and eastern European connections

Remarkable currents of trade washed back and forth along the rivers of the Frankish empire, and beyond. For Dorestad and the Frisians, this is a demonstrated fact. The scattered merchants whom the texts locate at London and York, and on the Baltic, have been joined by their exports, recovered by archaeologists in England as well as at Haithabu and the earlier market settlement, Ribe.[1] Haithabu aimed to control better the commerce across the narrow neck between the North Sea and Scandinavia, as well as any overland traffic down the road from Denmark into the Frankish empire (Ch. 20.1). The Danish king's choice of merchants to communicate with Charlemagne's court further indicates regular connections between the two economies.[2]

On the Rhine, Dorestad made money in more ways than one. Its mint testifies to the importance of the town; it also makes clear that the manufacture of

1 On the texts and archaeological evidence for the Frisians overseas, see Lebecq 1983, 1: 23–34 and 75–97; cf. Lebecq 1996, Feveile 1994, and Callmer 1994.

2 *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 809, p. 128.



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Carolingian coinage was in some way connected to commerce, a connection which is exemplified, for instance, by Carolingian privileges linking concession of a market with minting rights.[3] Under Louis the Pious, Dorestad seems to have been one of the two most prolific issuers of coins. Renewed scrutiny of the coin finds has led to the conclusion that the town's "economic boom" lasted longer than was previously believed, down to about 840.[4] The other hyperactive mint was Melle, whose argentiferous mines supplied much of Carolingian silver (Ch. 24.1). This pairing raises a further issue. Melle was important because silver was produced there. How was silver produced at Dorestad? Either it was shipped there to be coined (assuming the mints really were where they say they were) from inside the Frankish economy, or it entered that economy at Dorestad. Early analysis of the coins themselves suggests that, in the time of Charlemagne and Offa, Frankish silver traveled to England; certainly a few Dorestad coins have turned up there.[5] Silver struck at Dorestad or elsewhere in Frisia also traveled in other directions: its coins have been found up and down the Rhine system at places like Biebrich (Appendix 3, A5), Worms, Frankfurt, at Ilanz (A23) on the road into Italy and, in small numbers, at Haithabu and in Scandinavia.[6] It may be that some of these coins traveled for reasons other than commerce. But the overlap with Frisia's documented trading partners inside and outside the Frankish empire means that many coins surely traveled in merchant purses. For instance, a Frisian merchant heading south spontaneously gave a pound of silver (i.e. 240 d.) to St. Goar when the saint miraculously revived one of his slaves after a towing accident.[7]

Although the exploration of Quentovic is only beginning, the first finds connect it with its trading partner across the Channel, Hamwic.[8] The texts had already pointed to Neustria's trade with England. Charlemagne chose the head of toll-collecting at Quentovic as his emissary to King Offa of Mercia, because of the man's friendship with the Anglo-Saxon king.[9] Willibald (Ch. 5.1) sailed across

3 Endemann 1964, 34; 40n104; 43.

4 Coupland 1988 and 1990, 26; cf. 41, on *Christiana religio* issues which can be linked to Dorestad on stylistic grounds, and whose die traits might be taken to mean the mint struck 4.5 million coins between 822/3 and 840.

5 Metcalf and Northover 1989, 105–6, deduce from the fact that the gold content of Offa's coins decreased, compared to that of sceattas, but matches those of Charlemagne, that "revival of minting in Kent (and later London) was fed by continental silver brought to this country by cross-Channel trade." Dorestad coins: Lebecq 1983, 1: Figure 12. In the same period, Quentovic's mint seems to have been striking substantially fewer coins: Coupland 1990, 40–1.

6 See e.g., Lebecq 1983, 1: Figures 12 and 13. Cf. Coupland 1988, 25, and Metcalf 1996, 400, 409 and 422–8.

7 Wandalbert, *Mir. Goaris*, 29, 76.16–19.

8 Hill *et al.* 1990, 55, on the pottery assemblage.

9 *Gesta Font.*, 12, 2, pp. 86–7. See in general Lebecq 1989.



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the Channel in a ship traveling from Hamwic to the market of Rouen. Notker's late ninth-century assumption that in Charlemagne's day Irish scholars reached the Frankish shores aboard Anglo-Saxon merchant ships is surely revealing of his own time.[10] To contemporary minds, the Atlantic seaboard conjured up commerce. Alcuin, for instance, rewrote the life of a seventh-century saint, the relic collection of whose shrine occupied us earlier. St. Richarius (French "Riquier") came from just this region and it brought merchants to Alcuin's mind. Rethinking the saint's expeditions to England to evangelize and redeem slaves, Alcuin innovated. The Anglo-Saxon recast his source to show St. Richarius as a spiritual merchant who wanted to increase the Lord's money; he depicts his service to God in England as a kind of commercial venture.[11] We may suspect that a skilled writer's metaphor casts an oblique shaft of light on the reality of his own time and place: England and the continental coast evoked commerce. In any case, enough traders sailed between them for Charlemagne to use commerce as a diplomatic weapon. When he had a falling-out with their king, the Frankish ruler decided to freeze all business with merchants from Mercia.[12]

Anglo-Saxon merchants didn't stop at the mouths of the Frankish rivers. We have already seen them traveling to Paris for the St. Denis fair, and they may have displaced the Frisians there in the second half of the ninth century.[13] One settled in Marseilles around 750, when it was still the main Frankish port on the Mediterranean.[14] As we shall see, this is not the only instance in which the English helped link the Frankish heartland and their home markets with Mediterranean ones.

Eastward, Charlemagne had tried to confine trade with the Slavs and the Avars to controlled markets on the frontiers (above, p. 378). By the late ninth century, the Franks had expanded their borders further east and, perhaps, abandoned the effort to confine trade. They may have sought instead to add the profits that came from transit tolls to those collected in recognized market places. Who was behind this eastward drive is suggested by distinctive saints' cults which reinforce the later evidence of street or gate names that feature Frisians. Merchants from the Rhine estuary were active in some of those frontier markets or transit points, particularly at Erfurt and Magdeburg. The problem is that this evidence does not

10 Notker, *Gesta*, 1, 1, 1.6–2.6; on Irish-Frankish shipping connections, Johanek 1985, 227–34 and Lebecq 1989, 430–1.

11 Alcuin, *Vita S. Richarii Centulensis* (*BHL* 7223–7), 2, *MGH SRM* 4.390.12–391.3 and 8, 393.3–14 and 22–30 and 9, 393.31–394.2; his source, the anonymous 8th-C. *Vita Richarii* (*BHL* 7245), 2, *MGH SRM* 7.444.35–445.10 and 7, 448.3–20, narrates the same story without commercial similes. I Deug Su 1983, 148–9 noticed the commercial language when he emphasized the passage's social message concerning the liberation of slaves (149–52).

12 *Gesta Font.*, 12, 2, p. 87; cf. Abel and Simson 1883, 2: 7–9.

13 Lebecq 1983, 1: 26; cf. 1989, 429–30; Johanek 1985, 239–44.

14 *Annales Petaviani*, a. 790, *MGH SS* 1.70; cf. *ibid.*, 3.170 and, for the date, Levison 1946, 7n3.



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usually allow a very refined chronology and, in this case, one cannot safely push it back beyond the tenth century.[15]

Further south, indubitable signs of trade at both ends of the Danubian corridor imply that it may have traveled between them. The suggestion is not diminished by evidence of long-distance contacts along parts of the route. The Arab and Byzantine coin deposits, not to mention some more exotic goods, provide a first indication from the western end, and here and there along the Sava and Drava (Ch. 12.7). Next to the predominantly local or regional traders enumerated in the Raffelstetten inquest, we find a long-standing presence of Jewish and other merchants both from the region and from "other regions," transporting slaves and unspecified goods.[16] According to an Arab source, Jewish merchants traveled overland between Frankland and the east through the land of the Slavs. Its description is too vague to allow us to place them with certainty in either of our corridors, but they had to transit central Europe somewhere on their way to the Khazars, and it is tempting to connect them with the Jewish merchants mentioned a generation later at Raffelstetten.[17] We actually see a few Jewish slave dealers traveling along a segment of this route, as they drove St. Naum and his fellow missionaries through the Alps to Venice (R700). The pirates who preyed on St. Blaise on the middle Danube will not have stayed in business long if the pilgrim to Rome was the sole traveler along this part of the route. In fact they mistook Blaise for a merchant (Ch. 7.3); and the gold and copper coins from Constantinople dropped nearby were probably lost by someone other than Blaise (Appendix 3, B33). That trade could move far along this corridor is confirmed by a Frankish embassy to the Bulgarian ruler in 892. To force Svatopluk into submission, King Arnulf ravaged Moravia and sought, through his ambassadors, to block the export of salt from Bulgaria to the Moravians.[18] All told, the evidence suggests that, in the later ninth and early tenth century, traders too tramped along these continental corridors between east and west. Once again, a route of communication used by travelers turns out to be a route of commerce.

Some merchants who came to the court certainly connected it to markets beyond the transalpine heartland. This is why their exemption from tolls did not

15 Schlesinger 1958, 313–26; Lebecq 1983, 1: 41–8, particularly on the chronological limitations. It is tempting to connect the Frisians' redirected trade eastward to Viking attacks in their homeland and the North Sea.

16 Raffelstetten Plea, 9, 252.8–10: "Mercatores, id est Iudei et ceteri mercatores, undecunque venerint de ista patria vel de aliis patriis, iustum theloneum solvant tam de mancipiis, quam de aliis rebus, sicut semper in prioribus temporibus regum fuit." See Ganshof 1966, 222–3; cf. 214–18, on c. 6.

17 Ibn Khurradadhbih, trans. Jacobi, p. 253.

18 *Ann. Fuld.*, *Cont. Ratisb.*, a. 892, p. 121; Dümmler 1887–8, 3: 354. Salt features prominently in the Raffelstetten Plea: 1–2, 5, 7, pp. 250–2. For Bulgarian-Byzantine trade, see above, pp. 605f.



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extend to Quentovic, Dorestad, and the Alpine (and Pyrenean?) customs houses on the imperial frontiers, as the standard form of one privilege shows.[19] The very fact that the toll houses bracketed the choke points of communication between western Frankland and the Atlantic, eastern Francia and the Slavlands, and southern and central Francia with Spain and Italy points in the same direction for other merchants.

Texts thus show that trade flowed in the Frankish heartland and toward the growing economies of the north and west, as well as toward the Slavic lands to the east. Archaeology is beginning to map the flows in greater detail. It has already proved that the scattered references of the texts concern routine, not exceptional, activities. One may hope that it will soon chart their changing character and dimensions over time. The ever elusive issue of volume may finally yield to the trowel and the computer.[20] But, so far, the trowel has been less helpful to the south. That is where the big money lay, in the more advanced and larger economies of the Mediterranean. As far as Europe was concerned, that meant connecting to Muslim Spain and to Italy, where we have detected four major clusters of merchants with direct or indirect connections to North Africa, Egypt, Byzantium and the Levant.

## 2. Southern European connections

### *Spain*

Recent research has underscored, from the tenth century onward, the importance of trade with Muslim Spain in the broader commercial development of Christian Europe and Mediterranean commerce in general. It has further suggested that the beginnings can be traced back into the Carolingian period.[21] Merchants' movements bear this out. Because the emirate of al Andalus was increasingly well integrated into the broader economic and cultural world of the Caliphate, trading links across the Pyrenees offered Carolingian merchants still another indirect link to that vaster economy. Although the chronology, precise location, and development of the Frankish customs house(s) which funneled the trade with Spain remain unclear, the reality of that trade shows up in the first decades of the ninth century.[22]

19 *Form. imp.*, 37, 315.14–16; the three formulas for Jewish merchants, including the resident of Muslim Spain, offer superior conditions since their exemptions specify no such limitations: *ibid.*, 30–1 and 52, pp. 309–11 and 325; cf. in general Bachrach 1977, 90–7 and Siems 1992, 418–29.

20 See e.g., Janssen 1987, for a meticulous appraisal of Carolingian ceramics at Haithabu.

21 Constable 1996b, 39–41.

22 Customs houses: Ganshof 1959, 11n24, 16–17 and above, Ch. 20.1; the difficulty of distinguishing market from frontier *telonea* is the main complication.



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The earliest indication may lie in an obscure reference to some sort of trading zone (*commercium*) on the border of the Muslim and Frankish kingdoms in 809.[23]

By the 820s, trading links between Spain and Francia are unmistakable, and they reached much further than the frontier exchanges Theodulf of Orleans has already shown us (Ch. 12.2). In 828, Louis the Pious took the Jewish merchant Abraham under his personal protection: henceforth Abraham was in service to the palace and exempt from all tolls. Whether in this capacity or otherwise, he was licensed to buy foreign slaves and sell them anywhere inside the Frankish empire. By this provision, Louis the Pious sought to oblige Abraham to respect the Frankish and canonical legislation forbidding the sale of Christians outside the empire.[24] But the crucial point for us is that Abraham, court merchant of the Frankish emperor, did not live in the Frankish empire. He was a resident of Saragossa, in Muslim Spain. In his person, he directly connected the court market to the first major town on the Andalusi side of the border.[25] As part of his anti-Jewish campaign, Agobard of Lyons relayed to the emperor the stories of two escaped slaves from Cordova, one of whom claimed to have been kidnapped as a small boy by a Jew at Lyons in 802 or 803. His fellow slave was from Arles, and reported a similar misadventure at another's hands around 822/3. Agobard maintained that his investigation turned up reports of other kidnappings and outright purchases by the first merchant.[26] Although Agobard's rabid anti-semitism raises questions about the care with which he might have checked these particular reports, the basic facts of a slave trade funneling human wares to al Andalus easily fits the profile suggested by the slave trader Abraham of Saragossa. And for Agobard's claims to have any effect – he knew all too well that the first reaction of Louis the Pious and his advisors would be to check the story with their own Jewish friends and merchants – there must have been commercial contacts connecting Lyons and Arles with Cordova.[27] What is more, Louis had

23 The Muslim governor of Saragossa invaded Frankish territory when the local count died: *Ann. regni Franc.* a. 809, p. 130: "Aureolus comes qui in commercio Hispaniae atque Galliae trans Pirineum contra Oscam et Caesaraugustam residebat . . ." Although one is tempted to recognize here a metaphorical expression, I have found no close parallel; cf. below, Ch.25n93.

24 See Hoffmann 1986, 17. If this provision was really enforced in Abraham's case, we must suppose either that this Spaniard only imported foreign slaves for an internal Frankish market, or that a market on the border allowed other merchants to purchase the slaves and transport them into al Andalus. The latter explanation might clarify the enigmatic *commercium* of 809.

25 "Habitans in civitate Cesaraugusta," *Form. imp.*, 52, 325.8; cf. above, pp. 666–8.

26 Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 195.149–59.

27 The letter to which Agobard attached the postscript describes the direct and negative reaction his earlier anti-Jewish activities had brought down on him from the imperial court: *ibid.*, 191.21– 192.57; cf. Blumenkranz 1963, 160–3; Bachrach 1977, 98–102.



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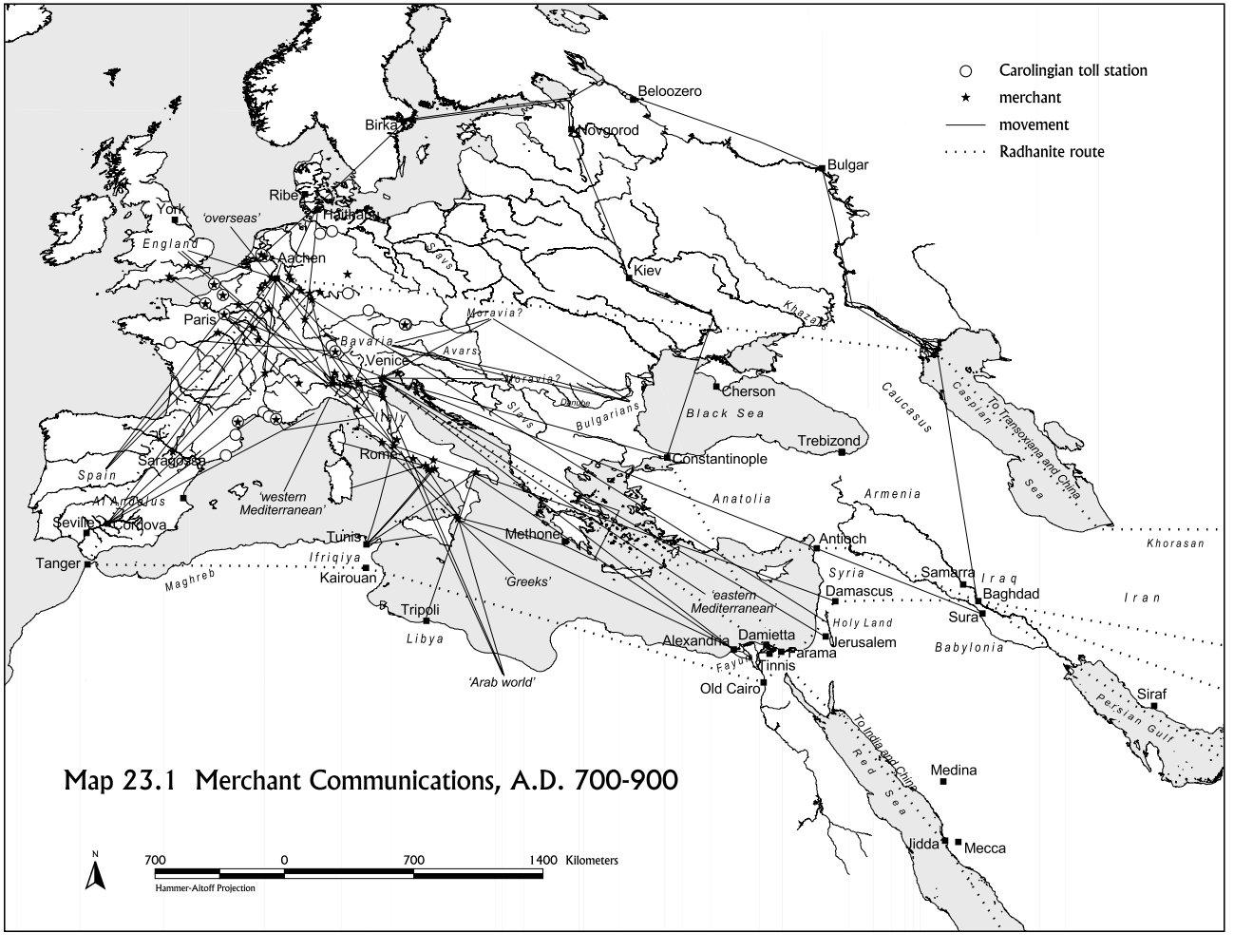


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accorded very similar privileges to David, Joseph, and other Jewish slave traders who were precisely residents of Lyons and who must have found themselves directly in Agobard's crosshairs.[28] Chronologically and geographically, these trading ventures coincide with the second phase of Arab coins that entered the Frankish empire from Spain (Table 12.1).

The trade connection that had prospered in Louis the Pious' day did not disappear in the next generation. In 851, "crowds" (*cohortes*) of merchants were known to be coming from the east Frankish kingdom to Saragossa. An Andalusi Christian described how he heard that his refugee brothers at the Frankish court were traveling home among them. Although the report turned out to be false, it proves that these merchants had spent time at Mainz, since they correctly reported that the brothers were there. Their commerce linked al Andalus with the Rhine–Main corridor.[29] The west Frankish court to which the Spanish mark was subject probably enjoyed similar connections, beyond its diplomatic relations with al Andalus. At least Charles the Bald communicated with his subjects in Barcelona and conveyed 10 lb. of silver for the repair of the cathedral through his *fidelis*, the Jew Judas.[30] It is perhaps more than coincidence that Judas' service on this occasion brings to mind the contemporary Jewish court bankers of Egypt and Iraq, "masters of the transmission of funds."[31] Around the same time, the Jews of Barcelona appear to have been exchanging letters with a Gaonic authority in Syria (R526).

The Meuse corridor also connected with Spain. In the late ninth-century we actually spy a caravan of Verdun merchants. Between Langres and the junction with the route leading southwest to Spain, they traveled with a group of Rome-bound Anglo-Saxons – pilgrims, merchants or both? – and at least one Frankish religious wayfarer. Typically, the only reason we hear about the Verdun merchants is because they recognized the hero of the story, a deaf mute cured by St. Bertin,

28 *Form. imp.* 31, pp. 310–11; cf. the similar privilege granted to the slave-traders Rabbi Domatus and his *nepos* Samuel, whose residences are not specified: *Form. imp.*, 30, pp. 309–10.

29 Eulogius, *Ep.* 3, 6, 499.1–500.8 ". . . festinus Caesaraugustam perueni causa fratrum meorum, quos uulgi opinio negotiatorum cohortibus interesse nuper ab ulterioris Franciae gremio ibidem descendentibus iactitabat. Deinde, urbi appropinquans, negotiantes quidem repperi, peregrinos autem meos eorum relatione apud Maguntiam nobilissimam Baioariae ciuitatem exsulasse cognoui. Et uerum fuisse hoc negotiatorum nuntium, regredientibus Deo fautore succedenti tempore ab interiori Gallia fratribus nostris, didicimus." Cf. *ibid.*, 3, 1, 497.1–3: ". . . dira . . . fortuna . . . fratres meos . . . apud Hludouicum regem Baioariae exulare fecit." Louis the German's court had been at Mainz in autumn 848 and summer 849, and must have passed through it in 850 en route from Forcheim to Cologne: BM 1388c–1389, 1392–4 and 1395–1396a.

30 D ChB, no. 417 (A.D. 876).

31 Abulafia 1987, 418.



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and informed him that he was originally from their town.[32] Each of these strands of evidence comes to us coincidentally. They nonetheless make clear that in the ninth century, at least three of the main Frankish clusters of merchants – the Meuse and Verdun, Mainz and the Rhine axis, and the court – were directly connected to the markets of Muslim Spain, and particularly Saragossa.

Jewish traders had links to places other than Spain. A court merchant mentioned by Notker (Table 9.1) in circumstances that strengthen his credibility attests to a direct and explicitly commercial link between a Frankish commercial cluster and the Holy Land. It is not implausible that Isaac, Charlemagne's Jewish envoy to Harun al Rashid, was a merchant, chosen for his familiarity with the destination, although there is no explicit evidence for this supposition.[33] Another court merchant was active in Italy about the same time (see below). And the new Hebrew document reveals that Jewish merchants with connections to Iraq frequented Carolingian fairs. But other, indirect links may have been equally important. Italian commercial clusters, as we have seen, tapped into the economic powerhouses across the Mediterranean. Did they connect to the Frankish trading networks north of the Alps?

## *Trade across the Alps*

Non-commercial links across the Alps intensified after the subjugation of the Lombard kingdom in 774.[34] Commercial contacts followed suit, for scattered references reveal connections between some of the main merchant clusters and corridors of Francia and Italy. For instance, nine months after the conquest, Charlemagne extended to Italy the toll exemptions of all boats, wagons, pack animals, bearers, and merchants working for St. Denis.[35] We have already observed the four Frankish customs houses astride the main Alpine routes. The fees mattered both to the merchants who paid them and the kings who benefited from them, judging from efforts to evade and to impose them. Thus Charles protested against Anglo-Saxon merchants who tried to blend in with pilgrims to Rome in order to avoid duties.[36] Alcuin sent his own personal merchant *to Italy* with merchandise to sell there. He surely did not expect him to come back empty-handed. So he sought the bishop of Chur's help in lightening the customs levies which this merchant might incur both going and coming through the Alps.[37] On

32 *Miracula S. Bertini* (*BHL* 1291), *MGH SS* 15.1.511.29–37. See also Notker's story about merchants at Narbonne: *Gesta Karoli* 2, 14, 77.1–9, on which, see above, Ch. 22n19.

33 See Pros. "Anon. 94," and "Isaac."

34 For northern laymen transplanted to Italy, see the valuable catalogue of Hlawitschka 1960 and the articles in Beumann and Schröder 1987.

35 DD Kar 1, no. 93 (14 March 775).

36 Alcuin, *Ep.* 100, 145.18–20.

37 Alcuin, *Ep.* 77, p. 119.



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the Adriatic coast we find a court merchant who worked for Charlemagne. At Ravenna, he was asked to appraise a bejewelled votive crown given to that church by the emperor Philippicus a century earlier.[38] It would be surprising if every Frisian who made up the *Scola Frisonorum* at Rome around the same time had renounced all trading, although there is no positive literary evidence of their activities (Ch. 21.2). A half a century later, Louis II sought to repress the banditry that afflicted both the pilgrims and traders who came to his kingdom. The fact that he lumped the two together, and that the bulk of the pilgrims who crossed Lombardy to reach Rome came from the north, may suggest that some of the merchants did likewise.[39] A Frankish merchant at Pavia in 887 strengthens the suggestion.[40] And we have seen (Ch. 6.2) that the correlation of Holy Land pilgrims and emporiums hints that the northern trading towns were plugged into Mediterranean trading networks.

Recent research has made it more likely that, in the later ninth century, Anglo-Saxon merchants still traded with northern Italy, and perhaps as far south as Rome. The segment of the Pavian compilation *Honorantie civitatis Pavie* which details the operations and rights of the royal treasury (*camera*) of the kingdom of the Lombards was drawn up around 1000. It uses older materials, mostly from the second half of the tenth century, but a few are earlier.[41] The *Honorantie* reports convincingly that English merchants once rioted when they were forced to empty their packs at the customs crossing. Their king then negotiated for them a general exemption from customs duties at the entrance to Italy, in return for their paying a forfeit fee which comprised 50 lb. of refined silver ("cocti argenti"), two greyhounds and the same number of high-quality shields, lances and swords. For the documents authorizing the exemption, the head of the royal treasury was also to receive 2 lb. of refined silver and two large, fur-trimmed cloaks.[42] The title ascribed to the king in question points to an official source going back either to Alfred the Great or Edward I. In fact, King Alfred negotiated tax and toll exemptions for the Anglo-Saxon residents at Rome with Pope Marinus around 882–4, which reinforces the likelihood that the treaty stems from his reign.[43] Whether

38 Agnellus, *Liber pont. eccl. Rav.*, 143, 372.9–10: ". . . corona ex modico auro una, sed tamen habuit preciosissimas gemmas, ut temporibus nostris interrogatus Iudeus negotians Karolo imperatori, quo precio venundari possit . . ." As the word order suggests, the words "Karolo imperatori" are a dative of possession; for agent, with *interrogare* in the passive, Agnellus uses "ab" with persons: e.g., *ibid.*, 150, 375.4; 162, 382.18.

39 *MGH Capit.* no. 213, 1, 2.86.4–15.

40 "Leodemarius negotiator," who signs with a "Leopertus monetarius," both of them being "ex genere Francorum" (Pavia, 887), *Novara*, no. 16, of 887; cf. Bullough 1966a, 112n121.

41 *Honorantie*, pp. 81–4.

42 *Ibid.*, 2, 19.38–53. The editors note the striking presence of Anglo-Latin terms in this Italian document: comm., *ibid.*, p. 37, on lines 40 and 48–9.

43 *Ibid.*, p. 37, on line 42, with Pelteret 1995, 74–6; R696.



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the wares imported across the Alps ("horses, male slaves, female slaves, wool, linen and canvas textiles, tin, and swords") listed in the preceding chapter are from the same era or, like the list of toll stations, date from around 950, is less certain, as is their association with the Anglo-Saxon merchants. But tin at least points to Britain, and slaves might also stem from there.[44] Farther to the east, merchants herded slaves across the eastern Alps toward the Adriatic Sea (below, pp. 761–8), and Arab and Byzantine coins moved in the opposite direction (Ch. 12.7). Shipping patterns have already indicated a modest resumption of commercial navigation along the ancient coastal route between Italy and Marseilles in the ninth century (Ch. 17.4).

From an early date, merchants' movements across the Alps were supplemented by a continuously renewed market: the pilgrims who, in a manner of speaking, delivered northern buying power to Italy (Ch. 21.2). Notker and the biography of Gerald of Aurillac provide concordant testimony from around the time the English traders were rioting at an Alpine customs station. By the 880s and 890s at the latest, Venetian and other merchants astutely expanded their market for eastern luxury goods at small cost by turning to the caravans of armed pilgrims returning to the north.[45] Notker's monastery overlooked Lake Constance and the Rhine route that led to Italy through Chur. He knew whereof he spoke, when he depicted Carolingian grandees decked out in all manner of oriental finery: "in as much as it was the holidays and they had just come from Pavia, to which the Venetians had recently transported from the regions across the sea all the riches of the easterners."[46]

The circumstances in which the neurotic Count Gerald learned that he had got a real bargain entirely confirm Notker's story for the late ninth century. Returning home after one of his many Roman pilgrimages, the count camped in a field outside Pavia, probably in the midst of a caravan of travelers. As was their custom, a crowd (*quamplurimi*) of Venetian and other merchants scurried from tent to tent, drumming up sales for their textiles and perfumes, when Gerald showed them the textiles he had purchased in Rome.[47] In other words, pilgrim

44 *Honorantie*, 1, 17.33–4, with comm., pp. 35–6. For the association: Pelteret 1995, 74. Slaves are absent from a 960 toll list from Aosta, so that they too might reflect a later 9th-C. reality.

45 On the need for armed caravans to cross the lands of the Roman church, Bernard, *Itinerarium*, 24, p. 320; cf. for Lombardy, above.

46 *Gesta Karoli*, 2, 17, 86.15–21: "Çeteri vero utpote feriatis diebus, et qui modo de Papia venissent, ad quam nuper Venetici de transmarinis partibus omnes orientalium divitias advectassent . . ."

47 Odo of Cluny, *V. Geraldi Auriliac.* (*BHL* 3411), 1, 27; *PL*, 133.658B–C. Ganshof 1933, 298–300 argues that, though the anecdote accurately reflects an event in the life of Gerald (of whom Odo was a well-informed younger contemporary), the liveliness of the details indicates that they stem from Odo's own experience c. 936–42. This is no easy point to prove; Ganshof further recognizes that Notker's depiction of essentially



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caravans conveniently brought part of the Frankish market for eastern goods to the Venetians' home turf, thereby transferring to the buyers the expense and difficulty of transporting Venetian wares across the Alps. Some Italian merchants also took it upon themselves to cross the Alps and bring their wares to northern markets. The case of Italian relic merchants in the 820s and 830s is perhaps the best known (Ch. 10.1). But Dagobert's forged privilege indicates that Lombard merchants were expected at the fair of St. Denis by the early tenth century, if not earlier (Ch. 22.3).

## *Money movements across the Alps*

In the past, skepticism has sometimes attended efforts to connect coin finds with commerce. Over recent decades, however, our knowledge of Carolingian coinage has expanded and changed considerably. Careful analyses have charted the main features of its history, creating a more accurate understanding of matters ranging from fundamental, like the shift from gold to a silver monetary system, to critical details, such as the identity of mints, metrology, hoard composition, and the chronology of issues.[48] It has become apparent that Carolingian rulers, particularly Charlemagne and Louis the Pious, exercised a remarkable level of control over the coinage circulating inside the empire. Louis in particular made use of systematic coinage recalls, a not unsophisticated procedure.[49] From Venice to Ribe via Dorestad, archaeology demonstrates the presence of coinage on trading sites.[50] Economic historians are moving increasingly to the view that the advanced regions of the Frankish economy were more monetized than almost anyone dreamed three decades ago. Combining this new understanding – including the prominent role of Dorestad and Venice as mints – with the growing evidence for trade still does not mean that every coin find represents a merchant's movement. But when there is no evidence against it, we can no longer exclude that possibility *a priori*, particularly when find circumstances fit the patterns of traders' movements that have emerged quite independently of the numismatic evidence. In this context, the flow of coins across the Alps calls for attention.

Various conditions militated against a continuous, and a continuously visible, flow of coinage through the Alps. Down to around 840, Carolingian rulers maintained tight control over the coins circulating in their kingdoms. Almost no non-Carolingian coins occur on the soil of the Frankish heartland at

the same situation in the 880s confirms Odo's accuracy.

48 The results are laid out in Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 190–266.

49 Coupland 1990, 24.

50 E.g., Venice: App. 3, A39–40; Ribe: Metcalf 1996, 403–4 (sceattas).



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the peak of the empire. The Frankish coinage struck in Italy was not brought into strict alignment with the northern issues until c. 793/4, and Italian coins should not have circulated much in the north before then. Later on, the division of the empire loosened royal control even as the kingdoms' coinages began to go their separate ways, impeding anew their circulation beyond their home regions. For instance, Lupus of Ferrières tried to obtain a supply of Italian coins for his planned pilgrimage to Rome, probably in 849. Everyone had told him that only silver struck in an Italian mint was accepted there. He had been unable to put together a substantial supply (*copia*) of them at home in West Francia, and he wished his friend, Bishop Reginfrid, to assemble such a supply for him.[51] The coin finds from the territory of modern France bear Lupus out on this, and western Francia and Italy were not alone in showing more regionalized circulation patterns in the second half of the ninth century.[52] But whether the absence of Italian coins around Ferrières in 849 reflects the failure of coinage to cross the Alps, or a refusal in Charles the Bald's kingdom to recognize foreign issues, is unclear.[53]

The situation was very different between c. 793/4 and 840, when users had no reason to discriminate against trans-Alpine coins. In fact Louis the Pious consciously suppressed mint names, beginning in 822. Specialists now believe his mintless *Christiana religio* coins were meant to affirm the uniformity and free circulation of coins throughout the entire empire, from the borders of Rome to the Elbe.[54] Numismatists have only begun to pierce the anonymity of these coins, so that the picture of coin movement across the Alps is necessarily incomplete for the last eighteen years of Louis the Pious' rule. For now, we are left with the period

51 Lupus, *Ep.* 66 (75), p. 72. Reginfrid's see has not been identified.

52 I observe only two explicitly Italian coins in the numerous hoards from Charles the Bald's reign in west Francia, one each in the hoards of Angers and Brioux (a total of 174 coins, of which all save eleven *Christiana religio* issues bear mint names). Angers (29 denarii and obols) must have been deposited early in Charles' reign and consists mostly of coins of Louis the Pious; alongside eleven *Christiana religio* issues, one of twelve of Louis' coins bearing mint names is a Pavia penny: Duplessy 1985, no. 11, p. 26, dated 840–5. Except for a coin of Louis the Pious from Pavia, the Brioux hoard is known to have had only 143 denarii and obols of Charles the Bald and Pippin II of Aquitaine from Melle and one from "Aquitaine": Duplessy 1985, no. 59, p. 41. It was deposited c. 850: Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 238.

53 On the growth of regionally circumscribed circulation, Blackburn 1995, 552; mostly numismatic grounds suggest to Coupland 1991, 152–5, that Charles the Bald lost control of the coinage within his kingdom between 840 and 864. The presence of Charles' coins in two hoards outside his kingdom, at Roermond (231 of 1,130 coins) and Pilligerheck (144 of over 1,800) possibly weighs against a conscious exclusion of competing brothers' coins; Coupland 1991, 122.

54 Uniformity: Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 216; free (and rapid) circulation: Coupland 1990, 34–5; cf. Blackburn 1995, 552.



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between c. 790 and 822 when we might hope to detect the full contours of such movement.

In fact, in these years, coins did cross the Alps, and on a substantial scale (Map 23.2). From Charlemagne's time, about half of the Carolingian coin finds north of the Alps included Italian coins.[55] Conversely, northern coins traveled south. The Ilanz treasure was deposited in the Alps c. 795, probably by someone coming from Italy. It shows that transalpine issues circulated alongside local ones in northern Italy.[56] The Sarzana (Tuscany, prov. La Spezia) hoard was buried shortly after 790. Next to eight Italian coins, it has two from Mainz and one each from Dorestad, Tours, and, probably, Sens.[57] The Vercelli find dates from not long after 790, and it comprises predominantly northern coins, with Strasburg in the lead.[58]

More money crossed the Alps under Louis the Pious. Italian coins typify the two most important hoards from his reign. At Veuillin, deposited c. 820/2 near Bourges, they constitute over a third of the total (36 percent: 273 of 753 coins); at Belvézet, buried c. 822/3, they are just under a third (31 percent: 77 of 247). What is more, among Italian mints, it is precisely the opposite ends of the Po trading axis which predominate.[59] The overwhelming majority of these coins were at most only five years old when buried. This denotes a remarkable velocity of monetary circulation for an early medieval economy which used to be reckoned "stagnant." If they are representative of the coinage circulating north of the Alps, these treasures embody extensive monetary interaction between the economic zones on either side of the Alps.[60] Even if they are somehow not representative of northern

55 I count thirty hoards (probably) and stray finds (possibly) deposited under Charlemagne inside the empire north of the Alps: Völckers 1965, to which must be added Duplessy 1985, no. 56, Breuvery. Fourteen contain coins from Italy, viz., Völckers 1965, nos. 1–4; 19, 22–3; 25, 27, 42–3, 46–8.

56 It consisted of 122 coins, of which ninety-two were issued south of the Alps, twenty-seven came from Frankish mints north of the Alps, and three came from England; cf. App. 3, A23.

57 Völckers 1965, no. 26.

58 9 Strasburg d. out of 23 known coins; the Italian coins come from Milan (two), and Treviso and Venice (one each): Völckers 1965, no. 28.

59 For Veuillin, Venice: 194; Milan: 47; Pavia: 26; Treviso: 6. Venice is the largest contributor overall, edging out even Bourges (127); Duplessy 1985, no. 17. Belvézet: Pavia 41; Venice, 34; Treviso, 1; Lucca 1. Only Marseille contributed more than Pavia (47); the next highest mint is Paris (13). Note too the fourteen coins from Spain: Barcelona nine; Ampurias five; Veuillin shows only five Spanish coins, from Barcelona (three) and Ampurias; Duplessy 1985, no. 40.

60 Coupland 1990, 34–5, who emphasizes what the coins tell about economic integration and what they suggest about "thriving internal trade." On the contrary, Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 215–16 suspect that, except for the Venetian coins, those of the Veuillin hoard have been selected in terms of their weight. This would imply that they are not representative of the circulating stock; cf. however the similar make-up of the hoard of Chaumoux-Marcilly (below).



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circulation, the hoards of Veuillin and Belvézet still testify to two individual movements of wealth across the Alps. This probably means trade: why or how else would one be acquiring, c. 820, large sums of fresh coins at Venice? What is more, Italian coins are not confined to the two great hoards. Minor finds from the middle Rhine, the upper Danube and Carolingian Saxony equally document the movement northward of Italian coins.[61]

The finds at Dorestad are particularly interesting for testing the northward movement of Italian coins. The archaeologically controlled conditions and the settlement's exclusively commercial vocation compensate for the relatively small numbers involved. Among coins recorded prior to 1965, Italy is the best represented region (twenty-one: 19 percent), ahead even of Dorestad itself, which nonetheless is the single most important mint (seventeen coins: 16 percent). As we might expect for the seaside terminus of the Rhenish corridor, a fair share of pennies were made on the Rhine and its tributaries (eleven: 10 percent).[62]

The conditions are most favorable for the coins discovered in the excavations of 1972. A hoard of thirty-two coins concealed not long after 820 ("Dorestad 1972 II") is nonetheless something of a special case, because it has as many as nine counterfeits which may be local. Only two (7 percent) of this hoard's twenty-nine coins with identified mints came from Italy; again, the Rhine is well represented, with six coins.[63] The twenty-two stray coins are the most revealing, since they emerged from the controlled circumstances of excavations. As a recent analysis has concluded, these coins represent most accurately "the level of commercial activity."[64] Here Italian issues comprise more than half of the fifteen coins bearing mint names (eight: 53 percent). Indeed, Pavia is the single best-attested mint, and Milan comes in second place.[65]

61 Rhine: Boppard: Morrison and Grunthal 1967, no. 177: one coin of Louis the Pious, Venice; if *ibid.*, no. 19, is right in assigning the small Frankfurt hoard to Louis the Pious, it had 1 d. of Dorestad, and 1 each of Sens and Venice. Danube: at Regensburg, *ibid.*, no. 173, 2 d. of Louis, from Regensburg and Venice. Saxony: Neumünster-Grotenkamp: *ibid.*, no. 178, one from Venice.

62 Völckers 1965, no. 3, catalogued 158 coins found and reported prior to 1965. He was able to identify mints for 110, against which the percentages are calculated. These figures include a hoard from an uncertain location in Frisia, which Völckers 1965, no. 3, 103, 138–51, 166, 169–71, erroneously listed as stray finds at Dorestad: Coupland 1988, 9. For technical reasons, however, these distributions may understate the number of local coins. Völckers was able to track down only an uncertain proportion of the total number of coins found since c. 1838. These entered museums, which tend to select the best-preserved and most unusual pieces; furthermore many of the most common issues, of Dorestad itself or the mintless *Christiana religio*, were reported to have been melted down, and research into the 19th-C. literature clearly suggests that Dorestad and mintless coins were far more abundant than was even recently believed: Coupland 1988.

63 Enno van Gelder 1980, 215–21.

64 Coupland 1988, 8.

65 Enno van Gelder 1980, 221–4: Pavia, four; Milan, three; Venice, one; Dorestad has only one coin. From the Netherlands, see also the find of Ide, deposited c. 850,



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Louis the Pious' coins issued after 822/3 generally lacked mint names. Thus, though the civil wars and Viking raids provoked a jump in the numbers of buried coins which the owners never retrieved, they only reveal the circulation of coinage insofar as they contained earlier coins or the few mintless *Christiana religio* coins that have been ascribed to mints on stylistic grounds. Even so, these coins show that in the second half of Louis' reign, the close connections with Italy continued. The hoard of Hermenches (Switzerland), about 4 km south of where a stray African dirham showed up at Moudon (Appendix 3, A26), was buried around 825–40 on the route leading north from the Great St. Bernard pass. It is heavy with coins identified as Milanese (c. 130 d.) or Venetian (c. 58 d.).[66] The silver buried at Chaumoux-Marcilly (near Bourges) in the early 840s shows an Italian component (178 d. ascribed to Milan) comparable with that of the nearby find of Veuillin, which was almost a generation older.[67] Further north, the Italian share seems to lessen, but it does not disappear. The very large hoard at Pilligerheck (near Elz, Hessia, on a tributary of the Lahn, some 40 km from the latter's confluence with Rhine), was concealed early in the reign of Lothar I. Italian coins make a small but certain appearance there; one at least is contemporary.[68] Similarly, a few years later, Italian issues continue to figure in a very large hoard deposited even further north and discovered in 1968. Dredging on the right bank of the Meuse, about 60 km downstream from Maastricht, at Roermond (Netherlands), turned up gravel from which 1,133 silver coins later emerged; an unknown quantity was lost. Italian issues comprise almost a tenth of the 398 coins (thirty-six: 9 percent) which can be attributed.[69]

Morrison and Grunthal 1967, p. 355, no. 52, whose 112 pieces included, in addition to sixty-eight indeterminate issues of Louis the Pious, and Charles the Bald (six), coins struck at Dorestad (one of Louis, thirty-four of Lothar I), Verdun (Lothar II), Pippin I or II of Aquitaine, and one coin issued at Venice under Louis.

66 Attributions by Coupland 1990, 43–4, of 320 *Christiana religio* coins.

67 Duplessy 1985, no. 94, a total of 303 coins of which 87 were issued by Charles the Bald. Of the remaining 216 coins of his father, 178 (56 percent of the total, 82 percent of Louis the Pious' coins), have been attributed to Milan: Coupland 1990, 43.

68 Summary description: Lafaurie 1970, 323–6; for the date: Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 191. According to Coupland 1990, 43–4 (cf. 36–7), of 1,412 *Christiana religio* coins issued by Louis the Pious, some 316 can be attributed to mints. Of these 6 percent (Milan: fifteen coins; Venice, three) were in Italy. Of 318 coins of Louis the Pious and his successors which identify their mints, three come from Milan (two) and Pavia (one); two of them are contemporary with the hoard's deposit. For the place, U.S. Board on Geographic Names 1960, 1: 298.

69 For the catalogue of the hoard, Enno van Gelder 1985, where twenty-three of 246 coins with named mints come from Italy (Milan: twelve; Pavia: nine, Treviso: one; Rome: one, all by Lothar I (and Pope Leo IV)); Coupland 1990, 40–5, cf. 37 assigns thirteen (9 percent) of 152 attributable coins to Italy: Venice (ten); Milan (three). There was also a coin of King Coenwulf of Mercia and some silver jewelry. The hoard was deposited c. 850–5 (*ibid.*). At both Pilligerheck (c. 195) and Roermond (over ninety), Coupland assigns the bulk of attributable coins to Dorestad.



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Thus Carolingian coins certainly crossed the Alps. Although coin finds in Italy are in general not well documented, northern coins do occur in late eighth-century hoards. When Italian coins were acceptable north of the Alps, they traveled there in substantial quantities. In the Carolingians' heyday, Arab, Frankish and papal coins tell the same story as the merchants. The conquest and annexation of the Po valley in 774 intensified economic as well as political ties spanning the Alps. Venice and Milan–Pavia were the principal focal points in Italy. The main axis of coin movements ran north and south between the Po basin and the Rhine–Meuse delta. But Map 23.2 also shows a second, unexpected flow along an east–west axis, between northern Italy and western France. Late in this period, it is possible that the movement of such coins was slowing, perhaps even before the Italian mints began to go their own way. Though new Italian coins still crossed the Alps into the Rhine corridor under Lothar I, the quantities seem smaller.

Almost despite themselves, the western written sources, reinforced by archaeology and numismatics, reveal merchant clusters and trading centers. When we detect geographic horizons, they often transcend one region. Merchants and their movements certainly linked the various corridors and clusters of commerce inside Frankland, and also inside Italy. Most important of all, they connected Frankland and Italy to each other. Coins show the same thing between about 790 and 850. If the shifting proportions of Italian coins found north of the Alps are meaningful, the movement of coins toward the north slackened (but did not cease) around 850.

We can see groups of merchants who connected the Frankish empire to the wider world beyond. Some networks reached out from the Rhine and Meuse or the Seine, the Loire, and the Canche toward England and Scandinavia; others disappear into the uncharted Slavic wilderness in the east; others still connected to the Islamic powerhouses in the south, through the Pyrenees, via Lyons, or across the Alps. That their movements overlapped and even converged implies that their trade did so as well. It is into this system of interconnected trading circuits that our indubitable trans-Mediterranean merchants fit: the goods, wealth, and traders who traveled among these western regions supplied wares for export and circuits to distribute goods that Mediterranean merchants like our known nineteen were importing. The picture is one of overlapping macro-regional trade networks. The indirect links to the more advanced Mediterranean economies are multiple and unmistakable. We need to examine one last and most extraordinary witness. Although his well-known testimony has sometimes been challenged, it fits closely the picture we have just sketched. At the same time, it adds clarity and system to the clusters and movements of merchants visible in and around Carolingian Europe.



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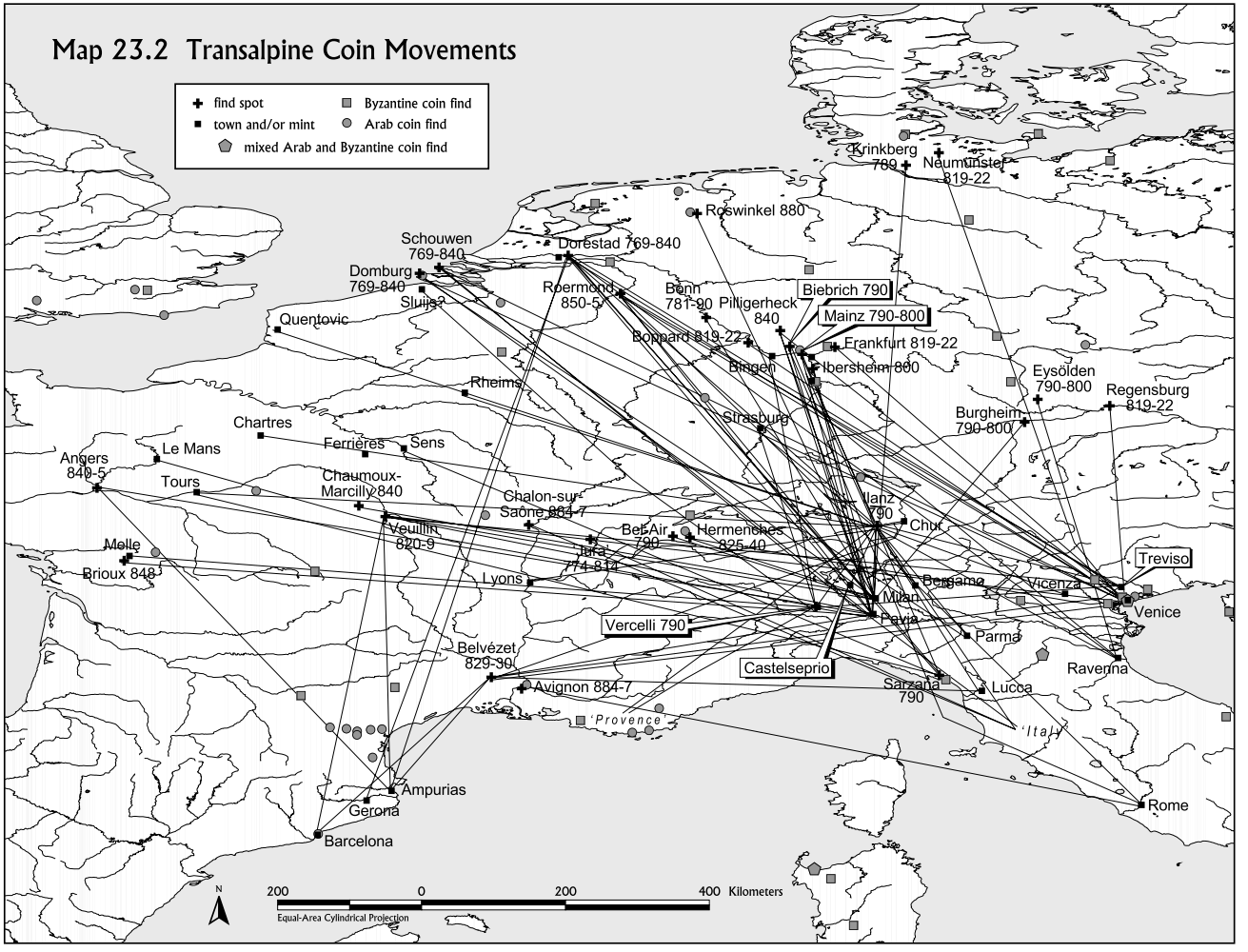


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## 3. The view from Iraq

The source is doubly important. It is both totally independent in origin from all the other evidence we have looked at, and it is of unique quality. So far we have found only snapshots, revealing fleeting views of merchants in time and space, with no explicit indication of how they might fit together in commercial terms. Against these we have set coins which, though they need not always mean commerce, certainly reveal the movement of wealth. It is we who have pieced together the pieces of the puzzle, and deduced from these snapshots the movements that, when reassembled, appear to represent a system. Our last source needs no such intervention, for it was written by a man who looked on these matters with penetrating clarity and grasped the system. Although it is controverted still by some, the description of a group of Jewish merchants who bear the obscure name of "Radhaniyya" deserves to rank as the single most important piece of evidence on ninth-century commerce to have survived.

Ibn Khurradadhbih (d. 912/13) was the son of the governor of Tabaristan on the Caspian Sea, a personal friend of the caliph al Muʾtamid (870–92), and postmaster general of the Caliphate. He used his unique vantage point to good effect, in the "Book of Routes and Kingdoms" of 885–6.[70] It describes in some detail the Jewish merchants who he claims were known as "Radhanites" (*Radhaniyya*). The account he gives is unique in several ways. Aside from several derivative versions, its information seems without precise parallel in the Arabic sources. It alone clearly articulates a complete trading circuit, its several ramifications, and the wares traded. The very uniqueness of this information elicited a serious challenge to its authority and reliability; the ensuing controversy has done much to clarify Ibn Khurradadhbih's accuracy.[71] Although the interpretation of certain details

70 Bul'gakov 1958, 130–6 has strongly challenged the traditional view that the work was composed in a short edition dated A.H. 232 (A.D. 846–7) and a larger one of A.H. 272 (A.D. 885–6). He argues that the text of A.H. 272 is the only version; the shorter text abbreviates it; Pritsak 1971, 243–4n10 accepts his position; I have found no other awareness of it among Orientalists. The dating is important, for it changes the certain chronological parameters of both his information on the northern arc and the *Radhaniyya*.

71 On Ibn Khurradadhbih, see in general Brockelmann 1943, 258 and 1937, 404; Miquel 1973–88, 1: 87–92; M. Hadj-Sadok, "Ibn Khurradādhbih," *EI* 3 (1971): 839–40. Challenge: Cahen 1964 and 1972; responses: Jacobi 1971 and 1975, as well as the articles cited below. Much debate has focused on the etymology of the name, but it has not produced consensus, nor is it essential to our purpose, the more so since the thesis that the name derives from the Rhône river has found little support. For a summary of the discussion, Gil 1974, 300–5, who himself concludes that the word refers to the region of Rādhān, in southern Iraq, a position strongly attacked by Jacobi 1975, 237–8, who has argued



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remains subject to controversy, the historical value of his information has emerged reinforced.

Ibn Khurradadhbih first summarizes the essential characteristics of these merchants (*al-tijār*, 153.9), and then describes their main itineraries, which he analyzes as fourfold.[72] They were Jewish and multilingual, speaking Arabic, Persian, Greek, "Frankish," "Andalusian," and Slavic. They traveled from east to west and back over land and water, importing from the west eunuchs, male and female slaves (*al-ghilmān* and *al-jawāra*, 153.12), "brocade" (*al-dībāj*), beaver skins (or rabbit fur), other furs, sable, and swords.[73] One of their two sea routes went all the way to India and China. Two more routes reached the Muslim Levant overland. The traders sold their eastern wares in Constantinople and at the Frankish court.

Orientalists have diverged on the economic plausibility of this account. Skepticism is particularly strong on whether these merchants actually connected the Far East, particularly China, with the early medieval west and whether the same individuals traveled from one end to the other of the itineraries it describes.[74] It is maintained that no goods from China have surfaced among the surviving artifacts of the Carolingian west. However little effort has been made to identify such evidence. Nonetheless a number of textiles which have recently come to light at Jouarre and Chelles, it is claimed, were made somewhere in Central Asia, and may even reveal contact with China.[75] Whatever the final

rather that the term derives from a technical Persian administrative term for "route experts" ("die Wegekundigen").

72 Ibn Khurradadhbih, *Book of Routes and of Kingdoms*, Arabic: pp. 153–5; tr., *ibid.*, pp. 114–16; also 66–7. To the English translation of De Goeje's French translation printed in R. S. Lopez and I. W. Raymond, *Medieval Trade in the Mediterranean World* (New York, 1955), 30–3, one will prefer De Goeje's original or the German one by Jacobi 1971, 252–3. See also the partial translation and textual discussion in Pritsak 1971. I am grateful to my student Jonathan Conant for helping me with the Arabic.

73 Specialists disagree on the detailed interpretation of the Arabic description of some of their western wares. Ashtor 1977, 270n119 proposes a textual correction concerning the beaver pelts; cf. Gil 1974, 312, for the interpretation of this (*khazz*) as cloth made of rabbit fur.

74 Cahen 1972. Jacobi 1975 essentially concurs, maintaining that his office led Ibn Khurradadhbih to view this human group chiefly as an information network, rather than as an economic circuit. Ashtor 1977, on the contrary, considers the data to be economically accurate.

75 Cahen 1964, 505; cf. Cahen 1972, 334; Jacobi 1975, 233, observes that although Chinese–Arab trade is well documented, it has left only limited archaeological traces at Alexandria. See now however, above, p. 585. Presumably traded through the northern arc, Chinese silk has apparently been found in a 9th-C. grave at Birka: Hodges and Whitehouse 1983, Fig. 47; a Buddha was found in Helgö: *ibid.*, Fig. 49. For textiles identified as central Asian and of Carolingian date: Laporte and Boyer 1991, 56–9, and, with greater detail: Laporte 1988, 135–50: nos. 5 (7th or 8th C.), 9 ( pre-8th C.), and 18 (7th–9th C.). A silk textile identified as probably Chinese was discovered in 1983 among the burial goods of queen Balthild (d. after 680) at Chelles,



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outcome on these textiles, others like them almost certainly reached Carolingian Europe from Central Asia (Ch. 24.5).

Ibn Khurradadhbih may have simplified his account, collapsing into a single human group multiple subgroups, each of whom specialized in one geographic segment of the trade route. Later practice – from the eleventh century onward – along similar routes argues for geographically specialized subsets of traders. Moreover, it has been noted, just the trip from Arabia to China and back required more than a half year. Hence the extraordinary length of travel time might seem to rule out the possibility that the entire circuit was accomplished by one merchant.[76] Yet would it be unreasonable to imagine that things were a little different in the very different economic context of the ninth century? These were pioneers developing a new western European trade with the Far East at about the same time that the caliphal heartland was expanding its links there. It was presumably a trade of rather low volume, and the pioneers might well have conducted those early ventures in a more primitive and risky fashion which involved fewer middlemen and therefore higher profits, from one end of the circuit to the other. Indeed, Chaudhuri has sketched just such a pattern for Indian Ocean trade. According to him, it shifted to large, interlocking trading zones only around the year 1000, about when the Genizah documents start up and show us just that pattern.[77]

The picture Ibn Khurradadhbih paints looks strikingly similar to many of the pieces we have observed as discrete elements of the broader world of early medieval movement and communications. Of course, no western source obliges us and uses the term "Radhanite." But Jewish merchants dealing in one of the Radhanites' main wares are well attested in the Frankish empire, at its court, and along its edges: beyond that Frankish eyes do not look. Jewish merchants trading in high-value textiles are equally attested at Constantinople, twenty-six years after Ibn Khurradadhbih wrote. Then the city prefect sought to block them from doing business with local merchants specializing in raw silk.[78] Wares of slaves and swords are known independently, as we shall see, and Jewish merchants are identified as trading in both. Other evidence points to some sort of fur trade involving Venice,

Footnote 75 (*cont.*)
*ibid.*, 37. No. F.8. It has not been dated and could possibly have been added during the Carolingian translation of 833 or later, e.g. in 1544: cf. *ibid.*, 19. I am grateful to M. Laporte for making this work available to me.

76 Cahen 1972, 333, notes that Ibn Khurradadhbih's account contradicts the later documentation of the Genizah, according to which the same enterprise never conducts trade with the Far East and the west. More than half a year: Jacobi 1975, 229; cf. 233. He defines broadly the stages beyond which, he thinks, few individual merchants would have gone, e.g. Slavic world to Islamic Spain (229). The Cairo Genizah, the source for our knowledge of later custom, seems to have begun collecting documents around 1000: Goitein 1967–93, 1: 18, cf. 20.

77 Chaudhuri 1985, 27–54.

78 *Liber Praefecti*, 6, 16, 100.343–5.



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and it is clearly documented outside the Frankish empire (Chapter 22). If the specialists have correctly understood the Arabic word translated as brocade (*al-dībāj*), this will not have originated in the Frankish empire. More probably, it came from Muslim Spain.[79]

The spatial patterns of communication that emerged independently corroborate parts of the four itineraries Ibn Khurradadhbih attributed to the Radhanite merchants, particularly if we consider that the Persian author naturally gave the most details about the route segments that lay inside the House of Islam (Map 23.1). The first is a complete circuit between an unspecified point on the Frankish coast and the Far East, via Egypt. There they land at al Farama, and shift to camels and travel overland, embarking again at al Qulzum for the medieval pilgrimage ports of Jar and Jidda on the Red Sea. From there they continue by sea to the Far East. The return route is the same in reverse, except that when they reach Egypt, the merchants sometimes choose to take their wares to Constantinople, and sometimes to the king of the Franks.

The unspecified port in "Frankland" has usually been identified with Marseilles. However, the Arabic term "Firanja" seems also to have been applied no later than c. 900 to the parts of Italy controlled by the Franks. This has suggested to at least one scholar that these merchants actually took ship somewhere in Italy.[80] In fact, everything we have seen makes Italy a far more likely point of departure. Although technically it belonged to Byzantium, Venice seems to me the best candidate for the unnamed port; it did lie on the coast of the Frankish empire, it was the major port in the Christian west trading with the Muslim world, and its mint issued Frankish coins. Finally it was a major point of sale for slaves hunted in the Slavic territories to the northeast. Jewish slave merchants operating beyond Frankish power in Moravia certainly delivered their Slavic wares for sale there (below, p. 766). Venetian ships sailed to Egypt. Although there is no specific evidence of them at al Farama in the ninth century, the pilgrim Bernard, who took a slaver of an unidentified home port, landed at Alexandria, and proceeded to al Farama from Cairo. The plausibility of al Farama as a transfer point at which wares were loaded onto beasts of burden has been questioned, but Arabic evidence supports Ibn Khurradadhbih.[81] Bernard's account of the camel rental market there wonderfully confirms this point. Such an institution surely implies regular traffic by non-residents.[82]

The Radhanite route along the Red Sea to Aden has equally been challenged. The fact that the route passes by Jar – the medieval port of Medina – and Jidda, still

79 Jacobi 1971, 259. On Andalusi silk production, and silk in the Frankish empire, see Ch. 24.5.

80 Gil 1974, 310–11.

81 Cahen 1964, 500, questioned it, but see Jacobi 1971, 256–7, and Ashtor 1977, 252.

82 *Itinerarium* 9, p. 313.



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today the port of Mecca, hints that the merchants perhaps availed themselves of an infrastructure which developed in response to pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. Other work has confirmed that such a route did develop.[83] Again, one of our western travelers shows up very close to this same route, since the Irishman Fidelis sailed with a group of pilgrims from Italy to Egypt and, after a visit to Cairo, traveled in the Red Sea (R391). Even the detail that has given the most pause to specialists has a partial echo in the report that King Alfred of Wessex sent envoys to India (R694).

A second Radhanite route went by ship from "Frankland" to Antioch, and then headed overland and by river to the Persian Gulf via Baghdad, and thence to Oman and southeast Asia. No precise parallel of a voyage from a western port to Antioch has emerged, although we do find overland trips involving it. But the vitality of the ancient trunk route between Italy and the Levant from beginning to end of our period, and the development of the Byzantine shipping axis, whose eastern extension ended at Cyprus, 120 km from Antioch's port, means that there is nothing impossible about such an itinerary, the more so that Antioch still had merchants around 850 (R459). And we do have that Frankish report of a Jewish merchant making frequent trips to "the Promised Land." The 400 km separating Akko from Antioch may not have loomed very large to a Frankish monk ensconced in the Alps 3,500 km away.

The two overland routes used by the Jewish merchants are equally familiar. The first began in "Frankland" or in Muslim Spain, crossed to North Africa, and continued by land to Egypt, Ramla, Damascus, and thence to Baghdad, the Persian Gulf, and southeast Asia. This is the African route to the Levant that we observed first in 767, and rather frequently thereafter. Most of our travelers set out from Frankland or Italy and picked up the route in North Africa and went as far as Ramla, Jerusalem, and Antioch, or vice versa. Real envoys, pilgrims, and fictional travelers make this new route quite well attested by western witnesses. In the opposite direction the monk and martyr George of Bethlehem probably followed precisely this road as far as Spain.

The final itinerary is more vaguely sketched, for it only reaches the Islamic world at the end, and then it is the very extremity. It begins "behind Rome," in "the land of the Slavs," and goes to the country of the Khazars and the Caspian Sea, to Balkh and Transoxiana and beyond to the Far East. The first segment sounds like the Danubian overland corridor which our travelers have traced. At some point, these particular travelers may have left the Danubian path and cut overland toward Crimea. Alternatively, they could have stayed inside the Bulgarian empire as far as the Black Sea, and sailed or ridden eastwards from

83 Challenge: Cahen 1964, 500; evidence for it: Brice 1981, p. 22, and A. J. Wensick, J. Jomier *et al.*, "Ḥadjdj," *EI* 3 (1971): 31–8, here 34.



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there. At the very beginning of this route, on the upper Danube, we have seen merchants, including Jewish ones, paying tolls on merchandise as they transited the Carolingian frontier. Arab and Byzantine coins mark the Amber Trail, from the Danube south to the head of the Adriatic. At the intersection of the two routes a tenth-century cemetery yielded cowrie shells from the Indian Ocean or points east. Further south on the same trail, other cemeteries yielded a coconut shell and more cowrie shells.

In short, the Arabic data on the group of Jewish merchants who traveled between the Frankish court and the House of Islam does not stand alone. It receives powerful support from the patterns of human movements and communications documented by various, and quite independent, Latin, Greek, Old Church Slavonic, and archaeological evidence.[84] Whatever the derivation of their name, the Radhanites look extraordinarily like the Jewish traders whom the Frankish sources reveal to us piecemeal and only so long as they appear in the Frankish empire. Unless we assume that the Radhanites are an otherwise totally unattested group of Jewish merchants working out of a non-specified area of Frankland and conducting a spectacular but otherwise unknown trade in slaves, swords, and furs against eastern luxury goods, and marketing their eastern wares to the Frankish court, they must overlap at least in part with the merchants associated with the Frankish court, whom we have met there, at Ravenna, at Lyons, or at Saragossa. This implies further that the merchants Abraham of Saragossa or David and Joseph of Lyons might be those same men, or rather their fathers. If not, they surely knew them, and traded alongside them, and perhaps with them also.

Where were the merchants? We began by contrasting the small number of individual merchants whose direct commercial interests across the Mediterranean are explicitly and clearly recorded, with the much larger numbers of other kinds of travelers who are equally well documented. A first solution to this conundrum lies in the general disdain of Carolingian litterateurs for trade and traders insofar as they did not obtrude on the doings of kings and nobles. But a more interesting contrast lies in the small number of explicitly documented men traveling long distances for commerce and the large numbers of merchants we have detected about whose movements we know nothing. So we decided to take what the

84 Cahen 1972 denies that there is any western evidence referring to these merchants "by any other name"; against which Jacobi 1975, 229, observes that the *Form. imp.* and Agobard describe men who fit the bill. Bachrach 1977, 72–4 and 97, is more cautious still, placing the Radhanites alongside the merchants known from Carolingian sources. For Abulafia 1987, 416, they must be assumed to be the same people.



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sources gave us, and turn the very limitation of this evidence – it shows merchants usually only in one place – into an asset. This delineated clusterings of human groups and commercial activities in Italy and in Frankland, and led us to discover their interconnections. The merchants were mostly strung along the main communication routes irrigating the Frankish and Lombard interiors of the Carolingian empire and linking them to its neighbors. This *may* suggest that trade was predominantly broken down into geographic units which overlapped or were linked among themselves, and that the movements of traders conformed to those patterns. In this sense, our nineteen long-distance merchants *may* have been the exception rather than the rule, in that they traveled directly to distant zones to seek or sell their wares, rather than trading with those zones through a series of regional intermediaries.

Another issue relates to the geographic structure of trade across the Mediterranean. It is now abundantly clear that some regions of Italy were in increasing commercial contact with the Muslim and even Byzantine economies across the sea, beginning in the later eighth century. That is interesting in itself. But that raised the critical issue of whether this commercial activity flowed through the Italian peninsula or reached a dead end there. Royal customs policy, merchants' locations and movements, and the circulation of new Carolingian coins converge clearly and powerfully. Commercial contacts across the Alps are unmistakable from the later eighth to the late ninth century. Coin movements were particularly strong from the 790s to the 850s. Nor were the traveling coins confined to Carolingian issues, since a few of the Arab coins which flooded into the upper Adriatic slipped past the Frankish customs inspectors, crossed the Alps and moved down the Rhine. Commercial contacts with Spain were also gaining.

In sum, behind the individuals explicitly identified as long-distance traders stood a much larger number of merchants who look to be men of economic substance. In Italy they witnessed charters in distinguished company. In Frankland they consorted with kings, built churches, made donations of a pound of silver or a silk textile, sailed ships, and consulted with an academy in Iraq. They scarcely look like peddlers. For most, the precise geographical horizons of their operations, whether very broad or very narrow, remain hidden. But what is sure is that the places in which they clustered connected. These interconnected trading networks branched into those from which the documented long-distance merchants stem. Only from archaeology can we hope for much more light on these trading networks and their activities. But what we have already seen of merchants and their movements authorizes us to conclude that commercial exchange counted in Carolingian economic life. While the most well-represented, and most representative, kind of trade occurred at the regional or interregional level, there was a place for more distant exchanges as well. These more distant exchanges may have proceeded from and flowed into and through the regional and interregional networks.



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The picture is not static. Growth is distinct, whether we look at the main wares, provenances of merchants, the length of the great fair at St. Denis, or the spaces over which Rhenish pottery circulated. The ceramic production sites of the Rhine Vorgebirge probably more than doubled between c. 700 and c. 875. Weekly and even annual markets become more prominent in the sources. All of this looks quite different from the seventh century. Exchange, including unmistakably commercial activities, increased in range, volume, and variety with respect to the preceding period, even as its geographical structures shifted. There are also hints that the tempo slowed after the middle of the ninth century.

Whether they were of certain trans-Mediterranean or unknown horizons, merchants appear along some of the new routes that emerged from the wider patterns of communications documented in Part IV. This was true of the land route down the Danube, and also of the overland route to the east via Africa. It was equally true of the main trunk sea lane and the direct link from Italy to Egypt, via the Adriatic. In other words, the link between routes of communication and routes of commerce is strengthened.

The long-distance merchants we have profiled were representative of a larger group that has gone unrecorded. Nevertheless, merchants trading through interlocking zones of commerce may have been more common and, in some respects, more efficient. The one weakness of the Rhine axis required shifting to land transport from water to traverse the Alps. The quiescent Rhône route causes the mountains between Italy and Frankland to loom even larger. But if we are right in what we have glimpsed of the merchants and markets of Frankland and Italy, and if we are right to discern commerce within broader networks of communications, foreign goods that could cross mountains must have been available in Frankland. Where are the wares?



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# 24

# *Where are the wares? Eastern imports to Europe*

In the decades around 800, European communications and commerce with the more developed economies of the south and east increased sharply. An accelerating rate of travel and developing new routes tell of tightening contacts among the trading worlds of east and west. In Italy, we have detected different clusters and axes of merchants and their movements; so too across the Alps, in Frankland. In Italy probably, in Frankland certainly, the geographic range of merchants and their goods expanded. Large regional zones of commerce constituted the dominant model. They sprang up along the main communications routes – the water routes are the most visible – and they interlocked. Frankland connected to the greater economies of Africa and the Middle East via Italy and Spain. Contacts were also taking place with the Middle East and Central Asia across the northern arc of Scandinavia and the Danubian corridor of the Slavlands. If these different observations are as well founded as they appear to be, then more proof should be forthcoming in terms of objects, wares that moved into the Frankish empire. We have already scrutinized two series of objects and the patterns of their movement into the Frankish ambit. Do they prove commerce?

The case is strong that whatever relics *were*, many came from the places they claim. Moreover, some relics were certainly bought and sold in a distinctively medieval form of commerce.[1] But their presence in a Frankish shrine does not reveal the circumstances of their acquisition. Some relics were purchased, but Charlemagne's ambassadors were charged with obtaining others. They directly show contacts, not necessarily commerce. Others may well have been obtained by pilgrims who were traveling on merchant vessels, but this too defies direct documentation. Coins? The proposition that they come from afar is less likely to offend twenty-first-century susceptibilities. But coins do not always move because of commerce.[2] For both relics and coins, aggregate patterns of movement create a

1 Herrmann-Mascard 1975, 339–54 and Geary 1990, 44–55.

2 Grierson 1959.



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plausible context for reconstructing commerce; they do not prove it. To nail this case shut, goods imported from afar and mentioned in sources or still surviving today are indispensable. But the eastern goods so famously present in Merovingian Gaul, the papyrus, the spices and the silks, disappeared, did they not?

This chapter will argue that reality was more complex. Papyrus did disappear, in certain places and at certain times. But not in others. Spices became rare and expensive, and this changed the way in which people used them. Silks never disappeared, but the volume of importation changed, and probably more than once. We can add to these categories another ware, less studied but indispensable to early medieval culture in a way that these other goods were not: demand for papyrus, silk and spices was, after all, pretty elastic. The story that emerges involves issues of bulk transport, cultural change, and shifting patterns of supply and demand. In the end, that story of wares will confirm the reality of imports from the south and the east into Carolingian Europe.

The wares which crossed the Mediterranean are well known, although not always well documented. Only those which originated far from Frankland provide certain evidence of movement and probable evidence of exchange: spices, papyrus, silks are the classic goods. Incense too traveled from afar. Citrus fruits of some sort began to be imported, along with other exotic foodstuffs (Ch. 21.3). More ambiguous for now is the case of precious metals unless, like the coins we have tracked, they still bear the official stamp of Arab or Byzantine moneyers. One may hope that ongoing analysis of their chemical composition will create new insights. Certain kinds of textiles and clothing products are also not without ambiguity, the more so that their nomenclature still awaits its historian. What, for instance, is the story of Cordovan leather? The earliest reference I know comes in the seventh-century privilege quoted in Chilperic II's famous concession to Corbie. It mentions "ten Cordovan skins" collected by the royal customs house at Fos.[3] Around 800, white and red Cordovan leather as well as Arab gold coins and textiles were imported into the southern French coastal zone between Narbonne and Marseilles, where they were offered as bribes to Charlemagne's personal representative.[4] A generation later and much to the north, Abbot Ansegisus of Fontenelle (823–33) earmarked 3 lb. for the purchase of forty *cordebisos* for his monks. These skins were surely an expensive, high-quality product, since they cost half as much again as normal goatskin. Were they still being imported from Cordova? Or had the word already been transferred to local goatskins prepared in the Cordovan style? If the name still designated the place of manufacture, these forty

3 *Corbie*, no. 15: "cordevise pelles X."

4 Theodulf of Orleans, *Contra iudices*, 498.174–5, 499.211–16, 500.245–6, to name only the objects explicitly identified by their origin.



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Cordovan skins prove that trade with Muslim Spain was regularly reaching the Seine in the reign of Louis the Pious. After all, the item appears in a list of *annual* revenues and expenditures. If not, then it reveals more local technical innovation fostered by foreign goods.[5] But before turning to the wares of indubitably distant origin, we must cast a glance at bulk transport inside the Carolingian empire, for it has implications for the movement of foreign goods beyond their port of entry.

## 1. Bulk wares inside Carolingian Europe

It is sometimes suggested that Carolingian commerce did not amount to much because it involved little transport of bulk goods.[6] The polyptychs nonetheless show that estate systems moved large quantities of agrarian and craft products across great distances (see in general Maps 15.1 and 22.1). Even were we to repeat old errors and think these movements always excluded commerce, they signal the ability to ship bulk goods far and wide. But merchants and commerce also dealt in staples and bulk transports, as a few examples indicate.

Salt and bread were basic to life, and to Carolingian commerce. The indispensable condiment and preservative is unequally distributed across Europe, and has always figured prominently in early exchange systems connecting different ecological zones. Even around 700, at the nadir of trade, merchants from coastal Comacchio were peddling this vital commodity from their boats far inland (R88). Long after Venice became famous for more glamorous exports to Europe, salt underpinned the shipping of its more expensive goods.[7] Along the Po river system, it remained the backbone of the trade of Venice's short-lived rival, Comacchio, into the ninth century.[8] Efforts of Carolingian institutions to *buy* the salt they needed help us to see it traveling by the boatload up the rivers of Frankland, and by the wagonload over its roads. Indeed, the thrifty archbishop of Sens decided one year to buy inland at Toul: rainy weather had driven up the price at Sens of salt from his usual source of supply on the Atlantic coast, several hundred kilometers away.[9] It is also one of the rare commodities for which we

5 *Gesta Font.*, 13, 8, p. 122. The chronology suggests that this technique was a Visigothic innovation which was taken over by the Muslims, and provides a precious new hint that Cordova's early medieval economic development had begun *before* the Muslims arrived.

6 Fossier 1981, 269 is symptomatic.

7 Hocquet 1978–9.

8 E.g., Liutprand's *Pactum*, p. 124 (A.D. 715); D L II, no. 4 (5 October 851).

9 Boatload: Adrevald, *Miracula Benedicti* (*BHL* 1123), 19, ed. de Certain, pp. 46–7; Jeremiah of Sens, *apud* Frotharius of Toul, *Ep.* 8, *MGH Epist.* 5.281.27–35. See on the Carolingian salt trade in general, Ganshof 1959, 6; and esp. Johanek 1987, 29–30, with a thoughtful analysis of the decision of the archbishop of Sens; for salt production on the Seille, etc., Stoclet 1993, e.g., 80–4.



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can discern smaller-scale commerce, from the story of a poor entrepreneur (Ch. 22.2).

Estate systems were not alone in ferrying grain around Europe: grain was commercially traded in different parts of the Carolingian empire and along its margins. We have already met the Mainz merchants who sailed up the Main to buy it; another Mainz house which probably belonged to a merchant bore the Old High German name "At the Granaries," while a bishop made handsome profits from selling grain in times of scarcity (above, pp. 655f). The Frisians whose slaves towed them up the Rhine as far as Strasburg bought grain which they "sold for a sea price," apparently a poetic expression for overseas trade and certainly implying that Alsatian grain reached the North Sea.[10] Charlemagne was probably thinking of the Frisians and referring to grain when a shortage moved him to forbid food exports (*alimonia*), and we have noted at Hamburg the excavation of a ninth- or tenth-century dock covered with grain.[11] A historical romance written before the Arabs invaded Sicily depicted a papal convoy loading in Sicily for Rome. Although he does not specify the cargo, the author probably expected his reader to know that the ships were taking on grain.[12] We have already seen a later ninth-century indication of grain trading along the Tyrrhenian coast (Ch. 21.2).

Lumber and other building materials traveled the regional routes north of the Alps. Mentions of their movements come mostly from letters between great men, which means that when we see supplies changing hands, they tend to do so as gifts. The fact that medieval collections have preserved numerous examples of such begging letters is sometimes construed as evidence that markets were unable to supply the goods mentioned. But that deduction does not necessarily follow from a churchman's desire to obtain for free what other people paid for. One need look no further than Alcuin's elegant and witty entreaties to find an ecclesiastic asking for free wine, in an age when Frankland was exporting wine for anything but free into the North Sea trading zone.[13] So too for building supplies: King Offa of Mercia solicited Charlemagne's help in obtaining long pieces of "black stone" (*petrae nigrae*).[14] In this case, Charlemagne seems to promise to

10 Ermoldus Nigellus, *Ad Pippinum regem*, I, 107–9, p. 210, "Si non, Rhene, fores, mansissent denique nostra/ Horrea, quae nobis gignit amoenus ager,/ Per te vecta quidem pretioque redempta marino," the point of this poetic bidding contest being that the Alsace would still have plenty of grain if there were no Rhine to transport it down to the sea for sale.

11 *MGH Capit.* no. 44, 4, 1.123.2–3; Jankuhn 1986, 140; for archaeological evidence of grain loading on a Hamburg dock, above, p. 610.

12 "Leontius," *V. Greg. Agrig.*, 61, 219.23–4; cf. *ibid.*, comm., pp. 381–2.

13 Alcuin, *Ep.* 192, 318.30–319.20. On Frankish wine exports, below.

14 Alcuin, *Ep.* 100, 145.36–9 (Charlemagne to Offa, 796). Charlemagne goes on to make his famous complaint about the (recent) shortening of the capes which the Mercians were exporting to the Franks. The reference to length, and to the dispatch of someone to pick out exactly the stones needed mean that Offa wished to use them in construction. I agree with



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give the stone to Offa, and we cannot tell if there was commercial distribution of it beyond Frankland. But Hincmar of Rheims advised his diocesan priests that marble or *petra nigra* should be used for constructing altars. This suggests that both stones were available in Champagne, and presumably not due to generalized largess.[15]

That building materials were indeed traded is implied, for instance by the forests of lumber consumed at Dorestad (above, p. 653). It is proved by practical administrative records. When a benefactor gave a church two slabs of purple marble, he specified their price (£4).[16] He also notes that he paid 8 d. at Boulogne-sur-Mer for construction material, probably lumber.[17] Ermold Nigellus' poetic debate over the economy states outright that Alsace exported lumber for the gold dust and gems that the Rhine supplied in exchange: "You've got wooden canopies, we've got gold dust, / For hardwood lumber comes a shiny gem."[18] Alsatian raw materials attracted gold and gems up the Rhine, perhaps even from the North Sea trading zone. Lumber was surely not carted across the Alps, but it floated easily downriver.

Frankish and Anglo-Saxon metal production concerned more than coinage. The silver-bearing lead mines at Melle in Poitou explain the large number of pennies struck at the mint there, and the mines were bustling under the Carolingians.[19] But scientific analysis proves that even many coins made in that mining region drew their silver from other, unidentified sources.[20] The best-documented sort of metal concerns the prestigious projects of the elite, not the indispensable iron of daily life, and lead leads the way in establishing increasing Carolingian metal production and shipment. The mines at Melle may have supplied some of the lead which reappears suddenly and broadly on the roofs of high-status buildings. In addition to Charlemagne's chapel at Aachen, his son-in-law's monastic showpiece of St. Riquier received a lead roof.[21] Around 800,

Footnote 14 (*cont.*)
Levison (1946, 111): the stones were certainly not the Rhenish millstones which Francia exported to England and Scandinavia; cf. Johanek 1987, 32n119. More probably they were a black construction stone, perhaps like the one still called "pierre noire" in Belgium and quarried around Tournai, from where transport down the Scheldt to the sea would have been easy.

15 *Capitula synodica III*, 3, *PL*, 125.794C.

16 *Diplomata belgica*, no. 37.

17 *Ibid.*, "ad *materiam* altaris."

18 Ermoldus Nigellus, *Ad Pippinum*, I, 125–6, p. 212: "Lignea tecta tibi, nobis est aurea harena/ Robore pro secto lucida gemma venit."

19 Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 235–9. Traver 1938, 23–7, on what his contemporaries knew about the mines; cf. 29–39 on the Carolingian occupation; Stoclet 1993 has much valuable information on Carolingian mining and metal production.

20 Barrandon and Dumas 1990.

21 Aachen: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 829, p. 177; St. Riquier: Hariulf, *Chron. Centul.*, 3, 26, p. 149.



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lead also covered the shrine of St. Martin at Tours.[22] Some tin (*stannum*) apparently crossed the Alps as a royal gift. At least Charlemagne and the abbot of St. Martin of Tours had each promised the pope half a ton.[23] Hadrian I's request that the king require each of his counts to transport 100 lb. of the metal certifies that there was no thought of floating this cumbersome material down the ancient Rhône route. Nothing could make clearer the changed circumstances of that river. Although there may have been some delay, St. Peter's did get a new roof. At the very outset of his reign, the next pope took credit for it, a fair indication that Hadrian had started the massive project.[24] Fortunatus of Grado noted in his will that the lead with which he had roofed his church had been a gift of the "Holy Empire" and his own efforts. He was probably referring to a similar gift of Charlemagne.[25] In the next reign, Ansegisus covered the tower and apse of the church of St. Peter at Fontenelle with lead sheathing.[26] The monastery of St. Denis seems also to have had a lead roof. In the 830s, the monk who invented the fabulous acts of King Dagobert states that, every other year, an unspecified mine produced four tons of lead as dues for the king. He claimed that the ancient king had ordained that the lead (apparently all 8,000 lb.) should be delivered to the abbey's agents or treasurers every other year, in perpetuity, for the roof. Once again, this historical fiction tells us nothing about the seventh century, but much about the era of its composition, when Abbot Hilduin, the man behind the *Gesta*, was well placed at court to know the details of royal revenues. Whether or not this scheme actually produced the desired effect on Louis the Pious, it is hard to imagine that the abbot actually meant to replace the roof every twenty-four months. Surely, like the wine of St. Germain, the plan was to sell it.[27] Lead roofs

22 *Vita Alcuini* (BHL 242), 19, *MGH SS* 15.1.194.12–17. The building went back to the 5th C., but this was not likely to have been the original roof. On the basilica, Pietri and Biarne 1987, 32–4.

23 *Cod. Car.*, 78, 610.2–30.

24 *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.1.21–4: "Sarta tecta . . . a summo usque ad summum, omnia et in omnibus noviter restauravit." The pope restored the roof over the main nave, the transept, the portico of the vast atrium, the fountains, and the bell tower. Leo III also took credit the same year (792–3) for redoing the roof of the titular church of St. Anastasia; see Geertman 1975, 38. Other roofs were repaired the next year: *Liber pont.*, 2.11–15. In 809–10, Leo III restored the roof of Santa Maria Maggiore: *ibid.*, 27.28–9. In 779–80, Hadrian I had repaired the roof of a titular church: *ibid.*, 1.507.3–4; cf. Geertman 1975, 12.

25 *Documenti di Venezia*, no. 45, p. 76: "Et coperii ipsam ecclesiam de plumbo de dono sancti imperii et in meo certamine."

26 *Gesta Font.*, 13, 5, p. 106.

27 *Gesta Dagoberti*, 40, 419.3–11, "Denique eodem tempore plumbum, quod ei ex metallo censitum in secundo semper anno solvebatur, libras octo millia ad cooperiendam eandem supradictorum beatorum martyrum ecclesiam eo ordine concessit, ut . . . in alio semper anno adduceretur et agentibus vel thesaurariis ipsius venerandi monasterii traderetur . . ." On the work and Hilduin, see Wattenbach *et al.* 1952–90, 319; cf. 302n30. Lead and construction wood were shipped up the Seine, apparently to St. Denis, and may have been



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continued to be added even in mid-century, after the civil wars and the first Viking incursions. When Hincmar finished the great basilica at Rheims, he topped it with a lead roof.[28] St. Bertin got one in 854.[29] Lead also crossed the Channel, since Lupus of Ferrières was hoping for royal help when he asked an English king for a gift of lead to roof his church. He also wouldn't object if it were transported to Etaples free of charge.[30] In the late ninth century, Anglo-Saxon merchants may have been hauling tin across the Alps to sell in Italy (above, p. 680). One wonders whether the innovative tin decorations on the Carolingian pottery known as Tating ware are symptomatic of a new and broader availability.

Although the history of medieval metal production is still in its infancy, this shipping and selling points to resurgent metal extraction and processing. Even before the archaeologists began to sift their evidence, the written record led some to conclude that estate systems expanded metal making at least modestly, including in the crucial arena of iron production.[31] Carolingian industrial waste is beginning to redraw the contours of our knowledge across the empire. Those wastes evince expansion, for instance in France, Germany, and Holland.

French highway builders recently uncovered 2,500 iron pits at Vert-Saint-Denis, near Melun, about a kilometer from a tributary of the Seine. Mining began in the eighth century and expanded rapidly; it continued into the eleventh.[32] Two-man teams seem to have dug the pits, true to the small-scale model that had come to prevail in the west at the end of antiquity (Ch. 2.1). Annual production at this particular site may not have been enormous, but it was *new*.[33] So too an extensive mining and smelting operation from the eighth and ninth century has emerged to push the origins of Lorraine iron production back four hundred years.[34] Iron smelting appears or reappears in southwestern Germany in the eighth century and, apparently on a significant scale, in Bavaria, a little later.[35] The deepening

Footnote 27 (*cont.*)
loaded on the banks of the Rhine. The St. Denis formula collection, compiled under Abbot Fardulf (793–806), contains a letter from a prelate to an abbot arranging for a ship to deliver lead and, apparently, lumber for construction (*materiamen*) to the mouth of the Seine ("Signa"): *Collectio S. Dionysii*, 17, *MGH Formulae* 505.20–4; on which see Buchner 1953, 54; on this document, Stoclet 1993, 151–4.

28 Flodoard, *Hist. Remensis eccl.*, 3, 5, *MGH SS* 36.198.9.

29 Folcuin, *Gesta abbatum Sithiensium*, *MGH SS* 13.618.26.

30 Lupus, *Ep.* 13–14 (84–5), pp. 21–3.

31 Lombard 1974; Sprandel 1969, 305–6.

32 The 2,500 small pits are crowded into the 2 hectares excavated: Daveau and Goustard 1997.

33 Each pit produced some 160 kg of high-grade ore (c. 80 percent ferrous oxide). Assuming a uniform rate of exploitation over the three centuries of operation yields an annual average of production of c. 1.6 tons of ore for the excavated area: Daveau and Goustard 1997, 48. The excavation map (*ibid.*, 47) leaves no doubt that mining continued in the non-excavated area to the west.

34 Leroy 1988.

35 Szöke 1990 and Frei 1966.



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history of the lead and silver mines of the Harz mountains in northern Germany appears symptomatic when compared, for example with the Rhineland kilns. Down to the eighth or ninth century, men mined the argentiferous Harz lead deposits continuously, but on a small scale. Then things changed: a centralization of the smelting process brings with it the presumption of higher productivity. This reorganization paved the way for the very visible Ottonian expansion in the tenth century, when Harz mining finally breaks through into the written records, and makes its mark in the ancient lead pollution scientists have recently measured in Switzerland and Greenland.[36] In the Netherlands, a small area north of Dorestad has disclosed three major iron production centers. Two were operating in the ninth century, one newly; the volume of production was considerable, and seems to have outstripped local needs.[37] In the Jura, the first of the numerous small sites to be explored showed considerable production in the late Merovingian period.[38] The tempo of metal production was up. Were dynamic great estates fanning production? In any event, the archaeology of metal extraction meshes with the written evidence for exchange.

Higher value per weight characterized the textiles traded among regions of the Frankish empire. Charlemagne's complaint about recent changes in the size of English textile products exported to his empire makes perfectly clear that fabrics were traded across the Channel in standard lengths. Indeed, the wording implies that the kingdom of Mercia was exporting finished garments (*sagi*, cloaks), to Frankland.[39] The Frisians were famous for their textiles, which were remarkable apparently both for their fabric and for their dye qualities. These wares traveled at least as far south as Strasburg and, although the debate continues on whether it is the famous Frisian cloth, the archaeological data accumulates for a quality textile diffused in eastern England, around the southern North Sea, and up the Rhine to the foothills of the Alps.[40] Wealthy institutions that had ready access to the markets fed by the North Sea traders purchased part of their textile needs. Others had the good fortune to see large quantities come to them each year as rent from their Frisian holdings. This was the case of the 855 textiles supplied to Fulda, or those owed to St. Bavo's of Ghent.[41] Where they were

36 Klappauf 1995; Shotyk *et al.* 1998, 1638.

37 The third ceased production in the 4th C.: Joosten *et al.* 1997.

38 Two furnaces (assigned to c. 550–650 by $C_{14}$ and archaeomagnetic dating) which apparently produced c. 1,000 kg of iron in about two years of operation: Eschenlohr *et al.* 1991, 13–15 and 120–1. The smelting operations have been hypothetically linked with early medieval population growth deduced from place-names.

39 Alcuin, *Ep.* 100, 145.39–41.

40 Lebecq 1983, 1: 131–4; Ermold, *Ad Pippinum*, I, 123–4, p. 210; Steuer 1987a, 170–2.

41 Thus Fontenelle allocated c. 40 lb. annually for buying clothing, the details of which Abbot Ansegisus spelled out: *Gesta Font.*, 13, 8, pp. 122–3. Fulda and St. Bavo: Lebecq 1983, 1: 132–3.



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getting it is not clear, but the landless Venetians traded linen up the Po.[42] And high-value goods like wine were apt to travel long distances in the ninth century, from the Seine or Rhine rivers or along the Tyrrhenian coast (Ch. 22.3–4; 21.2).

## 2. The problem of papyrus and the Alps

So even cumbersome goods like salt, lead or grain ranged long distances, especially, but not exclusively, when water transport was available. Some goods surely went as gifts. No less surely, some traveled as commercial wares. Einhard makes this explicit about grain; Ermold does the same for wine, and Wandalbert for pots. Even bishops paid for their salt. Men, carts, beasts, and boats moved wares like these along the rivers, roads, and coasts of Frankland and Italy, and their movements breathed new life into transport and commercial infrastructures. Two of the most active routes, the Po and the Rhine rivers, led to opposite edges of the Alps. But there is little reason to think that the grain, ceramics, wine, salt, or other bulky wares regularly left the relatively inexpensive water transport systems behind and crossed the Alps overland, from one transport zone to another. When bulk goods like the papal tin did cross the Alps, typically, cost was irrelevant since commerce was not at issue, and transport was organized ad hoc.[43]

The changing seasonality of papal communications has confirmed the accuracy of anecdotal evidence for a shift. Predominantly seaborne links between Italy and Gaul were replaced by predominantly overland ones by the eighth century (Ch. 3.3). The shift illuminates – and explains – one of the most striking facts Pirenne adduced to prove the impact of Islam on trade to Frankland. In Pirenne's view, the disappearance of papyrus from Gaul established that the Islamic supremacy cut off distribution of an indubitably Egyptian product. In fact, he mistook a regional change in the transport infrastructure for an international economic change. A look at Map 24.1 makes this clear.

What changed around 700 was not the production of papyrus in Egypt, nor its export across the Mediterranean to Europe. What changed was only that the northernmost leg of its distribution into Frankland ceased.[44] Papyrus remained

42 *Bobbio Polyptych of* 862, 138.18–19. Egypt, where the Venetians certainly traded, was a major producer of linen: Mackie 1989, 82.

43 In the opposite direction, Charlemagne sent beasts of burden ("vehicula fortia et multa") to bring marble and columns from Rome and Ravenna for his son-in-law's monastery at St. Riquier as well as for his own palace: Hariulf, *Chron. Cent.*, 2, 6, p. 63, which makes explicit that Charlemagne sent the beasts; Einhard, *V. Karoli*, 26, 31.1–3; cf. *Cod. Car.*, 81, p. 614.

44 The occasional statement that papyrus was still used in France as late as 787 (e.g. Lewis 1974, 92) is groundless. The papyrus letter of 788 preserved in Paris, Archives Nationales, K7, no. 9 (*ChLA* 16, no. 629) was sent to Charlemagne by his ambassador in



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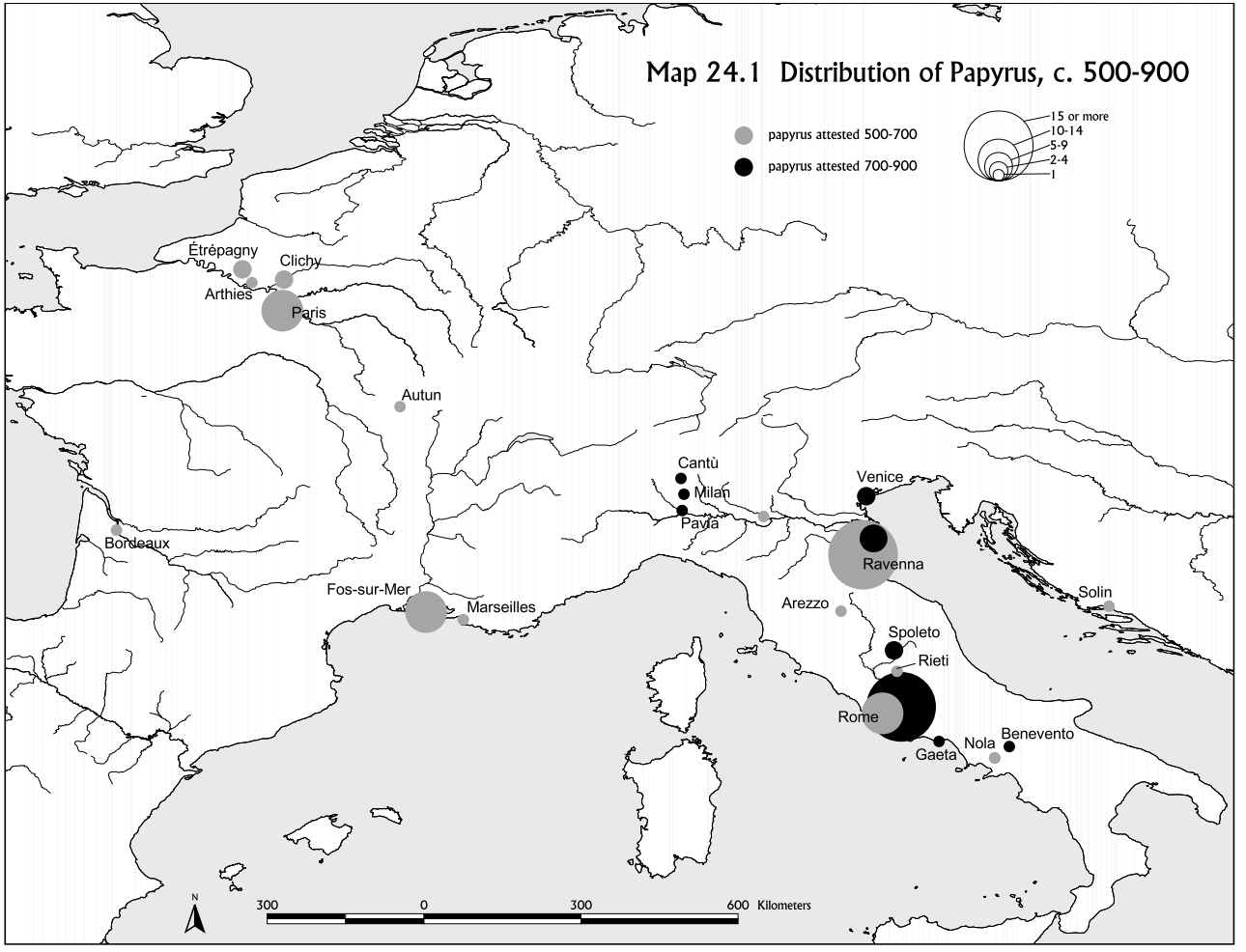


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readily available in Italy: as far north as Rome, writers on the west coast consumed appreciable quantities of the Egyptian import until an era when the Carolingians were but a memory. On the Adriatic side, practically up to the foothills of the Alps, it remained in common use throughout the ninth century. It also continued to be used in Spain. In other words, the story of papyrus is simply another manifestation of how shifting *regional* communications affected one relatively small sector of the Mediterranean, the sea link running north of Rome through the Ligurian Sea to the mouth of the Rhône. Pirenne's argument that Islam killed Gaul's commerce with the Middle East is misleading: it has extrapolated from a development in regional transport a Mediterranean-wide economic conclusion. Papyrus continued to be produced and exported. But it simply was not economical to transport northward across the Alps on the backs of men or beasts the papyrus that was readily available in Venice.[45] By the same token, there was no economic justification for carrying Rhine wine and grain south across the mountains into the fertile Po valley. The shifting infrastructures of communication dictated that only high-value, low-bulk goods be imported into Frankland when demand for exotic goods began to grow again north of the Alps. For them, the profit justified the higher cost of transalpine transport.

Papyrus might tell more. One piece which still bears its Arabic manufacturing mark hints that the ninth-century papal writing office may have started stockpiling. But, if this one bull is typical and the reading of the Arabic correct, in 876 the papal stock was thirty-eight years, not centuries, old.[46] This suggests that the papal writing office may have reckoned *around 840* that supply networks were unreliable; if the Roman officials had bought the papyrus shortly after its manufacture, the purchase occurred precisely when peaceful communications were slumping.[47]

That the papal chancery continued to use papyrus for centuries after the Franks abandoned it makes another important point. We too easily forget that demand is embedded in culture.[48] The collapse of the part of the transport network that had supplied papyrus to the Frankish elite in the late seventh century undoubtedly

Footnote 44 (*cont.*)
Benevento. The problem of the distribution of papyrus within Egypt may be complicated. 9th-C. papyri suggest that the supply was more abundant at the capital, Fustat (Old Cairo), than in the Fayum, a great production center: *Marchands d'étoffes*, 2, no. 3.17, p. 11 and no. 9.20–1, p. 25.

45 For its bulk, papyrus was not a high-value item. But it was not dirt cheap. Around 800, a roll (probably twenty sheets) of the highest quality cost one-and-a-half dinars *in Egypt*. Inferior grades might cost a sixth of that or less, but that was still a pretty price to pay: Grohmann 1954, 1: 69.

46 JE 3052, Santifaller 1953, 50; Bresslau 1912–60, 2: 491; Lohrmann 1968, 187.

47 See Chart 14.3, core movements and Arab coins.

48 Lopez 1943, 35 and 37 pointed out that changing taste could have affected Frankish wearing of silk and use of spices, although he emphasized other factors at the producing end of the circuit.



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explains why the north ceased writing on this particular material. But it remained available in the Mediterranean. Even in the eleventh century, the papal writing office still clung tenaciously to the papyrus that had become extinct elsewhere in Italy. The reason is simple, and it is not economic. The use of this special writing material was part of the conservative symbolic culture of papal power. It both embodied and reflected an unbroken continuity of administrative routines that went back to antiquity; so too certain papal internal service books, probably the registers, continued to be written on papyrus into the eleventh century.[49] Besides, the writing material served as one among many independent signals of a papal document's authenticity, alongside the Byzantine-style lead seals, the special handwritings, and the rhythmic formulas known as *cursus*.

North of the Alps, the situation was different. By the time the Carolingians had seized power, the economy was rebounding and more writing materials were needed in general. The new rulers certainly had enough wealth to bear the cost of importing papyrus across the Alps and restoring its use in their rather modest writing office, if they had perceived an imperious need. After all, transporting rolls of papyrus would have been easier than dragging tin ingots or marble columns across the mountains. But things had changed. The Carolingian kings' writing office grew out of the household clergy who had served them as mayors of the palace. In other words, it broke with the Merovingian one in terms of personnel and organization. The new kings certainly saw many old papyrus diplomas when they confirmed old privileges or received new documents from Italy. But those who drew up their records felt no need to imitate the old dynasty; in fact the writing material played so small a part in the apparatus of verification of royal privileges that it was sometimes supplied to the royal office by the beneficiary, along with the text of the charter.[50]

No less important, in the meantime, parchment (with the persistence of wax tablets for ephemera) had become the normal and predominant type of writing material, even as the social base of literacy and its written records had contracted relative to late antiquity. Production of parchment must have been stimulated by need, for it caught up with demand. It kept pace as the Carolingian renewal provoked a jump in the quantity of parchment consumed. Many sheep and cattle had to die in order to create the small liturgical libraries required for every one of the empire's thousands of parish priests, as well as the growing libraries of abbeys, cathedrals, and palaces.[51] In fact, for several centuries, there is little sign of shortages of writing material, for instance recourse to palimpsests, which recycled old

49 Santifaller 1953, 35–49; Lohrmann 1968, 185–94.

50 Tessier 1962, 109–11: this was manifestly true of privileges written up outside the royal writing office and subsequently validated by it, a habit which can be detected as early as Louis the Pious.

51 For some estimates and the economic aspects of book production, see McKitterick 1989, 135–41.



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manuscripts. This includes the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when the economy and population soared, along with the generation of records and of more learned tomes. *A contrario*, the same point is made by the rather slow penetration of paper, whose price might have been cheaper and whose quantities were, ultimately, more infinitely increasable than parchment. In the Italian peninsula, the vanguard of western economic (and record-generating) growth, paper did not become common until the later 1100s, while Europe north of the Alps lagged by more than a century, despite the advent of new cities, royal governments, universities, and a culture of writing whose social base was incomparably larger than it had been in the early Middle Ages.[52] In a word, once a changing transport infrastructure interrupted the transalpine supply of papyrus, shifting cultural and institutional patterns joined to insure that northern demand for papyrus never returned to earlier levels.

## 3. Drugs: the spice of life

If demand for a material which had once seemed indispensable for the orderly conduct of daily business was so elastic, what are we to think of goods whose superfluous luxury was even more pronounced? In some respects, spices are not so dissimilar to changing attitudes toward writing materials. Those of us who remember the American table of the 1950s or earlier will recognize that the use of spices in cooking is a culturally conditioned and fluid kind of demand.

As we have seen in Rome, Venice, and the Po valley, exotic spices and fragrances were available on the Italian side of the Alps. Pepper was reckoned in pounds or sacks (presumably a multiple of pounds). Cumin also was counted in pounds; cinnamon and *costus* were measured in ounces. Notwithstanding occasional assertions to the contrary, these very high-value, low-volume goods certainly reached the north. But the additional transport and, perhaps, the more dispersed geography of demand raised cost and diminished volume. Tellingly, south of the Alps, the casual vocabulary of exotic substances tends to be richer and more precise: one hears of *serostyrax*, *cotzumber*, and *olibanus*. North of the Alps, it is often simply "spices" (*pigmenta*) or "incense" (*incensum*), implying that the supply offered less choice and variety.[53]

52 Paper: there is a fine summary in J. Irigoin, "Paper, Introduction of," *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* 9 (New York, 1987): 388–90.

53 *Serostyrax* and *cozumber* (the derivation of the latter is unclear to me; cf. also below, n104): Boniface, *Ep.* 85, 191.17 (A.D. 746–7), and 65, 128.22; Bishop Ursus' will: *San Lorenzo*, no. 1 (February 853) mentions 600 lb. of silver and three sacks, one of pepper, one "de alivano," and one unspecified (p. 9). The second sack's contents were incense: this is a slightly deformed version of the Greek loan-word *olibanum*, from ‹τ›ὸ λίβανον, hitherto first attested



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Nonetheless, signs are unmistakable that availability improved north of the Alps. In the spring of 735, the great and venerable Bede lay dying in his monastery, a stone's throw from the Tyne river and the North Sea. On his deathbed, he distributed to the priests of Jarrow his personal stash of fancy stoles, pepper, and incense.[54] Four generations later, things had changed. Pepper and incense ceased being once-in-a-lifetime gifts for the ranking clergy of a great monastery. On the other side of the North Sea, the eight clerics of every level who staffed a minor church belonging to St. Bertin received a present every year on the founder's anniversary, 5 November. It consisted of an ounce of pepper, a second ounce of cumin, and a third of cinnamon, galingale (a type of ginger), or cloves.[55] The fact that the document specifies different options for the third spice probably implies that in any given year, one could be certain of obtaining one of the three, but not all of them. Pepper and cumin posed no such problems. At Fontenelle, to care for sick monks, the abbot assigned a pound of silver per year to buying "spices" (*pigmenta*) for mixing with honey.[56]

Spices were available, but they were not the sort of thing one could expect in every country priest's home. In 877 Hincmar admonished his suffragans not to demand from their hosts unnecessary things like spices and other sorts of (expensive) goods when they traveled through their diocese preaching and confirming the baptized. After all, Hincmar added, even their own palaces might not have all the things the bishops were demanding from their priests. Clearly, however, some bishops *were* demanding spices as part of their country subordinates' hospitality. In fact, it was a fairly complicated world, since Hincmar goes on to imply that bishops were living off supplies unduly demanded from subordinates, and were getting rich by selling their own stores.[57] Walafrid Strabo mentions the high price

in 10th-C. Rome: Kahane and Kahane 1970–6, 369. If the copy is reliable, the first letter suggests that Venetians mistook the Greek word for Arabic. This was an entirely plausible slip, since the ancient Greek word derived from a Semitic root; and it is telling for the geography of supply. *Pigmentum* is the usual Carolingian word for spices: see e.g., Christian of Stavelot, *Expositio in Matthaeum*, 2: "Thus . . . quia . . . hoc pigmentum Domino fuit oblatum . . ." *PL*, 106.1284A. See following notes for further examples. For *incensum*, see further below. Physicians, however, were relatively precise on either side of the Alps: below.

54 Cuthbert, *De obitu Baedae*, p. clxiii, as Paul Meyvaert has pointed out to me.

55 According to a charter of 867: *Diplomata belgica*, no. 37. The revenues of the properties of the Holy Savior church are specified to feed and clothe eight *clerici* every year. The triple option could simply mean that all were available and a selection was possible, but the character of the document inclines me to suspect that this interpretation is less likely. Battisti 1961, 639, thought galingale first appeared in the west in the 13th C.

56 *Gesta Font.*, 13, 8, p. 122. The abbey's estates supplied large amounts of honey, so the 20 s. were presumably spent on the spices. Honey, e.g. *ibid.*, pp. 120–1: Ansegisus enumerates dues totaling 13 *sextarii*.

57 In the same sentence: *Epistola* 52, *PL*, 126.274D: ". . . praecipiat ut, intrantes in domos eorum quibus pacem praedicant, illa edant et bibant quae apud illos sunt, per



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of a heap of pepper in Frankland ("apud Gallos").[58] Spices were indubitably luxuries, even gifts fit for a king, and, in keeping with the kind of literary documents produced by the Carolingian renaissance, that is when we hear about them. That Harun al Rashid sent a remarkable selection to Aachen is well known.[59] But members of the Carolingian family also exchanged such presents among themselves, to judge from a royal letter which mentions them in the same breath as a fine horse, a saddle, and a large curtain intended to decorate the palace.[60] A bishop who had disobeyed his king sought to assuage the royal ire by sending him a heap of extraordinary gifts ("small favors," *parva xeniola*). The bishop was probably Salomon II of Constance, writing to King Louis the German, before 876. When the prelate says he had recently acquired these "foreign or overseas" little gifts, it is worth remembering that Constance stands athwart the great Rhine route to Italy. The "small favors" included two fine textiles, one of a shade of green whose name (*prasini*) evokes a class of Byzantine purple silk from the imperial workshops and one of damask (*polimitum*), branches of (date?) palm with their fruit, cinnamon, more galingale, cloves, a packet of mastic and pepper, figs, pomegranates, and an ivory comb.[61]

So spices certainly reached the Carolingian empire north of the Alps. Bishops might demand them from country priests or send them as gifts. But in contrast with Merovingian times they were expensive and rare. Not unlike papyrus, a kind

Footnote 57 (*cont.*)
parochiam praedicando ac confirmando pergens episcopus, non debet superfluas pensiones in pigmentis et aliis quibusque a presbyteris quae non habent requirere, et talia, quae forte in domo sua non accipit, voluptati potius serviens quam necessitati, exigere et suis parcens opibus, et superflue acceptis et venditis ditescere."

58 *De cultura hortorum*, 302–4, *MGH Poet.* 2.346: "Hoc *puleium* [pennyroyal, a mint], apud Indorum tanti constare peritos/ Fertur, apud Gallos quanti valet Indica nigri/ congeries piperis." The price of pennyroyal in India was a proverbial expression; it seems to have come to Walafrid from Isidore, *Origines*, 17, 9, 59, Lindsay; cf. ed. André, p. 197 with n483, a passage which may represent a Spanish interpolation. But the comparison with the price of pepper in Gaul is Walafrid's own.

59 *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 807, p. 123.

60 *Collectio Sangallensis*, 27, *MGH Formulae*, 412.20–3, which looks as if it is addressed by the younger Louis, son of Louis the German, to Louis the Stammerer, king of west Francia. The editor suspects (*ibid.*, 393n3) that this may be a fictitious letter that has slipped into the real letters used in the collection. Even so, it would show what the author, who may have been Notker the Stammerer, thought about kings and spices.

61 *Coll. Sangall.*, 29, 415.15–19: "palliolum coloris prasini et aliud polimitum, spatulas palmarum cum suis fructibus, cynamomi, calangani, cariofili, masticis et piperis fasciculum, Caricas ficorum, malogranata, pectinem elefantinum, vermiculos, cicadas, aves psitacos, merulam albam et longissimam spinam de pisce marino." See also Dümmler 1857, pp. 123–6, with further parallels. On the nomenclature of the forbidden class of imperial purple silk, in which color terms refer to "different shades of murex [purple]," and *prasinodiblatta*, see Muthesius 1997, 28.



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of cultural shift had occurred. Spices, whose salutary qualities had always been esteemed, were now prized mainly for their medicinal value. When Notker of St. Gall summarized the marvelous and exotic substances Harun al Rashid had sent to Charlemagne, he calls them "most varied spices, perfumes, or medicines."[62] A letter from his monastery (which he may have authored) concludes: "And, in order that you may know how solicitous we are of your longevity, we are sending you aromatics, unguents, and medicinal spices ("aromata et unguenta et pigmenta medicabilia"), so that you might delight by smelling, daubing, and tasting them and enjoy long life . . ."[63] So too, spices were purchased for sick monks at Fontenelle. The choice of spices for their founder's anniversary was also not accidental, since 5 November was close to the beginning of the season for winter colds and other respiratory infections. A medical compendium compiled at Lorsch prescribes a potion of cloves and pepper to be drunk, apparently prophylactically, in October. November's potion was based on cinnamon.[64] From Louis the Pious' early years, a Bavarian letter shows one abbot, who is sick, asking another to send him "some spices and oil and Greekish wine along with some balsam to make a preparation to care for our infirmity."[65]

The supply of spices north of the Alps had constricted dramatically by around 700. But to argue that, around 800, spices still were not reaching them because Carolingian kitchens used fewer condiments than the Merovingians', overlooks the history of taste and the formation of cooking traditions. In an age of orally transmitted techniques and recipes, who, two or three generations after 700, would have remembered the full gamut of ancient spices that once were indispensable to Frankish cuisine? A gradual process of culinary rediscovery (and concomitant slow rising demand) seems more likely to me, once supply resumed.[66] This kind of cultural shift in the meaning and use of spices must have narrowed need for them. In any case, arguments that spices were absent from the Carolingian scene collapse as soon as one opens its medical books.[67]

The leading books of medical recipes came from Italy, or at least were transcribed by Italians. Within decades of their compilation, they found new homes north of the Alps. This aspect of the Carolingian cultural renewal is barely noted

62 Notker, *Gesta Karoli*, 2, 8, 61.15–18, "pigmenta, odoramenta vel medicamenta diversissima."

63 *Coll. Sangall.*, 27, 412.20–3.

64 *Das "Lorscher Arzneibuch,"* "Varia," p. 76. Similar or identical diets are attested in other Carolingian medical MSS: cf. e.g., Chartres, B.M. 70, s. ix[1], in Wickersheimer 1966, 25; Paris, B.N., lat. 2825, s. x, *ibid.*, 59.

65 *Salzburger Formelbücher*, 2, 20, 41.8–10. This particular collection contains material from the late 8th and early 9th C.: *ibid.*, pp. 13–15.

66 Lopez 1943, 37–8, allowed the hypothesis that early medievals had "coarser taste" and so liked spices less, but was inclined to attribute the decline of spice consumption (which he assigned to the 8th C.) to upheavals in India and China.

67 See in general Riddle 1965; cf. Stannard 1974 and Voigts 1979, esp. 259–61.



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but it is fundamentally important.[68] More than just late antique medical lore was transferred to the north. The very first reception of new Arab drugs occurred centuries before the earliest evidence of a Salernitan school. The crucial fact of the Italian origin of most of these manuscripts appears moreover to have escaped medical historians. The books surprise by the variety and quantity of exotic spices and drugs they require. Pepper, for instance, was very widely used for medicinal purposes. It occurs more than twenty-one times in the *Liber botanicus* (*Sangallensis*). This medical manual was compiled in northern Italy in the opening years of the ninth century and carried across the Alps soon thereafter.[69] Pepper occurs constantly in ninth-century Italian medical recipes.[70]

But pepper is equally well attested in the north. For instance, a remarkable physician's handbook written at Lorsch around 800 (Bamberg, Staatsbibl., Medic. 1) requires it for many potions, and it occurs also in Old High German recipes.[71] That particular kinds of pepper are specified, e.g. "white" or "long," suggests that supplies were varied as well as regular.[72] Although many recipes specify the quantities in grains, as one might expect for potions concocted for one patient, others presume substantial quantities of pepper in combination with other spices. Thus a general recipe for colds, stomach aches, and other maladies requires in addition to an ounce of pepper, two ounces each of "overseas spicum," cloves, cinnamon, spikenard, and ginger, to mention only the most obvious exotic drugs and spices. These were mixed in with three measures of wine and 16 lb. of honey, to be drunk frequently on an empty stomach until the sufferer felt better which, one imagines, could have taken some time.[73] The

68 Bischoff 1984, 189–90.

69 I have counted only the recipes which were not copied from Ps.-Apuleius, an earlier remedy book: *Botanicus sangallensis* (St. Gall, Stiftsbibl. 217, pp. 275–322), 2, 1 and 5, p. 122; 5, 1, p. 124; 13, 2, p. 128, etc. Pepper is flanked by ginger, balsam, and galingale. This physician's handbook seems to have continued to travel in the north since, when it was still unbound, it apparently was folded over for convenient transport in its new home. On the origin of the manuscript and the folding in its new home: Bischoff 1966–81, 1: 99.

70 E.g., *Jörimann Treatise A* (St. Gall, Stiftsbibl. 44, pp. 337–54, also in a 9th-C. Italian hand and already at St. Gall in that century: Bischoff 1984, 178n22), 23, p. 13; 37, p. 15; 66, p. 19, etc.

71 *Das "Lorscher Arzneibuch,"* pp. 442–3, s.v. (several dozen occurrences); cf. the OHG recipes, below, n79. For the script, Bischoff 1977, 23. Notwithstanding the broader point that these manuals were really used and that their contents in general reflect what was really available (see below), the *Arzneibuch* in particular appears to me also to include many bookish recipes containing ancient, obsolete lists of ingredients. The author indicates as much e.g., 1, 30, 118.1: "Item supra dicta iera aloetica *de alio codice sumpta* conficitur sic . . ." For specific recipes within this handbook whose modernity and Frankish application are nonetheless indubitable, see below.

72 *Botanicus sangallensis*, 22, 5, and 54, 1, pp. 132 and 143; *Das "Lorscher Arzneibuch,"* pp. 442–3, s.vv. *piper album*, *longum* and *nigrum*.

73 E.g., *Jörimann Treatise B* ("*Dicta Aristotelis archetri*," St. Gall, Stiftsb. 44, pp. 337–54),



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evidence from the northern medical books is just as overwhelming.[74] It would be easy to multiply the citations for pepper as for other substances necessarily imported from distant climes.[75] But such handbooks are usually compilations. Can their testimony be taken seriously to evince the availability of drugs and spices in Carolingian Europe?

Some believe that the early medievals' medical books mindlessly recopied ancient works with no thought to the availability of ingredients or real use of the treatments. It is true that some works are more "learned" than others, and mix more scholarly materials with the stuff of practical experience.[76] But the general rejection of the treatises' testimony is no more compelling here than it would be for early medieval canonical collections, which edited the ancient and modern laws of the church in view of contemporary needs. It will certainly convince no one who has held in his or her hands one of the dirty and well-worn medical manuscripts of convenient pocket size.[77] It is undermined by the compilers' acts of choice, addition, and subtraction.[78] It is confounded by the efforts to translate such recipes into the vernacular, for instance, the Old High German and Latin recipes from Basle.[79] The intrusion of the vernacular Frankish term for "cup" (OHG *stauf*, i.e. *staup* before the Second Sound Shift) makes clear, for instance, that the Lorsch physician composed or reformulated recipes which he actually used, and that he had access to some very exotic substances when he did so.

POTION AGAINST A SMALL STROKE. 1 ounce myrrh, 1 ounce frankincense, 1 ounce of the juice of the laserpitium plant (*Ferula tingitana*), 1 ounce of ammoniac, 2 ounces sage:

80, p. 21, "Remedium ad omnes tribulationes corporis forasticas et extrinsecus egritudines liberandas."

74 As it emerges from even a cursory examination of the MS descriptions, e.g., of Wickersheimer 1966, 49, 56, 65, 69, 77, 98, respectively for Montpellier, Faculté de Médecine 362, s. ix/x; Paris, B.N., lat. 2796, lat. 5543, both s. ix; lat. 6862, s. $ix^{2/4}$; lat. 7021, s. $ix^{1}$; lat. 10251, s. $ix^{med.}$ etc.

75 It would be rewarding to push beyond these preliminary indications about the diffusion of imported substances to refine our understanding of the spread of old and new drugs, and so to determine, e.g., which milieus were most open to the new Arab knowledge.

76 At least so it appears to me, on the basis of the early medieval treatises I have read. The Lorsch book is precisely such a "learned" treatise, as one grasps immediately from its theoretical defense of the monastic practice of medecine (*Das "Lorscher Arzneibuch," Defensio artis medicinae*, pp. 48–62), and its sometimes explicit recopying of ancient recipes (above, n71). Yet it too incorporates a new Arab drug, and it uses the local measure for some recipes (below, n80). The *Jörimann Treatises* look more uniformly practical.

77 E.g., the filthy little book, from northern 8th-C. Italy: Vatican, B. Apost., Pal. lat. 187.

78 E.g., Riddle 1965, 186–92.

79 Thus pepper, myrrh, etc. in the Old High German and Latin Basle Recipes, *Die kleineren althochdeutschen Sprachdenkmäler*, 39.1 and 7.



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you crush them in a mortar and mix them with 9 *staupen* of wine and you make (the patient) drink it nine times . . . and every day . . . that he doesn't drink this potion, let him drink water mixed with chicory (*Cichorium intybus*) and pepper.[80]

The example could be multiplied but it makes the point that, even in the learned Lorsch handbook, some of the recipes at least were administered to suffering Franks.[81]

The medical treatises prove that more than the old spices were newly available in Carolingian Italy and Frankland. These humble manuscripts brandish new words and new drugs. In Charlemagne's lifetime, the new Arab pharmacology – itself the issue of the new economic and botanical world that stretched from Africa to the Indian Ocean – was beginning to make headway among medical practitioners on both sides of the Alps. Four examples make this clear. *Azarum* occurs in ninth-century medical recipes for various ailments, and seems to refer to a kind of resinous gum. It comes from Arabic *ʿanzarūt*.[82] Ambergris occurs under its Arabic name *ambar* in another contemporary treatise and, it would appear, in an eighth- or ninth-century rhythmic poem from the Po valley.[83] But perhaps the most surprising of all is the appearance, via Arabic, of a Malay word – and surely the substance too – a few kilometers from the middle Rhine around 800. The earliest appearance of camphor, "cafora" (from Malay *kāpūr* through Arabic *kāfūr*), in western Europe comes in two recipes of the Lorsch medical book.[84] Here the Lorsch manuscript confirms another element of Ibn Khurradadhbih's description of Carolingian trade with the Arab world.

80 *Das "Lorscher Arzneibuch,"* 1, 41, 124.1–7: "Myrra ÷ I, tus ÷ I, laser ÷ I, amoniacvm ÷ I, saluiam ÷ II: teris in mortario et distempera cum uini staupis VIIII et dabis bibere per nouem uices . . . et omni die . . . quando istam potionem non bibit, heliotropia id est solsequia cum aqua et pipere bibet."

81 Other examples with *staupen* measures: *ibid.*, 1, 42, p. 124; 2, 228, p. 228 (with aloe, myrrh, ammoniac, pepper, costus, ginger, etc.); 2, 260, p. 242; 4, 90, p. 314; cf. also the recipes which involve the therapeutic qualities of beer, e.g., 1, 45, p. 126 (with pepper etc.).

82 *Jörimann Treatise A*, 74, p. 20; 146, p. 31; 154, p. 32; 164, p. 33 and 181, p. 35. Cf. Prinz and Schneider 1967, 1: 1298. 7–10.

83 *Antidotarium of St. Gall* (Stiftb. 44, p. 247), p. 89, in a recipe for making incense (described below, n104). *Rhythmi aevi merovingici et carolini*, 136.3–4, *MGH Poet.* 4.721: "Nardei qui sedulo et ambaris odorem/Ore spirabas . . ."; cf. Prinz and Schneider 1967, 1: 540 and 549.

84 *Das "Lorscher Arzneibuch,"* 2, 209, p. 218; 4, 86, p. 312. Camphor also appears in the *Antidotarium of St. Gall*, p. 89, as well, apparently, as in the *Botanicus sangallensis* (St. Gall 217), 55, 1, p. 144 ("cafaro"). From the early 10th C., see the *Glasgow Antidotarium*, f. 168$^{r}$: Glasgow, Univ. Libr., Hunterian MS T. 4. 13 (cf. Lowe and Brown 1980, 1: 19 and 2: 46), p. 147 ("Collirio": "casfora penso denario medio"). Etymology of camphor: *OED Online*, 2nd edn, s.v.; cf. Riddle 1965, 190. I have not had the leisure to undertake the exhaustive philological and historical study these treatises – and their MSS – deserve: they may still hold some surprises.



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Camphor, he tells us, was precisely one of the wares Jewish merchants purchased in southeast Asia for import to Frankland; the Muslim economy is in fact known to have drawn its supplies (and the word) from Sumatra and Borneo.[85] Whether early Radhanite merchants or Venetians carried the Lorsch physician's camphor we cannot know, but around 800 the recipe book clearly and precisely confirms the trade links between southeast Asia and the Carolingian empire that Ibn Khurradadhbih described a couple of generations later.

So, the quiet work of great palaeographers allows us to chart with precision the earliest stage in the European appropriation of Arab science. For that is surely what we are seeing in the new drugs. It is impossible to imagine that they were purchased across the sea and imported into Europe as unidentified substances for local users. At least a minimal oral indication of their properties must have accompanied them. If the earliest surviving manuscripts offer an accurate image, this first reception of the Arab drugs occurred in northern Italy, around 800 (St. Gall, Stiftsbibl. 217). Simultaneously, at least one of the drugs became known across the Alps, at Lorsch, a monastery 15 km from the Rhine and enjoying close ties to the court and its activities in Italy.[86] Already in the ninth century, the Italian manuscripts St. Gall 44 and 217 had crossed the Alps; the former was annotated in its new home.[87] As far as the future of Salerno is concerned, the south Italian reception begins in the early tenth century, with the Glasgow manuscript.[88]

These new drugs go beyond illuminating the earliest, oral stage in the transmission of the new Arab science to Europe. They appear in the same place as the Arab coins. They do so in the years when we detect from other forms of communications a new Adriatic route linking Venice to the Muslim world. As their names attest, the new drugs and words were imported directly from that world.[89]

Pomegranates and pepper were not the only exotic goods that the backs of man or beast carried to Carolingian markets. Others were present in smaller quantities, or more sporadically. Planning wall paintings for his new buildings, Bishop Frotharius of Toul sought orpiment (arsenic trisulphide), "folium Indicum" (presumably indigo), minium (i.e. cinnabar or red lead), quicksilver and other supplies from Aglemar, apparently the abbot of St. Claude, some 30 km northwest of Geneva. It may be that Frotharius knew of some recent project at the abbey. But one cannot fail to note that St. Claude lay just a day's travel from the

85 Tr. Jacobi, p. 252; sources of camphor: *ibid.*, p. 259.

86 Abbots Ricbod (784–804) and Adalung (804–37) were both very prominent at court.

87 Bischoff 1984, 190.

88 Above, n84. The earlier Beneventan medical MSS need to be studied in this light. Bischoff 1966–81, 3: 18n61 observes that Visigothic script has heavily influenced the Glasgow codex.

89 There is no sign of a Greek linguistic intermediary, for instance. Cf. this with the apparent misidentification of the Greek word *libanos* as Arabic in a Venetian document, above, n53.



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Great St. Bernard pass to Italy.[90] So too a writer reminds his audience in the Ardennes that they pay for a purgative which foreigners make from the roots of plants that grow wild and free far from the Frankish forest.[91]

## 4. A liturgical imperative

Cooking spices and date palms were exotic luxuries. In Frankish culture, demand for them was elastic. Their presence north of the Alps surely proves the existence of commerce with the more developed economies of the south and east. But the elasticity of demand for them means that their quantities do not necessarily demonstrate that that commerce was itself infrequent. Theoretically, demand should have been less elastic for medicinal drugs, but the quantities needed for the small proportion of the population that had access to physicians will not have been enormous. Nonetheless the medical texts prove that various spices were readily available on both sides of the Alps, and that the new Arab drugs became known in the Rhineland at the same time that they appeared in Italy.

But Frankish culture placed a premium on another item whose finest qualities came from furthest away. With some justice, the Carolingians' has been called a liturgical civilization. Pippin and Charlemagne devoted great resources to improving and rendering more spectacular the performance of the "divine work," the liturgy. Rome was the model.[92] There, in the eighth century, to honor God and his saints, the most costly substance an underdeveloped world could imagine was conspicuously consumed, destroyed in fact, on the altars of shrines great and small. Burning incense was essential to the Roman style of liturgical performance. The gifts of incense sent across the Alps to Boniface by the cardinal deacon in charge of policy toward the Franks were laden with more than social meaning.[93]

90 *Ep.* 24, *MGH Epist.* 5.293.1–5, datable c. 831–4. Frotharius promises to make good on the supplies. "Unde peto, ut nobis mittas ad decorandos parietes colores diversos, qui ad manum abentur [!], videlicet auri pigmentum, folium Indicum, minium, lazur adque prasinum et de vivo argento iuxta facultatem. Haec nobis dirigito et a nobis debitum servitium iterum exigito."

91 Christian of Stavelot, *Expositio in Matthaeum*, 56, *PL*, 106.1473C–D, about scamony: "Erat namque consuetudo in ipsa terra [*sc.* Palestina], et in multis terris, . . . ut medici facerent et unguenta et theriacas, quia abundant eis herbae et pigmenta, et vendant his qui hoc non habent. Unde et vestrates scamoniam comparant, quod illi vendunt de vili herba conficiunt." Isidore quotes Pliny on the origin of high-quality scamony in Asia Minor and the unsatisfactory character of Syrian and Judaean types: *Origines*, 17, 9, 64, Lindsay; discussion in ed. André, p. 200n488–90.

92 See in general Vogel 1965.

93 E.g., *Ordo romanus I*, 26, 41, 46; 59, 75.14, 80.12–14, 82.1–2, and 87.15–88.2, respectively. Cardinal's gift: Boniface, *Ep.* 65 (A.D. 745), 128.22.



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Incense was indispensable for the liturgy to which the Carolingians devoted such efforts.[94] In fact, one of the characteristic ways in which the Carolingians transformed the Roman liturgy was by *increasing* the incense used in the Mass.[95] Carolingian church inventories are loaded with censers.[96] How and why incense was used in the liturgy excited discussion among contemporary theorists.[97] Its consumption expanded in the ninth century: Hincmar, for instance, required every diocesan priest to have a censer and incense, and to use them during the Mass.[98]

Since earliest antiquity, Arabia and eastern Africa had furnished most of the incense used in the Mediterranean world, as well as part of China's needs.[99] Could the incense burned daily in Francia, at every Mass as well as in many extra-eucharistic ceremonies, have come from anywhere else? Frankincense and myrrh were imported into Constantinople in 911/12 along with other spices and exotic substances.[100] Certainly the Italian sources tend to use ancient and new technical names. As with spices, Carolingian administrative sources most frequently call the stuff by its generic name, *incensum*, rather than specifying particular kinds, e.g. *thus* or *olibanum* (frankincense) or *myrrha* (myrrh). For what it is worth, even Carolingian authors inclined to originality like Christian of Stavelot repeat Isidore, himself indebted to Solinus and Pliny, on the Asian origin of incense.[101] Amalarius also quotes Isidore on the Indian and Arabian origins of aromatic substances, albeit with a significant change (see below). Although the general word "incense" is most common, a variety of grades that included frankincense and myrrh was certainly available north of the Alps, as the greater precision required

94 Incense: Atchley 1909, 102ff etc., has ample testimony on its early medieval use; see also Fehrenbach 1922 and Jungmann 1962, 1: 409–13; on the substances, Groom 1981, 96–164.

95 Jungmann 1962, 1: 101–2, 411 and 578.

96 A few examples from different parts of the empire's northern regions: Fontenelle, gift of Gerbold (c. 787–807), *Gest. Font.*, 12, 2, p. 88, and his personal censer, which he took with him during his travels, *ibid.*, 12, 3, p. 90; Ansegisus' (823–33) gift: 13, 4, p. 101. St. Riquier: Angilbert *apud* Hariulf, *Chron. Cent.*, 2, 10, p. 68 (four gilded silver censers) and 831 inventory, *ibid.*, 3, 3, p. 87 (eight gilded silver censers and one of copper). The description of the censers and incense boxes of the church of St. Michael on Staffelsee figure in Charlemagne's model inventory for fiscal and church properties, *Brevium exempla*, 2 and 3, 251.9–13. Ghent, St. Bavo's, shortly after 851, *Schatzverzeichnisse*, no. 28, p. 39.7: "Turibulos ii de argento. Bustiam [i.e. pyxis, a small box] unam."

97 E.g., Jesse of Amiens, *Epistola de baptismo*, *PL*, 105.784A; Amalarius, *Liber off.*, Prooemium, 21, *Opera liturgica*, 2.18.13–14 and *Codex expositionis II*, 16, 3–4, *ibid.*, 1.276.25– 277.2.

98 Hincmar of Rheims, *Capitula synodica [I]*, 6, *PL*, 125.774A–B; cf. De Clercq 1936–58, 2: 341.

99 Groom 1981, 9.

100 Leo VI, *Liber Praefecti*, 10, 1–6, 110.454–77.

101 Christian of Stavelot, *Expositio in Matthaeum*, 2, *PL*, 106.1284B: "Est autem *arbor Arabiae* quod ipsum fert *immensa atque ramosa* . . ." from *Origines*, 17, 8, 2, Lindsay; cf. ed. André, pp. 140–1n343.



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by medical recipes makes clear.[102] Carolingian liturgical practice gives no hint whatsoever that incense or its exotic ingredients were hard to come by.[103] One recipe, for instance, from that Italian *Antidotarium* which was already used at St. Gall in the ninth century, makes liberal use of a pound of *cozumbrio*, as well as frankincense, myrrh, spikenard, camphor, and ambergris, among other ingredients.[104]

Amalarius the liturgist was concerned with balsam because it was equally indispensable for Frankish worship, although its use was much narrower than that of incense. Balsam came from the Holy Land or Arabia.[105] Judging by Willibald's efforts to smuggle it out (Ch. 5.1), the export of this odoriferous resin was heavily taxed, if not forbidden, by Muslim authorities. In the western church, small quantities of balsam were mixed with oil to make chrism, the holy oil used in baptism, ordination and church dedications.[106] Theodulf of Orleans wrote a poem to the Frankish queen, attempting to flatter her into giving him some balsam for his liturgical functions.[107] Was it hard to come by, or was Theodulf simply looking for a free source? The fact that Frankish royal inspectors found two small glass containers of balsam in the sacristy of the Bavarian church of St. Michael, on a royal island in the Staffelsee, may suggest the latter.[108] And balsam figures frequently in the medical books.[109]

Nonetheless distribution became unreliable in western Francia around the middle of the ninth century. We know this because that colossal west Frankish forgery, the Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals, invented a letter of Pope Fabian (236–50), involving balsam. Historians agree that the False Decretals emerged out of very real conflicts among Frankish bishops and with their king, Charles the Bald. In this case, eastern bishops had supposedly written to the pope asking for

102 Thus, the Latin version of the prescription mentions "incensum tuos," i.e. frankincense, while the OHG recipes from Basle specify and distinguish red and white incense: *Die kleineren althochdeutschen Sprachdenkmäler*, 39.2 and 7. Although the OHG text also mentions "murra," it is not impossible that the red incense refers to a grade of myrrh, and the white to frankincense: Groom 1981, 122 and 137 (Pliny), but cf. 135, "semi-transparent . . . yellow or palish brown." Cf. e.g., the recipe from the Lorsch compendium translated above.

103 Numerous ancient efforts to grow frankincense and myrrh trees outside their native habitat seem to have had little success: Müller 1978, 773–5. Counterfeiting and adultering had been part of the industry since antiquity, but most of the additives were in any case from the Middle East, *ibid.*, 736–7. One might imagine that early medievals sought to "stretch" their supplies by adding flowers or spruce resin to their incense: cf. Fehrenbach 1922, 3.

104 *Antidotarium of St. Gall*, p. 89, "Confectio timiame."

105 Groom 1981, 126–31.

106 F. Cabrol, "Huile," *DACL* 6.2 (1925): 2777–91, here 2785.

107 *Carm.* 31, *MGH Poet.* 1.523.17–18.

108 *Brevium exempla*, 3, 251.15. Of course it was a royal possession, and stood at the Bavarian entrance to the Brenner pass.

109 E.g., *Das "Lorscher Arzneibuch,"* p. 420, s.v. "balsamum."



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his advice. They reported that some of their colleagues refused to perform every year the ceremony of mixing and blessing chrism – one of the more grandiose ceremonies in the old Frankish ("Gallican") liturgy. The imaginary eastern bishops claimed that they could not always get balsam and it was wasteful to destroy what was left over each year. Rather, they purportedly argued, it was more practical to keep using the same chrism for two or three years. "Insane!" thundered back the pseudo-pope. Jesus Christ himself had started the custom of mixing the chrism on Holy Thursday; all left over chrism must be burned and new chrism mixed every year. Unless some west Frankish bishops were actually making the case that balsam was on the market only sporadically around 850, the fake is completely gratuitous.[110] In fact, the issue of when chrism might be mixed arose several times around that time.[111] What this forgery illuminates is supply. Pseudo-Isidore reveals that the distribution of balsam in west Francia was irregular around 850: it might appear on the market only once every two or three years; and it was so expensive that some bishops hesitated to destroy what chrism they had not used. The pseudo-pope's reply was nonetheless categorical. He assumed the supply problems could be surmounted one way or another.

## 5. Silk

Although the demand for it could have been as elastic as for spices, the Frankish elite reveled in the luxurious feel, comfort, and look of silk. It was long ago noted that under the Carolingians, silk seems to appear in texts from the Frankish heartland at least as often as under the Merovingians.[112] Carolingian princesses and nuns flaunted their silk gowns, but they scarcely outdid male aristocrats.

110 Ps.-Fabian, *Ep.* 2, 8–11 (JE 93), *Decretales Pseudoisidorianae*, p. 160. On the chrism ceremony, Chavasse 1945.

111 E.g., *Conc. Meld. et Paris.*, a. 845–6, 46, *MGH Conc.* 3.107.1–2, with further references (*ibid.*, n139) to Benedictus Levita and the Aachen Council of 836. The synods simply insist that it be mixed only on Holy Thursday and make no reference to supply difficulties or recycling old chrism.

112 The main texts are collected and discussed by Sabbe 1935; judgement on Carolingian and Merovingian silk, *ibid.*, 813. His list could be expanded. A definitive assessment of Carolingian trade will require systematic analysis of the occurrences and (changing) meanings of the nomenclature of different textiles. The semantics will probably vary not only by time and place, but also by genre of the source. The *Liber pontificalis* would be the place to start. Muthesius 1997, 122, suspects, for instance, that "ex pallio" means "of silk" in the St. Riquier inventory. If correct, this would almost double the number of silk objects in the treasury, discussed in n115. Close scrutiny of the Carolingian nomenclature of textiles would increase the number of positively and probably documented silks.



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Charlemagne bestowed silk, as well as gold and silver, on his faithful grandees.[113] Precious relics sat on silken pillows, while churches were draped with the luxurious textile.[114] Some notion of quantities comes from inventories of the great and lesser shrines north of the Alps. In 831, the liturgical treasury of St. Riquier recorded at least forty-five silk vestments and furnishings.[115] Fontenelle's treasury had nineteen such pieces.[116] Even lesser foundations boasted substantial silk trappings. For instance, most of those at the royal estate church at Staffelsee were made of (ten) or decorated (thirty-four) with silk, rather than linen, wool, or unspecified stuff (thirty-three).[117] The availability of silk, like that of incense, appears undiminished in the late ninth century. On the contrary, a bishop of Soissons commanded in 889 that *every church* in his diocese should have at least one silk chasuble ("casula serica"), as well as a censer.[118]

Italy also appears well supplied with silk. The two textiles (*panni*) worth 60 gold mancosi that the abbot of Farfa loaned (in addition to cash) to two brothers around 802 must surely have been of silk.[119] Silks show up in the will of Fortunatus of Grado.[120] But the single greatest consumer was the papacy. Some precise quantitative data come from the records of papal gifts to the churches of Rome. I have tabulated the recorded textile gifts of Pope Hadrian I for the period from February 772 to August 779 (Table 24.1).[121]

113 E.g., the grandees who had not followed his son's revolt in 792: *Annales Laureshamenses*, a. 793, *MGH SS* 1.35: "... eos multipliciter honoravit in auro et argento et sirico et donis plurimis."

114 Garments: Sabbe 1935, 813–20; relics, 822–3; churches: 820–3.

115 Counting only the objects identified as *serici* or *ex cendalo* and erring on the side of undercounting in doubtful cases: Hariulf, *Chron. cent.*, 3, 3, p. 88. *Cendalum* or *cendatum* is of uncertain derivation, according to Prinz and Schneider 1967, 2: 447; W. von Wartburg, *Französiches etymologisches Wörterbuch* 11 (Paris, 1964): 641–2, argues, rather unconvincingly, that it derives from Lat. *sindon*, itself a borrowing (via Greek) of a technical term for a fine cloth originating in an unspecified Oriental language. It seems to me more likely to be a new (second) borrowing, perhaps of the same Oriental root. Cf. Kahane and Kahane 1970–6, 385, who derive it from Byzantine Greek, σενδές, which word, according to Sophocles 1887, 984, s.v., derives from Persian "SNDS"; cf. also Constantine VII, *Imperial Military Expeditions*, comm., p. 214.

116 *Gesta Font.*, 13, 4, pp. 102–3. The technical vocabulary appears more precise there than at St. Riquier: three *fundata*, three *stauracin*, ten *ex cindato* and three *serica*.

117 *Brevium exempla*, 4, 251.17–22.

118 Riculf, *Capitula*, 9, *MGH Capit. episc.* 2.104.10 and 18–19.

119 *Farfa*, no. 175.

120 Certainly the three *damaschini*, *Documenti di Venezia*, pp. 75–6, and probably others as well.

121 Using the chronology worked out by Geertman 1975, 8–11. Hadrian's distribution of silks is concentrated in these years. It looks very much like the pope systematically refurbishing the city and its shrines: an initial period dominated by textile gifts, roof repairs, and the atrium and approaches to St. Peter's, was followed by reconstruction of the water supply system, and then lesser shrines, and finally the walls, a sequence which is in itself deeply revealing.



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TABLE 24.1
Hadrian I's distributions of textiles, Rome, February 772 to August 779

| | Quantity | Textile designation | Object |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 557 | *sirica* (including 440 *sirica* also qualified as "de stauracim seu tyrea") | *vela* |
| | 7 | "de palleis quadrapolis" | *cortinae*[a] |
| | 174 | "de palleis quadrapolis" | *vela* |
| | 2 | "de quadrapolo" | *vestes* |
| | 65 | "de stauracim seu quadrapolis" | *vela* |
| | 10 | "de octapolum" | *vela* |
| | 22 | "de stauracim seu octapuli" | *vela* |
| *Subtotal* | **837** hangings and altar covers **certainly of silk** | | |
| | 154 | "de stauraci seu tyrea" | *vela* |
| | 14 | "de stauracim" | *vestes* |
| | 65 | "de palleis tyreis atque fundatis" | *vela* |
| | 22 + ?[b] | "ex palleis i.e. stauracim seu tyreis" | *vestes* |
| *Subtotal* | **255+** additional hangings and altar covers **probably of silk** | | |
| | 675 | *linea* | *vela* |
| *Total* | 1,767 + textiles of all sorts | | |

*Notes:*

[a] The text makes clear that curtains (to fit for instance the great main portals of St. Peter's) were considerably larger than *vela*. Cf. Beissel 1894, 358–60.

[b] At *Liber pont.*, 1.501.8–11, the biographer simply skipped the enumeration, recording only that at this time Hadrian gave such *vela* to all the titular and other churches, diaconies, and monasteries of the city of Rome. At 504.15, *Liber pont.* implies that there were twenty-two presbyteral *tituli*.

*Source: Liber pontificalis*, Duchesne, 1.499.13–505.26. Imprecision in the text leaves the nature of two textiles unclear: 500.1–2 and 500.23, although they were probably of silk, by analogy with the other similar objects. *Quadrapolum* and *octapolum* are calques of technical terms used by the Byzantine silk industry to designate qualities of silk (e.g. ὀκτάπωλον). The lower the number, the higher the quality. *Quadrapolum* will have been of very high quality indeed: cf. Muthesius 1995, 291–5.

The calculation could be repeated for other popes, but Table 24.1 will suffice to indicate the astonishing scale of papal acquisitions and distributions in the 770s. In the space of seven-and-a-half years, Hadrian I certainly acquired and distributed 837 (and probably over 1,100) silk textiles, some of which were huge and none of which were tiny. Gifts averaged at least 112, and probably 147 silks per year. Their total size has been calculated at over 3,000 square meters of silk.[122] And this enumeration takes no account of the vestments, garments and residential use of the papal court. There is no denying that very large quantities

122 Beissel 1894, 360. Because the records for 772–6 are more or less collapsed into two units, the actual time span for most of these gifts was probably even shorter.



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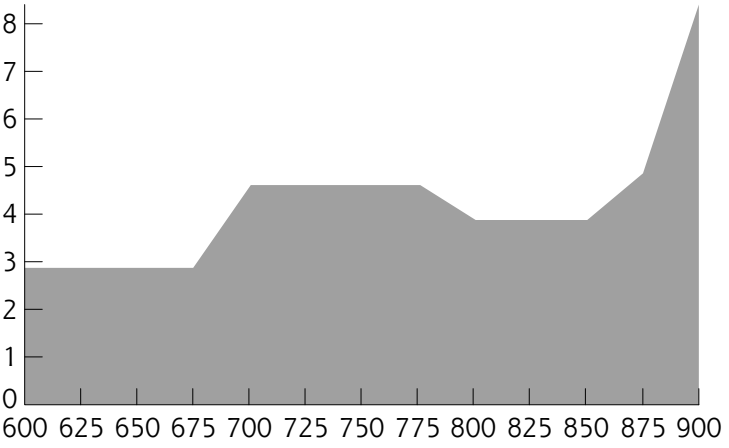
Chart 24.1. Surviving silks per quarter-century, 600–900




This chart reflects the dating of surviving silks by Muthesius 1997, 163–203. She typically assigns silks to periods of up to 200 years. To create this chart, the numbers of silks per period were divided by the number of quarter-centuries in that period to yield a rate of surviving silks per quarter century. For example, thirteen silks dated 500–700 (i.e. divided by eight quarter-centuries) yielded a rate of 1.625 silks per quarter-century; ten silks dated 600–800 yielded 1.25 silks per quarter-century, hence 2.875 silks per quarter century in the 7th C.

of silk textiles flowed across the Mediterranean into Italy, at least in Hadrian's reign. This occurs precisely when Arab gold coins begin to appear in Italy. It does not look as if the balance of payments was much of a problem.

In future, putting early medieval sources into an electronic format that allows for quantitative analysis may allow answers to some important new questions. One could then ascertain whether the *rate* of attestation of silk garments is higher in Carolingian texts than in early Merovingian ones, and raise the issue of what such a rate might mean. Meanwhile we may turn to the recently published analysis of silks imported into Europe in the early Middle Ages and still preserved there. This pioneering study allows a provisional (and very rough) estimate of changing patterns of supply. The fabrics have been classified as to date and place of origin on the basis first of the technical details of their manufacture, and secondly on the grounds of their designs. In a number of cases, the datings are further reinforced or circumscribed by the circumstances of their preservation, e.g., as burial goods of a famous person, or as the container for relics identified by an authentic whose script establishes an approximate date of deposit; occasionally stratigraphy is also helpful.[123] The sample is drawn overwhelmingly

123 Muthesius 1997, 163–203.



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from textiles preserved north of the Alps. That the flow of silks into Europe increased in the tenth century (and, according to this data, continued to increase in the eleventh) appears consonant with the well-known general trend of European commerce in the Mediterranean world. What is new is that these charts suggest that the flow of silk into Europe north of the Alps had already increased in the Carolingian period. The dip in the first half of the ninth century is also interesting. One must immediately qualify these suggestions with a recognition that the sample is still relatively small and the dating method new and untested, although it is surely a step forward from dating solely by the style of decoration.[124] The majority of these textiles are furthermore assigned to the Byzantine empire, while the evidence on communications leads us to suspect, on the contrary, a predominance of Islamic imports.[125] Even so, another 1,200 silk textiles analyzed and classified in summary fashion appear to support the general chronological picture sketched by the 104 textiles which were studied and catalogued at greater length and assigned to various dates between 500 and 1100.[126] And this material evidence is, once again, quite independent of the textual data on silk imports.

Since the closest sources of silk in the Carolingian period were still the Islamic world and Byzantium, its presence in Francia and Italy necessarily points to exchanges with those regions. Some might have come from Spain, but most will have been imported from the Byzantine empire and the eastern Mediterranean, or points more distant.[127] Of course eastern silk could also have transited via Spain.[128] A fair number came from Central Asia: silks of this type survive notably among the relics at Sens, and with the relics of St. Lambert of Tongres and Liège (d. 705).[129] One silk, preserved with relics at Huy – on the Meuse – bears a merchant's annotation in Sogdian (an Iranian language) which has been

124 See also below, n131.

125 Muthesius 1997, 146: two thirds came from Byzantium.

126 *Ibid.*, 204–44.

127 The notion that silk was cultivated in 9th-C. Italy is unfounded: Toubert 1995, 253–66. Scholars differ over whether Muslim Spain was producing silk in the Carolingian era: Constable 1996b, 173–4 states that production began in the 8th C.; Muthesius 1997, e.g. 88–9, lists no Spanish silk earlier than the 12th C. Serjeant 1951, 29 and 33, deduced that at Cordova the first ṭirāz production (embroidered with the ruler's name), apparently including silk, occurred only in 821.

128 Constable 1996b, 177–8, has identified what may be the earliest attestations of Spanish textiles (whether of silk or not is unknown) in Carolingian sources: "vela . . . spanisca" in the *Liber pont.* comes among gifts given c. 829–31: Duchesne, 2.75.23–4; cf. Geertman 1975, 72. Ansegisus gave his abbey a *stragulum hispanicum* between 823 and 833: *Gesta Font.*, 13, 4, p. 102; however, he had served Louis the Pious in the Spanish mark c. 827–30: *ibid.*, 13, 2, p. 99 with n218.

129 Muthesius 1997, 94–100; cf. her catalogue entries M 105–8.



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assigned to the seventh or eighth century and which seems to mention the village of Zandana in Bukhara.[130]

It is futile to argue that silk textiles in the numbers recorded at Rome in 772–9 stem from diplomatic exchanges and so escaped, at least initially, the networks of commerce. Next to the 1,100 or even 837 Roman textiles of Table 24.1, the quantity of diplomats' silk gifts were small potatoes, even if the quality were beyond compare.[131] The list survives of textiles presented by a Byzantine embassy to Louis the Pious. Its gifts must have been particularly lavish, since the purpose was to reestablish theological and political concord with the Franks and to obtain Louis' support for throttling the pope and dissident Byzantine milieus in Rome. The Frankish ruler received ten textiles.[132] In other words, most of the silk fabrics recorded in the written sources or preserved *in situ* must have been purchased.

The patterns of commercial distribution may have been fairly complex, which perhaps hints also at the volume of import: thus a Frisian trader carried *holoserica*, the highest quality of silk cloth, *up* the Rhine, i.e. toward Italy, which appears to be counter-intuitive.[133] His case reminds us that we cannot rule out the possibility that some central Asian goods reached Frisia via the northern arc. A case has been made for silk moving from central Asia toward the Black Sea through a network of Jewish traders, and one could imagine that this network intersected with the Scandinavian one.[134] Certainly silk reached as far as Haithabu. The silk thus far found there is imprecisely dated and could have reached it from either north or south, although it may be telling that the gold-threaded brocade discovered in the emporium certainly did not come from Sweden or the east. Secondly, the quantities of silk detected archaeologically diminish as one moves westward across the Baltic. If the silk did nonetheless come from the north, Frisians and other merchants might have found it attractive for resale in their homeland.[135] This would be one way of explaining why our Frisian merchant and his silk were sailing toward Italy. He would represent an earlier current than the central Asian coins which reached the northern waters of

130 Muthesius 1997, 94, and M 103. The place may be between Bukhara and Samarkand, the modern Zandany: Board on Geographic Names 1970, 7: 639.

131 On prohibited and imperial qualities of silk, see Muthesius 1995, 289–91. The evidence for manufacture in the imperial workshop is strongest for fewer than a dozen surviving textiles: *ibid.*, 34–43; 46–50, 102–3; cf. 148. Their unique quality and inscriptions led Muthesius naturally to focus on them, so that they loom unrepresentatively large in her basic selection of 104 textiles.

132 *MGH Conc.* 2.480.5–7; cf. R383. Cf. the memorandum on the gifts prepared for the court of King Hugh of Provence and of Italy in 935, Constantine VII, *De cer.*, 2, 44, 661.7–21. He also was designated to receive ten garments; another two dozen were earmarked for his entourage.

133 Wandalbert, *Mir. Goaris*, 28, 73.11–74.4. See further, below.

134 This is the implication of Haussig 1989.

135 In favor of this possibility, Steuer 1987a, 168–9; brocade: 170; cf. above, p. 611.



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Frankland, as well as England and Ireland, borne by the later ninth-century Vikings. However, at least as far as the Frisian is concerned, it also might be that the distribution system involved transport north to Dorestad, where larger lots of goods may have been sold to retail merchants. In fact, the Frankish elite did not associate exotic eastern goods with the north. For them, spices and silk meant Italy.

This seems to me already implicit in the geography of the gift giving, or soliciting, that we observed above. A prince whose father controls the Rhine sends spices to his west Frankish cousin. The bishop of Constance, whose cathedral overlooks the great river's exit from the Alps, ships pomegranates, costly textiles, spices and the like to his king. Another bishop in the Frankish heartland seeks imported artistic supplies from an abbot whose monastery probably stood a day's march from another Alpine pass complex. We have already seen Notker's Frankish grandees decked out in the oriental finery they had bought in Pavia. And St. Gerald was certainly not the only traveler returning from Rome who had a chance at Pavia to add to whatever eastern delights he had purchased in the markets of the Eternal City.

A few contemporary observers make the Italian commercial link to the east explicit. When the well-traveled Amalarius discussed balsam, he too lifted a page from Isidore of Seville about its exotic origin. Yet he made a slight but significant change. "The balsam tree," he writes, "is one of the aromatics, which are odoriferous trees, as the same Isidore writes: '*Aromatics are whatever are of fragrant odor, which India or Arabia or the regions* of Italy *supply*'." His addition of "Italy" reveals the Carolingians' immediate source for their balsam, as well, probably, as for the other aromatics imported from Arabia. It confirms Italy's critical role in the geographical structure of trade with the Arab world.[136] When a St. Gall poet saluted a passing king, he hailed the different peoples of the multinational Carolingian empire who hurried to do homage. His words for the Lombard kingdom – again from a man whose monastery overlooked Lake Constance and the trail to the Po basin – tell us all we need to know.

> Let the folk of Italy, mixed of diverse bloods,
> Rush to you with spices and fine fabrics.[137]

136 *Liber officialis*, 1, 12, 13, *Opera liturgica*, 2.71.27–30: "Balsami arbor est una aromatum quae sunt odoriferae, ut idem Isidorus: 'Aromata sunt quaeque flagrantis odoris, quae India vel Arabia mittit sive *Italiae* regiones'." Cf. Isidore, *Origines*, 17, 8, 1, Lindsay, as well as ed. André, p. 141: "Aromata . . . mittit siue *aliae* regiones." Amalarius' reading is not attested in the apparatus of either Lindsay or André. I suppose that Amalarius might have been influenced by the *aliae* of his source and perhaps he even thought that he was was emending the text here. But even such an emendation is revealing of how he understood the situation.

137 Waldramm, *Sylloga codicis Sangallensis 381*, 17, *MGH Poet.* 4.328.13–14: "Italiae populus diverso sanguine mixtus/Ad te pigmentis palliolisque ruat."



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Much, perhaps most of the eastern wares we can detect in the Frankish north crossed the Alps from Italy. The profit to be made on their sale justified that expensive journey.

This review of some salient wares from the south and the east in the Carolingian empire falls far short of exhaustiveness. More work on each of the wares I have investigated will deepen and extend the evidence and our understanding of the coalescing trading circuits of early Europe. In particular, further analysis may sharpen the chronological and regional oscillations of supply. But it is now impossible to deny that, on both sides of the Alps, a remarkable range of goods from the more developed Islamic and Byzantine economies were imported into the empire of Charles the Great. By value, a broader range of such goods was available in Italy than beyond it. This is readily understandable in terms of the economics of overland transport across the Alps. Even the expensive goods, like spices, incense, and silk, available on both sides of the mountains appear to have been more readily and more variously obtainable in Italy, where the vocabulary for describing them often seems more precise. It is possible that some goods, silk for instance, also reached the Frankish empire via Scandinavia, but conclusive proof remains wanting. In any event, contemporaries considered that the great peninsula was the main point of transit for exotic goods that reached the Carolingian north. This would explain why they seem to expect that they would be easier to come by along the main routes leading north from Italy. Some goods also moved north from Spain; but the evidence for this is a little later.

The reliance on Alpine routes to Italy was fundamental for all forms of Carolingian communications. This was the Achilles' heel of Carolingian economic integration into the broader Mediterranean world. On the positive side, it meant that the season for transporting eastern goods north was somewhat longer than if the goods had gone chiefly by the more westerly sea route. But that advantage was more than counterbalanced by the greater expense of overland transport. The threshold of transport cost effectively insured that lesser-value, high-bulk goods comparable to papyrus would not reappear on northern markets for centuries, even irrespective of the changing cultural attitudes towards writing and writing materials, and the manifestly increasing and efficient supply of its competitor, parchment. Lively Rhône river traffic and, especially, the Italian fleets that circumnavigated Spain to reach England and Flanders lay far in the future. For the next few centuries, northern Europe was essentially open to low-bulk, high-value goods from the southeast: coins, spices, incense, and textiles. For them, the demand was real and, so far as we can tell, the supply tended to satisfy it, notwithstanding some problems discernible toward 850.



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Silk is the most abundantly attested Carolingian import, but the evidence for other goods is strong. Perhaps significantly, unlike spices and incense, whose nature it was to be consumed, silk was a relatively "durable" good. The cultural matrix that shaped demand probably implied that the need for spices had shrunk. Ninth-century Europeans seem to have desired them more in the lessened quantities implied by medicinal applications, as opposed to use in the kitchen. Conversely, demand for incense grew, as the Carolingian reform of the liturgy emphasized frequent and ever more elaborate liturgical ceremonies, not only in the cathedrals and monasteries, but in the countless rural churches of the empire. I have found no hint of supply difficulties for incense.

The clues that, north of the Alps, imports were more readily available closer to routes leading to Italy nonetheless provide an important indication that commercial distribution networks were underdeveloped in Frankland. This would tally with the importance of periodic markets, and with some indications of difficulties in the supply of non-durable eastern imports. This might be the implication when a normative source of 867 specifies that for an annual feast clerics were to receive, in addition to pepper and cumin, any one of three different spices. Unreliable supply of balsam is indicated by a controversy about preparing liturgical chrism in western Francia in the 840s: new balsam was not available on the local markets every single year. The one piece of papal papyrus bearing specific manufacturing data was used some thirty-eight years after it was made in Egypt, hinting that even in Italy, in the 840s, the papal writing office was concerned about the regularity of supply from the Middle East.

That three hints of unreliable supply of exotic goods occur in the generation between 840 and 870 offers food for thought. If future research should confirm that this clustering is real, then we may be seeing a conjunctural rather than a systemic problem in supply and distribution. The years of the Carolingian civil wars were marked by surging raiding and, probably, increased banditry, as security decreased. The clustering also bears comparison with the overall pattern of communications: the "core movements" dipped sharply exactly in the period 825–50 (Chart 14.3), strengthening the possibility that short-term developments are reflected in these scattered indications of unreliable supply levels. Nonetheless, the erroneous older assumption that a shortfall in the supply of papyrus north of the Alps meant a breakdown of anything but a regional supply infrastructure cautions us not to assign definitive blame at this early juncture.

North of the Alps silk may have been more expensive than in Italy – this would explain why pilgrims like St. Gerald stocked up in Rome or Pavia – but it was widely available. Both texts and surviving silk fragments make this quite clear. If our sample is any indicator, the quantity consumed by the papal court looks very large. A first and very preliminary attempt to evaluate the changing volume of imports based on surviving silk suggests that more silk was reaching



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the northern regions of Carolingian Europe in the eighth and ninth centuries than had been the case in the seventh century. If future research bears this out, it would confirm further much that we have seen in these chapters.

So rare spices, Arab drugs, incense, and precious silks were making their way to Italy, and from Italy across the Alps to the Frankish heartland. Continuing research will probably add more wares to the list.[138] These extremely costly goods were being purchased in the markets of the Muslim world and, perhaps to a lesser extent, of Byzantium. It is here that the testimony of the Arab coins of Carolingian Europe resonates most obtrusively. The conventional wisdom has tended to be that whatever luxury goods the impoverished Carolingians imported from the Middle East had to be paid for in cash; hence one might have supposed a drain of Carolingian silver toward the Islamic world.[139] But the merchants who were purchasing these luxuries were also acquiring dirhams and dinars: the purchase of the costly luxuries of the more developed economies, in other words, did not exhaust the resources the western traders had brought to eastern markets. Despite the high value of the goods they acquired in the southeast, whatever wares westerners had brought to exchange there seem to have been of greater value than incense, spices, and silks, for the Adriatic traders returned home with Arab currency. The great influx of Arab money started around 775. In precisely these years we observe very substantial imports of silk into Rome. Within another decade or two, at most, the first new Arab drugs were reaching northern Italy, and an Arabic word of Malay extraction was written in a parchment book near the middle Rhine; the markets of Rome attracted Arab merchants at the same time that Venetians traveled to the Middle East. What wares allowed the underdeveloped economy of Carolingian Europe to buy and import such extraordinary and expensive luxuries from the greater economies of the south and east, and still bring home the cold, hard cash of the *dinar manqūsh* and dirham?

138 For instance the sherds of Iraqi or Egyptian glazed glass dated c. 900, and discovered in 1992 in a fill layer at Fulda during the construction of the Dommuseum, where I recently saw them.

139 Spufford 1988, 49–52, nonetheless has argued for a more positive balance of trade when slave exports permitted.



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# 25

# *European exports to Africa and Asia*

AMIDST A GENERAL surge in the communications linking northwestern Europe to the more developed economies of the Mediterranean, coins and high-value goods entered the Frankish empire from the Arab and, probably, Byzantine worlds. Since there is not the slightest hint that precious metals flowed out of Europe, this leaves little doubt that Europe exported goods of high value to exchange for the eastern imports. Frankland certainly moved some goods toward the south. Alcuin, for instance, expected help for his merchant clearing customs both on his way *to* Italy and en route home: necessarily he was conveying some merchandise to sell in the south.[1] What exactly he and other merchants were transporting is less clear. Whatever it was needed to be of high value, portable and saleable in Italy or beyond.

## 1. Lumber, fur, and arms

The most emphatic statement has claimed that Europe exported English tin, Venetian lumber, furs, Frankish weapons, and slaves, but spent little effort sustaining these assertions with evidence.[2] A source from the second half of the tenth century shows that horses, slaves, wool, linen and canvas textiles, tin, and swords were shipped across the Alps in that period (above, p. 680). Slaves, tin, and swords will have been marketable beyond Italy. But one cannot use developments of 1000 to prove those of 800.

1 Alcuin, *Ep.* 77, 119.2 and 4–5: "Italiae [in the dative] mercimonia ferentem" and ". . . in montium claustris a vestris non teneatur tolneariis constrictus, sed per latitudinem caritatis latam habeat eundi et redeundi semitam."

2 Lombard 1972, 23 (originally published 1947). With effort and goodwill, one can discover some evidence for some of these assertions in his further essays published *ibid.*; see below. The lack of method necessarily compromised the impact of his stimulating and valuable insights.



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Nonetheless, arguments of increasing strength can be made for Carolingian exports of lumber, furs, swords, and slaves. Alcuin's merchant certainly did not drag logs across the Alps. But Italy and the Adriatic façade of the Balkans had forests closer to the sea and the ships. The hypothesis that lumber was exported from Italy to the wood-deprived areas of the Caliphate gains plausibility from the ecological disparities between the two areas.[3] But it must remain a hypothesis, since today the evidence for ninth-century Adriatic lumber exports to the Arab world is zero.[4] The hypothesis receives some encouragement from late tenth-century Byzantine concern about Venetian wood shipments to the Arabs.[5] Furthermore, the Venetian treaty with Lothar I paid careful attention to the Venetian rights to cut wood on the mainland. This might point indirectly in the same direction, but the Venetians will have needed lumber for their own ships and the treaty seems to imply in any case that these rights are limited to firewood.[6] Future archaeological and palaeobotanical evidence from the seabed or the Arab world may someday allow us to go further.

Fur is another matter. Some of the fine furs voraciously consumed by the Islamic world certainly traveled along the northern arc.[7] Perhaps this was the source of supply for the Constantinopolitan furriers' shops that a fire destroyed in 931.[8] Although details are hard to come by in the Carolingian sources, we know that Jewish merchants operating out of Frankland imported furs into the Arab

3 Lombard 1972, 107–76.

4 *Ibid.*, 133 and 149n176 (originally published 1958), typically claims that Andreas Dandolo's *Chronica per extensum descripta*, 8, 1 (for which he supplies the reference, "Muratori, 12, p. 170") states that Leo V categorically prohibited the export of long lumber needed for shipbuilding. It says nothing of the sort. At 144.31–3 (of Pastorello's edn., 1942–58; cf. the 18th-C. edition: L. A. Muratorius, *Rerum italicarum scriptores*, 12 [Milan, 1728].167B–C), Dandolo says only that Leo forbade communications with Syria and Egypt ("ne quis in Syriam vel Egiptum auderet accedere"). Cf. Dölger no. 400; R328.

5 A Byzantine embassy of 971 threatened to burn any Venetian ships carrying wood to the Arabs, after which the doge forbade the shipping of weapons and wood of strategic sizes to the Arabs, *Decretum*, July 971: *Venedig*, no. 14, pp. 26–30; Dandolo, *Chronica*, 8, 14, 178.17–24. Contrast Lombard 1972, 133–4, who has confused the report of the three ships.

6 *Pactum Hlotharii*, 24–5 and 30, 134. 21–34 and 135.15–17; c. 24 and 30 are imprecise; c. 25 specifies that the woodcutters may only fell non-(fruit-)bearing trees "quantum ad collum portare potuerit, lignamen faciendum, non ad pectus trahendum," which I take to mean limited to sizes which can be carried (in a basket) fastened at the neck, as firewood (*lignamen*, not *materia*), not pieces which must be carried over the shoulder.

7 Ibn Khurradadhbih, text, Pritsak, p. 253, translation, p. 256, cf. for 921, Ibn Fadlan, p. 107, with 98n207. For the Arab evidence on the fur trade, see the thorough discussion of Jacob 1891, 18–50, and Martin 1986, 5–14. On furs in Abbasid costume, Serjeant 1951, 73–5.

8 "Leo Grammaticus," 321.4–8; Ps.-Symeon, Constantine and Romanos, 40, 744.18–20; cf. John Skylitzes, *Synopsis historiarum*, Romanos I, 26, 226.20–3; A. Kazhdan, *ODB* 2: 809.



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world.[9] Furs do occur in Frankish monastic inventories, and it would be surprising if the Frisian merchants who exported Frankish wine, swords, and grain to Scandinavia did not acquire there the forest products whose subarctic collection system is well known.[10] They were certainly an object of commerce inside the Carolingian empire. Records of a meeting that Charlemagne held with his grandees in 808 show that he attempted to fix the prices of high-quality cloaks, especially fine marten and otter coats (priced at 30 s.) as well as sable ones (10 s.). The meeting occurred at either Nijmegen or Aachen. In the former case, it is worth remembering that Dorestad was but a day distant, and that the place for which these prices were to be fixed may have been the market associated with the palace. The fact that the meeting seems to be concerned only with luxury goods reinforces this hint.[11]

We cannot follow the furs through Frankland toward the Alps.[12] In fact, when Notker depicted the oriental finery which Charlemagne's grandees had purchased from Venetians at Pavia, he seems to include fine furs along with silk and other exotic textiles.[13] This shows that the monk of St. Gall did not fully understand the sources and circuits of Venetian trade. It is also the earliest text which indicates that the Venetians dealt in the other great forest product of their time, after slaves. Since the finest furs came from the far north and the Slavic territories of central and eastern Europe, Notker's ignorance of their western origin may hint that, in the 880s, the Venetian stock was not reaching the Mediterranean

9 Ibn Khurradadhbih, trans. Jacobi 1971, 252; see Ch. 23.3.

10 Whether furs mentioned in Carolingian inventories were of local origin or imported from afar is unclear; cf. e.g., *Gesta Font.* 13, 4, p. 103, where Johanek's caution (1987, 37) about a mention of Black Sea beaver ("ex cane Pontico") is well founded. The author loves to enliven his vocabulary, and he lifted the expression unaltered from Isidore, *Origines*, 12, 2, 21, Lindsay. Cf. the bishop of Augsburg's gifts of fur to the monks of St. Gall in 908, *Schatzverzeichnisse*, no. 118, 121.21–2. Subarctic collection: Ohthere, in the Old English Orosius, p. 20.

11 *MGH Capit.* no. 52, 5, 1.140.1–6; cf. no. 51, 7, "De roccis et sagis," 139.1. The next item of *Capit.* no. 51 (which could be the agenda for the meeting in which the decisions recorded in no. 52, were made) was c. 8, "De mercato palacii nostri," 139.2. That year Charles was at Nijmegen from the beginning of spring until Easter; otherwise he was at Aachen: BM 431b–439b.

12 The 107 "pelles ad pellicium" recorded as annual imperial revenue from Remedius' *ministerium* in the Lower Engadine and Vintschgau in the Rhaetian Alps, presumably came from local trapping: *Imperial Polyptych*, 394.10.

13 *Gesta Karoli*, 2, 17, 86.15–21, with *ibid.*, Hefele's nn9–10: "Çeteri vero utpote feriatis diebus, et qui modo de Papia venissent, ad quam nuper Venetici de transmarinis partibus omnes orientalium divitias advectassent, Phenicum pellibus avium serico circumdatis et pavonum collis . . . alii de lodicibus, quidam de gliribus circumamicti procedebant." The king was making fun of their lovely furs and silks. They were destroyed by the brambles, rain and blood spatters that came with a royal romp in the woods, while the king's cheap sheepskin emerged intact.



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through the Frankish empire.[14] One way to explain his misunderstanding would be if the furs were then coming from the north through the Slavlands, perhaps along the Amber Trail and through the Noric Alps, thereby skirting the Frankish toll stations, not to mention the Viking invasions. If Venice was in fact the "Frankish" port where Ibn Khurradadhbih's Jewish merchants embarked, the testimony of Frank and Muslim converge, for fine furs were one of the Radhanite merchants' exports to the Caliphate (Ch. 23.3).

Weapons leave deeper tracks. As iron production increased around the empire, Frankish craftsmen manufactured more exceptionally fine weapons and armor. European swords traveled the entire length of the northern arc to users in Baghdad. Thus Ibn Khurradadhbih identifies swords as one of the Rus traders' key wares.[15] A generation later, Ibn Fadlan mentions their arms, and he calls them "Frankish" (*ifranjiya*).[16] Though this prohibition was no more effective than others, Charlemagne's effort to halt the export of weapons signals that the volume was large enough to alarm the Frankish ruler.[17]

The sword market was highly competitive, to judge from the fact that the blades bore the ninth-century equivalent of trademarks. They were inscribed with "ULFBERHT" or other Frankish men's names, and they have been discovered in large numbers outside the Carolingian empire. The names are those of Frankish armorers or imitators whose shops seem to have centered on the Rhineland. Archaeologists have retrieved such weapons from the Rhine near Mannheim and Speyer; eight have been found at Dorestad itself.[18] That exports overcame Charlemagne's embargo is proved by the swords themselves. Overall, some 100 Ulfberht swords have been found along routes associated with the entire northern arc. At least seventy-nine Frankish swords have been identified in Scandinavia from the late eighth into the tenth century.[19] Some eighty examples of another, tenth-century type have been excavated in Norway and Sweden.[20] From an economic perspective, it is striking that, while the first Frankish swords were exported as finished products, subsequently sword blades were sent unfinished to Scandinavia. There they received handles in the local taste. This suggests specially targeted export production, which hints at growth.[21]

14 On the geography of fur producing, Lombard 1972, map facing p. 190; and Martin 1986, 5–14.

15 Pritsak 1971, text, p. 256; trans. p. 253.

16 Pritsak 1971, 250–1, with n36. Cf. Ibn Fadlan, p. 118.

17 *MGH Capit.* no. 44, 7 (A.D. 805), 1.123.13–19: "De negotiatoribus qui partibus Sclavorum et Avarorum pergunt . . . ut arma et brunias non ducant ad venundandum . . ."; swords are explicitly mentioned in one Rhenish MS (Vat. Pal. lat. 773, s. ix[1]; Mordek 1995, 799–801) of *MGH Capit.* no. 40, 7 (803), 1.115.18 with 39; cf. *ibid.*, no. 20 (779), 20, 1.51.15 ("De brunias"); cf. also *ibid.*, no. 273, 25, 2.321.1–19.

18 Steuer 1987a, 156 and 152, respectively.

19 *Ibid.*, 152–3nn95 and 96.

20 *Ibid.*, 153.

21 *Ibid.*, 152 with n95.



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Charlemagne's efforts to curtail the export of Frankish swords were explicitly aimed at the Slavs and Avars. In fact swords manufactured around 800 and in the early ninth century are found outside the empire, along the same Amber Trail where Arab and Byzantine coins cluster.[22] The famous blades also reached the Muslim world across the Mediterranean: Ibn Khurradadhbih lists them as one of the Radhanites' wares.[23] Recent archaeology tends to confirm their southward export. In the late eighth and ninth centuries, such weapons found their way across the Alps into the Slavic principalities of the Adriatic façade. The logical route for these swords will have been through Venice, and it is not impossible that the Frankish weapons discovered in Croatia were but spillovers from a larger Venetian export stream.[24] The same "trademark" inscriptions that have caught archaeologists' attention were well known in tenth-century Baghdad. A treatise on the alphabets of the world composed there in 987 describes the alphabet of the Franks as resembling that of the Greeks, although it seemed to Arab eyes more regular. As the learned author noted, "We have often seen it on Frankish swords."[25] Such arms also traveled to Iraq from Italy as a Carolingian princess' diplomatic gift to the Caliph.[26]

## 2. Europeans

But one ware we have met more frequently than all others combined. Whether we look at merchants serving the court, trading on the Danube or traveling to Venice, over and over again we encounter the same merchandise: the human ware of slaves, Europeans hunted and captured across the continent and exported to foreign climes. Not only was their value high: they had a singular advantage

22 *Ibid.*, Abb. 13; cf. Vinski 1983.

23 Trans. Jacobi, p. 252.

24 Vinski 1983; Vinski 1983–4 adds no new witnesses.

25 Muhammad ibn Ishāq known as Ibn al-Nadīm, *al Fihrist*, p. 23. See in general Zeki Validi 1936; cf. Richter Bernburg 1987, 677.

26 Diplomatic gifts seem sometimes to advertise the wares of a particular region: e.g. the drugs, spices, and silks Harun al Rashid sent to Charlemagne: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 807, p. 123. In 905–6, Bertha of Tuscany sent as gifts to al Muktafi: "fifty swords, fifty shields, and fifty lances of the type used by the Franks, twenty garments woven with gold, twenty Slav eunuchs, twenty beautiful and elegant Slav slave girls, ten big dogs against which no wild beast could prevail, seven falcons and seven sparrow hawks, a silk (?) tent with all its fittings, twenty garments made from a wool produced by a mollusk collected from the sea bottom in that region, whose colors change like the rainbow, and three birds from the country of the Franks which if they see poison in food and drink make frightful screeches and beat their wings, and glass pearls which remove arrows and spearheads, even if the flesh has grown back around them." My trans. from the Italian of Levi della Vida 1954, 25. For "sea wool" (cf. Latin *lana maritima*) garments: R503, which indicates that they came from Sardinia, an origin which this text seems to confirm, given the links between Tuscany and Corsica (Ch. 17.4).



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which nullified the cost of mountain transport imposed by the Alpine successor to the old Rhône route. They moved themselves over land. In fact, they could even be forced to carry additional wares on their way to the market.[27]

Slavery has played a notable part in the broader discussion about the transition from antiquity to the Middle Ages and the nature of medieval society. Scholars have lately resumed a debate launched by Marc Bloch on the fate of slavery and the transformations of the European labor force and the social system in which it was embedded. The question has been whether agrarian slavery died under the Carolingians or later, and why.[28] Important though it is, this debate has shed little light on the other aspect of early medieval slavery investigated by modern scholars, the slave trade.

The main features of the Carolingian slave trade have already been mapped.[29] Still, a few new sources deepen and extend the picture. Work to date has relied almost exclusively on the Latin evidence. The slave trade which, after all, was geared to export, gains by being seen in a broader context. It was a Carolingian phenomenon, but it was not only that. From a general and economic perspective, the Arab slave raids on the Frankish, Italian, or Byzantine shores might have been but a variation on Charlemagne's army attacking Saxony, or Frankish (or Slavic) and Scandinavian slave hunters operating in the obscure but overflowing human reservoir of the Slavic principalities. *Mutatis mutandis*, the better documented life-stories of enslaved Byzantine boys shed some light on the tragedies we will never recover, those of the silent peoples dragged down to the shore at Venice, Cherson, or points in between, and shipped across the sea to a life of enslavement in a foreign world.

## *The language of slavery*

The terminology of slavery in the Carolingian age has never been exhaustively analyzed.[30] Latin *servus* or Greek *doulos* had meant "slave" clearly enough in the

27 Verlinden 1955–77, 2: 120.

28 The discussion has moreover fed into the broader debate about the "feudal revolution," the shift from predominantly public structures of administration and governance to private ones; see Bloch 1947. Bonnassie 1991 (originally published 1985), 1–59, and Hoffmann 1986 come to rather similar conclusions from different evidence; Bois 1992 (originally published 1989), 13–33; Wickham 1991. On the Marxist inspiration of much of the debate: Verhulst and Bourin 1991, 55. For an excellent review of the literature, Pelteret 1995, 4–24, which ranges far beyond the early medieval England of the title. For the "Feudal Revolution" debate, see Bisson 1994 and 1997, and the responses which he has elicited.

29 Verlinden 1955–77, 1: 705–19 and 2: 114–33. Schaub 1913 is primarily concerned with patristic (and a few Carolingian, 72–81) theories of slavery.

30 Contrast the systematic lexical scrutiny of



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classical period. By the eighth century, they had become more ambiguous. Very noble bishops used them to refer to themselves in a humility formula that was becoming fashionable – "Servant of the servants of God" – while Byzantine officials commonly and proudly called their state service "servitude" (*douleia*). In neither case would the classical meaning "slave of the slaves of God" or imperial "slavery" render accurately the contemporary nuance.[31] So we are not surprised that these words do not always refer unmistakably to slavery.

Two other sets of words are less problematic. *Mancipium* or, in Greek, *andrapodon* normally refer to slaves in a more conventional sense, even though centuries of Christian ideals had begun to undermine the classic understanding of slaves as "tools with voices," at least insofar as the slaves were also Christians.[32] Most importantly for our purposes, the broader word for "prisoner" (*captivus*; cf. Greek *aichmalōtos*) came to mean, usually, "slave," for military violence remained the main source of the stream that fed the international slave trade of the early Middle Ages. This was the most miserable sort of slave, the "captive" whose status was deplorable enough to give Italians the word for "bad" (*cattivo*).[33] *Captivus* was so used on both sides of the Alps. Thus the eighth-century *Life* of St. Bonitus of Clermont records the saint's efforts to curtail the slave trade when, late in the seventh century, he was the royal official in charge of Marseilles:

> Not long thereafter, as it was customary in that place that men were sold and condemned by the punishment of exile and enslavement (*captivitatis*), he commanded by his decree that it should never occur; rather, those whom he could find who had been sold, he redeemed and brought home, as was his habit.[34]

Around the middle of the eighth century, the biographer of St. Eligius of Noyon (sed. 641–60) uses the terms interchangeably: "With great mercy and dispatch, he went wherever he understood a slave (*mancipium*) was to be sold, and immediately paid the price and liberated the slave (*captivum*)."[35]

Pelteret 1995, 261–330; a similar effort for the Carolingians would scrutinize all kinds of sources, including those in early Germanic; a valuable comparative perspective would come from including the Greek and the Old Church Slavonic.

31 On "servus servorum Dei," see, e.g., Levison 1946, 238n6; *douleia*: Kazhdan and McCormick 1997, 194.

32 Bloch 1947, 37–41; Bonnassie 1991, 30–2; Hoffmann 1986.

33 Heers 1981, 23–64.

34 *V. Boniti* (*BHL* 1418), 3, 121.3–6: "Non multo post inibi, ut moris erat, homines venundari atque exulitatis captivitatisque pena damnari, suo nusquam fieri praecepit esse decreto; sed magis eos quos repperire potuisset venditos, sicut semper agere consueverat, redimendo ad propria reducebat." Note that this report of prohibition is ambiguous. Did it refer to the slave trade in general? Or merely to judicial enslavements?

35 *Vita Eligii Noviomagensis* (*BHL* 2474–6), 1, 10, *MGH SRM* 4.677.4–6: "Sane ubicumque venundandum intellexisset mancipium, magna cum misericordia et festinatione occurrens, mox dato praetio liberabat



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Capture, sale, a lifetime of enslavement and, for a few, redemption, intertwined in ninth-century minds. Thus, for instance, Paulinus, patriarch of Aquileia, whose ecclesiastical purview extended into the Slavic lands and whose province straddled the Amber Trail: in a theological treatise, he interwove the words of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans with Colossians 2, 14 about the "sale" of mankind into the "captivity" or enslavement of sin. The deed of sale was erased by the redeeming blood of Christ. Revealingly, he slipped in the word *captivi* where his biblical source had spoken of the *servi* who were "sold under sin."[36] Describing the devastation wrought in Italy by Arab raiders, Pope John VIII wrote to Charles the Bald: ". . . the blood of the Christians is poured out, a people devoted to God is devastated by constant massacre. For if any escapes the flame or the sword, he becomes booty, he is dragged away as a *captivus* and made forever an exile. Behold, the towns, castles and estates perish, stripped of inhabitants . . ."[37] In the words of a Lombard monk of Monte Cassino, the combination of civil war and Arab marauding were devastating southern Italy even as the shipment of Italian slaves to the Caliphate had the opposite effect on the enemies of Christendom: "the places across the sea are bolstered by the male and female *captivi* . . . of our race."[38] A moralizing treatise which is no later than the eighth century enjoins: "Do not dare to make a man captive, because the Lord says 'He who has kidnapped a person and sold him and has been convicted of the crime, let him be put to death'" (Exod. 21, 16). The further connection between *captivi* and commerce is implicit in the statement's context, for it is redolent of trade: let there be no greed, no love of gold and silver, no lending at interest, no tampering with weights and measures: one must do unto others as you would have them do unto you.[39]

Footnote 35 (*cont.*)
captivum . . ." On the date, Wattenbach *et al.* 1952–90, 127–8. The work combines with invented stuff genuine material from the first, lost *Life*. It is in any case revealing of the 8th C. Cf. the *Leges Alamannorum*, 27, 2, 97.9–10, where "captivum faciendi potestas" seems to refer to selling the *mancipium* of line 7 outside the province (cf. 97.14–15).

36 "Nos uero redempti, quia fuimus captiui, *uenundati sub peccato* (Rom. 7, 14), obligati nimirum in eo *cyrographo decreti* quod *ipse tulit de medio, delens* sanguine suo, quod nullius alius redemptorum delere potuit sanguis." *Contra Felicem libri tres*, 1, 25, *CC Cont. Med*. 95.30.7–31.11. Cf. Romans 6, 16–22 on the "slaves of sin" ("serui . . . peccati") and their liberation.

37 *Registrum*, 22, JE 3062, 20.3–5.

38 Erchempert, *Historia Lang. Ben.*, 18, 241.11: ". . .ultramarina loca captivis nostrae gentis diversi sexus et aetatis fulciebantur."

39 Pirmin (?), *Scarapsus*, 17, 48.22–49.22: "Nullus avarus sit, quia apostolus ait: . . . aurum et argentum vestrum eruginavit . . . usuras nullus presumat accipere, quia dominus ait: 'Non fenerabis fratri tuo ad usuram pecuniam nec fruges' (Deut., 23, 19) . . . Nemo mensuras dublicias, nec stateras iniustas habeat, quia dominus ait: 'Non habebis in saeculo diversa pondera, maius et minus' (Deut., 25, 13), . . . Quod enim proficit homini, si lucretur universum mundum, se autem ipsum perdat? (Luc. 9, 25) Et iterum ipse dominus: 'Prout vultis, ut faciant vobis



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The spread of *captivus* as a common word for slave reflects an incipient and informal distinction. "Normal" slaves were assumed to be linked to the land and immobile; slaves subjugated by violence, on the other hand, were mobile merchandise. The latter might sometimes be called *mancipia*, but the former were never called *captivi*.[40] "Land" slaves are well attested, for instance in the constantly repeated Frankish formulas confiscating, describing or confirming ownership of "real estate and slaves" (*res et mancipia*).[41] Such human chattels are equally well-attested in lists of individual slaves attached to specific estates or slated for manumission.[42]

The last aspect of the Carolingian language of slavery is the most famous. Whether we speak English, French, German, or Italian, our word for "slave" derives from "Slav." The medieval Latin ethnic term "Sclavus" added to its proper meaning the derived one of "slave." Nothing could make more clear the role of the Slavic east in supplying the slaves sold by early medieval Europe. The earliest attestation of the new meaning had been thought to occur in imperial diplomas for Magdeburg issued in 937.[43] The general lag between language and reality would make an early tenth-century record of a Carolingian linguistic innovation unsurprising. Some scholars nonetheless contend that the new meaning actually emerges in 857, in east Francia, in royal diplomas issued for Niederaltaich and Würzburg.[44]

homines bona, et vos facite illis similiter' (Luc. 6, 31). Hominem captivare non praesumitis, quia dominus in legem ait: 'Qui furatus fuerit hominem et vindederit eum et convictus fuerit noxie, morte moriatur.' Et iterum . . ." The attribution of the work to Pirmin has been seriously challenged. In any case, it survives in at least two MSS from around 800: Angenendt 1972, 59–61, cf. 56–7.

40 In 806, Charlemagne's *Divisio regnorum*, 11, *MGH Capit.* no. 45, 1.128.45–129.6, forbade his sons to obtain real estate and established slaves (*casati servi*) in their brothers' kingdoms; he explicitly exempts merchants' wares, including *mancipia*. Similarly, Charles declared that those guilty of failure to perform their military duties must pay not in land or slaves, but in gold, silver, *pallea* (fine textiles of uncertain nature), weapons, animals, or other wares, which are "useful." The implication is that such slaves were not easily transformed into cash or otherwise of value to the king; that is, Charles is thinking of slaves established on the land, with which they are mentioned in the same breath. *MGH Capit.* no. 74, 2 (811), 1.166.28.

41 For instance, in the capitularies and related documents: e.g., *MGH Capit.* no. 196, 15 (A.D. 829), 2.34.18 ("praedia et mancipia"); no. 259, 12 (853), 2.270.7; no. 273, 6 (864), 2.313.24–314.7; 14, 2.315.30–316.7; 23, 2.320.13 and 15; *Concilium Triburense*, 49 (895), *ibid.*, 2.240.36. Confirmation: e.g., D Loth I, no. 22 (823).

42 E.g., the gift of Helmgaud, one of our travelers, to St. Martin of Tours in 813 included over 300 slaves: *Gallia christiana* 14 (Paris, 1856), Instrumenta, no. 12; D Loth I, no. 136 (855).

43 Verlinden 1942, 122–3; cf. Verlinden 1955–77, 2: 999–1010.

44 Thus Reuter 1985, 93, with n92, on D LG no. 80 (Bodman, 857; original confirmation of immunity for Altaich; p. 117.27 "homines ipsius monasterii tam ingnuos



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## *Two changes*

Two very important changes affected the slave trade under the Carolingians. The first is a double expansion: volume increased, even as the geographic scope grew, for the trade now became geared more to export than to satisfying local needs.[45] The slave trade seems strangely disconnected from slave labor inside the Frankish empire, if in fact slave production continued to be crucial to the agrarian economy. So far there has been little specific evidence of the settling of enslaved captives on Frankish estates. Although Verlinden made a plausible case from changing patterns in collections of model legal documents that the purchase and use of slaves on Carolingian estates was declining, the capitularies and records of real transactions show that the process was drawn out and complex, if indeed it was occurring in such a clear-cut fashion.[46] More work is needed to clarify how patterns of slave-owning inside the empire changed over time and space. For instance, slaves and other unfree laborers seem proportionately more numerous toward the eastern edges of the empire. This has been connected with these regions' less developed rural economy, compared with the areas west of the Rhine. But it is worth noting that these eastern lands bordered on the main slave-hunting grounds and first document the semantic equivalence of "Slav" and "slave."[47]

The second main shift concerned the geography of Frankish supply. In the sixth and seventh centuries, warfare against Frankland's neighbors had fed the slave markets.[48] England's quarreling kingdoms supplied more wares, as is clear

Footnote 44 (*cont.*)
[!] quam servos sclavos et accolas super terram ipsius commanentes"; cf. p. 117.31–2: "cum omnibus rebus sibi subiectis <et homi>nibus tam ingenuis quam s<e>rvis, *cuiuscumque sint nationis* . . ." where the last clause seems to recognize the ambivalence of the term *slauus*), following P. Kehr (*MGH Diplomata regum Germaniae ex stirpe Karolinorum* 1, Berlin, 1932, 426 s.v., where "sclavus" is treated as a common noun), and on D Arnulf no. 66 (Frankfurt 889; original confirmation of immunity for Würzburg; p. 99.10: "aut homines ipsius aeclesiae sive accolas vel *Sclavos* in ulla re stringendos . . ." where it alone is a new word. Comparison with the older form of the formula seems to me particularly revealing, e.g. BM 910 of Louis the Pious for Marmoutier (19 November 832): *PL*, 104.1216B–C: "cum *mancipiis* et accolabus diversi sexus et aetatis."

45 Verlinden 1955–77, 1: 718–19; Johanek 1985, 253–4.

46 Verlinden 1955–77, 1: 718–28. Cf. Hoffmann 1986, and Bonnassie 1991, 51–9. Pelteret 1995, 251–9, lays out in clear and thoughtful fashion how evolving mentalities, including a changing understanding of freedom, conspired with economic and social developments to foster the disappearance or transformation of slavery in England.

47 Verhulst 1990, 100–1; Verhulst 1991, 200. Cf. Pelteret's analysis of the differing geography of slave-holding in Anglo-Saxon England reflected by Domesday Book: Pelteret 1995, 185–240.

48 Verlinden 1955–77, 1: 663–7.



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from anecdotal evidence ranging from Gregory the Great's purchase of English slave boys in Gaul to the story of Balthild, the Anglo-Saxon slave girl who rose to be queen of the Franks and founder of Chelles and Corbie.[49] The latest hints of this stream of supply – in which the Frisians were involved – comes in that early eighth-century legend about Gregory the Great's Angle slave boys in Rome and also, I should think, in the fact that a Carolingian bishop's English father had been a merchant at Marseilles around the middle of the eighth century.[50] It is possible that English slave shipments to the Po valley resumed – or continued – late in the ninth century (above, pp. 679f).

The establishment of more peaceable relations within Britain may have lessened the flow of English slaves.[51] The Anglo-Saxons' conversion to Christianity was another factor. In any case, the English supply was probably supplanted by another source, which increased as the British flow diminished.[52] That source was the Slavs.

The beginning of the European trade in Slav slaves is murky. Slave trading, it is frequently supposed, attracted into the Slavlands in 623 or 624 the caravan of Frankish traders led by the merchant Samo, though there is no explicit evidence of what they were buying and selling. Samo helped the Slavs defeat the Avars and became their ruler, in the process fathering thirty-seven children by his twelve Slavic wives. Frankish merchants apparently continued to trade in Samo's territory for at least seven years, until Samo's Slavs turned on them. This triggered wars with the Merovingian king Dagobert and Slavic raids on Thuringia.[53] Whether or not Samo and the others were already dealing in slaves, the conflict itself produced a large number of them. Dagobert encouraged the Alamannians and the Lombards to attack the Slavs around 632. They returned home with a "great number of *captivi* from the Slavs."[54] Although obscurity veils the later

49 Ch. 21n29; see in general, Levison 1946, 8–10.

50 *Annales Petaviani*, a. 790, *MGH SS* 1.70; cf. 3.170 and, for the date, Levison 1946, 7n3.

51 See e.g., Pelteret 1995, 70.

52 Pelteret 1995, 74–9, nonetheless suggests (77) that "from the mid-tenth century on the [Anglo-Saxon] slave trade was geared mainly to the export of persons abroad, although the internal trade did not cease." But he is mainly focusing on the problem of export in general, not export toward the Mediterranean. His examples suggest that these later exports were going mainly toward Scandinavia and Ireland; the relative distances – and therefore transport costs – equally suggest that closer sources of supply were economically advantageous for Mediterranean markets.

53 Fredegarius, *Chronicae*, 4, 48, 68, and 74–5, 144.14–145.6; 154.18–155.17 and 158.13–159.5. Slave trade: Verlinden 1933 and Verhulst 1970, 14; no evidence: Claude 1985a, 74–5.

54 Fredegarius, *Chronicae*, 4, 68, 155.1–17, "... et pluremum [!] nummerum [!] captivorum de Sclavos Alamanni et Langobardi secum duxerunt."



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development of the trade in Slavs, there is no question of its reality under the Carolingians.[55]

Developments beyond Europe decisively influenced this second shift. Christians or not, up until the mid-seventh century, Europeans who were exported south wound up as slaves in the Byzantine empire or one of the Germanic successor states. However miserable their mortal existence, their souls were safe. The Muslim conquests changed that. After some hesitation, European Christians came to a consensus that the Muslims were not Christian heretics, but "infidels," indeed, "pagans," alien to the biblical tradition.[56] To convinced Christians it was of small consequence that Christian slaves lost their mortal bodies to alien masters. But their immortal souls were a different matter. It was but a small step to conclude that any who contributed to their damnation were liable to a similar fate themselves. For an age obsessed with salvation and hell, this was no trifle. The Arab triumph can only have reinforced nascent efforts by Christian leaders to curtail the export of their own people. Hence there arose a series of partial prohibitions on the export of slaves, that is, of *Christian* slaves.[57] This new development enhanced the attractiveness of the heathen Slavs in the path of expanding Frankish power, even though Christians still were sold overseas, one way or another.

55 Vercauteren 1934, 212–14, suggested that the slave convoy traveling to the market mentioned in the Life of St. Gaugericus of Cambrai (d. 623/6) came from Slav territory, a suggestion echoed by Verhulst 1970, 14; *Vita Gaugerici* (*BHL* 3286), 12, *MGH SRM* 3.656.16–657.2. This is no more than a possibility. The suggestion is based on the deduction that the slave trader was traveling southwest on the old Roman road between Bavay and Cambrai. While it is true, as Vercauteren asserts, that this road continues toward the "east," to Cologne, that by no means proves that slaves traveling on it necessarily had been hunted east of Cologne. The same road crosses the Meuse at Maastricht (see, e.g., Chevallier 1997, 229–30) and the slaves were just as likely to have been purchased there, from a North Sea source. The later 7th-C. Life in this instance most likely bears witness to the age of its composition: see Van der Essen 1907, 207–8.

56 Rotter 1986, 247, although the concept of "paganus" itself may not have been perceived as starkly as "heathen" (49).

57 Nonetheless, the earliest texts from the Frankish kingdom are aimed at Jews as much as at "pagans." The Council of Clichy (626/7) forbade selling Christians to Jews or pagans: *Concilia Galliae, a. 511–a. 695*, *CCL* 148A.294.106–114. The council of Chalon-sur-Saône (647/53), 9, forbade the export of any slaves outside the kingdom because of fear that Christians would be subject to "Jewish servitude," "Iudaica servitute . . . inplicita," *ibid.*, 305.50. King Ine of Wessex (688–726) also forbade west Saxons to sell members of their own tribe ("his agenne geleod") overseas: *Laws*, 14, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, 1.94. In the second or third decade of the 8th C., Duke Landfrid I forbade the sale of slaves outside Alamannia without his approval, without giving any reason: *Leges Alamannorum*, 27, 1–2, 97.1–17.



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## *Getting slaves*

Christian or pagan, the export of Europeans is inherently hard to track. Almost nothing survives which compares to the later medieval Italian notaries' records of sale, or what has been reported as the "day-book" of a tenth- or eleventh-century slave merchant at Old Cairo in Egypt.[58] Moreover, exporting slaves is by definition a transient phenomenon and less liable to leave lasting traces. Slaves destined for export will have been in the Frankish empire only for a few weeks. Historians have sometimes pointed to a holy man's biography which *might* give a glimpse of a troop of Slav slaves bound for the block in Mainz. But if they were indeed slaves, the meaning was so obvious to the contemporary biographer that he felt no need to specify it.[59]

Individual exported slaves and their traders generated no records connected with ecclesiastical real estate, which is where we get most Carolingian archives. The best documents are legal sources that attempted to control or tax the trade. Narrative and other literary sources cast occasional shafts of light. The first glimmer has just appeared from archaeology, in the form of the cartography of the very instrument of enslavement: iron shackles (Figures 25.1 and 25.2) that constrained captives' necks have recently been mapped across central Europe.[60]

Future research might draw inspiration from the well-studied Atlantic slave trade. Pens must have held the slaves at assembly points, which would have to be situated near major routes. One might further imagine that such holding conditions, not to mention castration, would engender poor hygienic conditions and therefore higher mortality rates. The result will probably have been summary burials of a population abnormally weighted toward the prime slave profiles of

58 See the sources used by Verlinden 1955–7, e.g. 2: 840–68; "day-book," Richards 1989, 67.

59 Eigil of Fulda, *Vita Sturmi* (*BHL* 7924), 7, 139.12–15: "Tunc quadam die dum pergeret, pervenit ad viam, quae a Turingorum regione mercandi causa ad Mogontiam pergentes ducit, ubi platea illa super flumen Fulda vadit; ibi magnam Sclavorum multitudinem repperit, eiusdem fluminis alveo gratia lavandis corporibus se immersisse"; cf. the judicious reserve of Johanek 1985, 246–7.

60 Henning 1992, who assumes that they are as likely to reveal slaving centers as other forms of imprisonment. Even with that uncertainty the inquiry is worth pursuing. From our period, Henning (419) identifies an iron collar, part of a small hoard of iron objects, at the late 9th-/early 10th-C. Slavic ring fort or "mound castle" ("Burgwall") at "Staré Zámky," at Brno-Líšeň (Figure 25.1). On the site in general, see Staňa 1985, 190; on the find, Staňa 1961, 111, a copy of which I owe to the kindness of Dr. Blanka Kavánová. The scarcity of iron probably made metal shackles the exception; wooden yokes or rope were likely more frequent. For instance, *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.178.19 and 179.6; Theophanes, A.M. 6254, 1.433.12–13; cf. A.M. 6078, 1.255.6–7.



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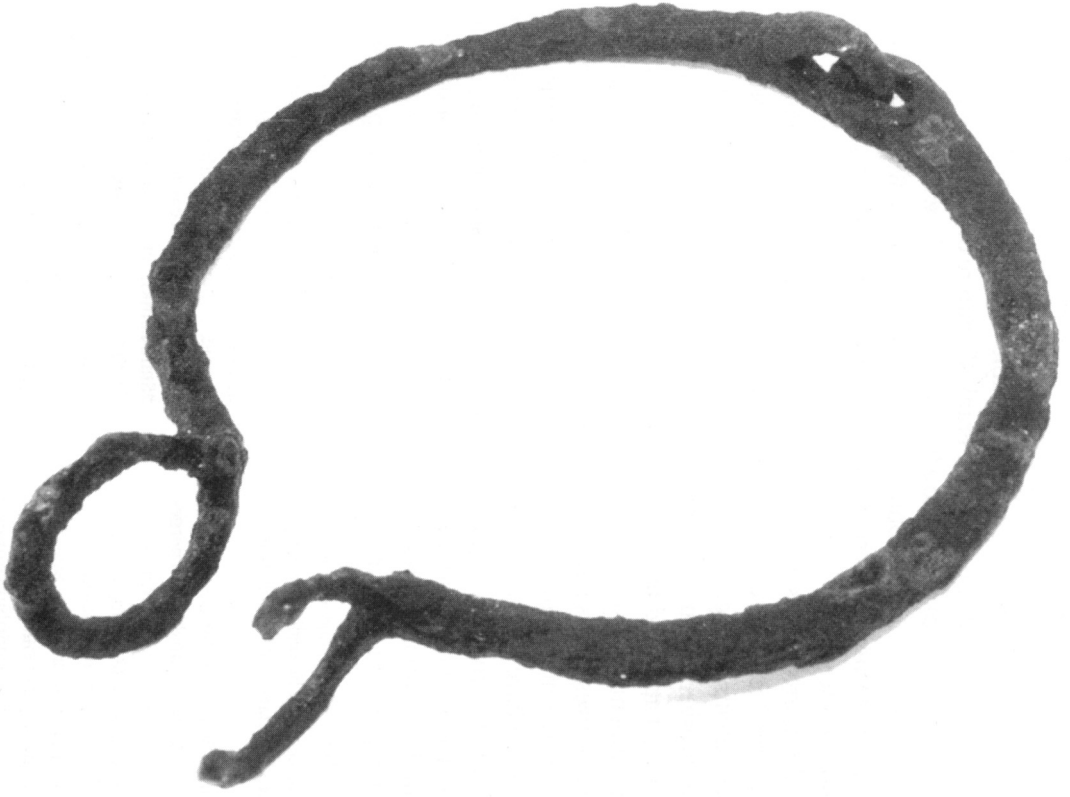

Figure 25.1. Witness to slavery? A neck-piece or collar of a late ninth- or early tenth-century shackle, discovered in the ring fort "Staré Zámky" (Brno-Lišeň). This piece of the sort of chain which held human beings in the Slavlands has been hypothetically linked with the slave trade. The high cost of iron in Carolingian Europe nonetheless suggests that most slaves would have been shackled with wooden yokes or ropes on their way to the block in Venice or elsewhere. Courtesy of Blanka Kavánová, Archeologický ústav Brno.

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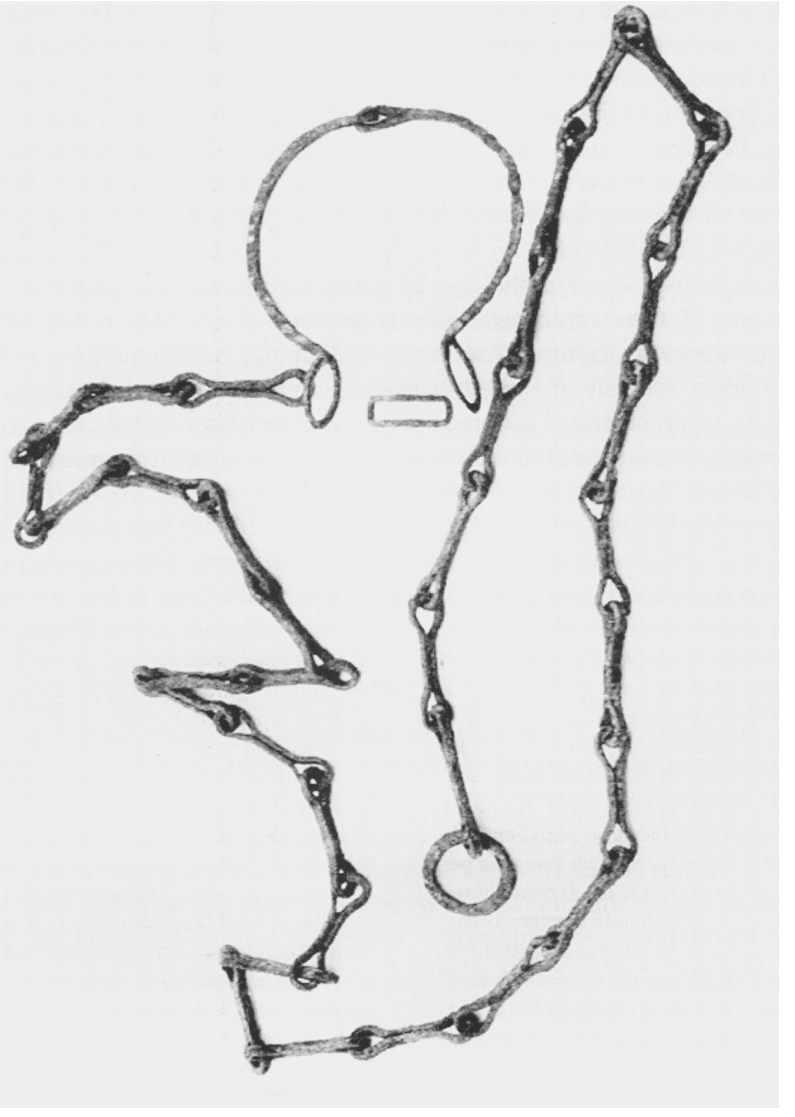

Figure 25.2. Complete neck shackle, from Krivina (Museum Ruse, Bulgaria). This slightly later, remarkably well preserved tenth-century find shows a complete assembly of which Figure 25.1 is the sole surviving piece. The chain slipped through the loops of the collar to fasten it shut, and then was attached to the captive's limbs. Courtesy of Ilya Prokopov, The National Museum of History, Sofia.



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age and gender, i.e. older adolescent and young adult males. In this respect, one wonders about the 2,000 ring forts or "castle mounds," some of which are quite small. These primitive circular fortifications or corrals dotted the west Slavic territories between the eighth and tenth centuries.[61] Scholars have imagined every possible function for these enigmatic enclosures except this one.[62] Judging from the Life of Constantine the Philosopher, it would have taken some noticeable structures to pen the 900 slaves whose freedom the saints obtained from Rastislav and Kocel.[63]

Human beings entered the "social death" of slavery in different ways. Carolingian Europe conforms basically to the classic pattern sketched by Orlando Patterson: capture in warfare, kidnapping, punishment for crimes, abandonment and sale of children, self-enslavement, and birth.[64] Along with kidnapping, particularly of the predatory, raiding variety practiced on neighboring groups, warfare was undoubtedly the major source of "merchandise slaves."[65]

As in antiquity, war prisoners were an utterly commonplace source of merchandise, slaves, and profit. A Byzantine legislator presumed that every victory would produce booty, and he specified how the treasury and the troops would

61 B. Wachter, "Burg (Westslawische)," *RGA* 4 (1981): 202–8, here 203. On the disposition of slave jails ("clusters of straw-roofed huts, each with a high-walled pen of rough stakes to hold slaves") on the west coast of Africa, see Miller 1988, 175–6. The mortality rates of early medieval castration and where the operation would have been performed are unclear to me. If mortality were at all high, the operation may have been performed before the trip, to spare the cost of feeding and moving those who would not survive. The repeated prohibitions at Venice are ambivalent, since they could indicate that Venice was preferred for the operation, or they could have created an incentive to castrate elsewhere.

62 See e.g., Váňa 1970, 87–106, and Staňa 1985.

63 15, 20, p. 162. The palaeoanthropological study of skeletons buried in the slave-consuming countries might hold promise for detecting imported Europeans, and not just from DNA. Again, the more advanced study of African enslavement can supply inspiration. For instance, certain intentional modifications of the teeth are strong indicators of individuals who had been imported into North America from Africa, and the differential levels of skeletal lead content relative to age may distinguish native Africans from slaves born in the Americas: Handler 1994, esp. 115.

64 Patterson 1982, 105–47. He adduces two further categories. The enslavement by tribute probably existed on the Carolingian marches, but it has not so far been explicitly documented. Debt- and self-enslavement probably overlapped. For an interesting discussion of the ways in which people became slaves: *Edict of Pîtres* (864), 34, *MGH Capit.* no. 273, 2.325.37–327.16.

65 Patterson 1982, 115 on organized kidnapping. For penal enslavement see, e.g. *Lex Salica*, D- Text, 15, 4 (free woman who goes with slaves), p. 55; cf. above, n34; below n79. For the enslavement of an abandoned child: Ch. 22.2, on the salt peddler; self-enslavement: R186. Birth must have supplied most slaves mentioned on Carolingian estates. See however, below, n77.



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divide it.[66] Plenty of anecdotes illustrate the nature of that valuable booty. Early in the eighth century, Justinian II was enraged to learn that a punitive expedition against Cherson had not carried out exactly his orders to kill everyone it captured: the victorious Byzantine forces had sold the children into slavery.[67] A contemporary novel from Sicily describes a victorious expedition into the Adriatic, in the area of Dyrrachium. It produced an abundance of slaves ("hē aikhmalōsia pamplēthēs") for the Byzantine army. After the troops had returned to their base, the commander assembled them for the final muster, and divided the booty, "gold and silver and the entire group of captives (*aikhmalōsian*), telling each (soldier) to keep (*diatērein*; i.e. not to sell) however many souls they received, so that they might receive baptism."[68] A late eighth-century campaign into mainland Greece was hailed for the great crowd of slaves it produced for the empire.[69] This is also probably the meaning when the Italo-Byzantine duke of Naples carried off 500 Lombard *captivi* to the city on the bay, whose slave market flourished in the sixth as in the ninth century (Chapter 21n45). Even Christians who had been enslaved by Arab raiders and then "rescued" by Byzantine forces found themselves on the block anyway, as a ninth-century pope protested. The soldiers must have their reward (R625). A victory in 962 filled the capital with slaves and, a few years later, as the invincible Byzantines rolled the imperial frontiers ever eastward, the emperor John I Tzimiskes was forced to clarify the tax problems arising out of the sale of war slaves.[70] True to its Byzantine roots, the church of Rome did no differently. When an Arab squadron was defeated off Ostia in 849, the pope enslaved those Arabs whom he did not execute and set them to building the Leonine wall around the Vatican (R493).

Among the Arabs, too, selling captives was standard procedure. In 714, the conquerors of Spain are supposed to have led a train of 30,000 prisoners back to Syria. Though we may doubt the number, Willibald confirms the gist of the Arab report, for just a decade later he escaped an accusation of espionage thanks to a Spanish eunuch in the caliph's service.[71] And the practice was no less common in

66 Leo III, *Ecloga*, 18, p. 244; Dain 1950. See in general Verlinden 1993.

67 Theophanes, A.M. 6203, 1.377.29–378.2–3 and 11–13; cf. the slightly variant account of Nicephorus, *Brev.*, 45, 108.15–16, with Mango's comments, *ibid.*, pp. 202–3. Theophanes or his source attributes the soldiers' sparing of the children to their sense of mercy. This may be true, but they also stood to make a handsome profit.

68 *Vita Pancratii Tauromenii* (BHG 1410), 1.263 and 270.

69 Theophanes, A.M. 6275, 1.456.28–457.2.

70 Skylitzes, *Synopsis hist.*, 250.56–7; John I, *Novella* (= *Collatio tertia*, Nov. 25), pp. 257–8; Dölger no. 754.

71 The account of the enslaved Visigoths comes from the early modern Maghrebin scholar al Makkari (c. 1577–1632), whose compilation preserves many lost sources of recognized value: E. Lévi-Provençal, "al-Maḳḳarī," *EI* 6 (1991): 187–8. Contrast on the reliability of the report of the booty: Sánchez-Albornoz 1973, 1: 55 and Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 1: 29n1. Willibald: Ch. 5.1.



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the Germanic successor states. The Merovingians took many slaves in their campaigns; the same is true for other tribes, as the Slavic prisoners of the Alamannians and Lombards have already shown.[72] In this respect, the armies of their eighth- and ninth-century descendants certainly did not innovate.

For Alcuin, it was obvious that war produced slaves: the classical Latin words for "slave" told him so. In an age without dictionaries, real or imagined etymologies determined the meaning of most words. True to ancient tradition, Alcuin thought the word *servus* derived from having been pre*serv*ed from death in war, while it was obvious that *mancipium* came from the words for having been made a *cap*tive by force (*manus*).[73] But the learned Anglo-Saxon did not have to look in Isidore of Seville to find out about war slaves: his countrymen were still taking them generations after the scholar left York. And he was an eyewitness to the Carolingian expansion, achieved largely by military force and punctuated by explicit mentions of the taking of large numbers of *captivi*.

Naturally, the terse reports of Frankish campaigns only exceptionally mention routine events like the taking of captives and their fate. They also rarely mention that people were killed in battle. Both were normal parts of early medieval warfare, and elicited comment only in unusual circumstances, when for instance the numbers were very high, or they affected individuals of exalted status. Huge numbers appear to be the reason *captivi* are recorded, for instance, in 747, 753, 782, 783, 788 – when 1,000 Byzantine soldiers were captured in Italy – 791, and 796. Although the mainstream royal historians were sometimes reticent, other observers make clear that prisoners were taken in great number. In 796, a serious witness claims that a third of the population of Saxony was carried off.[74] Military operations may have shrunk in scale and frequency

72 Verlinden 1955–77, 1: 663–7.

73 Alcuin, *Interrogationes et responsiones in Genesin*, *PL*, 100.557B: ". . . enim homo ab homine superatus, jure belli possit occidi, quia servatus est, servus est appellatus. Inde et mancipia, quia [sunt] manu capta." Cf. Isidore of Seville, *Origines*, 9, 4, 43 and 45, Lindsay.

74 747: *Fredegarii chronicarum continuatio*, 31, *MGH SRM* 2.181.17–19: "Quod videntes Saxones, . . . multi ex eis iam trucidati et in captivitate missi, regiones eorum igneque crematis, pacem petentes, iure Francorum sese . . . subdiderunt . . ." 753: ". . . Pippinus rex ira commotus, commoto omni exercitu Francorum, iterum Renum transacto, Saxonia cum magno apparatu veniens, . . . et captivos tam viris quam feminis cum multa praeda ibidem fecisset et plurimos Saxones ibidem prostravisset," *ibid.*, 35, 182.19–24. In the wake of another Saxon revolt and the disastrous defeat and death of three of his highest court officials, twenty-four other grandees and their followers, the *Royal Annals* tell us that Charles the Great ordered the savage execution of 4,500 Saxons: *Ann. regni Franc.* and *Ann. Ein.*, a. 782, pp. 60–5; another contemporary witness adds: "et multos vinctos Saxones adduxerunt in Francia": *Annales Petaviani*, s.a. *MGH SS* 1.17; cf. BM 260b. For 783, Charlemagne's annalist tells us simply that in the Frankish victory, an enormous number of Saxons were killed: "cecidit ibi maxima multitudo Saxonum, ita ut pauci fugam evasissent": *Ann. regni*



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thereafter, but the royal surrogates who led the Frankish armies followed tradition. This was surely the case for Louis the Pious, sub-king of Aquitania, whose campaigns provoked a moralist's entreaty (see below). The columns of captives reappeared along with the royal expeditions, for instance when Louis attacked Brittany in 818 and 824.[75]

So Carolingian warfare produced substantial quantities of war slaves, *captivi*. But were they sold? The Franks had certainly done so in earlier centuries, and the practice is explicitly attested for contemporary Byzantines and Arabs. Previous scholars have relied on the general habit of the age and thought so, despite the fact that the taciturn sources do not bother to describe the sale of Frankish war prisoners.[76] Certainly, some slaves might have been used inside the Frankish empire. For instance, they could be settled on estates to work the ruler's land. In fact, a high proportion of slaves has been noted on some royal estates east of the Rhine.[77] So some of the Saxons, Avars, Bretons, and others taken in warfare

*Franc.* s.a., p. 64. His successor's chronicler – who tended to add damaging material which the father's annalists had tactfully omitted – supplies this important detail: "Caesa est eorum infinita multitudo, spoliaque direpta, captivorum quoque magnus abductus est numerus." *Ann. Ein.*, s.a., p. 65. 788: R220. 791: *Annales Laureshamenses*, s.a., *MGH SS* 1.34, report how the Frankish armies ravaged the Avar kingdom: "sed et predas sine mensura vel numero, et captivos, viros et mulieres et parvulos, innumerabilem multitudinem exinde ducebant." One of the armies had come up from Friuli, and presumably returned to the threshold of Venice with its slaves. 796: cf. the very similar wording on the Saxon campaign, *ibid.*, s.a., p. 37; cf. also *Lorscher Annalen*, 35.19–24. The version of the same information in the *Chronicon Laurissense breue*, 4, 29, p. 34, indicates that the quantities of captives must have been enormous: "Carlus in Saxoniam Francos collocat, Saxones inde educens cum uxoribus et liberis, id est tertium hominem," which seems to mean that every third person was removed from Saxony. The *Royal Annals*, on the other hand, describe both campaigns as great victories, but breathe no word of slave-taking: s.a., pp. 86–91 and 98–9. See also below, n78, on certain cases of resettlement.

75 818: Ermoldus Nigellus, *Carmen in honorem Hludovici*, says that the Frankish armies that attacked Brittany carried off captives: 3, 1599–1600, p. 122; 824: *ibid.*, 4, 2021, p. 154. Cf. Reuter 1985, 77. The slave trade offers one possible explanation for the hoard of Veuillin. It was characterized by a large number of fresh Venetian coins and deposited c. 820/2 near Bourges, on the road leading west toward the Loire river and the Atlantic (above, pp. 683f). The Loire had been important for the import of English slaves in the early 7th C. The deposit date perhaps hints rather at a connection with the war slaves taken in the Breton campaign of 818, which had been launched from Vannes, at the western end of the river and road route to Bourges. On the campaign, see von Simson 1874–6, 1: 132–3.

76 Verlinden 1955–77, 1: 705–6; Reuter 1985, 77.

77 Verhulst 1990, 92, 93; apparently not so in Rhenish Hessia or Franconia: 96. It is unclear whether this might explain Charles' prohibiting lesser officials from buying slaves from a "servus regis": *MGH Capit.* no. 77, 5, Aachen, 802–3, 1.171.7–9; Ganshof 1961, 167.



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could have ended up on royal estates. Others were held as hostages, or simply resettled in other parts of the Frankish empire.[78]

But probably not all. In an eighth century not known for abundant testimony, scarcely a decade went by without someone prohibiting slave trading or closing down a slave market. The numbing repetition implies, of course, that the prohibitions were ineffective. And we know that Charlemagne's prohibiting the export of swords has not kept archaeologists from recovering large numbers outside the empire. Besides, the prohibitions were not usually blanket ones. They aimed only at protecting one's own group. No subjects of Wessex, no Alamannians, no Beneventans might be sold outside the home province, ordered the king of Wessex, or the duke of the Alamannians, or Lombards. Even then, however, the legislator foresaw exceptions, for example for murderers. Most commonly, the prohibitions forbade the sale of Christians to pagans. Here too, however, the treaties between the Franks and the Venetians show significant attenuation. One wonders whether it is only a coincidence that, in the ninth century, the emphasis in surviving records shifts from prohibiting the sale of Christians to penance for those who have done so.[79]

Contemporary churchmen were scarcely trying to talk their rulers out of something they were not doing. For instance, in the months after he conquered

78 Contemporary witnesses seem careful to specify when Saxons were resettled or taken as hostages. E.g. in 795: *Lorscher Annalen*, 34.5–12, and *Chron. Lauriss. br.*, 4, 26, p.34 (cf., however, *Ann. Mosellani*, s.a., 498.36–8, which is less specific); so too in 804, when 10,000 Saxons – the number is from Einhard – were removed from their homes and settled in different places around the empire; in this case, they do not use the term *captivus*: e.g. *Annales Mettenses priores*, a. 804, 91.11–19; Einhard, *V. Karoli*, 7, 10.19–24.

79 Around 732, Gregory III urged Boniface vigorously to repress the sales of Christian slaves to pagans for human sacrifice: JE 2239, Boniface, *Ep.*, 28, 51.18–23. In 743, Carloman's Council of Estinnes forbade the selling of Christians to pagans: *ibid.*, 56, 102.19–20; this may refer to the export of slaves to the north or east, since Carloman's territory did not reach the Mediterranean; *Concilium Romanum a. 743*, 10, *MGH Conc.* 2.1.16.8. Cf., e.g., the assembly held in 772 at Neuching, in Bavaria: *MGH Conc.* 2.99.31–3. Charlemagne prohibited the sale of slaves except in his representative's presence, as well as "outside the frontier" (*foris marca*) in 779, *MGH Capit.* no. 20, 19, 1.51.9–14. The repetition of this prohibition in 781, extended also to stallions and weapons, at Mantua – near Venice – makes clear the military concern: *ibid.*, no. 20, 19, 1.51.9–14. See also Pippin of Italy, *ibid.*, no. 102, 18, 1.211.9–11 (A.D. 801–10). For the regional or ethnic focus of such prohibitions, e.g., Ine of Wessex, cited above, n57; *Leges Alamannorum*, 27, 1–2, 97.1–17; *Pactum Sicardi*, 3, 218.47–51; homicide: *ibid.*, 4, 219.1–6. Venetian pacts: see below, pp. 763ff. Penance: Halitgarius of Cambrai, *Liber poenitentialis*, *PL*, 105.700B (same penance as for abortion); Hrabanus Maurus, *Ep.* 30, 1, 449.6–29 (same as for homicide, but mercy should be shown); Regino of Prüm, *Libri duo de synodalibus causis*, p. 212: bishops visiting their dioceses should ask whether there have been any kidnappings and sales into foreign slavery, or anyone has sold Christian slaves to Jews or pagans, or whether Jews have sold any Christian slaves there.



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Lombard Italy, Charlemagne received a letter of congratulations.[80] This work, the first "Mirror of Princes" of the Middle Ages, enumerated what the conqueror had to do to guarantee that God would continue his spectacular support. First of all, God's law should always inspire Charles' royal conduct.[81] The second thing took precedence even over heaping privileges on churches. The conqueror of the Lombards must never let Christians be sold to pagans. Any who does so will have to repay their price when he stands before the throne of Christ.[82] Cathwulf returns to the theme a little later, when he ranks people who sell Christians to the pagans with witches, poisoners, perjurers, and counterfeiters, and calls for their repression.[83] Charlemagne apparently took Cathwulf's sermon to heart, since a year or two later he upbraided Hadrian I when he heard that papal subjects had been selling Christians to the Muslims. Hadrian's response has already shown us that Byzantine slavers regularly operated along the Italian coast. The pope claimed he had repressed those slave ships and traders who had docked in the papal port at Civitavecchia: but Charlemagne's own representative in Lucca had refused to cooperate. Around this time Charles invalidated all sales into slavery caused by the famine and his army's movements (R186). That will have brought small consolation to the Lombards who were already aboard ships sailing south. A few years later, Hadrian would attempt to use Charlemagne's distress over sales of Christians to "pagans" to poison the king's relations with two ranking Ravennate officials.[84] There is no doubting that this king opposed the sale of Christians to pagans. But there can also be no doubt that this was precisely what was occurring. Nor is there any indication that the royal concern extended to non-Christians.[85] More than a few Saxons and Avars fell into that category.

80 Cathwulf, *Epistola ad Carolum*, *MGH Epist.* 4.502–4; see in general Anton 1968, 75–9. The letter lacks an exact date, but its tone makes clear that the victory was recent. So much so that Cathwulf recommends (502.42–503.1) that Charles give thanks to God for this success "com omnibus exercitibus tuis . . . com omni regno tuo," which suggests that the Frankish forces had not yet left Italy and disbanded for the winter.

81 *Ibid.*, 503.12–19.

82 *Ibid.*, 503.20–22: "Et christianum vendere, numquam in paganam gentem dimittere. Vae, vae, Christi membrum coniungere membro diaboli, animam perdere, redditor precii eius ante thronum Christi." Hoffmann's (1986, 15n35) emendation "Et christianum <non> vendere" is unnecessary. The present infinitive (*dimittere*) functions as an imperative in late Latin (e.g. Väänänen 1981, 134); *vendere* is the substantivized object of *dimittere*. The sentence is correctly translated as it stands: "And never allow selling a Christian to the pagan people." Granting privileges to churches: Cathwulf, 503.23–4.

83 *Ibid.*, 504.14.

84 R201. If Gundlach's dating is correct, the accusation came at a time when abundant (pagan and Christian) war slaves would have been available from the Saxon campaigns of 782 and 783.

85 See above, however, n79, on the 781 capitulary of Mantua.



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In Charles' last years, his son Louis was on the offensive against the northern marches of al Andalus. Frankish power subjugated Barcelona and, we may believe, produced prisoners. These campaigns are usually reckoned the context for another treatise on right rulership.[86] Smaragdus' The Royal Road (*Via regia*) has sometimes been dismissed as a web of biblical quotations. This accurately describes the texture of the work but misses its plan, and the point. In Carolingian culture, appeal to the word of God trumped all arguments. The concluding chapters reveal what Smaragdus thought was on the king's mind.[87]

> Therefore, O most famous king, always seek His support and and take refuge in His protection, so that the Lord may grant you both strength in your arm and victory in war. For thus it has been written *A most mighty tower is the name of the Lord; the just man runs to him, and he will be exalted* (Prov. 18, 10). Therefore salvation lies not in the multitude of men (cf. Ps. Heb. 32, 16; 1 Macc. 3, 19), nor in numerous weaponry: it lies in calling on the name of the Lord. And therefore you too, O most faithful king, so that you might rely on the help of the Lord to defend your kingdom, pray constantly to ask for his protection.[88]

The notion that Carolingian rulers relied on God as well as tactics to achieve victory will surprise no one who knows how they solicited prayers for military success. Smaragdus was simply buttressing with scripture a deeply held tenet of his time.[89] But it took more than prayers to get God's help. The catch had come a little before. In order for God to hear the king's prayers, he had to obey God: the king must forbid the taking of slaves in war (*captivitas*).

86 For Louis the Pious: Anton 1968, 161–8. For learned and subtle arguments that the treatise was written at about the same time, for Charlemagne, during the Danish war, see Eberhardt 1977, 29–73 and 195–263. Though the case for Charles is not implausible, it does not suffice to exclude Louis the Pious. The main argument is that this particular Visigoth, Smaragdus, cannot be proved to have been associated with Louis when he was king of Aquitaine, although in 809 he already served Charlemagne. But even if Smaragdus were at Charles' court, this would not rule out dedicating a work to the aging emperor's son. And it is striking that he repeatedly calls his addressee *rex*, but never *imperator* (e.g., quotations below; contra: Eberhardt 1977, 224–6). Whether intended for Charlemagne or Louis, the *Via regia* was probably written before c. 814/16, and there was warfare enough to justify the treatise's references to it: Eberhardt 1977, 197–225. The MS link with the *Filioque* dossier of 809 is only suggestive for the date. The new edition of that material further weakens the case: it shows that Smaragdus was *not* at Charlemagne's court, since he sent a letter to the emperor about the *Filioque*, and that his embassy to Rome is an old error: *Das Konzil von Aachen*, *MGH Conc.* 2, Suppl. 2.29–35. For Louis' campaigns, e.g., in 811 and 812: BM p. 238, after no. 519; for Charlemagne's: BM 449b–450, 463a, etc.

87 D'Achery's edition, reprinted in *PL*, combines into his ch. 30 what are five separate and short chapters in the manuscripts: Eberhardt 1977, 103–4, whose findings in this respect I follow.

88 Smaragdus, *Via regia*, 31[MSS = c. 35] and 32 [=c. 36], *PL*, 102.969B–C and 970B–C.

89 McCormick 1984.



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Forbid therefore, O most clement king, the taking of slaves in your kingdom. Be a most faithful son of that Father [a cagey reference to the issue of fidelity to the other, earthly father] to whom you daily call out with the other brethren: *Our Father who art in heaven*. Whatever He loves and cherishes, you love too. Whatever He hears and forbids, you forbid too . . . For He spoke in command to Moses: *If any man shall be caught afflicting one of his brethern of the tribe of Israel and, having sold him, receives the price, let him be killed and you remove this evil from your midst*" (Deut. 24, 7). He also spoke out through the Prophet Amos and said: . . . *For three transgressions of Israel and for four, I will not turn it back: because it sold the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes* (Amos 2, 6).[90]

Smaragdus continues in this vein for several chapters, reminding the impressionable Louis that the Lord weakened and crushed the arm of any king who offended Him. The abbot's point is unmistakable. It also appears to be original.[91] God Himself had forbidden the taking of slaves *from one's own tribe*. Smaragdus was not worried about enslaving Arab infidels, but about Christians. That would be the Visigothic brethern of the tribe of the New Covenant. The choice of biblical quotations suggests, strongly, that they were being captured and sold as slaves.[92] Smaragdus' concern for them was perhaps strengthened by the fact that he too was a Visigoth, quite possibly from Spain.[93]

So the victorious armies of Pippin III, Charlemagne and Louis the Pious took substantial numbers of war slaves. Contemporary moralists complained not about slave sales to pagans in general, but against selling Christians to "pagans," i.e., Muslims, and they did so in the context of victorious Frankish military action. Numerous assemblies of bishops reiterated the complaint, showing that it struck a chord with leading representatives of the church. But it was a rare bishop who worried about the sale of pagans to "pagans."[94] It would

90 *Via regia*, 30, *PL*, 102.967A–C: "*Prohibendum ne captivitas fiat*. Prohibe ergo, clementissime rex, ne in regno tuo captivitas fiat. Esto fidelissimus illius Patris filius . . . Ipse enim Moysi praecipiens ait: 'Si deprehensus fuerit homo sollicitans fratrem, et vendito eo acceperit pretium, interficietur, et auferes malum de medio tui.' Ipse quoque per Amos prophetam clamat et dicit: '. . . Super tribus sceleribus Israel, et super quatuor non convertam eum: pro eo quod vendiderit pro argento justum, et pauperem pro calceamentis'."

91 Eberhardt's detailed research (list: 1977, 136–42) shows that the treatise is even more heavily indebted to earlier writers than previously imagined. But precisely, and almost uniquely, in this chapter, Eberhardt identified no new borrowings (141–2).

92 Eberhardt 1977; 593; cf. 652 and 655, seems to take this differently. It would in any case fit the Christian Visigoths better than the pagan Danes.

93 *Ibid.*, 31–3. Might the Spanish campaigns have been connected with Count Aureolus' enigmatic *commercium* south of the Pyrenees? *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 809, p. 130; cf. Ch. 23n23.

94 Paulinus of Aquileia did urge Heiric of Friuli to redeem slaves (*captivos*) in his moral treatise, *Liber exhortationis*, 56, *PL*, 99.281B. Both men lived on the main route to Venice, but the recommendation is buried in a host of other injunctions.



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be surprising if some of the Frankish *captivi* did not find their way into the slave trade.

Carolingian conquests did not continue. In all probability, the relative proportion of slaves stemming from Frankish – if not Viking and Arab – victories decreased over time. Contemporaneously, there was a change in the geography of acquisition, if not of disposition. As the Frankish juggernaut ground to a halt, other sources of supply opened up along the empire's eastern marches. The 900 slaves the Slav princelings of Pannonia liberated at the request of Sts. Cyril-Constantine and Methodius had been kidnapped for a reason. When the profits were great, the trend was irresistible. But what kind of money could one make selling Europeans in the southeastern Mediterranean?

## *The economics of slave trading*

The difficulties of understanding the workings of an early medieval economy only increase when one considers a phenomenon that connected several different economies, none of which is very well mapped yet. These difficulties make it tempting for historians to rely more on theories than evidence. I shall try to avoid the theoretical and keep it simple. For now, the best thing is to consider the slave trade of early Europe in simple terms of supply and demand, costs, profits, and scale, and to make clear what exactly we can document, and what we must suppose.

### Supply and demand

Demand is primordial. Were there no demand for slaves, there would have been no market, no incentive to hunt them down and ship them across the sea. Internal demand for slaves seems to have been slackening in the more advanced regions of western Frankland.[95] The recognition that slavery persisted as a not insignificant feature of the Carolingian countryside once made this observation somewhat perplexing. Two things have lessened the perplexity. The evidence is mounting that, contrary to even recent conventional wisdom, the population and economy of the Carolingian empire were not stagnant. Demographic growth inside the empire was increasing the supply of labor of all categories, including, probably, home-born slaves.[96] A second factor was the spread of the bipartite estate and its system of land tenancies held by free or servile peasants, who were

95 Verlinden 1955–77, 1: 718; Verhulst 1990, 100.

96 Demographic growth: e.g., Toubert 1995, 128–32; Lohrmann 1990, 115; slave fertility was probably comparable to that of other low-status peasants: Pelteret 1995, 252–3.



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obliged to feed and shelter themselves in return for labor services on the owner's reserve. Manumission has plausibly been proposed as one carrot which would have helped estate operators move slave workers into the heavy burdens of servile tenancy. Not quite free, but not slaves either, servile tenants had to sustain themselves from their *mansus*, their tenant householding, in return for heavy labor services on the lord's domain. The lord's responsibilities to them lessened, even as his profits remained the same or increased.[97]

At the same time that demand for slaves inside Europe was lessening, external demand was probably increasing, at least in the Arab world. It may also have been growing in Byzantium, but the pacification of Greece and some successful campaigns in the east may have reduced the Byzantines' need to import slaves. In the House of Islam, on the other hand, the western wars of conquest ended for several generations with the failed siege of Constantinople in 718 and the Carolingian success in southern France. With them stopped the enormous flow of war slaves, such as that from Visigothic Spain.[98] The conquests of Sicily and Crete, both in the 820s, were very important, strategically and in terms of slave supply but, in the grand scheme of things, they were more in the nature of codas than overtures. Byzantine resistance was stiffening also, making the annual raids into Asia Minor increasingly expensive. Other sources of slaves became more appealing.

We have dated the Venetians' first recorded effort to supply slaves to the Muslim world to c. 748, that is, during the devastating final onslaught of the bubonic plague (R157). The unusually lethal bubonic plague had struck Africa in 745 and continued to rage over the next seven years (R153). Historical demography, epidemiology, and Arabic sources seem to offer a coherent pattern that suggests in that final pestilence an urban mortality rate of 25 to 35 percent.[99] One economic consequence of the better documented fourteenth-century Black Death was that it concentrated wealth among survivors and, of course, increased the value of labor.[100] If similar causes produced similar effects in eighth-century Africa, such an epidemic will have supplied survivors with greater means to purchase replacement laborers from any healthy populations which could deliver them to Africa. The epidemiological fact that bubonic plague traveled with – and killed – ships' crews, may imply a temporary dislocation of African shipping, just as we saw at the outset of the era of plagues. What is more, African access to the slave-hunting grounds of Sicily was limited by local political disturbances and renewed Byzantine defenses (Ch. 17.2). The Venetians, in other words, seized a very specific opportunity, created by a spike in demand for labor that arose out of

97 E.g., Verhulst 1991, 200–2.
98 Ashtor 1969, 58.
99 Conrad 1981, 429–41.
100 Concentration: Genicot 1990, 52–3; labor: Genicot 1971, 688–90; more evidence for both: Pirilla 1994, 200–6.



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heavy mortality in the Caliphate. The configuration was new. That mortality had not much affected western Europe, which was then "unplugged" from the Mediterranean shipping world that conveyed the contagion. Once the last wave of plague had receded, and regardless of the long-term demographic trend of the Caliphate and Muslim Spain, their economies were booming in the later eighth and early ninth centuries.[101] This further increased the demand for labor. And a strong economy meant that there was no shortage of local or more exotic goods, or even silver and gold, to be exchanged for European labor in the form of slaves. In fact the demand was too great for even a burgeoning Europe to satisfy since, at the same time, large numbers of slaves were also imported from subsaharan Africa and from Asia.

As far as Europe was concerned, the supply of slaves looked unending thanks to demographic growth and the inviting wilderness stretching toward the east. But cultural factors would complicate the simple economics of slave supply. Even though some Christian slaves continued to be exported to the Muslim world, the growing barriers to such sales must have raised the costs and constricted the sources of supply toward the unconverted regions of Europe, particularly the Slav territories to the east. It suddenly becomes obvious why the first theological opposition to the mission of Constantine and Methodius arose in Venice.[102] The lagoon settlements were known more for their slave trade than for their dynamic ecclesiastical culture. Control of the new christendoms springing up between the Frankish empire, Byzantium and Bulgaria had obvious political and ecclesiastical stakes, as the east Frankish court and metropolitan churches of Salzburg and Passau vied with Rome, Constantinople, and even Pliska. But beyond ecclesiastical politics there was the profound issue of conversion: shipping baptized Slavs to death and damnation in the Muslim world may have given pause, even to Venetians.[103]

## Costs and profit margins

Direct data on the price of slaves at, say Walenstadt or Venice, compared to the price they brought at a place like Alexandria is lacking. What scholarly opinion there is on relative values is not in agreement. But various slave prices scattered through the sources of the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries nonetheless allow us

101 Booming economy: above, p. 586. We do not yet know for certain the demographic trends of the Muslim world in the 8th and 9th C. Dwindling populations in some Syrian villages may indicate only a regional decline, for the consensus is that the Caliphate experienced slow demographic growth at least down to the 10th C: Gatier 1994, 44–8; Shatzmiller 1994, 56–7.

102 *Life of Constantine the Philosopher*, 16, 1–59, pp. 162–5.

103 See below, on failed Venetian efforts to curtail the slave trade.



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to establish the broad outline. The data on the comparative cost of slaves confirms what the direction of the flow of human wares implies: slaves were cheaper in Europe than in the Muslim world.[104] To supply a very rough yardstick for comparison, the first columns of Table 25.1 give the approximate weight of the precious metals contained in the coins.[105] In only one case does a slave command a comparable price in Europe and in the Muslim world. For male slaves, the price runs about three to four times higher on the southern shore of the Mediterranean. Chart 25.1 lays this material out graphically. Even allowing for its imperfections, the comparison makes clear just how profitable the export of Europeans to the Muslim world must have been: the same slave will have tripled or quadrupled in value when transported across the Mediterranean Sea. It suggests furthermore that, though slaves may have been more valuable in Byzantium than in the early medieval west, Byzantine prices sometimes equaled and sometimes were cheaper than those of the Muslim world. This implies two further consequences. Westerners will generally have preferred to sell their slaves in the Muslim world, where they probably commanded a higher price than in Byzantium. And it would have been profitable in some circumstances to export slaves from Byzantium to the Caliphate. But it would have been even more profitable for Byzantine slave traders to seek their wares in the Latin west. This data on prices finds confirmation in the activities of Byzantine slave dealers in the west.[106] Another consideration suggests that the value of European slaves was high enough to produce profits, even if the scale were limited. Most of the Europeans we see enslaved in the Caliphate served in domestic capacities, and so may have commanded a higher price than field laborers, for example. Eunuchs are a case in point.

104 Thus already Lopez 1987, 315, but with small evidence. Ashtor 1969, 498–9 with n12, thinks that in our period, the price of slaves was generally comparable, though not equal, around the Mediterranean. For this he cited the 712 document, but converts its value erroneously (=13 dinars: cf. Table 25.1). He recognizes the cheapness of the prices mentioned by Agobard, but dismisses them, since he "doubts most of these [Carolingian] slaves were sold" in the Caliphate.

105 It should be stressed that the comparison only approximates the relative values of slaves in the different economies. The sources are disparate, and slaves' values varied according to their desirability and short-term supply; the relatively rare Carolingian coinage probably gave it a higher local purchasing power than the same amount of silver in the Muslim economies. I have not included extreme cases where special circumstances seem to shape prices, for instance, the famine prices mentioned in Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1.115, or those which are not clearly dated and localized in Ashtor 1969. Rāġib 1993, 758 estimates that ordinary slaves cost around 20 dinars in the Caliphate; however, he too relies on the same work of Ashtor used here.

106 R186; the Byzantine Calabrian dealer condemned by Elias 2: *V. Eliae Spel.*, 18, 855C-856D; in June 960, when the doge attempted to outlaw the slave trade at Venice, he foresaw that Venetian merchants might attempt to set up Greeks as proxy dealers: *Venedig*, no. 13, p. 20.



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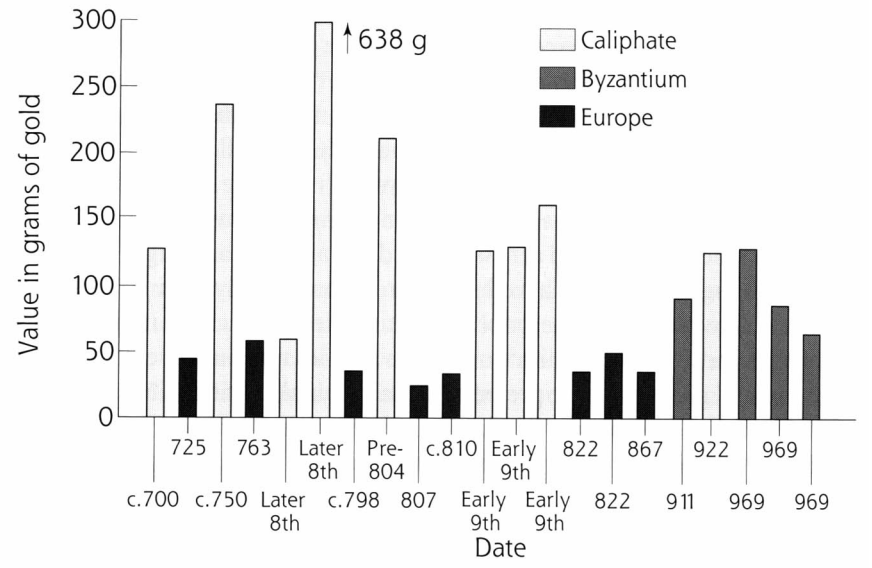
Chart 25.1. The comparative price of a human being: Carolingian Europe, Byzantium, and the Caliphate




This chart indicates the differing value of slaves on different shores of the Mediterranean, and suggests potential profit margins (see Table 25.1 for details).

TABLE 25.1

The comparative price of a human being: Carolingian Europe, Byzantium, and the Caliphate, 8th–10th C.

| Intrinsic value of 1 slave (calculated values in parentheses[a]) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Silver** | **Gold** | **Price** | **Date, place** | **Comment** |
| *Italy*[b] | | | | |
| | 45 g | 12 s. AV | 725, Milan | boy from Gaul |
| | 47.25–69.3 g | Oxen and gold worth 21 s. AV | 763, Chiusi | woman with infant |
| (306 g) | (25.5 g) | 30 s. AR (for 2 slaves) | 807, Como | 2 local "infantoli" |
| 408 g | (34 g) | 1 lb. AR | c. 810, Arogno | woman plus ?her *agnitio* |
| | (37 g) | 38 Benev. s. = 148 g (for 4 slaves) | 867, Gaeta | 2 peasants and their wives, age unspecified |



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TABLE 25.1 (*cont.*)

| Intrinsic value of 1 slave (calculated values in parentheses[a]) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Silver** | **Gold** | **Price** | **Date, place** | **Comment** |
| *Frankland*[c] | | | | |
| 408 g | (37 g) | 20 s. AR | c. 798 | restitution when a slave kills a slave |
| 408 g | (37 g) | 20 s. AR | 822, Lyons | lower range of slave price |
| 612 g | (51 g) | 30 s. AR | 822, Lyons | upper range of slave price |
| *Byzantium*[d] | | | | |
| (630 g) | 90 g | 20 n. | 911, Constantinople | Christians sold by Rus |
| (892.5 g) | 127.5 g | 30 dinars | 969, Treaty with Aleppo | male Byzantine slave |
| (595 g) | 85 g | 20 dinars | 969, Treaty with Aleppo | female Byzantine slave |
| (446.25 g) | 63.75 g | 15 dinars | 969, Treaty with Aleppo | adolescent Byzantine slave |
| *Caliphate*[e] | | | | |
| (1,275 g) | 127.5 g | 30 dinars | late 7th C., Egypt | male slave |
| 2,376 g | (237.6 g) | 800 dirhams | c. 750, Iraq | young girl |
| 594 g | (59.4 g) | 200 dirhams | later 8th C., Iraq | male slave |
| (6,375 g) | 637.5 g | 150 dinars | later 8th C., Iraq | beautiful girl |
| (2,125 g) | 212.5 g | 50 dinars or more | before 804, Iraq | male slave |
| (1,275 g) | 127.5 g | 30 dinars | early 9th, Basra | male slave |
| 1,306.8 g | (131 g) | 440 dirhams | early 9th, Sidjistan | lower range of male slaves, provincial budget |
| 1,633.5 g | (163 g) | 550 dirhams | early 9th, Sidjistan | upper range of male slaves, provincial budget |
| (1,275 g) | 127.5 g | 30 dinars | 922, Oman | estimated price for an east African king |

*Notes:*

AR – silver; AV – gold.

[a] For Italy (Rovelli 1992, 119n24) and Frankland (Spufford 1988, 51), I have used the rate of 1:12; for the Caliphate, gold has been converted into silver at the legal 1:10 rate, although the market rate varied more widely (*ibid.*). For Byzantium I have used the 10th-C. rate of 1:7: *ibid.*

[b] 725, *CDL* 1, no. 36; 763: *CDL* 2, no. 174 (note that the weights of Desiderius' coins fluctuate, and the fineness also seems to have declined); cf. for the Lombard coins of these different periods: Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 61–2; 807: *Codex diplomaticus Langobardiae*, no. 83; 810: *ibid.*, no. 86; 867: *Gaeta*, no. 13.

[c] 798: *Lex Salica*, E Text, 56, p. 95; 822: Agobard, *De baptismo mancipiorum*, 116.35–6.

[d] 911: Treaty of Rus and Byzantines, *apud Lavrent'evskaja letopis'*, p. 36, tr. Hellmann 1987, p. 660; others: Antoniadis-Bibicou 1972, 228–9.

[e] Late 7th C.: Ashtor 1969, 89; c. 750, Iraq – early 9th C., Basra: Ashtor 1969, 58; early 9th, Sidjistan: Ashtor 1969, 59n2; 922: Ashtor 1969, 58–9.



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There is no obvious basis for estimating acquisition and transport costs. They will have eaten into the profits. Nonetheless, compared to textiles, tin, swords, or other goods, slaves added another unmistakable advantage to their high profit margin, which became even more important in light of the changing infrastructures. The shift to the Alpine overland arteries connecting northern Europe to the Mediterranean made little difference for slaves, for they transported themselves over land. Indeed, their backs could carry swords, furs, or even packets of tin as they walked to their own social funeral. Once they reached the sea, their shipment benefited from the economies of water transport. There the need to move human beings swiftly to the final market, and so minimize mortality, will have been one incentive for the accelerating rate of travel we have observed, and also for larger ships. Even if transport costs and mortality lessened the profit margin on this trade, that margin was so broad as to make it exceedingly lucrative. The source of the western wealth that was used to acquire Arab coins and drugs is becoming clear.

So too is the enigma of those fresh Venetian silver coins. Why Venice should have issued Frankish coins when it was no part of the Frankish empire has intrigued scholars. We now know what the Carolingian traders were taking down to the lagoon and exchanging for spices, silk, drugs, and incense. For the Frankish wares were so precious that these traders, just like the Venetians on the other side of the sea, were able to acquire all the exotic luxuries they could transport and sell at home and still be left with money, fresh money, in their purses. No Muslim dirhams would enter the Christian empire of Europe. The silver the Venetian traders brought back from their voyages to the Levant was exported north. It will have been restruck as Frankish pennies, impressed with the sign of the cross and edifying legends like "Christian religion"; the Venetians kept for themselves the gold they acquired in the Caliphate and in Byzantium. By somehow agreeing to or extracting the right of striking Frankish money, the clever Adriatic merchants also got to pocket the profit from minting the coin in which they paid for their wares.[107] Analysis of surviving silver from the mint of Venice may cast more light on its origin. Certainly Frankish silver flowed into Venice – Venetian ships plied the Po and its tributaries, and St. Gerald's fellow pilgrims will have paid cash for their purchases at Pavia (Ch. 21.2). We have already met the Milanese penny fused to a dirham from the marketplace of Torcello (Chapter 11). But silver from dirhams was probably mixed with that from recycled Carolingian pennies, and advanced scientific analyses might detect some hint of this in surviving Venetian pennies.

107 On the Venetian coins, Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 217. On profits from striking money, e.g., Grierson 1975, 95–7. The Veuillin hoard is heavy with fresh coins from Venice: above, n75.



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On the rare occasions when we can specify the scope of Venetian merchant ventures, our informants do not identify the goods the shippers exported. Even so, what they do tell us allows us to surmise the economic implications if they were carrying slaves. Bonus' convoy to Alexandria comprised ten ships. The credible earlier ninth-century cargoes of sixty-three and 221 slaves give a point of departure (Table 13.2). Taking the smaller number would imply some 630 slaves aboard the Venetian ships. Assuming a price of 25 s. silver (midway between Agobard's 20 and 30 s.: Table 25.1), such a convoy's cargo would represent a total investment of 15,750 s., or some £788 in Carolingian silver currency. Table 25.1 indicated that those slaves would have increased in value by a minimum of 17 percent, and more probably 140 percent when they reached the Caliphate. Thus they might have sold for between £917 and £2,018, yielding a gross gain of at least £129, and more probably £1,101, on the outbound voyage alone. That order of magnitude finds comfort in the famous sea investment which the doge Justinian mentioned in his will just a year or so after that convoy had brought the relics (and return cargo) back to Venice.[108]

## 3. Geography of the European slave trade

The geography of the slave trade can be viewed from two perspectives. The broader one takes the position of the consumer societies, and attempts to discern the range of the supply networks which fed the Muslim world's voracious appetite for slave labor. The narrower one examines the share of those supply networks which originated in western Europe. Broadly conceived, the Europeans imported into the House of Islam were only part of the overall picture. Slaves also trudged into the Muslim world from the south, like the Nubians in Egypt or the subsaharan Africans who labored in the fields of Iraq or Oman. From the northeast came central Asian slaves, especially the Turks, who, from servile origins, would rise to such greatness.[109]

108 *Ilario e Benedetto*, no. 2, p. 21: "Est enim omnis mea possessio confirmata et adbreviata cum illas iamdictas ducentas libras que in monasterio ********* cum speciebus et ornamentis et laboratoriis solidis, si salva de navigacione reversa fuerint, libras mille duocentas, de qua sexcentas reservavi dispensandum pro mea anima cuique per breve ubi vel ubi conscripsero." The text is damaged and probably corrupt in some places; it would reward deeper study. But it seems to imply that Justinian had invested perhaps £1,000 in an overseas venture, which bears comparison with the hypothetical £788 suggested for the convoy of R406. We may hope that ongoing publication of Arabic papyri will extend the evidence of slave prices in the 9th C. and so improve these early and rough estimates.

109 R. Brunschvig, "'Abd," *EI* 1 (1960): 24–40, here 32.



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The geographic breadth and the diversity of networks transporting Europeans into the House of Islam is arresting (Map 25:1). Beyond Frankish Europe, one famous stream of slaves tramped toward the southeast along the northern arc. They certainly were doing so by the early tenth century, and they may have started arriving earlier, along with the furs and Frankish swords, if that is how some of the Slavs of Iraq got there.[110] Many of these slaves are believed to have been collected along the way as tribute or plunder from the Slav tribes whose territories the Rus traversed. But at Birka, on the doorstep of the river routes toward Byzantium and the Caliphate, we have already met a troop of Christian slaves from the west (above, p. 611). There is no reason to assume that their shipment stopped in the Swedish lakes zone.

The Black Sea would be notorious for its late medieval slave trade. The large numbers of Byzantine slaves held by the Khazars and freed by Constantine-Cyril and Methodius show that the trade goes back to the ninth century. It was another stream that fed the river of human labor flowing into the Caliphate, for we know that the Khazars exported slaves there (Chapter 20n41). To the west, the Bulgarians seem to have shipped slaves to the Byzantines (above, p. 605); others might have traveled toward the Caliphate. Constantinople certainly possessed a slave market, though the details are unknown. Whether or not it played any role in supplying the Caliphate has never been asked.

In fact, in general terms, we may suspect that, from the southern Mediterranean, the northern shore and its hinterland appeared in the ninth century as a vast arc of slave supply. European slaves certainly reached the Caliphate from Spain, from the Tyrrhenian coast of Italy, and from the Veneto. By 900 they were coming from the northern arc as well. Greece has hitherto been more a less a blank in the map of slave supply. This has occasioned little notice, the more so that slavery is not thought to have been very important inside the Byzantine empire (aside from the sale of captives). Yet Byzantine slaves were not uncommon in the Caliphate: we need look no further than the story of Photius' creature, Leontius, former Arab slave and would-be ambassador to the west of the patriarch of Alexandria: "I was born a Byzantine," as he explained to the 869 Council of Constantinople.[111] We also encounter at Louis the Pious' court the

110 See above, pp. 606–12. In 885–6, Ibn Khurradadhbih does *not* mention slaves among the wares of the Rus: trans. Pritsak 1971, pp. 256–7; on Slav slaves in Iraq toward 850, above, Ch. 9n28.

111 "Graecus fui genere," in Anastasius' translation: *Concilium CP IV*, actio 9, Mansi 16.155C–E; the severely condensed Greek text sheds no light on wording here: Mansi 16.397A–B; cf. Pros. Leontius was a *captivus* who had had the good fortune to be purchased by the patriarch of Alexandria. But he was presumably captured by one of the Arab slave-hunting expeditions which multiplied in the eastern Mediterranean also in the last three quarters of the 9th C.



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curious case of a eunuch bearing the Slavic name of Drogus, whom Einhard calls a "Greek."[112] Finally, we have seen that slaves were cheaper in the Byzantine empire than in the Caliphate (above, Table 25.1). Drogus and the price differential hint that Byzantium, like the early medieval west, exported slaves. An Arab observer confirms that the ancient empire shipped choice girls and eunuchs to Iraq's markets.[113] But Frankland led the way.

In June 845, the bishops assembled at Meaux plaintively evoked the troops of slaves they saw. West Frankish traders, both Christian and Jewish, drove them through many peoples and towns of Christendom on their way to the infidels' markets.[114] But the bishops did not bother to specify the roads they took: that was obvious to contemporaries. Taking into account the chief source of supply – the Slavs – and the principal destinations, Verlinden deduced that the main ninth-century routes led from central Europe through the Alps toward Lyons and Spain, on one hand, and toward Venice, on the other. In the tenth century, he thought, the source for Spain shifted further northward, while the Venetians began to derive their stock more from the Adriatic Slavs.[115] He is certainly right as far as the ninth century is concerned. We may also suspect that other currents flowed toward Spain and Venice from different quarters or along different routes, including some of those we sketched in an earlier chapter, particularly along a route heading southwest from Mainz, perhaps via Verdun, toward Spain (above, pp. 611f), and from western France toward Italy (above, n75). The slaves towing Frisian boats up the Rhine, or the "merchants' route" running east into Thuringia are equally obvious possibilities (above, pp. 654f). Slaves, presumably imports, were sold at Utrecht early in Charlemagne's reign.[116] The tolls collected at the Walensee indicate slaves' movement through the central Alps.[117] But there was also a slave market there. This means that two or more slave-trading circuits met in the middle of the Alps. One circuit clearly led toward Italy, via the Septimer or the Splügen passes.[118] Walenstadt lies on an excellent route for east–west travel through the Alps, and geography suggests that the slaves for sale there could have been coming from the north – the Rhineland or Bavaria – or the west.

But the densest and surest signs come from the southeast of the Carolingian empire and the Veneto.[119] The earliest reference occurs in the 770s or 780s, when Paul the Deacon was still working on his unfinished masterpiece, the History of

112 Pros. "Drogus."
113 Al Djahiz (?), *A Clear Look*, 14, p. 159, quoted above, p. 591.
114 *Conc. Meld. et Paris.*, 845–6, 76, *MGH Conc.* 3.124.7–13.
115 Verlinden 1977; cf. 1955–77, 2: 126–32; for the Spanish market, Constable 1996a, 266–8.
116 DD Kar 1, no. 56 (A.D. 769). The location suggests that they came from England; this would then be the last attestation of English slaves on the Continent before the *Honorantie*.
117 Verlinden 1977, 378 and 384.
118 *Ibid.*, 384; Imperial Polyptych, 383.1.
119 Verlinden 1955–77, 2: 126–32.



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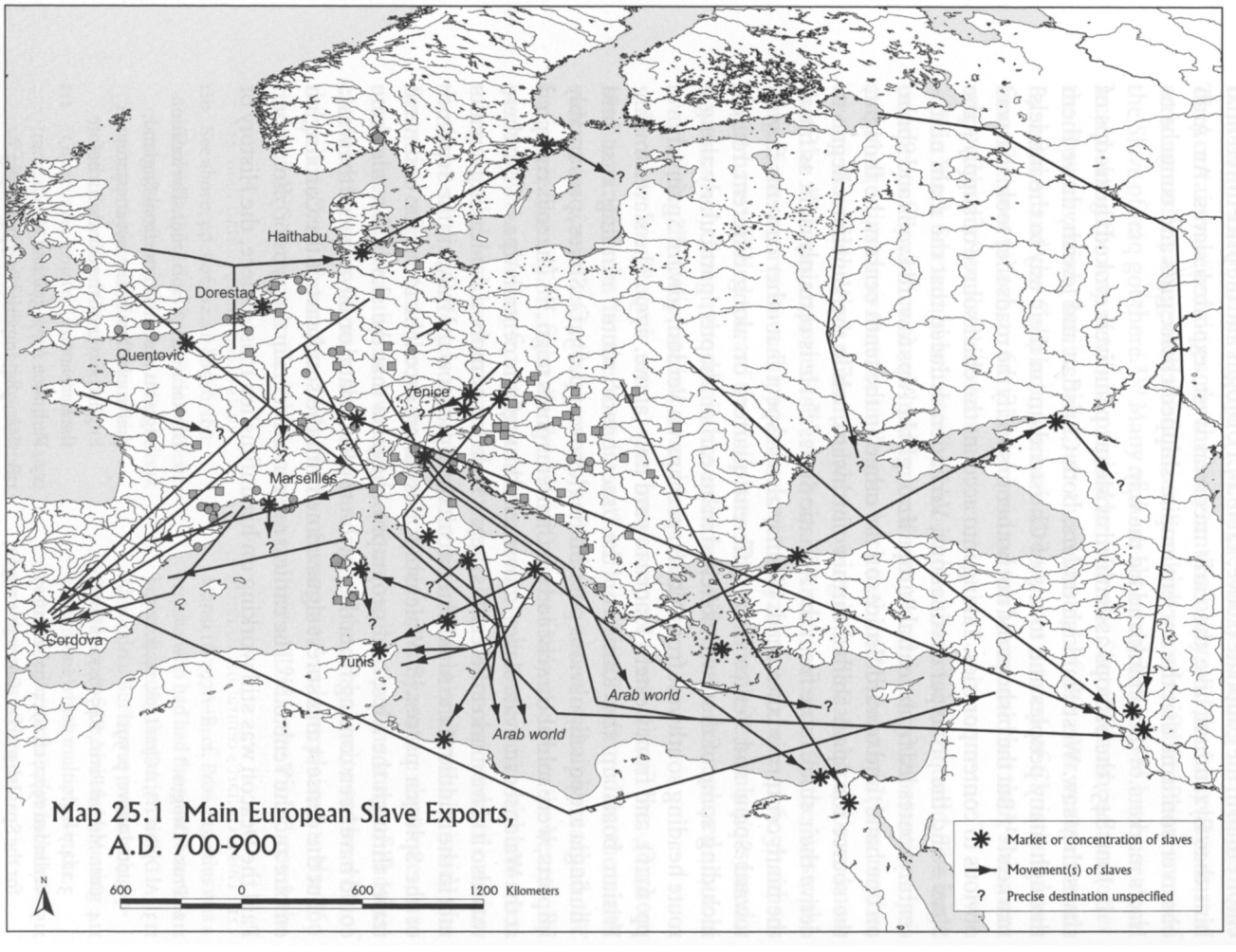


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the Lombards.[120] Although what he completed reaches only as far as 744, there is no doubt that Paul wove contemporary concerns and calculations through the whole texture of the work.[121]

He begins his history with a "scientific" description of the salubrious weather of northern Europe, founded on the ancient climatic theories of health. This, Paul explains, is why the north produces people so prolifically. As he tells it, northern Europe stretches from the Atlantic to the Don River. This vast land mass (explicitly including the Slavic east) deserves the name "Germania," because of the teeming masses its healthy climate "germinates." Europe's high fertility explains the slave trade and invasions of Paul's own time. "This is why the countless crowds of slaves (*captivorum*) are frequently driven down from this populous 'Germania' and sold to the southern peoples."[122] From a man who was probably born athwart the corridor leading from central Europe to the Adriatic, this is powerful testimony.[123]

Toll regulations afford a glimpse of slaves transiting the upper Danube as well as the Alps. Late in the ninth century, Slav merchants, including those who came from Bohemia as well as the mysterious "Rugi," sold slaves at the Frankish markets along the Danube.[124] The presence of local and foreign merchants trading in slaves in the same places, shows that this business had long-distance connections, and the locale fits the central European route ("behind Rome") of the Radhanites described by Ibn Khurradadhbih.[125] They could have been driving their wares down the long road west toward Spain. But they could also have been marching along the much shorter route that led past Paul the Deacon's home, toward the leading slave emporium of western Europe, Venice.

The very first Venetian merchants we met were attempting to set up a slave market on the far side of the Italian peninusla and export Christians to Africa. It would be astonishing if the Venetians did not pursue this lucrative trade for which the major hunting grounds lay so close to home. In fact there can be no doubt that they did so. Paul the Deacon's troops of slaves heading for sale to the southern peoples do not stand alone. The agreements governing relations between Venice and the Carolingian empire confirm the importance of the slave trade.

120 See Goffart 1988, 329–47.

121 This is Goffart's central and compelling contention about early medieval historical writings, including this one: 1988, 378–431.

122 *Historia Langobardorum*, 1, 1, 47.25–48.10, esp. "Ab hac ergo populosa Germania saepe innumerabiles captivorum turmae abductae meridianis populis pretio distrahuntur." For Paul's etymology of Germania, cf. Isidore, *Origines*, 14, 4, 4, Lindsay, and in general, on this passage and its background, Goffart 1988, 382–5.

123 On Paul's birth place at Cividale del Friuli: Goffart 1988, 334.

124 Raffelstetten Plea, 6, 251.23–8.

125 *Ibid.*, 9, 252.8–10; Ibn Khurradadhbih, tr. Jacobi 253. Koller 1995, 291–2 develops an isolated and unpersuasive argument denying that the *Plea* depicts a slave trade and reckons absurd the notion that slaves were transported such long distances.



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The earliest surviving treaty was established in 840 and depends to some uncertain degree on earlier pacts. It makes perfectly clear that Venice was a major center for the slave trade, and that Lothar I wanted to insure that his subjects did not wind up on the block there, en route to the Caliphate. The Venetians solemnly promised that they would not knowingly buy, sell, or transport Christians into foreign enslavement (*captivitas*), so long as they were Lothar's subjects ("de potestate vel regno dominationis vestre" [!]). This last clause apparently engendered some unease, and the Venetians went on to promise that they would not transport any Christian under any pretext, in such fashion that he or she fell into the power of the pagans. If they discovered any slave trader who had brought Christians into their duchy in order to sell them, the Venetians would deliver him to the Frankish authorities. They meant traveling, non-resident slave dealers: the Venetians went on to specify that anyone who apprehended such a criminal would receive everything that "that person was bringing with him." This implies that the traders who delivered the slaves to Venice possessed only movable wealth.[126] Another clause treats a further category of slaves (here called *captivi*). If such slaves were discovered in the duchy, the Venetians would deliver to Lothar's representatives the persons who transported the *captivi*, along with all their property and dependents. Again, these are traveling slave traders.[127] Finally the treaty attests that Venice was an important center for creating eunuchs, as one would expect in a major slave market serving the Middle East. Although the custom was well established ("inolitam consuetudinem"), the treaty forbade castration. Castrators would themselves be castrated. Nonetheless the Venetians could exculpate the accused, if he found twelve oath-helpers.[128]

Although the treaty makes explicit only in the first case that it concerns Frankish subjects, there can be no doubt that this is the intent of its provisions. Despite its ambivalent status, Venice by then was back under the Byzantine wing, and the Frankish emperor had no power or authority to negotiate – or enforce – conditions for people who were not his subjects, notwithstanding the extension of the prohibition of export to Christians. In fact, his subject Godescalc of Orbais was able to thumb his nose at some very powerful Frankish bishops simply by crossing the lagoon (above, p. 261f) to Venice. If the treaty's conditions had been of universal application, they would have ended the Venetian slave trade overnight.

126 840: *Pactum Hlotharii*, 3, 131.18–25. For more on the *Pact*, Ch. 18.1.

127 The text is imprecisely formulated, but it must refer to kidnapped individuals from Frankish territory, since the treaty foresees that the Venetian authorities might decide not to hand over the traders; in that case, the Venetian official of the place where the kidnapped individuals were being sought (*requiruntur*), would swear an oath, along with five oath-helpers chosen by the Franks, that the kidnapped individuals (*captivi*) had not been delivered to that place. *Ibid.*, 4, 131.26–30.

128 *Ibid.*, 33, 135.22–25.



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No such thing happened. Around 876, the doges discovered that some Venetians were buying slaves from "pirates and bandits" and transporting them across the sea ("transfrectantes"). They decided to forbid slave-trading ("ne quis de mancipiis commercium faciant"). It is unclear whether this prohibition was meant to be general, or limited to the victims of piracy. Whatever the intent, it was short-lived.[129] A tenth-century doge looked back on the decree as corrupt, an abject failure.[130] In fact, only a few years after 876, the Venetians would water down even more their promises not to trade in Carolingian subjects.

In 880, they negotiated a renewal of the treaty with Charles III. The agreement not to deal in Christian slaves from the Carolingian empire was repeated word for word, with one significant change. This time the Venetians promised not to buy, sell, or ship knowingly Christians from Charles III's power or kingdom, *so long as they were free* persons ("qui liberi sunt"). They repeated the earlier promise not to transport any Christian into pagan power. But the new limitation of the main clause to free Christians is striking. The extraordinary profits implied by Table 25.1 perhaps helped erode Frankish resolve to protect all their subjects from the block.[131]

We may well suspect that these provisions were honored mainly in the breach. When influential individuals' interests were at stake, they allowed the Franks recourse. But it is less than likely that they were scrupulously observed. In fact, when the treaty was again renewed, eight years later, another small change shows that the ban on castrations had been ineffective. The new treaty strengthens the wording which implies that the penalty of castration for castrators would not be retroactive ("ab hoc die inantea").[132]

Regardless of how well the Venetians observed these treaties, they had no bearing on the Slavlands beyond the Frankish ban. Whether Methodius' cathedral was in modern-day Moravia, or to the southeast, closer to Sirmium, the tragic end of that mission has preserved for us a key witness to the Venetian slave trade, shortly after the 880 treaty. That witness proves that the Venetians paid little more than lip service to the ban on the enslavement of Christians; indeed, money was to be made on the sale of consecrated men, priests and deacons.

In 885, Methodius left behind a large group of disciples at various stages of ecclesiastical advancement. But the political clouds had already been gathering,

129 Andreas Dandolo, *Chronica*, 8, 5, p. 116. The report is lacking in the *Chronicon Venetum*.

130 *Decretum* of 960, *Venedig*, no. 13, here p. 19: "Sed de grauitate maligni et inuidi hostis ista constitutio corrupte extitit et transgressa."

131 *MGH Capit.* no. 233, 3, 2.139.1–7; c. 4, 139.8–12, verbatim repeat; c. 34 repeats the earlier engagement about castration: 141.17–19.

132 7 May 888, *MGH Capit.* no. 238, 3–4, 2.144.11–22, as in 880; c. 33 on eunuchs: 146.34–6.



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and the atmosphere was palpably heavy when the saint died.[133] Methodius' adversaries soon struck his designated successor. Frankish troops descended on the 200 disciples in the cathedral school. The older men were without commercial value, so they were taken out into the wilderness and left to die.[134] The younger ones, on the other hand, could command a price. In this part of the world, what to do with them was obvious, as the tenth-century biographer of one of the disciples tells us.

> And let it be known to all who esteem him, as we have written before, that the heretics tortured these men sorely, and the others – priests and deacons – they sold to Jews at a price. And the Jews took them and led them to Venice, and sold them in accordance with Divine Providence. Then came the emperor's man [сгь моужь: i.e. a *basilikos anthrōpos*?] from Constantinople to Venice on the emperor's business. And when he heard of the men, he bought some of them, and others he took also, and led them to Constantinople, and told the emperor Basil of them.[135]

The only unusual thing about this event was the slaves' social status. This is why, of the many men and women who were driven over those mountain routes to Venice, the details of their story alone were written down. It reveals to us one of the networks operating in central Europe that supplied the slave market at Venice, and puts the provisions of the Frankish treaties with Venice in their true perspective. Were it not for the personal intervention of a Byzantine emissary – Methodius and some of these disciples had been the emperor's guests at Constantinople just three or four years before – all of the young churchmen would have been sold and shipped. As it is, the Old Church Slavonic text implies that only some of them were purchased by the Byzantine envoy; the fact that a high official had to buy priests shows how scrupulously the Venetians observed injunctions against selling Christians.

The specific case deepens the normative evidence of the treaties, and fills in the shadowy reality of the suppliers of the Venetian emporium. Moreover, the fate of

133 Dvornik 1970, 185–93.

134 Theophylact of Ohrid, *V. Clementis* (*BHG* 355), 34, 110.10–18, gives the number and observes the treatment of the disciples according to their ages. *Ibid.*, 41, 114.32, identifies the warriors as *Nemitzoi* (from the Slavic word for Germans); *First Life of Naum*, p. 181 says *eretici*.

135 *First Life of Naum*, p. 181; translation adapted from that of Kusseff 1950, 143–4. The first part of this passage of Theophylact's *V. Clementis*, 34, 110.12–14 ("Whoever of the deacons and priests were younger, the men of the inheritance of Judas and deserving of strangling sold to the Jews") closely parallels the first Old Church Slavonic *Life of Naum*, p. 182, and clearly describes the same event. The Slavonic text avoids the miraculous interlude of the Greek version and gives a clearer explanation of what happened to the "priests and deacons" when the slave traders took them to Venice. Although the *Life of Naum* refers only to Naum by name, at this point it is clear that the text is describing what happened to the whole group of, apparently, c. 200 slaves.



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the Methodian youths yields a final, precious clue for our broader inquiry. For it proves what the normative sources suggest. If the Methodian cathedral and mission were situated in its traditional location, somewhere in modern Moravia, along the Morava river, then the most direct route to Venice ran along a path already known to us: the Amber Trail across the Danube, through the eastern Alps, toward Venice. Whether or not Austrian place names add another set of tracks to this trail is unclear to me.[136] But whatever the final judgement on the toponymic testimony, there is no denying that of the Life of Naum. The Old Church Slavonic Life actually shows the merchants taking slaves from central Europe to Venice.

If, as some now contend, the headquarters of the mission lay in the vicinity of Sirmium, the final stages of the route would still have overlapped with the Amber route. The Life of Naum answers the question raised by the Arab and Byzantine coins scattered along the ancient Amber Trail and its branches: they were

136 A widely held scholarly opinion argues from the later medieval testimony of place names that a number of sites formerly (or still) named "Judendorf," "Judenhof," or the like ("village" or "farmstead of Jews") preserve memories of early medieval Jewish traders. No Jews, apparently, resided in some of them by the time they were first mentioned. The settlements cluster in the upper Alpine valleys of the Mur and the Drava–Drau rivers and the watershed between them. They seem to sketch a string of stations connecting the Danube basin with the Adriatic, and so have been interpreted as resting places of early medieval traders traveling between Italy and central Europe: Popelka 1935; cf. Verlinden 1955–77, 2: 122–3. For more recent discussion, see Neumann 1962 and, especially, Wadl 1992, 16, 18–21, and 241–2, as well as Hausner and Schuster 1989, 8, 571. Similarly named sites have turned up further north, although their chronology remains unelucidated. The places cluster along the eastern fringes of Frankish power, including near the Carolingian trading sites with the Slavs: Wenninger 1985, 204–7, with Karte 3. Tempting though the geography looks, thus far this theory comes up short to judge from specialized Old High German toponymic studies. The late date of the evidence is not so troubling. Although the earliest mentions begin in the 12th C. for Lower Austria and Carinthia, that is when the written record often starts there. However, toponymists have concluded that in these regions place names ending in "dorf" are usually of 11th-C. date, notwithstanding the greater antiquity of similar endings in other areas; see in general Bach 1953–4, 2: 349–55, esp. 354; Wiesinger 1985, 354, notes nonetheless some earlier examples; Ernst 1989, 85. Names ending in "-hof" (not "-hofen") are equally reckoned to be of relatively recent date: Ernst 1989, 44. The names cannot therefore go back to the 9th C., if the philologists are right. It is still conceivable that the names perpetuate in 11th-C. form earlier traditions about the spots, or that rarer, alternative forms paint a truer picture. It does seem a remarkable coincidence that when Völkermarkt first appears in the written sources (1105/26), it is called both "Volchimercatus" and "Forum Iudeorum," Wadl 1992, 139; and that a dirham was discovered there (A41).



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dropped or buried by travelers with intensive contacts with those two Mediterranean economies. The slave traders purchased their wares far inland, in exchange for goods which have yet to be identified. Directly or indirectly, they sold them to the "southern peoples" whose voracious appetite for northern slaves provided the first great impetus to the development of the European commercial economy.

The Venetians could not bring themselves to abandon so lucrative a trade, and subsequent renewals of the earlier privileges no longer speak of slaves.[137] Whether they had transited via Venice or some other way, the Carolingian princess of Tuscany had no difficulty finding forty Slav eunuchs and slave girls to send as a present to the caliph in 905–6.[138] Certainly the Venetian slave trade was still flourishing in 960, when the doge attempted once again to end it, or at least make it a ducal monopoly. The terms of the prohibition show that Jews and Byzantines were still deeply involved in this Venetian trade, although Istria and Dalmatia appear to have gained importance as sources of supply.[139]

It is remarkable that the Venetian slave trade managed to survive the second half of the ninth century. For it faced increasingly stiff competition from the Arabs themselves. We have already seen that a real lull in Arab attacks set in around 750. Raids resumed around 800. Although they would lead to the long-term conquest and occupation of two of the great Mediterranean islands, even in those cases, the newly conquered lands would contribute to the acquisition of slaves. The raids of the ninth century in other words, added another, and important stream of supply to the networks that had sprung up in the eighth.

The first attacks came from Spain. They arose out of the constant warfare that attended the expansion of Carolingian power across the Pyrenees. Thus an Arab raid into Septimania in 793 produced a prodigious haul of slaves.[140] A few years later, Arab corsairs set out from Spain and captured sixty Greek monks on the monastic refuge of Pantelleria, barely 75 km from the Tunisian coast in the strait of Sicily. Charlemagne was able to redeem some of them and restore them to their home. That the Frankish emperor should become involved in so small and distant a raid underscores the novelty of the Muslim slave hunts: a few decades later an operation on this minute scale would scarcely have furrowed the royal eyebrows (R272). The early raids were hit-and-run operations aimed at collecting slaves. For instance, one attack on Corsica carried off all the inhabitants of a town

137 See *Praeceptum Widonis* (891), *MGH Capit.* no. 239, 2.147–8; *Praeceptum Rudolfi*, (924), *ibid.*, no. 240, 148–9; *Praeceptum Hugonis* (927), *ibid.*, no. 241, 150–1.

138 Above, n26.

139 *Decretum*, June 960, *Venedig*, no. 13, here pp. 20–1. Kretschmayr 1905, 1: 110–11, takes the exemption clause ("excepto . . . pro causa palatii") as establishing a monopoly; cf. Hoffmann 1968.

140 Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 1: 145–6, observes that the implied total of 225,000 slaves is impossible.



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except the aged and infirm: the raiders left behind those without value on the slave market (R290). By 813, slave-gathering raids had become so regular that a count of the Spanish mark could foresee their movements and set an ambush for one, capturing eight Arab ships returning from Corsica; he liberated more than 500 captives manifestly destined for the markets of al Andalus (R318). The Spanish raids got attention from as far away as Rome. They reached a new sophistication by adding ransom to their operations, since Pope Paschal I redeemed captives from Spain. The same incident implies that the Africans were also entering the slave-collecting business.[141]

The African invasion of Sicily brought new system and scale to the slave hunting. This is clear, for instance, from the story of one of our travelers, Elias the Younger. The tasks were clearly divided. Some men were slave hunters: they tracked down the children and captured them. They then took them down to the beach, where they sold their prey to a slave merchant who awaited with a transport ship. The trader presumably could refuse any unsuitable captives. Once the ship was full – 220 slaves in Elias' case – it shoved off for Africa. The second time, no Byzantine warship rescued Elias, and the African Christian slave merchant sold him directly to a customer in Africa (above, p. 246).

Over and over again, the profile is the same. The Arab raiders were as eager to collect saleable men and women as to plunder treasure (e.g. R441–42; R451; R654). As the "industry" matured, it probably took on new characteristics aimed at maximizing profits and reducing costs. When the raiders established a relation of symbiosis with the societies on which they preyed, they expanded profits by entering the ransom business.[142] All it took was regular relations with the prey society that allowed them to communicate with their prisoners' homes and to negotiate handsome payments for captives whose age made them worthless on the block, or who were worth more in ransom than their market value. Although the process is best attested for the Cretan Arabs, it surely functioned in similar fashion in the west, as Pope Paschal's ransoms suggest. One eastern text depicts with chilling detachment the standard procedure. Around 873, the raider Said attacked various Aegean islands with a fleet of some fifty-four ships, ranging as far north as Proconnesus. To evade Byzantine pursuit they moved quickly: everyone they captured was loaded into the ships, and sorted only when they reached a safe haven. At that point, the prisoners were separated into three groups. One group was imprisoned, surely because they convinced their captors they would be ransomed. Another group was earmarked for sale. The members of the third group were killed. The reason we know about this occasion is because a priest

141 R350, esp. "a transmarinis regionibus."

142 On ransoming of prisoners otherwise destined for slave markets in the Ummayad and early Abbasid periods, Khouri 1991.



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bound for slaughter – he must have been too old to fetch a decent price on the market – talked the executioner out of it.[143]

A second feature of the economic development of this Arab slave trade was the proliferation or expansion of local slave markets. When Elias was captured in the 830s, the market was improvised on the beach. As the slave-collecting industry expanded, it was clearly advantageous to develop permanent markets closer to the hunting grounds. From the local market, middlemen could convey the slaves across the Mediterranean to the great markets of Tunis, Tripoli, Alexandria, and Baghdad. And so we hear of slave markets at Palermo, Reggio di Calabria, and Naples and probably at Taranto.[144] The slave collecting showed no sign of abating as the ninth century turned into the tenth, and the Italian peasant or cleric snatched from his field or church and transported to Africa became a familiar figure.[145] Slaves, Muslim or "infidel," became a typical cargo of Muslim ships hired in Sicily for the voyage to Africa.[146] Meanwhile, human wares continued to pack the beaches, and informal markets sprang up wherever the haul was rich. It is remarkable that northern European slave trading survived the powerful competition of this direct Arab slave collecting in southern Europe. But it would be surprising if that competition did not eat into northern European profits.

Reggio and Naples were of course Christian towns. The symbiosis of the slave hunters and the prey population went very far indeed. For Italian Christians were deeply involved in hunting down other Christians, a development not discouraged by the ethnic diversity of the southern Italian population. Thus the Beneventans had to extract from the Campanian sea cities the promise not to sell most Lombards across the sea (above, p. 748). The prohibition shows that by 836

143 Which could only be attributed to the miraculous intervention of his patron St. Nicholas: R627; *Laudatio Nicolai* (*BHG* 1352z etc.), 42–4, 171.11–173.19; date: *ibid.*, 2.295–6; cf. 293.

144 E.g., in 857/8, the Arabs conquered the "Iron Castle" of Sicily and sold its inhabitants in the slave market of Palermo: Amari 1930–9, 1: 462–3. Taranto: R577–9; Reggio and Naples: Ch. 21.2. Another such market may be implied by an enigmatic Hebrew poem preserved by the Cairo Genizah. Apparently composed by the southern Italian poet Rabbi Amitai of Oria or Rabbi Silano of Venosa, who flourished in the second half of the ninth century, it describes the arrival of ships loaded with young male and female slaves: ed. and trans. Z. Malachi, "A Hebrew Poem from Italy on the Slave Trade," *Israel Oriental Studies* 2 (1972).288–9. I am grateful to Ms. Deborah Tor for bringing this remarkable document to my attention.

145 See e.g., *V. Eliae iun.*, 55, 84.1134–86.1160; 57, 88.1186–90.1220; 65, 102.1403–104.1422. Later slave gathering expeditions: e.g., R671 (the victorious Byzantines sold Taranto's whole population into slavery); R746; R793; R801. In 925, the Arabs captured the Jewish scholar Donnolo, aged twelve, at Oria; his family was sold in Sicily and Africa while he escaped in Taranto: R804.

146 In the early 10th C.: Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar ibn Yūsuf, *Book of Chartering Ships*, tr. Christides 1993, p. 92, cf. p. 87; see also Cahen 1988.



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not only Muslim and Christian Africans, but also Campanian Christians had entered into the lucrative circuits which sold other Italians into slavery. They stayed there, to judge by the Roman threat to sell the pope's opponents to the Saracens at Naples (Ch. 21.2). Nor were the Italo-Byzantines absent from the trade. They were, says Erchempert, pseudo-Christian beasts, who hunted for Christian slaves or bought them from the Arab hunters roving across the Italian countryside and then kept them for themselves or "stuffed the beaches" with their human wares.[147] Places like Naples welcomed Arab corsairs and the slaves they had captured.[148] Christians not only sold slaves to the Muslims: they bought them, as Erchempert states and a lawsuit proves. The case opposed the bishop of Gaeta to a cleric and a layman. The latter two had bought two Italian peasants and their wives from the Arabs and then freed them in return for their land. The bishop fought against this extortion but, in the end, he was forced to accept it.[149] Nor was this only a trait of southern Italians. The Venetians had no qualms about selling Slav ecclesiastics, and the doge's decree of c. 876 could mean they participated in the new markets created by the Arab raids.[150] In the end, allegiances were made to money, not faiths or ethnic groups. By 873, things had reached such a state that the pope attempted to cajole the Christian rulers of Sardinia into not buying – and probably reselling – "liberated" Christian captives from the Christian Byzantines (R625). As we have seen, the role of Jewish merchants in the slave trade of many regions of Europe is also clearly documented in the Latin, Old Slavonic, and Arabic records; an enigmatic Gaonic *responsum* from the ninth century may preserve a subtle allusion to such trading. Volume is what looks striking about Venetian and Arab merchants' shipping of slaves; geographic range is what impresses about the Jewish traders.[151]

147 Erchempert, *Historia Lang. Ben.*, 81, 264.23–31, explaining a Byzantine defeat. His uncertain Latin requires translation: "But the Greeks, just as they resemble them by their habits, so mentally are they the same as animals, being Christians in name but, in conduct, sadder than Saracens. That is, they both hunted all sorts of the faithful on their own, and they bought them from the Arabs; some they put up for sale, stuffing the beaches of the sea, and (vera = vero?) others they kept as male and female slaves." "Achivi autem, ut habitudinis [!] similes sunt, ita animo aequales sunt bestiis, vocabulo christiani, set moribus tristiores Agarenis. Hii videlicet et per se fidelium omnes predabant et Saracenis emebant, et ex his alios venales oceani litora farciebant, alios vera in famulos et famulas reservabant."

148 Naples: R514; and Ch. 21.2.

149 *Gaeta*, 1, no. 13 (October 867).

150 Above, n129; it might also refer to the Slav pirates that lurked along the Adriatic coast.

151 As Prof. Robert Brody kindly informs me, most references to slavery in Carolingian-era *responsa* are banal in that they refer to domestic slaves working in a Jewish household. However, he observes that the Commentary on the Tractate of Yebamot, no. 267, p. 116, could refer to the problems arising out of the sale of slaves to non-Jews, and *might* reflect awareness of a business involving such sales. I am also grateful to Deborah Tor for her help in citing this passage.



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The demand was great, the money good, and the doing easy. Although sporadic kidnappings were probably a small proportion of all slave sales, they are the ones that caught the public eye. We have already seen Agobard's report of kidnappings at Lyons and Arles whose victims were taken to Cordova. The story of the court cleric Bodo, who under pretext of pilgrimage to Rome, converted to Judaism and sold his fellow travelers into slavery was a sensational variation on an established theme.[152] It was only natural that Roman fiction depict an African sea captain scheming to sell his passenger into slavery (above, p. 244). There is no reason to think that these activities were limited to Italo-Byzantines or court clergymen. The old monk who deceived Blaise of Amorion into traveling to Bulgaria with him must have turned a handsome profit from the sale of the well-born boy (Ch. 7.3). And it could have been little different inside Carolingian Europe. Whether or not the specifics of the kidnapping cases alleged by Agobard were true, his accusations suggest that the international slave trade sometimes swept up locals in its currents. Agobard in fact claimed that his investigation had turned up witnesses that the slave trader in question had bought Christian slaves in Lyons.[153] The penitential composed by another one of our travelers foresees a standard penalty for any Christian who sold another into pagan slavery. And that was before the Northmen took up residence on Frankish soil and did unto the Franks as the Franks had done unto so many others. Small wonder that Carolingian bishops visiting their dioceses routinely asked about sales of Christians to pagans and Jews (above, n79).

Even as these considerations shed a new and chilling light on the economics of the Viking and Arab raids – and allow us to surmise what was going on among the silent peoples of the Slavlands – they have another important point to make. They could not have existed without a broader, developed infrastructure for the transport and sale of slaves beyond the frontiers. Which raises the final, most difficult question for us, that of the scale of this slave trading.

We have no consistently reliable figures which allow us to assess the number of exported slaves and, over time, estimate the trend. What I know is laid out in Table 25.2. Some of the numbers are manifestly impossible – the 9,000 slaves packed into six ships according to Bernard. A few numbers look more reliable, and they are big – the 900 slaves freed in southeastern Europe by Constantine and Methodius, the sixty-three slaves per ship liberated by a Frankish count in 813, the 221 delivered by a Byzantine patrol, the 200 seminarians at Methodius' mission, or the third of the Saxon nation whom Charlemagne enslaved on one campaign. They speak of a trade which dealt in substantial, even very large, quantities of slaves.

152 *Ann. Bert.*, a. 838, pp. 27–8.

153 Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 195.149–59.



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TABLE 25.2
Movements of large numbers of slaves, 700–900

| Quantity | Date | Circumstances | Movement number |
|---|---|---|---|
| *60–3,000 slaves* | | | |
| 500 | 715–31 | Lombards captured at Cuma taken to Naples; presumably for sale | 1 |
| 1,000 | 788 | Byzantine soldiers captured by Beneventans and Franks; presumably sold | 2 |
| 60 | 806 | Byzantine monks enslaved on Pantelleria redeemed in Spain by Charlemagne | 3 |
| over 500 | 813 | captive Corsicans intercepted at Majorca en route to Spain | 4 |
| 221 | 835 | Italo-Byzantine captives liberated by Byzantine navy en route to Africa | 5 |
| 900 | 867 | liberated by Constantine and Methodius in Moravia and Pannonia | 6 |
| 200? | c. 885 | St. Methodius' disciples enslaved in Moravia and transported to Venice for sale | 7 |
| 1,000 | 886 | given by Danelis to Basil I, who sends them to southern Italy as colonists | 8 |
| 3,000 | after 886? | Leo VI later used 3,000 more of Danelis' slaves to repopulate strategic points | 9 |
| *More than 3,000 slaves* | | | |
| 30,000 | 714 | taken from Visigothic Spain to Syria | 10 |
| 45,000×5 | 793 | Arab raid into Septimania | 11 |
| a third of the Saxons | 796 | taken away by Charlemagne as *captivi* | 12 |
| 9,000 | 867 | captured in Italy and sent from Taranto to Africa, Tripoli, and Egypt aboard 6 ships | 13 |

*Sources:* 1. *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.400.20–1; see Ch. 21n45. 2. R220. 3. R272. 4. R318. 5. R431. 6. Above, n63. 7. Above, n140. 8. McCormick 1998b, 35n36. 9. Theoph. Cont. 5, 77, 321.3–6. 10. R87. 11. Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 1: 145–6. 12. Above, n74. 13. R577–9.



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But the main evidence is qualitative. A first indication comes from the number of our travelers who, incidentally, were enslaved in the course of their lives. Individuals like Elias the Younger, Blaise, the captain of Blaise's ship, and Leontius the pseudo-ambassador, all happen to have become slaves.

The scale of slave dealing was important enough to figure prominently in the treaties between sea traders and continental powers. The Lombards and Franks may have been only partly successful in protecting their subjects from joining the slave cargoes of Venetians and Campanians. Notwithstanding the alacrity with which some Christians sold their fellows across the sea, slave trading was important enough to alarm influential churchmen. The protests of Agobard and Amulo of Lyons might be dismissed as fueled by their anti-semitic agendas, for this they certainly were, and the Christian slave traders who competed with the Jews did not enter their sights. But the public protest of the Council of Meaux is another matter. Not only do these bishops condemn in blanket terms all West Frankish slave dealers ("huius regni"), explicitly including Christians and Jews, but they voice a concern which is striking in terms of the issue of scale. They viewed the export of slaves as a strategic threat to the Frankish kingdom: the numbers were great enough that they might affect the Franks' military competition with the Muslims. A monk at Monte Cassino voiced a like concern a generation later (above n38). The prelates assembled at Meaux could imagine no better solution to the problem than to require that the slave merchants sell their wares inside the Frankish kingdom. This of course would have throttled the trade, for it would have deprived it of the profits generated by the greater value of slaves in the Islamic world.

The level of organizational specialization remains unclear, outside some revealing anecdotes from the Arab slave-gathering expeditions in southern Italy, where specialized hunters worked with the traders. The case of Methodius' disciples indicates that the Jewish and Slav slave traders of central Europe – equally attested in the Raffelstetten Plea – bought from local suppliers and sold to the Venetians. The Venetian pacts with the Franks confirm that their suppliers were not Venetians, or at least did not own real estate in Venice. The Venetians therefore were chiefly middlemen, who specialized in the delivery of these slaves to the southern and eastern Mediterranean markets where they were in such demand. If we may believe Ibn Khurradadhbih, other Jewish merchants kept the entire circuit in their own hands, sailing with their wares from a port which was probably Venice. The fact that these merchants had caught the attention of the head of a caliphal bureaucracy that oversaw communications reinforces the impression that their operations attained an important volume. A further indication of scale comes from the fact that we hear of at least six slave merchants closely connected with Louis the Pious over a few years.[154] One could continue in this vein, but the

154 *Form. imp.*, 30–1 and 52, 309.4, 310.7–8 and 325.8.



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point should be clear. Small wonder that when a Greek priest of Alexandria looked up and saw a Venetian gangplank, he thought of slavery. The fact that we owe the picture to a Venetian only reinforces its value.[155]

The export of Europeans to the richer economies of the south was as old as the hills. It was going on at the closing of antiquity, and it continued without interruption through the dark years of the seventh century. But so far as we can tell, the scale of this trade was no larger than the small quantities of eastern goods that arrived aboard the same ships which must have left with human freight. If historians are correct in thinking that the mid-eighth-century Life of Eligius is referring to Marseilles when it describes that saint liberating boatloads of slaves, we can get some general idea of the numbers. "He redeemed from slavery up to twenty, thirty and even fifty at a time; once in a while he freed all together a whole column, up to a hundred, as soon as they got out of the ship, of both sexes, from different peoples, that is Romans, Gauls, Britons, and Moors, but especially from the tribe of the Saxons, who like some flock driven from their own homes, in those times were being sold abundantly to different places."[156] "Twenty, thirty, even fifty or a hundred" evokes a scale of operations smaller than the 900 slaves freed by Constantine and Methodius, the 200 enslaved seminarians, or the 220 slaves with whom Elias traveled. Whether these quantities came from Eligius' lost, seventh-century Life, or were invented by the early Carolingian author, they give some idea of the scale of the trade between 650 and 750. It was smaller than in the ninth century.

Around 750, the Caliphate suffered a shortfall of labor because of the bubonic plague. Into the breach stepped the Venetians, and next to them also the Byzantine slavers, cruising the coast of Italy and loading Lombards for sale

155 *Tr. S. Marci* (*BHL* 5283–4), pp. 253–4: "Sin autem vobiscum in navem ascenderemus, duceremur utique tamquam captivi ad terram quam ignoramus."

156 ". . . interdum etiam usque ad viginti et triginta seu et quinquaginta numero simul a captivitate redimebat; nonumquam vero agmen integrum et usque centum animas, cum navem egrederentur, utriusque sexus, ex diversis gentibus venientes, pariter liberabat, Romanorum scilicet, Gallorum atque Brittanorum necnon et Maurorum, sed praecipuae ex genere Saxonorum, qui abunde eo tempore veluti greges a sedibus propriis evulsi in diversa distrahebantur." *V. Eligii*, 1, 10, 677.6– 12. That this concerned specifically Marseilles was argued by Krusch and accepted by Verlinden 1955–77, 1: 668. This appears uncertain to me: the text rather appears incoherent, for it is difficult to imagine how Anglo-Saxons (if that, and not the continental Saxons, are who the 8th-C. author means) and Moors would be arriving from the same place; nor can we imagine that Britons and Anglo-Saxons were imported into Marseilles by ship, so that we would have to assume that the vessels were river boats coming down the Rhône. It seems to me rather that the author had no particular place in mind for Eligius' good works.



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across the sea. The last five decades of the eighth century were also the era when the Carolingian conquests could well have flooded the market, both directly, through the capture of large numbers of war slaves, and indirectly, through the disruption of food production. As the slaves flowed out in these final decades of the eighth century, Arab coins, eastern silks, new Arab drugs, and old eastern spices surged into Italy. The slave trade fueled the expansion of commerce between Europe and the Muslim world.

As the Carolingian conquests subsided, and civil war increased, the supply of war slaves probably slackened. Ultimately, the Venetian, Byzantine, and other supply networks simply could not keep up with demand from the south. But even more important, the Frankish empire itself began to feed the voracious system from which it had profited. In the north, it was easier for Vikings to capture Franks, Anglo-Saxons, and Irish, directly and for free, than to pay Franks or Frisians for them.[157] In the south, it was easier for merchants from the Muslim world to purchase their wares on the beaches of Italy, where Italian and Arab hunters were tracking them down locally, in small-scale hunts or in large-scale raids. In an extraordinary irony of history, the European empire which had once profited by supplying slaves from its subjects and neighbors became itself a leading source of supply. Still the demand was insatiable. Next to the southern raiders and their Italian allies, Venetians and Radhanites continued hard at work, developing the traditional supply sources in central Europe in the middle and second half of the ninth century. Central Europe became increasingly integrated into the communications network of western Europe, as some coins, swords, and other goods flowed into it, even as human wealth poured out. The trend of Venetian treaties indicates increasing latitude for slave sales, not decreasing. The turn of the century brought no changes in the substance of the trade.

Amidst the hostilities, some Europeans made money. The human capital continued to flow out of Europe, and the wealth of the more developed world continued to flow in, enriching two tiny corners of the developing European economy, even if direct Arab competition began to cut into their profits from the 810s or 820s. In the Veneto and, as the ninth century turned into the tenth, along the Campanian coast Arab gold and silver allowed more investment in ships, in goods, in churches, and in people. The European commercial economy in the Mediterranean was born precisely in the dynamic centers of the slave trade with the Arab world, in Naples and Amalfi, and in Venice. It would be another generation or two before that economy would begin to retreat from the horrible trade out of which it sprang. And even that retreat would be partial, not permanent.

157 On Viking–Irish slave trading, see Holm 1986, which I owe to the kindness of Dorothy Africa.



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This the flourishing slave trade of the later Middle Ages indicates, along with its last medieval prolongation, when it was carried to the western coast of Africa in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[158] Once again, the roots of modern Europe – and its daughters – reach deep into the soil of the Middle Ages.

158 Verlinden 1955–77, 1: 358–62 observes the growing proportion of black African slaves in the 14th and 15th C.; cf. 1: 835–46; cf. Curtin 1998, 3–10 and 17–45.



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# *At the origins of the European economy*

We began with a Roman empire which commanded the Mediterranean and its resources and wed them to its capitals and armies. In so doing, it bound together Europe, far western Asia, and northern Africa. Subsidized by the state, great fleets of ships moved mountains of goods across the inland sea. In their holds sailed the grain and oil that were the tribute of empire. Subaltern to the north, the southern rim of the Mediterranean, for small profits, sent its wealth across the sea in a tax-powered exchange. As the economy of the western regions of the empire went south, figuratively and literally, the eastern and southern regions took up the slack and bounded further ahead. Eastern merchants aboard eastern ships played an ever greater role in an ever shrinking western economy.

We ended on the far side of a series of transformations, some violent, some silent. As the sequence of shocks which began with bubonic infection subsided, the most dynamic, Middle Eastern engines of the late Roman economy were firing up again. This time, however, the eastern Mediterranean and Africa were fused to the economies of western Asia and the Indian Ocean. Signs of expansion also gathered strength in northwest Europe. By 800, multiple circuits were connecting again, linking the growing agrarian economies and political societies of western Europe to each other, and back to the Middle East. Only this time the ships and traders were mostly western. And this time, the subaltern society of Europe exported its human wealth in exchange for southern riches. The consequences did not end there, as one anecdote may illustrate.

Late in 851, the ruler of Frankish Italy convoked his annual assembly at Pavia. A group of merchants had traveled from Cremona to appear before the young emperor Louis II and lodge a serious complaint against their bishop. Lord Benedict, they protested, was perpetrating illegal acts against them. Every time they moored their ships in the town port, his representatives demanded three payments. According to the merchants of Cremona, the landing fees, mooring charges, and free lunches were entirely illegal, since neither they nor their



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parents had ever paid them. A hearing held in the palace yielded no resolution, and Louis appointed an advisor to investigate the matter at Cremona.[1]

As it turned out, the Cremona boatmen had a point, but it was a pretty narrow one. If in fact they or their fathers had not paid the ship fees, it was because in the old days, they didn't own ships. The bishop's position was quite clear: by a privilege that went back to Charlemagne, he collected fees every time any and all merchants put in at the town port.[2] The bishop sustained his case with numerous witnesses, whose testimony the plea records.

> The archpriest Odepert spoke first, having sworn on his priesthood: "I can remember before the times of Lord Charles and King Pippin, that these men who have sued this holy Church over this port never owned their own ships, nor did their families, nor did they ever bring salt from Comacchio to sell in this port, except in modern times, under bishop Panchoard." The priest Leonard spoke similarly. The priest Gudepert, having sworn on his priesthood and having been interrogated, said: "I know as far back as the times of Lord Charles and King Pippin that these people never owned their own ships and brought salt from Comacchio to trade, except if they brought salt and other goods (*species*) in common with the people from Comacchio aboard a ship from Comacchio, and paid in common the landing and mooring fees to the king and the church of Cremona, according to this pact."[3]

Over and over, churchmen, laymen and port officials repeated the same story: these men had never owned ships in the old days of Charlemagne and his son Pippin; if any of them or their fathers had traded, it was aboard vessels out of Comacchio, which had in fact paid the customary fees. They confirm the essential point made by the first witness: the men of Cremona had started to operate trading ships only recently, in the episcopates of Panchoard (attested 840–2) and Benedict (851–78).[4] Unsurprisingly, the imperial envoys found for the bishop and dismissed the new boatmen's suit.

We might smile at the narrow legal grounds for the Cremona merchants' efforts to evade the taxes that weighed on river traders: since their fathers had not owned boats, they could not have paid taxes on trading vessels; it followed that

1 *Placiti* no. 56, 1.193–8. The fees are the classic ones for Po traffic: *ripaticum*, *palifictura*, and *pastus* (*ibid.*, 194.7), and in fact, derive from Liutprand's pact with the merchants of Comacchio (R88): BZiel 84. Hartmann 1904, 74–90, remains fundamental for Po river traffic in the early Middle Ages, including this document. Not untypically, the men are called only *habitatores* of the city. That they were merchants is obvious from the terms of the dispute, the statement of Bishop Benedict, and the other records stemming from the dispute: R504.

2 *Placiti* no. 56, 195.11–15: "Quotienscumque quislibet negotiator cum suis navibus in ipsum portum aplicat [!] . . ."

3 *Ibid.*, 195.17–30. The pact is the one that went back to Liutprand in 715: R88.

4 R. Van Doren, "Crémone," *DHGE* 13 (1956): 1019–21, here 1020. The witness Castabilis extends the date, stating that they had been paying the fees for thirty years.



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their sons were under no obligation to pay such taxes. But they were arguing within the logic of a legal world which connected obligations to personal status. A traditional system straining in the face of deep social and economic change is exactly what this lawsuit reveals.

The Cremona plea takes us as close as we will ever come to a moment of crucial social change in European history. We glimpse here the very men of no real account, just after they have abandoned their ancestral ways and become merchants. After the Venetians and their ilk they were the second wave that propelled the European economy out of its origins. A generation or two before, their fathers had led other lives, perhaps as peasants. One or another of them had joined a boat crew from Comacchio, and begun to trade by their side.[5] Business must have been good. In the last decade or so, they had assembled capital enough to build or buy their own boats and run their own businesses, trading up and down the river. In fact, the trade must have been very good, if these enterprising new men dared to defy the lord bishop of Cremona in his front yard. What else can one call refusing to pay in their home town the customary tolls their own bishop collected from their competitors? As if that were not enough, they had the audacity to travel to the imperial court and argue from the very novelty of their profession that they owed him no such tolls.[6]

The Cremona plea is about change on a very local level. It shows, at close range, what weighty consequences were unleashed on the micro-historical stage by the growth of the communications and commercial networks which hundreds of movements of travelers and things have disclosed at the macro-historical level. And the plea gives some inkling of how profoundly destabilizing this change could be. But once again, were the new merchants typical? After all, Cremona was in a very special part of Carolingian Europe, only 200 km from Venice, the epicenter of change. The Po valley possessed a remarkable transport system in the river itself; its rich, alluvial earth fed a growing population and a growing economy. On this soil, innovative great estates were promoting agrarian and other exchanges among different regions even as they fostered new, local markets. The men and women who possessed the estates were coalescing into a new ruling class which itself mixed a heady brew of new and old. Lombard families competed with and married the second or third generation of a new colonial elite from across the

5 Awkward though the phrasing is, the testimony shows that most of these men had no background in trade; the "nisi" clauses indicate that the witnesses are allowing the possibility that some smaller subset of them had started out working with the traders of Comacchio.

6 Of course the plea tells only one side of the story. In light of the insistence in D L II, no. 4, on the dues also owed by merchants from Comacchio and Venice, one wonders if, at the outset, there might have been some kind of cooperation or even collusion between the bishop's officials and the local men.



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Alps, who might have had that drive for distinguishing itself in new surroundings which one discovers in many colonial elites. Economists of development today pay close heed to literacy levels. It would be very surprising if the Po valley's expanding archives do not imply the same thing that has recently been observed across the Apennines at Lucca. Inside town walls, literacy was rising. Although still miserable by twenty-first-century standards, the numbers and social spectrum of people capable of reading and writing were increasing by the 770s.[7] Change in this regard reached beyond the clerical elite who adhered to the ideals of the Carolingian revival.

But change was not confined to Cremona, or even the Po valley. The lawsuit depicts with greater clarity and chronological precision developments that were afoot elsewhere. The newly minted merchants who were trying to evade traditional taxes are showing us, from the bottom up, the same thing that Carolingian kings show us, from the top down, when they legislated on the tolls paid at markets, passes, and ports. That rulers collected old tolls and sought to repress new markets is interesting. That *new* markets were springing up on riverbanks and beaches is crucial (R368; R381). North of the Alps, the abbey of St. Denis was forging the defense and expansion of its international fair and its local markets (above, Ch. 22.2; p. 8). In a different language, the Rhineland's burgeoning new kilns tell the same story, and extend its reach across the North Sea. That kilns were popping up like mushrooms means more – new – potters and sellers. Moreover, the boatmen's lawsuit was more than a local phenomenon in another sense. For the enterprising merchants of Cremona were trying to cut overhead and gain a competitive advantage over their rivals – and inspiration. When Louis II confirmed his court's decision, he added a phrase that identifies the real rivals of the new men. The Venetians too, he says, must continue to pay their customary fees at Cremona.[8] This is the local face of the Venetian dynamism that reached a first peak in the decades around 800.

The inquiry has ranged over half a millennium, all of Europe and some slices of Asia and Africa. It has exploited evidence no less diverse – from Roman silks to rabbinical responses from Iraq, via the aggregate testimony of papal bulls, sunken ships, saints' relics, and Arab gold. It has sometimes been said that early medieval history will never amount to much because there is so little evidence. That may have been true in the past, although it surely does not seem so to any who have ever practiced ancient or Byzantine history. But it is no longer the case, if only we listen more carefully to the muted messages that lie latent in the era's

7 Judging from the indirect implication of the changing numbers of those who were able to write their own names when subscribing to charters: M. Palma and F. Bianchi, *ChLA*, 38, pp. v–vi, who indicate that, while the post-774 increase is especially marked among churchmen, it extends also to laypeople.

8 D L II, no. 4.



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many witnesses, written and material. Those data will only grow, as archaeologists exhume a material world we once assumed we would never know. Indeed, the data deployed even in this early and incomplete study would never have been mustered without that faithful and powerful tool, the modern computer.

We began by seeking the general economic trend of the late Roman world. Different indicators displayed clear signs of change. The overall picture is unmistakable, for the change represents decline: dwindling populations, a mutating disease pool, lessening metal production, contracting diffusion and product range in ceramics. But that is already too simple. The processes of impoverishment followed very different chronologies in different regions. Rome's western provinces led the way into poverty and, for a time at least, their very decline fanned the forces of economic expansion elsewhere: eastern mines or shippers took up the slack in western production and moved their goods west, so long as westerners could afford to buy them. Debate continues on how far such economic contraction affected the eastern provinces of the Roman empire. The answer will probably vary, province by province, or even microregion by microregion, as in the better-mapped west. But, as Alexander Kazhdan first argued nearly a half century ago, deurbanization and impoverishment in people and in the production of wealth characterize the lands that remained Roman, or Byzantine, by the mid-seventh century. Even if some favored zones actually prospered in the obscure years when the ancient world ended, they surely did not do so enough to compensate for the aggregate economic decline implied by the successive downward spirals of Gaul, Spain, Italy, the Danube provinces, Africa, Greece, and Asia Minor.

The "Roman economy" had always been the interplay of a number of regional economies, and in this interaction the state played a critical role. The stimulating and redistributive role of early Roman taxes and trade are now familiar features of historians' thinking about the imperial economy. The role of the state, and its cultural, military, and fiscal imperatives, only loomed larger as other, competing forms of human organization weakened – the late antique cities, the privately based corporations of shippers, the privately funded and founded city strata of the ruling classes, religions which were not the expression of state power – and all things rooted in and financed by the state grew. Of this general trend, the fate of shipping supplies a particular example.

The conditions that accompanied the subsidized service of the annona transports appear, on balance, generally favorable. They gave ships in state employ a leg up on ships that enjoyed no subsidies, no customs exemption, and no protection from arbitrary requisition, not to mention no guaranteed business in bad times. The very big and very expensive operations of the annona transports were an economic corollary of the broader economic phenomenon, the deep and pervasive reach of the fiscal organization of the late Roman state. Whatever the



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intentions of the empire's governing elite and bureaucracy, their actions had unmistakable economic consequences. Through its fiscal mechanisms, the late Roman state played a decisive role in producing, transporting, and distributing a substantial share of the basic foodstuffs of Mediterranean civilization. The reasons behind this extraordinary fact had little to do with our ideas of economics, and much to do with the more imperious arguments of cultural expectation and political expedience. The good ruler was one whose *humanitas* fed his capital abundantly and cheaply; one who failed to do so was, in any case, likely soon to be dead.

For a variety of reasons, some navigational, some fiscal, and some economic, the fleets serving the late Roman state experienced geographic concentration and contraction. As Roman civilization grew old, Alexandria and a few other eastern harbors remained as major home ports for the annona, which dominated all other forms of shipping in volume and importance. The pervasive role of these ships in binding together the cities around the Mediterranean, perhaps in alliance with other developments we cannot yet see – transformations of the physical and organizational fabric of the sea cities? – fostered proliferating colonies of black rats, and created a perfect environment for the transmission of the lethal new disease from the east. When the bubonic plague struck, it hit hard. And it kept coming back. The breeding grounds of contagion coincided with the places and people who manned and moneyed the ships that held this far-flung civilization together and permitted its unique forms of organization. Still, crippled and more expensive though the ancient shipping system must have become, it sailed on. If the waves of the Justinianic plague did unto Constantinople as the Black Death did unto Florence, the population of the capital that needed an annona diminished, lightening somewhat the load for the ships that were left. But the fall of Alexandria and its Nile breadbasket, first to the Persians, and then, definitively, to the Arabs, brought the whole system to a grinding halt. The bread distributions of the capital ended in 618.

Over the long haul, western ships had virtually disappeared, even from the western Mediterranean basin. To a certain extent, eastern freighters took their place; the total number of ships operating in both basins went down; and, on the eve of its destruction, more and more of the eggs of late Roman shipping had come to rest in the basket of the annona. So it was that, comparatively speaking, commercial shipping lessened to its lowest point in centuries in the second half of the seventh century, certainly in the western Mediterranean, but probably also in the eastern basin, where the new economic and cultural world of the Mediterranean Caliphate was, initially at least, more at home on land than at sea.

This of course simplifies, perhaps too much. The distribution networks that relayed the salvation from the sea into the interior had suffered slow decay or dislocation. At least this was so in the west, if we may judge from the Rhône and the



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slight penetration inland of such exotic amphoras as continued to come to the coast. And from the later sixth century, the demand that Gaul, Italy, Spain, or Africa were able to mount was probably narrow enough that we should not wonder at the little heed paid to moving goods from the coasts inland. The fact that, around 675, it took a royal privilege (Ch. 3.3) to assemble a wagon train to move the equivalent of about one shipload of exotic goods to the royal family's retirement monastery in northern France – or at least to promise to do so – tells us much.

The reality of Roman economic decline, in the aggregate and as compared even, say, with the fourth century, seems to me undeniable in the seventh. The disruption of the splendid communications systems that once tied this big and complicated world together seems equally inescapable. But how long did disruption last? Perhaps not long at all in the Levant – the jury is out and evidence points in both directions. Certainly it endured longer in the new imperial heartland of Byzantium. In the west, the decline had started sooner and perhaps went deeper. But the turn too may have set in earlier.

For several generations, debate has continued about the nature and trend of the early medieval economy of Europe. The old questions of agrarian organization and production, and even demographic tendency have begun to receive new and surprising answers, thanks to innovative approaches and the earliest archaeological returns. Suspicion is stiffening into conviction that agrarian and demographic Europe was on the road to recovery – and maybe more – in the Carolingian age. Only the ancient controversy over Mediterranean commerce and shipping of the eighth and ninth centuries has remained intractable. Diametrically opposed opinions do battle with a handful of texts, in which one side sees the rule and the other, the exception. The argument from silence has been made to carry a heavy burden. Hence the entirely new approach, or rather, series of approaches, to discern whether the modest number of long-distance Mediterranean merchants that are unmistakably visible represent a broader, less visible reality, or not.

Long-distance commerce does not exist in a vacuum. On the contrary, it both presupposes and stimulates a wider system of communications which allows the movement of people, goods, and information. As it turns out, the system of communications is far better attested than the commerce. So we started with communications to discover the deeper context in which to appraise the data on commerce. Because of the extreme controversy which has surrounded the subject of Mediterranean trade at the origins of Europe, new and independent sets of evidence were articulated into independent but overlapping investigations. Different and independently preserved evidentiary bases disclosed the history of early European communications in the Mediterranean. First and foremost, people, the travelers, mostly fellow aristocrats of the authors of the sources we do



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have, came to the fore. Prosopography uncovered systematically those who we know traveled, and began to indicate who was missing from the record. The life stories of prominent travelers were set against group portraits of western and eastern travelers, with results that challenged the conventional wisdom of stasis and stagnation. Well-connected ambassadors and pilgrims dominate the record, but other, sometimes unexpected, groups emerged: refugees, exiles, immigrants, slaves, and even merchants.

An initial surprise was the volume of travelers that our research uncovered: 669 in all. Their stories produced new data on points of departure, months of arrival, age and health when under way, places where they changed ships, or where their travel plans were frustrated. Behind the hundreds of individual stories, we began to see the ghostly shapes of the ships they took, the company they kept, the routes they followed. The earliest voyagers replicated the patterns of a dying antiquity, sailing east through the Byzantine Aegean. But later eighth- and early ninth-century travelers turned to new routes and new infrastructures that led to the House of Islam. Direct land routes to Byzantium were born again in the 86os. Attitudes toward travel shifted also, as ninth-century voyagers began to assume that others would follow in their paths.

The 669 travelers revealed much about a human world in motion around the Mediterranean; behind them we sensed and even saw the more fundamental structures – shipping routes, ports of call, navigational style, and so on – that articulated all movements around the inland sea. It is compelling testimony when evidence from such diverse horizons, – travelers (and records) from Constantinople or Jerusalem – converges in so many ways with that of travelers from Trier, from Wessex, from Rome, and with other sources produced a world away.

Next to the movements of people, we set the movements of things, of relics and coins which were imported into western Europe in the early Middle Ages. The quality of their preservation and the potential of their provenances lent them particular luster. The relic hoards preserved since the days of Dagobert and Charlemagne at Sens and Chelles offered a second route to understanding changing communications. The relics revealed in striking detail what regions connected with these great churches, at what times. The Sens treasure displayed in miniature the transformations of the late antique world of communications. Its most archaic stratum certainly antedates the later seventh century; it uncovered communications between central Gaul and the shrines of Asia Minor, Africa, Spain, and Egypt. Then Africa, Spain, and Egypt dropped away. The city cults of Asia Minor disappeared, replaced by the overwhelming dominance of Constantinople. Outside the capital's mighty walls, only Ephesus remained, the same Ephesus whose fair and whose ships shaped our travelers' movements. But then links with the Holy Land and Sinai rebounded over the eighth century. That pattern recurs at Chelles, except that there, in keeping with the abbess' personal



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relations with Constantinople, Byzantium – and even the Black Sea – retained a greater place in the eighth century.

Coins opened a third, independent avenue to exploring changing patterns of communications. But to say "coins" is to compound three further evidentiary bases whose conditions of preservation are unrelated: early medieval records mentioning coins, and the Arab and Byzantine coins discovered in the soil of western Europe. Documents that mention *dinar manqūsh* dated and located the influx into Italy of Arab coins, starting around 775. They traveled mainly through the Adriatic and Venice. They also allowed us to distinguish differing densities of penetration and economic function according to the region. In most of northern and central Italy, Arab gold served as a kind of reserve coinage that might be used for particularly large expenditures. In the Veneto, on the other hand, people used dinars widely for all sorts of transactions. The coins themselves trace the main routes of communications linking Carolingian Europe to the places where they were minted; their dates suggest the chronology of those routes. Exactly as the documents predicted, the wave of coins rolled up the Adriatic in the second half of the eighth and the first decades of the ninth centuries. But the actual coins tell us more, for they crossed the Alps, westward, along the great Rhine axis. Eastward, they moved beyond the boundaries of writing, toward the Danube and the Slavlands.

The results of these independent investigations reconstructed a first picture of the matrix of movement into which the limited information on commerce and exchange could be set. The experience of travel brought further new evidence to the debate. Behind the secular rise and fall of movements, shipping routes and economies, there lay storms, ships, and men. Fiction proved as valuable as historical writing, at least for assessing "what it was really like." Dangers, human or atmospheric, cargoes, sizes of ships and their groupings, the rise of western homeports, and the regional style of navigation all began to populate that early medieval Mediterranean which had seemed so empty. And began to hint of change.

The analysis of the aggregate movements deduced from the studies of people, relics, and coins produced something new. For the first time, early medieval Mediterranean evidence has become so abundant that it needed a computer for counting: in total, we know about 730 movements around the Mediterranean basin between c. 700 and 900. They stem from four largely independent series of data: the "core movements" from, essentially, the trips of our travelers; the "complementary" movements; and the Arab and Byzantine coins deposited in the soil of Europe. These independent series of data are not randomly or evenly distributed over the two centuries. On the contrary, they rise and fall in clear and correlated patterns. The trend of three series is downward until c. 750–75 (Chart 14.3). In the last quarter of the eighth century both sets of movements rise sharply, as does also the influx of Arab coins. "Core" and "complementary"



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movements continue to rise in the first quarter of the new century, before diverging somewhat between 825 and 849. Because so many of the complementary movements are the evolutions of war fleets and raiding squadrons, it is plausible that their plateau, coinciding with the decline of the core movements, reflects two critical military turning points: the Arab conquests of Sicily and Crete, and the disruption they implied for more peaceable shipping along the route segments those two great islands dominated. Core movements rebounded in the third quarter and ended the century in a gentle decline or stability; the complementary movements steadily decreased in the second half of the century. Despite some divergence in the first quarter of the ninth century, the finds of Arab coins generally parallel the rise and fall of the core movements. Byzantine coin deposits display yet another and striking pattern. In the first and third quarters of the ninth century, they follow the same basic trend as the core movements. Otherwise, however, they vary from the core movements and, especially, they correlate inversely with Arab coins. When Arab coins increase, Byzantine coins decline, and vice versa. A coincidence? One can easily imagine commercial hypotheses to explain the correlation: Ibn Khurradadhbih notes that the Radhanite merchants sailed alternatively from the Caliphate to Frankland or to Byzantium. The choice may have hung on commercial conditions. But the relatively small number of finds cautions against pinning too much on the details of their behavior alone. What remains is the substantial convergence of all four series of independently derived indicators of the ebb and flow of communications between western Europe and the eastern and southern Mediterranean.

*Cum hoc, ergo propter hoc*? Simultaneity does not prove causality, as the old logician's fallacy reminds us. But in time series as long as this one, such simultaneity is in itself noteworthy and invites deeper examination. Even before we attempt to explain the pattern, we must emphasize that it is possible, for the first time, to speak about the ebb and flow of communications in a way which has gone beyond impressions. One may still choose to believe that some 700 movements are too small a sample to provide the premises for this kind of insight. One may still choose to believe that the rise and fall and renewed rise are not "real," but merely the artifacts of source production. To the former, there is little to reply, except to invite the skeptic to examine truly quantitative historical research into much more recent periods, and to discover that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century specialists often do not deal in larger samples. To the latter there remains the double obstacle it assumes: first, that sources were produced and preserved in similar rhythms over time not only at opposite ends of the Mediterranean, for the Latin and Greek sources, but also for the Arab ones, and even for the much smaller numbers of Old Church Slavonic, Hebrew, and Old English sources which we have used. Secondly, one must accept that the convergent chronology of written documents and Arab and Byzantine coins is just more coincidence.



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The real significance of these rising and falling patterns is that they indicate change, and they force us to ask why. "Early medieval" communications turns out to be a major simplification, if it is taken to mean a state of unchanging relationships. And given the sharp pattern of change in volume between the eighth and ninth centuries, more questions arise. Why so dramatic a surge between about 775 and 825? And why the later decline and rise? We will return to these great issues in a moment. First we must note the other types of change that affected transport and communications in this era. Of differing kinds, they nonetheless reinforce the patterns of secular rhythms.

In terms of time, the new information allowed us to test and modify some widely accepted verities. The early medieval style of navigation, which favored coasts over deep sea and tended to keep ships and sailors close to the shores they knew best, also allowed daring skippers to run more deeply into the dangerous seasons at the ends of summer and winter. Secondly, although many ships did indeed practice the kind of stop and start navigation that is often associated with this period, others seem to have moved increasingly to another mode of operation, and sail around the clock. This doubled real rates of movement, and therefore the radius of action: these ships still moved at the average of 2 knots or so, but when their sailing day rose to twenty-four hours instead of twelve, they covered twice as much sea. Both changes have economic implications: shippers increased the productivity of their investments by whatever percentage of additional sailing days they gained against the seasonal weather, and by as much as double for whatever proportion of their voyages they kept to sea day and night. These technical navigational changes converge with the swelling volume of communications, and hint how some of that growth was achieved.

In terms of space, the aggregate movements of people and things fell into clear patterns. The number and nature of the routes by which Carolingian Europe communicated with the Middle East expanded from the solitary old trunk route between Rome and the Aegean and points beyond. Combined land and sea routes now linked Europe with the eastern Mediterranean through North Africa and up the Gulf of Corinth. And the Adriatic became the royal route to the east. Shipwrecks and, in Corinth's case, land archaeology, conform to this pattern, indicating that the aggregate movements of people and things are not misleading, either on the routes or the chronology by which they emerged.

The new findings invite comparison of the changing volumes of communications with the changing routes. The volume of communications bottomed at the beginning of our period, when the main trunk route around Greece was the only one. The amount of communications increases by around 20 percent in the half-century when the earliest new routes spring to life, joining Italy to Africa and reviving the Adriatic sea lane. The Gulf of Corinth opens against a backdrop of slackening communications: they decline by about 10 percent in



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the quarter-century when we detect travelers in that new corridor. Whereas the new eighth-century routes had an incremental effect on overall traffic, this may mean that the first ninth-century innovation represented a fragmentation of pre-existing traffic, rather than real growth. Slightly fewer travelers moved along more routes. What was lost in that quarter-century nonetheless was recouped in the next, at the same time that new land corridors become visible. And, while all of these routes were coalescing, yet another, totally new corridor was coming together far to the north. Although the scarce written sources let us follow few travelers there, excavations prove that, at some point in the ninth century, northernmost Europe entered into economic exchanges with the Caliphate via the now famous northern arc. In aggregate, communications were therefore even more voluminous than what our prosopographical data indicate. On balance, the opening of new routes occurs in the context of increasing traffic, not stagnating communications. This has broader implications for judging the economic trend of the Carolingian age.

Once we look beyond the sources' disinclination to dwell on filthy lucre and the traders engaged in it, we can observe a myriad of movements of people and things. They mostly can have moved only in convoys of ships and caravans of travelers. None of these ships will have been built, launched, and sailed only to transport the pilgrims, envoys, refugees, and exiles who catch the attention of the authors of our sources. They mostly were already going to the places where our travelers were heading. This is why the routes taken by our different kinds of travelers to Jerusalem shifted over time: the transport infrastructures changed, and so their itineraries had to change. In communications we have gained a broad and clear context for discussing commercial shipping movements in the eighth and ninth centuries.

Travelers' movements tend to overlap with what we can detect of the movement of goods, as the trading worlds that surrounded the Mediterranean began to resurrect and intersect: southwestern Italy with the African–Egyptian link, Venice with the same link, and also, especially, with Egypt and the Levant; the northern arc with the Byzantine and central Asian trading worlds flowing into the Black Sea. It is true that the overland routes were less conducive to bulk transport, but most of the goods that we have observed did not answer that description. Low-volume, high-value goods could be traded there. By the late ninth century, the Danubian corridor attracted enough merchants along some of its segments to sustain pirates and toll collectors, while a trade embargo seemed a promising tool of diplomacy. Exchange is at present harder to detect on the cross-country routes that lay to the south. Nonetheless, the attempt to shift Bulgarian traders from Constantinople to Thessalonica around 890 implies that commerce was not unthinkable in that region; and we saw that the same Byzantine commercial official operated at both ends of the Corinth corridor,



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suggesting that trade also transited there. The transalpine routes that delivered to northern Europe the exotic goods imported into Italy necessarily ran overland also, and favored high-value goods. Another factor may have skewed the economics of moving wares by land. The slaves who were driven across the Alps to be sold in Venice were naturally capable of carrying portable goods such as furs or swords on their backs.

Deeper investigation of the patterns of commerce against the backdrop of the changing patterns of early medieval communications uncovered a substantial number of merchants in Europe. But usually they are identified simply as "merchants": the records give no explicit information on the economic or geographic scale of their activities. They cluster in certain regions in Italy and Frankland. Like the Arab and Byzantine coins, the traces of merchants and their goods do not stop at the water's edge. The main commercial routes leading into transalpine Europe fit the customs collection system reinvigorated by the Carolingian kings. The merchants congregate up and down the long rivers that were the arteries of early European communications and civilization. Although they are usually visible only in snapshots, in a particular place, the traders manifestly communicated somehow with other places. It is in fact possible to link most of the clusters of merchants in one way or another, even though we cannot follow most of the merchants' movements. Not only were the places where the merchants clustered coupled; they tied into other economies beyond Frankish Europe. The nature and size of the economy meant that periodic markets were dominant; the St. Denis fairs in October were the best known and probably also the most important. In the Rhineland, in addition to smaller and more traditional fairs like the one Einhard started, the largest periodic market may have been the one created as a by-product of the general assemblies of the Frankish elite. But the nature of that beast meant that its characteristics differed considerably from the St. Denis fairs, which were absolutely regular in time and place, and involved also the sale of bulk goods of considerable value. The general assembly "fairs," rather, concentrated affluent consumption.

The St. Denis fair expanded its catchment area and range of wares. Early in the eighth century it looks basically regional, with a notable presence of Anglo-Saxon merchants. By the mid-ninth century, it was attracting Jewish merchants with connections to Iraq. The diploma forged for the fair in the early tenth century implies that by then merchants were riding in from Lombardy, Spain, and Provence. The main goods traded also diversified, as honey and madder flanked the staple of wine. Expansion equally marks Rhineland trading. Thus the geographic range of certain ceramics, and thus too the numbers of kilns firing the final product in the Rhenish Vorgebirge region. Whether we look at the circulation of Frankish coins, merchants, or goods, the accelerating Frankish economy is anything but landlocked and isolated: ties ran north and west to Scandinavia and England, east into



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the Slavlands and toward the Bulgarian empire, Byzantium and beyond, southwest toward Muslim Spain. Above all, they ran south toward Italy, along the mighty Rhine.

The reality of Carolingian exports and imports to and from the Mediterranean world emerged from data both familiar and unknown. The end of papyrus shipments into Gaul tells us about transformations of the transport system and cultural expectations for writing materials. Spices traveled across the Alps, but the cultural patterns of their consumption had changed since the drastic reduction of their arrivals around 700. Now they had greater significance as medicine than for cooking. Most importantly, the incoming exotic medicines included the first drugs that concretized the new Arab pharmacology. Incense and silks further incarnate the high-value, low-bulk goods that poured into northwest Europe. To pay for these imports, Europe produced a rather narrow range of high-value, low-bulk goods. Some textiles, perhaps, and some tin seem plausible, if barely documented. Fur, probably, and Frankish swords certainly were exported to the Muslim world. But the thing which Europe was producing in greatest abundance around 800 was Europeans. The strength and beauty of their bodies were in great demand in the expanding economy of the Caliphate, and they had the signal advantage of transporting themselves across the Alps. The sale of Europeans to the more advanced economies of Africa and Asia, as well as Spain, played a crucial role in the early development of the European commercial economy. The fact that they could be turned into eunuchs or domestic slaves racheted up their value.

Future historians will be able to augment the people and things on the move that I have been fortunate enough to detect. Archaeologists will expand many times the substantial but still limited range of goods and movements that the written sources and selected objects have illuminated. They will add new levels of detail, often excruciatingly local, to the fresco of which I have tried to brush in a few important panels. But exploring the new patterns and their profound historical meaning will require the two disciplines to expand the cooperation that in many quarters has so splendidly begun. In the meantime, we are left to ponder the implications of what we have seen, and draw some broader conclusions.

The first is simple. The rise of the European commercial economy, indeed the rise of the European economy, period, did not begin in the tenth or eleventh century. It began, decisively, in the concluding decades of the eighth century.

Internal forces brought the various regions of Europe to a point where demand for exotic goods could increase. Demographic growth, the expansion and stability of political structures, innovative methods of marshalling and compelling labor on the land and extracting its fruits – the story of water mills and the great estate – shifting cultural values and ambitions (including, probably for the first time since late antiquity, a small but positive trend toward literacy, and an application of literacy to land management), a currency which was solid and unified were



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essential elements of this turning point. The role of the climate is increasingly appealed to, also. Though it is still ill understood and documented, future research may come to align it with these other factors.

The imperfect but real political integration of Italy into a transalpine Europe was, as Peter Classen observed, one of the most important developments of the European ninth century.[9] But its significance transcended politics. We now know that the North Sea trading economy had been developing, perhaps in fits and starts, since the mid-seventh century. Like the other rivers that drain into the Atlantic system, but much longer, the Rhine offered an avenue by which this trading world could push ever more deeply into the heart of Europe. As Carolingian power expanded toward the Alps, that avenue drove further and further upstream. In the mountain approaches, for instance, Alamannia's autonomy was crushed, and its old local pottery vanished under the triumphant Rhenish exports. Charlemagne's conquest of Italy united the burgeoning political, cultural, and economic world of transalpine Europe with that of the resurgent Po valley. We find a Frisian merchant carrying silk southward on the Rhine, even as exotic goods cluster around the northern exits of the Alpine passes. Already in 773, Venice was off to a promising start at the mouth of the dynamic Po economy. In 774, almost overnight, it found its broader economic hinterland expanded manyfold, as the Po lands were annexed to those of the Rhine and Seine.

The internal European expansion was already under way when the separate pulsations of a far bigger and more powerful economy, or constellation of interacting economies, came to be sensed from across the Mediterranean. At the outset, the European markets attracted few southern merchants. Who can blame them, given the anemic demand around the time Charlemagne was born, and the far more enticing prospects at home? But a few enterprising Europeans surmised the possibilities, and began to frequent the local markets of Italy, buying up the most traditional ware of a demographically growing but underdeveloped economy, its people. The Venetians perhaps were the first to figure this out. Their very seclusion, far away in the northern corner of the Adriatic was an asset. Did their tiny, water-logged hamlets lack rats? In any case, their distant isolation may have helped to insulate them from the last great onslaught of the Justinianic plagues. That will have been doubly advantageous to them. It will have powerfully increased demand – and therefore prices – for able-bodied labor, in the form of slaves, even as it killed the men who manned and financed potential competitors from the south. A felicitous development fostered the new shipping experiments of the Venetians, and perhaps of others also. For starting around 750, a lull that lasted almost half a century fell over the sea raiding that had marked the eighth century's earlier decades. Within a generation of the new opportunity discovered

9 Classen 1981.



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and seized, the influx of Arab gold, silk, and drugs was large enough to leave wide traces in the written and archaeological records of northern Italy. And that influx was financed by the export of human wealth. The happy slave traders of Europe had profit enough left over from those sales to sail home with Arab gold and silver in their purses.

Early on, the Franks expanded Venice's economic hinterland by promoting links across the Alps to the Rhineland. The Carolingian push to the east favored Venice no less. Behind the Alps, Frankish power spread a zone of political stability ever eastward. It fostered the growth of new communications routes that bound the Adriatic to the new slave hunting grounds of central Europe. As northern and central Italy drew closer to the transalpine world, contacts with the Muslim world intensified, even attracting a few Muslim merchants. Next to these Arabs we see the far more famous Jewish traders. Whether they came mostly from the Caliphate (and, or via, Spain), or emerged from families anciently at home in what was becoming Europe is today more a matter of belief than demonstration.[10] If this human group was in some measure a newly arriving one, then such a migration also speaks a powerful language of economic opportunity and attraction. But even if it was not mainly so, the trading diaspora they incarnated was unmistakably and newly vigorous, and it reached far into the House of Islam, indeed, beyond it, in the case of the Radhanites. Byzantium too was engaged, though more obscurely: an Adriatic wreck freighted in Byzantine ports, Greek slavers operating off Tuscany, and the Radhanites themselves, alternating voyages between the Frankish court and Constantinople, all testify to western Europe's connections with the recovering eastern empire, even if they were less powerful c. 800 than those with the Muslim world. And we must not lose sight of the fact that the long links of such trading networks generated small but pervasive effects in their short, local segments. In the remote Alpine passes where a scrap of inventory happens to survive, we can see boatmen and taverns springing up, skimming off a little money from each merchant, each official, each pilgrim who traveled their way, even as new men schemed to dodge customs duties along the Po. Up and down the long and narrow ways of early medieval travelers, money was spent or lost, percolating its shallow way at least into the immediate environs.

Even so the power and production of these new economic networks were only nascent. Overland transport limited the types of goods that transited between the Mediterranean and transalpine Europe to those whose value justified the expense or which transported themselves. It would take several centuries fully to overcome this obstacle; indeed, in some sense the bottleneck was not definitively broken

10 Bautier 1991, 312–15, suggests that the Jewish communities were growing by converting the locals. This would help explain the fear and hatred of an Agobard.



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until, around 1300, the Italian trading fleets sailed past Gibraltar and headed up the Atlantic coast for Bruges and London. Distribution networks were perhaps even more underdeveloped than the transport systems, given especially the increasing but dispersed population and relatively underdeveloped merchant classes. And the wealth of Europe, though growing, was still small potatoes compared with that of the southern rim.

This leads to another implication. Since the decisive advance of the European commercial economy started in the eighth, not the tenth or eleventh centuries, we are forced to rethink, much less optimistically, it seems to me, the whole extraordinary story of the rise of the European economy. The run-up to the eleventh and twelfth centuries, with their impressive trading fleets, emergent cities, and merchant practices was three times as long as has been conventionally reckoned. It must have been three times as difficult.

In the flush of new findings, it is essential not to exaggerate the scale of these commercial beginnings. They look impressive when compared with the later seventh century or early eighth. They look much less so when compared with the movements of exchange involving the same regions in the fourth or the eleventh century. The range of goods traded seems to have been considerably narrower than in the earlier or later centuries: so far as we can tell today, Europe was exporting small-volume, high-value goods, and importing similarly, around 800. But it was doing so with a new vigor, in new directions, aboard ships launched in new ports. Now it was European ships and merchants leading the new trade with the richer, bigger, more sophisticated south and east. The essential pattern had now been set. The founder's effect was at work, by which the first places that set movements in motion, like Venice, often reaped incommensurate benefits. The basic pattern would prevail for the next thousand years.

One more broader implication: to some, early medieval civilization appears a contradiction in terms. The eighth and ninth centuries still seem to many the epitome of the parochial, the closed, the autarkic, if not to say the "Dark Ages." Perhaps the conclusion that Europe financed, at least in part, the early stages of its economic and commercial ascent by the sale of its own peoples on foreign shores will incite some to believe more firmly in this metaphorical "darkness." Yet it is the sources, or more accurately, our own stubborn refusal to take what they give us, that explain the obscurity of this period. That its civilization privileged the local is certainly in some measure true. But only in some measure. At least for a few decades, some Italians hoarded Arab coins, and others reveled in exotic silks and incense, as the first Arab loan-words entered the European vocabulary. The humble treatises of medical practitioners have unveiled not only the economic fact of the exotic new drugs, originating from as far away as the Indian or the Pacific Oceans. They announce the advent of Europe's long appropriation of the new Arab science. It is perhaps beginning to seem a little less anomalous that the



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Carolingian court received not only Anglo-Saxons, Irishmen, Spanish Visigoths, and Italo-Lombards, but the brother of the patriarch of Constantinople, a Byzantine Slav eunuch, and Arab refugees. At its origins, in other words, Europe was deeply open, to new peoples, new things, new ideas even. So too the Arab world, which received the shiploads of slaves from the shores of Europe, and assimilated them and their descendents into the new societies being born across the sea.

Much remains to be done before the picture is complete. In the nature of things, this investigation has focused on change which testifies to contraction and then growth in communications and commerce. But even when the cycle of growth was started again, there were also obstacles and downturns. Three seem to me to have been particularly important. The Arab conquest of Sicily directly affected shipping routes, and more. The old trunk route through the strait of Messina now became more dangerous to all, as they sailed between the Arab Charybdis of Messina and the Byzantine Scylla of Reggio. Merchant ships still transited the strait, but the later ninth century also witnessed the development of a new, overland route from Apulia, north to Rome, which avoided the most dangerous stretch of sea. This new danger incited Venetian shippers to narrow their horizons and sharpen their sights, for they disappeared from the western Mediterranean after about 840. From then on, they concentrated on the Levant and Byzantium, the trading routes on which they would become famous, and which would constitute the arteries of their economy for centuries to come. At the same time, Venice's disengagement from the western Mediterranean created new opportunities for the emerging ports of Italy's polyfocal west coast, Amalfi, Naples, and Genoa.

So too the conquest of Crete made the approaches to the Aegean Sea more risky. Ships still sailed the old route around the Peloponnese, but the menacing new emirate certainly encouraged the rise of the Corinthian corridor, particularly the overland leg toward Larissa and Thrace, which allowed travelers to avoid or minimize their exposure to corsairs from Crete.

Both developments are revealing. They did represent serious dangers and had real impact. On trade, insofar as the Arabs now began to supply themselves directly with their European slaves, stiffening the competition and eating into the profits of the European traders. On emerging patterns of Christian ship movements: by lessening them or increasing the risk (and therefore cost) that they implied – even as they, naturally, increased the frequency of the islands' shipping links with ports in the Caliphate. But what is most revealing is that obstacles of this magnitude were powerless to stem the swelling flow of communications and commerce. Like some great river, the currents connecting east and west were blocked but briefly, and partially; soon the streams diverted, and opened new channels to flow around the obstacles. This is the measure of the



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vigor and dynamism of the economic forces which propelled the ships and the travelers we have discerned.

A third development may have been more devastating. The violent arrival of the Magyars disrupted continental links through the Danube basin for at least two or three generations. Whether travelers found new ways between east and west, whether the southern, Balkan corridor, or some route north of the Carpathian mountains took its place, is an open and important question. But the loss was real, and can be measured indirectly by the dramatic developments in communications and contacts that ensued so swiftly when the Hungarian kingdom converted to Christianity. This definitively reopened that overland route to Constantinople around the year 1000. It ushered in the era of mass medieval pilgrimage to the Holy Land that culminated in the First Crusade. Those developments of the tenth and eleventh centuries will probably also appear in a new light if they are examined from the kind of perspectives developed here. But they must await other studies, and other historians. What is already clear, I think, is that they built on the developments that got under way in the closing decades of the eighth century.

There was, obviously more than foreign invasion and violence to the perceptible falling-off of communications in the course of the ninth century. Others have argued for a similar pattern in the northern arc, and connected it mostly with civil wars in Persia. Whether that vision will be sustained by specialists of the Caliphate and Scandinavia remains to be seen.[11] The civil wars in Frankland were closer, and the Viking, Magyar, and Arab attacks disrupted the political stability in which economic growth most easily occurs and trade flourishes. It would be surprising if Europe's aggregate demand, and the ability to pay for that demand did not decline or stagnate in those turbulent decades. No less important, the political unity which had encouraged movements of all kinds across Mediterranean Europe and the north had split into smaller, less stable units. The upheavals also shattered the old monetary unity. Though not indispensable, a uniform coinage had surely fanned those two or three generations of surging growth around the year 800. Notwithstanding the new obstacles, the Venetians still traded. In the 930s we first find them directly and overtly interested in economic developments north of the Alps, when they launched an anti-Jewish campaign that looks suspiciously like an effort to vanquish powerful competitors by non-commercial means (R807). Along the northern arc, arrivals of eastern goods increase toward 900. It was at the ninth century's end that English exports across the Alps reached a level that required a treaty. And the balance in Mediterranean shipping had shifted, decisively. Now, and for the rest of the medieval and early

11 Whether or not that explanation holds, one can only admire Hodges and Whitehouse (1983; 1996) for having dared to assemble the evidence and to attempt it.



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modern era, it was western bottoms that would carry home the trade with the east. Indeed, the long and slow process had begun by which the fleets of Genoa and Venice would supplant the fleets of the eastern Mediterranean even in their home ports. The basic pattern for the commercial development of the European economy over the next half-millennium was set.

So this is the story that our investigation has allowed us to tell. It is merely a provisional reckoning. I have surely not identified every piece of evidence, nor correctly understood every detail that I have encountered. Future research over the same ground by colleagues better equipped in certain languages, or in the byways of economic analysis, will correct and improve these findings. Each route, each segment of each route, each ware, merits a monograph unto itself. The day is fast approaching when the archaeological exploration of the waters and soils of the Mediterranean and its extensions will multiply a hundredfold the evidence that I have been able to assemble into this picture, and bring with it inevitable improvements, refinements, and contradictions. But if I have done my work well, then this story, with all its imperfections, will at least serve as the kind of chart our ancient mariners lacked, and mark courses, dangers and destinations in a once well-known world which has lost its familiar contours. Some of the features will prove to be more accurately observed and drawn than others. But if where they lay and how I got to them are clearly marked, then this imperfect chart will serve to improve and deepen understanding of the past, rather than obscure it, and facilitate the new courses of those who will improve and replace it.

In the end, new questions and new methods allied with old to tell an old story differently, and perhaps more clearly. The early medieval Europe that emerges differs from the conventional wisdom. It is a Europe which is not the impoverished, inward-looking, and economically stagnant place many of us learned about in our student days. On the contrary, in its origins, Europe's small worlds came to be linked to the greater world of the Muslim economies. This Sture Bolin and Maurice Lombard saw clearly. The links were perhaps modest compared with what had once existed and with what would develop over the next two or three centuries, but they were real and, in economic terms, they counted, particularly given Europe's small scale. They also counted culturally, if one considers, for instance, the new Arab science a matter of significance. The world that Charlemagne knew firsthand was peopled not only by Franks, Alamannians, and Saxons, by Danes, Anglo-Saxons, Lombards, and Visigoths, but by Venetians, Arabs, Jews, Byzantines, and Slavs. Perhaps never again in its history would Europe be so culturally open, in so many directions, in so many ways. In the end, the European economies did engage deeply with those of the Muslim world and Byzantium, and that process began in the eighth century.

As we look back to a great historical investigation, completed more than half a century ago, we can see and appreciate more clearly the penetrating insight of the



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Belgian historian. Where others had seen only random facts, he perceived patterns. Pirenne argued that without Muhammad, there would have been no Charlemagne. Although we must now situate the moments and stages of economic decline from antiquity elsewhere in time, space, and causality, yet there remains fundamental truth in his overall insight, that the rise – and economic consolidation – of Islam changed the nature of an emerging European economy. But it did so not so much by applying the coup de grace to a moribund late Roman exchange system in the 600s. A century later it offered the wealth and markets which would fire the first rise of western Europe, a rise whose rhythms we can detect in the movements of diplomats, pilgrims, warriors, merchants, and, I think, slaves, as a new Europe and its satellite societies exported its own human wealth in exchange for the wealth of goods and species of the House of Islam. So in a paradoxical and profound sense, perhaps Pirenne was right, even when he was wrong: without Muhammad, there would have been no Charlemagne.



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# APPENDIX 1

## *Checklist of Mediterranean travelers, 700–900*

THE FOLLOWING provides only the most summary list of the travelers whose prosopography forms the basis of Parts II and IV. A full accounting will be presented in "Pros." For each traveler, I here give only the name, the very approximate date (usually of first attested Mediterranean travel) and a reference. When the reference is to Appendix 4 (signified by "R," i.e. Register of Communications), this means that the traveler is somehow (sometimes indirectly) connected with the instance of communication catalogued under that number, whether or not the traveler is named in that Register entry. References relate only to the first appearance of the traveler in question. For simplicity's sake, I have used the traditional Latin transliterations for Greek as well as Latin given names.

| Name | Approximate date | Reference |
|---|---|---|
| Abu Aaron | 900 | R740 |
| Adalgis | 774/5 | R183 |
| Aedelstan | 883/6 | R694 |
| Aegaeus | 796 | Theodulf, *Carm*. 27.87–92 |
| Agamus | 808 | R279 |
| Agatha | 725 | Ch.8n17 |
| Agatho | 873 | R624 |
| Agnellus | 819/29 | R371 |
| Aio | 811 | R306 |
| Ali | 905/6 | R768 |
| Amalarius | 813 | R316 |
| Anastasius 1 | 725 | Ch.8n17 |
| Anastasius 2 | 757/67 | *Subiaco*, no. 111 |
| Anastasius 3 | 767 | M. Fantuzzi, *Monumenti ravennati* 2 (Venice, 1802): 1–3 |
| Anastasius 4 | 869/70 | R597 |
| Anastasius 5 | 894/5 | R732 |
| Angelarius | 885 | R698 |



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| Name | Approximate date | Reference |
|---|---|---|
| Anna 1 | 742 | *MGH SRL* 185.18–24 |
| Anna 2 | 900 | R738 |
| Ansfridus | 828 | R403 |
| Anthes | 766 | R170 |
| Antoninus | 878 | R654 |
| Antonius | 855/8 | *PL*, 75.235A |
| Arculfus | 681/7 | R40 |
| Arimundus | 808 | *MGH Epist*. 5.66.21–2 |
| Arsaber | 860 | R535 |
| Arsaphius | 810 | R296 |
| Arsenius | 850 | *Liber pont*., Duchesne, 2.136n20 |
| Athanasius | 847/55 | *PL*, 75.233D–234B |
| Auprandus | 871 | R609 |
| Bagao | 796/800 | Theodulf, *Carm*. 27.87–92 |
| Basilius 1 | 806/8 | R273 |
| Basilius 2 | 809 | R289 |
| Basilius 3 | 825 | R390 |
| Basilius 4 | 855/7 | R519 |
| Basilius 5 | 867 | R564 |
| Basilius 6 | 868/9 | R573 |
| Beatus | 806 | R285 |
| Benedictus | 855/8 | *PL*, 75.235A |
| Bercharius | 673/96 | R29 |
| Berharius | 828 | R404 |
| Bernardus | 867 | R579 |
| Blasius | 874 | R622 |
| Bonegesius | 830/45 | R418 |
| Bonifacius | 828 | R404 |
| Bonus | 828 | R406 |
| Callinicus | 706 | R67 |
| Callistus | 803 | R262 |
| Christophorus 1 | 807 | R274 |
| Christophorus 2 | 814 | R330 |
| Clemens | 863 | R547 |
| Constaes | 781 | R197 |
| Constantinus 1 | 710 | R73 |
| Constantinus 2 | 732 | R132 |
| Constantinus 3 | 767 | R173 |
| Constantinus 4 | 784 | R203 |
| Constantinus 5 | 867 | Photius, *Epistulae*, 81, 1.121–2 |
| Constantinus 6 | 863 | R547 |
| Cosmas | 710 | R73 |
| Damianus | 869 | Mansi 16.20C |
| Daniel 1 | 799 | R243 |
| Daniel 2 | 882 | R692 |
| Dauferius 1 | 817 | R352 |



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| Name | Approximate date | Reference |
|---|---|---|
| Dauferius 2 | 888 | R721 |
| David | 878 | R648 |
| Dionysius | 817 | R348 |
| Dominicus 1 | 808 | *MGH Epist*. 5.66.21–2 |
| Dominicus 2 | 828 | R406 |
| Dominicus 3 | 864 | R550 |
| Dominicus 4 | 866/7 | R559 |
| Dominicus 5 | 872/6 | *PL*, 75.239C–D |
| Donatus 1 | 805 | R266 |
| Donatus 2 | 869 | R592 |
| Donnolo | 925 | R804 |
| Dorotheus | 710 | R73 |
| Drogus | 828 | Einhard, *Tr. Marc. et Petri*, 256.40–7 |
| Dubslaine | 891 | R726 |
| Ebo | 843/4 | R470 |
| Egilbaldus | 807 | R277 |
| Elias 1 | 885/91 | R706 |
| Elias 2 | 882 | R692 |
| Elissaeus | 781 | R197 |
| Epiphanius 1 | 717/20 | R91 |
| Epiphanius 2 | 784/5 | R206 |
| Epiphanius 3 | 808 | R282 |
| Erlbaldus | 811 | R306 |
| Ermenrich | 867 | R576 |
| Eugenius | 878 | R650 |
| Euphemianus | 817 | R348 |
| Euphemius | 870 | *PL*, 106.1266A |
| Eustathius | 809 | R288 |
| Eustratius | 875 | R622 |
| Euthymius 1 | 700/867 | *PL* 75.237A |
| Euthymius 2 | 868 | R568 |
| Eutychius | 726/8 | R119 |
| Evanthia | 791/2 | R226 |
| Evrardus | 869/70 | R597 |
| Felix 1 | 709 | R71 |
| Felix 2 | 807 | R277 |
| Felix 3 | 807 | R274 |
| Fidelis | 825 | R391 |
| Florus | 871 | R611 |
| Formosus | 866/7 | R559 |
| Fortunatus | 821 | R364 |
| Frotmundus | 855/8 | R521 |
| Gaideris | 882 | R691 |
| Gaudiosus | 721 | Mansi 13.200B |
| Georgius 1 | 710 | R73 |
| Georgius 2 | 710 | R73 |



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| Name | Approximate date | Reference |
|---|---|---|
| Georgius 3 | 710 | R73 |
| Georgius 4 | 731 | R130 |
| Georgius 5 | 756 | R162 |
| Georgius 6 | 826 | R394 |
| Georgius 7 | 850 | R501 |
| Georgius 8 | 852 | R508 |
| Georgius 9 | 867 | R566 |
| Georgius 10 | 871 | R609 |
| Gisela | 767 | R172 |
| Gisepertus | 881 | R684 |
| Godescalcus 1 | 742 | *MGH SRL* 185.18–24 |
| Godescalcus 2 | 846/8 | R479 |
| Godescalcus 3 | 846/8 | R479 |
| Grasulf | 793 | *Italia sacra* 10, App. p. 459A–B |
| Gregorius 1 | 710 | R73 |
| Gregorius 2 | 731 | *Liber pont*., Duchesne, 1.415.1 |
| Gregorius 3 | 744 | DD Kar 1, no. 183 |
| Gregorius 4 | 787/8 | R214 |
| Gregorius 5 | 792 | R227 |
| Gregorius 6 | 808 | *MGH Epist*. 5.66.21–2 |
| Gregorius 7 | 813 | R316 |
| Gregorius 8 | 814 | R330 |
| Gregorius 9 | 831/3 | R422 |
| Gualtari | 763 | R167 |
| Ḥadīj | 868 | al Djahiz, *Kitab*, 48–9 |
| Haido | 811 | R306 |
| Halitgarius | 828 | R403 |
| Ḥarrani | 871 | R610 |
| Harun ibn Yahya | 880/912 | R684a |
| Helmgaudus | 802 | R260 |
| Hilarion | 854/72 | R516 |
| Hugo | 811 | R306 |
| Hyacinthus | 746/900 | R155 |
| Iacobus | 842/3 | R463 |
| Iesse | 802 | R260 |
| Ignatius | 885 | R692 |
| Iob | 808/13 | R286 |
| Iohannes 1 | 687 | *Liber pont*., Mommsen, 219.1 |
| Iohannes 2 | 700/800 | *PL*, 75.231B |
| Iohannes 3 | 701 | *Liber pont*., Mommsen, 217.1 |
| Iohannes 4 | 710 | R73 |
| Iohannes 5 | 710 | R73 |
| Iohannes 6 | 741/52 | Mercati 1970, 171–3 |
| Iohannes 7 | 752 | R158 |
| Iohannes 8 | 766 | R170 |
| Iohannes 9 | 788 | R220 |



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| Name | Approximate date | Reference |
|---|---|---|
| Iohannes 10 | 808 | *MGH Epist*. 5.66.21–2 |
| Iohannes 11 | 808 | R279 |
| Iohannes 12 | 815 | R339 |
| Iohannes 13 | 824–5 | R384 |
| Iohannes 14 | 819/29 | R361 |
| Iohannes 15 | 847/55 | *PL*, 75.231B–233A |
| Iohannes 16 | 855/8 | *PL*, 75.235A |
| Iohannes 17 | 866 | R558 |
| Iohannes 18 | 867/70 | R569 |
| Iohannes 19 | 868/9 | R573 |
| Iohannes 20 | 878 | R654 |
| Iohannes 21 | 879 | R666 |
| Iohannes 22 | 882 | Sansterre 1993, 1: 109–10 |
| Iohannes 23 | 899 | R737 |
| Ioseph 1 | 836/42 | R436 |
| Ioseph 2 | 892 | R729 |
| Irmingarda | 869 | R593 |
| Isaac 1 | 797 | R238 |
| Isaac 2 | 854/72 | R516 |
| Iulianus | 710 | R73 |
| Iustinianus | 810/19 | R305 |
| Lando | 886/7 | R711 |
| Landolfus | 891/2 | R727 |
| Lantfridus | 797 | R238 |
| Lazarus 1 | 850/900 | R501 |
| Lazarus 2 | 855/8 | R518 |
| Lazarus 3 | 896 | R733 |
| Leo 1 | 784/5 | R206 |
| Leo 2 | 800/1 | R249 |
| Leo 3 | 801/2 | R258 |
| Leo 4 | 808 | *MGH Epist*. 5.66.21–2 |
| Leo 5 | 824 | R383 |
| Leo 6 | 861 | R538 |
| Leo 7 | 866 | R559 |
| Leo 8 | 869 | R592 |
| Leonacius | 772 | R178 |
| Leontius | 867 | R566 |
| Leopardus | 868 | R572 |
| Lucas | 892 | R729 |
| Lunisso | 772 | R178 |
| Mac bethan | 891 | R726 |
| Machelmus | 824 | R382 |
| Madalveus | 768/75 | R180 |
| Maelinuuin | 891 | R726 |
| Malacenus | 900/3 | R741 |
| Mamalus 1 | 725 | Ch.8n17 |



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| Name | Approximate date | Reference |
|---|---|---|
| Mamalus 2 | 781 | R197 |
| Marcus 1 | 800/900 | Merendino 1979, 364–71 |
| Marcus 2 | 833 | R425 |
| Marinus 1 | 725 | R114 |
| Marinus 2 | 869 | R592 |
| Marouse | 725 | Ch.8n17 |
| Martinianus | 697 | R53 |
| Martinus 1 | 855/8 | *PL*, 75.235A |
| Martinus 2 | 866 | R558 |
| Martyrius | 697 | R53 |
| Maurus | 830/50 | R419 |
| Methodius 1 | 815 | R340 |
| Methodius 2 | 860 | R535 |
| Methodius 3 | 863 | R547 |
| Methodius 4 | 868/9 | R573 |
| Metrophanes | 867 | R564 |
| Michael 1 | 798 | R240 |
| Michael 2 | 803 | R262 |
| Michael 3 | 808/13 | R286 |
| Michael 4 | 865 | R553 |
| Michaelius | 710 | R73 |
| Moschus | 721 | Ch.8n17 |
| Mouschouse | 731 | Ch.8n17 |
| Nabira | 701 | *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.380 |
| Naum | 863 | R547 |
| Nicephorus | 816 | R344 |
| Nicetas 1 | 710 | R73 |
| Nicetas 2 | 806 | R270 |
| Nicetas 3 | 824 | R383 |
| Nicetas 4 | 869 | R593 |
| Nicolaus | 899 | R737 |
| Nordbertus | 814 | R332 |
| Obellierius | 811 | R306 |
| Oppas | 724/43 | R113 |
| Palumbus 1 | 821 | *Subiaco*, no. 55 |
| Palumbus 2 | 855/8 | *PL*, 75.235A |
| Pamphilus | 766 | R170 |
| Pancratius | 869 | R593 |
| Paulus 1 | 710 | R73 |
| Paulus 2 | 720/6 | R105 |
| Paulus 3 | 772 | R179 |
| Paulus 4 | 805 | R266 |
| Paulus 5 | 808 | R283 |
| Paulus 6 | 866 | R559 |
| Paulus 7 | 868/9 | R573 |
| Paulus 8 | 878 | R650 |



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| Name | Approximate date | Reference |
|---|---|---|
| Petrus 1 | 683 | R38 |
| Petrus 2 | 731/41 | R138 |
| Petrus 3 | 785 | R208 |
| Petrus 4 | 785 | R208 |
| Petrus 5 | 803 | R262 |
| Petrus 6 | 813 | R316 |
| Petrus 7 | 836/89 | R437 |
| Petrus 8 | 864 | R550 |
| Petrus 9 | 864 | R550 |
| Petrus 10 | 864 | R550 |
| Petrus 11 | 866 | R558 |
| Petrus 12 | 867 | R563 |
| Petrus 13 | 868 | R573 |
| Petrus 14 | 868 | R573 |
| Petrus 15 | 876 | R635 |
| Petrus 16 | 878 | R654 |
| Petrus 17 | 879 | R669 |
| Putiphar | 796 | Theodulf, *Carm*. 27.87–92 |
| Radbertus | 802/7 | R271 |
| Radoaldus | 860 | R536 |
| Raganarius | 814/40 | R336 |
| Rainardus | 881 | R684 |
| Richoinus | 814 | R332 |
| Rocculfus | 808 | R279 |
| Romanus | 891/2 | R727 |
| Rotruda | 787 | R211 |
| Rusticus | 828 | R406 |
| Sabas 1 | 855/8 | *PL*, 75.235A |
| Sabas 2 | 878 | R648 |
| Samuel | 860 | R535 |
| Sarah | 724/43 | R113 |
| Scholasticius | 713/15 | R85 |
| Sedesclav | 864 | R550 |
| Sephatiah | 877/85 | R646 |
| Sergius 1 | 672/6 | R28 |
| Sergius 2 | 710 | R73 |
| Sergius 3 | 718 | R97 |
| Sergius 4 | 867 | R566 |
| Sicco | 787/8 | R215 |
| Sighelm | 883/6 | R694 |
| Sigimundus | 797 | R238 |
| Silvester | 868 | R572 |
| Silvinus | 720 | R103 |
| Simon | 850 | R502 |
| Sisinnius 1 | 708 | *Liber pont*., Mommsen, 221.1 |
| Sisinnius 2 | 710 | R73 |



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| Name | Approximate date | Reference |
|---|---|---|
| Sisinnius 3 | 788 | R220 |
| Sondoke | 866 | R558 |
| Stauracius | 828 | R406 |
| Stephanus 1 | 731/41 | R134 |
| Stephanus 2 | 867 | R579 |
| Stephanus 3 | 869 | R593 |
| Stephanus 4 | 879 | R662 |
| Suppo | 869/70 | R597 |
| Symeon 1 | 858/99 | Berschin 1988, 157–8 |
| Symeon 2 | 892 | R729 |
| Synesius | 766 | R170 |
| Thaqīf | 868 | al Djahiz, *Kitab*, 48–9 |
| Theoctistus | 797 | R237 |
| Theodorus 1 | 709 | R70 |
| Theodorus 2 | 784/5 | R206 |
| Theodorus 3 | 788 | R220 |
| Theodorus 4 | 808 | *MGH Epist*. 5.66.21–2 |
| Theodorus 5 | 808/13 | R286 |
| Theodorus 6 | 824 | R383 |
| Theodorus 7 | 829 | R413 |
| Theodorus 8 | 867 | R566 |
| Theodorus 9 | 869 | R593 |
| Theodorus 10 | 879 | R659 |
| Theodosius 1 | 713 | R81 |
| Theodosius 2 | 839 | R444 |
| Theodosius 3 | 841 | R455 |
| Theodosius 4 | 878 | R648 |
| Theodosius 5 | 884/5 | R697 |
| Theodotus | 824 | R383 |
| Theognostus 1 | 812 | R311 |
| Theognostus 2 | 861/2 | R539 |
| Theopemptus 1 | 713 | R81 |
| Theopemptus 2 | 800/900 | Costa-Luzi 1899–1900, 92–3 |
| Theophanes 1 | 808/13 | R286 |
| Theophanes 2 | 839 | R444 |
| Theophanius | 710 | R75 |
| Theophilus 1 | 798 | R240 |
| Theophilus 2 | 860 | R535 |
| Theophylactus | 701/5 | R60 |
| Theuderissius | 830/45 | R418 |
| Theudmundus | 867 | R579 |
| Thomas | 697/705 | R53 |
| Tidberchtus | 723/9 | R108 |
| Ursus | 878 | R649 |
| Waimarus | 886/7 | R711 |
| Willibaldus | 723–9 | R108 |



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| Name | Approximate date | Reference |
|---|---|---|
| Witboldus | 786/8 | R210 |
| Zacharias 1 | 741 | R147 |
| Zacharias 2 | 800 | R245 |
| Zacharias 3 | 843/7 | R467 |
| Zacharias 4 | 847/55 | R487 |
| Zacharias 5 | 860 | R536 |
| Zacharias 6 | 867 | R566 |
| Anons. 1–2 | 705/7 | R65 |
| Anons. 3–5 | 709 | R70 |
| Anons. 6–16 | 713 | R81 |
| Anon. 17 | 723/9 | R108 |
| Anons. 18–25 | 724 | R111 |
| Anon. 26 | 725/6 | R115 |
| Anons. 27–8 | 726/8 | R119 |
| Anons. 29–30 | 726/85 | JE 2448 |
| Anons. 31–2 | 729 | R125 |
| Anons. 33–4 | 732 | R132 |
| Anons. 35–6 | 742 | R148 |
| Anon. 37 | 724/43 | R113 |
| Anon. 38 | 743 | R150 |
| Anons. 39–40 | 743 | R149 |
| Anons. 41–2 | 748 | R157 |
| Anons. 43–4 | 752/3 | R160 |
| Anon. 45 | 753 | R161 |
| Anon. 46 | 756/7 | R163 |
| Anons. 47–50 | 763 | R166 |
| Anons. 51–2 | 764/6 | R169 |
| Anons. 53–4 | 766 | R170 |
| Anon. 55 | 766/7 | R171 |
| Anons. 56–7 | 767 | R172 |
| Anons. 58–9 | 768 | R175 |
| Anons. 60–1 | 771 | R177 |
| Anons. 62–3 | 775 | R183 |
| Anons. 64–7 | 776 | R186 |
| Anons. 68–9 | 776/8 | R187 |
| Anon. 70 | 778 | R189 |
| Anons. 71–2 | 779/80 | R192 |
| Anons. 73–4 | 783 | R201 |
| Anon. 75 | 785 | R207 |
| Anons. 76–7 | 787 | R212 |
| Anon. 78 | 787/8 | R215 |
| Anons. 79–80 | 787 | R211 |
| Anons. 81–3 | 788 | R217 |
| Anons. 84–5 | 795 | R230 |
| Anons. 86–9 | 797 | R238 |
| Anon. 90 | 799 | *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.5.3–8 |



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| Name | Approximate date | Reference |
|---|---|---|
| Anon. 91 | 800 | R244 |
| Anon. 92 | 800 | R248 |
| Anon. 93 | 800 | *Arabische Briefe*, no. 19 |
| Anon. 94 | 800 | Notker, *Gesta Karoli*, 19.20–21.8 |
| Anons. 95–8 | 850/1000 | R502 |
| Anon. 99 | 800 | R248 |
| Anons. 100–1 | 801 | R254 |
| Anon. 102 | 801/4 | R259 |
| Anon. 103 | 802 | R260 |
| Anons. 104–5 | 803 | R263 |
| Anon. 106 | 808 | *MGH Epist*. 5.66.17–19 |
| Anons. 107–24 | 810 | *Breve commemoratorii*, p.302 |
| Anons. 125–6 | 810 | Ch. 21n24 |
| Anons. 127–59 | 810 | *Breve commemoratorii*, p.302 |
| Anons. 160–1 | 812 | R310 |
| Anons. 162–5 | 812/13 | Thegan, *Gesta Hlud.*, 186.1–3 |
| Anon. 166 | 813 | R322 |
| Anons. 167–70 | 813 | R316 |
| Anons. 171–2 | 813 | R326 |
| Anon. 173 | 813 | R327 |
| Anons. 174–5 | 814/40 | R336 |
| Anons. 176–7 | 816 | R345 |
| Anon. 178 | 817 | Theodore Stud., *Ep*. 377, 2.509.22–5 |
| Anons. 179–80 | 817/24 | R350 |
| Anons. 181–2 | 817 | R347 |
| Anon. 183 | 817 | R348 |
| Anons. 184–5 | 818/19 | R357 |
| Anons. 186–7 | 824 | R382 |
| Anons. 188–9 | 824 | R385 |
| Anons. 190–2 | 825 | R391 |
| Anon. 193 | 825 | *Miraculum Nicolai Siciliense* |
| Anons. 194–7 | 825 | R390 |
| Anons. 198–9 | 827 | R399 |
| Anons. 200–1 | 828 | R404 |
| Anons. 202–5 | 828 | R406 |
| Anon. 206 | 819/29 | R361 |
| Anons. 207–9 | 829 | R413 |
| Anons. 210–12 | 831 | R420 |
| Anons. 213–14 | 831/3 | R422 |
| Anon. 215 | 833 | R425 |
| Anon. 216 | 835 | R431 |
| Anon. 217 | 837 | Lupus of Ferrières, *Ep*. 20, 27.9–12 |
| Anon. 218 | 838 | R443 |
| Anon. 219 | 838 | R442 |
| Anon. 220 | 838/9 | R442 |
| Anons. 221–2 | 839 | R444 |



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| Name | Approximate date | Reference |
|---|---|---|
| Anon. 223 | 840 | R444 |
| Anon. 224 | 842 | R456 |
| Anons. 225–6 | 843 | R465 |
| Anon. 227 | 842/3 | R455 |
| Anons. 228–9 | 843 | R465 |
| Anon. 230 | 844 | *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.88.7–11 |
| Anons. 231–2 | 845 | R474 |
| Anon. 233 | 847 | *PL*, 75.231C–236B |
| Anons. 234–5 | 847/55 | R484 |
| Anon. 236 | 850 | Bischoff 1984, 188 |
| Anons. 237–8 | 853 | *PG*, 99.312C–313A |
| Anon. 239 | 855 | *PG*, 99.312C–313A |
| Anon. 240 | 855/7 | R520 |
| Anon. 241 | 855/8 | R521 |
| Anon. 242 | 855/8 | *PL*, 75.236A–B |
| Anon. 243 | 861/5 | R540 |
| Anon. 244 | 861/5 | R541 |
| Anon. 245 | 861/5 | R542 |
| Anon. 246 | 861/5 | R543 |
| Anons. 247–8 | 863 | R547 |
| Anons. 249–50 | 865 | R553 |
| Anons. 251–2 | 866 | R557 |
| Anons. 253–6 | 867 | R576 |
| Anons. 257–8 | 867 | R564 |
| Anons. 259–60 | 867 | R565 |
| Anon. 261 | 867 | R561 |
| Anon. 262 | 868 | R583 |
| Anon. 263 | 868 | R584 |
| Anon. 264 | 868 | R585 |
| Anons. 265–6 | 870 | *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.183.2 |
| Anon. 267 | 871 | *Cava*, no. 75 |
| Anon. 268 | 871 | R611 |
| Anons. 269–70 | 880 | Grumel² no. 551 |
| Anons. 271–2 | 872 | R616 |
| Anons. 273–4 | 872 | R622 |
| Anon. 275 | 875/93 | R622 |
| Anons. 276–8 | 876 | R634 |
| Anons. 279–80 | 876 | R631 |
| Anons. 281–2 | 875/7 | R630 |
| Anons. 283–4 | 878/80 | R658 |
| Anon. 285 | 879 | R659 |
| Anons. 286–7 | 880 | Pritsak 1971, 257 |
| Anons. 288–90 | 880 | R682 |
| Anons. 291–2 | 881 | R680 |
| Anons. 293–4 | 881/4 | R690 |
| Anon. 295 | 882 | *Cava*, no. 86 |



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| Name | Approximate date | Reference |
|---|---|---|
| Anon. 296 | 883 | R693 |
| Anon. 297 | 883 | R695 |
| Anons. 298–301 | 885 | R700 |
| Anon. 302 | 885/6 | R700 |
| Anons. 303–4 | 889/91 | R725 |
| Anon. 305 | 892 | R729 |
| Anons. 306–7 | 892 | R728 |
| Anon. 308 | 892 | R729 |
| Anons. 309–10 | 892 | R730 |
| Anons. 311–12 | 896 | *Ann. Fuld.*, *Cont. Ratisb*. a. 896, p. 128 |
| Anons. 313–14 | 899 | Philotheus, *Klētērologion*, 165.5–7 |
| Anons. 315–16 | 899 | Philotheus, *Klētērologion*, 177.30 |
| Anons. 317–19 | 902 | R755 |
| Anon. 320 | 905/6 | R768 |
| Anons. 321–2 | 925 | R804 |



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# APPENDIX 2

## *Mentions of Mancosi to 850*

THE TABLE that begins on the next page lists the mentions of mancosi in early medieval documents down to 850. "Place" refers to the place in which the document was drawn up, for acts. They are grouped in four regional series (Adriatic zone, Latium, Tyrrhenian zone, and "Other," i.e. the Po valley, England, Benevento, and one unidentified place. Within each series, the records are listed chronologically. For more details, see Chapter 11.



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| Date | Place | Amount | Wording | Function | Transaction | Reference (no.) | Comment | Item no. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Adriatic zone* | | | | | | | | |
| Jan. 778 | Sesto | 20 | mancoseos auri | penalty | donation | *Sesto*, 2 | original; to be paid to the king | 1 |
| May 793 | Treviso | 20 | numeri aurum mancusos solidos | penalty | *convenientia* | *Treviso*, 11 | | 2 |
| c. 799 | Treviso | 20 | macosus, mancosus | penalty | rent | *ibid.*, 12 | original | 3 |
| 801–10 | Rižana (about various towns of Istria) | 344 | solidi mancosi: various sums as taxes | tax | plea | *Rižana Plea* | | 4 |
| May 802 | Treviso | 20 | nomero auri mancosus | penalty | exchange | *Treviso*, 13 | original | 5 |
| 8 May 808 | Senigallia | 2 lb. | auri mancusios et solidos libras | penalty | donation | *Sesto*, 5 | | 6 |
| 19 Nov. 815 | Aachen (about Verona) | 20 | "manculos" | rent | privilege | *Verona*, 117 | BM 597 | 7 |
| c. 824 | Frankland? (about Grado) | 32 | solidos auri mancosos; mancosi, repeatedly | appraisals | will | *Documenti di Venezia*, 45 | | 8 |
| Feb. 825 | Bussolengo | 2 | < mancuso > s < argento > et < den. > 20 | rent | rent | *Verona*, 124 | damaged original | 9 |
| 7 Sept. 829 | Verona | 6 | mancosos 6 et per unumquemque mancoso d. 30 | sale price | sale | *ibid.*, 131 | original | 10 |
| 5 Oct. 832 | Verona | 2 | <mancosos duo et> d. 10 | sale price | sale | *ibid.*, 135 | damaged original | 11 |
| 15 Jan. 833 | Mantua | 1,000 | mancusos auri obrizi | penalty | privilege | D Loth I, 11 | | 12 |
| 22 Feb. 840 | Pavia | 6 | pro 6 mancusis | appraisal | treaty | *Pactum Hlotharii* | | 13 |
| c. 847–50 | Osimo | 3 | solidos mancusos | rent | rent | *Brev. eccl. Rav.*, 162 | | 14 |
| 5 April 847 | Verona | 5 | per argento manc(osos) | sale price | sale | *Verona*, 184 | original | 15 |
| c. 850 | Ravenna | 300 | solidos mancosos . . . pretium | sale price | sale | *Papiri diplomatici*, 126 | see Buzzi 1915, 61 for the same notary in 859 | 16 |
| 9th C.? | Rimini | 1 | solidum mancusum unum | rent | rent | *Brev. eccl. Rav.*, 50 | | 17 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9th C.? | Senigallia | 1 | mancuso uno | rent | rent | *ibid.*, 103 | | 18 |
| *Latium* | | | | | | | | |
| July 786 | Rieti | 100 | auri solidos mancosos | penalty | sale | *Farfa*, 141 | | 19 |
| after 790? | Rieti? | 20 | auri solidos mancosos | coins | debt | *ibid.*, 175 | earlier loan; see no. 26 | 20 |
| June 791 | Rieti | 10 | auri solidos mancosos | penalty | exchange | *ibid.*, 150 | | 21 |
| Jan. 792 | Rieti | 1,000 | mancosos | penalty | rent | *Lib. larg.* 1 | | 22 |
| Aug. 794 | Farfa | 20 | mancosos | penalty | exchange | *Farfa*, 160 | | 23 |
| Oct. 799 | Rieti | 30 | auri solidos mancosos | penalty | exchange | *ibid.*, 164 | | 24 |
| 802–15 | Farfa | 60 | auri solidos mancosos | penalty | rent | *ibid.*, 209 | | 25 |
| 19 Feb. 804 | Rieti | 80 | mancosos | loan; appraisal | debt | *ibid.*, 175 | loan | 26 |
| April 806 | Rieti | 70 | solidos mancosos in auro | penalty | rent | *ibid.*, 181 | | 27 |
| 18 June 808 | Rieti | 50 | auri solidos mancosos | penalty | rent | *ibid.*, 189 | | 28 |
| 17 March 809 | Farfa | 200 | in auro mancosos solidos | penalty | gift | *ibid.*, 195 | | 29 |
| 17 April 809 | Rieti | 20 | auri solidos mancosos | penalty | exchange | *ibid.*, 196 | | 30 |
| 18 July 813 | Rieti | 200 | auri solidos mancosos | penalty | rent | *ibid.*, 202 | | 31 |
| 18 July 813 | Rieti | 300 | auri solidos mancosos | penalty | rent | *ibid.*, 203 | | 32 |
| Feb. 814 | Spoleto | 190 | mancosos | penalty | plea | *ibid.*, 207 | | 33 |
| March 814 | Rieti? | 500 | in auro mancosos | penalty | rent | *ibid.*, 211 | | 34 |
| 17 Jan. 817 | Spoleto | 100 | auri solidos mancosos | penalty | security | *ibid.*, 229 | | 35 |
| 29 March 817 | Rieti | 20 | auri solidos mancosos | penalty | exchange | *ibid.*, 235 | | 36 |
| 28 April 820 | Aachen, about Farfa | 5,000 | auri mancusios | penalty | plea, confirmation | *ibid.*, 247 | BM 719 | 37 |
| June 820 | Farfa? | 500 | auri solidos mancosos | penalty | rent | *ibid.*, 243 | | 38 |
| 827 | Amiterno | 500 | auri mancusios | penalty | *convenientia* | *ibid.*, 262 | | 39 |
| 19 Feb. 834 | Farfa? | 300 | auri solidos mancosos | penalty | rent | *Lib. larg.*, 8 | | 40 |
| 3 May 834 | "Camertula" | 20 | solidos 30 mancosos | penalty | exchange | *Farfa*, 279 | | 41 |
| 2 June 836 | Rieti | 200 | auri mancusos | penalty | exchange | *ibid.*, 280 | | 42 |

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| Date | Place | Amount | Wording | Function | Transaction | Reference (no.) | Comment | Item no. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Latium* (*cont*.) | | | | | | | | |
| March 839 | Farfa? | 50 | mancosos | penalty | rent | *Lib. larg.*, 9 | | 43 |
| 15 Sept. 840 | Farfa? | 30 | mancosos | penalty | rent | *ibid.*, 12 | | 44 |
| July 843 | Farfa? | 20 | auri mancusos | penalty | rent | *ibid.*, 15 | | 45 |
| July 843 | Farfa? | 20 | auri mancusos | penalty | rent | *ibid.*, 17 | | 46 |
| Aug. 843 | Farfa? | 300 | auri solidos mancosos | penalty | rent | *ibid.*, 16 | | 47 |
| 17 April 847 | Rieti | 20 | in auro mancusos | penalty | exchange | *Farfa*, 288 | | 48 |
| *Tyrrhenian zone* | | | | | | | | |
| Sept. 781–Aug. 782 | Rome | 200 | in auri solidos mancusos numero | gift | legacy | *Liber pont.*, 1.509 | to pope | 49 |
| June 828 | Roselle | 200 | mancusus | penalty | loan | *Monte Amiata*, 107 | original | 50 |
| 837 | Rome | 150 | auri solidos mancosos bonos ebritias | sale | sale | *Subiaco*, 60 | | 51 |
| March 838 | Tuscania? | 1,000 | in auro mancusos | penalty | rent | *Monte Amiata*, 117 | original | 52 |
| 844–7 | Rome | 2,000 | mancusos | sale | sale | *Liber pont.*, 2.98 | sale of bishoprics | 53 |
| 847–854 | Rome | "multi" | mancusi in argento | spending | construction | *ibid.*, 2.132 | building Leopolis | 54 |
| *Other* | | | | | | | | |
| 786 | England (for Rome) | 365 | mancusas | gift | promise | Alcuin, *Ep*. 127 | | 55 |
| 797 | England (for Rome) | 365 | mancusas | gift | promise | *ibid.* | | 56 |
| May 799 | Milan | 10 | mancosos | rent | rent | *Farfa*, 163 | | 57 |
| 802 | Rome | 120 | mancusas | gift | promise | JE 2511 | | 58 |
| after 811 | "Clusina" | 1,000 | mancosos | penalty | security | *St. Gall*, 2.393 | copy of 811–19 | 59 |
| 1 Nov. 811 | Modena | 1 | in auro vel argento mancuso uno tantum | rent | rent | *Modena*, 4 | original | 60 |
| Jan. 812 | Benevento | 1,000 | mancosos | penalty | gift | *Chronicon Vulturnense*, 1.259 | interpolated and suspect | 61 |

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# APPENDIX 3

## *Arab and Byzantine coins in Carolingian Europe*

APPENDIX 3 INVENTORIES finds of Arab and Byzantine coins dating, in the former case, from the beginning of minting, and in the latter, from the reign of Constantine IV (668–85) down to c. 900. The format of each entry comprises my identification number A1, A2, etc. (Arab finds) and B1, B2, etc. (Byzantine), the location and date of discovery, the type of find and, in the case of hoards or where other evidence is available, the approximate date of deposit, followed by a description of the coins and a discussion of the place and circumstances. Finds are listed in alphabetical order of the English form of the places where they were found, and are located on Map 12.1. Note that different finds from the same place bear the same identifying number. Hoards which mix Arab and Byzantine coins are included with the Arab finds. For the Kufic coins I have mostly relied on the published identifications. Dr. Michael L. Bates of the American Numismatic Society came promptly to my assistance with the coins identified in entries A7, A17, A22 and A41, and has my gratitude. I am grateful to my colleague Professor Roy Mottahedeh for his help with the Venice dinars.

Only those coins have been included for which there is some indication of provenance. The numbers could have been much increased if I had followed the example of others and reckoned as local finds every foreign coin in the various museums of the countries of the former Yugoslavia, Albania, and so on. This is probably true of many, doubtless false of others.[1] Unless there was some specific reason to think that coins in local museums were local finds, I have refrained from using them; they can be added to the discussion later.[2] At this early stage of analysis of the evidence relating to so controversial a subject, it is better to be too

1 It very probably holds for many coins in the archaeological museum at Split. Thus, in addition to the six Syracusan solidi of 760–75 from excavations at Biskupija-Crkvina, the museum has another fourteen similar specimens of unknown provenance: Delonga 1981, 216, nos. 21–34; cf. B3.

2 For instance, Livorno, Museo civico G. Fattori, has two coins of Leo V and one of Michael II: Morrisson 1998.



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stringent than too lax. It will be easy for others to see if my patterns are borne out by future and well-documented finds.

From the records available to me, it is sometimes unclear what is a stray find and what is a hoard or mini-hoard (i.e., two or three coins found together).[3] In such cases, when the coins appear to be identical and there is no evidence against it, I have assumed they are from the same find (e.g. B28). I have generally avoided featuring coins that have proved hard to nail down, for instance, the possible case of a "golden dirham" (sic) from the first half of the tenth century, seemingly attested from Popinci, at the museum of Novi Sad, or two undated Arab gold coins discovered in Germany early in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[4] Indirect evidence for another dirham appears in entry B6. New finds and studies continued to appear as this book went to press, most notably a counterfeit eighth-century dinar discovered at Lage-Müssen, 25 km north of Charlemagne's Saxon center of operations at Paderborn.[5]

*Note:* The following abbreviations, AE – for copper, AR – for silver, and AV – for gold, are used throughout this appendix.

## Arab Coins in and around Carolingian Europe

A1 AUENBERG, Saarbrücken, Germany, 1963 or 1964.

Stray find or mini-hoard? Deposited after c. 695.

3 The advantage of distinguishing small groups is that even two coins of like date and origin have a much greater likelihood of deposit near that date than one single coin; conversely, the probable date of deposit of a group of two or three coins is less certain than for larger hoards.

4 Novi Sad: Kovács 1989, 55, no. 277 and cf. A31; Germany: Anonymous 1839, 333, which was not easy for me to get and of which I therefore cite the entire relevant passage: an Arab gold coin was excavated at Ostbevern (Kr. Warendorf; 15 km north-east of Münster), and is mentioned among the acquisitions of the Verein presented at the quarterly meeting of its Münster section on 25 October 1838: "Für das Münzkabinet war (1) ein schönes Exemplar der letzten Sedisvakanz-Denkmünze des Domkapitels zu Münster vom J. 1801; (2) eine bei Ost-Bevern ausgegrabene arabische Goldmünze; – und für das Museum vaterländischer Alterthümer unter andern eine bei Haltern gefundene, Römische Handmühle, acquirirt worden." Cf. Kennepohl 1949, 16. The latter's reference, *ibid.*, to a report of an "Arabische (Gold-)Münze bei einem Silberschatz" discovered at Paderborn, in "Westfälische Zeitschrift 64.1906.108f," appears to be wrong. I am grateful to Dr. Giuliano De Marinis, as well as Prof. Lucia Travaini, for informing me in advance of publication about the five Fatimid dinars discovered during the excavations in the Piazza della Signoria at Florence; they date from the 10th and 11th C.

5 See L. Ilisch, in C. Stiegemann and M. Wemhoff, eds., *799. Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit*, 1 (Mainz, 1999), pp. 391–2; Quinsat 1997 and Brather 1996 came to my attention too late to be used here.



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1. AE *fals*, Ummayad, shortly after 695, probably Egypt (Alexandria).
2. AE follis, Helen Augusta (337–41), Trier.
The coins were found at the same time in a field, about 1 m apart. The site was apparently marked by a heap of stones, 2 m higher up on the slope. The coins are reportedly almost the same size: Franke 1977. It is not impossible that they represent a mini-hoard. The hill where the find occurred is near Bliesransbach (a suburb of Saarbrücken), right by the source of the Blies, which flows into the Saar (a tributary of the Moselle) after a course of about 10 km.

A2 AUTUN, Saône-et-Loire, France, before 1862.

Stray find or mini-hoard? If the latter, deposited after c. 692/4.
Transitional dinar 692/4, Damascus; reportedly discovered with two Merovingian coins (Lavoix 1887, xiv).
Possibly part of the Merovingian hoard of Buis (Chissey-en-Morvan, c. Lucenay-l'Evêque, ar. Autun, whose most recent coins antedate 650). Lafaurie (Lafaurie and Morrisson 1987, 68) rejects the specialists' identification of this coin, dates it to c. 630–40 and places its burial c. 640–50. Morrisson (*ibid.*) accepts the specialists' identification, and discussion with Philip Grierson leads me to do likewise. See Lavoix 1887, xiii–xiv and 8, no. 26; Duplessy 1956, 121, no. 1; Lafaurie and Morrisson 1987, 67–8, with further bibliography.

A3 AVIGNON, Vaucluse, France, c. 1990.

Stray.
AE, 692/4–749, Ummayad, post-reform, possibly minted in the Middle East; found with a metal detector: Hennequin 1990.

A4 BARCELONA, Spain, c. 1977.

Stray?
Dirham, 844/5, al Andalus.
Reportedly purchased in Barcelona extremely cheaply, which suggests that it was a local find sold by a non-professional merchant. The coin was perforated, and a cut half of a *Christiana religio* issue of Louis the Pious (822–40) was inserted into the dirham (for a total weight of 2.82 g): Balaguer and Canto Garcia 1987, 43–5 and 47–8. This reinforces the Catalonian provenance, since Frankish currency was of course issued and circulated there.

A5 BIEBRICH, Wiesbaden-Biebrich, Germany, 1921.

Huge mixed hoard deposited c. 800.

a. Arab:
1. Dirham, A.H. 174 (A.D. 790/1), Ifriqiya: Duplessy 1956, 124, no. 11.

b. Frankish:
2–45. 44 denarii, Charlemagne, Grierson Class 3 (794–812): Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 237, and no. 735; issued at Agen, Bourges, Dorestad, Laon, Lyons, Mainz,



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Melle, Pavia, Saint-Denis, "Sennes," Toulouse, Tours, Vienne, and possibly Ravenna.

c. Papal:

46–8. 3 denarii of Leo III, 795–800, Rome: Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 638.

Enormous find in a leather sack, weighing 8–10 kg (the equivalent of 4,000–5,000 d.), most of which is reported to have been thrown into a freshly poured concrete retaining wall immediately upon discovery: Völckers 1965, 104–9, no. 42 (pl. Q–R), who identified forty-eight coins or casts from this great hoard. The hoard was dredged from the Rhine at Biebrich, some 7 km downstream from its confluence with the Main at Mainz. Weapons (three swords and two lances) were reportedly also found (Völckers 1965, 105). If the lost coins of the hoard occurred in the same proportions as what has been recorded, this would imply by weight a minimum of around 90 dirhams for 8 kg total. The overall pattern of the mints indicates that most of the hoard came from the southwest, i.e. Provence, Toulouse, Gascony, and Italy: Völckers 1965, 106–7, who reckons it to be a witness to "southern commerce."

A6 BIZANET, Aude, France, 1856.

Stray (?)

Dirham, A.H. 95 (A.D. 713/14), al Taymara, in the area of Isfahan.

Found on a butte near Narbonne: Lacam 1956, 108 and Figs. 9–10, and 1965, 71.

A7 BORMES-LES-MIMOSAS, Var, France, before 1965.

Two stray finds or mini-hoard? If the latter, deposit after c. 750/1.

1. AE, without mint name or date, possibly Ummayad period; cf. Walker 1956, 220–1, nos. 708–11.
2. AE, A.H. 133 (A.D. 750/1), Egypt: Bates 1991, 49, no. 9. Identifications made or confirmed by Dr. Michael L. Bates.

Found in this town overlooking the coast, some 100 km east of Marseilles, facing the Ile de Port-Cros: Lacam 1965, 203–4, with pl. XXIA–B. For a 6th-C. wreck in the vicinity, see Table 20.1, ship 2.

BRASLOVĆE: see A33, Rečica.

"BULKESZI": see A31, Petrovci.

A8 CAGLIARI, Museo archeologico nazionale, Sardinia, 19th C. and c. 1968.

Stray finds and/or minihoards?

1–3. 3 (or 4) AE, 692/4–749, two of which are reported as identical, uncertain mint.
4–5. 2 (or 3) identical AE, 692/4–749, Baalbek.
6. AE, 692/4–749, either uncertain mint or Baalbek.
7. AE, Abbasid c. 776–7.
8. Dirham, A.H. 162–6 (A.D. 778–82/3), mint reported as al Abbasiyya.



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9–10. Dirhams (774–786/7), mint reported as al Abbasiyya for both.
No. 6 is imprecisely identified; it was purchased at Assemini c. 1968: Oman 1968, 117n7. Most if not all of these coins appear to have been acquired in the 19th C. by Canon Giovanni Spano from local finds.[6]

CARNUNTUM: for the clay impression of a dirham, see B6.

A9 CHÂTEAU-ROUSSILLON, Perpignan, Pyrénées-Orientales, France, 19th and 20th C.

Multiple strays and excavations.

1–3. 2 dirhams and 1 *fals*. No other data are given; found before 1854; Colson owned the first two and had seen the third; he states that they all came from Ruscino: Colson 1854, 40n1; Duplessy 1956, no. 2; Richard and Claustres 1980, 124n116–17.

4. Dinar, Latin and Arabic inscription, A.D. 715/16, Africa. Discovered in 1841, at the foot of the Tour de Castel-Roussillon: Colson 1854, 40n1 and pl. I.5; Duplessy 1956, no. 2; Richard and Claustres 1980, 124, with n115.

5. 1 AE, al Andalus, A.D. 711/56. Inv. 176; surface find, "parcel 631." Found before 1912: Massot 1912, 192, no. 148; Richard and Claustres 1980, 124, with Miles 1950, 127–8, no. 28.

6–9. 4 AE : "'petits bronzes anciens attribués aux Arabes' et qui peuvent s'apparenter au précédent," i.e. the early bronze of al Andalus, no. 5. Richard and Claustres 1980, 124; cf. Massot 1912, 192, nos. 149–52.

10. Dirham, A.H. 196 (A.D. 811/12), al Andalus. Inv. 175, found north of the basilica: Richard and Claustres 1980, 124 with n118.

11. Dinar, A.H. 205 (820/1), without a mint name. Announced 8 October 1836: Colson 1854, 40n1 (A.H. "155") and pl. I, no. 6; Duplessy 1956, 131, no. 2; Richard and Claustres 1980, 123n114 (with identification by R. Curiel).

Stray and excavation finds from the site of the ancient town of Ruscino, near Perpignan, repopulated by Visigothic refugees after 711; on the Via Domitia. The site also produced coins of the last Visigothic kings, and a small hoard of pennies of Charlemagne struck at Toulouse, Bourges, Pavia, Tours, and Narbonne, between 793/4 and 812 (Grierson Class 3) and including, oddly, an obol attributed to Charles the Bald.[7] One of the bronze coins found at Château-Roussillon is illustrated in Lacam 1956, Figure 10d. The report of a "dépôt mis au jour lors des fouilles du *forum* de Ruscino," appears to be unfounded, since the coins so indicated are identical to the ones on this list.[8]

6 See the *Catalogo della Raccolta archeologico sarda del Can. Giovanni Spano*, Parte seconda (Cagliari, 1865), p. 205, as cited by Oman 1968, 115.

7 Richard and Claustres 1980, 123–4; cf. above, Ch. 12.2.

8 Leenhardt *et al*. 1993, 209. Colson 1854, 40n1 also reports the discovery of further, unspecified Arab coins in Cerdagne and Conflent.



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A10 CHAUNAY, Vienne, France, 1928.

Stray
Dinar, A.H. 164 (A.D. 780/1), Al Andalus, worn: Thouvenin 1931.
Found on a northern slope above the creek Boulard (=Bouleur?), c. 2 km from Chaunay. The old road from Poitiers to Angoulême runs through Couhé, 10 km distant.

A11 CONTRES, Loir-et-Cher, France, 1863 or slightly earlier.

Single find, grave.
Dirham, A.H. 161 (A.D. 777/8), al Andalus: de Longpérier 1863.
Clipped to the size of a Carolingian penny (which points to an early deposit), and showing little wear; discovered in a tomb at this village 21 km SW of Blois, on the Bièvre, a tributary of the Loire; mutilated mint legend.

A12 "CRÈZE" (i.e. Grèzes?), Aude, France, 1943.

Stray.
Dinar, A.H. 96 (A.D. 714–15), Istakhr (Iran): Lacam 1965, 71.
Lacam states that the dirham was found at "Crèze, near Carcassonne." I have been unable to locate it, nor does Sabarthès 1912 record any such place name in the Aude; however, Grèzes is a well-documented hamlet 4 km west of Carcassonne (Sabarthès 1912, 173; see also, *ibid.*, "Grèze," a farm).

A13 CROYDON ("Whitehorse"), near London, 1862.

Large mixed hoard, including ingots and hack-silver, deposited c. 872.
Three dirhams recorded among over 180 western coins.
1. Harun al Rashid, c. A.D. 800, uncertain mint.
2. Harun al Rashid (A.D. 786–809), Medinat Balkh?
3. Al Wathik (A.D. 842–7), uncertain mint: Blunt and Dolley 1959, 230–1.
Of around 250 oxydized coins, c. 150–85 coins, silver ingots and hack-silver have been recovered; they include seven Carolingian and over 175 Anglo-Saxon pennies. The hoard also, reportedly, included a "rare Byzantine coin minted in Italy," of unspecified date: Whitting 1961, 33; but see Blunt and Dolley 1959, 230. The dirhams are fragmentary, and now lost; one of the dirhams bore traces of cuts which suggest it reached England via Scandinavia. Possible Viking test marks also appear on one of the Carolingian pennies: Brooks and Graham-Campbell 1986, 99. See also Duplessy 1956, 124–5, no. 15; Blackburn and Pagan 1986, 294, no. 67. Blunt and Dolley had already concluded that it was "Viking." Brooks and Graham-Campbell argue that this is a Danish hoard, connected with the invaders' activities in London in 872. They believe that the dirhams and the Carolingian denarii in the hoard came to England via Denmark.



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A14 CUERDALE, Lancashire, England, 1840.

Enormous silver hoard, including ingots and hack-silver, deposited c. 905.
At least 36 dirhams, of which 29 can be described (including 13 imitation dirhams), among c. 7,000 coins.

1. A.H. 256 (A.D. 869/70), al Andalus, which apparently reached Scandinavia from the east; pierced.
2. A.H. 156 (772/3), ?Madinat al Salam (i.e. Baghdad).
3. Date, mint illegible, ?Al Mansur (754–75).
4. Similarly; Al Amin (808–13), central or eastern Caliphate.
5. A.H. 252 (866/7), Madinat al Salam.
6. A.H. "250" (actually 870–92), Arminiyah (Dabil-Dvin): reuse of an old die.

7–8. A.H. 267 (880/1) and A.H. 277 (890/1), Arminiyah/Bardhaʾah (Partaw, Caucasian Albania).

9. A.H. 277 (890/1), Arminiyah.
10. Same date, <Arminiyah>.
11. A.H. 267 or 277 (880/1 or 890/1), Bardhaʾah.
12. al Muʾtamid (870–92), mint missing, ?Arminiyah or Bardhaʾah.
13. A.H. 282 (895/6), Madinat al Salam, freshly minted.
14. Late 8th–early 9th C., Abbasid.
15. c. 873–92, al Banjhir (north slopes of Hindu Kush, E. Afghanistan).
16. c. A.H. 272, Andarabah (Afghanistan); along with 13 imitation dirhams: Lowick 1976.

Also recorded are thirteen Anglo-Saxon pennies: Blunt 1983, and uncertain numbers of Carolingian, Viking and Byzantine coins: Blackburn and Pagan 1986 294, no. 87. The enormous hoard comprised c. 7,000 coins and "nearly 1,000 ounces of silver ingots" and hack-silver (Blunt 1983, 1). According to Lowick, this mixture of Arab coins is characteristic of Scandinavian hoards. The most recent coin would have reached England from Baghdad via Scandinavia in about nine years.

A15 DOMBURG, Walcheren, Netherlands, date unknown and 1890.

Stray finds.

1. Dirham, A.H. 252 (A.D. 866), Dvin, province of Armenia: De Man 1899, 51; and 1907, 289 (for which I thank Philip Grierson); ensconced in a decorative setting.
2. Dirham A.H. 205 (820/1), Isfahan: De Man 1899, 170–1; 1907, 289. She reports that a similar dirham was discovered at Zuid-Bargen, near Emmen (prov. Drenthe: 1907, 289); a fourth dirham of unspecified origin and date was found in excavations at Domburg and was preserved in the state archeological museum in Leyden: *eadem* 1899, 171n2.

Numerous scattered finds, including these two dirhams, have come from the early medieval settlement site which is now submerged offshore, and also, possibly, from shipwrecks. They have been found on the beach of the island of Walcheren and at very low tides since the 17th C.; cf. in general Völckers 1965, 44.



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A16 DOUZENS, Aude, France, before 1943.

Single find.
AE, A.H. 97 (A.D. 715/16), Africa. Bilingual Latin and Arabic inscription; found on a butte halfway between Carcassonne and Narbonne: Lacam 1965, 71.

A17 DRAGUIGNAN, Var, France, before 1811.

Stray?
AE, Egypt, "a familiar issue of al-Qāsim b. ʿUbayd Allāh," A.D. 734–42: thanks to Dr. M. L. Bates.
Seen in the library of Draguignan by A. L. Millin: Millin 1807–11, 3: 33–5, who had it engraved (*ibid.*, pl. I, 8) and deciphered by his friend de Sacy (presumably the orientalist Antoine Isaac Silvestre de Sacy, 1758–1838). Lane-Poole 1901, 47–8; Bates 1991, 48, no. 5. The coin was lost long ago according to the Musée de Draguignan, as cited by Lacam 1965, 204. Draguignan is some 30 km inland from Fréjus, which is on the coastal route westward toward Marseilles.

A18 EASTBOURNE, Sussex, England, shortly before 1847.

Minihoard deposited after 724/43.
1. Dinar, Hisham, 724/43, mint unknown.
2. Unspecified.
"Two Cufic coins" found together at the seashore; one coin is identified as a worn dinar, and ascribed from the legends to Caliph Hisham. The other was presumably another dinar: Anonymous 1846–7; Duplessy 1956, 121, no. 12.

A19 FUTOG (Futtak), Serbia, Yugoslavia, before 1894.

Stray.
Dinar, A.H. 89 (707/8), anonymous.
Known dinar, redated (earlier attribution to 685–705). Despite the date of appearance, Kovács 1989, 121n634a, believes that this earlier coin was not part of the Petrovci hoard. Futog is on the north bank of the Danube, about 8 km west of Novi Sad.

GRÈZES? See A12 "Crèze."

A20 HAITHABU, harbor, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, 1979–80.

Hoard consisting of two distinct subgroups of dirhams, aboard a shipwreck; the ship sank c. 902–7.

a. first subgroup:
1–9. A.H. 192 (A.D. 807/8), Baghdad.
10. A.H. 188 (803/4), Baghdad.
11–12. damaged, c. A.D. 805/15 and 749/833.



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1–9 seem to have been uncirculated and show die overlap; possibly they were struck in immediate succession, so that the 9 coins seem to have traveled direct from Baghdad to Haithabu together, perhaps in a sealed container.

b. second, Samanid, subgroup:

13–14. A.H. 281 (A.D. 894/5), AR, al Shash (Tashkent) and A.H. 29<0/5> (i.e., A.D. 902/7), mint uncertain; Hovén 1990.

The finds, particularly of subgroup b, appear typical for Baltic Islamic imports. Find circumstances are left unclear, i.e. which particular wreck or wrecks this hoard or hoards came from; Crumlin-Pedersen 1984, 245–50, mentions in the harbor at Haithabu at least three substantial wrecks and scattered debris, possibly from other shipwrecks.

A21 HON, Norway, 1834.

Very large mixed hoard of gold or gilded coins and remarkable jewelry; deposited after c. 848/9.

a. Roman and Byzantine gold (numbering follows Skaare 1988):
1. solidus, Valens (364–78), Thessalonica.
2. same, Constantine V (751–75), Syracuse.
3. same, Michael III (c. 843–56), Constantinople.

b. Merovingian:
4. solidus, imitation of Tiberius II, after 582–602, Marseille.

c. Arab:
5. dinar, A.H. 152 (A.D. 769–70), Baghdad or unknown mint.
6. dinar (imitation), A.H. 162 (778–9).
7. dinar A.H. 180 (801–2), Fustat.
8–9. 2 dinars, A.H. 185? (801–2) and A.H. 186 (802), Baghdad.
10. dinar, A.H. 189 (804–5), Fustat?
11. dirham (gilded), A.H. 191 (806–7), Baghdad.
12. dinar, A.H. 192 (807/9), Fustat? Possible imitation.
13. dinar, A.H. 206 (821/2), probably Baghdad.
14. dinar A.H. 234 (848/9), Marw.

d. Carolingian gold:
15–16. 2 solidi, imitations of Louis the Pious, 814–40; Frisia?
17. gold cast of a denarius of Louis the Pious, Arles, after 814–19/22.
18. denarius (gilded), Lothar (817–19/22).
19. denarius (gilded), Pippin I or II of Aquitaine, 838–52?

e. England:
20. denarius (gilded), Wulfred, archbishop of Canterbury, c. 810?: Skaare 1966 and 1988.

Hoard of over 2.5 kg of gold: 20 Byzantine solidi, dinars, gold, cast gold and gilded Carolingian and Anglo-Saxon pennies, as well as remarkable jewelry. Although the



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hoard was discovered in Norway, the individual coins are almost unique among the tens of thousands of silver coins deposited in Viking-age Scandinavia. As a group, they have no parallel whatsoever. Some of the jewelry is certainly Carolingian and counts among the period's masterpieces.[9] The Sicilian solidus and one from Marseilles, as well as the Anglo-Saxon penny and Carolingian imitations point strongly to western Europe as the origin of this remarkable collection of coinage. Skaare observes that the chronology would allow the hoard to have been part of the enormous ransom of gold and silver paid for the abbot of St. Denis in 858 (1966, 408). Whether or not this particular event explains the hoard, numismatists concur that the coins traveled to Hon from western Europe.[10] The dates and mints of the Arab coins fit perfectly with what texts and surviving coins show of the arrival of Muslim coins in Carolingian Europe. The only possible exception is the coin from Marw – which is also the latest piece in the hoard. Its date matches only our Viking and Sardinian hoards, and is half a generation later than the other Islamic issues discovered at Hon. The mint might nonetheless have a parallel from Venice (see A38).

Except for two, the coins have all been mounted in similar fashion, with small golden hoops so that they could hang, e.g., from a string on a necklace. The two exceptions also have similar, but larger mounts, and they are attached to the two coins which are largest in size and weight (nos. 14 and 16). The round number of coins and similarity of mountings indicate to me that the gilded coins were prepared specifically to match the gold ones, in order to create a spectacular personal accessory. Such necklaces were stylish in late antiquity, and Byzantine "marriage belts," belts made of gold coins or imitations and connected with weddings, would be another distant analogy.[11] The coins would have been brought together specifically to create the piece, whether in Scandinavia or in Christian Europe. This would explain the gilding and, perhaps, gold cast, created to match 1–10 and 12–16 (and 17?). In the place where the work was created, insufficient dinars and Byzantine solidi were available to create a set of twenty; an Anglo-Saxon penny and Carolingian silver pennies were pressed into service.

Coin jewelry appears to be more typical of Scandinavian fashion than Carolingian.[12] This, plus the unavailability of sufficient gold coins to make up the round number, as well as the use of an Anglo-Saxon penny (which seem to have been rare in the rather tightly controlled monetary environment of the Carolingian empire), suggest to me that the magnificent ornament was created in Scandinavia from coins of which all or most had been acquired in Frankland and England.

9 E.g., Graham-Campbell 1980, 31, illustrated, 33.

10 E.g., Spufford 1988, 52–3; Morrisson 1998, reckons them to be a witness to the "grand commerce occidental" of the 9th C.

11 Bruhn 1993, 8–16 and 50–1.

12 On the Scandinavian fashion, see e.g., Bálint 1981, 110.



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A22 HYÈRES, Var, France, before 1965.

Strays?

1. *Fals*, heavily worn, "without legible mint-name or date (it does not seem that either was originally included in the inscriptions)." The "epigraphic style would be typical for the province Ifriqiya about 787–805."
2. *Fals*, from the ancient seaside site of Olbia, just south of Hyères, on the coastal route toward Marseilles: Lacam 1965, 204 with Pl. XXIC–D. The photo appears to show "a thick coin characteristic of Egypt; it would then be an example of the earliest Arabic/Islamic issue of Egypt, to be assigned to the beginning of the eighth century." See Bates 1991, 47, no. 1.

Identifications and quotations from Dr. M. L. Bates, letter of 7 April 1999.

A23 ILANZ, Switzerland, 1904.

Hoard of 133 gold and silver coins, including 2 dirhams, as well as gold jewelry, deposited c. 795: Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 210. All published accounts of its contents before Bernareggi 1977 are erroneous; cf. also Bernareggi 1983.

a. Arab dirhams:
   1. Al Mahdi, c. A.H. 166 (c. A.D. 782–3), al Abbasiyya, North Africa.
   2. A.H. 173 (789/90), Tunis: Grierson 1953, 47.

b. Lombard gold:

3–42. 40 tremisses of King Desiderius, issued at Castelseprio, Milan, Pavia, Pombia, Treviso, Vercelli, and Vicenza.

c. Carolingian gold:

43–82. 40 tremisses of Charlemagne's Italian mints, Castelseprio, Chur, Bergamo, Lucca, Milan, and Pavia; an uncertain number of fragmentary gold coins of Desiderius and Charlemagne were destroyed by analysis, c. 1906: Bernareggi 1977, 363.

d. Carolingian silver pennies:

83–130. 48 denarii, Pippin III (9), Autramnus, Quentovic, Strasburg; and Charlemagne (39), including one (or two? cf. Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 210) of Charlemagne's reformed pennies, introduced c. 794, issued at Pavia (Völckers 1965, 165, no. xxiv, 48; cf. Jecklin 1906, 63, no. 80); earlier denarii struck at "Ardis" (Arles?), Chartres, Dorestad, Lyons, Milan, and Mainz by Odalricus, Parma, and Rheims, by Rodlanus, monasterium sanctae Mariae, St. Martin (Tours), Treviso, ?Worms, and mintless pennies of northern Italy: Völckers 1965, 160–5.

e. Anglo-Saxon pennies:

131–2. 2 silver denarii of King Offa of Mercia and 1 of King Egbert of Kent.

f. gold objects: an earring, 5 pendant medallions, 2 little lumps of gold and 2 fragments: Geiger 1986.



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A traveler hid a container, presumably of leather or cloth since no traces of it were detected, in a crack in the cliff on the small road leading up to the hamlet of Ruschein, across the Vorderrhein from Ilanz, 10 m below the site of a tower which seems to go back to the 8th C.; a boulder blocks the view of the find spot from the tower location (Bernareggi 1977, 353; cf. Jecklin 1906, 28–35).

The location allows the possibility that the traveler was coming from Italy by one of three passes: the Lukmanier/Luco Magno (Bernareggi 1977, 353, perhaps the most likely); a little noted route across the Valserberg from the San Bernardino pass (Clavadetscher 1955, 14); or, perhaps, the Furka pass from the Ticino river. He was approaching Chur, some 30 km distant, when he hid his hoard. Grierson and Blackburn (1986, 210), hypothesize that the two groups of forty gold coins represent some kind of family hoard. The presence of the class 3 silver coin(s) means that the hoard cannot have been hidden before 794. Geiger 1986, 405, argues from the one tremissis apparently minted at Chur that the hoard was assembled there. However, the minting of gold ceased c. 781, and the Chur coin might be as early as 774 (Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 210), which makes his contention much less likely than the obvious conclusion that this pouch of money was traveling north toward Frankland from Italy when something horrible happened to its owner. See also Duplessy 1956, 123, no. 8; Völckers 1965, 73–9.

A24 LAGRASSE, Aude, France, 1845.

Single find.
Dirham, A.H. 191 (A.D. 806/7), Cordova: de Longpérier 1863, 216.

A25 MARSEILLETTE, Aude, France, 1943.

Stray.
Dirham, A.H. 176 (A.D. 792/3), al Andalus: Lacam 1965, 72.

A26 MOUDON, Switzerland, 1825.

Stray.
Dirham, A.H. 170 (A.D. 786–7), al Abbasiyya.
Found in a meadow on the western edge of the town. Moudon is about halfway between Lake Geneva and Lake Neuchâtel, on the route north from the Great St. Bernard pass or, possibly, the Mont Cénis or the Little St. Bernard. See Soret 1855; Duplessy 1956, 123, no. 9.

A27 MÜNCHBERG, Franconia (mod. Bavaria), Germany, before 1967/8.

Stray.
Dirham (A.H. 170?), date reported as A.D. 786(/7), no mint stated: Blackburn 1993, 49, no. 17.
The coin was reported to have turned up near the town (Steinhilber 1973, 138), which lies on the edge of the Fichtel mountains, on a tributary of the Saale river



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(which flows north), and some 15 km distant from the Eger/Ohře river, which flows eastward in the direction of Prague; both are tributaries of the Elbe river. See also Hahn 1976b, 51, no. 17. The site lies about 80 km northeast of Hallstadt.

A28 MUIZEN, province of Antwerp, Belgium, 1906.

Mixed silver hoard of more than seventy-three coins, deposited after c. 867; one dirham and seventy-two Carolingian pennies recovered.

a. Arab:
1. Dirham, A.H. 252 (A.D. 866/7), Arminiyah.

b. Carolingian:
2–51. Fifty denarii, Louis the Pious, Christiana religio (822–40).
52. denarius (gilded), Lothar I, Rex Agustus [!], Christiana religio, mounted.
53–6. Five obols, Pepin I or II of Aquitaine.
57–8. Two obols, Charles the Bald, Aquitaine.
59–71. Fourteen denarii, Charles the Bald, Christiana religio.
72–3. Two denarii, Charles the Bald, Quentovic: Roosens 1950; Morrison and Grunthal 1967, 353, doubt that the coins in question correspond to the hoard and reject the dirham as extraneous; contra: Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 216.

This small town is on the Dyle (Dijl) river, some 20 km downstream from Louvain, the site of a major Viking encampment in 884.

A29 NARBONNE, Aude, France, before 1956.

Three stray (?) finds.
1–3. AE, anonymous Ummayad (before 750).
From "the soil" of Narbonne: Lacam 1956, 108 and Figure 9–10; cf. Lacam 1965, 71–2. The vague reference of Armardel 1892, 155n4 (cf. n3 and 157), leaves unclear whether the device of 1847 he discusses reflects a real Ummayad coin in the Museum collection.

A30 ODOORN, Netherlands, 1859/60.

Silver hoard of an unknown quantity of Carolingian pennies, 2 dirhams, and rings deposited c. 895 (Boeles) or c. 890 (Morrison and Grunthal 1967, 370–1); in favor of Boeles' later dating, note Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 255.
1–2. 2 dirhams, one fitted into a fibula, struck between 846 and 861; plus an unknown quantity of Carolingian pennies, including some of Berengarius, king of Italy (888–900), and of Wido of Spoleto (891–4), and silver rings. No other data given: Boeles 1915, 71–4; see also Duplessy 1956, 124, no. 14.

A31 PETROVCI, Croatia (or Serbia, Yugoslavia?), 1891.

Hoard of 10 or 11 Abbasid dinars and jewelry, deposited c. 790.
1. A.H. 136 (A.D. 753/4), Abul Abbas as Saffah (for year, Rispling 1993, 130), no mint is identified for any coin.



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2. 163 (779/80).
3–4. Two dinars, 165 (781/2).
5. 166 (782/3).
6–7. Two dinars, 167 (783/4).
8–9. Two dinars, 168 (784/5).
10. 172 (788/9).
(11. Dinar of A.H. 168 [784/5], formerly believed to have been found separately at "Bulkeszi," was probably part of this hoard, according to Kovács 1989, 120–1 n634a: Mirnik 1981, no. 360.)

The hoard apparently came from the small village of Petrovci, on the Jarčina canal, 11 km east of Vikovci, on the road which reaches the Danube 9 km away, at Vukovar.[13] From the late Avar-style jewelry and coins, Kovács dates the deposit to the late 8th-early 9th C. A deposit c. 790 seems indicated by the clustering of the dinars in the 780s. Mirnik 1981, no. 360 reports that 9 coins were deposited in the archaeological museum of Zagreb, and mentions an uncertain association with a grave. Rispling 1993, 130, notes that the dinars are practically unique in eastern Europe, where dirhams prevail, and suggests that they reached Petrovci from the south, rather than via the northern and eastern Europe route. A 10th-C. dinar is reported to have turned up at Popinci, some 15 km east of Sirmium: Kovács 1989, 55, no. 277.

A32 PORTO TORRES, Sardinia, 1922.

Hoard of 40 solidi and dinars, as well as jewelry, deposited c. 883–4.

a. Arab:
1–3. 3 Aghlabid dinars, issued in A.H. 236, 267 and 270 (A.D. 850–1, 880–1, and 883–4, respectively); for the second one, Taramelli's informant read A.H. 261 (i.e. A.D. 874/5). No mint name: Oman 1968, 116.

b. Byzantine:
4–19. 16 solidi of Theophilus (829–42); judging from the incomplete and apparently somewhat inaccurate description of Taramelli 1922 (e.g., the control mark Θ is apparently taken for a letter O), these belong to Class III, issued at Constantinople 830/1–840: *DOC* 3: 425–8 and plate 22, 3d5.
20–40. 21 solidi of Basil I and Constantine (869–70): apparently Class II, issued at Constantinople, A.D. 868–79: *DOC* 3: 487–9.

Found in a small ceramic container with pieces of gold ornaments: three pieces of a tubular bracelet (total weight 18 g); a piece of a gold earring (3 g); 22 small

13 Kovács 1989, 120n634a, supplies confusing information, which allows for the possibility that he is referring to Petrovci, that is Donji Petrovici (44° 58′ N, 19° 59′ E), nearer to Sirmium (mod. Sremska Mitrovica). The fact that the hoard was deposited in the museum at Zagreb appears to militate for the more western Petrovci (45° 17′ N, 18° 56′ E), some 100 km away, and which can be located on the declassified 1: 50,000 Soviet military map of Yugoslavia: General'nyj štab, *Jugoslavija*, L-34–112-B (Moscow, 1973).



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(1–1.5 cm), rectangular and thin sheets of gold (total weight: 19 g). The three African dinars published by Oman 1968, 116, from the Museo archeologico nazionale of Cagliari, where they bear the provenance "Porto Torres," are presumably those first published by Taramelli 1922 (with an erroneous reading of one date), of whose article Oman was unaware. Taramelli describes the Byzantine coins as being quite fresh in appearance, whereas the dinars show some wear. See also Mosser 1935, 68.

A33 REČICA OB RAKI, Slovenia, 1893.

Mini-hoard of dirhams deposited after 787/8.

1–2. A.H. 171 (A.D. 787/8, not 793!), al Abbasiyya, "well-preserved"; see Müllner 1894a; Mirnik 1981, no. 357; Kos 1988, 1: 511, no. 326 (with the exact name of the village in Slovenian; it is 4 km from Braslovće); Hahn 1990, 245.

The coins were discovered in a crevice in a rock, 1.5 m under the surface, in a quarry. The mint can be deduced from the statement of Müllner 1894a that the issue is that described by Poole 1875, 74, no. 184. The site is on the Raka creek, up whose valley a route snakes north through the mountains, ultimately reaching the Drava some 50 km away. About 25 km upstream from Rečica, the Raka route crosses a Roman road which runs toward Celje from the Mur, passing Völkermarkt (see A41): see *Tabula Imperii Romani*, L33 (Rome, 1961). The Raka is a tributary of the Savinja, which empties into the Sava. The find spot lies on the east bank, about 25 km upstream from Celje, and about 10 km from the Roman road between Celje and Ljubljana.

A34 RENO RIVER, Bologna, Italy, 1857.

Hoard of c. 100 gold coins, deposited c. 806/11.

Previous literature reported the find as deposited c. 820? and containing twenty-three Byzantine solidi (most recent: Leo V [813–820]); eleven dinars (most recent: A.H. 198; A.D. 813/14); five Beneventan solidi, including one of Arigis II (type: 765?–87, De Witte 1859, 399; cf. Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 70).[14] Recent advances compel a reappraisal of the surviving pieces, which consist today of five Byzantine solidi (two more have been lost); fourteen dinars (plus one reported as lost); and two Beneventan coins.

a. Fifteen dinars (A.D. 755/6–806/7):

Stasolla 1986 analyzed and corrected the readings of fourteen dinars from the hoard, including three coins not described by Frati; she was unable to locate a fifth coin in the name of Ǧa'far with a date reported as A.H. 184 (800/1). They are, *annis Hegirae*:

14 I have been unable to consult: L. Frati, *Delle antiche monete d'oro ritrovate in Reno nell'agosto dell anno 1857* (Bologna, 1857), which apparently has engravings; and [C.] Cavedoni, "Notizia archeologica delle antiche monete d'oro ritrovate in Reno presso Bologna," *Messagero di Modena*, no. 1613, 30 October 1857, which is reviewed by De Witte 1859. Among older literature, see Allan 1914, 84–5; Mosser 1935, 71–2; Duplessy 1956, 122, no. 6; Gorini 1985, 73–4.



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1. 138 (A.D. 755/6).
2. 153 (770).
3. 154 (770/1).
4. 157 (773/4).
5. 166 (782/3).
6. 170 (786/7), Egypt.
7. 172 (788/9), Egypt.
8. 173 (789/90), Egypt.
9. 177 (793/4), "western regions" of the Caliphate.
10. 178 (794/5), same.
11. 181 (797/8), same.
12. 186 (802), same.
13. 189 (804/5).
14. 191 (806/7).

(15. A.H. 184 [800/1], "western regions" of the Caliphate; lost).

b. Seven Byzantine solidi (A.D. 741/51–803/11):

16. Constantine V and Leo IV, Class IIb (c. 757–775), Constantinople, see *DOC* 3: 300–1.
17. Leo IV and Constantine VI, Class I (776–8), same mint, *DOC* 3: 328–9.
18. Constantine VI and Irene, Class Ib (790–2), same, *DOC* 3: 341–2.
19. Irene (797–802), same, *DOC* 3: 349.
20. Nicephorus I and Stauracius, Class II (803–811), same, *DOC* 3: 355–6.

(21. lost: solidus of Constantine V, same, Class Ia, 741–51: see below).

(22. lost: solidus of Constantine V, same, Class Ib, 741–51: see below).

The legend of the lost coins widely attributed to Leo V and his son Constantine (reported as obv. D LEON PAMVLT and PAMVLΘ, rev. DN. CONSTANTINUS and CONSTANTIN: De Witte 1859, 396) proves that the coins cannot be from that reign (814–20) but must come from the reign of Constantine V (720–75). They appear to have been from Grierson's Class Ia and b, issued by the mint of Constantinople and datable 741–51: see Grierson, *DOC* 3: 299–300; cf. 375–6 and 380–2; cf. too 241–81. The widely accepted and reported deposit date of after 820 is no longer tenable. These lost coins are not listed among the twenty-one coins from the Reno hoard reproduced and catalogued in Morigi Govi and Sassatelli 1984, 172–3, and have apparently been separated from the others since the original gift of twenty-three coins in 1857.

c. Beneventan:

23. solidus, Arichis II, Class 3 (774–87), Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 575, no. 1096.
24. tremissis of Arichis II, Class 3 (774–87).

Found in the river bed just west of Bologna during construction of a railway, at a depth of c. 2.5 m. The deposit included human bones and a darkened patch of gravel some 3 × 1.5 m (possible traces of a boat?). Of c. 100, thirty-nine coins were recovered: De Witte 1859, 292. The papal government gave twenty-three gold coins from the Reno discovery to the Museo Universitario in 1857. At present "c." twenty-one coins from this hoard can be identified in the collection of the Museo Civico of



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Bologna; they came there from the Museo Universitario: Brizzolara 1984, 164. Today the Reno river flows into the Adriatic at the lagoon of Comacchio, an early rival of Venice, some 100 km downstream from the site of the apparent misfortune.

A35 STECKBORN, Switzerland, 1830.

Hoard of thirty coins, including one Carolingian penny, deposited c. 800: Fraehn 1837, 326; Völckers 1965, 118, no. 58. Only about a third of the twenty-nine Muslim coins were recorded. Fraehn's careful analysis and publication were based on the imperfect and poorly labeled reproductions sent to him, hence his uncertainty about how many coins he was actually seeing. He was sure that he could distinguish at least nine different coins; there were possibly ten or eleven, to judge from the rather unsystematic account of Soret 1840, with a maximum of twelve.

a. Six dirhams (first group of Fraehn 1837, 328–32; the numbers he found attached to his reproductions are in quotation marks):
   1. A.H. 162 (A.D. 778/9), 165 (781/2) or 172 (788/9), Ifriqiya or al Abbasiyya. According to Fraehn 1837, 328 ("no. 6"), the coin was certainly African, but the year was indistinct and admitted all three possible dates. Conceivably it is the same coin seen at Zurich by Soret 1840, 15–16, which he identified as A.H. 176 (792/3), Ifriqiya; it was worn.
   2. A.H. 180 (A.D. 796/7), Ifriqiya ("no. 7").
   3. A.H. 169 (785/6), Ifriqiya ("no. 8"); at Zurich c. 1840.
   4. A.H. 180 (796/7), Ifriqiya ("no. 9").
   5. ?A.H. 182 (798/9), illegible ("no. 10"); struck by Muhammad al Akky, governor of Ifriqiya, presumably the same mint as preceding.
   6. ?A.H. 176 (792/3), illegible ("no. 11"); struck by Nafr ibn Habib, governor of Ifriqiya, A.H. 174–7.

b. Three (or two) dirhams, belonging to vicar Hanhart of Steckborn (Fraehn 1837, 332):
   7. A.H. 1.6 (partially illegible year; probably 176, i.e. A.D. 792/3), mint read as "Bedaa" (a place in Mauretania according to Duplessy 1956, 124, no. 10); seems to show Nafr's name, hence the year.
   8. A.H. 1.6, Ifriqiya; by Nafr, therefore A.H. 176.
   9. ?, illegible, struck by Harsema, governor of Ifriqiya. Fraehn thought this was the same coin as my no. 4, above. Not so, according to Soret 1840, 18, no. 8.

c. Two (or one) coin(s), presumably dirhams also, belonging to the pastor of Steckborn (Fraehn 1837, 332):
   10. A.H. 174 (790/1) "Bedaa"; apparently the same coin seen at the "Societé des Antiquaires de Zurich" c. 1840 by Soret 1840, 14–15: worn; cf. 18.
   (11. = no. 3 above).

d. One coin (but possibly not a coin), presumably a dirham, belonging to the daughter of one Löwenwirth of Steckborn (Fraehn 1837, 330–1):
   12. No details; struck by al Akky; perhaps the same as no. 5 above.



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e. AR denarius, Charlemagne, period 2, Melle, or following this type: Völckers 1965, 118, no. 58.
The coins were discovered at Steckborn, on the Rhine, some 6 km downstream from Reichenau, on the opposite bank. According to Soret 1855, 326–7, Dr. H. Meyer of the "Antiquaries Society of Zurich" obtained and communicated to Soret between 1840 and 1855 a further unspecified number of dirhams from Steckborn. They added no new data but confirmed Fraehn's readings. See also Duplessy 1956, no. 123, no. 10: "30 dirhams."

A36 TEN POST, Netherlands, 1991.

Single find.
AE (A.H. 108) A.D. "726–7," al Andalus, Cordova; metal detector find in a place which had produced numerous late Roman coins, mostly AE: Van der Vin 1996, 68, no. 1070/22. It is the farthest north of the al Andalus coins which presumably transited via the Carolingian empire. Ten Post is 3 km northnortheast of Ten Boer, on the road to Delfzijl.

A37 VENICE: church of San Lorenzo, 1592.

Hoard of more than 400 dinars, dispersed; deposited after 761.
1. A.H. 97 (A.D. 715/16).
2. A.H. 143 (760/1), see Asolati and Crisafulli 1994, 226, no. 9/31.1–3.
More than 400 gold dinars were discovered in jars (*zare*) during demolition and deep digging around the foundations of the chapel of Santa Candida, attached to the convent of San Lorenzo, in 1592. Two coins were still preserved in the convent in the 18th C., when the scholar Cornar (Cornelius 1749, 64–6) had engravings made for his study of the history of Venetian churches; because, according to him, the coins were in poor condition, Gorini (1985, 74) dated their burial to "VIII–IX secolo"; the date of the two coins can be read from Cornar's engraving.

A38 VENICE: church of San Tomà, 1934.

Hoard of 1 dinar and 6 Byzantine solidi, deposited c. 838–42.

Arab:
1. A.H. 223 (837/8), Baghdad? Marw?

Byzantine:
2–6. Solidi, Theophilus, Michael II and Constantine (830/1–840), Constantinople.
7. Solidus, Theophilus, Michael II and Constantine (831–42), Naples: see Asolati and Crisafulli 1994, 241, no. 9/39.1–8.
Found at S. Elena in mud which had been removed from the "terreno di S. Tomà all'inizio del Canale Foscari": Gorini 1980, 740. Variously described as a gold coin "with oriental characters" (Gerola 1937, 485; cf. Duplessy 1956, 122, no. 7) and a "dirham" (Gorini 1980, 740), and dated "after 850" (Gorini 1985, 74), a clear color plate (Gorini 1980, pl. 702) shows that it is gold; cf. also Asolati and Crisafulli 1994.



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I am grateful to my colleague Roy Mottahedeh for deciphering the inscription of the dinar, which refers to Caliph al Mu'tasim and A.H. 223, i.e. A.D. 837/8; the mint name is damaged but three letters could be read: ... *slā*.., which would indicate Madinat as-Salām, i.e. Baghdad. Asolati and Crisafulli 1994, which became available to me only recently, read the same year, but rule out Baghdad; they suggest Marw, in Khorasan. The Arab and Byzantine coins are perfectly contemporary. The photograph shows that they are in very good condition.

A39 VENICE: Saint Mark's Square, 1869 (1868?).

Dirham deposited sometime after 750.
Abbasid dirham, of unidentified date and issue, found in the soil of Saint Mark's Square, announced in the *Gazzetta di Venezia* 26 March 1869 (1868? not seen), as reported by Chalon 1869; cf. Tiesenhausen 1873, p.(!) xlii, and Gorini 1985, 74.

A40 VENICE: Torcello, 1961 (Figure 11.1).

Minihoard; deposited c. 800–20.
Excavated damaged dirham, c. 800/20, found stuck to a Carolingian penny of 793/812. The *bismillah* is missing, so the coin can only be assigned from its appearance to the end of the 2nd C. of the Hegira, i.e. the opening decades of the 9th C. A.D.: Tabaczyński 1977, 272, no. 3, citing A. Kmietowiczowa of Cracow. The coins and their find spot bore traces of textile which could not be associated with clothing, presumably the purse which once contained them: Tabaczyński 1977, 283; cf. 271. The denarius was struck at the mint of Milan. The coins were recovered during excavation of the square next to the cathedral of Torcello which, in the early middle ages, had been remodeled from an industrial site into a market place. This find is apparently not correlated with the later tombs sunk into this space: Tabaczyński 1977, 282; cf. Leciejewicz *et al*. 1977, 290; mentioned by Gorini 1985, 74. The general stratigraphic situation, which is complicated, along with the coins, led the excavators to date this stratum to the 9th and 10th C., Leciejewicz *et al*. 1977, 42–57.

The heavy weight of the fragmentary denarius (1.4 g) of Charlemagne and the design show that the penny is of Class 3, and was therefore struck between 793/4 and 812, according to Grierson's dating. Cf., e.g., Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 208 and no. 743.

A41 VÖLKERMARKT-LAMPRECHTSKOGEL, Austria, c. 1990.

Single find.
Dirham whose date was previously reported as A.D. 786 (Blackburn 1993, 49, no. 18) and 789 (Hahn 1990, 238, with Figure 6). Dr. M. L. Bates identifies it as an issue of the mint of al Abbasiyya in Africa, A.H. 161 (A.D. 777–8), in the name of the governor Yazīd, and cites Lavoix 1887, no. 707.
This town is on the north bank of the Drava river, about 16 km E. of Klagenfurt, on one of the ancient routes leading from the Adriatic toward the Danube region. The



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town is between two Roman roads that run north to the Mur river, on a third road that joins them: *Tabula Imperii Romani*, L33 (Rome, 1961), map. See above, p. 767n136.

A42 WINCHESTER, England, 1964.

Single find during excavation.
Dirham, A.H. illegible: it may have read 285 (A.D. 898/9), in any case, datable A.H. 279/95 (A.D. 892/907), Samarkand: Dolley and Blunt 1977, 138 and plate iv; see also Hinton 1986, 19.

## Byzantine coins in and around Carolingian Europe

B1 ASOLO, Italy, date unknown.

Stray find?
Follis, Leo VI (886–912): Bernardelli *et al.* 1995, 88, no. 2/27.123. The authors found grounds for believing that this is one of the probable, though not certain, cases of local finds, within this small local museum's collection. Asolo is on a hillside (205 m.), c. 25 km northwest of Treviso.

B2 AUBUSSON, Creuse, France, 1967.

Minihoard discovered in sifting rubble from the castle walls. Deposited after c. 867–86.
1. AE, Michael III (842–67);
2. AE, Basil I (867–86); no mint is specified in either case; see Desbordes *et al.* 1983, 105n37; Morrisson 1998.

The castle, about half way between Clermont-Ferrand and Limoges, commands the juncture of the ancient route from Clermont-Ferrand (and hence, the Rhône valley; Clermont-Ferrand is about 90 km from Aubusson) with the Creuse, whose waters flow into the Vienne and then the Loire. The castle shows up in documents from the first half of the 10th C.: Desbordes *et al.* 1983, 101n2; cf. Parisse *et al.* 1994, 68.

B3 BISKUPIJA, Crkvina, Croatia, 1892.

Six coins from graves; deposited c. 800–50.
1–6. Solidi, Syracuse, c. 760–75.

The coins were found in the mouths of aristocratic males, of whom five were buried south of an early medieval church dedicated to the Virgin and one in a sarcophagus inside the church. Biskupija lies about 6 km south of the princely center of Knin. The men were buried around the same time, with Carolingian grave goods which date from the first half of the 9th C. The literature mentions variously four, six, and seven coins in connection with these finds. Delonga 1981 explicitly identifies six coins with these graves and illustrates them. Although they are referred to as "worn" (cf. Werner 1979, 227), Delonga's photos show rather that they have been clipped. The



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fourteen other identical or nearly identical coins preserved at the same museum but of unknown provenance surely belong with these six grave finds, so too the one from the 9th-C. woman's grave at Trilj (B39; a family member?). Trilj is some 75 km to the southeast of Biskupija, on the corridor formed by the Cetina river and the mountain road that overlooks it. See Werner 1979 and Delonga 1981, 211–13, nos. 15–20.

B4 BOSNIA, before 1950.

Stray find.
Solidus, Theophilus 830/1–840, ?Constantinople, reported as discovered "in Bosnia": Vego 1952. From Vego's drawing, it appears to be a solidus from Constantinople (worn or clipped? weight reported as 3.42 g; diameter as 18 mm: cf. *DOC* 3: 426–7). Marović 1953, 214, showed that Vego had misidentified the coin.

B5 BUDAPEST-CSEPEL, Hungary, 1913/14.

Stray find?
AE, Leo VI (886–912), nothing else known: Kovács 1989, 22, no. 55.

B6 CARNUNTUM (mod. Petronell), Austria, 1895–6; before 1976; 1973.

Excavated mold of dirham and apparently stray finds of folles.

a. Byzantine:
1–3. Three single finds of folles of Leo VI (886–912), Constantinople: Hahn 1976a, 166, no. 9470 and 194, no. 10732; *Fundberichte aus Österreich* 12 (1973): 202; Hahn 1990, 240. Although the coins come from a major archaeological site, no information is supplied on their context.

(b. Arab:)
(4.) Clay mold of a dirham of Caliph al Mu'tadid (A.D. 892–902), excavated in the amphitheater. (Beninger 1930, 41 [report of H. Kurtz]; cf. Mitscha-Märheim 1955, 42 and 44n19). The likely purpose was to produce jewelry, but the mold confirms the availability of dirhams wherever it was made, presumably at Carnuntum.

Roman Carnuntum controlled a major crossing of the Danube, and was a key location on the Amber Trail linking the Baltic to the Adriatic. The annual fair held here is first explicitly attested in the 14th C., although indirect indications suggest that it already existed in the 12th, and Mitterauer 1967, 301–15, argues that it went back at least to the early Middle Ages. Some coins of the 6th and earlier 7th C. have turned up there (e.g., Mitscha-Märheim 1962, 218). If Mitterauer is right that the local church dedication to St. Petronilla (hence the modern name Petronell) really is older than Agnes, Henry IV's mother, it is worth noting that the Carolingian family attached particular importance to her cult: Angenendt 1977, 54–5, with n17. In any event, long-distance connections roughly contemporaneous with the Byzantine folles are implied by the mold. Moreover, a partially destroyed cemetery which has been identified as Slavic and dated to the second half of the 10th or first half of the



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11th C. (at Bad Deutsch-Altenburg, 4 km distant), yielded a necklace made from two cowrie shells, as well as amber, crystal, and carnelian beads. The attractive cowries are native only as far west as the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea; they are famous for having served as a kind of currency in Africa. Amber is characteristic of the Baltic, and carnelian was imported there also across the Viking trade route from far to the east: Mitscha-Märheim 1955; cf. Mitterauer 1967, 311; for crystal and carnelian imports to Scandinavia in the 9th and 10th C., see above, p. 611.

B7 CELJE, Slovenia, before 1988.

Three stray finds of copper.
1. Follis, Constantine V (751–69), Constantinople.
2. Follis, Nicephorus I (802–11), same mint.
3. Follis, Theophilus (830–42), same: Kos 1988, 2: 58, nos. 340/1/1549–51, respectively. These are heavily worn single finds from the Savinja river at Celje: cf. *ibid.*, 2.23 and 70. The river could explain the wear.

B8 CITTANOVA, Italy, 1913? before c. 1950.

Stray or grave.
Solidus, Leo III and Constantine V (732–c. 737), Constantinople. Clipped? Asolati and Crisafulli 1994, 33, no. 1/3.1. From the Sammartini property; possibly the same as the Byzantine gold coin recorded in 1913 from that site, then identified as a cemetery: *ibid.*, n3. Cittanova is a Venetian hamlet 7 km north of Eraclea.

B9 COLOMBIER, Switzerland, before 1987.

Stray.
Solidus, Constantine IV (668–85), Italy; see Lafaurie and Morrisson 1987, 86. Colombier is on the western shore of Lake Neuchâtel, on the route north from Italy. It is about 35 km north of Moudon; see A26.

B10 CORNUS, Santa Caterina di Pitinnuri, Sardinia, c. 1857.

A large hoard of gold coins, deposited in the early 8th C.? Only one coin is specifically identified.
Tremissis, Justinian II with Tiberius IV (705–11), mint unspecified. A shepherd discovered a large deposit of gold coins: "una gran quantità . . . da empierne più litri"; the identification was made from a wax imprint: Spano 1858b, 188; Roberti 1910, 421n1; Taramelli 1915, 76n1; Mosser 1935, 22–3.

B11 COUVIN, province of Namur, Belgium, ?before 1905.

Follis, Constantine V (741–75), Constantinople.
The author discovered a series of coins during his archaeological prospections at Couvin, apparently on the site of the former castle. He enumerates nineteen coins of silver and bronze, ranging in date from Julius Caesar to our follis, without



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indicating whether they were stray finds or part of a hoard (or hoards). The bronze dekanoummion of Justinian, Carthage, was presumably another stray find: Maillieux 1905, 70; Lafaurie and Morrisson 1987, 81.
Couvin is at the foot of a steep cliff in the valley of the Eau Noire stream, whose waters ultimately flow into the Meuse, about 15 km due west. The town is astride a route which, coming from Avesnes, Cambrai and Arras (beyond which lies the valley of the Canche and Quentovic), runs in the general direction of Dinant, Liège, and Aachen. Another route reaches Couvin from the south, coming from the directions of Laon and Rheims.

CROYDON, see list of Arab finds.

B12 CSANYTELEK-SÍRÓHEGY, Hungary, 1934.

Single find, grave.
Follis, Leo VI (886–912), no mint mentioned.
Worn and perforated, the coin was found in a grave complex attributed to the 10th or 11th C.: Kovács 1989, 23, no. 63. The town is in the Tisza/Tisa (Theiss) river valley, some 20 km north of Szeged. Presumably a Magyar deposit.

B13 DETA, Romania, before 1887.

Single find, grave.
AE, Leo VI (886–912), denomination and mint unspecified; Kovács 1989, 25, no. 77.
The town is about halfway between Timisoara and the Danube. Possible Magyar grave?

B14 DURRËS, Albania, various dates.

Six apparently single finds of bronze coins.
1. Follis, Theophilus, 830/1–842, Constantinople? Spahiu 1979/80, 385, no. 247.
2. Follis, Basil I, Constantine and Leo VI, 870–9, Constantinople: *ibid.*, 386, no. 253, *DOC* 3: 482–4.
3. Follis, Basil I, 879–81, same mint: Spahiu 1979/80, 386, no. 251; cf. *DOC* 3: 482–4.
4–6. Folles, Leo VI, 886–912, same; no. 5 was discovered in 1950, in a cemetery: Spahiu 1979/80, 387, nos. 257–9.

B15 ERINGERFELD,[15] Westphalia, Germany, c. 1838.

Stray find?
Solidus, Michael III (after 852?), no mint given: Kennepohl 1949, 16, no. 4; correct identification by P. Berghaus reported by Hatz and Linder Welin 1968, 12n47.
Eringerfeld is 25 km southwest of Paderborn, on the Wester Schledde, a tributary of the Lippe river.

15 Although numismatists, including Germans, tend to identify this place as Ehringerfeld, see Board on Geographic Names 1960, 1: 309.



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B16 FEHMARN ISLAND?,[16] Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, 1833?

Apparent hoard of six Italo-Byzantine bronze coins, deposited c. 832/9.
1. 1 dekanoummion of Justinian I, 562–3, Ravenna.
2. Follis, Heraclius, 630–1, Sicily.
3. Follis, Constans II with Constantine IV, Heraclius and Tiberius, 659–68, Syracuse.
4. Follis, Constantine IV, 681–5, Syracuse.
5. Follis, Michael II and Theophilus, 821–9, Syracuse.
6. Follis, Theophilus with Michael III and Constantine, 832–9, Sicily: Komnick 1994, 82–3.

Fehmarn island lies about 95 km due east of Haithabu, off the Baltic coast.

B17 FÜLE, Hungary, before 1908.

Stray find?
Coin of Theophilus, Michael, and Constantine c. 830–42; unspecified metal, nothing more known; Kovács 1989, 28, no. 87.

B18 FUSINA, Italy, before c. 1980.

Stray find.
Follis, Nicephorus I (802–11), Syracuse: Asolati and Crisafulli 1994, 201, 9/14/112.
Over 100 coins (mostly bronze, and mostly late Roman) have been discovered at various times since c. 1900 in the embankments (*argini*) at Fusina, just across the lagoon from Venice; the fill was dredged mostly from the lagoon, apparently in the last century. Two bronze coins of Heraclius and one of Justin II also came from the same fill.

B19 GLEICHERWIESEN, Germany, 1957.

Stray surface find.
Follis, Constantine IV, 668–73, Carthage (Grierson Class 1). Laser 1980, 306, allows this identification, since one of the two T's he reports in the left and right fields is presumably a cross; cf. *DOC* 2: 520–1.
The village where the coin turned up lies between the highest mountain in the vicinity, the Grosser Gleichberg (alt. 679 m; southwest of Hildburghausen) and the prominent "Witches' Hill" (Hexenhügel, alt. 417 m). It is on the Milz creek, a tributary of the Franconian Saale (on which the Carolingian palace Salz stood, some 30 km downstream from Gleicherwiesen). The precise find spot (c. 700 m. southeast of Gleicherwiesen, alt. 355 m) seems to have been on or near the small road that goes

16 An alternative but apparently less reliable report places the find nearby on the mainland at Oldenburg in Holstein, Germany. On Oldenburg, an emporium with far-reaching connections to the Carolingian southwest, Slavic southeast (and beyond) and Scandinavia, see Gabriel 1988 and 1991. Oldenburg is about 20 km from Fehmarn island.



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over the Hexenhügel, toward the source of a tributary of the Itz river, which flows down to Hallstadt (and Bamberg).

Major hills and other prominent natural features played a crucial role in shaping prehistoric and early medieval routes by supplying landmarks to long-distance travelers.[17] For travelers coming up the Itz, the hill and the Gleich mountain pointed the way to the Franconian Saale (running southwestward) and the Werra river (flowing northward). The find spot lies roughly as far east as, and about half way between Erfurt and Hallstadt, two of the legal transit points Charlemagne authorized in 805 for merchants traveling to the Avars and Slavs: *MGH Capit.* no. 44, 7, 1.123.13–21. The find is about 80 km north-northwest of Münchberg (see A26).

B20 GRAULHET, Tarn, France, before 1899.

Stray find?
AE Leo VI (886–912). Discovered at Graulhet and given to the city of Albi. Rossignol 1899, 30–1, no. 1. A follis of Phocas struck at Carthage was found in the same town: *ibid.*, 15, no. 134; Lafaurie and Morrisson 1987, 69, with corrected identification of the earlier coin. The town is located on the Dadou, a tributary of the Tarn, about two thirds of the way between Toulouse and the Mediterranean.

B21 HAITHABU, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, 1907–39.

Three single finds.
1. Solidus of Theophilus, Michael II and Constantine, 832/9, Constantinople; made into a fibula: Komnick 1994, 107, no. 4. Apparently a grave find, discovered in the 1937–9 excavations. The coin looks "fresh from the mint": Jankuhn 1943, 114, with Tafel 2, m (p. 71), who suggested a link between its presence at Haithabu with Anons. 221–2, returning from Constantinople and Louis the Pious' court; see next item.
2. Follis of Theophilus, 839/42, Constantinople; found in 1913; Shepard 1995a, 48–55, suggests that this coin might have reached Haithabu with Anons. 221–2, returning from Constantinople.
3. Follis of Leo VI and Alexander, 886/912, Constantinople; found in 1907: see Komnick 1994, 107, nos. 5–6, respectively. Cf. also A19.

B22 HELLMONSÖDT, Austria, "many years before" 1934.

Hoard of Byzantine copper coins in a ceramic container; only four coins were not dispersed. Deposit c. 695?
1. Follis, Maurice (582–602).
2. Follis, Constans II (641–68).
3. Half follis, Constantine IV (668–85).
4. Half follis, Justinian II, 1st reign (685–95); see J. F. Kastner, *Fundberichte aus Österreich* 1 (1930/4): 65; Hahn 1990, 242.

17 See Freising 1977, 45.



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Hellmonsödt lies 14 km due north of Linz and the Danube, halfway to a tributary of the Vltava river, which flows north to Prague. Linz was an important benchmark for late Carolingian toll collecting in the Danube region: Raffelstetten Plea, 1, 251.1–2. See Ch. 22.2.

B23 HOHNHORST, Celle, Niedersachsen-Lüneburg, Germany, date unknown.

Reported copper minihoard of two late Roman and one Byzantine coins, deposited c. 912? Or c. 720–41?

1. Half follis, Anastasius I (491), Constantinople.
2. Follis, Maurice (594/5), Antioch.
3. Follis, ?Leo VI and Constantine VII, 911/12. Berger 1988, 89, no. 5004/1–3. According to Grierson (*DOC* 3: 508), there are no bronze coins of Leo VI with Constantine VII. Either Constantine has been misread for Alexander, or a coin of Leo III and Constantine V has been misidentified. An Antonianus is also ascribed to this hoard, erroneously according to Berger. Celle is on the Aller, upstream from Bremen.

HON, see A21.

B24 JÁNOSHALMA-KISRÁTA, Hungary, 1936.

Single find, grave.
Solidus, Theophilus, Michael and Constantine, 830–42, Constantinople; very heavily worn and cut in half; in a burial, apparently male, of uncertain date, although presumably of the 9th or 10th C.: Kovács 1989, 33, no. 115.
The town is 30 km east of the Danube, some 130 km south of Budapest.

B25 KEIDENZELL, Franconia (mod. Bavaria), Germany, before 1963.

Stray.
Follis, Theophilus (829–42), Constantinople: Kellner 1963, 76, no. 5050; Hatz and Linder Welin 1968, 12.
Keidenzell, in middle Franconia (about 20 km west of Nürnberg), is 2 km from a tributary of the Regnitz. It lies about 55 km south of Hallstadt, and about 35 km (a day's travel) southeast of Forcheim, also on the Regnitz. Both were authorized trading posts with the Slavs and Avars specified by Charlemagne: *MGH Capit.* no. 44, 7, 1.123.16–17.

B26 LEIBNITZER FELD, Austria, before 1867.

Single find.
Follis, Leo VI, 886/912, Constantinople. This coin appears not to be related to two single finds of Italian tremisses (John, 423/4, Ravenna and Leo I, 457/61 or 465/71); see Pichler 1865–75, 2: 231; Hahn 1990, 244.



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The plain where the coin was found is cut by the Mur; the Mur and the road on which Leibnitz stands runs north to Graz; the road continues south toward Ptuj, on the Drava.

B27 LUDWIGSHAFEN-MAUDACH, Germany, 1874.

Single find.
Solidus, Justinian II (685–95 or 705–11), ?Constantinople; see Chantraine 1965, 332, no. 2206/28 (who assigns it to Constantinople); Lafaurie and Morrisson 1987, 84, do not accept this mint attribution.
Maudach is 13 km north of Speyer and today some 2 km from the course of the Rhine. The exact find spot bears an archaic-sounding route name ("am hohen Weg"); cf. *Mitteilungen des historischen Vereines der Pfalz* 5 (1875): 145; Kreuter 1978, 12–13.

B28 LUNI, Italy, 19th C.

Seven (or four?) bronze single finds (and minihoards)?
1. Follis, Leo III and Constantine V (720–41), Syracuse.
2–4. Three folles, Michael II (821–9), Syracuse.
5–6. Two folles, Theophilus (829–42), Syracuse.
7. Follis, Michael III and Theodora (852–6), Syracuse; Bertino 1983, 299–300; cf. 274; Morrisson 1998.
From the early medieval town.

B29 MARSEILLES, France, 1994.

Excavated single find.
Follis of Constantine IV, Sicily, type 4, 681–5, from the excavations of the ZAC Providence: Morrisson 1998.

B30 MIKULČICE, Czech Republic, c. 1959.

Excavated single find, grave.
Solidus, Michael III (856–67), Constantinople; Grierson Class III: *DOC* 3: 463–4, judging from the description of Vavřinek 1970, 33; cf. Grierson 1973, 10–11.
The coin comes from a ring fort or "castle mound" called "Valy" near Mikulčice; the solidus, which is reported as uncirculated, was found in the mouth of a corpse in the structure's cemetery. The burial (no. 480) was located right next to the southern wall of Church no. 3, a three-naved structure of the 9th C.; cf. Kučerovská 1980, 217.

Mikulčice is a ring wall fortification assigned archaeologically to the "Great Moravian" period. It appears to lie in the floodplain of the Morava river, about 1.5 km from Branch One of the Amber Trail, in the classification of Freising 1977, Hauptkarte (= "Mikultschitz"). At the same site, excavation of the apparently "Great Moravian" stratum some 35 m away from the solidus burial produced three more coins, only one of which was located in a grave. These were two silver pennies of the



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mint of Milan of Emperor Lambert (894–8), reported as unworn and with two perforations each, and one from the same mint of Berengarius I (888–915): Kučerovská 1980, 215–18. In the subsequent discussion, the two main interpretations for this find connected them with Magyar raids in Italy and with pre-Magyar trade. Kučerovská cited unspecified work of Grierson which showed that these particular issues were very early in their respective coinages, and that similar coins were lacking from undisputed Magyar contexts further east (*ibid.*, 226). In fact, more recent research proves that only Lambert's coins are lacking from Magyar archaeological contexts; fifty-one coins of Berengarius' royal issues are inventoried by Kovács 1989, 97, Table 15, who shows that most of them reached the Magyar domains in connections with raids in Italy (93–9). Furthermore, paired perforations also occur on these coins: Kovács 1989, 113n593. In any case, these apparently Magyar finds (which are perhaps from a slightly later occupation of the site), show that Mikulčice was on the 9th-C. route to Italy.

B31 NIDA (Roman site), Heddernheim, Hessia, Germany, before 1931.

Stray find?
Semissis, Constantine IV (668–85), Syracuse, reattributed by Morrisson 1998 on the basis of Schubert 1989, no. 2270c, 23, p. 250 and 251n.
The gold coin is believed to have been found on the Roman site of Nida, on the Nidda, just west of Frankfurt. Note, however, that this piece comes from a private collection which included some coins which had been purchased, so that the provenance is not absolutely secure: Schubert 1989, 245.

B32 NIJMEGEN, Netherlands, ?before 1947.

Stray?
Solidus of Constantine IV, Heraclius, and Tiberius (668–81); see Lafaurie and Morrisson 1987, 82; some doubt exists about this find.[18] Nijmegen is on the Waal, a branch of the Rhine, about 40 km from Dorestad as the crow flies.

B33 ORŞOVA, Romania, before 1907.

Two single finds.
1. Solidus, Basil I (867–86), no mint indicated.
2. AE, Leo VI, denomination and mint not indicated: Kovács 1989, 51, nos. 260 and 263, respectively.

These finds are isolated from the bulk of the finds mapped by Kovács (Abb. 48) and presumably have no Magyar connection. Orşova is on the north bank of the Danube, in the Iron Gates stretch, at the confluence of the Cerna river.

18 Their citation of A. W. Byvanck, *Excerpta romana* 3 (Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatiën, 89, The Hague, 1947), is incorrect, and the correct reference could not be found.



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B34 OSVĚTIMANY, Czech Republic, 1923/4.

Single find, excavation.
Solidus, Theophilus, Michael II, and Constantine (830–40), Constantinople (Class 3: *DOC* 3: 425–8); illustrated in Hrubý 1959, pl. 13.
This coin was discovered during amateur excavations in the ring fort known locally as "St. Clement's," near Osvětimany, conducted by V. Gloz: Hrubý 1959, 40 (cf. 66); Sejbal 1959, 63n7 (cf. 70). The fort is located in the Chřiby hills (German: Marsgebirge; alt. 461 m), thus between and overlooking Branch One (c. 7 km distant) and Branch Two (c. 1 km distant) of the Amber Trail: Freising 1977, Hauptkarte. It is 17 km west of the major "Great Moravian" site of Stare Město. Later excavations dated this fort's construction and most extensive habitation to the 9th C. and the "Great Moravian" culture: Hrubý 1959. See also Kučerovská 1980, 215; and Kovács 1989, 135n698, who, paradoxically, deduces from the coin's excellent condition that it only reached the region in the 10th C.[19]

B35 PÁLMONOSTORA, Hungary, c. 1934?

Stray find.
Solidus, Theophilus, Michael II and Constantine (830–40), Constantinople (cf. *DOC* 3: 426–7, 3d). The coin is perforated; Kovács 1989, 82, no. 865. Magyar find?

B36 PÁZMÁND, Hungary, before 1915.

Stray find.
AE, Leo V (813–20); nothing else known: Kovács 1989, 52, no. 267.
Pázmánd is between Székesfehérvár and Budapest, 20 km west of the Danube.

B37 POREĆ, Croatia, before 1974.

Stray find.
Tremissis, Philippicus (711–13), Syracuse (*DOC* 2: 672, no. 18) or Ravenna, according to Gorini 1974, 145 (with photo). Presumably this gold coin could have been deposited while Poreć was still under Byzantine control.

PORTO TORRES, see A32.

B38 PTUJ, Slovenia, before 1867.

Two single finds.
1. Follis, Constantine V and Leo IV (751–75), Sicily, Kos 1988, 2: 352, no. 434/25/1211; Morrisson 1998.

19 J. Sejbal, "Zum Fund einer byzantinischen Goldmünze aus der ersten Hälfte des 9. Jahrhunderts auf dem grossmährischen St. Klemens-Burgwall," *Moravské numismatické zprávy* 6 (1959): 17–19, appears not to be available in North America.



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2. Follis, Leo VI (886–912), Constantinople: Kos 1988, 2: 352, no. 434/25/1211;[20] see also Pichler 1865–75, 2: 230–1.

Cowrie shells (see above B6) were also found in a 10th-C. cemetery at Ptuj, and point to contacts with the Indian Ocean: Mitscha-Märheim 1955, 32.

B39 PULA, DOMUS DE MARIA, and TEULADA, Sardinia, c. 1980–95.

Five stray finds.

1. Follis, Constantine IV (668–81), Carthage.
2–5. Four folles, Leo V and Constantine (813–20), Syracuse: Biamonti 1996, 244–5, nos. 70–4; Morrisson 1998. I owe a copy of both articles to the kindness of Cécile Morrisson.

The Lulliri collection was formed of stray surface finds from the southernmost tip of Sardinia, in the coastal region of Pula, Domus de Maria and Teulada; the collection also includes fifty-seven Vandal coins, ten Justinianic issues of Carthage, and two Heraclian dekanoummia of Carthage.

B40 RECANATI, Italy, c. 1850–1953.

Fourteen apparently stray copper and gold finds and, perhaps, a mini-hoard of gold.

1–2. Semissis, Constantine IV (668–9), Constantinople (a mini-hoard?).
3. Half follis, Constantine IV (674–85), Rome.
4. Follis, Anastasius II (713–15), Ravenna.
5. Semissis, Leo III (720–32), Constantinople.
6. Tremissis, Constantine V (744/5 or 749/50), Ravenna.
7–8. Folles, Constantine V (751–75), Syracuse.
9. Follis, Theophilus (828–30/1), Constantinople.
10. Follis, Theophilus (830/1–42), Syracuse.
11. Follis? Michael III (842–67), Syracuse.
12–15. Folles, Leo VI (886–912), Constantinople.

A collection of coins acquired in the Marche region, south of Ancona, by R. di Colloredo Mels and his grandfather. Callegher 1996, 7–13, plausibly deduces from the collector's correspondence and the coins themselves that this part of the collection comes from local finds. Recanati is on the high spur of land which reaches the Adriatic between the mouths of the Musone and Potenza rivers: Callegher 1996, nos. 82–96, 38–40 and plates, pp. 22–3; Morrisson 1998. I am grateful to Cécile Morrisson for knowledge of these coins and for Callegher's article.

B41 RUINAS, Ozieri, Sardinia, 1990.

Hoard of twelve bronze coins, deposited c. 820.

1. Dekanoummion, Tiberius II (578–82), Ravenna.
2. Dekanoummion, Heraclius (610–41), Catania.

20 Hahn 1990, 145, reports this "provisionally" and citing Kos, in press, as one follis of ?Theophilus, Syracuse 830/42. The description in Kos 1988, 2: 376, n1211, seems difficult to reconcile with this attribution.



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3. Follis, Constans II (641–68), Syracuse.
4–12. Nine folles, Leo V (813–20), Syracuse: see Guido 1994; Morrisson 1998.

The hoard was discovered during the farming of a field known locally as "Ruinas," and belonging to the village of Ozieri in the hills above Oristano (25 km away as the crow flies) and Sardinia's west coast. Roman ruins and much ceramic mark the spot.

B42 SAN GIOVANNI DI OSSI, Sardinia, 1907.

Hoard of nineteen Byzantine and Lombard gold pieces, deposited c. 713/44. If the identification with Leontius (no. 6) is correct, the Byzantine coins point to an early date within that range of years.

a. Byzantine:
1–3. Three tremisses, Tiberius III Apsimar (698–705), Sardinia.
4–5. Two tremisses, Justinian II with Tiberius (705–11), Sardinia.
6. One tremissis, Leo III (717–41), or perhaps more likely, Leontius (695–8), Sardinia: Dessì 1908, with *DOC* 2: 44; cf. *ibid.*, 617, n. to no. 11 and, on the last coin, *DOC* 3: 82n245.

b. Lombard:
7–19. Thirteen tremisses, Liutprand (713–44). On the Liutprand issue, see e.g., Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 64, group 2.

San Giovanni di Ossi is, or was, 11 km from Ossi; Ossi (338 m) overlooks Sassari; it lies up the Mascari creek, a tributary of the Mannu, which enters the Mediterranean on Sardinia's northwest coast at Porto Torres, a distance of c. 25 km as the crow flies.

B43 SANT'ANTIOCO, Sardinia, "a few years" before 1907.

Hoard of 1,200 "Byzantine" gold coins (Roberti).
Dispersed; nothing further known; see Dessì 1907, 26n1; Roberti 1910, 421n1; Taramelli 1915, 77n1; Mosser 1935, 76.

B44 SARDINIA 1, 1965.

Hoard of ten gold Byzantine and Lombard coins, deposited c. 712/44. The Byzantine coins indicate an earlier date within that range.

a. Byzantine:
1–4. Four solidi, Tiberius (III? 698–705)?
5–6. Two tremisses, Tiberius?

b. Lombard:
7–10. Four tremisses: Liutprand (712–44): Morrisson 1979a, 232, who seems to suggest that the hoard was found in northern Sardinia.

B45 SARDINIA 2 (?), before 1975.

Hoard of thirty-eight Byzantine copper coins reported to have been discovered in Sardinia; deposited c. 685–95.



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1. Half follis, Maurice (582–602), Constantine in Numidia.
2–3. Two dekanoummia, Heraclius (610–41), Carthage.
Of Constans II (643–68), Carthage:
4. Follis, class 2 (643–7).
5–9. Five half folles, class 2 (643–7).
10. Dekanoummion, class 2 (643–7).
11–15. Five half folles, class 4 (647–59).
16. Half follis, class 4b (647–59).
17. Follis, class 5 (659–68).
18–20. AE three half folles, class 5 (659–68).
21. AE follis, Syracuse (641–68).
22. AE follis, Syracuse, class 2 (647–50).
23. AE half follis, Rome, class 4 (659–68)
Of Constantine IV (668–85):
24. Half follis, Constantinople, class 3 (674–85).
25. Follis, Carthage, class 1 (668–73).
26. Follis, Carthage, class 2 (674–81).
27–9. Three half folles, Carthage, class 2 (681–5).
30. Follis, Syracuse, class 1 (668–74).
31. Half follis, Rome, class 2 (674–81).
Of Justinian II, first reign (685–95):
32–6. Five half folles, Sardinia, class 1 (685–95).
37–8. Two half folles, Sardinia, class 2; O'Hara 1977.

B46 SCHWAAN, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany, before 1980.

Stray find?
Solidus, Constantine V and Leo IV (741–75), Sicily; Laser 1980, 55–6; Laser and Stribrny 1997, 228, no. 2001; Morrisson 1998. The town where the coin was found is on the Warnow river, about 25 km upstream from the mouth, at Rostock, on the Baltic.

B47 SETTIMO, Sardinia, 1842.

Hoard of an uncertain number of Byzantine gold coins, deposited either c. 610–41 or c. 698–705.
The emperors whose coins figured in this hoard are: Marcian (450–7), Tiberius II (578–82) or III (698–705), Phocas (602–10), and Heraclius (610–41). The other three emperors mentioned suggest that the Tiberius whose coins were found here is most probably Tiberius II, and that the deposit date, consequently, was in the first half of the 7th C. See Spano 1858a, 59; Taramelli 1915, 76n1 (see above); Mosser 1935, 79.

B48 SHALËS KONISPOL, Albania, before 1979.

Stray find (cf. Spahiu 1993, 626, Figure 1).
Follis, Nicephorus I (802–3), Constantinople (class 1, *DOC* 3: 357, no. 4.1, etc.): Spahiu 1979/80, 385, no. 244.



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The find spot is about 20 km inland, to the southeast, from Buthrotos (mod. Butrint) on the coast.

B49 SIRMIUM (mod. Sremska Mitrovica), Serbia, Yugoslavia, before 1978.

Two stray copper finds.
1. Follis, Michael II and Theophilus (821/9), Constantinople; one perforation; reported as uncirculated.
2. Follis, Leo VI (886/912), same mint. Both from Popović 1978a, 185, nos. 50 and 51, respectively.

B50 SKOPJE, Macedonia, before 1929.

Stray find.
Solidus, Theophilus. Description shows that it is probably Grierson Class 3, 830/1–840, Constantinople. See Grbić 1929, 57; on the local provenance, 51; cf. Metcalf 1979, 32 with n21.
Skopje lies at the nexus of several routes through the Balkans. It is on the Vardar river, at the end of which lies Thessalonica. In the later Middle Ages, a road north to Kučevište crossed the mountain to reach the source of the Binačka Morava, a tributary of the Morava, which then could be followed north to the Danube and Belgrade. Another route, which seems to be Roman, ran from Skopje northwest into the Kosovo plain; from there, different routes went north: Škrivanić 1974, 97–8; cf. map facing 81.

B51 SMOKOVAC (kod Knina), Croatia, before 1981.

Stray find?
Solidus, Basil I and Constantine (868–79), Constantinople (*DOC* 3: 488, no. 2b4): Delonga 1981, 217, no. 37. The find site is by Knin (cf. the Biskupija deposits, B3).

B52 SNEEK, Netherlands, 1843.

Single find.
Half follis of Constantine IV (668–84): see Lafaurie and Morrisson 1987, 89, who, without explaining why, question whether it is a coin, and assign it to Constantine IV; Bolin 1926, p. (22) 79d (Constantine V); Van der Vin 1992, 120, identifies the metal and denomination, but proposes an attribution to Constans II. The coin was discovered at this place in Frisia during the construction of a new cemetery.

B53 STRADEN, Austria, ?1826; before 1867.

Single find.
Follis, Leo V (813/20), Syracuse: Hahn 1990, 244; Blackburn 1993, 49, no. 24; Morrisson 1998; Pichler 1865–75, 2: 230.
Straden is on a north–south road linking the Raab river to the Mur: see the 19th-C. situation depicted by Pichler 1865–75, 2: fold-out map. It is about 20 km east of Leibnitz and 2 km from the Sulzbach, which flows south into the Mur river.



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B54 STREDA NAD BODROGEM, Slovakia, 1885.

Hoard of silver and gold coins, deposited after c. 868/79.
Solidus, Basil I and Constantine (868/79).
The gold coin was found in a deposit of ashes, charcoal, and containers, apparently along with an unspecified quantity of unidentified silver coins: Ondrouch 1964, 170, no. 577; Kovács 1989, 20–1, no. 49. Streda nad Bodrogem is on the Ondava river which flows south from the Carpathian mountains into the Tisza/Tisa and hence into the Danube.

B55 TISZAESZLÁR-BASHALOM-FENYVESTÁBLA, Hungary, 1958.

Single coin, grave.
Solidus, Theophilus, Michael II and Constantine (830–40), Constantinople (cf. *DOC* 3: 425–8, class 3); worn, clipped and perforated. Grave of an aristocratic, presumably Magyar youth; family grave complex from around the middle of the 10th C.: Kovács 1989, 69–70, no. 382.

B56 TOMBELLE, Vigonovo, Italy, ?1946.

Copper hoard? Deposit c. 811?
1–3. Folles, Constantine V (751–5), Syracuse.
4. Follis, Michael I (811), Syracuse: Asolati and Crisafulli 1993, 163–4, nos. 17/1.5–8. According to information Asolati and Crisafulli obtained on the spot, these coins were part of a larger group discovered in a container during the demolition of the bell tower of Santa Maria del Capitello, in this Venetian hamlet; many of them were dispersed without being recorded. Our items were accompanied by four bronze coins of Maurice and Constans II issued at Constantinople, Antioch, and Carthage, four anonymous folles (10th–11th C.) and three *histamena* of the Angeloi, which suggest to the publishers four constituent clusters, i.e. separate hoards, of coins. They cautiously suggest that these coins come from votive deposits (recent evidence suggests a shrine there from c. 400), against which they note the fine quality of the coins preserved in one or more local private collections. The place is some 6 km east of Padua, 13 km from the lagoon of Venice.

B57 "TRANSYLVANIA," before 1914.

Stray?
Solidus, Basil I (867–86); nothing more known: Kovács 1989, 82, no. 867.

B58 TREBINJE, Bosnia, before 1979.

Stray?
AV Theophilus; cast of a local find of gold coin of Theophilus: Metcalf 1979, 32, 2.1 (denomination unidentified). Trebinje lies in the Popovo plain, on the opposite side of the mountains from Dubrovnik, some 20 km away.



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B59 TRILJ, Croatia, 1921.

Single coin, grave.
Solidus, Constantine V, and Leo IV (760–75), Syracuse; found in the grave of an aristocratic woman, buried at the church of St. Michael.
The grave appears to date from the first half of the 9th C.: Werner 1979, 228 and 232. Cf. above B3, for 20 more solidi of the same type, at Biskupija. Trilj is on Cetina, in the hills above Split.

B60 VELIKI MUN (*alias* Mlun), Croatia, 1963.

Single coin, grave.
Tremissis, Constantine V (741–75), Syracuse or Ravenna.
Pierced and clipped; excavated with bronze earrings in a female grave the material culture of which was interpreted as pagan Slavonic: Marušič 1980; identification by Morrisson 1998, who further reports its identity with a coin from the Archaeological Museum of Istria in Pula. The grave is located on a hill whose name is given as Zajćji Brigeg, near Veliki Mun, which is about 5 km southwest of Buzet, in the middle of the neck of the Istrian peninsula.

VENICE, see also A37–A40.

B61 VENICE, behind the church of San Pietro in Castello, 1988.

Excavation.
Follis, Leo III and Constantine V (720–41), Ravenna, from excavations behind the church.
Discovered in the same stratum as three 4th-C. Roman bronze coins, and the lead seals of two Byzantine officials, Gregorius prefec(tus) (pre)ctorii [!], assigned to the 7th C., and Mouselios, imperial asēkrētis (cf. Laurent, 2: 12, no. 18, 7th C.): Asolati and Crisafulli 1994, 235–8, 9/38 (3).4.

B62 VERONA, Cortile del Tribunale, Italy, c. 1982.

Single finds; excavation.
1. Follis, Justinian II (692–5 or 705–11), Syracuse (*DOC* 2: 598, no. 57).
2. Half follis "of same period."
3. Half follis, Leo III, 732–c. 735, Constantinople (*DOC* 3: 263, no. 40b1).
All three were found (along with 4th-C. coins) in an 8th-C. hole, dug perhaps in connection with the construction at that time of church of Santa Maria Antiqua: Arazone 1987, 206; cf. 200. The excavation produced c. 500 coins, of which about a fifth were unidentifiable at the time of writing, and included numerous late Roman bronze coins. No coins between Justinian I and Justinian II had been identified as of 1987.



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B63 VORË, Albania, before 1979.

Three stray finds?
1. Follis, Basil I and Constantine (868–70), Constantinople: Spahiu 1979/80, 386, no. 252.
2–3. Folles, Leo VI (886–912), same mint: Spahiu 1979/80, 387, no. 261 and 388, no. 273.
Vorë is near Tirana.

B64 WAGNA, Austria, before 1847.

Stray find?
Follis, Leo VI (886/912), Constantinople: Pichler 1865–75, 2: 231; Hahn 1990, 244.
Wagna is by the Mur, about 3 km south of Leibnitz, on the road toward the Drava.

B65 WESTERHAM, Kent, England, 1954.

Stray find.
AV solidus, Leo III (717–41), Syracuse: Whitting 1961, 28; Rigold 1975, 666, no. 25; Lafaurie and Morrisson 1987, 94.
The find place is about 30 km southeast of London on the Darent, a tributary of the Thames.

B66 WIENER NEUSTADT, Austria, 1951.

Mini-hoard, two copper coins.
1. Follis, Constans II, Constantine IV, Heraclius and Tiberius (662/8), Sicily.
2. Follis, Leo V (813/20), Constantinople; B. Koch, *Fundberichte aus Österreich*, 5 (1946–50): 235; Hahn 1990, 241.
The coins were discovered by children playing on the Neustädter Kanal. Wiener Neustadt is on the route which leads along the Leitha river toward the Danube and Carnuntum. This place's distant connections in the early Middle Ages are equally indicated by a coconut shell – from Africa or southeast Asia – excavated in a 10th-C. grave at Katzelsdorf, 4 km south of Wiener Neustadt: Mitscha-Märheim 1955, 42.

B67 ZAGORJE OB SAVI, Slovenia, ?1894.

Hoard of five Roman and Byzantine coins? Deposited c. 870/9?
1. AR Vespasian (69–79).
2. AE Julia Mamaea (222–35).
3. AE Gallienus (254–68).
4. AE Constantius II (337–61).
5. AE Basil I, Constantine, Leo VI (870/9), Constantinople: Müllner 1894b says that they were found in the same garden, and appears to suggest they are a hoard; Kos 1988, 1: 510, no. 325/1–2, 5, 10, 12, treats them as single finds.
Zagorje is on the north bank of the Sava river, where a road heads north across the



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mountains to the Savinja river valley, which it reaches 30 km away, halfway between Celje (B7) and Rečica ob Raki (A33).

B68 ZELLERNDORF, Austria, c. 1936.

Single find, excavation.
Follis, 751/75, Syracuse: Hahn 1990, 242; cf. Morrisson 1998.
According to *Fundberichte aus Österreich* 2 (1936): 120, the coin was recovered during excavations under the floor of the local church (i.e. grave goods?); Mitscha-Mährheim 1962, 220; Blackburn 1993, 48, no. 1. The village is on the banks of the Pulkau stream which flows eastward into the Dyje/Thaya river, a tributary of the Morava, which enters the Danube 10 km downstream from Carnuntum.

B69 ZEMIANSKÝ VRBOVOK, Slovakia? 1937.

Hoard of eighteen silver coins and hack-silver; deposited c. 674–81.

1–16. Sixteen ceremonial "miliaresia," Constans II (659–68), Constantinople (Class 6: *DOC* 2: 437, no. 47).

17. Hexagram, Constans II and Constantine IV (659–68), Constantinople? (Class 5: cf. *DOC* 2: 441–2, nos. 57–8).

18. Hexagram, Constantine IV (674–81), Constantinople (cf. *DOC* 2: 536, no. 26): Radoměrský 1953; Ondrouch 1964, 170, no. 576.
The coins have been clipped, often heavily. Svoboda 1953 contends from the objects and their find circumstances that this was the trove of a silversmith who had traveled into Avar territory from Byzantium; Grierson (*DOC* 2: 19) suggests that the group of sixteen coins had been a gift to a foreign ruler. Pohl 1988, 195, refers to this as a find of hack-silver and seems to assume that it is Avar, although it is separated from Avar finds on his map 4.



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# APPENDIX 4

## *A register of Mediterranean communications, 700–900*

THE REGISTER catalogues movements in and around the Mediterranean which illuminate our theme; for the sake of convenience it also includes selected documents concerning, e.g., customs dues.[1] Before 700 and after 900, it is merely illustrative – I am aware of many more movements in those periods which it does not include. Between 700 and 900 it is most comprehensive for long-distance trips which crossed boundaries; Latin, Old Church Slavonic, Greek, Arabic and Hebrew sources were examined in decreasing order of thoroughness. It includes a small number of movements which, though they did not directly involve the Mediterranean, proved germane to our investigation (e.g. communications between the Bulgarian and Frankish empires). Trips inside the Byzantine empire are very incompletely recorded; those inside the Caliphate are barely treated. To do the former would require another book; the latter, another lifetime. Even so, the register represents the most comprehensive inventory so far attempted of the movements in this period of individuals, small groups, ships, some overland travelers, and military forces. It distills the result of the prosopographical analyses which will be published elsewhere, and creates a new basis for addressing the problem of communications in the early medieval Mediterranean. Future scholars will be able to improve and expand on it.

The annotation "(arr.)" or "(dep.)" signals that the date refers to an arrival or departure at the place where the annotation has been placed. Citations of primary and secondary sources for each movement have been kept to a minimum.

1 c. 609–10, Alexandria–Constantinople. Phocas seized the Alexandrian grain ships at Constantinople when he learned of Alexandria's defection to Heraclius: John of Nikiu, *Chronicle*, pp. 176–7.

2 Sept. 619, Rome–Ascalon–Jerusalem (arr.). Sophronius brought John Moschos' corpse home to the Levant, to bury him at Sinai; Saracen raids made that impossible, so he took it to Jerusalem, where he arrived at the

1 Of course none of the latter are counted as movements in Ch. 14.



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beginning of indiction 8: anonymous prologue to the *Pratum spirituale* (cf. CPG 7376), 93.53–7.

3 Shortly before 31 May 632, Constantinople–Carthage (arr.). Eparch George returned to Africa with Heraclius' command to baptize all Jews and Samaritans by force; he began on 31 May: Maximus Confessor, *Ep. 8 frag.*, Devreesse, p. 34; cf. Dagron and Déroche 1991, 31.

4 Between 1 June and 31 August 632,[2] Carthage–Jerusalem. Maximus Confessor wrote to an abbot about the forced baptism: *Ep. 8 frag.*, p. 34; Dagron and Déroche 1991, 30.

5 After late April or May 641, Constantinople–Septem. After the death of Heraclius-Constantine, his advisor Philagrius sakellarios was tonsured and exiled to Septem (mod. Ceuta, Africa): Nicephorus I, *Brev.*, 30, 80.7–10; cf. Van Dieten 1972, 68.

6 After 28–9 September 641, Constantinople–Carthage. After renouncing his patriarchal office on this date, Pyrrhus hid and then sailed off to Carthage (*apeplei*: Nicephorus, *Brev.*, 31, 82.28; the text says "Chalcedon," but is universally and persuasively emended to "Carthage": e.g., *ibid.*, n17). For the day of the month: Van Dieten 1972, 74.

7 Before 641/6,[3] Carthage–Constantinople–Carthage. Bishop Fortunius of Carthage came to Constantinople under Patriarch Paul II: *Conc. CPitanum a. 680–1*, actio 14, *ACO* ser. 2, 2.2.652.4–8; Van Dieten 1972, 79.

8 After 24 November 642 and before 29 May 643,[4] Rome–Constantinople. Pope Theodore I wrote to the new Patriarch Paul II, the bishops who consecrated him, and the emperor: JE 2049, *apud* Anastasius Bibliothecarius' *Collectanea*, PL, 129.577C–584C.

9 642–3, Tripoli–Sicily. Refugees fled the Arabs: Amari 1933–9, 1: 232–3.

10 29 May 643, Cyprus–Rome. Archbishop Sergius of Cyprus wrote to Pope Theodore I: *ACO* ser. 2, 1.60.11–64.12; cf. Van Dieten 1972, 82 with n30.

11 After July 645 and before May 649,[5] Carthage–Rome. Pyrrhus came to Rome and was welcomed by Pope Theodore I: Maximus Confessor, *Disputatio cum Pyrrho*, PG, 91.288A and 353A; *Liber pont.*, Mommsen, 179.13–25.

12 Before 646, before 17 August, Carthage–Rome. Bishops of Africa wrote to the pope: *ACO* ser. 2, 1.66–70; cf. Van Dieten 1972, 87.

13 Shortly after 17 August 646, Carthage–Rome. Victor, bishop of Carthage, announced to the pope that he had been consecrated on this date: *ACO* ser. 2, 1.100.1–2.

14 After c. 646 and before 653, Rome (–?Ravenna)–Constantinople. Pyrrhus

2 The letter refers to "the present fifth indiction."

3 In 646 Victor was bishop of Carthage, see below, R13.

4 The first date is Theodore's accession; for the second, see Caspar 1930–3, 2: 544n2; cf. Van Dieten 1972, 81.

5 After Pyrrhus' debate at Carthage against Maximus; before Theodore's death: Van Dieten 1972, 85–7.



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left Rome, negotiated with the exarch of Ravenna (he entered into contact with the exarch's men in Rome) and returned to Constantinople: *Liber pont.*, Mommsen, 179.20–5; Theodore Spoudaios, *Commemoratio* (CPG 7969), *PL*, 129.592B–593C; Van Dieten 1972, 104.

15 After 1 September 647 and, probably, before 13 May 649; certainly before 654,[6] Constantinople–Rome. Apparently, before Pope Theodore I's death a patrician was sent from Constantinople to persuade the pope and Maximus Confessor to accept the imperial *Typos* on monotheletism: Anastasius Apocrisiarius, *Relatio motionis* (*BHG* 1231), *PG*, 90.113D–116C; Theodore Spoudaios, *Comm.*, *PL*, 129.594A.

16 648–9 (or 647–8), Caliphate–Cyprus. The Arabs conquered Cyprus: Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 59 with n1.

17 649–53, Caliphate (Jerusalem? Alexandria?)–Rome–Caliphate. (Afflicted Christian) envoys came to Rome, asking Pope Martin I for help; he supplied some, which the Byzantine authorities construed as treasonable aid to the Muslims: Martin I (JE 2078), *PL*, 129.587C–D.

18 652, Syria–Sicily. Mu'awiya, Arab governor of Syria, sent his namesake Mu'awiya ibn Khudayj to raid Sicily; he returned with booty and some captives: *Liber pont.*, Mommsen, 183.18–21, with the Arabic sources discussed by Amari 1933–9, 1: 194–206.

19 18 June 653, Rome (dep.)–Ostia–Messina–Calabria–"many islands"–Naxos–Constantinople. Pope Martin I was arrested and taken to Portus in a small boat. There he was put aboard a ship which got under way immediately; he reached Constantinople on 17 September: for details, see Ch. 16.5.

20 Before June 653, Antioch–Palermo. Tiberius, father of Pope Sergius, immigrated from the region of Antioch: *Liber pont.*, Mommsen, 210.1–2.

21 15 May 655, Rome–Constantinople (arr.). Papal legates arrived in Constantinople: Anastasius Apocrisiarius, *Relatio*, *PG*, 90.121B; Maximus, *Ad Anastasium*, *PG*, 90.132A with Van Dieten 1972, 106.

22 Before Sept. 655, Pontic coast of Asia Minor–Cherson. Small ships (*naviculae*) crossed over infrequently to Cherson, selling grain and other (food) wares (*species*, presumably Anastasius' translation of τὰ εἴδη) and loading salt. Martin I complained that the Roman church was not sending him wine or grain: JE 2081, *PL*, 129.601B–D.

23 c. 660/8 Africa–Constantinople–Africa. An African went to Constantinople to get a cure for his son's testicles. *Miracula Artemii* (*BHG* 173), 4, 4.19–5.16.

6 After Pyrrhus' debate at Carthage against Maximus; before Theodore's death: Van Dieten 1972, 85–7, and 94–5 with n73, who leaves open the outside chance that this mission occurred as late as 654 (96n73); cf. *Relatio motionis*, *PG*, 90.120D for the date of issue of the Typos.



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24 c. 660/8, Constantinople–Gaul–Constantinople. Aboard a Constantinopolitan ship on a merchant voyage, St. Artemius cured the testicles of its carpenter, who had made wooden fittings for the saint's shrine, in the middle of the night, at sea, as they approached Gaul; his ship repairs allowed a safe voyage and excellent profit from his trade: *ibid.*, 27, 39.8–40.21.

25 662–3, Constantinople–Aegean coast of Greece–Athens–Taranto. Emperor Constans II traveled with his army along the coast of Greece; after wintering in Athens, he traveled by sea to Taranto, arriving in the spring of 663. See Ch. 3.2.

26 669 (668/9?), Egypt–Sicily. Mu'awiya ibn Khudayj, governor of Egypt, sent a naval expedition under Abd-Allah ibn Qays; it captured booty, including "icons" of gold, silver, and pearls. The Arabists follow the Arabic sources and date this raid to 668–9 (after Constans II's assassination): Amari 1933–9, 1: 195–216; Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 1: 63. The contemporary *Liber pont.*, Mommsen, 190.11–40, describes an Arab raid launched from Alexandria against Syracuse, which removed to Egypt the "bronze" which had been taken to Syracuse from Rome, and which would fit the "icons" (i.e. statues) of the Arabic sources, which it places in the pontificate of Adeodatus (672–6) and after the usurpation of Mezezius. Nonetheless, Mezezius' usurpation appears to have occurred in 668–9: P. A. Hollingsworth, *ODB* 2: 1359.

27 Between 670 and 680,[7] Cyprus–Constantinople. A convoy of ships, including one bearing the relics of St. Therapon, sailed to the capital; this was conceivably an evacuation fleet: *Transl. et mir. Therapontis* (*BHG* 1797), 8–10, 124.1–126.22. The author makes clear that this translation coincided with the second attack of the Arab fleet against Cyprus; *ibid.*, 7, 124.8–17, and Bosworth 1996.

28 672/6, Sicily–Rome. Future Pope Sergius immigrated, and entered the Roman clergy: *Liber pont.*, Mommsen, 210.2–3.

29 After c. 673 and before 685 or 696, Gaul (–Rome?)–Jerusalem. Bercharius' pilgrimage: Adso, *Vita Bercharii* (*BHL* 1178), *AASS* Oct. 7.2.1017D; cf. Pros.

30 Summer 673, Caliphate–Cilicia–Lycia–Smyrna. A great Arab fleet was constructed and sent toward Constantinople; part of it wintered as far west as Smyrna; a second fleet soon reinforced it: Theophanes, A.M. 6164, 1.353.14–19.

31 April to September 674 to 678, Kyzikos–Constantinople. The Arab fleet approached Constantinople along the European coast; based in Kyzikos, it subsequently operated off Constantinople every summer from April to

7 After Pyrrhus' debate at Carthage against Maximus; before Theodore's death: Van Dieten 1972, 85–7.



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September: Theophanes, A.M. 6165, 1.353.25–354.5; Nicephorus, *Brev.*, 34, pp. 84–6, with comm., pp. 193–4; cf. *Mir. Demetrii*, comm., 2.131.

32 Shortly before 25 July 677, Constantinople–Thessalonica (arr.). Constantine IV sent ten warships (*enoploi karaboi*) with grain to relieve the food shortage at Thessalonica, besieged by the Slavs. *Mir. Demetrii* (BHG 516z–22), 251, 1.213.22–6.

33 c. 25 July 677, Thessalonica (dep.)–Thebes and Demetrias. Imperial officials and Thessalonicans decided to send the ten warships with the city's vessels (*skeue*) and *monoxyla* to the Slavs at Thebes and Demetrias to purchase more food for the city. They were there during the assault on the city of 25–27 July and returned to the city a few days later: *ibid.*, 254 and 268, 1.214.9–13 and 218.1–4; cf. comm., *ibid.*, 2.121–5.

34 677–8, Aegean–Sea of Marmara. Slavs of Strymon in ships attacked food ships traveling up to Constantinople via the islands (of Thrace) and the Hellespont, Parion, Proconnesus, and the toll station of Constantinople itself, taking sailors and ships back to their creeks and provoking a land attack by Constantine IV: *ibid.*, 277, 1.220.5–11; cf. comm., *ibid.*, 2.125–6.

35 678, Constantinople–Thessalonica. Constantine IV sent a convoy of ships transporting 60,000 *modioi*, under naval escort: *ibid.*, 281, 1.221.3–11, cf. comm., 2.127–8.

36 678, Constantinople–Syllaion–Caliphate. A storm wrecked the Arab fleet returning along the Asian coast from the siege: Theophanes, A.M. 6165, 1.354.5–11; Nicephorus, *Brev.*, 34, 86.14–21.

37 12 August 678,[8] Constantinople (dep.)–Rome. Constantine IV wrote to Pope Donus, *ACO*, ser. 2, 1.8.28–10.4, inviting him to send legates to Constantinople to resolve their theological differences, under imperial protection and at imperial expense; the exarch of Italy would provide a ship and all necessary supplies. The emperor further promised to supply an escort of warships, "if need be." The allusion to the "foreign disturbances" (8.28–9) and the date suggest that this provision refers to the Arab fleet based in Kyzikos (above, R31).

38 Before 681/7, Burgundy–Jerusalem. Petrus de Burgunnia settles in Jerusalem: Adomnan, *De locis sanctis*, 2, 26, 5, *CCL*, 125.219.20–3; cf. *ibid.*, 2, 27, 5, 220.18–22, and Pros., "Petrus 1."

39 c. 681/7, Ravenna–Constantinople. Iohannicius was transferred at the emperor's request: Agnellus, *Lib. pont. eccl. Rav.*, 120, 356.22–357.10; Pros. "Iohannicius."

8 Date preserved only in the Latin translation: *ACO*, ser. 2, 1.3.10–11; cf. Dölger no. 242.



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40 ?January c. 681/7, (Gaul?)–Jerusalem (arr.). Arculf left Jerusalem in September after a stay of nine months: Adomnan, *De locis sanctis*, praef. 183.5; 1, 1, 7–12, 183.25–184.53; Pros.

41 Between 14 and 22 September, between c. 681 and 687, Jerusalem (dep.)–Jaffa–Alexandria. Arculf arrived after 40 days' sail, in October: *ibid.*, 2, 30, 2, 222.7–10; cf. 2, 30, 23, 224.84–5; Pros.

42 ?Before c. 26 March–19 April, between 681 and 687, Alexandria–Crete–Constantinople (arr.). Arculf sailed from Alexandria to Constantinople, via Crete, where he spent some days. The text says that he stayed in Constantinople from Easter to Christmas, "for some months." It is not impossible that the text has jumbled the dates of Arculf's stay in Constantinople, and that he actually arrived before Christmas, and stayed until after Easter, which would make better sense in terms of sailing schedules: *ibid.*, 226.5–228.38; Pros.

43 ?After 25 December 682–7, Constantinople–Sicily–Vulcano–Rome (dep.). Arculf sailed west; he spent some days in Sicily and stopped in the Aeolian islands. It is possible that he actually departed after Easter: see previous; *ibid.*, 234.36–12; Pros.

44 c. 682/8, (Rome?)–(Gaul?)–Britain (west coast)–Iona–(Gaul). Arculf's ship was blown off course to the west coast of Britain: Bede, *Hist. eccles.*, 5, 15, pp. 506–8; cf. Adomnan, *De locis sanctis*, praef., p. 183; Pros.

45 687–701, Calabria–Rome. Beams were imported from Calabria to repair St. Paul outside the Walls: *Liber pont.*, Mommsen, 214.22–3. Such big beams can only have traveled by sea.

46 688–9, Sicily–Barqah. Byzantine forces invaded Africa from Sicily; they occupied Barqah (temporarily): Amari 1933–9, 1: 242–3.

47 Between 1 September 691 and 31 August 692, Rome–Constantinople. Papal legates came to attend the council; they were deceived and subscribed to its acts: *Liber pont.*, Mommsen, 211.26–7.

48 692, Constantinople–Rome–Constantinople. Justinian II sent Sergius *magistrianus* to Pope Sergius who now, at the latest, began to resist the Quinisext council; Sergius returned home, taking John, bishop of Porto and Bonifatius, the pope's counselor: *Liber pont.*, Mommsen, 212.11–13.

49 c. 692/3, Constantinople–Rome. Justinian II sent his official Zacharias with a *iussio* commanding Pope Sergius to come to Constantinople to subscribe to the council which Rome had refused to recognize; Zacharias was driven from Rome: *Liber pont.*, Mommsen, 212.14–15; cf. Dölger no. 259.

50 September (?)–November 695. Arab conquest of Carthage: Morrisson and Kampmann 1979.

51 695, Constantinople–Cherson. Deposed emperor Justinian II sent into exile: Theophanes, A.M. 6187, 1.369.26.



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52 697, Constantinople–Carthage. Patrician John brought "all the warships (*ploimata*)" from Constantinople and the Kibyrrhaiōtai theme to reconquer Africa. The fleet forced the chain protecting the harbor and retook Carthage and other *polismata* or *kastra*. John wintered in Carthage, awaiting further orders from the capital: Nicephorus, *Brev.*, 41, 98.1–11; Theophanes, A.M. 6190, 1.370.8–14; Bede, *Chronica maiora*, 564, *CCL*, 123B.529.1931–3; see Diehl 1896, 583–5; Ahrweiler 1966, 32–4; Amari 1933–9, 1: 244–5; cf. R56.

53 Before 697/8? Maurienne–Rome–Jerusalem. Pilgrimage of Thomas of Farfa, joined at Rome by Martianus and Martyrius: *Constructio Farfensis*, 3.6–10; Pros.

54 Before 697/8? Jerusalem–Rome. Martianus and Martyrius returned to Rome: *ibid.*, 3.23–4.

55 Before 697/8? Jerusalem–Ephesus. Thomas of Farfa traveled there after three years at Jerusalem; he spent another three years at Ephesus: *ibid.*, 3.25–5.8.

56 698, Carthage–Crete–Constantinople. An Arab fleet drove off John's fleet; he withdrew to Crete and awaited reinforcements; a usurpation developed in the fleet and proclaimed emperor Apsimar, droungarios of the Kibyrrhaiōtai; the fleet advanced to Constantinople and toppled Leontius: Nicephorus, *Brev.*, 41, 98.11–30; Theophanes, A.M. 6190, 1.370.14–29; Amari 1933–9, 1: 244–5.

57 c. 698–703, Tunis. Work began at restoring the channel of the Tunis lagoon; the caliph commanded that 2,000 Copts be sent to Africa for this, or to build ships. Musa ordered the construction of 100 ships: Amari 1933–9, 1: 291–2; cf. Fahmy 1966a, 64–72; Ageil 1985, 94–132.

58 c. 700 ?Africa–Pantelleria. Arabs landed on Pantelleria: Amari 1933–9, 1: 290–1; cf. Ageil 1985, 136–7.

59 24 June c. 700–50, Africa–Taurinia.[9] An Arab fleet raided southern Italy; a miraculous storm wrecked a detachment approaching Taurinia on the feast of St. Phantinus; the Arabs were drowned or captured and converted: Peter of Taurinia, *Miracula Phantini* (*BHG* 1509), 18, 70.1024–71.1058.

60 After 30 October 701 and before 11 January 705, Sicily–Rome. Theophylact cubiculary, patrician and exarch of Italy came to Rome: *Liber pont.*, Mommsen, 217.3–17; Pros.

61 701, Pavia–west coast of Italy–Rome. Bonitus, bishop of Clermont, on pilgrimage, received the wherewithal to continue his trip from the Lombard King Aripert; he got a ship at the coast and saved it from wreck on the shore.

9 The *Miracles* were composed by a bishop Peter of Taurinia, under either Emperor Leo III or Leo V; the latter appears more likely to me. He dates this event to the time "of the fathers"; therefore the event was not contemporary with the raids which began in the 9th C. This places them in the first phase of raiding, which seems to have ended c. 754, see below, R159.



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It was apparently traveling in a convoy.[10] The ship was overloaded; others on board wanted to jettison the cargo, but the saint prohibited it: *V. Boniti* (BHL 1418), 24, 131.21–132.9.

62 Before 703? Ephesus–Italy. After three years at Ephesus, Thomas returned to Italy: *Constructio Farfensis*, 5.4–8; Pros.

63 c. 703 autumn, Egypt–Tunis–Byzantine Italy (Messina?). An Arab squadron raided and took rich booty; a storm devastated the fleet: Amari 1933–9, 1: 292–4 with n1. According to Ageil 1985, 139, this raid occurred in November. P. Lond. 4.1350 (A.D. 710) confirms the later Arab historians' account of this expedition; cf. too Fahmy 1966a, 65–9.

64 704, Tunis–Sicily. Arab raid: Amari 1933–9, 1: 294–5.

65 After 21 August 705 and before 18 October 707,[11] Constantinople–Rome–Constantinople. Justinian II sent Anons. 1–2, metropolitans, to Rome to invite Pope John VII to hold a council and emend any part of the Quinisext unacceptable to Rome. Out of fear, John made no changes and returned the text with the envoys: *Liber pont.*, Mommsen, 220.6–12; cf. Dölger no. 264.

66 705, Tunis–Syracuse. Arab raid: Amari 1933–9, 1: 295.

67 c. 11 July 706? Constantinople–Rome (arr.). Justinian II blinded Patriarch Callinicus and exiled him to Rome: Theophanes, A.M. 6198, 1.375.13–14. When he arrived, he was buried inside a wall. After 40 days, the pope (John VII) had the wall opened and found him still alive. He died four days later, presumably on 23 August, his feastday: *Syn. CP.*, 919.4–920.7; cf. Pros. "Callinicus."

68 After 25 March 708 and before 5 October 709, Constantinople–Rome. *Sacra* arrived from Justinian II commanding the pope to come to Constantinople: *Liber pont.*, Mommsen, 222.18–19; Dölger no. 266.

69 Between 20 November 708 and 9 November 709, Constantinople–Damietta. A Byzantine raid: Brooks 1913, 381; Fahmy 1966b, 140.

10 The text which implies a convoy is garbled at 131.22–132.1 "... minaces fluctus terrorem nonnulli qui cum eo erant incutiunt mortis, et qui <in> naves qui simul gradiebantur separato, indivise homines tabulis inditi, vix pauci ad litus pervenire potuerunt." The threatening waves struck terror (into) some who were with him, and (into) some men <in> the ships which were traveling along with them at a distance (separato), all together grasping upon boards, a few were scarcely able to reach the shore. The nominatives are variations on the Vulgar Latin nominative of lists, and the third *qui* is the non-gendered Protoromance form; the letter sequence QUIINNAUES triggered the copyist's mistake. *Contra*, Krusch, *ibid.*, 131n5.

11 Date: second reign of Justinian II and pontificate of John VII. It would seem unlikely that this was the first order of business after Justinian recovered the throne, so that a date in 706 or even 707 is most plausible, especially since the papal biographer notes that the pope died soon thereafter: *Liber pont.*, Mommsen, 220.13.



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70 c. 709,[12] Constantinople–Sicily–Ravenna–Constantinople. Justinian II sent Theodorus I with a fleet to attack Ravenna. Archbishop Felix I ("II") and the rebels ("Anons. 3–5") were captured and sent to Constantinople, where many were executed: *Liber pont.*, Mommsen, 222.7–17; Theodore had sailed from Constantinople to Sicily and thence to Ravenna; the captives included also Iohannicius and Anon. 5: Agnellus, *Lib. pont. eccl. Rav.*, 137–8, 367.14–369.4. The trip to Constantinople took more than 50 days: Pros. "Ioannicius."

71 After c. 709 and before 711, (Ravenna)–Constantinople–Pontus. Felix I was taken as a prisoner to Constantinople, where he was blinded and exiled to Pontus: *Liber pont.*, Mommsen, 222.11–17; Pros.

72 After c. 709 and before 712, Constantinople–Ravenna. The survivors among the Anon. Ravennate captives (Anons. 3–5) who had been sent to Constantinople returned unexpectedly home in a *maxima navis*: Agnellus, *Lib. pont. eccl. Rav.*, 139, 369.5–22.

73 5 October 709, Porto Romano (dep.)–Naples–Sicily–Reggio–Cotrone–Gallipoli–Otranto–Kea–Hebdomon (Constantinople). Pope Constantine embarked for Constantinople with a large number of papal officials, aboard more than one ship, which he apparently owned or rented: "ilico navigia fecit parari"; winter weather delayed him at Otranto; the stratēgos of Karavisianoi met the convoy on Kea; it arrived at Constantinople in 710: *Liber pont.*, Mommsen, 222.19–223.21; see above, pp. 463f. The pope later continued on to Nicomedia to meet Justinian II: *ibid.*, 224.5–13.

74 Shortly after 5 October 709, (?Constantinople)–Naples (dep.)–Rome–Ravenna. At Naples, the pope's convoy encountered exarch John Rizokopos, en route to kill Roman clergy: *ibid.*, 223.3–9.

75 Winter 709/10, Constantinople–Otranto (arr.). Theophanius regionarius arrived with imperial instructions that the pope receive quasi-imperial treatment along his route: *ibid.*, 223.15–18.

76 710, Tunis–Sardinia. Arabs pillaged the "capital": Amari 1933–9, 1: 295–6.

77 711/14, Africa–Spain. Invasion and conquest of Spain.

78 12 October 711,[13] Cherson (dep.)–Constantinople. A large fleet set out from Cherson to return to Constantinople; a storm sank many ships of all kinds which had been assembled from or with financial contributions of various owners at Constantinople, and of all kinds and size, "dromons, triremes, carriers of 10,000 modioi (*skaphōn muriagōgōn*) and fishing boats and right

12 For what it is worth, *Liber pont.* 222.18, places these events "hisdem temporibus" as Justinian II's *sacra* convoking Pope Constantine at Constantinople.

13 *Liber pont.* 222.18, places these events also "hisdem temporibus" as Justinian II's *sacra* convoking Pope Constantine. Exact date: rising of the star Taurouras. According to the treatise on the stars and weather attributed to an Anonymous Prōtospatharios, this star rose on 12 October and caused terrible storms at sea: *On the Stars Observed by Sailors*, 174.7–9.



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up to *chelandia*"; it supposedly drowned 73,000 persons. Bodies washed up between Amastris and Herakleia: Theophanes, A.M. 6203, 1.377.22–378.16; Nicephorus, *Brev.*, 45, 106–8.1–32, with comm., *ibid.*, pp. 202–3.

79 24 October 711, Nicomedia–Gaeta–Rome (arr.). Pope Constantine entered Rome, after landing at Gaeta and completing the trip by land; he suffered ill health en route: *Liber pont.*, Mommsen, 224.14–17.

80 c. 4 (or 24?) November 711 (dep.), Constantinople – c. 24 January 712 (arr.), Rome.[14] Three months after the pope returned to Rome, news arrived of Justinian II's death: *ibid.*, 224.19.

81 A few years before 712, Syria–Rome. Bishop Theopemptus 1 and his daughter immigrated to Rome: *Miracula Anastasii graeca* (*BHG* 89), 2, 1.167.1–3 (cf. 2.374–5); Pros.

82 712 (after November 711),[15] Constantinople–Rome. Emperor Philippicus sent a *sacra* affirming monotheletism. The pope and a Roman council refused to receive the doctrine, and Philippicus was not recognized as emperor in the usual ways: *Liber pont.*, Mommsen, 224.21–6 and 225.12–21; cf. Dölger no. 271. A letter (*grammata*) of Patriarch John VI to Pope Constantine which supported monotheletism apparently accompanied Philippicus' *sacra*; John VI claimed that earlier he had been impeded from sending synodal letters by Philippicus: *Epistola apologetica*, *ACO* ser. 2, 2.2.902.11–16; yet he later seems to imply that he had been forced to write to the pope, in order to temporize and try to lessen the emperor's heresy: *ibid.*, 903.12–21; cf. Grumel[2] no. 321.

83 c. 712,[16] Pontus–Constantinople–(?Trepani–Palermo–Santa Maria del Tindaro–Capo Passero–) Sicily–Ravenna. The new emperor Philippicus recalled Felix 1 from exile; he restored his church's property and issued new privileges. Felix sailed to Ravenna via Sicily; Philippicus urged that *naves* be prepared to transport him: Agnellus, *Lib. pont. eccl. Rav.*, 143–5, 371.26–373.7.

84 After 3 June 713,[17] (Constantinople; dep.)–Sicily–Rome. *Scribta* (!) arrived

14 Justinian II was killed, possibly on 24 November 711 or, more probably, on 4 November: Grierson 1962, 50–1. This critical news took therefore some eleven (less probably, eight) weeks to travel over the winter. Justinian's head was dispatched "per totam Ytaliam," including Rome (Theophanes, A.M. 6203, 1.381.5–6; Nicephorus, *Brev.*, 45, 112.90–2) and Ravenna (Agnellus, *Lib. pont. eccl. Rav.*, 142, 371.16–25). It is unclear whether the head traveled with the news.

15 Presumably the *sacra* announcing the new emperor's accession and orthodoxy was sent as soon as was feasible after he took power in November 711.

16 After November 711, Philippicus' accession.

17 Philippicus was dethroned on the Saturday before Pentecost, after two years in power; Theophanes, 383.5–17 describes this under A.M. 6205. This has yielded the traditional dating 3 June 713; cf. Sumner 1976, 287–9, and the contemporary letter of Agatho, chartophylax of the Hagia Sophia, which places the event in the 11th indiction (Sept. 712–Aug. 713): ed. Riedinger, *ACO* ser. 2, 2.2.900.5.



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from Sicily, announcing that the orthodox Anastasius II had deposed Philippicus: *Liber pont.*, Mommsen, 226.3–5.

85 After 3 June 713 and before 9 April 715,[18] (Constantinople)–Rome–Ravenna. Scholasticius, exarch of Italy, arrived in Rome, bearing the new emperor Anastasius II's *sacra*, announcing his orthodoxy and acceptance of the sixth ecumenical council: *Liber pont.* Mommsen, 226.3–5. He presumably also carried Patriarch John VI's synodal letter and *Epistola apologetica*. Both letters were sent together: Agatho Chartophylax, *Epilogus*, *ACO* ser. 2, 2.2.900.24–9.

86 Shortly before 1 October 713, Rome–Sicily–Rome (arr.). Anon. 12 went to Sicily to get a spell from a magician in "Marathōdis"; he brought it back and bewitched Anon. 6; the spell took effect on this date: *Miracula Anastasii graeca* (*BHG* 89), 6, 1.173.4–6; cf. 4, 171.19–21; Pros.

87 August–September 714, Spain (dep.)–Syria. Musa and Tariq left Spain and traveled to Syria with 30,000 prisoners: Sánchez-Albornoz 1973, 1: 55; Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 1: 29.

88 10 May 715, Pavia. *Pactum* between the Lombard king Liutprand and the citizens (*milites*) of Comacchio concerning fees and customs to be paid by shipping on the Po, according to "old custom." There would be three shore officials (*riparii*) at Mantua, and the Comacchiesi should share with them whatever they themselves have to eat; they shall pay a customs "tithe" (*decimas*) of 18 measures of salt (measures shall weigh 30 lb., perhaps implying a boatload of 5,400 lb.) and 1 tremissis docking fee (*palo*). At "Capo Mincio" they pay only a transit fee of 2 tremisses for each ship; at Brescia there would be 4 *riparii*; 15 measures of salt would be paid as customs (*decimas*), and 1 tremissis for docking. There would be 2 *riparii* at Cremona, with the same payments; anyone who wished to go further upstream must pay ½ a solidus (that would be 1.5 tremissis, if the word is correctly used) as a transit fee (*transitura*); if (salt) is sold at 4 measures (a tremissis), let him

18 Date: "post aliquod . . . temporis" in reference to the preceding "scribta" from Sicily. Hartmann 1889, 124, implies, probably correctly, that Scholasticius brought the letter of Patriarch John VI announcing his renewed orthodoxy. If this is correct, the exarch probably arrived in Rome no earlier than 714, since the response seems to have been sent only by Pope Constantine's successor in 715. Grumel[2] no. 322 maintains that the letter must have been sent almost immediately after Anastasius' accession but adduces no evidence. Although *Liber pont.* says explicitly that John VI sent his synodal letter in the reign of Gregory II, the surviving text of John's apology, which was sent with the synodal letter, is addressed to Constantine: Riedinger 901.21–2. Cf. too Duchesne, *Liber pont.*, 1.410n4. Grumel is correct in distinguishing this apology from the synodal letter to Constantine, no. 323. But I see no grounds for distinguishing it from one to Gregory II, his no. 324. Cf. too Dölger no. 273, dated "summer" without evidence.



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give 2 measures for a half tremissis; if at 6, let him give 3. At the port of Parma, 2 *riparii*; the Comacchiesi should pay as *ripaticum* and docking fee together 1 solidus, 1 lb. of oil, 1 lb. of garum and 2 oz. of pepper. At the mouth of the Adda ("ad Addua"), 2 *riparii*; 12 measures of salt as *decima*, and 1 tremissis for docking; the same will be paid at the port which is called "Lambro et Placentia," i.e. ship traffic from Piacenza up the Lambro toward Milan, according to Hartmann 1904, with comm., pp. 74–8. See also above, pp. 117f.

89 After 19 May (dep.) from Rome, and before 11 August 715 (arr.), at Constantinople. Pope Gregory II responded favorably to Patriarch John VI's renewed orthodoxy; Michaelius may have been sent back to Constantinople at this time, whether or not he is identical with the homonymous *apocrisiarius* known there in 712; he is attested in the capital on 11 August: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.396.20–2; Pros.

90 715–31, Calabria–Rome. Gregory II imported beams: *ibid.*, 1.397.1–4.

91 717–20, Ravenna–Constantinople–Ravenna. Emperor Leo (III) confirmed earlier privileges for Epiphanius 1, scriniarius and apocrisiarius of Ravenna: Paschal I, JE 2552, *PL*, 102.1089C; Pros.

92 717–40, Constantinople–Naples. Bishop Sergius of Naples received the title of archbishop from the patriarch of Constantinople: Grumel² no. 325b; *Gesta episc. Neapol.*, 36, 422.8–9.

93 1 September 717, Caliphate–Constantinople (arr.). An Arab fleet evaluated at 1,800 vessels (very large ships, "war" or "supply" *katēnai* and dromons) arrived for the great siege: Theophanes, A.M. 6209, 1.395.21–5; cf. Anastasius' translation, 2.255.20; Nicephorus, *Brev.*, 52, 120.10–11; Guilland 1959, 119 and Canard 1926, 80–102. Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle*, tr. Chabot, 2.484, reports 5,000 ships. On the Arab sources and their relation to the Greek, see also Brooks 1899.

94 Spring 718, Egypt–Constantinople. 400 Arab *katēnai* loaded with grain and a number of dromons arrived for the siege: Theophanes, A.M. 6209, 1.396.27–9; cf. Nicephorus, *Brev.*, 54, 122.22–5. The Byzantines claimed that a surprise attack destroyed with Greek fire or captured both the Egyptian and the African fleets: *ibid.*, 124.35–8; Theophanes, A.M. 6209, 1.397.9–15.

95 Spring 718, Africa–Constantinople. 360 *katēnai* loaded with weapons and supplies arrived not long after the Egyptian fleet: *ibid.*, 1.397.1–3; cf. Nicephorus, *Brev.*, 54, 122.22–5.

96 Between c. spring 718 and 15 August 718, Constantinople (dep.)–Kyzikos–Syracuse. Leo III sent Paul, stratēgos of Sicily, with a small escort, out of besieged Constantinople to undermine the usurpation of Sergius, stratēgos of Sicily, and his newly proclaimed emperor Basil-Tiberius. They



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left Constantinople at night in an "exelastikos dromon," traveled to the area of Kyzikos, and from there made their way "from place to place by both land and sea" to reach Sicily suddenly (ἀπὸ <δὲ> τόπου εἰς τόπον, διὰ τε γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης τὴν πορείαν ποιησάμενοι ἐξάπινα τὴν Σικελίαν καταλαμβάνουσιν), manifestly in order to surprise the rebels. The besieging Arab fleet and the overall chronology suggest a daring winter trip (news of the siege reached Sicily presumably in the late autumn, triggering the usurpation which, when word reached Leo III, caused him to devise Paul's mission). These circumstances explain Theophanes' emphasis that they traveled in stretches and by both land and sea, i.e. that they avoided the usual sea route (around Greece) and took an unusual alternative route involving some land travel.[19] The narrow neck of land at the beginning of the Thracian Chersonnese or the isthmus of Corinth are the most likely alternatives (Ch. 3.2). The man behind the usurpation was "astounded" (ἐξέστη) when he learned that Paul had disembarked in Syracuse: Theophanes, A.M. 6210, 1.398.6–20; Nicephorus, *Brev.* 55, 124.9–11, suppresses these details.

97 Summer 718, Sicily–Benevento. When Sergius' usurpation collapsed, he fled to "Lombards close to Calabria," i.e. Benevento; he later returned to Sicily under a safe conduct: Theophanes, A.M. 6210, 1.398.21–3; cf. Nicephorus, *Brev.* 124.10–11; Pros. "Sergius 3."

98 15 August 718, Constantinople (dep.)–Syria and Egypt. The Arabs abandoned the siege of Constantinople. The Byzantines claimed that a storm in the Sea of Marmara sank much of their retreating fleet; the rest, except for ten ships, were destroyed by a miraculous fiery hail which caused the sea to boil and dissolved the ships' pitch caulking: Theophanes, A.M. 6210, 1.399.6–19; cf. Germanus I, *Homilia de acathisto* (CPG 8014), 20, p. 197; Nicephorus, *Brev.*, 56, 124.2–126.8, provides a more modest account of the disaster. Mango, *ibid.*, p. 210, connects the boiling sea with volcanic activity in the Aegean; Rochow 1991, 96–7. For the Egyptians' return home: Brooks 1913, 389.

19 The circumstances show that Paul left Constantinople, apparently after the Byzantine victory over the two newly arrived Arab fleets (R94) and before the Arabs lifted the siege on 15 August 718; cf. Nicephorus, comm., p. 209 and Caruso 1996. Lampe 1968, s.v. 495 translates *exelastikos* "that can be rowed." This is redundant, since all dromons were oared. It is more likely from *exelaunō*, in the sense of "drive" or (Mod. Greek) "ride." Anastasius Bibliothecarius, who hesitates to translate technical terms, may have sought advice here, for he renders this as "*dromon velox*": Theophanes, 2.257.26–7; cf. Rochow 1991, 95. Nonetheless, the circumstances suggest another possibility, from the prefix ἐξ-: this might have been a light ship that could be drawn "out of" the water and dragged over land with relative ease, which would explain the observation that the party traveled by land and sea.



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99 After 3 August 718 and before 24 July 719, Spain–Africa. The Arab admiral who had commanded the fleet which had participated in the conquest of Spain returned to Africa: Guichard 1983, 70n21, citing the biographical dictionary of al Dabbi.

100 718–25,[20] Pavia–Sardinia–Pavia. The Lombard king Liutprand learned that an Arab raid against Sardinia had dishonored the place to which St. Augustine's relics had been translated (from Africa); he sent a representative who purchased them for a steep price and brought them back to Pavia: Bede, *De temporum ratione*, 66, *CCL*, 123B.535.2061–6; cf. Paul the Deacon, *Hist. Lang.* 6, 48, 181.13–17; A. Trapè, *BibS* 1: 588–90.

101 After 1 April 720, before 4 April–2 May 721, Byzantine empire–Tinnis. The Byzantines raided Tinnis in Egypt: Brooks 1913, 389, from al Kindi.

102 Late spring, dep. from Hamwic; 11 November 721, arr. at Rome, via Rouen–Tortona–Lucca. Beginning of Willibald's pilgrimage to Rome and overseas: Ch. 5.1; Pros.

103 Before 720, Francia (–Rome?)–Jerusalem–Francia. Pilgrimage of Silvinus, bishop of Therouanne, to the Holy Land: *Vita S. Silvini* (*BHL* 7747), 9, *AASS* Feb. 3(1865).30E; cf. Pros.

104 Between 12 July 720 and 30 June 721, Africa–Sicily. An Arab raid captured booty and prisoners: Amari 1933–9, 1: 296–7.

105 Between 25 March 720 and 726 (c. 725?), Constantinople–Italy. Leo III and Constantine V sent Paul to depose, kill and replace Pope Gregory II for blocking the collection of imperial taxes. Whether Paul came from Constantinople or not, the order did: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.403.16–25; Pros. "Paulus 2."

106 721, Africa–Sardinia. An Arab raid took booty: Ageil 1985, 166.

107 722, Africa–?Sardinia. An Arab raid against an unspecified target, presumably Sardinia: Ageil 1985, 166.

108 Shortly after 28 March 723, Rome (dep.)–Terracina (?Fondi)–Gaeta–Naples – Reggio – Catania – Syracuse – Monemvasia – Kos – Samos – Ephesus –Phygela–Strobilos–Patara. Willibald and two companions began their pilgrimage to the Holy Land by land; they spent two days at Terracina and continued to Gaeta where they took a ship ("transfretaverunt") to visit Naples and its shrines; in late April they boarded an Egyptian ship for southern Italy and the east. They spent two days at Reggio and three weeks at Catania; their ship left Syracuse c. June. They finally disembarked at Ephesus, and walked along the coast to Phygela (mod. Kuşadasi, Turkey), Strobilos and Patara (mod. Kelemiş), where they spent the winter: Ch. 5.1; Pros.

20 Bede, who is well informed about Italy, places this event at the very conclusion of his short chronicle, just after the siege of Constantinople of 717–18. He is believed to have composed this work in 725: Bede, *Hist. eccl.*, ed. Plummer, 1.cxlix–cl.



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109 April 723, Egypt–Naples (arr.). The Egyptian ship which Willibald and his companions took to the Byzantine empire was in port: Hugeburc, *V. Willibaldi* (BHL 8931), 4, 93.5–6.

110 Spring 724, Patara–Miletus. Willibald took a ship back into the Aegean, to Miletus: *ibid.*, 93.22–3.

111 Spring (dep.), Miletus–11 November 724, Jerusalem (arr.), via "Mons Gallianorum" – Paphos – Constantia – Tartus – Arca – Emesa – Damascus – Tiberias. Willibald got a ship in Miletus, sailed along the coast of Asia Minor to "Mons Gallianorum" (apparently the mountainous promontory of Cape Chelidonia, mod. Gelidonya or Yardimci Burnu, Turkey)[21] and then over to Cyprus; they arrived at Paphos c. 16 April, for Easter; they stayed for three weeks and went on to Constantia, which they left after 24 June. From there they sailed to Syria, and walked to "Arche" and to Emesa (mod. Homs), where they were arrested and, finally, released. They then went to Damascus, and thence to various pilgrimage sites in the Holy Land, and Jerusalem: Ch. 5.1.

112 724, Africa–Sardinia and Corsica. Arab raid: Ageil 1985, 166.

113 c. 724–43, Spain–Ascalon–Damascus. Sarah, Oppas, and Anon. 37 traveled to Caliph Hisham; they sailed to Ascalon, disembarked and continued overland to Damascus: Sánchez-Albornoz 1973 1: 83; Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 1: 358–9.

114 c. 725, Constantinople–Rome. Leo III sent Marinus 1 as duke to impose his will. He became paralyzed and left Rome, presumably returning to Constantinople: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.403.11–15; Pros.

115 c. 725–6, (Constantinople)–Ravenna–Rome. Leo III sent Anon. spatharios with *iussiones* to depose Gregory II: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.404.1–8.[22]

116 726, Africa–Sardinia. Arab raid, presumably against Sardinia: Ageil 1985, 167.

117 From 30 November 726, Tyre (dep.) to c. 6 April 727, Constantinople (arr.). When Willibald finally had his papers in order, and his ship was ready after many days wait, he sailed for Constantinople; they traveled all winter: Hugeburc, *V. Willibaldi*, 4, 101.5–21.

118 c. 726, Constantinople–Italy. The imperial edict forbidding icons arrived and provoked revolts in Byzantine Italy: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.404.9–405.4; cf. Conte 1984, 65 and 77.

119 c. 726/8, Constantinople–Naples–Rome. Eutychius, former exarch, was

21 Cf. Wilkinson 1977, 157, s.n.; I am grateful to my friend, Prof. James Russell of the University of British Columbia, for his advice on the Cape.

22 The phrasing suggests that he was sent from Constantinople; I notice that I did not include this individual in my final counts of travelers.



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sent to Italy; he dispatched an envoy from Naples to Rome: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.405.19–406.13; cf. Pros.

120 c. 18 April 727, Aegean Sea–Constantinople (arr.). On this day Leo III defeated off Constantinople the large fleet assembled by the rebels of Hellas and the Cycladic islands; many ships were destroyed by fire. They had presumably arrived a few days before: Nicephorus, *Brev.*, 60, 128.7–130.18 with comm., p. 212; Theophanes, A.M. 6218, 1.405.14–24; Rochow 1991, 118–19.

121 727, Africa–Sardinia. Arab raid: Ageil 1985, 167.

122 727, Africa–Sicily. Arabs attacked and took many prisoners home: Amari 1933–9, 1: 197; Ageil 1985, 167.

123 Between 16 April 728 and 4 April 729, Africa–Sicily. Arabs raided Sicily and defeated the patrician: Amari 1933–9, 1: 297; Ageil 1985, 167.

124 728, Sicily. Peace with Arabs referred to by exarch Gregorius in 813: Leo III, JE 2526, *MGH Epist.* 5.98.1–5.

125 Before 7 August 729, Constantinople (dep.)–Syracuse–Catania–Reggio di Calabria–Vulcano–Lipari–Salina–Naples–Rome. Willibald spent two years in Constantinople and then sailed back to Italy with imperial and papal envoys. He apparently left them at Naples, where he stayed for many days. Then he continued on to Capua (Vetere), Teano and Monte Cassino, in autumn: Ch. 5.1.

126 Between 5 April 729 and 25 March 730, Africa–Sicily. 180 Arab ships invaded Sicily; they retired as winter approached; a storm devastated the fleet; supposedly only seventeen ships escaped: Amari 1933–9, 1: 297–8; Ageil 1985, 167.

127 729/30, Rome–Constantinople. The defeated usurper Tiberius Petasius' head was sent to Constantinople, presumably by Eutychius exarch and Pope Gregory III: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.408.13–409.3; cf. Pros. "Eutychius."

128 After 17 January 730,[23] Constantinople–Rome. Patriarch Anastasius sent synodal letters against icons to Gregory II: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.409.15–23; cf. Grumel[2] no. 344.

129 Between 24 March 730 and 14 March 731, Africa–Sicily. An Arab raid took booty and prisoners: Amari 1933–9, 1: 298; Ageil 1985, 168.

130 After 18 March 731, Rome (dep.)–Constantinople–Rome. First embassy of Georgius 4: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.415.15–416.4; Pros.

131 731, Africa–Sicily. Two Arab raids that year: Ageil 1985, 168.

132 c. 732 (after 1 November 731), Rome (–Constantinople) and Italy (–Constantinople). After the synod of Italian bishops he had convoked condemned iconoclasm, Pope Gregory III sent Constantinus 2 to Constantinople

23 Anastasius' predecessor, Germanus II, resigned on 17 January: Conte 1984, 65.



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with a document attacking the doctrine. He was intercepted and imprisoned in an unspecified place for a year: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.415.15–416.4. Possibly at the same time, the *generalitas* of the "province of Italy" sent a similar document to Constantinople with Anons. 33–4; they were intercepted and imprisoned for eight months by Sergius, stratēgos of Sicily: *ibid.*, 1.416.16–417.1. The phrasing implies that Constantine was detained in Sicily; this is explicitly stated for the mission of the *generalitas*. The implication is that Sicily was the sole route then linking Rome and the east: cf. Ch. 17.1. It is not impossible that both missions traveled together.[24]

133 c. 732, Rome–Sicily (–Constantinople). On his second embassy, Georgius 4 was detained in Sicily: *ibid.*, 415.15–416.4; Pros.

134 Before 731–41 (c. 732–3?), Sicily–Rome. The future pope Stephen III immigrated: *ibid.*, 468.3–4; Pros. "Stephanus 1."

135 Between 3 March 732 and 20 February 733, Africa–Sicily. An Arab raid took booty and prisoners: Amari 1933–9, 1: 298; Ageil 1985, 168.

136 Between 3 March 732 and 20 February 733, Africa–Sardinia. Another Arab raid attacked Sardinia: Amari 1933–9, 1: 298; Ageil 1985, 168.

137 c. 732–c. 735,[25] Ravenna–Venice–Ravenna. Ravenna fell to the Lombards; Eutychius exarch fled to Venice; Pope Gregory (III) wrote to the Venetians, urging them to help; they reconquered Ravenna by surprise attack: Paul Deacon, *Hist. Lang.* 6, 54, 183.30–184.2; Gregory III, JE 2177–8, *MGH Epist.* 3.702. For the authenticity of the letter(s): Hartmann 1889, 129–31; Kehr 1906–75, 7. 2: 38, no. 20; *Chron. Ven.*, 95.7–96.6; Bertolini 1972, 38–9n50.

138 c. 731/41, Rome–Constantinople. Petrus 2, Gregory III's ambassador, took letters on icons to Patriarch Anastasius, Leo III and Constantine V: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.417.1–4; Pros.

139 September 732–August 733, Kibyrrhaiōtai theme–Italy. Leo III sent this fleet, under stratēgos Manes, to punish the pope, Rome, and Italy; it was shipwrecked in the "Adriatic," which, in this period, includes the Ionian Sea: Theophanes, A.M. 6224, 1.410.4–9; cf. Ahrweiler 1966, 51n1. It is not impossible that the advancing Lombards were the true target.[26]

140 21 February 733–9 February 734, Africa–Sicily. Byzantine ships with Greek fire defeated Arab raiders: Amari 1933–9, 1: 298; Ageil 1985, 168.

141 10 February 734–30 January 735, Africa–Sicily. An Arab attack on Sicily was stymied; the Byzantines took many prisoners: Amari 1933–9, 1: 298–9; Ageil 1985, 172.

24 According to Hadrian I, his predecessors, including Gregory III (731–41), had written to Emperor Leo III about iconoclasm: JE 2488, ed. Mansi 12.1061A (cf. 1059E); it is unclear whether this or another representation is meant.

25 Date: Hartmann 1889, 131.

26 Thus Bertolini 1967; so too Rochow 1991, 132.



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142 735, Africa–Sardinia. Arab raid: Amari 1933–9, 1: 299; Ageil 1985, 172.

143 Between 18 December 738 and 7 December 739, Constantinople–Damietta. 360 Byzantine ships raided and took many prisoners: Brooks 1913, 381.

144 c. 739, Rome (–?Marseilles)–Frankish court: Gregory III sent Anastasius and Sergius by sea ("navali itinere") to Charles Martel for help against the Lombards: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.420.16–21 (app.); cf. *Fred. Cont.*, 22, 178.25–179.7, which says that Gregory sent two embassies, and that Charles responded with an embassy of his own.

145 740, Africa–Sicily. A large-scale Arab invasion obliged Syracuse to pay a ransom; the Arab forces were recalled because of a Berber revolt in Africa: Amari 1933–9, 1: 299–300.

146 740–7? Byzantine empire–Holy Land. The *Passio LX martyrum* (*BHG* 1217), claims that the emperor Leo III trapped the Arab forces of Suleiman on a plain; this Byzantine victory resulted in a seven-year truce with the Arabs, during which merchants from each side could trade with the other without impediment, and pilgrims could go to the Holy Land (*Passio*, 5–6, 3.14–30). The event has traditionally been connected with the siege of Constantinople and dated to 718–25; the *Passio* has been dismissed as a fictitious imitation of an earlier Passion. It is, however, no less plausible that *BHG* 1217 echos events of the 740s, and the battle of Akroinos. At the very least, the *Passio* reveals a Palestinian author's assumption, between the later 8th and the 10th C., that merchants would respond swiftly to truces between Arabs and Byzantines, by traveling to each other's territories for trade. See (with the traditional dating) Gero 1973, 176–81; Huxley 1977.

147 Before 741 (possibly before 731), Athens–Rome. The future pope Zachary immigrated: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.426.1; Constantine VII, *De adm. imp.*, 27, 1.114.15–16; Pros. "Zacharias 1."

148 c. 742, Rome–Constantinople. The new pope Zachary sent *responsales*, Anons. 35–6, bearing his synodal letter and a *suggestio*. His biographer claims that he loyally sent his envoys to the (iconoclast) Constantine V, only to discover the usurper Artabasdus on the throne: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.432.17–433.1. This is highly improbable; he more probably sent the embassy to the usurper.[27]

27 Date: Zachary's accession on 10 December 741 must have occurred after news of Artabasdus' usurpation (July 741: *Die Byzantinische Kleinchroniken* 2, 3, 1.47; cf. 2.85–6; cf. also Speck 1981, 72–4) reached Rome. The erroneous dating of the usurpation to 742 vitiates Bertolini's basic argument (1968, 2: 463–84), although his point that two missions were involved (475) is well taken: his observation that the first mission was by *responsales* (plural), and the second by a singular *missus* is only reinforced by the corrected chronology of Artabasdus' accession. Rome certainly recognized Artabasdus as emperor from 742; cf. Speck 1981, 115; see also R150.



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149 After 1 July 743, Pavia (dep.)–Constantinople. King Liutprand sent Anons. 39–40 to seek imperial ratification of his deal with Pope Zachary over the retrocession of the territories of the Exarchate. They may well have traveled with the Roman *missus*, Anon. 38; see the next two items.

150 September–October 743, Rome–Constantinople (arr.)–Rome. Pope Zachary's *missus*, Anon. 38, arrived during "a disturbance"; when Constantine V had regained the throne (2 November 743), he summoned the envoy, granted a papal request of two estates and sent him home: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.433.1–8. Timing and circumstance suggest that this envoy accompanied Liutprand's ambassadors.[28]

151 Before 1 June 744, Constantinople–Pavia (arr.). In negotiations on 30 June 743, at Pavia with Pope Zachary, Liutprand expected his ambassadors, Anons. 39–40, to Constantinople to return by the kalends of June (of the following year) with imperial ratification of the proposed deal; he set that date for the restitution to the "Res publica Romana" of the last territory which he would retain until the deal was sealed: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.431.2–9; cf. 1.437n34.[29] Cf. preceding two entries.

152 744–March 752, Rome–Constantinople. Zachary wrote to Constantine V requesting the restoration of icons: Hadrian I, JE 2448, Mansi 12.1061A (cf. 1059E). Hadrian's wording implies that this letter postdated Constantine V's restoration, so it cannot have been identical with any of the preceding missions.

153 Between September 745 and August 746, bubonic plague traveled from (Africa–) Sicily–Calabria–Monemvasia–Greece–Aegean islands; in summer 747, it infected Constantinople. It started in Sicily and spread to Greece and the Aegean throughout the entire 14th indiction, and reached Constantinople in the 15th. It peaked in the spring of the first indiction, i.e.

28 "In temporis perturbatione" (*Liber pont.*, 1.433.5) seems to refer to Constantine V's siege of Constantinople from September to 2 November 743: Theophanes, A.M. 6235, 1.419.7–420.12. It is clear that Anon. 38 had arrived in Constantinople before Constantine's victory on 2 November and, apparently, feared to present himself to the restored emperor, since Constantine had to have him sought out ("requirens . . . eumque reppertum," *Liber pont.*, 1.433.4–5). Well he should have feared, since he will have borne letters to Artabasdus, and Rome had recognized the toppled usurper; cf. Speck 1981, 119–21. In the end, Constantine V granted the Roman church the estates of Nymphae and Normiae. Timing would suggest that these were thanks for the pope's diplomacy with the Lombards.

29 *Liber pont.*, 1.429.8 dates Zachary's trip to Ravenna and Pavia explicitly in the 11th indiction. The year 744, i.e. the (next) kalends of June, follows from the fact that the Pavian discussions occurred at the end of June 743, since the emperor's ratification was "per inito constituto," i.e. for the deal just cut with Zachary; Anons. 39–40 must have left for Constantinople after 1 July 743.



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748, and perhaps reached a final crescendo[30] in the summer: Theophanes, A.M. 6238, 1.422.29–424.3; cf. Nicephorus, *Brev.*, 67, 138.4–140.43, who tells us it lasted a year at Constantinople, dying out as it started, i.e. gradually (140.36–8). This means that it reached Constantinople in the summer of indiction 15, i.e. 747, and died out in summer 748. Theodore Studite, *Laudatio Platonis hegumeni* (*BHG* 1553), 3–5, *PG*, 99.805C–808A informs us that the city seemed deserted after two months of the infection; Nicephorus I, *Antirrheticus*, 65, *PG*, 100.496B–D. This wave of plague actually began in Mesopotamia in 743–4: see Ch. 17.1; cf. also Rochow 1991, 160–4.

154 16 January 746. Great Middle Eastern earthquake, which ruined cities from Gaza to Persia, "and likewise on the sea many ships were sunk on that night," presumably, in this season, in port: *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria*, 5.95. The date is given twice, as the (Coptic) feast of the Dormition and "21 Tubah," which are correct: Grumel 1958, 334.

155 After 746 and before c. 900, Spain–Bethlehem–Jerusalem. Hyacinth made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and arrived there from the south: *Descriptio Terrae sanctae*; for the date, see Pros.

156 747 or 748, Alexandria–Cyprus–(Byzantium). 1,000 Arab ships set out to attack Byzantium; the stratēgos of the Kibyrrhaiōtai surprised them in a Cypriot harbor and destroyed 997: Theophanes, A.M. 6238, 1.424.3–7; Nicephorus, *Brev.*, 68, 140; Rochow 1991, 164.

157 Around 748,[31] Venice–Rome–(Africa). Many (*plures*) Venetian traders came and set up a market to sell merchandise; they bought a multitude of male and female slaves for export to Africa. When Pope Zachary (741–52) found out, he forbade the trade, redeemed the Christians at cost, and manumitted them: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.433.14–19; Ch. 21.2.

158 752,[32] after June, (probably October) Constantinople–Rome (arr.)–(Pavia). John silentiary arrived with Constantine V's *iussiones* for the pope and King Aistulf: *ibid.*, 1.442.6–16; Pros. "Iohannes 7."

30 ἐξεκαύθη εἰς ἅπαξ, Theophanes 1.423.20; the verb is ambivalent since it can mean "burn out," but in the Septuagint it usually means "flame up," etc., as in modern Greek.

31 Most biographies of this section of the *Liber pont.* are in rough chronological order (allowing for telescoping and casting back and forward to follow a story). Biographers' reliance on annual entries of the papal account books particularly reinforced this structural characteristic, as Geertman 1975 has demonstrated. This section (starting "Porro eodem in tempore") follows the story of Carloman's retirement at Rome (747: BM 55b), and precedes Ratchis' death (749).

32 *Liber pont.*, 1.442.6, places John's arrival during Aistulf's violations of the forty-year treaty which occurred about four months after the treaty had been negotiated; the treaty itself went back to the third month of Stephen's papal ordination (26 March 752, *ibid.*, 441.5–11) i.e., late May or early June: hence John probably arrived in October; cf. Dölger no. 312 and JE 2308.



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159 Between 17 July 752 and 5 July 753, Africa–Sicily and Sardinia. A big Arab attack took many prisoners and booty. A lasting lull in raiding ensued. Amari attributes this to Byzantine defensive measures described by the Arab sources, including the construction of fortresses and the deployment of ships which patrolled the sea around Sicily and occasionally captured Muslim merchantmen: Amari 1933–9, 1: 301; Ibn al Athir, tr. Amari, 1.363, who also cites the Berber uprising in Africa. This new deployment is the "fleet of dromons of Sicily" which, according to the pope, was planning an operation against Otranto a few years later:[33] see R164–5.

160 752–3,[34] Rome–Constantinople. With John silentiary, Stephen II sent Anons. 43–4 to Constantine V: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.442.12–16; possibly the occasion on which Stephen II wrote to Constantine V about iconoclasm: Hadrian I, JE 2448, Mansi 12.1061A–B.

161 753, before 14 October, Constantinople–Rome (arr.). John silentiary returned to Rome accompanied by the returning Lombard envoy and papal legates: *Liber pont.* 1.444.16–445.5; Dölger no. 314.

162 756, Constantinople–Rome–Marseilles. John silentiary and George prōtoasēkrētis arrived in Rome, then went by sea to Marseilles to reach Pippin: *ibid.*, 452.11–453.9; Dölger no. 318.

163 756 or 757,[35] Italy or Francia–Constantinople. Pippin sent an embassy and received one with many gifts from Constantinople: *Fred. Cont.*, 123, 186.6–10. It is unlikely that the Byzantine envoy (John) silentiary returned to Constantinople before the Compiègne meeting; he presumably returned home thereafter.

164 Spring 758,[36] Naples–Constantinople. The Byzantine envoy George, at Naples, agreed to an alliance with the Lombard king Desiderius, at Benevento, and sent a letter to Constantine V proposing joint operations against Ravenna and, with the "dromonorum Siciliae stolum," against

33 Eickhoff 1966, 98–103 offers a history of this fleet, arguing that its origins in fact go back to the 720s or 730s.

34 Obviously after John's arrival at Rome and mission to Pavia.

35 *Fred. Cont.* situates this exchange of embassies at the time ("dum haec agerentur") of Aistulf's death (March 757: Sandmann 1984, 95). He mentions the Frankish embassy first, so it is possible that Pippin had sent an embassy to Constantinople from Italy in 756; or he may not be mirroring exactly in his order of narration the sequence of events. The reference to many gifts and the implicit dating to 757 make clear that the Byzantine embassy is the one present at the assembly of Compiègne in May 757. We can legitimately conclude that there was one Frankish embassy, either in 756 or 757; but not both. BM suggests that the Franks had probably left for Constantinople from Italy: BM 84a. Cf. also *Cod. Car.*, 11, JE 2335, pp. 504–7.

36 Desiderius installed Arichis as duke in Benevento, and quickly ("confestim") summoned George; Arichis dated his rule from February or March 758: Kaminsky 1973, 21 with n130; cf. Pros. "Georgius 5."



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Otranto, where the fugitive duke of Benevento was besieged: *Cod. Car.*, 17, JE 2341, 515.24–37. The Byzantines seem in fact to have recovered Otranto at this time, although whether they did so through the operation planned by George and Desiderius is unclear: von Falkenhausen 1978, 8.

165 c. 760 or 764,[37] Constantinople–Rome. Paul I wrote Pippin that *sincerissimi fideles* had alerted him that a fleet of 300 ships and six patricians had left Constantinople; with the fleet of Sicily (*Siciliensi* [!] *stolum*) they would head for Rome and Francia for unknown purposes. Regardless of the truth of the matter, Paul clearly believed that the report came directly or indirectly from Constantinople: *Cod. Car.*, 20, JE 2345, 521.11–17.

166 763, Frankland–Rome–Constantinople. Joint embassy of Pippin III and Paul I, whose delayed return concerned Pippin, since Paul, responding to Pippin's letter,[38] stated that he knew only that the envoys had left Constantinople: *Cod. Car.*, 28, JE 2355, 533.1–5. Paul sent more than one message (*sepius*) to the Byzantine emperors about iconoclasm: Hadrian I, JE 2448, Mansi 12.1061A–B; Constantine V's letter to Pippin mentioned in *Cod. Car.*, 25, 529.35–6 (Dölger no. 322), need not have traveled outside the known missions.

167 763, Benevento–Apulia–(Greece)–Constantinople–Benevento (arr.). Arichis II sent Gualtari to Constantinople; outbound, Gualtari may have boarded

37 Kehr 1896, 125, proposed to replace the traditional date of c. 760 with 764. Neither is compelling.

38 Pippin had written to Paul some time after returning from campaign in Aquitaine. Paul gently reproved him for not reporting his return sooner, but at least he had learned about the king's safety from pilgrims. Pippin seems to have returned from Aquitaine no later than August 763 (BM 97). Paul's letter certainly was written before *Cod. Car.* 29 (winter 763–4), which adds new information. *Cod. Car.* 28 therefore dates from sometime in the second half of 763. It strongly suggests that the envoys from Constantinople had been expected in those months. To a second request for news from Pippin, Paul responded (*ibid.*, 29) by stating that Pippin must know that the very severe winter impeded travel of anyone from Constantinople ("de illis partibus") with news of their ambassadors. The envoys presumably reached home in 764, but we have no explicit evidence about this. The winter is universally identified as the unusually harsh one of 763–4; cf. BM 97b. *Chronicon Moissiacense* adds (under the erroneous year 762), that a great freeze struck Gaul, *Illyricum and Thrace*, and killed many olive and fig trees: *MGH SS* 2.294.32–3. This is the only weather report from Byzantine Europe in 8th-C. Frankish sources. It must come from the ambassadors, and may show us something of their route. Theophanes, A.M. 6255, 1.434.6–435.5, confirms the account and says that freezing set in at the beginning of October; cf. Nicephorus, *Brev.*, 74, pp. 144–6; Rochow 1991, 181–3. This embassy is not to be confused with that of 766: see McCormick 1994b, 116–23. The date of late 763–April 764 usually given for *Cod. Car.* 28 overlooks the fact that the envoys must have been *surprised* by the harsh winter, since they left Constantinople expecting to reach the west that year; this hints strongly that they were under way in October.



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ship in Otranto, or more likely Bari or Siponto;[39] he returned with relics: *Translatio Heliani* (BHL 3799), 581.10–582.36.

168 Later 763 or very beginning of 764, Constantinople–Rome. News reached Paul I that the joint embassy (above, R166) had left Constantinople: *Cod. Car.*, 28, JE 2355, 533.2–23.

169 c. 764–6, Frankland–Baghdad. Pippin III sent Anons. 51–2 to the Caliph: *Fred. Cont.*, 51, 191.21–6, which describes only their homecoming, via Marseilles, "post tres annos."[40]

170 Autumn 766, Constantinople–Frankland (arr.). The joint Frankish-papal embassy returned with the Byzantines Anthes and Synesius; they reached Frankland late in 766, wintered with Pippin and, in February or March 767, held a theological debate and submitted a proposal to the Frankish grandees. The proposal was probably the marriage of Pippin's daughter Gisela to the Byzantine emperor's son: *Cod. Car.*, 36 and 37, JE 2363–4, pp. 544–50; *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 767, p. 24; Classen 1985, 26; McCormick 1994b, 113–31.

171 c. 766–7,[41] Alexandria–Africa–Rome (–Francia). Cosmas, patriarch of Alexandria, sent a monk with a letter defending the "integrity of the faith" to Paul I; he arrived at Rome in a ship (*navigium*) from Africa. Paul forwarded the letter to Pippin: *Cod. Car.*, 40, JE 2370, 553.5–14.

172 Between March and June 767,[42] Gentilly (dep.)–Constantinople. After the

39 Otranto is the obvious choice as the unnamed port where Gualtari embarked after crossing Apulia. Nonetheless, that a mountain chain (*iuga montium*, 581.17–20) was still in sight when a storm broke out argues against it, if there is any realism in the description. From the sea, the land around Otranto looks like a gentle rise; it does not exceed 200 m above sea level. To someone familiar with the Apennines east of Benevento, which routinely rise higher than 1,000 m, this will not have been *iuga montium*. Bari is perhaps more likely, and somewhere like Siponto, at the foot of the Monte Gargano promontory (1,056 m), a better fit still, if we can reckon it to be in Apulia. After the storm, the ship landed on the next day, i.e. presumably on the Balkans' Adriatic coast or an island. Dubrovnik or Dyrrachium are closest.

40 *Fred. Cont.* poses problems. The news of the envoys' return is implicitly situated after an event explicitly dated to mid-February, and before another which can be dated to Easter, April 10. The sequence of events may well be confused (cf. R175). If it is not, Pippin's ambassadors will have left home in 765 or, if the chronicler is reckoning inclusively, 766.

41 The pointed references to the king's orthodoxy and his present concern with pious reflection as well as the integrity of the faith situate this letter around the time of the synod at Gentilly, perhaps shortly after the pope was satisfied that Pippin had not yielded to iconoclast blandishments; cf. McCormick 1994b, 113–23.

42 The legation had already left for Constantinople when Paul received the letter of Pippin to which he responds in *Cod. Car.* 36. Once he had informed the pope of the legation's departure and so motivated *Cod. Car.* 36, John left Rome again for the north before 28 June 767. This in turn implies that his original departure from Gentilly scarcely can have occurred later than the beginning of June.



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debate at Gentilly, Pippin sent his envoys Anons. 56–7 with Anthes to Constantinople, carrying a letter to Constantine V; a copy was sent to Paul I, along with emperor's letter to Pippin. The embassy may have avoided Rome, since Paul seemed to learn of it from Pippin's letter and the papal envoys John and Pampilus, and Flaginus, Pippin's chaplain: *ibid.*, 36, 544.35–545.10; cf. 544.17–23; McCormick 1994b, 117–22.

173 12 August 767, Jerusalem–Rome (arr.). Constantinus 3 arrived, bearing Patriarch Theodore's synodal letter addressed to Paul I, outlining the eastern churches' defense of icon veneration. Shortly after 1 September 767, Pope Constantine II forwarded the Greek text and a Latin translation to Pippin III: *Cod. Car.*, 99, JE 2375, 652.35–653.3.

174 767–8, Baghdad–Marseilles–Bourges. News reached Pippin, apparently at Bourges, that his envoys, Anons. 51–2, had arrived at Marseilles from Baghdad, accompanied by Anons. 58–9, sent by Caliph al Mansur. Pippin ordered that the Arabs be transferred to Metz for the winter: *Fred. Cont.*, 51, 191.21–6; R169.[43]

175 Around April 768, Champtoceaux (dep.)–Marseilles–Baghdad. Pippin received Anons. 58–9, after they arrived in Marseilles and wintered in Metz; gifts were exchanged and the king had them escorted back to Marseilles, where they took ship and sailed home ("navale evectione per mare"): *Fred. Cont.*, 51, 191.21–6 and 192.4–9; Borgolte 1976, 41–2. The traditional chronology is jumbled: the ambassadors must have arrived before or early in the winter of 767–8: see for details, Pros., Anons. 51–2. The undocumented motive of the contacts may have been cooperation against Spain: thus already Oelsner 1871, 396.

176 After 1 August 768 and before 24 January 772, Rome–Constantinople. Pope Stephen III wrote to Constantine V and Leo IV about iconoclasm:[44] Hadrian I, JE 2448, Mansi 12.1061A–B.

177 Before around 771–5, Frankland–Baghdad. Franks were imprisoned in Baghdad: *Vita Romani neomartyris georgica*, 15, tr. Peeters, 418.37–419.3. Almost all the prisoners were freed at Caliph Mahdi's accession in 775; cf. *ibid.*, p. 399.

178 Shortly after April 772,[45] Rome (dep.)–Constantinople. Early in Hadrian I's

43 The usual dating, around 15 February 768, seems too late: see next entry.

44 Possibly after the Lateran council of April 769, but in no way necessarily so.

45 The arrest and exile occurred soon after Hadrian's accession on 9 February 772. They are explicitly (and manifestly correctly) dated by their sequence to the period during which Paul Afiarta was absent on a mission to King Desiderius, attempting to dissuade him from further attacks on the Exarchate: *Liber pont.*, 1.488.12–490.13. Desiderius began these attacks "not two months" after Hadrian's accession: 1.488.4–7.



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pontificate, he exiled his opponents Lunisso and Leonatius to Constantinople: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.490.14–15.

179 772, after April, Ravenna–(Venice)–Constantinople. Hadrian planned to exile Paul Afiarta also to Constantinople, after condemning Lunisso and Leonatius. He wrote to Leo, archbishop of Ravenna, asking him to send Paul there, either by Venice or another route. He also sent a letter (JE 2398) to emperors Constantine V and Leo IV, explaining Paul's crimes and asking them to exile him somewhere in the empire. When Leo received this missive, he feared to accomplish it, since Afiarta's ally, King Desiderius, had captured the doge Maurice's son, and Leo presumed that the doge would trade Afiarta for his son. On this pretext he had Paul murdered: *ibid.*, 490.23–491.6.

180 After 772? and before November 775 (768?), Verdun–Alps–Rome (–province of Nursia?)–Monte Gargano–Apulia–(by sea)–Constantinople–(Grecia?)–Ephesus–Jaffa–Jerusalem–Verdun. Pilgrimage of Madalveus, bishop of Verdun (d. 4 October 776): Bertarius, *Gesta episcoporum Virdunensium*, 12, *MGH SS* 4.44.1–6; *Vita Madalvei* (BHL 5132t), 14–18, pp. 196–9; Hugh of Flavigny, *Chronicon*, *MGH SS* 8.345–7. For more on the dating of Madalveus' trip, see Pros.

181 772–95, Rome–Africa. According to his epitaph, Pope Hadrian I played some role in getting bishops for captive Africa: Silverius, *MGH Poet.* 1.114.43–8: ". . . Africa laetatur, multos captiva per annos, / Pontifices precibus promeruisse tuis."

182 After 20 January and before 25 March 773,[46] Rome–Marseille–Thionville (arr.). Hadrian I sent his envoys to Charlemagne; they were forced to travel by sea, "marino itinere": *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.493.13; *Ann. regni Franc.* and *Ann. Ein.* s.a., pp. 34–5.

183 April 774,[47] Verona–Epirus?–Salerno (dep.)–Constantinople. King Desiderius' son Adalgis escaped the Frankish conquest; he fled "in partes Chaonides" i.e. Epirus (Agnellus, *Lib. pont. eccl. Rav.*, 160, 381.9–12; cf. e.g., Isidore, *Origines*, 14, 4, 9, Lindsay). This presumably refers to Dyrrachium.[48] It would have been an obvious haven, and this Byzantine port was just across the Adriatic from the friendly Lombard duchy of Benevento, which would, in fact, be his next stop.[49] Byzantine activity at Dyrrachium was increasing no later than the early 9th C., to judge from the seal evidence: *CBSDO* 1: 40. The

46 The Annals locate the meeting at Thionville, where Charlemagne was in this period: BM 152–6.

47 Agnellus makes his departure from Salerno coincide with Charles' approach to Rome, hence the month.

48 It is also possible that Agnellus is misusing his terms and means the even more obvious port of Zadar, in Byzantine Dalmatia.

49 He may have sailed across the Adriatic, landed e.g. at Bari, and traveled (via the Via Appia) to Benevento, and then over to Salerno.



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variant account of the *Continuatio Romana Pauli Diaconi*, *MGH SRL* 201.43–4, appears to be of lesser authority (Wattenbach *et al.* 1952–90, 458–9); in any case, its claim that Adalgis fled in secret from Verona to Pisa, where he took ship for Constantinople, is less plausible: the Frankish army controlled the territory he would have had to cross, whereas the Franks had no influence over maritime movements.

184 March 776, Constantinople?–Sicily?–Italy. Late in 775, Hadrian learned of a planned Byzantine intervention to restore Adalgis and retake Rome; it was scheduled for the following March: *Cod. Car.*, 57, JE 2419, 582.22–31; BM 198a considers this a mere rumor. It is still revealing of assumptions about travel seasons.

185 Immediately after 7 February 776, Constantinople–Naples–Rome (arr.). Hadrian I informed Charlemagne that Bishop Stephen of Naples had just written to him, informing him that Constantine V was dead (d. 14 September 775). Hadrian admitted that rumors had reached him earlier, but he had deferred notifying Charles until he was certain (the last thing Hadrian wanted was for Charles *not* to intervene in Italy that spring): *Cod. Car.*, 58, JE 2422, pp. 583–4.

186 775–6, Byzantine empire–Civitavecchia–Tuscany–Caliphate. Byzantine slavers had been operating along the west coast of Italy, apparently off Tuscany, buying Christians and selling them to the Muslims. Hadrian's response to Charlemagne's complaint that Hadrian's Romans ("nostri Romani") were selling Christians to Muslims reveals the traffic. The pope responded around 20 February 776 that "we have never stooped to such a crime" nor had it ever occurred with his *express* approval ("per nostram voluntatem"). It was actually the evil Greeks who have "always" (*semper*) sailed along the Lombards' coast and purchased slaves from them, by virtue of their treaty (*amicitia*). In fact, Hadrian claimed that he had tried to suppress the trade, but since he had neither ships nor sailors, he had written to Duke Allo (of Lucca), asking him in vain to "make ready many ships," capture the Greeks and burn their ships. So, with God as his witness, Hadrian had acted on his own initiative, burning the Greek (slave) ships in Civitavecchia, and imprisoning their Greeks for a long time. He further specified that in fact, many "familia [!]" were sold by the Lombards because they were starving to death; and some even climbed up into the Greek ships under their own power, since they despaired of surviving the famine: *Cod. Car.*, 59, JE 2426, 585.9–23. The implication is that the Greek slave merchants then sold the Christian Lombards to the Arabs. What this means is that Charlemagne's entourage observed a jump in slaving activities affecting Lombard Christians; Hadrian's response was to shift the blame for the spike in slaving to Charles himself, to emphasize that it was nothing new, and to



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deny personal responsibility.[50] On 20 February 776, Charles invalidated the sale of individuals or their dependents into slavery ("in servitio") and all unjust sales insofar as they could be documented, and which were caused by the famine and his army's operations: *MGH Capit.* 1.187–8, no. 88, 1–2, 4, which was drawn up with the help of Pavian notaries; see Bullough 1985, 276; cf. Gundlach 1892, 551n1. Charles' reproach to Hadrian was likely formulated at this time.

187 Before 776–8, Byzantine empire–Istria. According to Hadrian I, Istrians and Anons. 68–9, Byzantines there had blinded a bishop when he obeyed Charlemagne's order to collect St. Peter's revenue in Istria: *Cod. Car.*, 63, JE 2427, esp. 590.20–7.

188 Between 8 June and 21 October 771,[51] emirate of Spain (Saragossa)–Paderborn (arr.). Hispano-Arab grandees came to Charlemagne to request help against Abd al Rahman I: *Ann. regni Franc.* and *Ann. Ein.*, a. 777, pp. 48–51; BM 211a.

189 May 778, Syracuse–Gaeta (arr.). The patrician of Sicily came to Gaeta to lure the towns of Campania away from Hadrian's authority and back to Byzantine allegiance: *Cod. Car.*, 61, JE 2424, 588.33–589.17.

190 Between Easter and September 779 or 780,[52] Sicily and Naples–Terracina. Hadrian informed Charlemagne that the Neapolitans and Byzantines had suddenly invaded and reconquered Terracina; he requested help recovering the latter, subjugating Gaeta and Naples, and recovering the patrimony of Peter located in Naples: *ibid.*, 64, JE 2428, 591.13–28.

191 Around Easter 779 or 780 (i.e. 11 April or 26 March, respectively),[53] Naples–Rome (arr.). A Neapolitan envoy had come to Hadrian and negotiated a deal at or until Easter: the Neapolitans would supply hostages and get the patrician of Sicily to agree to restore to Rome Peter's patrimony at Naples, in return for Terracina and the hostages. Arichis, who was awaiting Adalgis' return, thwarted the deal: *ibid.*, 591.29–592.4; cf. *ibid.*, 65, JE 2429, 593.21–4.

192 Between Easter and September 779 or 780, Sicily–Salerno or Benevento. Arichis was daily receiving envoys of the patrician of Sicily, and scheming for the restoration of Adalgis from Constantinople: *ibid.*, 64, JE 2428, 591.38–592.4.

193 774–88 (c. 780?), Cordova–Frankland. The emir of Spain, Abd al Rahman I (d. 29 September 788) negotiated a marriage alliance with Charlemagne;

50 The famine implicates Charles, for it refers to the hunger which swept Italy in connection with Charlemagne's invasion in 773–4.

51 The date follows from the king's itinerary.

52 Date: see next.

53 After Easter; before 1 August, by which date Hadrian asked that Wulfuinus be in Rome, prepared to lead the attack: 591.22.



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nothing came of the agreement: Rosenthal 1930; Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 1: 120–1, from al Makkari.

194 780–5,[54] ?Rome–Constantinople. Hadrian I wrote to Constantine VI requesting the restoration of icons: JE 2448, Mansi 12.1059E–1062A; the Greek translation omits this sentence.

195 February 781, Constantinople (dep.)–Sicily. Elpidius, former stratēgos of Sicily, was given this office anew and sent back to Sicily by Empress Irene: Theophanes, A.M. 6273, 1.454.25–7; cf. Rochow 1991, 230–1.

196 15 April 781, Constantinople (dep.)–Sicily. Elpidius was accused of disloyalty and Theophilus spatharios was sent to Sicily to arrest him; Sicily revolted: Theophanes, A.M. 6273, 1.454.28–30.

197 Between 15 March and 25 May 781,[55] Constantinople–Rome (arr.). The Byzantine envoys Constaes, sakellarios, and Mamalus, primikērios, arrived and concluded with Charlemagne the engagement of his daughter Rotruda to Constantine VI; the eunuch notary Elissaeus stayed to teach Rotruda to read and write Greek, as well as the customs of the Byzantine empire: *Annales Mosellani*, a. 781, *MGH SS* 16.497.15–16; Theophanes, A.M. 6274, 1.455.19–25; Einhard, *V. Karoli*, 19, 24.4–6; Peter Grammaticus and Paul Deacon, *Carmina* 12–13 (11–12), pp. 60–8. It is highly improbable that so important an arrangement was concluded out of the blue that spring, but we know nothing about the negotiations which must have preceded it. The Royal Annals omit all mention of the encounter, since it had turned out to be an embarassing failure by the time they were composed.

198 782, Constantinople–Sicily. Irene sent a large fleet and select forces under Theodore patrician to crush Elpidius' revolt; they succeeded: Theophanes, A.M. 6274, 1.454.26–9; Rochow 1991, 235–6.

199 782 Sicily–Africa. The defeated usurper Elpidius fled to Africa, defecting to

54 The date corresponds to Constantine's sole reign.

55 Charlemagne had come to Rome for the baptismal service and Easter liturgy on 15 April. On 15 March he was in Parma and by 15 May he was back in Pavia: BM 235 and 238. *Ann. Mosellani* situates the engagement in Rome. Theophanes is clearly referring to the same event, but his date corresponds to 1 Sept. 781–31 August 782, which cannot be reconciled with the certain evidence of Charlemagne's movements. Theophanes is clearly mistaken, whether he simply blunders or means to conceal a link between the sending of this embassy and the disastrous decision to send the patrician Elpidius to Sicily, or because the embassy *returned after* 1 September 781; Elpidius had left Constantinople in February 781 (above, R195) and, at almost the exact moment of the engagement, decided to throw his support behind the branch of the imperial family which Irene had excluded from power. Cf. Lilie 1996, 193–6. On the political situation in Constantinople at the time see Speck 1978, 1: 120–2; McCormick 1990, 140–2; see also Ohnsorge 1958, 65–7; Rochow 1991, 234–5.



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the Arabs with Nicephorus *doux*; the Arabs recognized Elpidius as Byzantine emperor: Theophanes, A.M. 6273 and 6274, 1.454.25–31 and 455.26–456.1; cf. Amari 1933–9, 1: 343.

200 Around 15 August–14 September 782, (dep.) and before July 783 (arr.), Constantinople–Rome. Distorted news of Harun al Rashid's invasion of Asia Minor as far as the capital region, and its conclusion, reached Hadrian, who conveyed it to Charlemagne: *Cod. Car.*, 74, JE 2439, 605.10–18; cf. Theophanes A.M. 6274, 1.456.2–22; Rochow 1991, 236–8.[56]

201 Between June and October 783,[57] Ravenna–Islamic world. Hadrian claimed that his enemies Eleutherius and Gregorius, former administrators at Ravenna who had fled to Charlemagne, had been oppressing the poor in their district by selling people to the pagans, i.e. Muslims.[58] The text is corrupt, but the selling of Ravennate slaves among (*apud*) the pagans is unmistakable: ". . . non sinebant in eorum iudiciaria partibus Ravenna inopes et pussillos opprimentes vivere, tam in venalitate hominum apud paganas venundantes gentes quam de †panis† . . .": *Cod. Car.*, 75, JE 2442, 606.20–4. It is conceivable that Hadrian invented the accusation, having personally experienced Charles' ire on this count; but for the accusation to work, Ravennate slave sales had to be known to the king.

202 783 or 793–821, Smyrna–Lesbos. During a famine, Smyrniots sent a ship with 500 *modioi* of grain, 100 *modioi* of legumes and 100 gold pieces to a coastal shrine on Lesbos: *Vita Davidis, Sym. et Georgii* (BHG 494), 13, 225.11–25. On the chronology, A. Kazhdan, *ODB* 1: 589.

203 Before August 784, Lentini (Sicily)–Rome. Bishop Constantine of Lentini had traveled to Rome at least once before he came as a Byzantine ambassador to Hadrian I. Writing to Hadrian, Irene and Constantine VI explicitly stated that the pope already knew Constantine, in a context in which the emperors were clearly conveying private, oral explanations and reassurances to the pope about the recent turnabout in imperial doctrine: Mansi 12.986B–C; Dölger no. 341.

204 Before 29 August 784, Lentini–Constantinople. Bishop Constantine had

56 The truce (cf. Lilie 1976, 174–5) which concluded the invasion and allowed the Arab retreat was established in Muharram A.H. 166 (Lilie 1976, 176n49). Hadrian's mention of the Frankish queen (605.22) shows that he had not yet heard of Hildegard's death on 30 April 783 (BM 261b), news of which could not have taken more than four to seven weeks to reach Rome (Table 16.2). Therefore the letter was written in June or July at the latest.

57 Gundlach dates it to this period because there is no mention of a queen: Gundlach 1892, 561 with n, and Abel and Simson 1883–8, 1: 464n5.

58 In the language of the papal court, the Muslims of Africa are referred to as "pagana gens" precisely in the context of Venetian sales of Christian slaves: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.433.16.



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traveled to the capital on unspecified business (see next entry): *ibid.*; cf. Pros. "Constantinus 4."

205 29 August 784, Constantinople (dep.)–Rome. Constantine VI and Irene sent a letter to Hadrian I, announcing Orthodoxy and asking him to come in person. They had personally briefed their ambassador, Constantine of Lentini; he was to bring an immediate response to Constantinople. Hadrian should set a travel date straightaway, and voyage with the "bishop" of Naples, via Naples and Sicily; the stratēgos of Sicily would attend to the pope's travel needs: Mansi 12.986B–C; Dölger no. 341. Whether Constantine actually reached Rome is unclear. Dölger thought not: something may have happened to Constantine, and only the later legation (next) actually got there. It is however also possible that Constantine did reach Rome, that Hadrian gave an unsatisfactory or incomplete response, and that R206 was then sent, to which Hadrian's letter (JE 2428) is the surviving response. Constantine did attend the ecumenical council in 787: Pros. "Constantinus 4"; the two missions asked for different responses from the pope. Speck 1978, 2: 549n301, tries to resolve the problem simply by emending the text from indiction "VII" to "VIII," i.e. 785, accepted by Rochow 1991, 242–3 and Lilie 1996, 61n31. This hypothesis presumes that the papal response (R208) could and would be organized and implemented within a maximum of two or three weeks of the arrival of the imperial invitation in Rome.

206 After Christmas 784, Constantinople (dep.)–before 26 October 785,[59] Rome (arr.), via Sicily. The empress and Patriarch Tarasius sent Epiphanius 2 and Leo 1 to Hadrian I, requesting that he send envoys to Constantinople. That Hadrian's response to this legation alone has been preserved could stem from a papal refusal to cooperate with R205. Otherwise, Dölger's hypothesis (no. 341) that something happened to Constantine of Lentini en route would apply. The envoys traveled via Sicily because its stratēgos added Bishop Theodore of Catania to the party: Mansi 12.1075E–1078A. Tarasius' synodal letter and profession of faith could well have traveled with this legation and so are not catalogued separately: Mansi 12.1047D–1075B; Theophanes, A.M. 6277, 1.460.23–7; Grumel[2] no. 351; Rochow 1991, 242–3, and Lilie 1996, 61n31, for a different view.

207 Before 785, Sicily (Taormina?)–Rome. Anon. 75, a Sicilian woman, had traveled to Rome for a cure: *Conc. II Nicaeanum*, actio 4, Mansi 13.24C–D.

208 26 October 785, Rome (dep.)–Sicily–Constantinople. Hadrian sent JE 2428 to Constantine VI and Irene; it condemned iconoclasm, introduced his ambassadors "Petrus 3" and "4," requested a sworn document from the

59 The dates follow from the fact that the legation carried a letter from the new patriarch Tarasius, and the date of Hadrian's response.



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rulers, patriarch and senate guaranteeing non-interference in the future council's deliberations, and voiced papal complaints against Constantinople: JE 2428, Mansi 12.1056A–1072C. That they traveled eastward via Sicily follows from Hadrian's statement that his envoys *returned* to Sicily during the riot which disrupted the council: *MGH Epist.* 5.56.26.

209 Shortly after 31 July 786, Constantinople (dep.)–Sicily. Soldiers disrupted the beginning of the council; the papal legates returned to Sicily: *ibid.*, 56.8–57.3; Grumel² no. 355 for the date. They returned to Constantinople in time for the opening of II Nicaea, on 24 September 787.

210 c. 786–8,[60] Frankland–Constantinople–Frankland. Charlemagne sent his ambassadors Witbold and John about the marriage of Rotruda and Constantine VI. Gone 18 months – considered a delay – they performed "strenuissime": *Gesta Font.*, 12, 1, p. 85.

211 March 787, (Constantinople)–Capua (arr.). Anon. 79–80, ambassadors of Constantine VI, came to Charlemagne at Capua (Vetere), where he was threatening Benevento, and where he issued privileges on 22 and 24 March (DD Kar 1, nos. 156–7). They had come to take Rotruda back to Constantinople; Charles refused to hand her over, dismissed them, and returned to Rome for Easter (8 April): *Ann. Ein.*, a. 786, p. 75; cf. *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 786, p. 72; Theophanes, A.M. 6281, 1.463.21–2; cf. BM 282c; Abel and Simson 1883–8, 1: 541–72; Dölger no. 345; Speck 1978, 2: 13–14n126; Rochow 1991, 249–50; Lilie 1996, 199–200.

212 Between April and 26 August 787,[61] Salerno (dep.)–Constantinople. Hadrian I reported to Charlemagne that a Capuan priest had informed him that Duke Arichis of Benevento had requested from Constantinople: a Byzantine force led by Adalgis; Naples; and the dignity of patrician, in return for recognizing Byzantine overlordship: *Cod. Car.*, 83, JE 2463, 617.23–31. BM 282c dismisses the report as untrustworthy; Abel and Simson 1883–8, 1: 605–6 are also suspicious. Hadrian may well have wished to insure that Charlemagne pay close attention to any threat Benevento might pose to Frankish control of Italy – and incidentally to Rome. But Benevento's project of alliance with Constantinople was not unthinkable: Arichis' son would soon marry into the Byzantine imperial family (R226), and Adalgis did land with a Byzantine force (R220), which surely required preliminary negotiation.

60 The date derives from the rather confused chronology of the *Gesta*, which states that although Witbold had been promised the succession of his uncle Widolaic, abbot of Fontenelles, who died on 14 September 787 or 788 (*Gesta Font.*, 11, 3, p. 82 with n181), his delay in returning from the east resulted in the abbey going to Gerbold (12, 1, p. 85).

61 Hadrian probably wrote after Charlemagne had left Rome and before Arichis' death on 26 August.



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213 After April 787 and before 20 January 788,[62] ?Constantinople–Calabria–Gaeta and Ravenna. Hadrian informed Charlemagne of reports from the bishop of Gaeta and from Ravenna that, with Byzantine *missi*, Adalgis had landed near Benevento's boundaries in Calabria: *Cod. Car.*, 80, JE 2460, 612.11–23 and 613.10–14. This news from Constantinople and/or Calabria reached Rome simultaneously via the Tyrrhenian shipping line and through the Adriatic.

214 Between 23 October 787 and 31 August 788,[63] Constantinople–(Lipari–Naples)–Rome. Petrus 3 and 4, the Roman legates, returned from the final session of the Nicaean council, held in Constantinople: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 1.511.26–512.9. If Gregorius 4 was indeed traveling with them, they sailed via Lipari and Naples: *Syn. CP.* , 641.44–52. Possibly, they carried Tarasius' letter to Hadrian I about the council: Grumel² no. 359, Mansi 13.458–62 and 756–8.

215 c. 787–8, Spoleto–Benevento–(Constantinople). Sicco and his mother (Anon. 78) fled Spoleto through Benevento en route to refuge in Constantinople; at Arichis II's invitation they decided to settle instead at Benevento: *Catalogus regum Langobardorum et ducum Beneventanorum codicis Vaticani*, *MGH SRL* 494.14; *Chron. Salern.*, 42, 42.22–43.1; *Epitaphium Sicconis*, 7–16, *MGH Poet.* 2.649–50; *Gesta episc. Neap.*, 51, 428.26–7; Pros. "Sicco."

216 c. 787–91? Charlemagne had ordered Venetian merchants expulsed from Ravenna and the Pentapolis;[64] Hadrian replied that he had instructed the archbishop of Ravenna to do so, and to confiscate their "presidia [read 'praedia'? cf. 622.31] atque possessiones": *Cod. Car.*, 86, JE 2480, 622.24–30.

217 c. 20 January 788, (Constantinople)–Sicily–Agropoli–Salerno (arr.)–Naples. Byzantine ambassadors – 2 spatharioi and the *diucitis* (i.e. *dioikētēs*; Anons. 81–3) of Sicily – landed at Agropoli and headed overland to Salerno, where they met Arichis II's widow Adalberga for three days; Beneventans then escorted them to Naples where they were granted an *adventus* and received by Bishop Stephen: *ibid.*, 82, JE 2461, 616.5–18. The presence of the *dioikētēs*

62 After Charles' departure from Rome and, apparently, before the more precise report concerning the arrival of Byzantine ambassadors on 20 January 788: R217.

63 The council ended on 23 October 787. It is possible, but by no means necessary, that the Roman envoys were still present as late as 6 January 788: Theodore Studite implies that they were present for the patriarchal decree promulgated sometime after the council (*Ep.* 1, 38, 110.43–4; cf. 63–8) which restored simoniacal bishops if they performed one year's penance; Grumel² no. 360. The legates returned to Rome before 31 August 788, since the papal biographer mentions their mission in the segment which Geertman's analysis (1975, 18) identifies with indiction 11, which ended on that date. The mention occurs at the time of their return, not their departure in 785.

64 Presumably on account of the tensions with Byzantium, hence the date.



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shows that even if these spatharioi had ultimately been sent from Constantinople, they were coming from Sicily in January.

218 c. 22 January 788, Naples (dep.)–Constantinople. Anons. 81–3 sent news of Arichis' death to Constantinople and awaited further instructions: *ibid.*, 83, JE 2463, 618.17–21.

219 After 22 January 788, rumored invasion: Constantinople–Treviso (i.e. Venice) or Ravenna. Hadrian wrote to Charles that the Byzantines had told the Beneventans they were planning to invade Italy. They would land at Ravenna or Treviso to restore Adalgis: *ibid.*, 617.31–6. This was probably a smoke-screen for the real invasion.

220 In or shortly after May 788,[65] Constantinople–Calabria (arr.). Byzantine invasion of southern Italy, to reestablish the Lombard kingdom. Iohannes 9 sakellarios and logothetēs tou stratiōtikou, former King Adalgis-Theodotus and Theodorus 3, stratēgos of Sicily, headed the fleet and expeditionary force; they suffered heavy losses (4,000 killed; 1,000 taken captive, including Patriarch Tarasius' brother Sisinnius: Alcuin, *Ep.* 7, 32.12–16; *Ann. regni Franc.* and *Ann. Ein.*, a. 798, pp. 104 and 105) and were defeated by the Beneventans, the duke of Spoleto, and some Franks: Theophanes, A.M. 6281, 1.464.2–9; *Chron. Moiss.*, a. 789, *MGH SS* 1.298.35–299.2; *Ann. regni Franc.* and *Ann. Ein.* a. 788, pp. 82 and 83; *Epitaphium Grimoaldi*, *MGH Poet.* 1.430.21–2. Cf. BM 294b and 296a; Abel and Simson 1883–8, 1: 632–5; Classen 1985, 33; Rochow 1991, 251.

221 788–93, Benevento–"in finibus Graeciae." Graswulf defected to Byzantium; how far he went is unclear: act of Grimoald III of Benevento, August 793, *Italia sacra* 10, "Anecdota," 459A.

222 After 9 February 790, Constantinople–Sicily. Empress Irene seized and sent her son's supporters "to the lower regions, up to Sicily": Theophanes, A.M. 6282, 1.464.25–465.5; Rochow 1991, 251–2.

223 c. 790? before 796,[66] Constantinople–Rome. Tarasius wrote to Hadrian I declaring his opposition to simony: *Ep.* 1; Grumel², no. 364.

224 After 790, Constantinople–Sicily. Tarasius congratulated Sicily's bishops on regularly holding their annual synods and reminded them of their decision at II Nicaea against simony: *Ep.* 2; cf. Grumel² no. 365.

225 A winter between c. 790 and 796,[67] Amastris–Trebizond. Bishop George of

65 The month follows from Grimoald III's dating of his reign from May 788, since he took power on the eve of the campaign, when Charlemagne had released him from hostage status and sent him back to rule Benevento: Bertolini 1968b, 31–4.

66 Hadrian's death would have been known in the east by 796; Speck 1978, 1: 198–202 would date the letter earlier.

67 The trip to Trebizond is dated to the joint reign of Irene and Constantine VI (*V. Georgii*, 34, 52.1–10); George became bishop c. 790: *ibid.*, p. lx.



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Amastris learned that some merchants of his town faced execution in Trebizond; he braved the winter weather and sailed to deliver them. Ignatius the Deacon (?), *V. Georgii Amastridos* (*BHG* 668), 27–30, 42.4–47.10; on the sea's miraculous tranquillity during the voyage, *ibid.* 28, 43.6–45.2.

226 791/2, Constantinople–Benevento. Evanthia, Constantine VI's sister-in-law, was sent to Benevento to marry Grimoald III: Erchempert, *Hist. Lang. Ben.*, 5, 236.20–1; Nicetas of Amneia, *Vita Philareti* (*BHG* 1511z), 143.20–35; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 105–8; Classen 1985, 33–4, with n110. See also R231.

227 792, Jerusalem–Rome. Gregorius 5 traveled from Jerusalem: *Syn. CP.*, 372.7–10; cf. Pros.

228 After 24 June 793, Constantinople (dep.)–Sicily "and the islands." Constantine VI transferred the Armeniakoi rebels to Sicily and "the other islands": Theophanes, A.M. 6285, 1.469.11–15.

229 795, after 8 May, Ephesus. The earliest mention of the fair of Ephesus occurs in connection with a victory of Constantine VI over the Arabs on 8 May, the feast of St. John the Evangelist. The emperor came to Ephesus and granted the fair held there in connection with the saint's cult a remission of customs duties of 100 lb. of gold: Theophanes, A.M. 6287, 1.469.27–470.1; cf. McCormick 1990, 143n43; Rochow 1991, 261–2. It is unclear how old the fair was; silence from earlier 8th-C. Byzantium means little. The travelers who stopped in Ephesus decades before and after argue strongly that the fair's existence was not confined to 795; e.g. R55; R417. For the 8th- or 9th-C. seal of an official possibly connected with the fair, see *CBSDO* 3: 30, no. 14.2. On Byzantine fairs in general, see Vryonis 1981 and Laiou 1990.

230 c. 795, Venice–Jerusalem–Venice. Anons. 84–5, Venetian merchants, brought back from the Holy Land relics of Sts. Genesius and Eugenius. Word of their miracles reached Count Gebahard of Treviso: *Mir. Genesii* (*BHL* 3314), 2, p. 9; R233 etc.

231 After 795? Benevento–Constantinople. Evanthia was repudiated and returned home: Erchempert, *Hist. Lang. Ben.*, 5, 236.22–9; Theodore Studite, *Ep.* 31, 1.87.92–88.99; Michael Studite, *Vita Theodori Studitae* (*BHG* 1754), *PG*, 99.252D; cf. Abel and Simson 1883–8, 2: 251 and 285 with n3; Cilento 1971, 85, with n35; von Falkenhausen 1978, 16n98; see also Pros.

232 Between c. 795 and 810,[68] Caliphate (Syria?)–Rome. Muslim merchants traveled by sea to Rome; where they boarded their ship is not stated. The witness who knew them was from Damascus: Yāqūt ibn ʿAbdallāh, 2.868; see Ch. 21.2.

68 Our Damascene informant died in 810; the church roofs which attracted the merchants may reflect Leo III's construction projects: Ch. 24n24.



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233 c. 796, Treviso–Venice–Jerusalem–Treviso.[69] Through merchants (Anons. 84–5) Gebahard sent magnificent gifts to the patriarch, requesting relics of Sts. Genesius and Eugenius; he agreed, if Gebahard would send a priest and a deacon to perform the liturgy before the relics during their shipment: *Mir. Genesii* 2, pp. 9–10. See R238 and 242.

234 796–822: communications between Muslim Spain and Africa and even the Muslim East accelerated in the guise of pilgrimage and study trips; this had begun under Hisham I (787–96) and would increase under Abd al-Rahman II (822–52): Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 1: 185.

235 Second half of February to 25 March 797, Asia Minor–Thessalonica. Theodore Studite's trip into exile. The prisoners left the Kathara monastery (Asia Minor) shortly after 15 February, and traveled to the Liviana monastery, to Leukai (near Nicaea), Phyraion, Paula, Lopadion, etc. to Parion (on the Sea of Marmara), Orkos, and Lampsakos (arr. c. 1–3 March), where they certainly boarded a ship if they had not done so earlier, and for three days awaited a favorable wind. At Abydos they paused for eight days and departed on 11 March. Next they reached Eleuntes, where the ship awaited favorable winds for another week (c. 12–19 March), before making the run to Lemnos in nine hours. From there they sailed to Kanastron (Cape Paliouri) in twelve hours, and passed by Pallene before debarking at "Embolos," apparently the westernmost point of the Chalkidike peninsula. From there they rode to Thessalonica: Theodore Studite, *Ep.* 3, 13.68–15.105; for place-names and dates, *ibid.*, pp. 143*–146*. For more details, see above, p. 490; cf. Ch. 13n4.

236 Around September or October, 797,[70] Mauretania–Spain–Aachen (arr.). ʿAbd Allah, the emir of Cordova's brother, came seeking Charlemagne's support: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 100; *Ann. Ein.* are more explicit: "de Mauritania ad se venientem," s.a., p. 101. BM 338f seems to suggest he was coming from Spain, but appears incoherent. Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 1: 152 (cf. 179) states that he was at Tiaret (Algeria), traveled to the area around Saragossa (cf. 156), where he expected to find support, and finally fled to the Frankish court.

237 Between c. 15 September and 15 November 797,[71] Constantinople–Sicily–Aachen (arr.). Nicetas (stratēgos) of Sicily sent his representative Theoctistus

69 Date follows from R238.

70 For the month, see next n.

71 Abel and Simson 1883–8, 2: 135, proposed a date in September based on a dating of Alcuin's *Ep.* 147 and 156 to 797, which is not assured: cf. Dümmler, *MGH Epist.* 2.236 and 253. The *Lorscher Annalen*, a. 797, 36.8–10, state that Charles returned to Francia from a first campaign in Saxony and, after "aliquantae ebdomadae," went back to Saxony. *Ann. regni Franc.* s.a., p. 102, places the latter movement in mid-November. Charles was at Aachen on 28 October 797: BM 339. The reckoning in weeks suggests that the king was in Frankland for less than a month or so.



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to Charlemagne, bearing a letter from the emperor (Constantine VI); Charles received him well and dismissed him after a few days: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 797, p. 100, cf. *Ann. Ein.*, s.a., p. 101; BM 338f. News of Constantine's deposition on 19 August 797 (see Grierson 1962, 54–5; cf. Speck 1978, 1: 307–8) had manifestly not reached Sicily by the time of Theoctistus' departure.

238 797,[72] Frankland–Treviso–Venice–Jerusalem–Baghdad. Charlemagne sent Lantfrid, Sigimund and Isaac to Harun al Rashid. They traveled via Treviso, since Gebahard joined his own envoys to them; his earlier arrangements (R230 and R233) strongly suggest that they took a Venetian ship. They traveled together to Jerusalem; Gebahard's men waited there for the envoys' return, but finally returned home on their own: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 801, p. 116; *Mir. Genesii*, 2, p. 10; see Borgolte 1976, 46–58; BM 337f; Biberstein 1993; Musca 1996.

239 Before 797–808, Constantinople–Rome. Basil of Rome had apparently been a monk at Stoudios: Theodore Studite, *Ep.* 28, 1.75.2–7 and 78.81–7; cf. Pros. "Basilius 1."

240 Between 7 August and 6 November 798,[73] Constantinople–Aachen (arr.). Charlemagne received envoys Michael 1 and Theophilus 1 bearing a letter from Irene, about Constantine VI's blinding and a peace treaty between the empires. They left Aachen with Charles' prisoner Sisinnius (cf. R220): *Ann. regni Franc.* and *Ann. Ein.*, s.a., pp. 104–5; cf. BM 347b and Pros.

241 798, Africa or Spain–Majorca and Minorca. "Mauri" and Saracens raided the Balearics; the inhabitants requested Frankish help: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 798, p. 104, cf. a. 799, p. 108, and *Ann. Ein.*, s.a., p. 104, and p. 109; BM 350h. This was the beginning of Arab raiding activity in this area, according to Lokys 1906, 11; Guichard 1983, 60–6, suggests that Ummayad princes from the coast between Alicante and Tortosa, in revolt against the emir, launched this new series of raids; the reference to "Mauri" could reflect the many Berbers settled in that region.

72 The Muslim envoys who responded to Charles' embassy reached the emperor's camp in June 801, at which point the *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 801, p. 116, dates the Frankish ambassadors' departure as "ante quadriennium," suggesting they left in 797. A few decades later, the *Mir. Genesii*, 2, p. 10, says that the embassy was en route "quartum dimidium annum," which Borgolte 1976, 50, interprets as 3½ years, perhaps inspired by the German expression for time (e.g., "halb Vier" for 3:30 o'clock). Four and a half or a very recherché way of saying "two years," i.e. the "fourth half year" are also possible. In any case, the court record's authority is superior.

73 The Royal Annals supply the year and the place. *Ann. Mosellani*, s.a. 797, *MGH SS* 16.499.7, specifies the season of Charles' return to Aachen: "tempore autumni." In the Anglo-Saxon tradition with which these annals are closely connected (cf. Wattenbach *et al.* 1952–90, 185), this meant these dates.



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242 c. 798 and before 801,[74] Jerusalem–Rome. Anon. 87 arrived at Rome with relics of St. Genesius and Eugenius: *Mir. Genesii* 2, p. 10. That he caught a ship to Rome, which was not his primary destination, rather than to Venice, suggests that the numbers of ships and destinations were limited; cf. R238.

243 Between 13 June and 11 November 799, (?Constantinople–) Sicily–Paderborn (arr.). Daniel, envoy of Michael, patrician of Sicily, arrived at Charlemagne's court: *Ann. regni Franc.* and *Ann. Ein.*, s.a., pp. 108 and 109. It is unclear whether Daniel was conveying a message from Constantinople via Sicily or merely from Sicily, although the latter appears the obvious solution from the wording. The evidence pointing to Constantinople is *Annales Guelferbytani*, a. 799, *MGH SS* 1.45: "et missi imperatissa [!] ibi fuerunt"; cf. BM 350f.[75]

244 Possibly between 11 November and Christmas 799,[76] Jerusalem–Aachen (arr.). Anon. 91, a monk, envoy of the patriarch of Jerusalem, brought to Charlemagne a blessing and relic of the Holy Sepulcher: *Ann. regni Franc.* and *Ann. Ein.*, a. 799, pp. 108 and 109.

245 After Christmas 799 and before c. 15 March 800,[77] Aachen (dep.)–Jerusalem. Charles sent Zachary and Anon. 91 to Patriarch George with *donaria*: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 800, p. 110, *Ann. Ein.*, a. 799, p. 111; BM 350h. Frobenius suggested that this was the occasion on which Alcuin sent *Ep.* 210, pp. 350–1, to Patriarch George, congratulating him on his accession and seeking to enter into a prayer association. This is very possible, especially given my new identification of Zachary (Pros. "Zacharias 2"); this also might help clarify George's accession date.

246 799 Africa or, possibly, Spain–Majorca and Minorca. Frankish defenders of the Balearics defeated Arab ("Mauri" cf. above R241) pirates: *Ann. regni Franc.* and *Ann. Ein.* s.a., pp. 108 and 109; Haywood 1991, 113–14; BM 350h perhaps erroneously connects this with Alcuin's mention (*Ep.* 184, p. 309) of raids on islands off Aquitaine. BM 350h in addition connects to this date and event

74 The only dating element is that Anon. 87 tired of waiting for Charles' ambassadors at Baghdad – therefore before 801 – and left on his own, after Anon. 86 had died. Presumably he waited at least over winter 797–8.

75 *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 108, situates Daniel's arrival "in eadem expeditione"; *Ann. Ein.* places it a few days after Leo III's departure. Charles' itinerary supplies the outside limits: BM 350 and 350f.

76 The place of the event in the Royal Annals' narrative suggests that it occurred during Charles' winter sojourn at Aachen and before Christmas. However, *Ann. regni. Franc.* begins the information with "Hoc anno," which might indicate that the arrival occurred at some other point in the year and that the annalist added it here, as a new category of information (cf. McCormick 1975, 48).

77 The Royal Annals implicitly situate the dispatch at the beginning of the year, and from Aachen, hence the months, following Charlemagne's itinerary; cf. BM 350h.



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Einhard's (*V. Karoli*, 17, 21.10–17) coastal defenses against the Arabs from Narbonne to Rome. While possible, their grounds – the pirates' defeat and the apparent stylistic echo in Einhard (*V. Karoli*, 21.12, "nuper pyraticam exercere") of *Ann. Ein.* a. 798, 105, "a Mauris piraticam exercentibus" – are not compelling.[78] Frankish action in the Balearics might help explain the report in Constantinople that Charlemagne was planning a naval invasion of Sicily: Theophanes A.M. 6295, 1.475.11–15. Einhard's shore defenses more probably allude to the arrangements of 813 documented by Leo III's letters to Charles, which events are implied by the raid on Civitavecchia mentioned in *V. Karoli*, 17, 21.15–17. Frankish defensive measures involving Corsica can be detected in the squadron of Hadumar (R269), and that of 807 (R275), and are referred to by Leo III in R278.

247 799, Balearic Islands–Aachen. The victorious Franks sent the insignia of the defeated Arabs to Aachen: *Ann. regni Franc.* and *Ann. Ein.*, a. 799, pp. 108 and 109; cf. BM 350h.

248 23 December 800, Jerusalem–Rome (arr.). Zacharias 2 returned with the patriarch's envoys, Anons. 92 and 99. They brought Charles the keys of the Holy Sepulcher and Calvary, of Jerusalem and "the Mount," and a *vexillum*. Charles kept them by his side for a few days; they remained at Rome until April (R253): *Ann. regni Franc.* and *Ann. Ein.*, a. 800, pp. 112 and 113; cf. *Annales Nordhumbrani*, ed. R. Pauli, *MGH SS* 13 (1881). 156.20–8 (= *Symeonis monachi Opera omnia*, 2.64) and discussion, below R251.

249 Between 23 November 800 and 25 April 801,[79] Sicily–Rome (arr.). Leo spatharios from Sicily defected to Charlemagne: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 811, p. 133.

250 800–1, Rome–(Sicily). Charlemagne planned a naval invasion of Sicily in connection with his imperial coronation, then changed his mind and sent ambassadors to Irene: Theophanes, A.M. 6293, 1.475.11–15; Rochow 1991, 273–4. The Frankish sources are silent, which would not be surprising for an abandoned plan.

251 Between 24 November 800 and 25 April 801 or 798–9? Constantinople–Rome (arr.). Anonymous "legati Graecorum a Constantinopoli directi" came to Charlemagne at Rome, asking him to accept their "regnum et imperium":[80] the "First Set of Northern Annals," i.e. "*Annales Nordhumbrani*," *MGH SS* 13.156.20–8; cf. *Symeonis monachi Opera omnia*, 2.64. This source preserves

78 "Exercere piraticam" is the stock Latin idiom for practicing piracy: e.g., Orosius, *Hist. adv. paganos*, 3, 12, 21, *CSEL* 5.161.5–6; cf. Einhard, *V. Karoli*, 14, 17.4!

79 Charles was at Rome when Leo defected: BM 370f.

80 In the final stages of preparing this book, I noticed that these travelers were not included in my totals.



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independent evidence from lost Frankish annals of excellent quality, which were reworked stylistically in the 10th C. by Byrhtferth of Ramsey, and probably reworked again, later.[81] Its data on the embassy from Jerusalem (R248) are substantially correct and confirmed by independent sources. A computistic synchronism in Köln, Dombibl. 83 seems to echo the report of these Byzantine envoys, although the embassy is there dated to 798 or 799.[82] The story is plausible, given the mounting opposition to Irene in Constantinople, the defection of a high Byzantine official to Charles during his stay in Rome, and the report of Frankish plans to invade Sicily: see previous.

252 March 801, Constantinople. Empress Irene reduced the *kōmerkia*, taxes on goods transiting Abydos and Hieros (mod. Anadolukavak): Theophanes, A.M. 6293, 1.475.16–17; cf. Oikonomides 1992b; Rochow 1991, 274–5. See below R303.

253 April 801, Rome (dep.)–Jerusalem. Charlemagne dismissed the Jerusalem monks; they returned home: above R248.

254 Between 29 May and 24 June 801, Baghdad–Africa–Pisa (arr.). The Persian envoy of Harun al Rashid and the Arab envoy of Ibrahim ibn Aghlab, emir of Africa, Anons. 100–1, landed in Pisa while Charlemagne was at Pavia. Charles granted them an audience on the road between Vercelli and Ivrea, i.e. between 17 and 24 June; they informed Charles that two of his ambassadors were dead, and that Isaac was in Africa with his elephant and other gifts. Charles commanded Ercanbald to go to Liguria and assemble a convoy (*classem*) to transport the elephant and gifts to Europe: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., pp. 114–16; BM 374a; Abel and Simson 1883–8, 2: 254–7; Borgolte 1976, 58–61; Biberstein 1993. Florus of Lyons' poem on the relics of St. Cyprian proves that the Frankish and caliphal envoys traveled overland to Africa;[83] it

81 See Lapidge 1982, 115–22, and Blair 1963, 92–4.

82 Löwe 1949. The association with Rome might be confirmed by the placement of the statement "Legatio Graecorum ad augustum veniens pacem petiit," in an unimpeachable contemporary source, the *Chronicon Laurissense breue*, p. 35; cf. Wattenbach *et al.* 1952–90, 264. But we cannot rule out the possibility that this statement refers to Irene's embassy in spring 802, since it lies between the imperial coronation and the arrival of Charles' elephant. The beast reached Italy in 801, but got to the court in the north only in July 802 (*Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 802, p. 117).

83 Courtois 1945, 80–2, denied that the emir's capital, named "Fossatum" in the Annals, makes any sense as a place name, rejecting its obvious identification with Abbasiyya, also known as Qasr al-Abyad, because its foundation date is uncertain (800, 801 or 805?) and denying that the royal annalist would have translated Ar. *Qasr* by the rare word *fossatum*. It is more likely that the Latin-speaking African locals called Abbasiyya that: it was surrounded by a moat (Amari 1933–9, 1: 270), i.e. *fossatum* in Vulgar Latin; hence its passage into the Annals. The locals probably helped dig the moat; Abbasiyya was therefore founded in 800 or 801.



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suggests that some part of the legation traveled on to Arles: *Carmen* 13, *MGH Poet.* 2.544.5–12.

255 After 17–24 June and before October 801, Liguria (dep.)–Africa: Ercanbald's convoy sailed to Africa and transported the elephant, Isaac, and baggage to Europe: see preceding.

256 October 801, Africa–Porto Venere (arr.). Isaac arrived with the elephant and baggage. Since snow kept them from crossing the Alps, the party wintered in Vercelli: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 801, p. 116; Abel and Simson 1883–8, 2: 282–3.

257 c. 801, (Africa?)–Liguria–Arles–Lyons. Under Archbishop Leidrad (798–814), Lyons obtained relics from Charlemagne which his envoys to Baghdad had acquired from the guardians of St. Cyprian's shrine at Carthage. They (or some members of the legation) brought them as far as Arles; Leidrad heard about it and obtained permission from Charles to transfer them to Lyons: Florus, *Carmina* 13 and 14, *MGH Poet.* 2.544–6; Borgolte 1976, 128–30, doubts the story; Courtois 1945 attacks it; he is correct in rejecting Ado of Vienne, but he has misunderstood the Latin of Florus' poems, which are unobjectionable.

258 Between Christmas 801 and 37 March 802?[84] Constantinople–Aachen (arr.). Irene's ambassador, Leo spatharios, arrived at Charlemagne's court, *de pace confirmanda*, and was dismissed: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 802, p. 117; *Ann. Guelferbytani*, a. 802, *MGH SS* 1.45; cf. *Chron. Laur. br.*, p. 35.

259 c. 801–4, Byzantium–Aachen. A Greek *magister*, Anon. 102, was at Charlemagne's court: Alcuin, *Ep.* 307, pp. 466–71.

260 Departure from Aachen before 27 March and arrival at Constantinople before 31 August 802,[85] possibly via Rome. Charlemagne responded to Irene's embassy by sending Jesse, bishop of Amiens, and Count Helmgaud. According to Theophanes they conveyed Charles' proposal of marriage to Irene; at least one papal legate, Anon. 103, accompanied them, so that they may have traveled to Constantinople via Rome: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 802, p. 117; Theophanes, A.M. 6293 and 6294, 1.475.14–15 and 27–32; Rochow 1991, 273–6.

261 802–3, Frankish court (dep.)–Baghdad. Charlemagne's embassy to Harun al Rashid; it returned "practically four years later": R271.

262 Between 11 July and 13 August 803, Constantinople–Rome–Salz (arr.). Charles' envoys returned with Nicephorus I's ambassadors Michael 2 metropolitan, etc. They traveled to Rome and then to Salz, where the Byzantines

84 The Royal Annals implicitly situate Leo's arrival before Easter.

85 The Royal Annals implicitly place the embassy's departure from Aachen before Easter; Theophanes says they arrived in Constantinople in the 10th indiction, which ended on 31 August.



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received the text of a proposed peace treaty, which they took back to Constantinople, *returning* to Rome en route home: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 118; *Chron. Laur. br.*, p. 35; *Ann. Mettenses priores*, s.a., 89.22–90.4; Charlemagne, *Ep. ad Nicephorum imp.*, 547.15–25.[86]

263 Between 11 July and 13 August 803, Jerusalem–Salz (arr.). Anons. 104–5, envoys of Patriarch George, reached Charlemagne "ibi": *Annales Maximiani*, *MGH SS* 13.23.40–1; they accompanied Charles to Salzburg in October: *Annales Iuvavenses maiores*, *MGH SS* 30.736.34–5; BM 398b; Borgolte 1976, 83–6.

264 After c. August 813, Salz–Rome (dep.)–Constantinople. Byzantine envoys Michael 2, etc. traveled from Salz back to Rome and to Constantinople: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 803, p. 118.

265 September 804, Sicily–Africa. Constantine stratēgos of Sicily concluded a ten-year peace which the Arabs subsequently violated: Leo III, JE 2526, *MGH Epist.* 5.98.1–5.

266 Right after Christmas 805, Zadar–Venice–Thionville (arr.). "Willeri" (i.e. Obellierius) and Beatus, dukes of Venice, and Duke Paul and Bishop Donatus of Zadar came to Charlemagne to arrange the defection of Veneto and Dalmatia: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 806, pp. 120–1; BM 414b.

267 805 or 806?[87] Venice–Civitas Nova and Dalmatia. At the time of Obellierius' coup, the Venetians destroyed Civitas Nova and attacked Dalmatia by sea: *Chron. Ven.*, 102.1–4.

268 c. 805, Africa–Patras. African Arabs raided around Patras; Slavs joined them in pillaging: Constantine VII, *De adm. imp.*, 49, 1.228.4–9; cf. Lemerle 1963, 37, and Belke 1996, 88.

269 806 sailing season, Genoa–Corsica. King Pippin sent a fleet which frightened off Arab raiders; Count Hadumar of Genoa died in battle: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 806, p. 122; BM 421b.

270 806 sailing season, Constantinople–Dalmatia, Venice. Emperor Nicephorus I sent a fleet under Nicetas patrician to restore Byzantine rule in Dalmatia: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 806, p. 122; BM 422b. It also came to Venice, where Nicetas conveyed the dignity of spatharios to Duke Obellierius, and where the fleet ("classis Constantinopolitana") remained, apparently through the winter of 806–7: *Chron. Ven.*, 103.8–16; *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 807, p. 124.

86 The date follows from Charles' itinerary. The general assembly was still under way at Mainz on 11 July (BM 398a). He had reached Salz by 13 August (DDKar 1, no. 200) and would be in Bavaria within the next two weeks.

87 The attack presumably preceded Nicetas patrician's arrival with a fleet to recover Dalmatia.



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271 806 sailing season, Baghdad–Jerusalem–Treviso. The Frankish embassy to Harun al Rashid led by Radbert, and accompanied by eastern envoys, successfully ran the positions of the attacking Byzantine fleet in the Adriatic and landed at Treviso: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 122; BM 122b; Borgolte 1976, 80; R261. They reached Aachen sometime in 807; cf. R277.

272 806, Spain–Pantelleria–Spain. Arab raiders transported sixty (Greek) monks from Pantelleria to Spain, where they sold them as slaves; Charlemagne was able to redeem some and restore them "in loca sua": *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 807, p. 124.

273 806/8, Rome–Constantinople. Basilius 1, a Greek monk at Rome, communicated to Theodore Studite his disapproval of the priest Joseph's rehabilitation: Theodore Studite, *Ep.* 28, 1.75.2–7.[88]

274 807,[89] Venice–Constantinople. Nicetas patrician's fleet (R270) concluded a truce with King Pippin until August, probably of 808, and returned to Constantinople, taking Beatus and other Venetians with him: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 807, p. 124; *Chron. Ven.*, 103.5–16.

275 807, Spain–Sardinia–Corsica. An Arab fleet attacked the islands in this order. In Sardinia, they supposedly lost 3,000 men; off Corsica, a Frankish squadron destroyed thirteen Arab ships: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 124; cf. *Historia Langobardorum codicis Gothani*, *MGH SRL* 11.12.

276 807, Italy–Corsica. Count Burghard's squadron defeated the Arabs: see preceding.

277 807, Baghdad–Jerusalem–Treviso–Aachen. The delegation of Harun al Rashid's envoy "Abdella," George, abbot of the Mount of Olives, and the monk Felix traveled to Aachen, presumably with the rest of Radbert's mission; they brought extraordinary gifts; afterward, the envoys were sent to Italy to await the return of the sailing season (i.e., of 808): *Ann. regni Franc.* a. 807, pp. 123–4; *Formulae Salzburgenses*, 62, *MGH Form.* pp. 453–5, with the additional text recovered by Bischoff, *Salzburger Formelbücher*, 2, 2, p. 34 (cf. pp. 13–14), which adds the size of the tent and reveals Charlemagne's efforts to collect countergifts for Harun from his subordinates; the letter emphasizes

88 Hatlie 1995, 411–12, identifies this Basil differently.

89 The Annals are not explicit as to the year in which the truce was to conclude; August might most naturally mean August of the year under discussion, i.e. 807; however, the facts that the return of the Byzantine fleet to the Adriatic is reported under the beginning of 809, followed by its wintering in Venice, and that the annalist dwells on the winter attack on Comacchio (i.e. winter 808–9; *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 809, p. 127), suggest that if the Byzantines did as planned under the truce, the latter was set to last until August 808. In other words, the mental point of reference for the royal annalist writing up the account of events from the year 807 was the time of writing (presumably c. Easter 808), not the imaginary historical time of occurrence.



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that the king would especially like gold and "pallium," since they were particularly expensive in Iraq. Notker, *Gesta Karoli* 2, 8–9, pp. 59–65; cf. Abel and Simson 1883–8, 2: 365–72; BM 424a; Borgolte 1976, 92; Biberstein 1993.

278 March 808, Rome–Aachen. Leo III wrote to Charlemagne, promising to abide by Charles' judgement about Corsica; given the events of 806 and 807, and that the preceding lines state that Leo would meet King Pippin of Italy to discuss protecting the Italian coast, the matter likely concerned the defense of the island: JE 2515, *MGH Epist.* 5.88.23–8.

279 Before 31 August 808,[90] Jerusalem–Rome (arr.)–(Aachen). Leo III forwarded to Charlemagne letters from the Frankish monks and Patriarch Thomas of Jerusalem describing the outbreak of the *Filioque* controversy at Christmas 807 and, at the patriarch's request, recommended Agamus and Roculphus to Charles; the monks' letter survives, as does Leo's cover letter (JE 2520): *MGH Epist.* 5.64–7.[91]

280 Before 31 August 808, Rome (dep.)–Jerusalem. Leo III answered the Frankish monks' letter and sent the text of the orthodox creed to them. Presumably at this same time Leo answered a letter of the patriarch of Jerusalem about the *Filioque* issue: *Vita Michaelis Syncelli* (*BHG* 1296), 6, 56.5–16, citing a lost letter of Michael Synkellos to the monks of Sicily (R287). Cf. JE 2534, which suggests that Leo sent the same creed text to "all eastern churches."

281 808? Rome–Constantinople. Basilius 1, a Greek monk at Rome, sent a letter and gift to Theodore Studite, criticizing him for his stance in the Moechian affair and pointing out that the pope shared the patriarch's position. He also sent a rich gift for Stoudios: Theodore Studite, *Ep.* 28, 1.75–80.

282 808, Constantinople–Rome. Theodore Studite wrote back to Basilius 1, criticizing his criticism and the pope, and thanked him for the gift: *Ep.* 28, 1.75–80; cf. Hatlie 1995, 411–12. Epiphanius, monk of Stoudios, who traveled to Rome at about this time with messages of Theodore, perhaps carried this letter. Epiphanius certainly conveyed Theodore's message about the Moechian schism to Leo III in 808–9: *Ep.* 34, 1.94.5–10 and 95.21–2; cf. 1.175*n121; Pros. "Epiphanius 3".

283 808, Constantinople–Dalmatia and Venice. A fleet sent from Constantinople and commanded by "dux" Paul put in at Dalmatia and then Venice. Its arrival presumably coincided roughly with the conclusion of the truce of 807–8

90 This controversy, commonly reckoned to have begun in Jerusalem at Christmas 808 (e.g. Peri 1971, 26), more probably started a year earlier: Schmid 1974, 133; Borgolte 1976, 105 and 1980; other evidence shows that the letters from Jerusalem reached Rome in the first indiction, which ended in August 808: Pros.

91 Leo's phrasing suggests that the two letters traveled to him separately (cf. 66.37–8 and 67.3), but I have counted them only as one trip.



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(R274); it wintered at Venice: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 809, p. 127; BM 441a; Abel and Simson 1883–8, 2: 394–5; Classen 1985, 92–3.

284 808–9, Venice–Comacchio. A detachment of the Byzantine fleet attacked Comacchio but was driven off: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 809, p. 127.

285 A 25 September? between 808 and 811, Constantinople–Zadar. Relics of St. Anastasia arrived in Zadar, translated by Bishop Donatus and Duke "Benenatus" (i.e. Beatus), returning home from Constantinople: *Translatio Anastasiae* (BHL 402),[92] pp. 34–5.

286 Some May between 808 and 813, Jerusalem–Lydda–Seleucia–Constantinople (arr.)–(Rome). Michael Synkellos and his companions traveled from Jerusalem to Constantinople, en route to Rome: *V. Michaelis sync.* (BHG 1296), 9, 62.1–5.

287 Between 808 and 846, Jerusalem or Constantinople–Sicily. Michael Synkellos (d. 846) sent a letter about the *Filioque* to the monks of Sicily: *ibid.*, 6, 56.5–16. The date may have been close to the outbreak of the controversy.

288 After January 809, Chalke Island, off Constantinople (dep.)–Rome. Theodore Studite wrote to Leo III before Epiphanius 3's return, describing the synod held at Constantinople in January 809 which rehabilitated Joseph, and requested that Leo condemn the Constantinopolitan synod. Eustathius conveyed the letter: Theodore Studite, *Ep.* 33, 1.91–4; cf. Hatlie 1995; Pros. "Eustathius."

289 After January 809, Chalke Island, off Constantinople–Rome (arr.). Epiphanius 3 returned with an oral message from Leo III. Theodore Studite wrote another letter to Leo and sent it with Epiphanius: *Ep.* 34, 1.94.5–14 and 95.20–3; he will also have carried *Ep.* 35, to Basilius 2, archimandrite [of San Saba], written in the names of Plato and Theodore; cf. *ibid.*, 1.174*n121; Hatlie 1995.

290 7 April 809, Spain–Corsica (arr.). The Arabs attacked a town and carried off everything, leaving only the bishop and some elderly and infirm people: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 128.

291 809, Venice–Constantinople? "Duke" Paul attempted to negotiate a peace settlement with Pippin, king of Italy. The Venetian doges Obellierius and Beatus plotted to frustrate this effort. When Paul realized this, he and his fleet left Venice, presumably for Constantinople: *ibid.*, s.a., p. 127; BM 441a; Classen 1985, 93; Abel and Simson 1883–8, 2: 394–5.

292 809, Rhombē (Greece)–Populonium (Italy). *Orobiotai* Greeks attacked

92 Klaić and Petricioli 1976, 107, date this text to the second half of the 12th C.; they argue that it contains a historically accurate kernel derived from lost documents; other evidence confirms this contention: Pros. "Beatus" and "Donatus 1."



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Populonium; they were presumably pirates, but, given the war, they possibly operated with Byzantine approval: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 133, BM 447a. The Greek term preserved by the Royal Annals as *Orobiotae* (var. Orobitae, Oriobiote, Oroboite) is problematic. The editors took it to be a Greek word ὀροβιῶται, in the sense of "mountain-dwellers." It is unclear how or why mountain-dwellers would become sea raiders. Reading the word with a harsh breathing would give the sense "frontier-dwellers," which is perhaps more promising. But the most likely solution of all comes from the upheavals affecting the 7th-C. Peloponnese. The Byzantine population of Argos is known to have emigrated to the island of Ὀρόβη: *Chronicle of Monemvasia*, 12.94, which Kresten 1977, 46–50n107, has plausibly identified with the modern island of Rhombē in the Gulf of Argos. I would propose that raiders from this island attacked Italy.

293 c. 809, Rome–Chalke Island, off Constantinople. Eustathius returned without difficulty from his mission to Rome: Theodore Studite, *Sermones catechetici* 2.511.5–19.

294 809–810/11, Constantinople–Lipari. Byzantine monks were exiled to Lipari because of the Moechian schism: Theodore Studite, *Ep.* 48, 1.131.57–8, cf. p. 193*.

295 Before 8 July 810, Kephalenia–Dalmatia. Pippin attacked Venice by land and sea; he obtained the dukes' surrender and sent his squadron to attack Dalmatia; there Paul, "praefectus" of Kephalenia, and the "eastern fleet" repulsed it: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 130. Pippin's forces crossed the lagoon, but were finally defeated by the Venetians and retreated: *Chron. Ven.* 104.5–15; Dandolo, *Chronica*, 132.9–25. After a six-month siege, the Venetians supposedly agreed to pay Pippin an annual tribute: Constantine VII, *De adm. imp.*, 28, 1.120.20–39; BM 447a; Abel and Simson 1883–8, 2: 415–22; Kretschmayr 1905, 1: 56–8; Cessi 1951, 179–90.

296 After 8 July and before October 810, Constantinople–Pavia or, possibly, Verona (arr.). Emperor Nicephorus I's envoy Arsaphius arrived at the court of Pippin of Italy and discovered him dead. Charlemagne ordered Arsaphius to cross the Alps for an audience: Charlemagne, *Ep. ad Nicephorum imp.*, *MGH Epist.* 4.546.35–547.14; 547.26–33; cf. *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 132, which mislead in that they do not connect the embassy with Pippin; cf. BM 450a and 459. Abel and Simson 1883–8, 2: 415–22; 430–2; 437–8; Classen 1985, 93. On Pippin's residences at Pavia and Verona, see Abel and Simson 1883–8, 2: 435 with n3; cf. Bullough 1962a, 628. *Chron. Ven.*, p. 104 erroneously implies that this embassy turned around and returned to Constantinople when they discovered that Pippin had died. The embassy was in Aachen in October: see next.



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297 October 810, (Constantinople–Pavia or Verona)–Aachen. Charles received Arsaphius, who, apparently, had arrived at Aachen while Charles was still in Saxony, i.e. in August or September: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 133; cf. p. 132; BM 449c–450b.

298 Before October 810, Cordova–Aachen (arr.). An ambassador from the emir of Cordova had arrived and was granted an audience by Charlemagne upon his return in October: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 133; cf. p. 132.

299 810 or 811, Venice. Arsaphius worked with the Venetians to substitute Agnellus for Obellierius and Beatus; the Venetians transferred the ducal palace to Rialto. Charles commanded that Obellierius be sent to Constantinople with his embassy of 811: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 810, pp. 133–4; cf. *Chron. Ven.*, 105.19–106.5; Kretschmayr 1905, 58–9 with 423; Carile and Fedalto 1978, 235–6.

300 After Christmas 810–early 811, Aachen (dep.)–Constantinople. Arsaphius was sent back to Constantinople, probably with Charlemagne's letter to Nicephorus I, even before Charlemagne's urgently assembled embassy headed by Haido of Basle departed. Charles' letter announced the forthcoming embassy: *MGH Epist.* 4.457.3–5; *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 811, p. 133, where the grammar implies the sequence of events; BM 459; Abel and Simson 1883–8, 2: 441–5 and 459n2, and Classen 1985, 93–4.

301 810, Spain–Sardinia–Corsica. Moors from "tota Hispania" with a very large fleet attacked Sardinia and Corsica; since there was no garrison on Corsica, they devastated almost the entire island for the first time that year: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 130.

302 810, Spain–Corsica. Spanish Moors attacked Corsica for a second time in 810: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 133; cf. *ibid.*, a. 809 and 810, pp. 128 and 130.

303 810, Constantinople. Nicephorus I restored the duties on goods transiting the Bosporus toward Constantinople, and set a surcharge of 2 n. on slave sales outside of Abydos, esp. from the Dodecanese: Theophanes, A.M. 6302, 1.486.28–9 and 487.11–13; Dölger no. 377; Bury 1912, 217; Rochow 1991, 294; Oikonomides 1992b, 243; cf. above R252.

304 ?Autumn 810, Aachen–Jerusalem (?). Charlemagne raised, or intended to raise funds to restore churches in Jerusalem; whether they were sent is unclear; this might have been one of the customary subsidies to which Einhard refers: *MGH Capit.* no. 64, 18, 1.154.1; Einhard, *V. Karoli*, 27, 31.18–25; cf. Peri 1971, 24–5; Biberstein 1993.

305 Between 810 or 811 and May 819, Venice–Constantinople–Venice. Justinian went to Constantinople, where the emperor made him *hypatos*; he returned home and became co-duke: *Chron. Ven.*, 106.15–18.



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306 811, after 11 October,[93] Aachen–Constantinople (arr.). The new emperor Michael I received Charles' envoys and accepted the treaty: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 136. Charlemagne sent with them Leo 2, who had defected to him at Rome in 801, and Obellierius: *ibid.*, s.a., p. 133.

307 Before 811–13, Sicily–Constantinople. Methodius 1 traveled to Constantinople to seek a government career: *Vita Methodii* (*BHG* 1278), 2, *PG*, 100.1245B.

308 14 August 812, Caliphate (Africa?)–Ponza–Ischia (arr.). After sacking Ponza, forty Moorish ships (*Mauri*) attacked Ischia, which they pillaged for six days, filling their ships with captives and victuals: Leo III, JE 2524, *MGH Epist.* 5.96.33–97.8. Amari 1933–9, 1: 356, plausibly interprets the slaughtered Moorish horses left behind on Ischia as having been killed to make room for human booty. The Arabs appear to have struck behind the Byzantine lines: see R310.

309 Before 26 August 812, Duchy of Rome. Pope Leo III mounted careful guard over his coasts, expecting an Arab attack: JE 2524, *MGH Epist.* 5.97.11–16.

310 Before 26 August 812, (Constantinople?)–Sicily–Benevento–Naples–(Amalfi–Gaeta; arr.). Leo III reported that an anon. patrician came (presumably from Constantinople) with a fleet to defend Sicily from the Arabs; when he reached Sicily, he sent his envoys, Anons. 160–1, via Benevento to the duke of Naples, requesting ships. The duke balked; the Gaetani and Amalfitans cooperated; the combined forces successfully engaged off Lampedusa thirteen Arab ships which had previously destroyed a squadron of seven Byzantine ships sent to investigate their movements; meanwhile forty more Moorish ships attacked Ponza and Ischia, several hundred miles behind the lines: *ibid.*, 96.15–97.8.

311 Before September or October (?) 812,[94] Constantinople–Aachen (arr.).

93 The date is Michael's accession; the envoys may have arrived before this date – they were dispatched after the Byzantine ambassadors had departed Aachen (R300), but with Nicephorus on campaign and then killed in battle with the Bulgars, and Stauracius (26 July–2 October 811) wounded and dying, there could be no question of an audience between the emperor's departure for war in May or June 811 (Theophanes A.M. 6303, 1.489.25, notwithstanding Anastasius' version; cf. Rochow 1991, 297–8) and the stabilization in October.

94 The Royal Annals place the Byzantine embassy's dismissal and, implicitly, its return to Constantinople (via Rome) before the general assembly from which King Bernard was sent to Italy; Italian documents date his reign from September or October: BM 515b. That, after the Byzantine legation's departure, Charlemagne's envoys had to await the return of good weather before leaving for Constantinople to conclude the treaty (*Epist. ad Mich. imp.*, 556.27–9) suggests that the Byzantines had arrived at Aachen and departed again for Rome late in the season, if the ordering of events in this segment of the Royal Annals is chronological. It is difficult to reconcile this implicit chronology with Notker Balbulus' implication (*Gesta Karoli*, 2, 6–7, 55.6–58.17) that it was this embassy which stayed at least over the octave of Epiphany, and occasioned the Latin translation of the antiphon "O veterem hominem"; cf. Berschin 1988, 115; McCormick 1994a, 48n82.



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Haido, Hug, and Aio returned from Constantinople, accompanied by the emperor Michael I's envoys, Michael of Synada, Arsaphius, and Theognostus, and the peace treaty: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 136; *Ann. Xantenses*, s.a., 4.12–18; Charlemagne, *Ep. ad Michaelem imperatorem*, *MGH Epist.* 4.556.20–30. They proposed the engagement of Theophylact, Michael I's son, with one of Charles' daughters or granddaughters: Theophanes, A.M. 6304, 1.494.20–5; cf. Anastasius' translation, *ibid.*, 2.332.31–6, and Rochow 1991, 306; also Ganshof 1971, 190–1n77. This treaty ratified the situation of Venice (Andreas Dandolo, *Chronica per extensum descripta*, 125.16–21; cf. 129.4–17 and 141.9–12), and renounced Carolingian claims to the coastal towns of Istria, Liburnia, and Dalmatia: Einhard, *V. Karoli*, 15, 18.19–22; Dandolo, *Chronica*, 125.16–21; cf. 129.4–17 and 141.9–12; BM 470b; Alexander 1958, 109–10; Classen 1985, 94–5; Grierson 1981, 911 with n49; above, Ch. 7.1.

312 Late 812 or early 813 (after R311), Rome (dep.)–Constantinople. En route home, Michael 2 etc. traveled to Rome with the treaty: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 136. They also delivered Patriarch Nicephorus I's synodal letter, which the late emperor Nicephorus had prevented the patriarch from sending; they restored union and sought Leo III's intervention in the Moechian schism; Michael became friends with Gregory of Akritas, and took him back to Constantinople: Theophanes, A.M. 6304, 1.494.20–5; 2.332.31–6; Patriarch Nicephorus I, *Epistola synodica ad Leonem III* (Grumel² no. 382), *PG*, 100.169–200 and the contemporary Latin translation; Ignatius, *Vita Nicephori* (*BHG* 1335), 160.31–161.15; *V. Gregorii Acrit.* (*BHG* 2166), 373.10–374.3; Alexander 1958, 109; Classen 1985, 96–7; Rochow 1991, 306–7.

313 812, presumably at Aachen. Charlemagne concluded treaties: for three years, with the anon. envoys of the Spanish emir al Hakam I; and with the Beneventans, who paid 25,000 gold s. as tribute: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 137; *Chron. Moiss.*, s.a., 309.26–310.1; cf. Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 1: 181–2 and 184; BM 471a.

314 After 812–18 and before c. 836–7, Sicily–Peloponnesus. Joseph Hymnographer's parents emigrated because of the Arab raids: Theophanes, *Vita Iosephi* (*BHG* 944), 2, 2.28–3.4; cf. Stiernon 1973, 249.

315 May, sometime between 812 and 850, Constantinople (dep.)–Frankish court. A Byzantine emperor entrusted to his ambassadors a letter, of which a fragment survives from St. Denis: Dölger 1950 and 1953, 332–5, dates it between 840 and 850; cf. Dölger no. 390; Ohnsorge 1958a, 166–75 devises a web of hypotheses to date it to 843. The content and provenance incline me to connect the letter with the embassy of 827 (R399). I shall return to this problem elsewhere.



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316 Rather early in the period between 8 February and 8 May 813,[95] Aachen (dep.)–Zadar–Dyrrachium–Aigina–Attica–Constantinople. Charlemagne's ambassadors Amalarius of Metz and Peter of Nonantola traveled to Constantinople: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 137; *MGH Epist.* 4.555–6. On 27–8 June 813, the envoys were at Zadar: Amalarius, *Ep. de diebus ordinationum*, 5–6, *Opera liturgica* 1.342.1–14; for the other places en route: Amalarius, *Versus marini*, 26–36, p. 427; they arrived in Constantinople after 31 July, when Leo V took power: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 814, p. 140; see Ch. 5.2.

317 Before April 813, Corsica–Lucca. With Bishop Jacob of Lucca, Bishop Petronius of Corsica presided over an ecclesiastical court at Lucca: *Placiti*, no. 26; Kasten 1986, 71n163.

318 813 (sailing season), Ampurias–Majorca (–Corsica). Irmingarius, Count of Ampurias, ambushed Arab raiders returning to Spain from Corsica; he captured eight ships and more than 500 captive Corsicans, obviously intended for the slave market: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 139; BM 218a; cf. BM 481a, Abel and Simson 1883–8, 2: 523.

319 June 813, Africa–Sardinia. An Arab fleet of more than 100 ships attacked Sardinia; en route home they were almost totally destroyed: *Ann. regni Franc.* a. 812, p. 137; Amari 1933–9, 1: 355, claims that this is the disaster positively dated to June 813 by a letter of Leo III (see next) as indeed seems probable. The fleet came from Aghlabite Africa; the event seems to be noted in Arab chronicles under different years (c. 816 and c. 821): Amari 1933–9, 1: 352n1.

320 Between June and November 813, Africa–Sicily. A Christian friend in Africa of the notarius of the stratēgos of Sicily sent a letter about the catastrophe which had befallen the African fleet returning from Sardinia; Leo III transmitted the news to Charlemagne: Leo III, JE 2526, *MGH Epist.* 5.98.19–34.

321 Before 11 November, Africa (Morocco and/or Tunisia)–Syracuse. More than one Venetian ship conveyed Arab envoys to Sicily and destroyed by fire two Spanish ships they encountered en route to Syracuse: *ibid.*, 5.98.35–6. The envoys concluded a ten-year treaty with the stratēgos of Sicily. That the envoys were from Africa appears logical: one would not expect the stratēgos to deal directly with the caliph in Baghdad. It is unclear whether the envoys were from the Idrisi kingdom in present-day Morocco, from the Aghlabite emirate centered in present-day Tunisia, or both. The circumstances described in the letter could apply to all: Amari 1933–9, 1: 353n7 and 356–7, and Talbi 1966, 395–6.

322 c. 11 July 813, Constantinople (dep.)–Sicily (Syracuse)–Rome. Before 11

95 The Royal Annals place the departure from Aachen at the beginning of spring, which, according to Bede's reckoning, corresponds to the dates I have given: *De temporum ratione*, 35, *CCL*, 123B.393.43–4.



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November, the stratēgos of Sicily was aware that emperor Michael I had (abandoned power and) become a monk (on 11 July: Grierson 1962, 56); he communicated the news orally to Pope Leo's envoy, Anon. 166, who arrived in Rome on 11 November; the same day, Leo wrote to Charlemagne informing him of Byzantine negotiations with the Arabs; he noted the oral report in a postscript: JE 2526, *MGH Epist.* 5.99.12–14. The fact that Leo III refers to the reigning emperor as "Leo imperator" without comment (*ibid.*, 99.7) suggests that reports of the transition had already reached Rome and indeed, been forwarded to Aachen; now further details were emerging; cf. Sansterre 1996.

323 Between 10 July 813 and 10 July 814, Sicily (dep.)–Ionian Sea–Constantinople. Peter, Bishop of Taurinia (mod. Taureana), and an anon. Sicilian were sent on a mission to emperor Leo (V) by the stratēgos of Sicily in Leo's year one, because of his accession and tax problems: Peter of Taurinia, *Miracula S. Phantini*, (*BHG* 1509), 19, 72.1060–74.1108. The delay with which the news of Leo's accession reached the west (see preceding) strongly suggests that this mission left in the spring or early summer of 814.[96] Leo III can be excluded: the text gives no hint that Peter was sailing into the midst of the great siege of Constantinople at a time when the governor of Sicily was probably more concerned with the usurpation of Basil-Tiberius than obtaining tax relief.

324 813, before 11 November, Aachen–Rome–Syracuse (arr.). Charles had sent a letter to the patrician of Sicily via Pope Leo III, who had his own messenger deliver it. The response reached Rome on 11 November; Leo forwarded it to Charles that day: JE 2526, *MGH Epist.* 5.97.34–42.

325 c. 11 November 813, Africa or Spain–Reggio Calabria (arr.). As the papal envoy was returning to Rome (where he arrived on 11 November) from the patrician of Sicily, he met a messenger with news of an Arab raid of seven ships, of which two had been abandoned at a settlement near Reggio; that raid thus occurred in late October or early November: *ibid.*, 5.98.19–22.

326 Between 11 and 25 November, (Constantinople–?Sicily)–Rome (arr.). A papal ship arrived at Rome (from an unspecified point of departure; one suspects Sicily, but it could have been from farther afield) with Anons. 171–2 ("Greeks") on board; they supplied fuller reports and rumors of Michael's overthrow and Leo's accession; the news at least had traveled from Constantinople, starting out sometime after 11 July (see R322): Leo III, JE 2527, *MGH Epist.* 5.99–100.

327 Between 11 and 25 November, (Syracuse)–Rome (arr.). A few days after

96 The reasoning for Saletta's claim that the next miracle (74.1109–57) represents a second mission to Constantinople is unclear.



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R326, Anon. 173, the stratēgos of Sicily's "man," reached Rome with more correct details: *ibid.*, 100.23–6.

328 Sometime between July 813 and Christmas 820, Constantinople. Leo V declared an embargo on all Byzantine trade with Egypt; it was still in effect c. 827 when Bonus and Rusticus were in Alexandria: *Transl. S. Marci*, 246.5–247.1. Dandolo adds that the embargo affected Syria and retaliated for profaning the Jerusalem shrines; if this last point is correct, it points to a date early in Leo's reign (see R331): *Chronica*, 8, 1, 144.31–3; Dölger no. 400.

329 813, Spain–Civitavecchia–Nice. Arabs raided these towns to avenge Irmingarius' attack (R318); the royal annalist implies that these were the same raiders who attacked Sardinia (R319);[97] they were repulsed and suffered grave losses: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 813, p. 139.

330 Before c. 13 April, Constantinople (dep.)–Italy–Nonantola–before 1 August 814, Aachen (arr.). Amalarius' party and the Byzantine envoys left Constantinople for Italy no later than c. 13 April;[98] as they sailed home, they encountered heavy weather, avoided the Slavs' shores and escaped a Moorish (*Maurus*) vessel. They reached Nonantola "after spring," i.e. after 8 May (Bede's definition: e.g., R316), and Aachen by 1 August. The Byzantines brought Leo V's request for aid against the Bulgars "and other barbarian peoples": Amalarius, *Versus marini* 51–73, p. 428; *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 814, p. 140; *Chron. laur. breue*, p. 38; Thegan, *Gesta Hludowici imperatoris*, 9, 190.6–17; Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici imp.*, 23, *ibid.*, 352.9–354.2; Peter received a charter from Louis the Pious at Aachen, on 1 August, BM 529; cf. BM 528a and Ch. 5.2.

331 c. August 814, Jerusalem–Aachen (arr.). News arrived that the Persians had ravaged Jerusalem and that the eastern Christians were undergoing a great persecution: *Chron. Laur. breue*, p. 38. This seems to refer to the upheavals which began with the civil wars and anarchy that afflicted the Caliphate after Harun al Rashid's death in March 809. Theophanes, who is well informed about affairs in Palestine, states that the troubles, including those in Palestine, lasted five years. He seems to designate 813 as a peak of violence against the Holy Sepulcher and Christians in the Holy Land, which triggered large-scale immigration to Cyprus and Constantinople in that year: A.M. 6305, 1.499.15–28; cf. A.M. 6301, 1.484.14–19; also Rochow 1991, 313 and Gil 1997, 474–5.

97 If so, then all of this activity took place before June 813. This, however, seems improbable, since Leo III reported the destruction of the Arab fleet off Sardinia as an act of God, but failed to connect it with vengeance for an attack on his own town of Civitavecchia: *MGH Epist.* 5.98.23–34.

98 I shall return to the *Versus marini* and the Bulgar invasion.



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332 Shortly after 1 August 814, Aachen (dep.)–Constantinople. Louis the Pious sent Richoin and Nordbert as ambassadors to Constantinople, perhaps with the Byzantine envoys who had accompanied Amalarius: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 814, pp. 140–1; Astronomer, *Vita Hlud.*, 23, 354.2–6.

333 c. 814/821 (c. 820?), Constantinople–Africa (between Libya and Egypt)–Sardinia–(Rome)–Constantinople. St. Jacob and his brother rented five ships and headed for Rome on pilgrimage; after a storm which sank three ships, they wound up in Sardinia, and returned to Constantinople in the spring: *Vita S. Iacobi*, 7–9, pp. 153–4, known mostly in this early modern version of a medieval life; cf. Wattenbach *et al.* 1952–90, 607 with n45. The Life seems to contain some authentic elements.

334 Between c. 814 and 824 (816?), Spain–Alexandria. Andalusian pirates occupied Alexandria: Wiet 1937, 68–9; 71–2. They were perhaps associated with the Ummayad rebels based in the region between Alicante and Tortosa: Guichard 1983, 60–8; their departure for the eastern Mediterranean brought a respite from raiding to the northwestern Mediterranean.

335 814–25, Frankish court. Louis the Pious took under his protection a series of Jewish merchants; three such acts have been preserved as model formulas for similar privileges. One grants to Rabbi Domatus and his *nepos* Samuel various privileges, including exemption from tolls, the right to hire Christians, protection from efforts to evangelize their slaves in order to force their manumission, and the right to purchase foreign slaves and sell them inside the empire: *Form. imp.*, 30, pp. 309–10; similar privileges were delivered to David, Joseph, and an undeciphered name, all of Lyons: *ibid.*, 31, pp. 310–11; and to Abraham, a resident of Saragossa: *ibid.*, 52, p. 325; BM 805–7. The last two diplomas specify that the merchants in question "partibus palatii nostri fideliter deservire," i.e. they are in special service to the court. For discussion and further bibliography, Siems 1989, 127–30; cf. Buchner 1953, 54 on the collection.

336 Between 814 and 840 (c. 826?), Frankish court–Jerusalem–Frankland. Raganarius participated in Louis the Pious' mission to the Holy Land:[99] Adrevald, *Mir. Benedicti* (*BHL* 1124) 1, 38, de Certain, p. 81.

337 815, Cagliari–Frankland (Frankfurt?).[100] Sardinian envoys brought gifts to Louis the Pious, implicitly recognizing his overlordship and doubtless seeking help against the Arabs: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 143.

99 Borgolte 1976, 110–11, argues that the embassy represents an otherwise unattested trip from the 830s; a case can, however, be made that the mission was just as likely to have been earlier and in response to Dominicus' embassy to the Frankish court: see R396; cf. Pros.

100 BM 589a places their arrival at Frankfurt and therefore between 22 July and 27 August.



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338 After 5 August, Constantinople (dep.)–before Christmas 815,[101] Nijmegen or Aachen (arr.). Nordbert and Richoin returned from Constantinople: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 143; cf. *Ann. Xant.*, a. 816, 5.13–16.

339 c. 816 (after April 815), Monemvasia–Rome. Iohannes 12, bishop of Monemvasia, fled second iconoclasm: Theodore Studite, *Ep.* 274, 2.405.5–11 and 15–18; cf. *Ep.* 272, 2.402.11–18; Grumel 1960, 33–8; cf. Sansterre 1983, 1: 128–9.

340 c. 816 (after April 815), Bithynia–Rome. The future patriarch Methodius 1 fled his monastery after the outbreak of second iconoclasm: Theodore Studite, *Ep.* 274, 2.405.5–11; *Vita Methodii* (BHL 1278), 4, PG, 100.1248A.

341 c. 815–22 (c. 830s?), Constantinople–Joppa–Jerusalem. St. Jacob hired a ship to go to Rome, but a storm miraculously took him to Joppa: *V. Iacobi*, 10–11, pp. 155–6.

342 Before 815, between 26 January and 24 April, Sigriana (southern shore of the Sea of Marmara). One Lent (i.e. sometime between the earliest and latest possible days given here), a ship which had lost its sails, steering oar, and *katartis* was driven toward the coast and shipwreck until Theophanes' prayers saved all fifty-three aboard; before Theophanes' exile due to the restoration of iconoclasm: Methodius, *V. Theophanis confessoris* (BHG 1787z), 23, 25.6–15.

343 November 816, Saragossa–Compiègne (arr.). Louis the Pious received the anon. ambassadors of Abd al Rahman, son of the emir of Cordova; they were then commanded to precede the emperor to his winter quarters at Aachen: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 816–17, pp. 144–5; Astronomer, *V. Hlud.*, 26–7, 368.7–370.1; BM 634a.

344 c. December 816,[102] Constantinople–Aachen (arr.). Leo V's envoy Nicephorus arrived: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 817, p. 145; Astronomer, *V. Hlud.*, 27, 370.1–8; BM 642b.

345 c. 816, Constantinople–Rome. Leo V sent Anons. 176–7 to Rome, to convince the pope to accept second iconoclasm. Pope Paschal I refused to see them: Theodore Studite, *Ep.* 272, 2.402.12–15; cf. Grumel 1960, 29–35 and Grumel[2] no. 410.

346 817–20, Constantinople–Damietta. Byzantine raid: Brooks 1913, 381 with n3 for the date; Fahmy 1966b, 140 (dating it 816–25).

101 They were still in Constantinople in August of what can only be 815 (see R332) when they experienced five days of earthquake; they probably returned before Christmas, since their arrival is included in the entry for 815.

102 The Royal Annals place the initial audience right at Louis' arrival at Aachen (cf. BM 634a). Louis had spent around twenty days at Compiègne (*Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 816, p. 144) before leaving for Aachen. Since he had reached Compiègne no later than 8 November (BM 638), he will have left for Aachen no earlier than 18 November (cf. BM 639) and no later than c. 28 November.



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347 817, between 24 July and c. 4 August,[103] Constantinople–Ingelheim (arr.). En route from Aachen to the Vosges, Louis the Pious encountered Anons. 181–2, envoys of Leo V. He interrupted his trip to grant them an audience at Ingelheim; when he discovered they had come for the same reason as R344, he dismissed them and continued his trip: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 817, p. 146.

348 817, Bonita Castle (near Acı Göl, Asia Minor)–Rome–Bonita Castle. Studites Dionysius, Euphemianus, and Anon. 183 conveyed a letter of Theodore Studite to Paschal I and brought back messages and a letter from John of Monemvasia and the future patriarch Methodius 1: Theodore Studite, *Ep.* 273, 2.404.15–24; cf. for the date 1.314*; *Ep.* 377, 2.508.4–6; *TIB* 7: 213–14.

349 817, Bonita Castle–Constantinople–(Rome). Epiphanius, carrying a letter of Theodore Studite for Rome, was arrested and imprisoned: *Ep.* 377–9, 2.508–11; cf. 1.370*–371*.

350 817/24, Rome–Africa–Italy. Paschal I ransomed captives and exiles "a transmarinis regionibus," which, in this context, probably refers to Africa: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.52.30–53.3.

351 817/24, Rome–Spain–Italy. Paschal I also ransomed captives over long roads, in Spain and elsewhere, bringing everyone home: *ibid.* The phrasing suggests that most travel between Italy and Spain went overland in these years.

352 Probably shortly after May 817 and before c. 825? Benevento (dep.)–Jerusalem–Benevento: Dauferius 1 made a penitential pilgrimage: *Chron. Salern.*, 54, 54.22–30; cf. P. Bertolini, "Dauferio," *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* 33 (Rome, 1987): 70–3, esp. 71.

353 818, first half? Bonita Castle–Rome (dep.). Euphemianus brought Theodore Studite's letters to Paschal I, and others: Theodore Stud., *Ep.* 273, 2.404.14–15; *Ep.* 274, 406.31–3. Cf. *ibid.*, 1.316*–318*; Grumel 1960, 38; Sansterre 1983, 1: 130.

354 Between 3 October and Christmas 818, Danube basin–Herstal (arr.). Louis the Pious received anon. envoys of the Abodriti; Borna, duke of the Guduscani; and the Timociani, who had recently defected from association (*societas*) with the Bulgar empire; as well as of Liudewit, duke of Pannonia inferior: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 149, Astronomer, *Vita Hlud.*, 31, 388.8–390.2; for the date, see BM 672f; cf. Bowlus 1995, 61.

355 818, Rome–Bonita Castle. Euphemianus brought back (cf. R353) a message from Theodore Studite's old ally Basilius 2: Theodore Stud., *Ep.* 273, 2.404.13–405.44; cf. *ibid.*, 1.316*–317*; Grumel 1960, 36–8, cf. 32–3; Sansterre 1983, 1: 129–30.

103 Louis was still in Aachen on 24 July (BM 655). He made an exchange of property with Fulda at Ingelheim on 4 August (BM 656).



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356 818, Naples–Syracuse. Certain Neapolitans appealed to the stratēgos in Syracuse to resolve a conflict over a new duke and received from him Theoctistus, whom another Byzantine official, Theodore prōtospatharios, soon succeeded: *Gesta episc. Neap.*, 50, 428.19–24; von Falkenhausen 1978, 11–12.

357 Between c. 818 and June 819, Rome–Constantinople. Pope Paschal I sent ambassadors, Anons. 184–5, to Leo V, about second iconoclasm; they bore a letter (of which an extract survives), and avoided the Byzantine churchmen who had accepted iconoclasm: Nicephorus I, *Capitula XII adversus iconomachas*, 460.2–9; Paschal I, Letter to Leo V, 228–35; for the date: Grumel 1960, 40; cf. Grumel 1959, 132; see also Grumel[2] no. 407a, no. 1.

358 Before May 819,[104] Venice–Zadar–"Sclavenia." Iohannes 14, the son of Doge Agnellus, was stripped of his corulership in connection with his brother Justinian's return to Venice; Agnellus exiled him to Zadar; when he learned of Justinian's appointment as co-duke, John fled to "Sclavenia," presumably the Slavic hinterlands of Dalmatia: *Chron. Ven.*, 107.2–3 and 7–8; for his subsequent flight, see R361.

359 Between 28 June 819 and 16 June 820, Africa–Sicily. A raid took many prisoners: Amari 1933–9, 1: 358–9.

360 July to December 819, Italy?–Pannonia; and Italy (and Bavaria)–Carinthia (Drava river); Dalmatia. Louis the Pious sent forces against Liudewit, who was subverting the Frankish alliance with the Timociani, formerly associated with the Bulgar empire. A first attack, apparently launched from Friuli (before July?), had no success; a second (?) attempt from Friuli (and Bavaria?) into Carinthia fared better and defeated Liudewit on the Drava river; Borna, duke of Dalmatia then was beaten by Liudewit on the Kulpa river; Liudewit next invaded Dalmatia, in December; Borna wore him down by guerrilla warfare: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 819, pp. 150–1; Constantine VII, *De adm. imp.*, 30, 1.144.80–90; BM 692a; Krahwinkler 1992, 186–9.

361 Sometime between c. 819 and August 829, Bergamo–(Venice–) Constantinople. Iohannes 14 fled from the Slavlands (R358) to Bergamo; Louis acceded to the Venetians' request[105] and turned him over or sent him directly to Constantinople: *Chron. Ven.*, 107.6–12; Dandolo, *Chronica*, 8, 1, 142.8–13.

361a Around 3 December, between c. 819 and 900, Africa–Sicily. Arab raiders captured the priest Philotheus; in the triple triage of captives that ensued (slaves, ransom, and slaughter), three days before the feast of St. Nicholas, the priest was slated for slaughter because of his age; he was miraculously

104 Justinian was back in Venice and co-duke by May 819: *Ilario e Benedetto*, no. 1.

105 BM 740c dates the request to 821, on rather shaky grounds.



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delivered by St. Nicholas, and celebrated his feast in safety: *Miraculum S. Nicolai Siciliense* (*BHG* 1352f), pp. 344–5.

362 820, Italy–Sardinia–Italy. (Arab) pirates captured and sank "in Italico mare" (i.e. the Tyrrhenian Sea) eight merchant ships returning to Italy from Sardinia; possibly a concealed naval failure against the Arabs of Spain: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 153; BM 722a, Simson 1874–6, 1: 160–1, refers to unspecified Arab sources which claim that these were Frankish warships; Haywood 1991, 115. The *Annals* mention that the treaty agreed to with the Cordovan emir in 812 and 817 was fruitless and had been abandoned by Louis the Pious in 820.

363 c. 820, Aachen. Louis the Pious ordered a search for prostitutes in the homes of all the Christian and Jewish merchants resident around the palace, whether they did business in the market "or anywhere else." This implies a market and at least a seasonal merchant colony at Aachen: *MGH Capit.* no. 146, 1.298.11–12.

364 821, before c. July–October? Grado–Istria–Zadar–Constantinople. Accused of providing technical support for Liudewit, Fortunatus was summoned to Aachen; he traveled to Istria and then, pretending to sail back to Grado to answer the summons, fled to Byzantine Zadar; the prefect John put him on a ship for Constantinople: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 821, pp. 156–7; cf. R360, R383.

365 Between 28 July and 15 October 821, Veneto–Remiremont. Much news reached Louis the Pious, manifestly from the Veneto: the death and succession of Borna, duke of Dalmatia; probably the murder of Leo V (see next); Fortunatus' defection: *ibid.*, pp. 155–6.[106]

366 Between 28 July and 15 October 821, Constantinople–Veneto–Remiremont (arr.). Louis the Pious received a full report of Leo V's assassination and the succession of Michael II: *ibid.*, s.a., p. 155; cf. BM 740c. Given that the news from Constantinople is ensconced in information from the Veneto, and that it reached the emperor in rather isolated circumstances, it is highly probable that it too traveled via the Veneto. The assassination occurred on 24 December 820, yielding an effective travel time of between eight and ten months for news from the dead of winter.

367 October 821, Pannonia–Thionville (arr.). Counts who had campaigned against Liudewit in Pannonia came to the general assembly: *ibid.*, s.a., p. 156; BM 740d.

368 821. Louis the Pious announced decisions on tolls and court provisions

106 The narrative sequence implies that the news came during the hunting trip at Remiremont which occurred between July and October, and it is introduced with the word *interea*: *ibid.*, p. 155; cf. BM 740c–d.



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which point toward increasing trade: *MGH Capit.* no. 143, 1.294–5. He attempted to confine tolls to markets and established transit points and specified penalties for evading market duties by transacting business elsewhere: 294.21–4. He affirmed the toll-free status of palace suppliers ("sive carris, sive sagmariis, sive friskingis, sive aliis quibuslibet vehiculis") of himself (*nobis*) and of his non-casual (*assidue*) subordinates; he specified penalties against those who attempted to evade tolls by passing off merchandise for sale as personal supplies being transported to the court: 294.29–36; cf. Ganshof 1961, 169.

369 c. 821, Rome–Constantinople. Methodius 1, the future patriarch, learned of Leo V's assassination and traveled to Constantinople as a papal envoy, bearing a papal doctrinal statement, and hoping to see Patriarch Nicephorus I restored: *Vita Methodii* (*BHG* 1278), 5, 1248B–C. Anastasius Bibliothecarius says explicitly that Methodius was "a sede apostolica . . . missus": *Ep.* 17, *MGH Epist.* 7.441.7–8.

370 c. 821–3, Africa–Byzantine islands. During Thomas the Slav's usurpation, Arabs from Africa with "not many ships" began raiding "the islands," carrying off large numbers of men, women, children and property: *V. David., Sym. et Georgii* (*BHG* 494), 18, 232.20–9.

371 Before 827–8, c. 821?[107] Venice–Constantinople. The doge Agnellus sent his grandson Agnellus as ambassador to Constantinople, where he died: *Chron. Ven.*, 107.16–17.

372 Before 1 November 822, Italy–Marseilles. Ships carrying salt and other "condiciones" were traveling to Marseilles; the same (?) ships sailed regularly from Italy to the Rhône, judging from Louis' confirmation of Charlemagne's grant to the church of Marseilles of tolls from the *villa* of "Leonio" collected in salt and "de aliis condicionibus," and tolls from ships from Italy docking at St. Victor's of Marseilles: BM 765: *Saint-Victor*, no. 12; cf. Ganshof 1960, 133n36.

373 18 December 822, Curte Aureola. Lothar granted Farfa toll-free status for one merchant ship (*causa mercimonii discurrenda*) belonging to the abbey, on the sea and rivers of his kingdom, including a place to berth and for setting up a *velum* ("areas ad velum figendum" i.e. spreading out a sail in order to dry it? Or pitching a tent to rest or do business?): D Loth I, no. 1.

374 Between 6 November–Christmas 822, Danubian borders of the Bulgar empire–Frankfurt (arr.). Louis the Pious received embassies of Moravians etc., and the Praedenecenti, the Bulgars' neighbors, and the Avars: *Ann. regni*

107 Dandolo connects Agnellus' mission with the accession of Michael II and Theophilus at Christmas, 820: *Chronica*, 8, 1, 144.38–40.



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*Franc.* s.a., 159; cf. a. 824, 165–6; BM 766a; the date follows from the itinerary and annual date.

375 822, Friuli–Pannonia (Sisak?). An Italian army attacked Liudewit; he abandoned Sisak and fled to the Serbs, who occupied much of Dalmatia. Liudewit promised to travel to Louis the Pious and submit the next year: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 822, p. 158; BM 762a.

376 Between 822 and 829 (827–8?),[108] Constantinople–Venice. Embassies presumably[109] conveyed Emperor Michael II's two requests to Doge Justinian that Venice contribute ships to the force being sent to defend Sicily: *Chron. Ven.*, 109.4–12; Dandolo, *Chronica*, 8, 2, 146.16–18. Bury 1912, 300–1, considered that the Arab invasion of Sicily motivated Michael II's plea. It is also possible that the request came in connection with Euphemius' usurpation in 826–7: *Chron. Ven.* does not indicate that the operation was directed against the Muslims (cf. Bury 1912, 296–7; 478–9).

377 Between 822 and 829 (827–8?), Venice–Sicily. Justinian heeded Michael II's first request and sent warships to Byzantine forces going to Sicily, without success: *Chron. Ven.*, 109.4–7; cf. next.

378 Between 822 and 829 (827–8?), Venice–Sicily. At Michael II's second request, Doge Justinian again contributed ships to the force sent to defend Sicily; no success: *ibid.*, 109.11–12.

379 June or July 823, Pannonia–Frankfurt (arr.). Word reached Louis the Pious of Liudewit's murder: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 161; BM 778a.

380 823, before June,[110] Italy–Corsica. Lothar commanded that his counts exile founders of sworn associations to Corsica: *MGH Capit.* no. 158, 4, 1.318.36–40.

381 823, before June, Corteolona. Lothar commanded that seaside ("infra mare") commerce be conducted only at legally recognized ports ("portura legitima"), on account of the tolls owed: *MGH Capit.* no. 158, 1.319.26–8. Beyond the evasion of commercial taxes, the effort to restrict the number and location of markets supplied apparently from the sea probably indicates an increase in trading and new ports; cf. BM 1017 and R368.

382 824, early?[111] Pliska–?Compiègne–Pliska. The khan Omurtag sent an astonishing embassy to Louis the Pious; Louis sent Machelm back to the khan with the Bulgar ambassadors: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 164; cf. BM 785a.

108 The reigns of Michael II and Justinian determine the date.

109 Neither source specifically refers to envoys, and I have not included them in my tally.

110 Capit. no. 157 (which overlaps with 158) bears a regnal date and place; Lothar was summoned north in June: BM 1016–1017.

111 This is the first item in the annual entry, before the description of winter and the lunar eclipse on 5 March 823.



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383 c. 10 April 824, Constantinople (dep.)–c. 17 November 824, Rouen (arr.), via Venice.[112] Michael II and Theophilus issued on 10 April the letter to Louis the Pious which accompanied their ambassadors, Theodotus; Nicetas of Myra; Fortunatus "archbishop of Venice"; and Theodore, oikonomos of the Hagia Sophia. It announced their victory over Thomas the Slav, sought confirmation of the previous peace, requested the dispatch of Frankish ambassadors to Constantinople, and listed gifts. The embassy presented certain theses on the veneration of icons, requested that Louis back the continuation of their embassy to Rome, and that he command that the pope expel any "seductores pseudochristiani" from Rome. Louis the Pious responded favorably before leaving for Christmas at Aachen: Letter to Louis the Pious, *MGH Conc.* 2.479.55–480.5; Dölger no. 408; cf. *MGH Conc.* 2.534.12–15; *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 165; McCormick 1994b, 145–50.[113]

384 Between c. 17 November and Christmas 824, Rouen (dep.)–Rome–Constantinople. The ambassadors of Michael II and Theophilus continued to Rome, escorted by unnamed Franks, *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 824, p. 165; *MGH Conc.* 2.482.11–13; 483.27–31.

385 Shortly after Christmas 824, Danube basin and Pliska–Bavaria–(Aachen; arr.). A message came from Bavaria ("allatum est") that Bulgar ambassadors had reached Bavaria; Louis the Pious ordered them to stay there until good weather; simultaneously he allowed their neighbors to travel to him at Aachen immediately, to vent their complaints against the Bulgars: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 824, pp. 165–6; BM 793d.

386 c. 824–7, Alexandria–Crete. Spanish Arabs expulsed from Alexandria established themselves on Crete: for differing dates, Christides 1984, 85–7; cf. Mango 1985b, 637n8; Malamut 1988, 1: 72–5.

386a A 5 December, c. 824–900, Crete–Myra. Arab raiders captured a youth at the feast of the vigil of St. Nicholas; on Crete, the slave's beauty brought him to the emir's attention. He was miraculously delivered a year later: *Mir. tria S. Nicolai* (*BHG* 1353–6), 5–17, pp. 188–94; on the date of the text, Beck 1959, 560.

112 Fortunatus died in Frankland not long after the embassy reached Rouen, in February or March, probably of 825 (Pros.). The concluding paragraph of his will (*Documenti di Venezia*, no. 45, p. 78) records what "in domo S. Hermagorae inveni" (i.e. the cathedral, or possibly the patriarchal palace of Grado), including perishables (fifteen measures of grain and nine amphoras of wine) and 72 lb. of silver, of which he presently had 60 lb. with him. This cannot refer to what he left behind ("inveni"!) when he fled Grado to Constantinople three years earlier; the perishables and the silver indicate that this was a recent inspection at Grado. This in turn can only mean that the embassy with which he traveled landed at Venice, at which time Fortunatus returned to his see and found the listed items, before he made his last trek across the Alps.

113 The date of their arrival at Rouen follows from Louis' itinerary: BM 793a–c.



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386b Around 6 December, c. 824–900, Constantinople–Athyras. Demetrius, a resident of Constantinople, was swept overboard by a storm in the middle of the night, during his annual pilgrimage to Athyras to celebrate there the feast of St. Nicholas: *ibid.*, 2–4, pp. 186–8.

387 825, after 15 May, Aachen (dep.)–Pliska. Louis the Pious received the Bulgar embassy concerning their common boundaries; Louis sent a letter to the khan with the ambassadors: *Ann. regni Franc.*, a. 825, p. 167; BM 794c.

388 825, before May? Italy–Corsica. Lothar issued a capitulary on mobilizing manpower for an expedition to Corsica: *MGH Capit.* no. 162, 1.325; BM 1023.

389 Shortly after 6 December 825, Aachen? Louis the Pious sent to bishops Jeremiah of Sens and Jonas of Orleans a florilegium on icons prepared by bishops Halitgar and Amalarius; they were to edit and present it to the pope at Rome for his approval; if the pope insisted on sending his own envoys to Constantinople, the bishops were to request approval for Frankish envoys to accompany the papal ones; if the pope agreed, they should send immediate word (to the court) and indicate their return date, so that Halitgar and Amalarius would be waiting for them at court when they returned; they should let the pope decide when and where (in Italy) the Frankish and papal envoys would take ship for Constantinople: *MGH Conc.* 2.532–5; BM 818–19; McCormick 1994b, 146–52.

390 825, Constantinople–Rome. Basilius 3, a monk, immigrated to Rome with four disciples. They stayed at the Greek monastery of St. Caesarius on the Palatine and were still there in 827: Einhard, *Transl. Marcell. et Petri* (BHL 5233), 1, 5, 242.3–8; Sansterre 1983, 1: 48, 160–1; cf. 2: 189n168.

391 Before 825 (c. 800?), (Ireland)–Italy–Egypt–Nile–Red Sea–(?Gulf of Aqaba)–(Jerusalem)–Ireland or England. The Irishman Fidelis recounted his trip to Dicuil before the latter immigrated to Frankland. Fidelis' pilgrim group included lay- and churchmen who sailed from Italy to Egypt en route to Jerusalem: "adorationis causa in urbe Ierusalem clerici et laici [h]ab Italia[114] usque ad Nilum uelificauerunt, deinde . . .": Dicuil, *Liber de mensura orbis terrae*, 6, 12, 62.5–31.

392 January 826,[115] Pliska–Aachen (arr.). Dissatisfied with Louis the Pious' answer to his earlier embassy (R387), the khan sent the same ambassador back with a letter threatening war if there were no treaty on the borders. Rumors of the khan's fall reached Louis and he stalled, sending Bertric, Count of the palace, to Carinthia to Baldric and Gerold, guardians of the Avar frontier, to verify the report. When they returned with no further sure

114 My correction: cod.: †habitaria†. The phonetic error appears to go back to the archetype.

115 This is the first item in the annual entry; the second item begins "interea" and is dated "circa Kal. Febr."



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information, Louis dismissed the Bulgar ambassador without a letter: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., pp. 168–9; BM 824a.

393 Between 13 April 826 and 1 April 827, Sicily–(Idrisi?) Africa. Euphemius, commander of the Byzantine fleet in Sicily, successfully attacked Africa: Ibn al Athir A.H. 211, under A.H. 201, trans. Amari 364–5; Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 1: 356; Amari 1933–9, 1: 374–5. Bury 1912, 478, explains why the attack on Africa was probably not against the Aghlabites (cf. 296n6 and 297–8).

394 Sometime before June 826, Venice–Constantinople–Venice. Georgius 6, a priest from Venice had presumably traveled to Constantinople to learn how to construct and operate an organ: see next.

395 June 826, Veneto–Ingelheim (arr.). At the general assembly, Baldric, duke of Friuli, reported all quiet on the Bulgar frontier and presented George the Venetian to Louis the Pious, so that he could build an organ for the court: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 170; BM 829c.

396 June 826, Jerusalem–Ingelheim (arr.). Louis the Pious received Dominicus, abbot of the Frankish monastery on the Mount of Olives: *ibid.*, p. 169; Raganarius' embassy to the Holy Land (R336) may have been connected with this event; Pros., and McCormick, "Holy Land."

397 Between 10 July and 1 October 826,[116] Naples–Salz. Louis the Pious received an embassy from Naples: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 170; cf. BM 832a.

398 14 June, Bay of Susa (dep.)–17 June 827, Mazara del Vallo (arr.). The combined forces of Euphemius and Asad (he had "ninety-nine" ships) invaded Sicily: Nuwairi, trans. Amari 2.1.115–16; *Cambridge Chronicle*, trans. Vasiliev and Canard 1.344 (with Bury 1912, 298n3; cf. *Kleinchroniken*, 45, 1, 1.331); Amari 1933–9, 1: 367–99.

399 September 827, Constantinople–Compiègne (arr.). Anons. 198–9, ambassadors of Michael II came to Louis the Pious: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 174. Astronomer, *V. Hlud.*, 41, 442.3–6, emphasizes their gifts and success. Hilduin of St. Denis identifies the envoys as "echonomus ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae et ceteri missi" and mentions their gift of the "authentici . . . libri, Greca lingua conscripti" of Ps. Dionysius the Areopagite, i.e. Paris, B.N., gr. 437, which performed miracles at St. Denis on the day on which Hilduin received it, presumably from Louis the Pious: *MGH Epist.* 5.330.1–11; McCormick 1994a, 30–2; Pros. "Theodorus 6."

400 827, Bulgar empire–Drava river, Pannonia. Bulgars attacked the Slavs in Pannonia by boating up the Drava and establishing Bulgar *rectores* over them: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 173.

401 Sometime between 827 and 844, Rome–Sardinia. As Duchesne deduced from the biography of Pope Nicholas I, lost letters of Gregory IV probably

116 The date follows from the itinerary.



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criticized the incest practiced by the rulers of Sardinia: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.162.12–16, with 171n54.

402 828, Aachen. Louis the Pious issued a diploma for anon. merchants, informing officials that the merchants enjoyed his protection; they would come to the palace in mid-May every year or two and should strive to serve the treasury ("cameram nostram") from their own business and that of the emperor; their goods and ships could not be requisitioned; they could increase the number of their transports and could not be delayed at the *clusae*; they enjoyed toll-free status, except for customs at Quentovic, Dorestad, and at the mountain *clusae*, where they should pay the "tithe" (*decima*); important legal actions involving them must be brought only in the emperor's presence or that of the official in charge of the merchants: *Form. imp.*, 38, pp. 314–15; BM 851; Ganshof 1957; Siems 1989, 131–3; Adam 1996, 176–7.

403 Between February and June 828, Aachen–(Constantinople–)Aachen (arr.?).[117] Louis the Pious sent Halitgar, bishop of Cambrai, and Ansfrid, abbot of Nonantola, as ambassadors; Michael II received them well: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 174; Astronomer, *Vita Hlud.*, 42, 444.13–16.

404 828, Tuscany–Corsica–Sardinia–Gulf of Tunis–Tuscany. Boniface II, count of Tuscany, with other counts of Tuscia, sailed completely around Corsica and Sardinia with a small fleet, looking for pirates. Finding none, he put into Sardinia, whose inhabitants were friendly to him, and got pilots who knew the course to Africa; he raided the African coast on the Gulf of Tunis; after five engagements, he sailed home: *Ann. regni Franc.*, s.a., p. 176, and Astronomer, *Vita Hlud.*, 42, 448.13–450.7, who adds the important detail about the Sardinian pilots. This suggests that Tuscan crews were not yet familiar with the route to Africa. But it is just conceivable that the squadron left Tuscany, never planning to head for Africa, and so did not seek out specialized pilots at the start. BM 852e; Haywood 1991, 115.

405 Before c. 828, Comacchio–Jerusalem–Alexandria–(Venice). The pilgrim and monk Dominicus 2 of Comacchio came to Alexandria, to look for a ship to take him back to Italy: *Transl. Marci* (BHL 5284), 257.20–258.3; see next.

406 c. 828,[118] Venice–Alexandria–Strophadia islands–Umag–Venice (summer). Ten Venetian ships, which were loaded (with unspecified cargo), were

117 The Royal Annals leave unclear whether the envoys were leaving or returning at the point at which the embassy is mentioned; the Astronomer, an eyewitness here, is less ambiguous, and places their return in this period. This may well be one of the rare occasions on which he improves on the Royal Annals.

118 The traditional date of the translation (263.6–7) is 31 January 828, but that is obviously impossible, given sailing conditions. It must refer rather to the date of the *depositio* of the relics, when they were placed in the new shrine constructed for them.



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supposedly blown off course and, despite the Byzantine embargo against trade with the Caliphate, driven to Alexandria, where the merchants stole the relics of St. Mark as well as did business. These ships also transported Dominicus 2 (R405), and Stauracius, a Greek monk of Alexandria who immigrated to Venice: *ibid.*, 247.1–248.11. See also the early account of the translation which places the theft during disturbances ("seditiones") at Alexandria (cf. R334 and R386): *Vita S. Leucii* (*BHL* 4894), p. 363; Ch. 9.1.

407 828, Bavaria–Pannonia. Louis the German led an army against the Bulgars; nothing is said about the campaign's success: *Ann. Fuld.*, s.a., p. 25; BM 852e; Dümmler 1887–8, 1: 37–8.

408 Before c. 828–9, Venice–Jerusalem. Iohannes 14, future doge of Venice, had traveled to Jerusalem where he saw the Holy Sepulcher; it would be his model for the ducal chapel of St. Mark's: *Transl. Marci*, 261.14–262.2. This voyage presumably occurred before his exile to Constantinople and subsequent return to Venice; cf. next.

409 Before sometime between December 828 and August 829, Constantinople–Venice. Iohannes 14 returned from exile in Constantinople (R361); he inherited the office of doge from Justinian: *Ilario e Benedetto*, no. 2 (828–9); *Chron. Ven.*, 109.8–11; Dandolo, *Chronica*, 8, 2, 148.2–4.

410 c. 828–30, Constantinople–Sicily. Theodotus arrived to help defend Italy. According to Nuwairi, he had "Alaman" soldiers with him, which is usually emended to "Armenian": Amari 1933–9, 1: 375–6 and Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 1: 86n2; cf. Ch. 9.2.

411 October 829, Thasos. An Arab fleet, apparently of Crete, utterly defeated a Byzantine fleet: Theoph. Cont. 3, 39, 137.11–16; Eickhoff 1966, 67; Malamut 1988, 1: 78. Probably part of the broader raid of the Cretan Arabs against the coast of Thrakesioi.

412 829, Bulgaria–Drava. Bulgar raiders came up the Drava again in boats and burned certain Frankish estates near the river: *Ann. Fuld.*, s.a., pp. 25–6.

413 Before c. 829, Alexandria–Venice. Theodorus 7, a Greek priest and guardian of the shrine of St. Mark, immigrated with his family the year after the relic theft: *Transl. Marci*, 261.9–10.

414 Between 11 March 829 and 28 February 831, Spain and Africa–Sicily. Some 300 ships joined the African invasion of Sicily: Amari 1933–9, 1: 418–20.

415 Sometime between 829 and c. 842, Constantinople–Aphousia (on the Black Sea). During a food shortage, the exiled St. Symeon of Lesbos' community was resupplied by a merchant ship (*holkas*) which arrived under full sail and dropped anchor off his monastery. It had been loaded by devout Christians in Constantinople with flour, baked bread, all sorts of legumes, grain, wine, salted fish, fruit, and vegetables: *V. David., Sym. et Georgii* (*BHG* 494), 24, 241.3–10.



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416 Early 830? Frankish court–Merida. Louis the Pious wrote to the Christians in revolt against the emir of Cordova, promising an attack from the Spanish mark if they desired it in the next year, and offering them a good home if they were forced to flee. He said he had learned of the revolt "relatione multorum": Einhard, *Ep.* 12, pp. 115–16; BM 916.

417 Spring (May?), c. 830–1, Ephesus. Presumably in connection with the annual fair, many ships loaded with merchandise were blocked in Ephesus because of fear of Arab pirates, until Gregorius 9 assured their safe passage: Ignatius, *V. Greg. Decap.* (*BHG* 711), 9, 53.15–27.

418 c. 830–45, Jerusalem–Alexandria–Reichenau. A Lombard pilgrim, Theuderissius, occasioned a notice at Reichenau about people in the Holy Land and Egypt: *Liber memorialis Augiensis*, 103c1–2; cf. Borgolte 1976, 114–18; McCormick, in press, "Mediterranean Communications."

419 c. 830–50, Constantinople–Ravenna. Maurus deacon, just returned from Constantinople, described the grave there of Agnellus' ancestor: Agnellus, *Lib. pont. eccl. Rav.*, 148, 374.15–18.

420 Between c. August and early November,[119] Baghdad–Thionville. At the assembly, Louis the Pious received Anons. 210–12, Caliph al Mamun's envoys, who received a peace agreement and went home: *Ann. Bert.*, a. 831, p. 4; Astronomer, *V. Hlud.*, 46, 466.11–16, specifies that two were Muslims (*Sarraceni*) and one a Christian, and that they brought "suae grandia munera patrię, odorum scilicet diversa genera et pannorum"; cf. BM 895a; Borgolte 1976, 111–13.

421 c. 831? Constantinople–Venice. After a long exile, Obellierius returned from Constantinople to challenge Doge John; he was defeated and decapitated: *Chron. Ven.*, 110.9–20; Kretschmayr 1905, 61.

422 c. 831–3, Thessalonica–Corinth–Reggio–Rome. Gregorius 9 the Dekapolite traveled, apparently overland, to Corinth; there he took a ship to Reggio. From there he took another, Neapolitan ship to Rome; he possibly made the final leg on land: Ignatius, *V. Greg. Decap.* (*BHG* 711), 11–12, 55.6–56.10; cf. Mango 1985b, 637 with n9, and Ch. 7.3.

423 c. 831–3, Rome–Syracuse. Gregorius 9 started homeward: Ignatius, *V. Greg. Decap.*, 12–13, 56.16–57.20.

424 c. 831–3, Syracuse–Otranto. Gregorius 9 sailed to Otranto; walking from there, he encountered an Arab camp: Ignatius, *ibid.*, 13, 58.1–19.

425 Between 1 October and 11 November 833, Constantinople–Compiègne (arr.). At the general assembly, the emperor Lothar received Mark, bishop of Ephesus, and Anon. 215, Theophilus' ambassadors, sent to Louis the Pious:

119 The Astronomer places the assembly in the autumn, which for Bede ran from 7 August to 6 November: *De temporum ratione*, 35, *CCL*, 123B.393.44–5.



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*Ann. Bert.*, s.a., p. 10; Astronomer, *V. Hlud.*, 49, 480.8–13; cf. Bury 1912, 331n2; BM 1036f–1037a.

426 Before 6 February 834, Italy–Marseilles. Lothar confirmed for the church of Marseilles Louis the Pious' privilege, granting the tolls in salt and other *conditiones* collected at the villa of *Leonio* and on ships from Italy (R372): D Loth I, no. 18.

427 c. 834, Otranto–Thessalonica. Gregorius 9 settled in Thessalonica under an assumed name: Ignatius, *V. Greg. Decap.*, 13, 58.1–19 and 23, 66.1–11; cf. Mango 1985b, 638n10.

428 c. 834–5, duchy of Benevento–Neretva R.–(Venice). Narrentani pirates who infested the mouth of the Neretva river massacred Venetian merchants returning from Benevento (Bari? Salerno?): *Chron. Ven.*, 112.10–12.

429 12 September 835, Africa–Palermo (arr.). A new Aghlabite governor arrived in Palermo with a squadron, after losing some ships to shipwreck and others to Christian attack just off Palermo: Amari 1933–9, 1: 434–5.

430 After 12 September, Palermo–? and Pantelleria. Arabs launched a small raid (against Byzantine Sicily? southern Italy?) which defeated the Christians and took prisoners; another squadron hit Pantelleria, captured a Byzantine warship carrying an African who had apostasized and Byzantine soldiers: Amari 1933–9, 1: 437. I have not detailed the various minor raids in Sicily over the next years.

431 835, Africa–Sicily–(Africa). Slave raiders, apparently from Africa, captured St. Elias 1 the Younger; a Byzantine warship from Syracuse intercepted the slaver transporting him and 220 other slaves to Africa: above, p. 246.

432 836, Naples–Africa. The Beneventans attempted to end the Tyrrhenian sea cities' selling of Lombards to Africa ("overseas"). By the treaty established in July 836, the Neapolitans (including explicitly Amalfitans: 217.44) agreed not to sell Lombards *super mare*: *Pactum Sicardi*, 3, 218.47–51. However, *Pactum* 4, 219.1–6, specifies that Lombards guilty of homicide might be "placed in a ship or sold *trans mare*"; Neapolitans' ships (*barcae*, *naves*, *navigia*) were allowed to circulate on the rivers of the principality and beach wherever they wished, securely; they must pay the customary fee if they wished to do business: *ibid.*, 13, 220.17–27.

433 836, Naples–Sicily. Naples successfully sought Arab allies to lift the siege by Beneventans: Amari 1933–9, 1: 312–13.

434 Between 14 December 836 and 2 December 837, Sicily. Arab and Byzantine squadrons clashed; the Arabs captured nine large ships and two *chelandia*: Ibn al Athir, A.H. 221, trans. Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 1: 361; cf. Amari 1933–9, 1: 439.

435 c. 836–7, Thessalonica–Constantinople. Gregorius 9 sailed to Constantinople;



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this was probably the preferred mode of transport at that time: Ignatius, *V. Greg. Decap.*, 20, 63.15–17; cf. Mango 1985b, 639–43.

436 c. 836–42, Constantinople–Crete–(Rome)–Constantinople. Iconophiles sent Joseph 1 Hymnographer on a mission to Rome; his ship was captured by barbarians and taken to Crete; ransomed, he returned to Constantinople: Theophanes, *Vita Iosephi* (*BHG* 944), 6–8, 6.3–7.27; John Deacon, *Vita Iosephi* (*BHG* 946), 16–18, *PG*, 105.953D–956A; cf. Stiernon 1973, 252.

437 Sometime between 836 and 889, Constantinople–Syria–Samarra–Byzantine empire–Rome. Petrus 7, a soldier of the Tagmata, was captured by the Arabs and sent to the caliph as booty; despairing of being freed, he vowed to go on pilgrimage to Rome and become a monk; miraculously delivered, he returned to the Byzantine empire and traveled to Rome, where he kept his vow: *Laudatio Nicolai* (*BHG* 1352z) 1.175–81; cf. *ibid.*, 2.292–8; Sansterre 1983, 1: 151, 2: 179n63.

438 Between 837 and 843 (c. 842?), Jerusalem–Constantinople. St. Jacob took a ship to Constantinople, where he visited his old friend, the (iconoclast) patriarch John VII: *V. Iacobi*, 11, p. 156.

439 Between 3 December 837 and 22 November 838, ?Constantinople–Sicily. "Many Greeks came to Sicily by sea," and lifted the Arab siege of Cefalù: Ibn al Athir, trans. Vasiliev and Canard, 1.362.

440 838, Caliphate?–Cyclades–Crete–Sicily. A large Arab squadron raided the Cyclades before sailing to Crete and Sicily: *Vita Theodorae imperatricis* (*BHG* 1731), 7, 263.9–11; cf. George the Monk, *Chronicon*, 798.1–3.

441 838, Spain or Africa–Marseilles. Arab pirates raided Marseilles and carried off all nuns and males, lay and clerical, as well as church treasure, in a slave-gathering expedition: *Ann. Bert.*, a. 838, p. 24. Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 1: 186 say they were from Spain; cf. von Simson 1874–6, 2: 177.

442 838, (?Salerno)–Lipari–(?Salerno)–Benevento. Beneventan ships sailed to Lipari looking for the Arabs who had pillaged it; they rescued a Greek monk and translated the relics of St. Bartholomew to the mainland: *Translatio Bartholomaei Benev.* (*BHL* 1010), 12.9–21, which does not identify the port at which they landed. Date: *ibid.* p. xi; cf. Amari 1933–9, 1: 494. *Translatio Barthol. in Gallias* (*BHL* 1009), 5.1–16 and 7.5–10, also goes back to an eyewitness, and describes how the Arabs took everyone except for very old monks; the Beneventans beached their ship for the night en route for home (presumably on the Italian mainland) and were almost surprised by Arab raiders. The Byzantine version (*BHG* 229) specifies that the sailors were from Amalfi: *PG*, 105.217B.

443 c. 838, Sicily–Africa. Elias 1 was again captured and sold into slavery in Africa: above, p. 246.



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444 18 May 839, (Sweden–) Constantinople–Ingelheim (arr.). Louis the Pious received Theophilus' envoys, Theodosius 2, bishop, and Theophanes 2, spatharios, bearing gifts and a letter soliciting military cooperation. They also presented the "Rhos" who had accompanied them to Frankland, since barbarians blocked the route home (via the "northern arc"). They turned out to be Swedes (*Sueones*), whom Louis decided to investigate to see if they were spies. If so, he would return them to Constantinople with his own envoys; Louis communicated this to Theophilus via the latter's envoys and a letter: *Ann. Bert.*, a. 839, pp. 30–1; cf. BM 993b. That Frankish embassy apparently never left the west: *Formulae Augienses*, Collectio C, no. 12, *MGH Form.* p. 370. There is confusion as to whether and how much the accounts of Theoph. Cont., 3, 37, 135.1–4, and "Genesios," *Reges*, 3, 16, 50.13–18 and 51.56–51 – the second of which used either the first or the same lost source as the first (A. Kazhdan, *ODB* 2: 828–9) – refer to this embassy. Dölger 1953, 330–1, offers the most plausible explanation. Theoph. Cont. and Genesios correctly give the substance of this embassy (a request for military cooperation), but confuse Theodosius 3 Baboutzikos' role in "841" (R455) with that of the metropolitan Theodosius 2 in 839, so that their accounts conflate the two embassies; cf. Ohnsorge 1958, 159, and Lounghis 1980, 167–8.

445 November 839, Constantinople–Cordova (arr.). Theophilus sent an embassy led by an Arabic-speaking Greek named "Kartiyus" to emir Abd al Rahman II of Ummayad Spain, offering a treaty against common enemies (i.e. the Abbasids and Aghlabids), and urging al Rahman to claim his ancestors' lands in the Levant, to strike the Aghlabids, and to order his subjects to evacuate Crete; Abd al Rahman responded with a non-committal embassy, led by Yahya al Ghazal and another Yahya (R453): Lévi-Provençal 1937, 3 and 1950–3, 1: 249–54; 331; Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 1: 185–7; Dölger no. 439; Dölger 1953; Wasserstein 1987, 80–1.

446 839, Venice–Neretva river. Doge Peter's fleet raided the Adriatic Slavs who had been engaging in piracy: *Chron. Ven.*, 113.1–10.

447 839, Africa–Sicily. The Aghlabite ruler sent an expedition to Sicily, which took booty without suffering losses: Ibn al Athir, trans. Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 1: 362.

448 22 February 840, Pavia. At Doge Peter's request, Lothar I independently concluded a five-year treaty with Venice. Among key provisions were the forbidding of slave trading in Christian subjects of the empire; prompt notification of enemy threats; a promise not to help Lothar's enemies; one to supply a fleet against hostile Slavs when requested; and the security of ambassadors and *epistolarii*: *Pactum Hlotharii*; BM 1067; cf. Ch. 18n18 and above, pp. 763f.



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449 Between 22 February and 29 March 840,[120] Constantinople–Venice (arr.). Theodosius 3 Baboutzikos brought the dignity of *spatharios* to Doge Peter and spent a year in Venice, seeking help against the Arabs; the result was the disastrous Venetian expedition to Taranto: *Chron. Ven.*, 113.12–114.7; cf. Dandolo, *Chronica*, 8, 4, 150.21–3. This is presumably the same mission as that which Theodosius conducted in Frankland: see below, R455. His seal was discovered in excavations at Haithabu (Figure 8.1), indicating that he was in contact with the Baltic emporium, presumably in connection with this mission: Laurent 1978; Shepard 1995a; see also Ch. 12n62 for a small Byzantine hoard which conceivably might be linked to the mission.

450 Between 22 February and 29 March 840,[121] Venice and Constantinople–Taranto. Disastrous Venetian expedition of sixty warships ("bellicosae naves") at the behest of Theodosius 3 and in coordination with a Byzantine fleet. The Arabs captured or killed almost all the Venetians; realizing that the Adriatic lay open, they sailed up it and attacked Osor (next): *Chron. Ven.*, 114.3–11; Ibn al Athir, trans. Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 1.362, A.H. 225 (i.e. 12 November 839–30 October 840), who mentions only the ships from Constantinople, which probably indicates that the Venetians were attempting true joint operations with the Byzantine navy.

451 29 March 840, Taranto–Osor. On the Monday after Easter, the Arabs attacked and burned Osor. Then they crossed the Adriatic and attacked Ancona, which they also burned and from which they removed many captives. Next they hit "Adrianensis portus" (presumably Adria or vicinity) close to Venice, and returned home: *Chron. Ven.*, 114.8–16.

452 c. April 840, Venice–Sicily and other places–Adriatic (arr.)–(Venice). After their Adriatic raid, the Arab ships returned to the Gulf of Otranto and captured the Venetian ships which were returning from Sicily and elsewhere:

120 The mission to Venice is usually dated to 840, on the basis of the *Chron.Ven.*'s synchronism with an eclipse on 5 May 840 (113.11–12: "Hac denique tempestate . . ."). Although such synchronisms are only mediocre indicators of date in this segment of the Chronicle, an independent consideration confirms the year and specifies the season. When Lothar issued the treaty between Venice and its neighbors (R448), Peter did not yet have the title *spatharios*, if we may trust the transmitted text: *Pactum Hlotharii*, 130.25–7. In a privilege issued on 1 September 841, Lothar's chancery did use the title: D Loth I, no. 62, here 171.18. It follows that Theodosius arrived in Venice no sooner than the spring of 840, and no later than the summer of 841. Since the disastrous expedition encouraged by Theodosius occurred in March 840 (see next), Theodosius arrived in Venice between 22 February and 29 March 840.

121 *Chron Ven.*'s synchronism is in this case confirmed by the explicit A.H. of Ibn al Athir: Amari 1933–9, 1: 495–6; the March date is that on which the Arab ships struck Osor (next).



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*Chron. Ven.*, 114.16–18; cf. Amari 1933–9, 1: 495–6. Does this imply that Venetian ships had left for Sicily and elsewhere in February or March? Or that they had wintered in Sicily?

453 840? Cordova–Constantinople. The ambassadors of Abd al Rahman II and Theophilus returned by stormy sea to Constantinople: Lévi-Provençal 1937, 10–24; Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 1: 253; R445.

454 841, Taranto–Kvarner (Quarnero) Gulf. The Arabs again raided the Adriatic; they defeated the counterattacking Venetians off the island of Susak: *Chron. Ven.*, 114.18–115.1.

455 Between 29 March 840 and before 20 January 842, (Constantinople–) Venice–Frankish court of Lothar I (arr.). Theodosius 3 Baboutzikos negotiated a military alliance with Lothar; he probably also arranged Louis II's marriage to a daughter of Theophilus: Theoph. Cont., 3, 37, 135.1–15 and Genesios, *Reges*, 3, 16, 50.13–18 which seem to have conflated the embassy of 839 (R444) and this one; *Continuatio Constantinopolitana Bedana*, *MGH AA* 13.343; Dandolo, *Chronica*, 8, 4, 151.1–4; cf. the Lothar Psalter Verses (London, B.L., Add. 37768, prov. St. Hubert, Ardennes), *MGH Poet.* 6.163, I, 3–4? Theodosius 3's presence in Venice from 840 and his efforts to organize a Venetian contribution to the Arab war lend credence to the Byzantine assertions that he went to Frankland and obtained a promise of military support from the Frankish "king," i.e. Lothar I. This will have been that embassy. Genesios 50.13–18 and 51.47–51 adds several details, including that a powerful Frankish contingent would attack Arab sites between Libya and Asia. Theodosius' death compromised the plan, to Theophilus' dismay according to the Byzantine sources. This implies that word of Theodosius' diplomatic success and death had reached Constantinople before Theophilus' own death on 20 January 842. See also Ohnsorge 1958, 153–66 (whose detailed reconstruction I have not followed); Grierson 1981, 903 with n31.

456 Between 16 June and 19 August 842,[122] (Constantinople)–Trier (arr.). Lothar I received and dismissed "legati Grecorum," including Anon. 224: *Ann. Bert.*, a. 842, p. 42; D Loth I, no. 67 (Mötsch, 18 August 842); Dölger no. 443; Ohnsorge 1958, 154–7; BM 1091a, cf. p. 482; BM 1092.

457 842, Syria–Chelidonian islets–(Constantinople). Ahmad ibn Dinar (Byzantine "Abu-Dinar") built a large fleet of 400 dromons and sailed to attack Constantinople; they were wrecked off Cape Chelidonia, in the Kibyrrhaiōtai theme; only seven ships returned to Syria. George the Monk, *Chronicon*, 801.5–14; *V. Theodorae imperatricis* (BHG 1731), 9, 265.4–17; possibly

122 The date follows from Lothar's itinerary: BM 1091m–o.



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the event summarized by Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 1: 406–7; Bury 1912, 274 with n3.

458 842, Spain, Africa or Sicily–Arles. Moorish pirates raided near Arles: *Ann. Bert.*, s.a., p. 42; cf. Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 2: 157.

459 c. 842, (Constantinople?)–Seleucia of Antioch. A Byzantine fleet raided Antioch's port, pillaging merchants, taking captives and fleeing: Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 1: 177–8.

460 c. 842? Africa or Sicily–Bari. Bari was captured by African Arabs who had been summoned by Radelchis I of Benevento to aid his struggle against Siconolf of Benevento-Salerno: Amari 1933–9, 1: 497–503; on the date, *ibid.*, 500n1. Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 1: 209, dates these events in both 841 and 842 (442).

461 c. 842, Crete–Taranto. Siconolf countered Radelchis I by recruiting Spanish Arabs from Crete who had come to Taranto: Amari 1933–9, 1: 502; cf. previous.

462 Between 10 October 842 and 29 September 843, Naples and Palermo?–Messina. Together Arabs and Neapolitans besieged and took Messina: Amari 1933–9, 1: 448; Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 1: 204–5.

463 c. 842–3, Constantinople–Corsica (–Rome). The ship St. Jacob boarded stopped in Corsica en route to Rome; the skipper robbed and abandoned him on the shore; there Jacob wandered about until he was discovered, arrested, and tortured as a spy: *V. Iacobi*, 12, p. 156.

464 11 March 843, Constantinople (dep.)–Crete. A Byzantine fleet, commanded by Theoctistus, sailed on the first Sunday of Lent for Crete, which was successfully occupied, briefly, before the expedition ended in disaster: Theoph. Cont., 4, 39, 203.9–12; "Leo Grammaticus," 229.1–10; Ps. Symeon, 654.12–15; Georgius Continuatus, 814.14–815.7; Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 1: 194–5; Malamut 1988, 1: 78–9 with further references.

465 c. 843, Constantinople–Rome. Empress Theodora (and, presumably, the child emperor Michael III) and Patriarch Methodius sent envoys, Anons. 228–9, and letters announcing the end of iconoclasm and, supposedly, requesting the return to Constantinople of a miraculous icon of the Virgin: *Commentarius de imagine Deiparae Romana* (BHG 1067), 15, 255**.26–256**.25; Grumel[2] no. 420, cf. no. 424; not in Dölger. Although the story of the miraculous icon is clearly fabulous, there is nothing improbable about an embassy on this occasion; Methodius' special relationship with Rome reinforces the inherent plausibility of such a diplomatic exchange.[123]

466 c. 843, Rome–Constantinople. The pope (presumably Gregory IV or Sergius

123 It is not impossible that this was the same mission as the first one of Zacharias 3 (see R467), in which case I will have overcounted by one envoy.



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II) responded to the letters of Theodora and Methodius with letters, rejoicing over the restoration of orthodoxy and describing the miraculous icon. The letters were conveyed by Anons. 225–6, leaders (*logades*) of the Roman clergy: *Commentarius de imagine Deiparae*, 15, 256**.25–257**.18. There may be some connection with the embassies of R455 and R470; see also R465.

467 Between 4 March 843 and 14 June 847,[124] Constantinople–Rome. Patriarch Methodius sent the priest Zacharias 3 on an embassy to Rome: Ps. Symeon, 671.1–11; Grumel² no. 437.

468 An 8 September between 843 and 846, Constantinople–Lesbos (arr.). George, made bishop of Mitylene by Methodius and Theodora, sailed with his brother to Mitylene (Lesbos) in a *basilikos dromon*; they arrived on 8 September: *V. David., Sym., et Georg.* (BHG 494), 32, 253.5–28.

469 After 843 and before 869,[125] Thessaly–Athyras–Constantinople. A Thessalian went by sea on a pilgrimage to Constantinople; he died at Athyras; his fellow travelers took his body to the Pegai shrine when they reached Constantinople, where he revived and became a monk: *Miracula Mariae Deiparae Pegae* (BHG 1072), 12, *AASS* Nov. 3.881B–D.

470 After 15 June 844, Middle Kingdom–(Constantinople). Lothar I projected one or more embassies to Constantinople between c. 840 and 844: Ohnsorge 1958, 162–83. He certainly planned one involving Ebo, the (former) archbishop of Rheims. When Ebo returned from Rome (where he had participated in Louis II's coronation on 15 June: BM 1115a), he refused Lothar's command to go to Constantinople, and fled to Louis the German's court, probably in late 844 or early 845: *Epistola synodica a. 867 ad Nicolaum I*, *MGH Conc.* 4.235.20–6; Ebo's forged bulls of Gregory IV (JE 2583 and 2585), *MGH Epist.* 5.83.7–13; Hincmar of Rheims, *Ep.* 198, *MGH Epist.* 8.211.7–14; Flodoard, *Hist. Rem. eccl.*, 2, 20, *MGH SS* 36.189.10–13; BM 1121a; cf. Ohnsorge 1958, 131–83 and Goetting 1984, 71–2. The circumstances suggest that this would have been a favorable moment for a marital agreement involving Louis II and a daughter of Theophilus, but cf. R455. It is not known if Lothar sent someone else in Ebo's stead.

471 844, (Scandinavia)–Nantes–Lisbon (arr. 20 August)–Isla Menor (in the Guadalquivir; arr. 29 September)–Seville (dep. after 11 November)–Aquitania. Eighty Viking ships attacked Muslim Spain; they took many slaves and booty, but finally retreated: Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 1: 218–25.

472 c. 844, Corsica–Rome–Pisa–Lucca–"Sulmono"–Genoa. After a year with a

124 Methodius' patriarchate supplies the dates. Lounghis 1980, 188, dates the mission to 845–6, but supplies no evidence.

125 The Miracles appear to be laid out in rough chronological order; this one occurs after the restoration of Orthodoxy and before the great earthquake of 869.



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bishop of Corsica, Jacob took a ship to Rome where he met Pope Sergius II; he continued his pilgrimage by sea as far as Pisa, where he stayed for three days; next he traveled to Lucca, where he stayed five days, to "Sulmona," and thence to Genoa; he spent fourteen years in Liguria: *V. Iacobi*, 13–16, pp. 156–8.

473 c. 845, Seville. Emir Abd al Rahman II established naval shipyards there after the Viking raid (R471): Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 1: 260.

474 Autumn 845 (after 4 September), Pliska–Paderborn. Bulgar ambassadors came to Louis the German: *Ann. Fuld.*, s.a., p. 35; BM 1386a; Dümmler 1887–8, 1: 285.

475 846–7 (A.H. 232), Caliphate. Caliph Wathiq ordered the end of maritime customs duties: Canard 1964, 49n66, from Tabari.

476 846, before August? Sicily–Ponza and Licosa. Sicilian Arabs occupied Ponza and Licosa; the Neapolitans joined with Gaetans and Amalfitans and drove them out; they or other Sicilian Arabs came again to the Gulf of Naples and occupied the Castel di Miseno: *Gesta episc. Neap.*, 60, 432.40–7; Amari 1933–9, 1: 504–6.

477 23–7 August 846, Africa–Rome (arr.). Arabs attacked Rome and sacked St. Peter's: BM 1126a and BZiel 41 (with various sources). They retreated to Gaeta in September. The attackers of Rome were *Africani*: *Gesta episc. Neap.* 60, 432.47–433.2; cf. Amari 1933–7, 1: 506–7; next.

478 10 November 846, Gaeta. Lothar I sent troops against the Arabs who had sacked St. Peter's; the Franks pursued them to Gaeta in September; the Arabs ambushed and defeated them on 10 November 846. Under Caesarius, son of Duke Sergius of Naples, the Neapolitan and Amalfitan fleet came ashore to save the Frankish survivors and retreated into the harbor of Gaeta (BM 1126a). When a storm threatened the Arabs, Caesarius allowed them to draw their ships up on shore, on condition that they leave thereafter. They escaped but, according to the Italians, they ran into a storm which destroyed many of their ships: *Gesta episc. Neap.*, 60, 433.2–20; *Chron. S. Benedicti Cassin.*, 6, 472.7–473.4; cf. Amari 1933–7, 1: 506–7, and previous.

479 c. 846–8, Frankland–Friuli–Venice–Dalmatia–Croatia–Bulgaria–Pannonia–Bavaria. Godescalc of Orbais fled his powerful persecutors to Italy, under the pretext of pilgrimage. Around 846 he was in Eberhard of Friuli's household, and Hrabanus Maurus was applying pressure to drive him out (*Ep.* 42, *MGH Epist.* 5.481–7); he fled offshore to Venice ("infra mare": Godescalc, *Carm.* 6, 1.4–5, *MGH Poet.* 3.731; cf. his *De praedestinatione*, 6, *Opera*, 208.3–4): where he stayed for two years (*Carm.* 9, 1–4, *MGH Poet.* 3.732); he spent some time in Byzantine Dalmatia (*De praedest.*, 6, *Opera*, 208.12–18); he was also in Croatia as a kind of freelance missionary, and became friends with Trpimir I (*Responsa de diversis*, *Opera*, 169.10–22); presumably from there he went on to



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Bulgaria (*De corpore et sanguine Domini*, *Opera*, 325.9–13) before returning to the Frankish empire, condemnation, and perpetual imprisonment: *Ann. Bert.*, a. 849, p. 57; see also Klaić 1971, 225–30.

480 Early or mid-847, somewhere in Frankland. Lothar I met with Louis II to plan a campaign against the Arabs in Italy with northern forces; among the diplomatic measures foreseen was a mission to the pope and to Doge Peter of Venice to solicit a fleet from Venice and the Pentapolis, to be deployed against the Saracens in Benevento; the mission's success is unclear: *Conc. in Francia, a. 846* (!), 12, *MGH Conc.* 3.137.27–138.2; BM 1127a; BZiel 46; cf. Zielinsky 1990, 12.

481 847, Cordova–Rheims. Abd al Rahman II sent an embassy to Charles the Bald: *Ann. Bert.*, s.a., p. 53; Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 1: 212–13.

482 After 3 July 847; c. 848?[126] Constantinople–Rome. Michael III wrote to Pope Leo IV, praising Ignatius; he merited the patriarchate of Constantinople with the unanimous consent of the Byzantine church: Pope Nicholas I, *Ep.* 85, JE 2692, 443.31–444.7; cf. *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.158.17–19, notwithstanding Lounghis 1980, 188n2. Neither source mentions an envoy; Dölger no. 449.

483 After 3 July 847 and before July 855, c. 848? Ignatius sent a pallium as a gift to Leo IV. Leo returned it to him, asking him not to take the return of the gift amiss and explaining that the Roman church did not receive palliums from anyone: Leo IV, *Ep.*, 41, JE 2647, p. 607. Cf. Grumel² no. 446 who dates the patriarchal dispatch to 847–852 or 853 and in any case before c. 853, because he believed that it was earlier than any correspondence about Gregory Asbestas. Cf. below R485. This may have been part of the embassy of Michael III which announced Ignatius' accession. See previous.

484 After 3 July 847 and before c. July 855[127] (c. 847–8? or c. 852–3?), Constantinople–Rome. Anons. 234–5, envoys of Gregory Asbestas, archbishop of Sicily, Eulampius of Apamaea and Peter (of Syllaion: Grumel² no. 445) appealed against their condemnation by Ignatius to Leo IV: Stylianus of Neokaisareia, *Ep. ad Stephanum V*, 375.24–376.3.

485 After 3 July 847 and before c. July 857,[128] Constantinople–Rome. Ignatius had written ("Vos autem, . . . ut fertis," 589.13) to Leo IV, informing him that

126 The letter was certainly written after Ignatius' first accession to the patriarchate on 3 July 847 and before Leo IV's death in 855 was known in Constantinople; Michael III's letter to Leo IV, as summarized by Nicholas I in 862, makes clear that this letter announced Ignatius' accession to the patriarchate. It therefore will have dated from early in Ignatius' first episcopate.

127 For the dating options, see Grumel² no. 445.

128 Grumel² no. 447 dates this letter c. 852–3 for reasons that are not clear; cf. *ibid.* no. 445, where the council which this letter seemed to describe is dated 847–8. See next.



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he had held a council and deposed certain men: Leo IV, *Ep.* 9, JE 2629, p. 589. This is apparently the same letter which Ignatius wrote to Leo IV, asking him to confirm his council's deposition of Gregory Asbestas: cf. Nicholas I, *Ep.* 90, JE 2813, 500.3–5. Nothing is known about how the letter reached Rome.

486 After 3 July 847 and before 17 July 857,[129] Rome–Constantinople. Leo IV criticized Ignatius for having held a council to depose the "aforesaid men" without any papal legate: Leo IV, *Ep.* 9, JE 2629, p. 589. The antecedent of "predictorum, ut fertis, virorum . . . depositio" (589.13–14) was not included in the extract of the letter preserved in the *Collectio britannica* (this construction makes Ewald's conjectural emendation unnecessary); that antecedent presumably referred to Gregory Asbestas and his associates (R484–5). Leo withheld confirming judgement against Gregory until he had heard the other side: Nicholas I, *Ep.* 90, JE 2813, 500.5–7. Nothing is known about who carried this letter.

487 847–55 at the latest, Islamic world–Rome. The Arab physician Zacharias 4 had come to Rome and converted to Christianity: John Hymmonides, *Vita Gregorii Magni* (*BHL* 3641), 4, 86, *PL*, 75.231B–233A.

488 Sometime between 847–61? Eastern Frankland–Jerusalem. Louis the German raised a tax of 1 d. on every manse of the royal fisc to finance the "redemption" of Christians living in the Holy Land; this presumably involved an embassy: Notker, *Gesta Karoli*, 2, 9, 65.5–12; Borgolte 1976, 136–7, suggests that it occurred during the caliphate of al Mutawakkil (847–61), who imposed a tithe on all Christian households.

489 Spring 848, Benevento. Louis II conducted a victorious campaign against the Arabs, partly at the request of duke Sergius of Naples; there is no evidence of the Venetian naval participation solicited in 847 (R480): BM 1131b; BZiel 53–4.

490 5 August 848, Spain (dep.)–Majorca. Abd al Rahman II sent a fleet of 300 ships against the Majorcans, to oblige them to respect treaties and cease damaging Muslim ships which passed through their waters: Ibn Idhari, *Bayan al-Mugrib*, trans. Sánchez-Albornoz, 1.186–7; cf. Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 1: 260; cf. *ibid.*, 200 with n1.

491 849, Africa, Spain or Sicily?–Luni–Provence. Arab raiders plundered the Italian coast from Luni to Provence: *Ann. Bert.*, a. 849, p. 57; BZiel 58. The description suggests they started at Luni and worked west, but this is not certain; they could be the same group as the next.

129 The letter will have been sent after the arrival of the representatives of Gregory Asbestas and his associates at Rome, which may have occurred as early as 847–8. Cf. Grumel² no. 445 and R484.



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492 849, Naples, Gaeta and Amalfi–Porto Romano. A squadron commanded by Caesarius (R478) sailed to Rome to fight an impending Arab raid; Leo IV feared they had come to raid with the Arabs: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.117.27–118.5.

493 849, (Africa?)–Sardinia–Porto Romano. Caesarius' fleet from Naples, Gaeta, and Amalfi defeated Arab raiders off Ostia: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.118.22–119.4; BM 1136a; BZiel 59; Amari 1933–9, 1: 507–8; *Liber pont.* 2.117.17–25 identifies them with the attackers of Rome in 846, and therefore as Africans. The captured Arabs were executed or enslaved and exploited as laborers by the Roman church.

494 850, after 1 September, Pavia. Louis II presented to a general assembly a memorandum on measures for the peace of the kingdom; he sought advice on repairing the ships which had formerly been stationed along the coast to defend it: *MGH Capit.* no. 212, 6, 2.85.15–18; this issue disappears from the capitulary that was issued at the assembly: *ibid.*, no. 213, pp. 86–8. No. 212, 1, *ibid.*, 84.35–7, sought guidance on repressing the pillaging of pilgrims en route to Rome, as well as people traveling to markets or for their other needs; the ensuing capitulary enjoined royal officials to investigate, capture and punish those who were attacking pilgrims or merchants ("qui negotiandi gratia per regnum nostrum discurrunt"): no. 213, 1, 86.4–15.

495 850, Spain, Africa, or Sicily–Arles. Arabs raided up the Rhône as far as Arles; returning downstream, they were caught in contrary winds and killed: *Ann. Bert.*, s.a., p. 59; cf. Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 2: 157.

496 850–4, Rome–Sardinia. Pope Leo IV ordered John, bishop of Cagliari, to destroy the altar which the heretical archbishop Arsenius had dedicated to St. Michael: *Ep.* 32, JE 2649, p. 603.

497 850–4, Rome–Sardinia. Leo IV wrote to Bishop John of Sardinia (possibly the same man as in R496) on a canonical matter: *Ep.* 48, JE 2650, p. 611.

498 Between c. 850 and 886,[130] Attaleia–Cyprus. Ships which specialized in sailing to Cyprus customarily departed from Attaleia. St. Constantine the Jew took one: *V. Constantini Iudaei* (BHG 370), 28, 635E–F and 29, 636A.

499 Between c. 850 and 886, Cyprus–Seleukeia in Cilicia. St. Constantine took an Isaurian ship in Cyprus to begin his return trip to Nicaea: *ibid.*, 39, 639A.

500 Winter between c. 850 and 886, Sea of Marmora (Mt. Olympos?)–Pythia (near Pylai, mod. Yalova). A severe winter gale threatened a ship in "the middle of the sea" with many passengers aboard until St. Constantine calmed the waters: *ibid.*, 54, 643E–644A.

130 As the Life depicts them, these various events occurred before the saint's reconciliation of Basil I and Leo VI.



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501 A 4 January, c. 850–900 (c. 866–71?), Constantinople?–Italy? Lazarus 1, a Byzantine ambassador, stated that George, called "the Jew," had troubled his relations with the "king" (*rhēx*), according to a truncated Greek letter preserved at St. Gall: *Byzantine Letter*; cf. Kaczynski 1988, 53–4. Lazarus had left his anonymous lord on 4 January (126.9), and found himself sitting by a fire on the night of 23 January (126.16–17). Raasted hypothesizes that Lazarus is the monk called the Khazar, that the *rhēx* is the emperor Louis II, George is the patrician who commanded the small fleet which aided Louis II in the siege of Bari in 871, and the "angelic Lord" is Patriarch Ignatius. This is all possible; however other identifications cannot be excluded.

502 Sometime between c. 850 and 1000,[131] Calabria–Africa. Simon, a monk of Calabria, was sent by his abbot to Africa to free four fellow monks and a boy who had been enslaved by raiders. He succeeded and brought them home with other Christians granted to him by the emir. The emir supplied more than one ship (*ploia*), manned by Arab sailors. On the voyage home, Simon's ship put in on a waterless island for many days because of contrary winds: *Syn. CP.*, 235.55–239.37.

503 Early 851, Rome–Sardinia. Leo IV wrote to Leo, *iudex* of Sardinia, requesting armed men to serve as his personal escort, and that he buy and send to him *lana maritima* for dyeing papal vestments; he authorized the sacerdotal functions of some problematic clergy: *Ep.* 17, JE 2611, p. 596. Presumably at the same time, Leo also sent *Ep.* 18, JE 2612, pp. 596–7; also *Ep.* 45, JE 2648, p. 609? On "sea wool" a type of shimmering textile made from sea creatures, see Serjeant 1951, 60–1; it was known in the Islamic world as a product of Africa and Spain; cf. Ch. 25n26.

504 10 January 851–29 January 852, "Casiriano villa regia"–Gondreville–Pavia–Cremona–Sospiro. Controversy over tolls and fees at the river port of Cremona. Benedict, bishop of Cremona, sought confirmation of his church's rights to tolls and other duties on shippers using the town port, which derived ultimately from the *pactum* established by King Liutprand and the merchants of Comacchio (R88; cf. BZiel 84); in January 851, Louis II confirmed the immunity granted by Charlemagne, Louis the Pious, and Lothar I, including possession of Cremona's port of Vulpariolus on the Po river, which had been lost to the bishopric under King Pippin of Italy (781–810), and which it had regained in 841 (D Loth I, no. 58), including transit tolls, mill and port (?) fees (*portora*) between Cremona and the mouth of the Adda river: D L II, no. 1; BZiel 75. The privilege specified that, just like the shippers of Comacchio, going and coming Lombard and foreign merchants ("ceterarum gentium homines

131 The content and context invite us to place this text in the 9th or 10th C.



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suum peragentes negotium") had to pay landing and docking fees ("ripatico et palo") as well as feed the two shore officials, and that the selling of salt and (lacuna) had to be conducted in the port or Cremona. This suggests that controversy was brewing. In September 851, the bishop also sought and received confirmation of Liutprand's *pactum* from Louis II's father, Lothar I, D Loth I, no. 116 (BM 1148; BZiel 80), which refers to the "controversias" the church was suffering from certain men. Around the same time, a group of merchants of Cremona protested at an assembly in Pavia that their bishop was demanding unjust tolls and port fees which they had never paid before; Louis II delegated Theodoric to hold an inquest at Cremona: BZiel 82. Theodoric found for the bishop and confirmed the legitimacy of the fees: *Placiti* no. 56; cf. above, pp. 778–81. Louis II confirmed the plea and issued another privilege confirming the church's traditional rights and the obligation of all persons, of whatever place or ethnicity, to feed the shore officials, pay a tenth of their salt, and a 4 d. docking fee; the Venetians must still pay their customary *census* and transit fees; whether they only transited or put in, all ships of all peoples, including Comacchio and Venice, were to pay the fees etc. due between Cremona and the mouth of the Adda, without contradiction: D L II, no. 4; BZiel 84.

505 September 852? Rome. Leo IV informed Louis II that he had mobilized Rome's coastal defenses at Porto on the rumor of an Arab raid: *Ep.* 1, JE 2620, p. 585; BM 1554a; BZiel 91.

506 October 852, Pliska–Mainz (arr.). Bulgar envoys came to Louis the German: *Ann. Fuld.*, s.a., p. 42; BM 1401a; Dümmler 1887–8, 1: 365.

507 17 November 852, Motovun (Croatia)–Pavia (arr.). At the request of Abbot Felmo, Louis II granted immunity and royal protection to the abbey of St. Michael's (San Michele Sottoterra) near Motovun in the diocese of Poreć: D L II, no. 9; BM 1190; BZiel 100.

508 c. 852, Jerusalem–Africa–Cordova–(Frankland). Georgius 8, monk of Mar Saba, was sent on business to Africa; he continued to Cordova; he then planned to go to Francia (to raise funds), but changed his mind, stayed, and was martyred on 27 August 852. His relics were translated to Paris in 858 (R528): Eulogius of Cordova, *Memoriale sanctorum*, 2, 10, 25–34, 426.16–430.10.

509 22 May 853, Constantinople–Damietta (arr.). Byzantine raid: Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 1: 212–18. Yaqubi, tr. *ibid.*, p. 276: eighty-five Byzantine ships captured 1,820 Muslim women, 1,000 Copts and 100 Jewish women in two days of pillaging. Tabari, *ibid.*, pp. 315–17: three squadrons, each of 100 ships (Bury believes the other two squadrons attacked the Levant: 1912, 292n3); each ship carried 50 to 100 men, totaling c. 5,000 men; they left with 600 women, sugar, linen, and other goods; they destroyed arms assembled



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for Crete, then attacked al Ushtum and destroyed war machines there. Precise date: Maqrizi, tr. *ibid.*, Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 1: 387; cf. Brooks 1913, 390–1.

510 853, Constantinople. The Byzantine (court) was reportedly angry with Louis II because of delays in his marriage to a Byzantine princess: *Ann. Bert.*, s.a., p. 68; this suggests that there may have been an exchange of communications between the courts which is otherwise unrecorded; cf. BZiel 117.

511 853, Bulgar empire–East Frankland. Bulgars joined forces with Slavs to attack the kingdom of Louis the German; Charles the Bald had apparently bribed them to do so; they were defeated: *Ann. Bert.*, s.a., p. 68; Dümmler 1887–8, 1: 382.

512 853, Rome–Tripoli (Africa). Leo IV wrote to and criticized Galerius, *episcopus Tripolitanus*, because of reports which had reached Rome of Christians who refused to perform penance, since they claimed that it implied sexual abstinence: *Ep.* 26, JE 2640, p. 600.

513 853, Rome–Frankish court. Romans, oppressed by the attacks of Saracens and Moors, complained to Lothar I that nothing was being done in their defense: *Ann. Bert.*, s.a., p. 68; BM 1161a; BZiel 116.

514 Sometime before 854, Africa–Sardinia–?Naples–Africa. Four Arab ships captured a large Christian merchantman off Sardinia. They manned their prize with twelve men and agreed to meet it, accompanied by one of the raiding ships, at an unnamed Christian port ("pays des Rums"). Each party was to wait twenty days for the other before returning home. The three warships then raided some more and headed to the rendezvous. The winds were unfavorable for the captured ship and its escort, which arrived at the Christian port only after the twenty days had passed, and made its way home separately. The separation triggered a conflict over the division of the booty captured during the entire voyage, which brought the case to the African jurist Ibn Sahnun (d. 854), who decided that all the raiders should share the booty equally: Ibn Sahnun, tr. Talbi, p. 290. The most likely Christian port where Arab raiders and a captured Christian vessel would have felt comfortable was Naples which, as Louis II complained in 871, was so busy supplying food, weapons, and other support to the Arabs that one could mistake it for Palermo or Africa itself: *Ep. ad Basilium*, 393.17–23. If this is correct, then the captured ship was not likely to have been Neapolitan.

515 Before 854, Europe–Africa. Muslim raiders could prey on Christian ships in Christian waters and heading toward Christian ports; they should not attack Christian ships coming to Islamic ports, whether they were near or far away, so long as the merchants were known for their trade with the Islamic world, according to the juridical opinion of Ibn Sahnun, tr. Talbi, p. 291.



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516 Sometime between 854 and 876, Constantinople–Thessalonica–Rome. Pilgrims Hilarion and Isaac traveled to Rome, where they spent two years; the trip to Thessalonica took fourteen days: *Vita Hilarionis georgica*, 22–3, 255.24–257.9; B. Martin-Hisard, "Ilarione," *BibS*, *Prima appendice* (1987): 671–3.

517 c. May or June 855, Rome. Louis II rushed to Rome to investigate the charge that a *magister militum* was preparing to hand Rome back to the Byzantines; the charge appeared unfounded: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.134.6–29; BM 1202a–b; BZiel 131–2.

518 After 17 July 855,[132] Constantinople–Rome (arr.). Emperor Michael III (and Ignatius, whom the *Liber pont.* does not mention) sent Lazarus 2, Khazar and monk, to the pope: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.147.22–148.4. Leo IV had requested that Ignatius send someone to explain his conduct toward Gregory Asbestas, and Ignatius responded without delay: Stylianus of Neokaisareia, *Ep. ad Stephanum*, 375.24–376.12. In the accompanying letter, Michael had anathematized Gregory Asbestas' faction and praised Ignatius' supporters: Nicholas I, *Ep.* 88, JE 2796, 478.32–8.

519 Sometime after July 855 and before March–November 857, (Jerusalem)–Tripoli–Rome.[133] Basilius 4, a native of Jerusalem, went on pilgrimage to Rome and became sick during the trip; he presumably started out from Jerusalem, but his testimony picks up the story at Tripoli: *Conc. CP IV*, actio 8, Mansi 16.137B.

520 Between July 855 and June 857,[134] Constantinople–Rome. Zacharias 3, bishop of Taormina and another bishop, Anon. 240, envoys of Gregory Asbestas and others, came to Rome, after Ignatius had deposed them. This seems to have caused Benedict to send the lost letter JE 2667 to Ignatius, requesting him to send (again) a representative to Rome, along with, again (*rursum*), Zacharias. Ignatius received Benedict's letter in July 857, a few days before his deposition: Deusdedit, *Collectio canonum*, 4, 428, 604.21–9; cf. 604.1–5 (line 3, correct *accusatoris* to *accusatus*). Cf. Stylianus, *Ep. ad Stephanum*, 376.9–12.

132 Lazarus arrived after 17 July 855, because Benedict III received him; the mission responded to an initiative of Leo IV, and therefore was sent from Constantinople probably earlier in 855, before news of Leo IV's death on 17 July arrived in Constantinople. Cf. Grumel[2] no. 448, who further observes that the murder of Theoctistus (January–March 856) undermined Ignatius' influence, so that his participation in this mission seems unlikely after that date.

133 For the chronology, see Pros. Cf. above, pp. 240–2.

134 JE p. 340 and Wolf von Glanvell, in Deusdedit, p. 604n20, date Benedict's letter responding to Zachary's complaint to June 857, presumably because it arrived in Constantinople in July 857; see R525.



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521 c. 855–8 to c. 863–6, Lotharingia–Rome–Tyrrhenian Sea–Jerusalem–Egypt–Carthage – Rome – Jerusalem – Red Sea – Armenia – Sinai – Rome – Italy – Burgundy–Aquitaine–Brittany (Rennes). After killing their uncle and brother, Frotmund and his brother left Lothar II's court for eight years of pilgrimage. They traveled from Rome to Jerusalem via the Tyrrhenian Sea, then spent two years in Egypt, traveled to Africa and Cyprian's tomb and hence back to Rome; a second pilgrimage returned them to the Holy Land, etc. for three more years, before they went back to Rome, and then north, ending up in Brittany: *Gesta patrum Rotonensium* 3, 8, pp. 207–13. According to Poulin 1991, Frotmund is the homonymous vassal of Robert the Strong; the detailed chronology looks a little difficult, but there can be no doubt the pilgrim hails from the same kindred.

522 Between 856 and 878, Rome–Constantinople. Hilarion and Isaac returned to Constantinople after two years in Rome: *V. Hilarionis*, 23–4, 257.10–19; cf. R516.

523 Between March and November 857, Rome–Venice–Constantinople (arr.). Basilius 4 traveled to Constantinople: R519.

524 3 April 857, Motovun–Mantua. Louis II confirmed an agreement by which two brothers would represent Abbot Felmo and the monastery of San Michele in Diliano; the penalty is 2,000 gold mancosi: D L II no. 24; BZiel 158.

525 July 857, Rome–Constantinople (arr.). Benedict III's letter (JE 2667) to Ignatius arrived: Ignatius, *Conc. CP a. 861*, apud Deusdedit, *Collectio canonum*, 4, 428, 604.26–8; Ignatius gives the date.

526 Between c. 857 and 875, Sura (Syria)–Spain (Barcelona?). Rabbi Amram bar Shechna, breakaway Gaon of Sura sent his prayer book (*Seder*) to Isaac bar Simeon, head of a Spanish Jewish community widely identified as Barcelona:[135] *Letter*, tr. Kobler, pp. 75–7; cf. Brody 1998, 191–3 and 344; Romano 1991, 319, hesitates to accept the traditional identification of Barcelona.

527 Between 19 April and 31 August 858,[136] Palermo–Apulia (?). After raiding land and taking much booty, Ali's Arab fleet met a Byzantine fleet of forty *chelandia* commanded by "the Cretan." First the Arabs captured ten Byzantine ships; then the Byzantine gained the upper hand and captured twenty Arab ships (*karabia*): Ibn al Athir, tr. Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 1.366; *Cambridge Chronicle*, *ibid.*, p. 345 (cf. *Kleinchroniken*, 45, 12, p. 332); Nuwairi, *ibid.*, p. 384; Ibn Idhari, *Bayan*, tr. Amari 2.12. Cf. Amari 1933–9, 1: 464–5; Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 1: 219–20.

135 I am grateful to my colleague Bernard Septimus for alerting me to this text.

136 The date follows from the overlap of the Muslim and Byzantine years.



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528 858, Paris–Viviers–Uzès–Barcelona–Saragossa–Cordova–Toledo–Alcala de Henares–Saragossa–Barcelona–Gerona–Narbonne–Béziers–vicinity of Beaune-Argilly (Côte d'Or)–Auxerre–the Senonais–Esmans (Seine-et-Marne)–(Paris). Usuard and Odilard, monks, traveled to Cordova and back to Esmans, a property of St. Germain des Prés, to which the monks had retreated because of the Viking invasion. One of the relics they carried was that of Georgius 8: Aimoin, *Translatio sanctorum Georgii, Aurelii et Nathaliae* (*BHL* 3409), *PL*, 115.939–60; R508.

529 c. 858, Genoa–Lyons–Clermont. St. Jacob traveled there, before settling as a hermit near Bourges: *V. Iacobi*, 17–21, pp. 159–60.

530 859, (Denmark–Francia)–Spain–Balearic Islands–Rhône–La Camargue: Viking raiders took up residence on the island of La Camargue: *Ann. Bert.*, s.a., p. 80. For details of the activities of the raiding fleet of sixty-two vessels on the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts of Spain: Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 1: 310–12. For their further attacks on Italy, R537.

531 Between April and July 859, Constantinople (dep.)–Rome. Basilius 4 left Constantinople for Rome: R523.

532 859, before 31 August,[137] Constantinople–Syracuse. A major Byzantine naval defeat in Sicily; Ibn al Athir mentions 300 Byzantine ships, of which the Arabs captured 100: tr. Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 1: 367; *Cambridge Chronicle*, *ibid.*, 346; cf. *ibid.*, 1: 221; Amari 1933–9, 1: 469–70.

533 859–60. An exceptionally cold winter in northern Italy froze the Adriatic solid, and the merchants who usually brought their wares (*mercimonia*) by boat this year brought them to Venice by horses and wagons. The implication is further that winter was an active trading season when Venice attracted non-Venetian merchants: *Ann. Fuld.*, a. 860, p. 54; cf. *Chron. Ven.*, 116.2–4; Andreas of Bergamo, *Historia*, 10, *MGH SRL* 227.5–9; BM 1216h.

534 18 June 860, land of the Rus–Constantinople. The Rus, aboard 200 ships, attacked Constantinople: *Chronicon Bruxellense*, 33.16–21; cf. Mango 1958, 74–82.

535 860, before 25 September,[138] Constantinople–Rome. Pope Nicholas I granted an audience to Arsaber "spatharius," Methodius 2 and Samuel, metropolitans of Gangra and Khonai, respectively, envoys of Michael III and new patriarch Photius, and the deposed bishops Theophilus and Zacharias 3, conveying Dölger no. 457 and Grumel[2] no. 467; cf. no. 464. They bore sumptuous gifts and invited the pope to send legates to a council to settle iconoclasm

137 The Byzantine naval movement was in response to the fall of Castrogiovanni (c. 24 January 859, Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 1: 367), and is dated by the indiction, which ended with August.

138 The dates offered by Hergenröther 1867–9, 1: 414, and Grumel are deductions based on the date of Nicholas I's response to this embassy (next).



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and other affairs: Photius, *Ep.* 288, 3.115–20; Nicholas I, *Ep.* 82, JE 2682, pp. 433–9; Nicetas, *V. Ignatii* (BHG 817), PG, 105.516A–B; *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.154.21–155.8; cf. 158.15–27; *Conc. CP IV a. 869–70*, actio 4, Mansi 16.58B–59A; Metrophanes of Smyrna, *Ep. ad Manuelem*, Mansi 16.416E.

536 c. 25 September 860, Rome (dep.)–Rhaidestos–Constantinople. Nicholas I sent *Ep.* 82, JE 2682, to Michael III, with Radoald and Zacharias 5, bishops of Porto and Anagni; they were explicitly accompanied by Theophilus and Zacharias 3; implicitly by Arsaber etc. (see preceding). Aside from reproaches about papal privileges, Nicholas asked that Michael send them back in dromons with appropriate "missi" so they get home safely: 439.18–20. This suggests that they traveled in warships in 860, and underscores the deteriorating security of the southern Italian coast. That it is specified suggests that it is new. See also *Conc. CP IV*, actio 4, Mansi 16.58D–E; Photius' men bribed the papal envoys en route at Rhaidestos: Ignatius, *Libellus*, Mansi 16.297D.

537 860, La Camargue–Pisa. The Vikings attacked Italy, raiding Pisa and other unidentified towns: *Ann. Bert.*, a. 860, p. 83; cf. BM 1216r; on their way home they were attacked by an Arab fleet and suffered serious losses: BZiel 193.

538 After 9 September 861, Constantinople (dep.)–Rome. Radoald and Zacharias 5 left Constantinople, apparently with Leo 6 *asēkrētis*, and returned home (*tote*: i.e. after Ignatius had turned himself in, following forty days of earthquakes which had begun in August): Nicetas, *V. Ignatii*, PG, 105.525A–C; cf. Grumel[2] no. 472. Grumel maintains that Leo followed them soon thereafter. They arrived in Rome sometime before 18 March 862 (see R544), presumably in late fall. In 866, Nicholas I's account of events suggests that the return of his envoys was long awaited ("tandem"); the return, the audience granted to Leo *asēkrētis*, and a Roman synod supporting the refusal to recognize Photius are not precisely dated, although Nicholas says that he granted Leo an audience two days after the return of his envoys: *Ep.* 98, JE 2821, 555.7–17.

539 After May 861, 862?[139] Constantinople–Rome. Theognostus, a monk, escaped from Ignatius' persecutors and fled to Rome in disguise, with Ignatius' *Libellus* describing his condemnation and the Roman legates' treachery: Mansi 16.293–301.

540 Sometime between c. 861 and August 865, Constantinopolitan region–Rome. At least one monk, Anon. 243, fled Photius to Rome: Nicholas I, *Ep.* 88, JE 2796, 477.21–30.

139 On 1 August 868, Hadrian II described Theognostus' stay in Rome as lasting "per septem ferme annorum curricula": *Ep.* 38, JE 2909, 749.15–25. The year of his departure will depend on whether the pope was reckoning inclusively. It was certainly after the council presided over by Radoald and Zachary, since Ignatius' *Libellus*, which Theognostus took to the pope, describes events there.



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541 Sometime between c. 861 and August 865, Mount Olympos–Rome. At least one monk, Anon. 244, fled Photius to Rome: see R540.

542 Sometime between c. 861 and August 865, Alexandria–Rome. At least one monk, Anon. 245, came to Rome testifying for Ignatius and against Photius: see R540.

543 Sometime between c. 861 and August 865, Jerusalem–Rome. At least one monk, Anon. 246, came to Rome and testified for Ignatius: see R540.

544 18 March 862, Rome (dep.)–Constantinople. Nicholas I wrote to Basil I, Photius, and the eastern patriarchs disavowing his legates' action; approving icons; and asking the emperor to venerate the Roman church: *Ep.* 84–6, JE 2690–2, pp. 440–51, carried back to Constantinople by Leo *asēkrētis*.

545 c. 862,[140] Moravia–Constantinople. Rastislav requested missionaries from Constantinople: Life of Constantine the Philosopher, 14, 2, p. 159; tr. pp. 199–200; Life of Methodius, 5, 1, p. 173, tr. p. 223.

546 Before c. 863, Byzantine empire–Moravia. Anons. 247–8, Greek missionaries, were in Moravia before Constantine and Methodius: Life of Methodius, 5, 2, p. 173; tr. p. 223.

547 c. 863, Constantinople–Moravia. Michael III sent Constantine-Cyril and Methodius 3 to Rastislav to convert the Moravians: see Ch. 7.2.

548 c. 863, Armenia–Rome–Armenia. Nicholas I responded to a letter from a prince of Armenia; he outlined Rome's position on Photius and Ignatius: *Ep.* 87, JE 2736, pp. 451–4. We do not know how the letter reached Rome. The most likely sender may have been Ashot I, whom the caliph recognized as prince of princes in 862: N. G. Garsoian, "Armenia, History of," *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. J. Strayer *et al.*, 1 (New York, 1982): 474–87, here 480–1.

549 864, Regensburg–Tulln?–Pliska. Louis the German campaigned against the Bulgar khan who had announced his intention to convert to Christianity; peace was concluded, which implies that envoys traveled between the two courts: *Ann. Bert.* s.a., p. 113; BM 1455a; Dümmler 1887–8, 2: 188; Nicholas I had been consulted about Louis' plans for meeting the khan: *Ep.* 26, JE 2758, 293.1–9, and mentions Louis' project to go to Tulln in this context.

550 After c. 864, Venice–Constantinople. Petrus 8 Candianus and his co-conspirators were exiled there: *Chron. Ven.*, 118.4–8.

551 c. 864–5?,[141] Rome–Sardinia–Rome. Paulus 6, bishop of Populonia, and abbot Saxu, papal legates, attempted to repress incest among Sardinia's leaders (*iudices*): *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.162.12–23.

552 864–75, Africa. In this period the Muslims began to fear Byzantine success,

140 The date is the conventional one and is deduced from the circumstances.

141 The date is suggested by the event's position in this biography.



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and undertook defensive measures on the coasts of Africa: Amari 1933–9, 1: 534–5.

553 Between 25 March and 31 August 865,[142] Constantinople–Rome (arr.). Michael 4 prōtospatharios and Anons. 249–50 arrived in Rome bearing a letter of Michael III which insulted Pope Nicholas I: Nicholas I, *Ep.* 88, JE 2796, 454.29–36 (dated 28 September 865); cf. Dölger no. 464; next.

554 c. 28 September 865, Ostia (dep.)–Constantinople. Because of the approach of winter, Michael 4 refused to wait any longer for Nicholas I's reply to the emperor Michael III's letter; he took the pope's letter, which bears this date: *Ep.* 88, JE 2796, pp. 454–87.

554a Between 7 and 21 April 866, Constantinople (dep.)–(Crete). A Byzantine fleet set out to invade Crete; the invasion was abandoned after Basil assassinated Bardas Caesar on 21 April: Ps. Sym. Mag., Michael and Theodora, 42, 678.7–8 and Theoph. Cont. 4, 40, 206.13.

555 After 26 May 866,[143] Alexandria (dep.)–Constantinople. Leontius left Egypt bearing letters of Patriarch Michael for Michael III and Basil: *Conc. CP IV*, actio 8, Mansi 16.137C–D and actio 9, where he changed his story: *ibid.*, 155C–156D; cf. Sansterre 1973.

556 866, after 4 July, Salerno (dep.)–Amalfi–Pozzuoli: Louis II sailed to Amalfi; he bathed at Pozzuoli after bypassing Naples: *Chron. S. Bened. Casin.*, 4, *MGH SRL* 471.11–13; John, *Gesta episc. Neap.*, 64, *ibid.*, 434.41–435.3; BM 1235b–d; BZiel 260–3.

557 866, Pliska–Regensburg.[144] Envoys of Boris-Michael, ruler of the Bulgarians, came to Louis the German announcing his conversion and requesting missionaries: *Ann. Fuld.* s.a., p. 65; *Ann. Bert.*, s.a., pp. 133–4; Dümmler 1887–8, 2: 188–90.

558 August 866, Pliska–(Friuli)–Rome (arr.). Envoys of Boris-Michael arrived in Rome; their diplomatic overture to Nicholas I sought his guidance on doctrinal positions laid out by Byzantine missionaries: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne,

142 In November 866 (i.e. indiction 15, which began on 1 September 866), Nicholas said that he had received this insulting letter from Emperor Michael, through Michael spatharios "last year, i.e. in the thirteenth indiction": *Ep.* 91, JE 2819, 529.3–4. This shows that Nicholas or his secretary reckoned the years differently from the indictions; they presumably began years in the Roman style, on the Feast of the Annunciation. This would mean that Michael arrived in Rome after 25 March 865 (the previous year, from that date to 25 March 865) and before the end of the thirteenth indiction on 31 August 865.

143 "Ad imperatores nostros sanctos," which implies he had left Alexandria after Basil's promotion to coemperor on 26 May 866 was known in Egypt: Mansi 16.137C.

144 The season is uncertain; the envoys are mentioned at the end of the entry in both annals, which is perhaps significant in the case of Fulda. Louis was at Regensburg in July and August, and perhaps also at the end of the year: BM 1461–2; 1462e–f.



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2.164.17–23. Important light on these pioneering travelers' route is shed by the late antique Gospel book of Cividale (Museo Nazionale, Codex CXXXVIII). It spent the early Middle Ages in an unidentified monastery in Friuli, where its margins recorded names of many visitors and friends of the house. A hand which is apparently of the 9th C. records (f. $4^r$) the first Bulgarians to visit the place: Sondoke, followed by the names of his whole family, the *homo bonus* Petrus, <lacuna> and Geor<g>ius. The reference to Boris-Michael dates the entry to after his conversion (864; ?865) and before his abdication in 889. The entries and circumstances indicate that this note records the passage through Friuli of Boris-Michael's envoys to Rome: Ludwig 1990, 419 (where 876 is an unfortunate misprint for 867); Ivanov 1933, 629–33; cf. Pros. "Petrus 11," "Sondoke"; perhaps they stopped there on their route home; cf. also R574. This proves that the new overland route ran through Friuli and the Veneto.

559 13 November 866, Rome (dep.)–Pliska–Byzantine border ([Debeltos?]–Constantinople). Nicholas I kept the Bulgarians in Rome and sent bishops Paulus 6 and Formosus to Boris-Michael in response to R558; he sent with them Donatus, bishop of Ostia, Leo 7, priest, and Marinus 2, cardinal deacon, via an overland route, to announce to the Constantinopolitan church Rome's decisions, even though they had already been communicated twice to the east: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.164.17–33; the legates to the Bulgarians carried the famous *Responsa* (JE 2812); Donatus conveyed nine letters, laying out the Roman case against Photius and for Ignatius, to Michael III, to Photius, Ignatius, Bardas Caesar, the Augustae, etc.: Nicholas I, *Ep.* 90–8a, JE 2813–21, pp. 488–568. At the Byzantine border, the official blocked their progress; the papal biographer disingenuously insinuates that the envoys had been told that Michael III wished them to come to Constantinople, but only through Bulgaria; they told this to the local official; after waiting forty days at the border for confirmation that the emperor did not wish them to enter the empire, they turned back: *Liber pont.*, 2.165.1–9; R570.

560 c. 866, Bari and Taranto–Dubrovnik. An Arab fleet of thirty-six ships under the emirs of Bari and Taranto attacked Dubrovnik; the siege would last fifteen months: Theoph. Cont. 5, 53, 289.3–15; cf. Constantine VII, *De adm. imp.*, 29, 1.126.91; Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 10–13.

561 c. first half of 867,[145] Constantinople (dep.)–Benevento or S. Italy. Photius sent gifts to the Frankish court in southern Italy and promised to have Louis II and Angilberga acclaimed as emperors in Constantinople if they helped

145 The date can be deduced from that of the autumn council (Grumel[2] no. 498) which the embassy preceded.



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topple Pope Nicholas; they agreed and Photius proceeded with his plan. Nicetas clearly means that an embassy traveled to the Frankish court: *V. Ignatii*, *PG*, 105.537B–C. The Frankish rulers were in fact acclaimed at the council, according to Metrophanes of Smyrna: *Ep. ad Manuelem*: Mansi 16.417D–E; this may be what Nicetas meant by *euphēmiai*: *V. Ignatii*, 541C; cf. Grumel² no. 495; BZiel 273; Bury 1912, 201; Dölger 1953, 313–15.

562 867, before August or 24 September, Basilius 4 returned to Constantinople from Rome; he participated at Constantinople in the Photian synod of August/September: R531.

563 867, before August or September, Italy–Constantinople (arr.). Photius informed the eastern patriarchs that further letters, from different persons, had just arrived complaining of Nicholas I's oppression in Rome; Photius included copies: *Ep.* 2, 1.51.331–41; cf. Sansterre 1973, 201.

564 c. 867, before August or September, Rome–Constantinople (arr.). Basilius (either 4 or 5), Zosimas and Metrophanes and Anons. 257–8 fled Nicholas I's oppression to Constantinople: Hadrian II, *Ep.* 40, JE 2914, 757.9–19; Photius, *Ep.* 2, 1.51.328–32; cf. Hergenröther 1867–9, 2: 45n75; Sansterre 1973, 201–7.

565 After 24 September 867, Dubrovnik–Constantinople (arr.). The besieged inhabitants (R560) sent Anons. 259–60 to the Byzantine emperor asking for help; they were en route when Basil I took power: Theoph. Cont., 5, 53, 289.15–290.7; Constantine VII, *De them.* 2, 11, 97.18–27; id., *De adm. imp.* 29, 1.126.88–96; cf. Gay 1904, 91; Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 13; Ferluga 1978, 166.

566 c. August–September 867, Constantinople (dep.)–(Italy). Photius sent to Louis II and Angilberga, then in southern Italy, metropolitans Zacharias 6 Kophos and Theodorus 8, with the synodal acts deposing Nicholas I. Their diplomatic brief will have included winning the Frankish court for Photius' cause: Nicetas, *V. Ignatii* (*BHG* 817), *PG*, 105.537C–D; Metrophanes, *Ep. ad Manuelem*, Mansi 16.417E. The pseudo-legates of the eastern churches Georgius 9, Leontius, and Sergius 4 accompanied them; they were to continue to Rome and depose Nicholas: *Conc. CP IV*, actio 9, Mansi 16.155E–156D; Sansterre 1973, 223–5. After the coup, Basil I recalled the envoys in mid-route ("ek mesēs . . . tēs hodou"): *V. Ignatii*, *PG*, 105.540A–B; Grumel² no. 499.

567 26 September 867, Constantinople (dep.)–Terebinth–Constantinople. Basil I sent the imperial dromon to bring Ignatius back from his exile on Terebinth: Nicetas, *V. Ignatii*, *PG*, 105.540B.

568 Between 24 September and 23 November 867,[146] Constantinople (dep.)–Rome. Basil I wrote his first letter to Nicholas I, declaring the church in a

146 The letter was sent after Basil's coup, before the December letter and indeed, to judge from Basil's own summary, before Photius' deposition on 23 November 867.



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terrible state, stripped of its legitimate "rector" and possessed by usurpation, according to the summary Basil gives of this "lost" letter in that of 11 December (R573): Mansi 16.46A–B. Lacking in Dölger; carried by Euthymius spatharios?

569 Summer, after 24 September 867 and before 869 or 870,[147] Constantinople–Italy. Basil I sent Iohannes 18 patrician to Louis II: Louis II, *Ep. ad Basilium*, 386.18–23; *Chron. Salern.*, 107, 107.17–24; BZiel 325.

570 867, before 23 October,[148] Byzantine border–Bulgaria–Rome (arr.). After having been turned away at the border (R559), Nicholas I's envoys to Constantinople returned to Rome: *Liber pont.*, 2.165.1–9. During the legates' stay in Bulgaria, emperors Michael III and Basil I sent a letter to Boris-Michael, suggesting that the Romans could enter the empire if they signed a profession of faith anathematizing the Roman practices which Photius was attacking: Dölger no. 469; Nicholas I, *Ep.* 100, JE 2879, 603.9–604.7.

571 Before 13 November 867, Pliska–Rome (arr.). Formosus so pleased Boris-Michael that he expelled *alienigenae*, i.e., the Byzantines, and requested that Formosus be made his archbishop; Nicholas (d. 13 November) found another solution: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.165.16–31; see next.

572 c. November–14 December 867, Rome (dep.)–(Pliska–Constantinople). Nicholas I had decided to send Bishop Grimuald of Bomarzo and priests to Bulgaria in response to Boris-Michael's embassy (R558), and order Formosus, who was apparently still in Bulgaria, and Dominicus 4, bishop of Trevi, who was certainly at Rome, to Constantinople again, in a further effort to communicate with Michael III: *ibid.*, 165.17–27. Dominicus and

147 Lounghis 1980, 192n4, dates the embassy to 871. This is based on the assertion of the *Chron. Salern.*, 107, 107.17–24, that Basil had sent this John to Louis to criticize Louis II's imperial title and the Franks' performance at Bari. BZiel 325 also dates John's mission to 871. But the chronicler's statement is clearly his own confused deduction from the text of Louis' letter which he then supplies. In fact Louis' letter explicitly states that his good treatment of John, which was public knowledge, had occurred *before* Louis II's unidentified ambassadors had been similarly received by Basil I: ". . . quae . . . nos prius erga Iohannem . . . gessisse patescat . . .": 386.18–19. The date of John's embassy therefore depends on the date of the Frankish ambassadors whom Basil had received; it is possible that Louis is referring to an unknown embassy which occurred after Suppo, Anastasius, and Eberhard returned from Constantinople in Spring 870 (R599); but it is most likely that it refers to the 870 embassy, so that John's mission to Louis II occurred after Basil's coup in 867 and no later than 869.

148 When the pope wrote to Hincmar of Rheims on 23 October 867, Nicholas' envoys had already brought back the hostile letter which Michael had sent to Boris. Nicholas makes clearer in this letter that Michael III had not solicited the embassy: *Ep.* 100, 602.32–603.22; this is confirmed by the long preamble in Nicholas' letter to Michael about letting his envoys and his letters gain admission to him: *Ep.* 88, JE 2813, 480.1–45.



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Grimuald lingered at Rome as Nicholas lay dying; when finally Hadrian II succeeded, he renewed their mission to Bulgaria and Dominicus' (and presumably Formosus') embassy to Constantinople, and reissued Nicholas I's letters in his own name: *ibid.*, 175.28–32. The mission apparently went nowhere, and the wording chosen by Hadrian's biographer seems to recognize a failure "in quantum tempestas fluctuosi temporis permittebat, piissimi patris votum pi<us> heres implevit," *ibid.* (where I have corrected the punctuation and misprint). Nonetheless Dominicus and Leopard reached Boris: *ibid.*, 185.4–17.

573 11 December 867, Constantinople (dep.)–overland to the Adriatic, off Dalmatia–Rome. Basil I (Dölger no. 474) and Ignatius (Grumel² no. 529) informed Nicholas I of Ignatius' restoration; commended their envoys Basilius 6 (Pinakas) spatharios, Iohannes 19, metropolitan, and Petrus 14, bishop; and requested Nicholas' judgement between Ignatius and Photius, in order to reestablish unity; Photius' representative Petrus 13, archbishop, and Methodius 4, also traveled with them: Mansi 16.46A–47C and 48D–E. The overland segment is proved by the date of the letter and the fact that the embassy was disrupted by shipwreck while trying to cross the "gulf of Dalmatia" i.e. the central Adriatic, in two imperial warships (*dromones*).[149] Hadrian II refers to the land travel as though it were something unusual: "non solum per mare, sed et per aridam gradiendo," *Ep.* 39, JE 2913, 753.33–4. The trip was inordinately lengthy and the envoys seem to have arrived only after 1 August 868, since on that date Hadrian II complained that Ignatius had not written to him to notify him of his restoration: *Ep.* 38, JE 2909, 748.33–749.3.

574 Between 14 December 867 and March or June 868,[150] Pliska–Rome (arr.). Formosus returned from Bulgaria with Paulus 6, bishop of Populonia and the Bulgarian grandee Petrus 11, whom he presented to Hadrian II: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.185.4–17; cf. R558.

575 Between 14 December 867 and March 10, 868,[151] Moravia–Pannonia–Venice–Rome (arr.). Constantine and Methodius traveled to Rome; they had been summoned by Nicholas I, but arrived when Hadrian II was already on

149 The one carrying Peter of Sardes sank: Nicetas, *V. Ignatii* (BHG 817), *PG*, 105.544C. It was newly built and Peter had selected it for himself: Anastasius Bibliothecarius, *Ep.* 5, 408.15–16; cf. Hadrian II, *Ep.* 40, JE 2914, 758.11–17.

150 Formosus participated in the ordination of the disciples of Constantine and Methodius 3, which presumably occurred on the traditional Ember Days, in 868: *Life of Constantine the Philosopher*, 17, 6, p. 165; tr. pp. 208–10.

151 They concelebrated a service with Anastasius Bibliothecarius and Arsenius, bishop of Orte. This means that they were in Rome before the latter's implication in the abduction and murder of the pope's daughter: *Ann. Bert.*, a. 868, p. 144.



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the throne: Life of Methodius, 6, 1, p. 174; tr. p. 224; Life of Constantine the Philosopher, 17, p. 165; tr. pp. 208–10.

576 867, Regensburg–Pliska–Regensburg. Louis the German sent a bishop to Boris-Michael with a priest and deacons in response to his request for missionaries; they found Bulgaria "full" of Roman missionaries, and with Boris' approval, the Franks returned home: *Ann. Fuld.*, s.a., pp. 65–6; Regino of Prüm, *Chronicon*, a. 868, p. 95; BM 1462g; Dümmler 1887–8, 2: 191.

577 867, Taranto–Africa. Two ships carrying 3000 slaves set out before Bernard's ship left for Alexandria: Bernard, *Itinerarium*, 4, p. 311.

578 867, Taranto–Tripolis. Two more ships carrying 3,000 slaves set out after the Africa-bound vessels and before Bernard's: *ibid.*

579 867, Rome–Monte Gargano – Bari – Taranto – Alexandria – Old Cairo – Samannud–"Maalla" (Mahallet Inshaq?)–Damietta–Tanis–Tell el Farama–"Albara" and "Alchara" (desert oases en route to Gaza)–Gaza–Jerusalem. Pilgrimage of Bernard and his two companions; they crossed the sea aboard a pair of slave ships: *ibid.*; see Ch. 5.1.

580 867, Jerusalem–Monte Aureo–Rome–Mont-Saint-Michel. Bernard took a ship home, which landed him on the west coast of Italy (at Salerno? or even Amalfi? Avril and Gaborit 1967, 293, suspect Agropoli) after a difficult voyage of sixty days: Bernard, *Itin.*, 20, 318; cf. Ch. 5.1.

581 c. 867,[152] Venice–Taranto. Duke Ursus of Venice led a squadron which defeated the Arabs: *Chron. Ven.*, 119.5–8; Amari 1933–9, 1: 521.

582 7 February 868, Constantinople. Basil I sent, presumably from one end of Constantinople to the other, an imperial ship (*ploion*) loaded with grain to replenish the granaries of the monastery of Stoudiou: *Vita Nicolai Studitae* (*BHG* 1365), 31, *PG*, 105.921D–924A.

583 Before February 868,[153] Jerusalem–Rome. Anon. 262, from the Holy City (and others from other major sees of the east, see next), attended the Septuagesima banquet at Rome: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.176.18–177.17.

584 Before February 868, Antioch–Rome. Anon. 263 from Antioch attended a Septuagesima banquet: R583.

585 Before February 868, Alexandria–Rome. Anon. 264 from Egypt attended a Septuagesima banquet: R583.

586 March 868, Constantinople–Sicily (arr.). Basil I sent a fleet with an army to Sicily; they were defeated on land: Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 21.

587 26 June 868, Palermo (dep.)–Gaeta. Hafaga sent his son Mohammad to

152 The chronicler mentions the expedition right after the succession of Basil I ("Is diebus . . .").

153 To guard against possible overcounting (cf. R540–3), the plurals of the *Liber pont.* are taken as only one new person. The Constantinopolitans mentioned there could very well have been other attested travelers, and so are not counted again.



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attack Italy: Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 21–2, who identify the target as Gaeta (slightly corrupted in the Arabic); cf. Amari 1933–9, 1: 486; Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.2: 131 and 214–15.

588 1 August 868, Rome (dep.)–Constantinople. Hadrian II sent letters to Basil I and Ignatius, carried by Theognostus: Hadrian II, *Ep.* 38, JE 2909, 749.31–5.

589 Between 1 August 868 and 10 June 869,[154] Constantinople–Rome (arr.). Spatharios Basilius and Iohannes 19, metropolitan, finally arrived bearing letters of Basil I and Ignatius (R573). Hadrian II received them in Santa Maria Maggiore: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.178.12–179.21.

590 Between 23 September and 21 October 868, Gaeta–Palermo (arr.). Mohammad returned home after a raid: R587.

591 868, Constantinople–Dubrovnik. A Byzantine fleet of 100 *chelandia* under Nicetas Ooryphas relieved the besieged city: Theoph. Cont. 5, 53, 290.7–18; Constantine VII, *De adm. imp.*, 29, 1.126.96–128.3; id., *De them.* 2, 11, 97.26–98.37; cf. Gay 1904, 91–2; Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 13.

592 10 June 869, Rome (dep.)–Bulgaria–Thessalonica–Selymbria–Constantinople. Hadrian II again sent Donatus, bishop of Ostia, to Constantinople, with Marinus 2, cardinal deacon, and Stephanus 3, bishop: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.180.1–7; Nicetas, *V. Ignatii* (*BHG* 817), *PG*, 105.544C; they carried Hadrian's *Ep.* 39–40, JE 2913–14, hence the date. The entire trip took c. three months, since the legates reached Constantinople's outskirts on 17 September (see R594). This was considered a long and arduous journey. They traveled overland through the Bulgarian empire: the trip followed (*penetrantes*) tortuous routes: *Liber pont.* 2.180.8, where the language is suggestive of a difficult trip through mountains; the previous papal biography had used the same verb for travel through Bulgaria (*ibid.*, 165.23–4: "penetrantibus . . . Bulgariam"). Moreover, the Bulgarian emissaries at Constantinople in the spring of 870 expressed Boris-Michael's thanks to the legates for the letters of greeting they had sent to the Bulgarian when they "went through" ("in vestro

154 They seem not yet to have reached Rome in August 868, since Hadrian II apparently knew nothing of their mission when he requested that Ignatius send Theognostus if in future Ignatius should decide to send some individuals to report on arrangements to restore order in the Byzantine church: *Ep.* 38, JE 2909, 749.31–5. The *Liber pont.* situates their arrival before the synod of June 869 which formally condemned Photius (cf. 2.179.22–31). The letter to Ignatius, which traveled together with that to Basil I in which Hadrian II commended these ambassadors, is dated 10 June 869: *Ep.* 39, JE 2913, 754.5; the letter to Basil, *Ep.* 40, JE 2914, 758.3–11, refers to the dangers and obstacles (*offendicula*) which the Byzantine envoys had faced in their haste to reach Rome. It is unclear whether they reached Rome only after an inordinately lengthy trip, or whether the pope had detained them and delayed a response until he could get more information or, possibly, both.



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transitu," *ibid.*, 182.19); the legates responded that they could not have "passed by" without greeting him: *ibid.*, 182.21. Finally, they were met at Thessalonica by Eustathius prōtospatharios, whom Basil had sent to escort them to Selymbria. Ceremonial and administrative procedure dictated that emissaries whom the emperor wished to honor should be met at or near their entrance into Byzantine territory. Had they traveled by sea, they would have entered Byzantine space much earlier.[155] Hincmar of Rheims, who was well informed on developments at Rome, indicates that the legates were awaited back at Rome by 1 March 870: *Ann. Bert.*, a. 869, p. 156. This shows the normally expected travel time.

593 869 autumn, (Corinth?)–Bari–Corinth (arr.). Basil I sent his patrician (Nicetas Ooryphas) to Bari with 400 ships to help Louis II against the Saracens and to receive his daughter, who had previously been affianced. Louis refused to turn her over, and the patrician returned (*rediit*), unhappy, to Corinth: Hincmar, *Ann. Bert.*, a. 869, pp. 164–5. The Byzantines accused the Franks of having abandoned the siege of Bari, contrary to agreement; Louis claimed that, after a long wait, he concluded that the Byzantine fleet was not coming and nothing more could be done "in ipso anno," a clear reference to the end of the campaigning season; he therefore sent most of his army home: *Ep. ad Basilium*, 391.23–9; cf. BZiel 298, with further references. Hincmar's account also implicitly situates the failed meeting after 23 September. Cf. too *Chron. Salern.*, 107, 107.5–24 which, like the Byzantine sources, passes lightly over this incident; cf. above R591 and below R604; Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 17–18 also accept the date of 869, and place this naval movement after the same fleet's operations at Dubrovnik; Gay 1904, 89–97. The late season of operations may explain why Nicetas headed for safe waters in relative proximity. It also explains why Suppo and Anastasius only appear at the end of the council of Constantinople: they arrived in Constantinople well after the papal envoys (R597); indeed they must have been sent to patch things up after this failed meeting. They will therefore have started out in very late autumn 869 at the earliest.

594 17 September 869,[156] Rome–Constantinople (arr.). Donatus of Ostia and

155 Constantine VII, *De cer.* 1, 89, Reiske 398.15–399.20, a 6th-C. memorandum; even in the tense circumstances of Pope Constantine's trip to Constantinople (R73), the pope was welcomed in Sicily by the stratēgos, received at Otranto an imperial *sigillion* commanding the honorable welcome of the papal party throughout the empire, and was welcomed again, on Kea, by the stratēgos of the Karavisianoi.

156 Duchesne detected an error in the *Liber pont.*: the legates could not have entered Constantinople on the impossible date of Sunday 15 September. But his ingenious solution (to correct the date to 25 September) is wrong. Since the text refers to an imperial *natalitium* on Monday,



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his fellow envoys (R592) arrived in Constantinople's European suburbs on Saturday, 17 September; on Sunday, 18 September, they were welcomed with an *adventus* ceremony through the Golden Gate: *Liber pont.* 2.180.13–24.

595 869, Africa–Malta. A few Arab ships occupied Malta briefly; the Byzantines counterattacked: Amari 1933–9, 1: 490; Eickhoff 1966, 193; Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 25.

596 869, Africa, Spain or Sicily–La Camargue. Disaster befell Rotland, archbishop of Arles, in the earthwork fort he had built on the Rhône against Arabs: *Ann. Bert.*, s.a., pp. 165–6; Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 2: 157. Hincmar refers to the place as "in qua portum Sarraceni habere solebant": "where the Arabs customarily had their port." Is he referring to recurring raids, or something more like a seasonal emporium? Even in the former hypothesis, such a traditional landing site might have begun as the latter, on the northern analogy of a Walcheren: Lebecq 1983, 1: 142–4. In the preceding entries written up by Hincmar, he speaks frequently of Viking raiders' landings, but uses no such terminology in that connection. Rotland's measure in any event suggests that Arab visits were now a regular occurrence in this region.

597 Between late 869 and 28 February 870, Benevento–(Thessalonica?)–Constantinople (arr.). Louis II sent Suppo, Evrard and Anastasius Bibliothecarius to put the dynastic marriage project back on track and, probably, to renew cooperation in besieging Bari: Anastasius Bibliothecarius, *Ep.* 5, 410.15–19; *Conc. CP IV*, actio 10, Mansi 16.158B; cf. BM 1242a; BZiel 301. Anastasius visited St. Demetrius' shrine at Thessalonica, either on the way to or from Constantinople presumably during this mission: *Ep.* 16, 439.11–13. The envoys' dispatch in connection with the marriage can only have occurred after the failed meeting of Louis II and Ooryphas in autumn 869 (R593); they are not positively attested in Constantinople until the 10th session of the council.

598 c. 869, Rome–Pannonia–Rome–Pannonia. Hadrian II commended Methodius 3 to Rastislav and Kocelo; Rastislav sent Methodius back to Rome for consecration as bishop; he returned once more: Life of Methodius, 8, 1–17, pp. 174–7; tr. pp. 225–8.

599 After 28 February 870, Constantinople (dep.)–(Thessalonica?)–Dyrrachium–Siponto–?Venosa–Rome. Suppo, Evrard, and Anastasius (R597) attended the

Duchesne identified the anniversary with that of Basil I, which occurred shortly after 23 September, and which therefore was to be dated to 26 September (*ibid.*, 188n32 and 35). We now know, however, that Basil's son Leo VI was born on 19 September 866 (*DOC* 3.2: 475), which fell on a Monday in 869. The ceremony which prevented Basil from welcoming the papal ambassadors was young Leo's third birthday, and the text of *Liber pont.* is to be corrected to "xv<iii> dies septembris".



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final session of the council of Constantinople: Mansi 16.158B; shortly thereafter they left, before the papal legates; they arrived at Dyrrachium by land, for Anastasius states that "just like" his own party, the papal group "boarded ship" there ("simili modo navem ingressi"); they sailed across the Adriatic, landed at Siponto, and traveled overland to Louis II, with whom they may be attested at Venosa on 3 April (R602); subsequently Anastasius traveled to Rome: Anastasius Bibliothecarius, Glosses on the Council of Constantinople, p. 171.

600 Before March 870, Pliska–Constantinople. Petrus 11 went to Constantinople: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.182.12–184.23.

601 After 2 March 870, Constantinople (dep.)–Dyrrachium–(Ancona)–Croatia. Donatus and his fellow legates left Constantinople; they traveled overland, escorted by Theodosius spatharios; they boarded ship at Dyrrachium and sailed for Ancona but, after a few days, they encountered Slav pirates, manifestly as they worked their way north along the Dalmatian sea lane, heading for the crossover point to Ancona. They fell into the hands of Domagoi, duke of the Croats; the *Liber pont.* insinuates that the incident reflected Basil's hidden anger over their opposition to Constantinople's pretensions to Bulgaria: 2.184.24–31; Anastasius Bibl., Glosses, p. 171. In 871, Hadrian II criticized Basil I for not having protected his ambassadors on this occasion: even Michael III had always equipped earlier papal ambassadors with a suitable guide (*praevius*): *Ep.* 41, JE 2943, 759.25–760.11, implying that they were not traveling in a warship: "nullo imperii vestri fulti praesidio." Cf. Louis II's criticism of the same incident, *Ep. ad Basilium*, 392.11–15. They presumably were bearing the letter of Ignatius in the name of the council: Grumel² no. 533.

602 3 April 870, Constantinople–Venosa (arr.). When his envoys returned from Constantinople, Louis II rewarded Suppo with a land gift at Angilberga's request; it implies a travel time of at most thirty-three days from Constantinople. However, the surviving diploma (D L II no. 50) shows discrepancies with the usual chancery practice of Louis II and appears to be a 9th- or 10th-C. pseudo-original which has been at least partially falsified; the seal seems to be of Louis the Pious. The extent of the falsification is unclear; the editor expresses no opinion about a possibly genuine model. The place of emission appears in a genuine original of 25 May 869, and on two other diplomas of 3 June 870 (D L II nos. 49 and 51–2) which the most recent editor has equally classified as falsified, noting particularly the location at Venosa. The latter nonetheless differ in provenance from D L II no. 50. Louis II was in any case in that area that summer (BZiel 309).

603 Before 29 August 870, Sicily–Malta (arr.). Arab reinforcements from Sicily arrived in Malta and definitively defeated the Byzantine counterattack:



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Amari 1933–9, 1: 490; Eickhoff 1966, 193; Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 25.

604 870 autumn, Constantinople–Bari. A Byzantine expeditionary corps headed by Nicetas Ooryphas arrived after the bulk of Frankish troops had left the siege of Bari; an attack failed; Bari finally fell on 2 or 3 February 871: Louis II, *Ep. ad Basilium*, 391.7–29; 392.15–17; 393.343–38; Theoph. Cont. 5, 55, 292.20–293.24; Constantine VII, *De adm. imp.*, 29, 1.128.103–112; id., *De them.* 2, 11, 98.33–42; Gay 1904, 91–8; Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 18–19; von Falkenhausen 1978, 20; Eickhoff 1966, 215–16; BZiel 314–16. Right from the beginning, the Frankish and Byzantine emperors quarreled about the respective role of each other's forces in the final victory (Louis II, *Ep. ad Basilium*, 391.7–10); the Byzantine and western sources reflect these differences.

605 Autumn? 870, Constantinople–(Bari?)–Adriatic Slavs (arr.). Another detachment of the main Byzantine force, commanded by Hadrianus, "loci servator" of Nicetas Ooryphas, attacked the Adriatic coastal territory of the "Frankish" Slavs, who were then deployed outside Bari, supposedly as a reprisal for the attack on the papal emissaries; they destroyed several *castra* and took numerous prisoners, whose restitution Louis II requested: *Ep. ad Basilium*, 392.15–30; cf. Gay 1904, 91–7; BZiel 314.

606 22 December 870, (Constantinople–Dyrrachium)–Croatia–Rome (arr.). Donatus of Ostia and his fellow envoys finally arrived home from Constantinople, after captivity in Domagoi's hands: *Liber pont.*, Duchesne, 2.184.29–185.3; R601.

607 c. 870? Bulgaria–Rome. Grimuald, bishop of Bomarzo, was expulsed from Bulgaria; he returned a failure, without papal permission and exceedingly rich: *ibid.*, 185.18–30; date: 190n61.

608 Before February 871? c. 876? southern Italy (Otranto?)–Carthage. Arabs, apparently under Emir Sawdan, ravaged southern Italy;[157] the entire population of a town whose name is corrupt was (enslaved) and transported to Carthage: Skylitzes, *Synopsis hist.*, Basil I, 28, 151.19–26 (an interpolation of 4 MSS). The problematic reading is Ἰοντόν, which is, however, fairly easily corrected phonetically and palaeographically to (acc.) Ὑδρεντόν, the medieval form of Otranto (e.g., Constantine VII, *De adm. imp.*, 27, 1.116.48).

157 If the identification with Sawdan is correct, this operation would have occurred before the fall of the emirate of Bari. Otherwise, it was perhaps connected with the early stages of the great raid of August 871 (R612). Amari 1933–9, 1: 581, accepts the account of Sawdan's liberation as found, e.g. in *Chron. Ven.* 123.6–10, and subsequent attacks based in Taranto; Amari seems to place it in 875. *Chron. Ven.* converges with the (rather confused) Byzantine sources. The place of Sawdan's liberation in the sequence of events implies that it occurred c. 876.



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609 Between 2 February and 13 August 871, Benevento (dep.)–Constantinople. Louis II sent with Auprand the famous letter to Basil I about the imperial title and the campaign in southern Italy; it may have been composed by Anastasius Bibliothecarius. Louis asked Basil to send Auprand back before eight days had passed: Louis, *Ep. ad Basilium*, pp. 385–94; BZiel 325.

610 Before August 871, Africa–Salerno. The African Arab Ḥarrani, apparently a merchant, met Waifar, prince of Salerno, in the town market, according to the 10th-C. *Chron. Salern.*, 110–11, 122.19–123.16; cf. Amari 1933–9, 1: 526–7; Citarella 1993, 277n110 and the reservations about the details of the story, at least, in Cilento 1971, 92–3. The traditional assumption that Ḥarrani was in Salerno on business is probably right: for *forum* as "market" in this text, cf. *Chron. Salern.*, 79, 77.1–2. If the sometimes inventive chronicler is using reliable material here, this throws precious light on commercial contacts across the Mediterranean at the height of the raids on the Italian mainland: those commercial contacts were considered so commonplace as to be rarely mentioned.

611 Before August 871, Amalfi–Africa. The Arab merchant Ḥarrani asked Florus, one of the Amalfitans who had come to Africa (presumably as merchants) to alert Prince Waifar of the impending Arab invasion: R610 and R612.

612 Between 13 August and 17 September, Africa–Italy (Taranto? arr.). A large Arab force landed in southern Italy, probably at Taranto; they devastated the area of Salerno, Naples, Benevento and Capua: Erchempert, *Hist. Lang. Ben.*, 35, 247.29–31; Amari 1933–9, 1: 526–9; Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 50; BZiel 329.

613 Before November 871, Constantinople–Rome (arr.). Basil I sent a letter with Ignatius' envoy Theognostus, abbot and skevophylax, expressing concern that he had not heard about the safe return of Hadrian II's envoys of 869–70 to Rome (R606), and supporting Ignatius' request for three dispensations from the papal condemnations: Dölger no. 488 (notwithstanding which there is no mention of Byzantine envoys accompanying Donatus' group), Mansi 16.203A–204A; Ignatius sent a similar letter with Theognostus, with different gifts, emphasizing Byzantium's successes and requesting the dispensations: Grumel² no. 534, Mansi 16.204A–206A. Cf. next.

614 10 November 871, Rome (dep.)–Constantinople. Hadrian II answered Basil I's letter; his legates Donatus of Ostia etc. had returned with delay, after suffering much danger, pillage and the slaughter of their men, so that everyone protested against such an experience, never before known under any emperor, including Michael III; he complained that Basil had allowed Ignatius to consecrate a bishop in Bulgaria; he refused Ignatius' three



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requests,[158] despite Theognostus' best efforts to persuade him otherwise: *Ep.* 41, JE 2943, pp. 759–61 (to Basil I).

615 871, Jerusalem–?Cologne (arr.). News reached the author of the *Annales Xantenses* of Arab depredations of Christian monks at Jerusalem: *Ann. Xant.*, s.a., 30.10–18.

616 c. 6 January 872, Constantinople–Regensburg (arr.). Basil I's ambassadors, Anons. 271–2, brought gifts and a letter to Louis the German. The gifts included a large crystal reliquary containing a piece of the True Cross. Louis received them with honor and sent them home with an appropriate answer, apparently before March, judging from the narrative sequence: *Ann. Fuld.*, s.a., p. 75; Dümmler 1887–8, 2: 337; BM 1490c.

617 Between c. 6 January and March 872, Regensburg (dep.)–Constantinople. Basil I's envoys apparently headed home before March: see preceding.

618 May 872, Crete–Dalmatia (including Brač). Cretan Arabs pillaged some Dalmatian towns; Slavs killed Venetians sent to scout the Arabs: *Chron. Ven.*, 119.17–120.12; Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 1: 53.

619 Between 14 December 872 and May 873, Rome. Pope John VIII wrote to the empress Angilberga, claiming that he was building dromons and other ships along with "cetera vasa bellica et apparatus," with which he would defend his territories better than the Gaetans were doing: *Fragmentum Registri*, 11, JE 2966, p. 279; BZiel 367. Was this connected with the stationing of Byzantine dromons on the Roman coast (R678)?

620 Between 14 December 872 and May 873, Arab lands and Byzantine territory–Terracina. John VIII enjoined Amalfi's rulers to capture forty Arabs who had escaped and taken refuge on Mt. Circea near Terracina after they had

158 The original of Hadrian's response to Ignatius' letter has not survived. The fragment of a letter to Ignatius (JE 2944) preserved only in Greek translation is generally reckoned to be a response to another letter, because the first word of the extract (ἔγραψας: *MGH Epist.* 6.762.10) seems to imply that Ignatius had written to Hadrian explicitly stating that he had expulsed the Roman clergy from Bulgaria, and there is no such statement in Anastasius' translation of Ignatius' letter of 871, R613. However, it has been noted that otherwise the letter fits in some way with JE 2943 (*ibid.*, 762n1; cf. Hergenröther 1867–9, 2: 165–6, whose position I accept). If this letter in fact responded to another and presumably later communication of Ignatius, it was written between 10 November 871 and December 872. But it is important to remember that this is a translation and an extract. Only the first word argues against it being an extract from the lost letter which accompanied JE 2943. If the extractor changed or adopted the first word (cf. his lemma "Εἶτα ἐγράφη Ἀδριανοῦ . . . ἐπιστολή . . ."), or merely dropped the word "οὐκ" ("did not"), the extract makes perfect sense as the antecedent to JE 2943. I believe that this is most probably the correct solution; Grumel² no. 535 should therefore be suppressed.



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been defeated "by the ships of our Greeks' prior (*dudum*) to May 873: *Frag. Reg.*, 5, JE 2960, 276.7–11. This was possibly the same engagement as that in which the Byzantines liberated Christian prisoners of Arabs, only to sell them to Sardinians: see R625.

621 Between 14 December and May 873, Rome (dep.)–Pliska. John VIII wrote to Michael-Boris threatening to depose Ignatius if "Graecorum perfidia" did not leave Bulgaria which, as ancient documents proved, was under Rome's jurisdiction: *Frag. Reg.*, 7, JE 2962, p. 277.

622 c. 872–4, Constantinople–Bulgaria–Danube–Rome. The pilgrim Blaise of Amorion headed to Rome via Bulgaria; he was sold into slavery, then freed; he went by boat up the Danube toward Rome and was mistaken for a merchant by pirates, probably near the Iron Gates. He escaped, returned to Bulgaria, and finally reached Rome with a bishop traveling there "on pilgrimage": see Ch. 7.3.

623 873, second half, Constantinople–Otranto (arr.). As Louis II advanced to subjugate Benevento, a Byzantine force under Gregory, patrician, landed at Otranto to help Duke Adalchis, who had agreed to bring Benevento under Byzantine rule: *Ann. Bert.*, a. 872, p. 192; Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 51, with the Greek sources; von Falkenhausen 1978, 20; BZiel 375.

624 November 873, Constantinople–Regensburg (arr.). Basil I sent Metropolitan Agatho to Louis the German to "renew their earlier alliance (*amicitia*)": *Ann. Fuld.*, s.a., p. 81; BM 1498e.

625 873, Rome–Sardinia. Pope John VIII wrote to the Sardinian leaders (*principes*), urging them not to sell as slaves prisoners liberated from the Arabs; the Greeks seem to have freed them from the Arabs, and certainly sold them in Sardinia. John may be referring to the victorious naval engagement which occurred prior to May 873 (R620). The phrasing implies that this was an ongoing problem: *Frag. Reg.*, 27, JE 2983, 289.2–10.

626 873? Constantinople–Rome? Constantinople–Italy (Rome?). Photius wrote to Anastasius Bibliothecarius, thanking him for his help, even if it came belatedly: *Ep.* 170, 2.45–6; the date is merely a guess.

627 c. 873, Constantinople–Aegean; Corinth–Patras. With a fleet from Crete, consisting of twenty-seven *kombaria* and a like number of *saktourai* and *galeai*, Said raided the Aegean, reaching even Proconnesus, and taking many slaves; Nicetas Ooryphas' Greek fire destroyed twenty Arab ships; subsequently he transported his ships by night over the isthmus of Corinth and surprised the Cretan fleet which had been raiding Methone, Pylos, Patras, and the Corinth area: Theoph. Cont. 5, 60–1, 299.13–301.20; Eickhoff 1966, 213, places this in 868, against which see Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 53–5. The first attacks or a related raid may have captured a priest of



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Mitylene who was delivered thanks to St. Nicholas: *Laudatio Nicolai* (*BHG* 1352z etc.), 42–4, 1.171.11–173.19; cf. *ibid.*, 2.295–6, on the date and author of the work.

628 July 875, Taranto or Crete?–Grado–Comacchio (arr.). Arab raiders besieged Grado for two days before the Venetians drove them off; they sacked Comacchio: *Chron. Ven.*, 121.16–22; Andreas of Bergamo, *Historia*, 18, 229.23.

629 875, Rome–"Arabs" (Sicily or Africa?). Zacharias 4, Arab physician, who had lived at Rome for at least 20 years (R487) returned to the Arabs and apostasized: John Hymmonides, *Vita Gregorii Magni* (*BHL* 3641), 4, 86, *PL*, 75.233A.

630 875–7, Byzantine empire–west Frankish court (Compiègne?). Anons. 281–2, "former inhabitants of Greece," took up residence at Charles the Bald's court: Heiric of Auxerre, in his *Commendatio* of his verse *Vita S. Germani Autissiodorensis* (*BHL* 3458), *MGH Poet.* 3.429.13–26, esp. 17–23; cf. Jeauneau 1979, 15.

631 c. 876, ?Constantinople–Benevento, Salerno, and Capua. Gregory *baioulos* and prōtospatharios attempted to coax the princes of Benevento, Salerno, and Capua to cooperate against the Arabs: he sent repeatedly (or transmitted from Constantinople) envoys, Anons. 279–80: Erchempert, *Hist. Lang. Ben.*, 39, 249.18–20; see von Falkenhausen 1978, 20–1 and 176, no. 1; Dölger no. 495.

632 c. 876, Venice–Arab world. The doges discovered that some Venetians were buying slaves from "pirates and bandits" and transporting them across the sea ("transfrectantes"), and decided to forbid slave-trading ("ne quis de mancipiis commercium faciant"). Whether this prohibition was meant to be general, or limited only to the victims of piracy is unclear. Whatever the intent, the policy failed: Andreas Dandolo, *Chronica*, 8, 5, 158.29–159.2. The report is lacking in the *Chron. Ven.* A 10th-C. doge also looked back on the decree against slave trading as an abject failure: *Decretum* of 960, *Venedig*, no. 13, p. 19: "Sed de grauitate maligni et inuidi hostis ista constitutio corrupte extitit et transgressa."

633 c. 876, Venice–Neretva river. At Domagoj's death, Doge Ursus signed a treaty with his Slavs but attacked the Narrentani: *Chron. Ven.*, 123.11–14.

634 After Christmas 876, Bari–Constantinople. Gregory *primikērios* sent the gastald of Benevento and other grandees of Bari, Anons. 276–8, to Constantinople to swear an oath of fidelity to the emperor: von Falkenhausen 1978, 21.

635 876–7, Venice–(Constantinople)? Pope John VIII had heard that Petrus 15, bishop of Jesolo, was about to depart on a mission to Constantinople; on 24 November and on 1 December 876, John wrote that if he hadn't left, he



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would not be leaving before February 877, given the Venetian sailing custom: *Registrum*, 17–21, JE 3068–71; 3067, pp. 14–19.

636 c. 876–7, Dalmatia–Umag–Novigrad–"Sipiares"–Rovinj. Slavs and Dalmatians attacked Istria; with thirty ships, Doge Ursus sailed to Grado and then to Istria, and destroyed the Slav raiders: *Chron. Ven.*, 122.10–123.5.

637 9 April 877, Rome (dep.)–Gaeta, Amalfi, and Naples. John VIII urged Decibilis and John *hypati* to continue to shun agreements with "pagans," i.e. Arabs; he sent like admonitions to Amalfi and Naples in his efforts to unite the feuding Campanians against the Arabs encamped on the Garigliano: *Reg.*, 39–42, JE 3087; 3089–90; cf. 3087, pp. 38–41.

638 17 April 877, Rome (dep.)–Benevento–Bari(?). John VIII urged Aio, bishop of Benevento, to work to end the treaty between the Arabs and the Neapolitans; he entrusted to Aio a letter to be transmitted to Gregory, imperial *paidagōgos*, commander of the Byzantine forces in the Beneventan region: *Reg.*, 46, JE 3091, pp. 44–5.

639 27 May 877, Rome–Venice. John VIII summoned the doge of Venice to a synod scheduled for Ravenna on 24 June 877, to end the quarrel concerning the patriarchs of Grado and Aquileia: *Reg.*, 57–60, JE 3100–3, pp. 52–6.

640 May? June? 877, Rome–Traetto (Amalfi–Rome). John VIII traveled to Traetto to attempt to end the treaty between the Neapolitans and Arabs: *Reg.*, 61, JE 3106, 55.8–10; shortly thereafter his envoys, abbots John and Anastasius, struck a deal in Amalfi: in return for 10,000 mancosi per year (the Amalfitans later would claim the price was 12,000 mancosi), an Amalfitan squadron would defend the coasts of Rome from Traetto to Civitavecchia; they did not deliver: *Reg.*, 79, JE 3126, 75.20–7; cf. *Reg.* 81, JE 3127, 81.30–5; Schwarz 1978, 29.

641 877, before 23 October,[159] Constantinople (dep.)–Rome. Basil I wrote to John VIII, asking him to send certain named legates to resolve lingering dissensions in the Byzantine church. The letter is known only from John's response (R651), which makes no allusion to any envoy who might have accompanied the letter: John VIII, *Reg.*, 69, JE 3135, p. 64; Dölger no. 496.

642 From 23 October 877 to 16 April 878, Constantinople–Rome. News of Ignatius' death had not yet reached Rome on the latter date, since the pope wrote to him then: R651.

643 After 26 October 877, Constantinople–Antioch–(Jerusalem)–Alexandria. Photius wrote to the eastern patriarchs informing them of his restoration: Grumel[2] no. 542–3.

644 Between 26 October 877 and September or October 878, Ravenna

159 The letter did not mention the death of Ignatius, and presumably was sent before that date; it certainly arrived before John's response on 16 April 878: R651.



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(dep.)–Constantinople. John VIII, archbishop of Ravenna, wrote to Photius apologizing for his earlier bad conduct: Photius, *Ep.* 267, 2.218; Grumel² no. 547.

645 Between 877 and 881,[160] Venice–Constantinople. At Basil I's request, Doge Ursus of Venice sent twelve bells for Basil's Nea Church in the Great Palace: *Chron. Ven.*, 126.13–16.

646 Between 877 and 885,[161] Oria–Constantinople–Oria. Basil I summoned Sephatiah, rabbi of Oria; he returned home with a chrysobull: Ahimaz, *Chronicle*, tr. Salzman, pp. 70–3.

647 Before 878 (c. 864?), Croatia–Constantinople. Sedesclav, from the family of Trpimir, prince of the Croats, had fled to Constantinople, perhaps in connection with Domagoj's (864–76) accession. See R655.

648 After April 878, Jerusalem–Rome (arr.). Arrival of monks David, Sabas, and Theodosius, envoys of Theodosius II, patriarch of Jerusalem: R664.

649 (Shortly?) before 16 April 878, Pliska–Rome (arr.). Ursus delivered a letter from Boris-Michael, king of the Bulgarians, to the pope: John VIII, *Reg.*, 70, JE 3132, 65.14–15; cf. next.

650 c. 16 (or 28?) April 878, Rome (dep.)–Constantinople–Bulgaria. Pope John VIII wrote to King Boris-Michael and others, urging them to flee Greek errors and return to St. Peter: *Reg.*, 66–7 and 70, JE 3130–2, pp. 58–62; 65–6. The papal legates, bishops Paul of Ancona and Eugenius of Ostia, intended to travel first to Constantinople, and from there to Bulgaria and back, since John asked Basil I to appoint a capable man to take them there and back: *Reg.*, 69, JE 3135, 64.39–65.6. The new route to Bulgaria seems to fit with the absence of communications during the winter of 877–8 (cf. R642) and, perhaps, turmoil from the siege of Syracuse (R654). The large pack of letters for Constantinople and Bulgaria probably also included *Reg.*, 72, JE 3118, p. 67, dated in the manuscript as "iiii kal. mart.," which the editor, with wide support, emends to "iiii kal. madii," i.e. 28 April.

651 c. 16 (or 28?) April 878, Rome–Constantinople–(Bulgaria). John VIII responded to Basil I's letter of 877 (R641), and sent a bundle of letters to Constantinople, indicating that the news of Ignatius' death the preceding 23 October had not yet reached Rome: *Reg.*, 69, JE 3135, pp. 64–5; John also wrote to Basil about the ongoing violation of the privilege of the Roman church; his ambassadors, bishops Paul and Eugenius, would communicate more orally; he also requested "help" (*ops*): *Reg.*, 72, JE 3118, p. 67; for the

160 Work on the foundations of the new church began in 877 or early 878: Jenkins 1965, 100. Ursus died in 881.

161 Oria came under Byzantine control after December 876, and no later than 885: von Falkenhausen 1978, 22–3; Ahimaz was already home when he learned of Basil's death: Chronicle, p. 85.



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date, R650. Basil was to help these legates also reach Bulgaria; letters were also sent to Ignatius and all Greek bishops and clerics in Bulgaria, threatening excommunication if they did not leave within thirty days: *Reg.*, 68 and 71, JE 3133–4, pp. 62–3 and 66–7.

652 11 May 878, Naples–Rome–Genoa–Arles (arr.). John VIII fled Rome for Frankland: Lohrmann 1968, 258. He and his party traveled in three dromons, which came up from Naples and took him, via Genoa, to Arles: Auxilius, *In defensionem ordinationis*, 4, p. 63; cf. Lohrmann 1968, 258–9 with n119. Whether these were Byzantine or Neapolitan warships is unclear. The desperate maneuver must be viewed in the context of the fall of Syracuse.

653 c. May 878, Constantinople–Monemvasia (arr.)–(Sicily). The fleet under Hadrian that Basil I had sent to relieve Syracuse in 878 stalled at Monemvasia, awaiting favorable winds: Theoph. Cont. 5, 69–70, 309.20–312.3; cf. Amari 1933–9, 1: 540–1.

654 c. May 878, Syracuse–Africa. Iohannes 20, and his sons Petrus 16 and Antoninus, among the many slaves taken during the conquest of Syracuse, went to Africa, feigned conversion to Islam in Africa and achieved office under the ruler "Abraches," and were martyred: *Syn. CP*, 72.1–74.3; cf. Amari 1933–9, 1: 653–4. According to the Greek source, the emir was the Aghlabid Ibrāhīm II ibn Ahmad (875–902); the devil ("Beliar"), i.e. Ibrāhīm, wished Antoninus to head one of his treasuries (*genikos*), and Peter, the other (*sakellarios*). But these Muslims were crypto-Christians; when they refused to convert, they were executed, along with their father and an aged Christian named Andrew, who appears in this abridged passion without warning. At a date which fits this story (891/2), Arabic evidence shows that the emir did offer the head of his financial department (dīwān al-Ḫarāǧ) to someone identified as Sawāda al-Naṣrānī, on condition that he convert. The official refused and was cut in half and crucified: Talbi 1966, 286.

655 878, Constantinople–Croatia (Klis?). With Byzantine support, Sedesclav returned to take control of the Croats: *Chron. Ven.*, 125.9–11; cf. Fine 1983, 257.

656 878, May?[162] Rome–Campania or Palermo? Pope John VIII paid a tribute of 25,000 mancosi to the Arabs not to attack Rome: Schwarz 1978, 29.

657 c. 878–9,[163] Constantinople–Ravenna. Photius answered the apology of John, archbishop of Ravenna (R644), with some sarcasm: *Ep.* 267, 2.218; Grumel[2] no. 547.

658 c. 878–80, Constantinople–Venice. Byzantine envoys, Anons. 283–4,

162 Amari 1933–9, 1: 593.

163 The letter was sent before knowledge of John's death reached Constantinople, which should have been fairly soon, given the frequent contacts with the Veneto.



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brought gifts and the dignity of prōtospatharios to Doge Ursus: *Chron. Ven.*, 125.12–13; Dandolo, *Chronica*, 8, 5, 160.10–14, claims furthermore that Ursus sent the bells (R645) to Basil, with thanks; Dölger no. 501.

659 Early 879? Constantinople–Jerusalem. Photius wrote to Patriarch Elias, sending him help for the Church of the Resurrection and probably requesting his presence at a council: Grumel[2] no. 549.

660 c. April 879, Constantinople–Bari or Otranto (arr.)–Benevento–Capua–Rome. Envoys of Basil I, Anon. 285, and Theodore, bishop of Patras (Nicetas, *V. Ignatii*, *PG*, 105.572C–D), had already arrived where Gregory primikērios was; Gregory wrote to John VIII asking if he were ready to receive these ambassadors for the unity of the church: John's reply, *Reg.*, 177, JE 3239, p. 142 (which must be dated to April);[164] cf. *Reg.*, 176, JE 3238, 142.2–3. The envoys actually did arrive in Rome, as is clear from John's response on 16 August to the letters they brought (R669), and they presumably followed the route negotiated for them (R662–3). Given the negotiations which preceded the final stage of their trip, they can scarcely have reached Rome before May.

661 April 879, Bari?–Capua–Rome (arr.). Gregory primikērios' envoy, Stephanus 4, traveled to Rome overland: see preceding and following items.

662 April 879, Rome (dep.)–Capua–(Bari?). John VIII thanked Pandenulf, count of Capua, for sending Stephanus 4 kandidatos safely to him with a letter from Gregory primikērios. John VIII now sent him back and requested that Pandenulf do the same for the Byzantine ambassadors who were about to cross his territory en route to Rome: clearly Gregory did not want the Constantinopolitan envoys to risk a sea trip at this particular time: *Reg.*, 176, JE 3238, pp. 141–2.

663 April 879, Bari?–Rome (arr.). Gregory primikērios wrote to John VIII urging him to come to meet him in southern Italy; John assured Gregory he had intended to do so, but he had just learned that the Frankish king was coming to Rome with a huge army – which was not true, or at least not certain. Gregory should send the envoys from Constantinople ahead to Rome, via Benevento and Capua, since John had already made the arrangements for their safe passage: Nicetas, *V. Ignatii*, *PG*, 105.572C–D; John VIII, *Reg.*, 207–11, JE 3271–5, pp. 166–90.

664 2 May 879, Rome (dep.)–Jerusalem. John VIII sent back to Patriarch Theodosius of Jerusalem Theodosius' envoys, the monks Theodosius, David, and Sabas, who had been delayed (see R648), with a lesser gift than he would have wished: *Reg.*, 178, JE 3242, 143.8–17.

164 Cf. von Falkenhausen 1978, 176, no. 2, who assigns Gregory primikērios' letter to before April, since the pope's reply can be dated to that month.



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665 Before 21 May (c. 2 May) 879,[165] Rome (dep.)–Nin or Klis–Pliska. John VIII wrote to Boris-Michael and his advisors, again, to return to St. Peter: *Reg.*, 182–3, JE 3246–7; pp. 146–7. At the same time John wrote to Sedesclav, count of the Slavs (i.e. Croats) asking him to help his envoy reach Bulgaria. This reveals his route: *Reg.*, 184, JE 3248, p. 147. The tensions with Byzantium presumably explain why Constantinople was avoided in this effort to communicate with Bulgaria.

666 8 June 879, Rome (dep.)–Nin–Pliska. John VIII invited Boris-Michael to return to St. Peter, and commended his legate, the priest Iohannes 21: *Reg.*, 192, JE 3261, pp. 153–4. On 7 and 8 June, John wrote to Branomir, duke of the Croats, the bishop-elect of Nin and the faithful of Croatia, and requested help for John's trip to the Bulgarians. The route again avoided Byzantium (cf. R665): *Reg.*, 190–1 and 206, JE 3259; 3255; and 3260, pp. 152–3; 157.

667 June or July 879, Rome (dep.)–Moravia. John VIII wrote to Methodius 3: *Reg.*, 201, 161.14–15.

668 c. June or July 879,[166] Pliska–Rome (arr.)–Pliska. John VIII thanked Boris-Michael for his ambassador "Functicus," i.e. Sundicus (Sondoke), and gifts and urged him to return to St. Peter: *Reg.* 198, JE 3265, p. 159.

669 16 August (dep.), Rome–before 17 November 879 (arr.), Constantinople.[167] John VIII sent JE 3271–6 with his new envoy Petrus 17, cardinal priest, criticized his envoys who were already in Constantinople for neglecting his orders, and restored Photius to communion: *Reg.*, 207–11, JE 3271–5, pp. 166–90.

670 December 879, Rome (dep.)–Amalfi. John VIII wrote to the Amalfitans threatening anathema and urging them to end their alliance with the Muslims; he promised to renew his subsidy for the defense of Rome, and pay an additional 1,000 mancosi as well as their customs duties in the papal port for the present year; otherwise he would close off access to all the places in which they usually traded: *Reg.*, 250, JE 3308, pp. 218–19.

671 879, before 19 October? Bari[168]–Naples. John VIII congratulated Byzantine officers Gregory spatharios, Theophylact tourmarchos and Diogenes

165 The letters are dated "ut supra." The preceding dated letter is *Reg.*, 178, of 2 May. In *Reg.* 190, 152.30–5, the pope told Sedesclav's murderer that he had celebrated a mass for his and his people's well-being on 21 May 879, implying that he already knew about Sedesclav's fall at that date.

166 Sundicus' mission may have been in response to that of May 879 (R665) or that of 878 (R650). The letter occurs in John's Register after one of 14 June and before one of 19 May (sic).

167 The papal letters supply the departure date; Peter attended the earliest dated (second) session of the council at Constantinople on 17 November: Mansi 17.393C.

168 Schwarz 1978, 29.



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komēs on their victory against the Arabs off Naples; he complains that they have yet to come see him aboard a few dromons, to receive blessings and defend Rome: *Reg.*, 245, JE 3303, p. 214; the naval units are the first signs of a Byzantine counter-offensive after the fall of Syracuse: von Falkenhausen 1978, 21.

672 After 13 March 880, Constantinople (dep.)–Rome. Papal legates departed for Rome after they subscribed to the last session of the Photian council on this date: *Conc. CP a. 879–80*, Mansi 17.520B. They carried letters from Basil I (Dölger no. 502) and Photius (Grumel² no. 553). That John expressed on 13 August his satisfaction about the recent council suggests that his legates had reached Rome by then (R679). They probably also carried Photius, *Ep.* 272–4, 2.221–4, Grumel² nos. 554–6.

673 880, June or earlier, Moravia–Rome (arr.). Methodius 3 was certainly at Rome by June for an investigation of his orthodoxy: John VIII, *Reg.*, 255, JE 3319, pp. 222–4; cf. Life of Methodius, 12, 1–6, pp. 177–8; tr. pp. 232–3.

674 Before August 880, Antioch–Africa–Sicily (Palermo?). Elias 1 traveled overland from Antioch to Africa, where he got a ship for Sicily; the first place mentioned is Palermo, which suggests that he landed there: *V. Eliae iun.*, 23–5 (*BHG* 580), 32.411–38.500; for the date, which was shortly before the next item, *ibid.*, pp. 148–51.

675 Before August 880, Africa? and Sicily–Kephalenia and Zakynthos–Methone. Arabs raided Kephalenia and Zakynthos in sixty very large ships (sixteen ships: Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 96), collecting many slaves with impunity, while the Byzantine fleet from Constantinople remained inactive at Methone. After reinforcements arrived, the Byzantines, commanded by Nasar, surprised the Arabs, burned or captured their ships, and enslaved the Arabs. Nasar brought the captured ships back to the church of Methone as victory offerings, informed the emperor and awaited further instructions: Theoph. Cont. 5, 62–3, 302.1–304.19; Skylitzes, *Syn. hist.*, Basil I, 33, 154.10–46; cf. Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 96–7; Eickhoff 1966, 236–8.

676 Before August 880, Constantinople–Methone–Sicily–Kephalenia and Zakynthos–Methone. Basil I sent Nasar's fleet to oppose the Arab attacks on the Ionian islands and continue a counter-offensive against the African advances; desertions had delayed Nasar at Methone; reinforced by Mardaites and Peloponnesians, he launched a successful sneak attack, R675.

677 Before 11 August 880, Methone–Reggio di Calabria (arr.)–Constantinople. Nasar received the command from Basil to pursue his advantage and sailed to Sicily with forty-five (*V. Eliae iun.*) or 169 ships (Ibn Idhari); in subsequent raiding, Nasar captured a large number of ships (*karamia*, i.e. *karabia*) transporting all kinds of merchandise and especially (olive) oil, whose price collapsed as a consequence; off Reggio he engaged and defeated a Palermitan



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fleet; after supporting land operations in southern Italy, he headed back to Constantinople with his booty: Theoph. Cont. 5, 64, 304.20–305.17; Skylitzes, *Syn. hist.*, Basil I, 33, 155.46–156.64; *Cambridge Chronicle*, tr. Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.2: 100 and *Kleinchroniken*, 45, 24b, 1.334; *V. Eliae iun.*, 25, 36.478–38.500; Ibn al Athir, A.H. 266, tr. Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.2: 137; Ibn Idhari, *Bayan al-Mugrib*, tr. Amari 2.1.16–17; Eickhoff 1966, 237–8; Kislinger 1995.

678 Before 13 August 880, Byzantine empire–Rome. Basil I had sent a number of dromons to defend Rome from the Arabs (cf. R619?): John VIII, *Reg.*, 259, JE 3323, 229.26–7. Since the pope still needed Byzantine warships in 879 (R671), the dromons presumably arrived in 880.

679 13 August 880, Rome (dep.)–Constantinople. John VIII rejoiced at the reconciliation of Rome and Constantinople, and thanked Basil I for leaving dromons in the papal service to defend the lands of St. Peter; for restoring to Rome the monastery of Sts. Sergius (and Bacchus) in Constantinople, and also Bulgaria: *Reg.*, 259, JE 3323; 229.23–31; cf. C. Mango, *ODB* 3: 1879; R678.

680 Between Christmas 880 and 31 August 881, western Europe–Jerusalem–western Europe. Patriarch Elias of Jerusalem presumed that the many travelers (Anons. 291–2) traveling between the two places had already alerted westerners to the tribulations of the church in the Holy Land: *Ep.* ed. d'Achery, *Spicilegium* 3.363: "per multos hinc illuc venientes cognoscitis" (corrected from the MS, Paris, B.N. lat. 11884, f. 2$^{v}$); cf. R684.

681 880, Thrace and points east–Taranto. Procopius prōtovestiarios, commanding thematic detachments from Sicily, Kephalenia, Dyrrachium, Peloponnesus, Slav auxiliaries, and thematic troops from Thrace and Macedonia, conquered Taranto and the environs; troops from Charsianon and Cappadocia reinforced them: von Falkenhausen 1978, 21–2. The Byzantine commander Leo "Apostyppes" sold the entire "people" (*laos*, which can also mean "army") of Taranto into slavery, which produced much profit for his troops and booty for the emperor: Theoph. Cont. 5, 65–6, 305.21–306.16.

682 c. 880, Constantinople–Adriatic hinterland. Basil I sent Anon. 288, a *basilikos anthrōpos*, and Anons. 289–90, priests, to evangelize the pagan Croats and Serbs: Theoph. Cont. 5, 54, 291.14–292.1; Constantine VII, *De adm. imp.*, 29, 1.126.73–8 and 2.101–2; Dölger no. 503.

683 After June 880 and before 23 March 881, Moravia–Rome. Methodius 3 wrote to the pope about Wiching, as we know from John VIII's reply: *Reg.*, 277, JE 3350, p. 244.

684 881, before 31 August, Jerusalem (dep.)–Frankland (Rheims?). Patriarch Elias wrote to the Carolingian kings and dignitaries of the west asking for



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help; the monks Gisepert and Rainard carried the letter, which survives in a manuscript from Rheims: *Ep.*, 363–4; cf. R680. The letter was sent after Christmas 880.

684a c. 880–912,[169] Constantinople–Thessalonica–"Qitrun" (overland along the coast; Kitros? cf. Marquart 1903, 238–9)–"Balatis" (probably Split: Marquart 1903, 243; about one month's travel, through reedy marshes and forest; Ibn Rusteh, tr. Wiet, p. 143)–Venice (about one more month through mountains and hills, *ibid.*)–Pavia–Rome (twenty days overland)–Arab world. Harun Ibn Yahya, a civilian captured by the Byzantines at Ascalon, c. 880/912, who was possibly a slave at Constantinople (A. Shboul, *ODB* 2: 903), and possibly a Syrian Christian, according to Marquart 1903, 207, traveled overland to Italy, and then must have returned to the Arab world to inform Ibn Rusteh about his trip. See Ibn Rusteh, *Les atours précieux*, tr. Wiet, pp. 134–46 (but cf. Wiet, p. vi, who, without explanation, would end the account on p. 143); cf. also the important textual discussion, commentary and translation by Marquart 1903, 206–70. For more on his itinerary, see above, p. 557.

685 Summer 881, Taormina–Peloponnesus. Elias 1 foresaw an Arab attack and sailed away to escape it: *V. Eliae iun.* (*BHG* 580), 26, 38.509–40.514; date: *ibid.*, p. 152.

686 c. 881–2, Peloponnesus–Buthrotos–Kerkyra–(Rome): Elias 1 and Daniel sailed up the Balkan coast and landed in Buthrotos; the local commander accused them of being Arab spies and locked them up; God killed him immediately and they went free; they wanted to go on to Rome, but they were prevented for an unknown reason, perhaps Arab raids; they crossed over to Kerkyra: *ibid.*, 28–9, 42.545–44.591; cf. *ibid.*, p. 154.

687 After c. 881–2, Kerkyra–Calabria. Elias 1 and his disciple traveled there and settled: *ibid.*, 39, 44.592–46.598.

688 c. 881, Sicily–Naples. Athanasius summoned Arab marauders, who became active around Naples: John VIII, *Reg.* 273 and 279, JE 3343 and 3346, pp. 241–2 and 246–7; Erchempert, *Hist. Lang. Ben.*, 44, 251.2–6; Amari 1933–9, 1: 598.

689 c. 881, Constantinople–Moravia. A letter from Basil I reached Methodius 3, inviting him to Constantinople: Life of Methodius, 13, 1–4, p. 178; tr. p. 233.

690 c. 881–4, Moravia–Constantinople–Moravia. Methodius 3 traveled to Constantinople, accompanied by anonymous disciples (of whom two, Anons. 293–4, stayed in Constantinople at Basil's request); they were well

169 Harun was certainly traveling in the later 9th or early 10th C. The precise date is uncertain. Scholars have proposed various dates between 880 and 912, based largely on the mention of only one emperor in a procession described by Harun, but compelling grounds for a particular date are still wanting: A. Shboul, *ODB* 2: 903.



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received by Basil I and Photius, and returned with gifts: *ibid.*, 13, 5–6, p. 178; tr. p. 233; preceding.

691 c. 882, Benevento–Bari–Constantinople. Gaideris, deposed prince of Benevento, fled to Constantinople, where he received the title of prōtospatharios: Erchempert, *Hist. Lang. Ben.*, 48, 255.17–24; date: von Falkenhausen 1978, 22.

692 After 882, Sicily (near Taormina)–Rome. Elias 2 went down to the beach and, by divine providence, found a ship there right away: *V. Eliae Spel.* (*BHG* 581), 6–8, 850E–851A.

693 Before 883, Spoleto–Constantinople. Wido, duke of Spoleto, sent an embassy, Anon. 296, to Constantinople and took money from the Byzantines, for which Charles III accused him of treason: Erchempert, *Hist. Lang. Ben.*, 79, p. 263; *Ann. Fuld.*, a. 883, pp. 109–10; Leo VI, *Taktika* 18, 88, 89.8–15, with Dagron 1987, 217–18; von Falkenhausen 1978, 22.

694 c. 883 (886? 871–99), Wessex (dep.)–Rome–(Jerusalem)–(India?). In keeping with a vow, Alfred the Great sent his envoys Sighelm and Athalstan with gifts to Rome, and to Sts. Thomas and Bartholomew "in India": *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, a. 883, Thorpe 1.150–3; Plummer 1.79. This was probably the occasion on which Alfred obtained freedom from taxes and tolls for Anglo-Saxons resident in Rome: Asser, *De rebus gestis Ælfredi*, 71, 53.13–54.10. Most scholars reckon India to be implausible and explain it away, as a corruption of "Iudea" (Keynes and Lapidge 1983, 266n198), as a plan that was probably never fulfilled (Asser, *De rebus gestis Ælfredi*, comm., pp. 288–90), or perhaps as referring to St. Thomas' shrine at Edessa (*ibid.*). Plummer 1902, 134, does accept the trip (cf. 99); Gregor 1964, 87 with n55, is non-committal. Dumville 1992, 6–7 with n35, defends the generally challenged date of 883. The communications world that has emerged from this study makes India less implausible. The mention of Thomas seems to militate against the "Judaea" emendation. It is in any case certain that Alfred exchanged letters and gifts with the patriarch of Jerusalem, possibly around 883 also: Asser, *De rebus gestis Ælfredi*, 91, 76.14–18 (with an obvious correction: Keynes and Lapidge 1983, 270n219), and 77.16–18. These may have been different missions, but I have counted them as one, and accepted it as far as Jerusalem.

695 c. 883–4, Aquileia–Constantinople. An ecclesiastic, Anon. 297, apparently from the western prelate's entourage, carried the patriarch of Aquileia's letter to Photius; Photius: *Ep.* 291, 3.139.1–140.35; cf. next; for the date and the fact that it was not Waldpert, see Grumel² no. 560.

696 c. 883–4, Constantinople–Aquileia. Photius responded to the patriarch of Aquileia's letter with a detailed epistolary attack on the *Filioque*: *Ep.* 291, 3.139–52; for the date etc., Grumel² no. 60.

697 Between April or May 884 and September 885, Rome–Constantinople. Pope



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Hadrian III sent a synodal letter to Photius about faith and the *Filioque* (JE 3399; cf. Grumel 1953, 135); it was apparently conveyed by Theodosius 5, bishop of Oria, who, while Hadrian was still alive, seems to have brought back rich revenues and certainly a communication from Basil I. Hadrian (d. September 885) may well have responded with gratitude via an unknown embassy: Stephen V, *Frag. reg.*, 1, JE 3405, p. 334; Photius, *De sancti Spiritus mystagogia*, 89, *PG*, 102.381A.

698 Not long after 6 April 885, Moravia–Danube–Belgrade–Pliska. After the destruction of Methodius' mission and after having been abandoned in the forest, Clement of Ohrid, Naum, and Angelarius found their way overland to Bulgaria: Theophylact of Ohrid, *V. Clementis* (*BHG* 355), 13–16, 114.20–120.26. Cf. essentially the same story in the Second Life of Naum, pp. 183–4; English summary in Kusseff 1950, 149; cf. Dvornik 1970, 189–93.

699 Before March 885, Constantinople–Oria. Gaideris, now a prōtospatharios, was sent to Oria: Erchempert, *Hist. Lang. Ben.*, 48, 255.17–24; *Naples*, no. 1, Trani, March 885.

700 Between 6 April 885 and August 886, Moravia–Venice–Constantinople (arr.). A Byzantine envoy, Anon. 302, came to Venice on "imperial business" and discovered some of Methodius 3's disciples, Anons. 298–301. They had been sold as slaves to Jewish traders, and taken down to Venice for sale; he ransomed some and took others to Constantinople, to Basil I (d. August 886), who reinstated them in their ecclesiastical dignities: Life of Naum, p. 181; cf. R698.

701 Between 18 June 885 and 7 June 886, Constantinople or Asia Minor–southern Italy. Nicephorus Phokas led a major Byzantine expedition to Italy: Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 110–11; von Falkenhausen 1978, 22.

702 885, Rome–Pannonia. Pope Stephen V wrote to Svatopluk about Methodius 3's errors and congratulated him on his decision to seek the patronage of St. Peter: *Ep.* 1, JE 3407, pp. 354–8; cf. *Ep.* 33, JE 3408, pp. 352–3, which may be of similar date, although the sequence of the *Collectio Britannica* would place it c. 888.

703 c. 885–6, Rome–Constantinople. Stephen V wrote to Basil I, responding to a letter sent to Hadrian III (cf. R697); he castigated the emperor for condemning Pope Marinus on the basis of Photius' arguments; asked him to cease *iniuria* to the Roman church; and requested naval support in the form of fully equipped and supplied *chelandia* from April until September; Theodosius 5, of Oria, was again the papal legate: JE 3403, ed. Grumel 1953, pp. 133–47.

704 c. 885–6, Calabria–Constantinople–Calabria. Photius responded to the canonical questions of Leo, archbishop of Calabria, about apostasy, imprisonment etc. by the Arabs; they were apparently motivated by the exchange of prisoners of indiction 3: *Ep.* 297, 3.162–6; Grumel² no. 562.



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705 After 885, Rome–Reggio. Elias 2 went home: *V. Eliae Spel.* (*BHG* 581), 13–14, 853A–C.

706 Between 885 and 891, Calabria–Rome. Elias 1 had a vision which commanded him to go the next day to Rome on pilgrimage: *V. Eliae iun.* (*BHG* 580), 36, 54.716–56.745.

707 Before August 886, Pontus–Gallipoli and Peloponnesus–Calabria. Basil I restored Gallipoli, transferred there Greeks from Pontic Herakleia, as well as freedmen to Calabria: McCormick 1998b, 35.

708 After 30 August 886; before 18 December?[170] Constantinople (dep.)–Rome. Emperor Leo VI and Stylianus Mapa, metropolitan, sent envoys to Pope Stephen V, to obtain papal approval for all who had received orders from Photius: Stylianus, *Ep. ad Stephanum*, pp. 375–80; Dölger no. 513.

709 886, a Naples–Rome–Sardinia–Corsica trading circuit. Stephen V's threat against Naples' Arab alliance illuminates the trading patterns of Neapolitan ships. Stephen threatened to destroy the Neapolitans' harvest; they should not delude themselves that they would get grain harvests (*labores*) from other provinces, for Stephen planned to close Rome, Sardinia, Corsica, and all Christendom to them: *Frag. reg.*, 7, JE 3414, 337.13–21.

710 Late 886 or early 887,[171] Rome–Nin. Stephen V castigated Theodosius, bishop of Nin: *Frag. reg.*, 9, JE 3416, p. 338.

711 c. late 886 or early 887, Salerno–Constantinople. Waimar, prince of Salerno, traveled with Lando to solidify his alliance with the Byzantine empire; he obtained imperial confirmation of his principality and the dignity of patrician: Erchempert, *Hist. Lang. Ben.*, 67, 260.31–8; Gay 1904, 139; von Falkenhausen 1978, 23.

712 886–912, Peloponnesus–southern Italy. Leo VI sent 3,000 freedmen from the Peloponnesus as colonists to Langobardia: McCormick 1998b, 35.

713 Before August 887, Venice–Neretva river. Peter Candiano, doge of Venice, sent an expedition against the Narrentani pirates, with no success: *Chron. Ven.*, 128.22–4.

714 August 887, Venice (dep.)–Neretva river. Doge Peter led a new expedition of twelve ships against the Narrentani; he was killed on land with seven others on 18 September: *ibid.*, 128.24–129.6.

715 c. 887–8,[172] Rome–Corsica. Stephen V absolved Sichipert, bishop of Corsica, for killing while he was an Arab prisoner: *Frag. reg.*, 15, JE 3433, p. 341.

170 It is unclear whether this embassy preceded Stephen's installation as patriarch on 18 December 886: it may well have, since we have a letter of Stylianus but not of Stephen.

171 The date is suggested by the order of letters in the *Collectio Britannica*.

172 Same reasoning as R710 for the date.



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716 c. 887–8,[173] Rome–Bari. Stephen V criticized George, patrician (who presumably resided at Bari: von Falkenhausen 1986, 198), for expulsing the elected bishop of Taranto and causing the ordination of a Constantinopolitan intruder despite Rome's rights; George should expulse him: *Frag. reg.*, 18, JE 3436, pp. 343–4; cf. *ibid.*, 19, JE 3437, p. 344.

717 887–8,[174] Rome–Constantinople. Stephen V responded to the letters conveyed by the Byzantine envoys (R708), that Stylianus' account of events differed from Leo VI's; he could not judge without a careful investigation, and asked both parties to send bishops to Rome so that these matters could be investigated there, according to the surviving Greek version: *Ep. ad res orientales*, 3, JE 3452, 381.9–12; cf. 380.24. *Frag. reg.*, 26, JE 3444, p. 348, is a fragment of the original Latin text.

718 887–8,[175] Rome–Nin. Stephen V wrote to Theodosius, bishop of Nin, about restoring the Salonitan churches which had been destroyed by barbarians; he promised him the pallium if and when he came to Rome to get it: *Frag. reg.*, 30, JE 3448, p. 351.

719 c. October 888, Calabria–Patras–Reggio–Calabria. Elias I fled from his retreat "En Salinais" to Greece because he was forewarned of an impending Arab attack; he returned as soon as he learned of their departure; crossing the Ionian Sea, he calmed a storm: *V. Eliae iun.* (*BHG* 580), 38–9, 56.761–58.782; cf. *ibid.*, p. 160. For the month: Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 134–5.

720 October 888, Constantinople–Milazzo. The Arabs defeated a Byzantine fleet sent to Reggio; they then attacked Calabria: Erchempert, *Hist. Lang. Ben.*, 81, 264.17–31; cf. Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 134–5.

721 888, Capua–Taranto–Constantinople. Atenulf I of Capua sent Dauferius 2 of Monte Cassino to Constantinople via Taranto: Erchempert, *Hist. Lang. Ben.*, 80, 264.11–16; cf. von Falkenhausen 1989, 714n14.

722 c. 888, Constantinople–Rome. Emperor Leo VI's letter reached Stephen V: see next item.

723 c. 888, Rome–Constantinople. Stephen V responded to and praised all the Byzantine bishops because they had deposed Photius, as they stated; but he needed some clarification because the emperor's letter claimed that Photius had abdicated: *Ep. ad res orient.*, 3, JE 3452, pp. 380–1.

724 After 888, Palermo–Calabria. People came to Elias at his monastery "En Salinais" and confirmed his vision of his mother's death: *V. Eliae iun.* (*BHG* 580), 40, 58.790–60.805.

173 The date is suggested by the order of letters in the *Collectio Britannica*; von Falkenhausen 1978, 27, proposes 888–9.

174 The date is that proposed by the editors of the *MGH*; the grounds are unclear, but presumably connected with the order of the texts in the *Collectio Britannica*.

175 The editors date the letter to 888; they assigned the previous letter in the *Collectio Britannica* to 887–8.



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725 889 or 891,[176] Constantinople–Rome. Anons. 303–4, a metropolitan and a *basilikos anthrōpos*, took letters from Leo VI and the anti-Photians to Stephen V, as requested, in order to clarify the differing accounts of Photius' deposition: rubric, Stylianus, *Ep. ad Steph.*, 381.27–30; thus Hergenröther (1867–9, 2: 693) interprets this textually corrupt passage; also Dölger no. 515.

726 Shortly after 891, Ireland / Scotland – Cornwall – Winchester – Rome (–Jerusalem). Dubslaine and his companions visited King Alfred en route to Rome and Jerusalem: Æthelweard, *Chronicon*, p. 48; whether they actually got there is uncertain. This Latin version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* was composed c. 978–88 (*ibid.*, p. xiiin2), and adds many such valuable details to the surviving versions of the Chronicle (probably derived from its lost source: *ibid.*, p. xxviii). The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, a. 891, Plummer, 1.82, gives only the first part of the story, the Irish pilgrims' arrival at Alfred's court.

727 891–2, Rome–Constantinople. Pope Formosus answered a letter of Stylianus of Neokaisareia, about those who were forced to follow Photius, and commended his legates bishops Landulph of Capua and Romanus: *Ep. ad res orient.*, 5, JE 3478, pp. 382–3.

728 September 892, Bavaria (dep.)–Odra river–Kupa river–Sava river–(Belgrade)–Pliska. King Arnulf sent Anons. 306–7 to the Bulgarian king to renew the peace between the kingdoms and, in the context of Arnulf's war against Svatopluk, duke of the Moravians, to convince the Bulgarians not to allow the Moravians to buy salt. Because of Svatopluk's *insidiae*, the envoys could not take the (usual) land route; they therefore took this more circuitous river route: *Ann. Fuld.*, *Cont. Ratisb.*, a. 892, pp. 121–2; Dümmler 1887–8, 3: 354–5; BM 1875b.

729 c. 892, Rome–(Pozzuoli)–Methone–(Demetrias)–Constantinople. St. Blaise left Rome, feigning a trip to Pozzuoli for the baths; accompanied by his favorite disciples, he sailed aboard a merchant ship and reached Methone after twelve stormy days. While Blaise and companions stayed behind, the skipper, Anon. 305, continued immediately toward Demetrias on the other side of Greece, for some business deal. There he was caught by Arab (*barbaroi*) raiders and enslaved; Blaise and his disciples reached Constantinople safely by an unspecified route: *V. Blasii*, 19, 666A–C; cf. 18, 665C–D.

730 c. 892, Africa–Rome. *Legati*, Anons. 309–10, came to Rome, bringing news of a schism in Africa that required the attention of the Roman church, along with heresy in the Byzantine empire. Pope Formosus referred to this when

176 The dating seems to depend on when one begins the three years (381.27) after which this letter of Stylianus was sent.



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announcing a general council, planned for 1 March 893: JE 3480, known from Flodoard, *Hist. Rem. eccl.*, 4, 2, *MGH SS* 36.372.4–7.

731 May 893, Pliska–(Belgrade)–Sava river–Kupa river–Odra river–Regensburg (arr.). Anons. 306–7 returned to Arnulf from the Bulgarian king with gifts, via the same route: R728.

732 Between 26 August 894 and 1 January 895, Constantinople–Regensburg. Emperor Leo VI sent his envoy Anastasius 5 to Arnulf, for friendship and with gifts; he was dismissed the same day as the audience: *Ann. Fuld.*, *Cont. Ratisb.*, a. 894, p. 125; cf. BM 1902–4; Dölger no. 525.

733 July–early August or September–early December 896,[177] Constantinople–Regensburg (arr.)–Constantinople. Lazarus 3, bishop and ambassador of Leo VI, arrived at the court of Emperor Arnulf, where he stayed only "paucos dies": *Ann. Fuld.*, *Cont. Ratisb.*, a. 896, p. 130; Dölger no. 533.

734 c. 896–7 (before February 902), Constantinople–Venice. Around the time that Doge Peter began to rebuild Rialto, Leo VI's embassy made him a prōtospatharios: *Chron. Ven.*, 131.7–9, with n2.

735 c. 898? Constantinople–Provence. Leo VI agreed with Louis of Provence that he might marry his imperial daughter Anna: Nicholas I Mystikos, *Ep.* 32, 218.77–220; Dölger no. 536; Ohnsorge 1958b; Hiestand 1964, 90–107; R738.

736 898–9, Tuscany–Africa–Tuscany. Seven years before her embassy to Caliph al Muktafi (which arrived in 905–6), Bertha of Tuscany claimed to have sent her ships to attack Aghlabid ships; they captured three of them and 150 crew members, as well as their commander, a eunuch named Ali: her *Letter to Caliph al Muktafi*, p. 26. For the date, *ibid.*, p. 35; R768.

737 Between January and September 899, Rome–Constantinople (arr.). Bishop Nicholas and Cardinal John, legates of Pope John IX, attended a council which reconciled Stylianus' Ignatians with the patriarchal church, and confirmed the peace of the latter with Rome. Constantinople recognized the council of Ravenna's decision in favor of Formosus' ordinations: Grumel[2] no. 596; John IX, *Ep. ad res orient.*, 6, JE 3522, pp. 383–4; Philotheus, *Klētorologion* 163.6–9; cf. *ibid.*, 162n129.

738 c. June–July 900? Constantinople (dep.)–Italy.[178] Leo VI's daughter Anna came to Italy to marry Louis of Provence: R735 as well as Richer, *Historiae* 2, 98, 1.288; cf. Previté Orton 1914.

739 December 900, Tarsus. Mu'tadid destroyed the Muslim fleet out of anger

177 The dates follow from Arnulf's itinerary: BM 1919–20a and 1922a–1925.

178 Nicholas I Mystikos implies that Leo VI's third marriage was connected with Anna's absence in the west; that marriage has been dated to June–July 900: Grumel 1936, 17–19, cf. 42; cf. also Jenkins 1965, 107.



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against the frontier provinces: Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 140–1; Eickhoff 1966, 256.

740 c. 900? Before 917, Babylonia–Lucca: Abu Aaron, son of rabbi Samuel ha Nasi, traveled from Babylonia to Lucca, where he found Rabbi Moses, son of Kalonymus, according to a 13th-C. work tr. in Y. Dan, "Kalonymus," *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 10 (Jerusalem, 1972): 718–22, here 720. The family is believed to have immigrated to Mainz in 917: Colorni 1980, 255–6 with n54bis; cf. also Colorni's discussion with A. Graboïs, *ibid.*, 309–11.

741 Between January 900 and July 903, ?Georgia–Jerusalem–Rome (arr.). Malacenus, a Georgian bishop, traveled from Jerusalem to Rome and, apparently, beyond, in the west, trying to raise money to ransom his monks who had been carried off in captivity to "Turcia": Patriarch Elias III, *Epistola encyclica*; Benedict IV, JE 2711, *Papsturkunden 896–1046*, 1.23–4.

742 c. 900, Reggio di Calabria–Naples. Leo, *natione Grecus*, and his mother sailed to Naples to get medical treatment: *Miracula S. Agnelli* (*BHL* 150), p. 320; cf. Luzzati Laganà 1982, 750.

743 900? Constantinople–Taormina (or Reggio?). A patrician was sent to Taormina with forces to reinforce the garrison; a fleet arrived in Reggio: Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 142; Amari 1933–9, 2: 90. Possibly identical with R747.

744 25 March 901, Palermo (dep.)–Messina. Abd Allah sent a fleet against eastern Sicily; he led an army out of Palermo at the same time: Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 143; Amari 1933–9, 2: 90–1.

745 Shortly before 10 June 901, Reggio–Patras. Elias 2 foresaw the sack of Reggio and sailed to Patras: *V. Eliae Spel.* (*BHG* 581), 20–3, 856E–857B.

746 10 June 901, Messina–Reggio. Abd Allah abandoned the siege of Demona and crossed the strait to attack the Byzantine forces assembled at Reggio, which he sacked; his ships transported plentiful booty and slaves: Amari 1933–9, 2: 91–4; cf. 73n2, for the emendation of *daqiq* to *raqiq*.

747 After 10 June 901, Constantinople–Messina. An imperial fleet arrived in port at Messina; Abd Allah attacked it and captured thirty ships: Ibn al Athir, tr. Amari 1.403; Amari 1933–9, 2: 91–2; Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 142–3.

748 27 November 901, Byzantine empire–Syrian coast–Baghdad (arr.). The Byzantine fleet attacked coastal towns and land forces penetrated far inland; the news reached Baghdad on this date, brought by merchants from Raqqa. This implies that the attack must have occurred in the preceding weeks of November: *ibid.*, 2.1: 141–2.

749 901 or 902, Crete or Syria–Demetrias. Arab raiders sacked the town: *ibid.*, 2.1: 160–1.

750 May 902, Africa–Trapani (arr.). Ibrahim ibn Ahmad abdicated in Africa; claiming to be heading for the pilgrimage, he assembled his forces at Nubah



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(between Susah and Iqlibiyah) and crossed over to Sicily, landing in Trapani: Amari 1933–9, 2: 97–9.

751 902, before 1 August, Reggio–Taormina (arr.): Elias 1 and Daniel sailed there to venerate the relics of St. Pancratius: *V. Eliae iun.* (*BHG* 580), 49, 74.1001–80.1088.

752 c. 1 August 902, Taormina (dep.)–Amalfi. Elias 1 took a ship for Amalfi to avoid an impending Arab attack. En route, the ship put into a *hormētērion* for a rest, and Elias performed a miraculous cure; a few days after reaching Amalfi, news came of the fall of Taormina on 1 August: *ibid.*, 52, 80.1090–9; cf. Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 146–7.

753 ?After 1 August 902, Amalfi–Calabria. Elias 1 returned to his monastery "En Salinais": *V. Eliae iun.*, 55, 84.1134.

754 3 September 902, Messina–Calabria. After the fall of Taormina, Ibrahim ibn Ahmad crossed over into Calabria and staged a devastating raid which ended only with his death at Cosenza: Amari 1933–9, 2: 110–18.

755 After 3 September 902, Africa–Calabria. Elias 1 was involved in liberating and repatriating three different enslaved Byzantines who had been transported to Africa, presumably during the great raid on Calabria: *V. Eliae iun.*, 55, 84.1134–86.1160; 57, 88.1186–90.1220; and 65, 102.1403–104.1422.

756 903, Spain–Majorca–Minorca. The emir of Spain definitively conquered and annexed the Balearic Islands: Lévi-Provençal 1950–3, 1: 200n1.

757 903, Naples–Rome. Newly restored Pope Sergius III, under the pretext of other business, sent a supporter to Naples to summon ships; the pope threatened the clergy who opposed him with exile in Naples; his supporters explained that the Neapolitans would deliver them to the Arabs or throw them into snake pits: Auxilius, *In defensionem sacrae ordinationis*, 1, 1, pp. 60–1.

758 Before August 903, Constantinople–Reggio. Musonius conveyed Emperor Leo VI's letter inviting Elias 1 to Constantinople: *V. Eliae iun.*, 66, 104.1429–106.1459.

759 Shortly before 17 August 903, Reggio–Ericusa–Naupaktos–Greece–Illyricum–Thessalonica (arr.)–Constantinople. Elias 1 set out to meet Leo VI; he fell ill at Thessalonica; Columbus, a prisoner who was traveling in the same party, was sent ahead to Constantinople; Elias died on 17 August: *ibid.*, 67–70, 106.1460–114.1554.

760 c. 903, Crete or Syria?–Lemnos. The Arabs took many prisoners on Lemnos: Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 161–2.

761 c. 903–6, Raffelstetten. An inquest held here laid out the tolls due by merchants and transporters along the upper Danube: Raffelstetten Plea; see in general Mitterauer 1964 and 1980; Ganshof 1966; Güttenberger 1926 and Koller 1995 for discussion of the routes and places mentioned; Johanek 1982, Adam 1996, 121–4 and above, pp. 555f. and 646f.



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762 June 904, Thessalonica (dep.)–Thessaly–Hellas–Thesprōtia–Buthrotos–Rossano–Bisignano–Tauriana–"En Salinais" (Calabria). The group returning Elias I's body traveled overland from Thessalonica to Buthrotos (cf. *TIB* 1: 92, i.e. presumably via the Metsobon pass); there they boarded a ship for Calabria, landed at Rossano, and then went overland to Elias' monastery: *V. Eliae iun.*, 73–4, 116.1591–118.1617.

763 904, before c. July. Tripoli–Hellespont. Leo of Tripoli sacked the imperial customs station at Abydos and attacked Parion: Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 163–5.

764 Before July 904, (?Byzantine) Italy–Thessaly–Tempe river–Thessalonica. Italian pilgrims were traveling to Thessalonica when St. Demetrius warned them away from the impending Arab attack: *Mir. Demetrii* (*BHG* 529), 3, *AASS* Oct. 4 (1866).192F–193C. Their route via Thessaly and crossing of the Tempe make it virtually certain that they had come via Larissa and, very probably, the Gulf of Patras and Naupaktos. Cf. the roads illustrated in *TIB* 1, Map "Hellas und Thessalia."

765 Before 26 July 904, Thessalonica. Sacked by Leo of Tripoli: Amari 1933–9, 2: 109–10; Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 166–79, relying on Kaminiates' controverted testimony (see ch. 16n96).

766 After c. July 904, Thessalonica–Tripolis (Syria)? or Alexandria–Cairo? According to Kaminiates, Leo's fleet returned to Tripolis in Syria; the unimpeachable contemporary Arab source Tabari does not say to where they returned, although the news reached Iraq in August 904, from Tarsus via Raqqa, in a letter dated 26 July; Leo had taken 5,000 prisoners and captured sixty Byzantine vessels according to this preliminary report, A.H. 291, tr. Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.2: 18–19. Although the place-name is corrupt (Seleukeia for Salonika) and the year wrong, the contemporary Egyptian author Eutychius claims that the victors brought their prisoners to Cairo, where he resided: tr. *ibid.*, p. 26.

767 A 6 October between 904 and 908, Aegean Sea. The Byzantine commander Himerios defeated an Arab fleet: *ibid.*, 2.1: 185–6; cf. Eickhoff 1966, 259–60; cf. Malamut 1988, 1: 82.

768 Between 2 November 905 and 21 October 906, Tuscany–Samarra (arr.). Ali, the eunuch slave of Bertha of Tuscany, arrived in A.H. 293 with her letter to Caliph al Muktafi offering friendship: Bertha, *Letter*.

769 906, Constantinople–Rome. Leo VI sent asēkrētis Symeon to Pope Sergius III about the Tetragamy: Dölger no. 545.

770 August or September 906, Rome–Constantinople (arr.). The pope sent an embassy to investigate the Tetragamy; the date is deduced from Nicholas I Mystikos, *Ep.* 32, 1.222.129–30; cf. *Vita Euthymii patriarchae* (*BHG* 651), comm., pp. 196–9.



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771 907, Constantinople–(Byzantine Italy?)–Kairouan. Leo VI sent an embassy to Ziadat-Allah at Rakkada, near Kairouan, to disrupt relations between the African and Sicilian Arabs: Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 150–1; Dölger no. 548.

772 909, Benevento–Constantinople. Atenulf I, count of Benevento and Capua, sent his son Landulf I to arrange joint action against the Arabs of the Garigliano river; Landulf was made a patrician: von Falkenhausen 1978, 34; Amari 1933–9, 2: 193; Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 388.

773 910? Constantinople–Crete. The Byzantine ambassador Nicetas *magistros* traveled by ship through the Aegean in connection with Himerios' expedition against Crete; details: Nicetas, *Vita Theoctistae Lesbi* (*BHG* 1723–4), *AASS* Nov. 4 (1925): 224–33; cf. Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 208–10; *ibid.*, p. 199, for the date, as well as Talbot 1996, 95–6n2.

774 Before 8 September 910, Aegean–Cyprus–Syria. Himerius' fleet staged landings and captured al Qubba (Lebanon) and Latakiya: Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 211–12, from Masudi, including the date.[179]

775 910–11, Rome–Kastorion–Athens–(Jerusalem?). Two monks returning from a pilgrimage to Rome stopped in St. Luke the Younger's village of Kastorion, on the northern shore of the Gulf of Corinth (Oikonomides 1992a, 252). They stayed with St. Luke's mother; he stole away with them but they left him in a monastery in Athens: *Vita S. Lucae iunioris* (*BHG* 994), 16, p. 166.

776 February, 911? Constantinople. Leo VI granted a privilege to Monte Cassino: *Naples*, no. 2; Dölger no. 555.

777 March 911, Attaleia–Syria. Two Byzantine *chelandia* and two or more *galaiai* were sent to reconnoitre, in preparation for the expedition of that year: Constantine VII, *De cer.*, 2, 44, 656.18–657.7; Jenkins 1953.

778 October 911, Cyprus (arr.)–Crete. Himerius attacked Crete with 177 ships, struggled over the winter, and then was defeated: Constantine VII, *De cer.*, 2,44, 652.10–654.4; Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 214; cf. Jenkins 1953; month: Jenkins 1965, 105.

779 911, Syria?–Cyprus. An Arab fleet under Damyana executed severe reprisals on Cyprus: Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 212–13; cf. p. 388.

780 8–14 September 911, Constantinople. Rus' treaty with the Byzantine empire: texts edited in the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, pp. 32–7; see also the important textual observations of Lunt 1994. French translation and discussion in Sorlin 1961, 329–31; 335; 448–50; cf. the more recent discussion and

179 Jenkins 1953, makes this expedition distinct from the invasion of Crete, in order to remove the contradiction between Masudi's A.H. date and his own dating of the invasion of Crete.



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German translation in Hellmann 1987, who (647–8) develops the position of Likhachev that the "treaty of 907" is simply the missing commercial segment of the treaty of 911: 656; 659–60; 662–4; Franklin and Shepard 1996, 103–5, reckon it a separate document. The text of the 911 treaty is certainly defective: see for examples Lunt 1994, 22n8; Dölger no. 556.

781 After May 912 and before June 913, Constantinople–Rome. Emperor Alexander and Patriarch Nicholas I sent an embassy to Pope Anastasius III: Nicholas I Mystikos, *Ep.* 32, pp. 214–44; Grumel² no. 616; Dölger no. 571.

782 913, Sicily–Calabria. Ibn Qurhub sent a squadron to raid Calabria; it returned with booty and prisoners: Amari 1933–9, 2: 174; Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 225–6.

783 913, (Syria?)–Strobilos. The Arab raider Damyana attacked Strobilos; he besieged it but died of illness: *ibid.*, 2.1: 29.

784 c. 913–15, Constantinople–Amalfi. Nicholas I Mystikos sent a pound of gold for the redemption of prisoners taken by the Arabs: *Ep.* 145, pp. 458–60; Grumel² no. 624.

785 9 July 914, Sicily (dep.; Palermo?)–Lamtah (port near al Mahdiyah). Ibn Qurhub sent a fleet against Africa; it found the enemy fleet at Lamtah on 18 July and defeated it: Amari 1933–9, 2: 177.

786 914, Sicily–Calabria. An Arab raid: Amari 1933–9, 2: 179.

787 August 915, Bari–Garigliano. Allied papal and Campanian forces, as well as the Byzantines commanded by Nicholas Picingli, stratēgos of Longobardia, attacked and destroyed the Arab raiding colony: von Falkenhausen 1978, 80.

788 c. 915 or 916, Constantinople–Bari. Nicholas I Mystikos congratulated Nicholas Picingli on his victory: *Ep.* 144, p. 458, Grumel² no. 681.

789 14 July 916, Palermo (dep.)(–Spain)–Africa. Ibn Qurhub had loaded his ships and was about to leave Sicily in voluntary exile when a crowd attacked the ships, captured him, and sent him to the Fatimid ruler in Susa, Tunisia, for execution; he arrived there before 3 August: Amari 1933–9, 2: 182–3.

790 14 August 916, Africa–Trapani (arr.). The new governor, Abu Said, arrived: *ibid.*, pp. 184–5.

791 September 917, Sicily–Africa (dep.). Abu Said pacified Sicily and left: *ibid.*, pp. 188–9.

792 917–8, Syria?–Byzantine coast. Tamal led a naval raid: Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 244.

793 918, before 31 August, Africa–Reggio. A slave gathering attack was launched, which Amari 1933–9, 2: 200, considered the beginning of a new development.

794 918, Syria?–Byzantine coast. Tamal led a new naval raid: Vasiliev and Canard 1935–68, 2.1: 244.

795 920, soon after 7 July? Constantinople (dep.)–Rome. Nicholas I Mystikos



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invited the pope to send representatives to condemn fourth marriages and restore unity: *Ep.* 56, p. 298; Grumel² no. 718.

796 Before 1 February 921, Byzantine empire–Arles. On this date, Louis the Blind confirmed his own and Boso's donations to the church of Arles, including "portum tam de Grecis quam ex aliis advenientibus hominibus necnon et tolneum simul cum moneta." This means that Greek merchants were trading at Arles by this date. Boso's earlier privilege (*Rois de Provence*, no. 21) had not mentioned them, which suggests that they were a new phenomenon: *ibid.*, no. 59, p. 108.2–3.

797 Between February 921 and January 922, Constantinople–Rome. Romanus I sent Basil, prōtospatharios of the Chrysotriklinos, and Nicholas I Mystikos sent the priest Eulogius to Pope John X, to restore unity: Nicholas I Mystikos, *Ep.* 53, pp. 286–92; Grumel² no. 732; Dölger no. 590; Nicholas, *Ep.* 54 (carried by Adeodatus, who had been en route to Jerusalem) and 55, also went to Italy and may have traveled with *Ep.* 53: pp. 292–8.

798 Shortly after April 921, Capua–Constantinople. Prince Landulf wrote to Nicholas Mystikos, informing him of patrician Ursoleon's death: Nicholas I Mystikos, *Ep.* 82, pp. 338–42, Grumel² no. 741.

799 After April 921, Constantinople–southern Italy. Nicholas Mystikos sent letters to various officials and groups: *Ep.* 82–5, 338–46, Grumel² nos. 741–4; cf. also *Ep.* 103, p. 384, Grumel² no. 745.

800 Between February 921 and May 923, Constantinople–Rome. Nicholas Mystikos recounted earlier dispatches to the pope and sent another one, to restore unity: *Ep.* 77, pp. 330–2; Grumel² no. 735.

801 922 (924?), Africa–Rocca di Sant'Agata (near Reggio?)–al Mahdiyah. A Slav slave or freedman Masud set up a slave-gathering expedition there with twenty ships; he took many captives and returned home: Amari 1933–9, 2: 20.

802 Before sometime between June 922 and June 923, Rome–Constantinople–(Bulgaria). The pope had sent archbishops Theophylact and Carus to Constantinople to reestablish unity; they were to continue on to Symeon, emperor of Bulgaria; Nicholas I Mystikos feared for their well-being and kept them at Constantinople, but forwarded the papal letter: *Ep.* 28, pp. 190–6; Grumel² no. 756.

803 c. 924? Constantinople–Africa. Romanus I concluded peace with the Fatimids in return for a lessened tribute: Dölger no. 603.

804 1 July 925, Oria (arr.)–Taranto–Sicily and Africa. Ga'far led an Arab slave-gathering raid which took the twelve-year-old future scholar Donnolo prisoner at Oria; his family was transported to Sicily and Africa while he escaped at Taranto: Ascoli 1880, 35–7; S. Muntner, "Donnolo, Shabbetai," *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 6 (Jerusalem, 1972): 169–70; Amari 1933–9, 2: 204;



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Ga'far traveled from Italy to Sicily: the text of Ibn Idhari, *Bayan al-Mugrib*, says he arrived in Sicily on that date, but Amari 1933–9, 2: 203n3 changes it to his departure to reconcile it with another source.

805 c. April 927, Constantinople (dep.)–San Vincenzo al Volturno. Romanus I granted a chrysobull sigillion to San Vincenzo for its dependencies: Dölger no. 610; von Falkenhausen 1995.

806 931, Calabria–"Fraxinetum." A Byzantine squadron pursued Arab raiders right to their home port, near La Garde–Freinet: Eickhoff 1966, 311.

807 932–6 (1 June 932?), Jerusalem–Constantinople–Venice–(Erfurt? arr.). A letter from Peter II, doge of Venice, and Marinus, patriarch of Grado, to King Henry I of Germany described recent Jewish–Christian conflicts in Jerusalem, the patriarch's appeal to Constantinople, and Emperor Romanus I's attempt to convert the Jews; the letter concluded by urging the persecution of Jews in Germany. They requested that Henry I order them to be baptized; if any refused, he should command that "the sign of the cross, in any metal, any textile or any other ware may not touch their polluted hands." This was manifestly an effort to eliminate Jewish (commercial) competition – German coins displayed the cross, which also figured frequently on contemporary textiles – and perhaps hints that the Venetians were trying to carry their wares across the Alps themselves: Synod of Erfurt, 932, C, *MGH Conc.* 6.1.113–14. Though not certain, it is not improbable that this letter is the one delivered to the king at Erfurt, and "sent from Jerusalem to Constantinople and from there to Rome, by the patriarch," referred to in the synod's *Breviarium canonum* (B), *ibid.*, 110.15–111.8; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 99–100.

808 934, Constantinople–southern Italy. A Byzantine squadron of eighteen ships was sent to Italy: eleven *chelandia* and seven *karabia* of Rus: Constantine VII, *De cer.*, 2, 44, 660.13–661.6.

809 939/46, ?–Kalamonion (seaside village) or Ampelon island–Rome. Two aged pilgrim monks heading to Rome visited St. Luke, gave him the Great Robe, and enjoyed a miraculous fish dinner: *V. Lucae iun.* (*BHG* 994), 28–9, p. 174; for the date, *ibid.*, p. 38. Ampelon: *TIB* 1: 121.

810 943/6, Italy–Ampelon–(Corinth?). A ship from Italy, struggling in the middle of the night in a storm, beached on St. Luke's island. The sailors had stopped there before, since they knew he was there and came to see him and describe their experience: *V. Luc. Iun.*, 63–4, pp. 196–7.

811 944, before 16 December, Constantinople. Romanus I concluded a treaty with the Rus: *Russian Primary Chronicle*, pp. 46–53; tr. Sorlin 447–52; etc. Dölger no. 646.

812 944, Constantinople–Italy–"Fraxinetum." A Byzantine squadron successfully attacked the pirate harbor from the sea, while their Lombard allies attacked from land: Eickhoff 1966, 317–18.



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813 31 October 945, Constantinople–Ottonian court (Hersfeld?; arr.). Constantine VII sent an embassy to Otto I: von Ottenthal and Kaminsky 1967, 127d; Dölger no. 651.

814 c. 12 April 949, Constantinople–Spain–Aachen (arr.). Otto I received Solomon, Constantine VII's ambassador; he responded with his ambassador Liutefred, a merchant from Mainz: von Ottenthal and Kaminsky 1967, 174a; Dölger no. 658; cf. no. 657.

815 949, Constantinople–Crete. A Byzantine fleet of sixty-four *chelandia*, twenty dromons, and ten or more galleys invaded Crete, unsuccessfully: Constantine VII, *De cer.*, 2, 45, 664.7–665.19.

816 25 August 949, Pavia–Venice (dep.)–Constantinople. On 1 August, Liudprand, Berengarius' envoy to Constantinople, left Pavia and boated down the Po. At Venice, he joined the German and Byzantine ambassadors Liutefred and Solomon; their ship shoved off on 25 August: Liudprand of Cremona, *Antapodosis*, 6, 4, 153.27–154.2.

817 17 September 949, Venice–Constantinople (arr.). Liudprand arrived in Constantinople: *ibid.*, 155.3.

818 24 October 949, Cordova–Constantinople (arr.). Constantine VII granted an audience to the ambassadors from Spain: Constantine VII, *De cer.*, 2, 15, 571.15–16. The way Liudprand described the preparations for his audience as well as for the Arab envoys suggests that the latter had just arrived: *Antapodosis*, 6, 5, 154.7–10.

819 August 953, (Constantinople?)–Chryson (near Hosios Loukas)–Italy. Cosmas, a eunuch, stayed at Chryson en route to Italy; he was the first to adorn St. Luke's tomb: *V. Luc. Iun.* (*BHG* 994), 80, p. 208.

820 956, Constantinople–Frankfurt(?). Constantine VII's embassy came to Otto I: von Ottenthal and Kaminsky 1967, 241a.

821 July 960, Constantinople (dep.)–Crete. A Byzantine invasion fleet got under way to reconquer the island: Ahrweiler 1966, 115; it supposedly comprised 2,000 Greek fire ships, 1000 dromons, and 307 transport ships: Theoph. Cont., Romanos II, 10, 475.18–20; cf. Pseudo-Symeon, Romanos II, 2, 758.20–2 (306 transport ships), and Treadgold 1992, 142–3 with above, p. 414

822 March–May 967, Constantinople–Ravenna (arr.). Nicephorus II's ambassadors came to Otto I while he was at Ravenna: von Ottenthal and Kaminsky 1967, 450a; cf. Dümmler 1876, 420n4.

823 Before Christmas 967, Constantinople–Italy (arr.). Otto I's ambassadors returned to him: von Ottenthal and Kaminsky 1967, 461a.

824 4 June 968, Italy–Kerkyra–Patras–Constantinople (arr.). Liudprand, Otto I's ambassador, traveled to Constantinople; an Italian departure follows from Otto I's itinerary; Liudprand, *Legatio*, 1, 175.24–5; cf. *ibid.*, 59, 207.27–9 and 65, 212.7–11: R828.



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825 c. 9 June 968, Constantinople–Italy (dep.). Liudprand was refused permission to travel in a Venetian freighter ("navis oneraria") that was about to leave Constantinople: *ibid.*, 14, 183.30–1.

826 19 July 968, Constantinople (dep.)–Italy. Nicephorus II ordered Adalbert's ambassador to return to Italy in the navy ships going there (twenty-four *chelandia*, two ships of Rus, and two "naves . . . Gallicae"): *ibid.*, 29, 190.26–30, 31, 191.30–1.

827 15 August 968, Rome–Constantinople (arr.). Pope John XIII's legates arrived: *ibid.*, 47, 200.20–6.

828 2 October 968, Constantinople (dep.)–Nikopolis–etc.–Italy (Otranto–Germany). Liudprand left Constantinople (R824) for the court of Otto I, carrying a chrysobull dated 17 September (Dölger no. 714); he reached Nikopolis on 20 November after forty-nine days of travel by his count: *ibid.*, 58, 207.8–18; on 23 November he left for the Offidaris river, which he reached on 25 November; bad weather forced a long (seven-day) delay across from Patras: *ibid.*, 207.22–7. He sailed on 2 December and got to Leukada on 6 December, a distance of 140 miles, according to him. He stayed on the island until 14 December (*ibid.*, 61 and 63, 208.30–6, 210.23–5), when he sailed for Kerkyra, where he landed on 18 December and was detained for twenty days: *ibid.*, 65, 212.11–26. Although the end of the work is lost, Liudprand left Kerkyra on 7 January 969 and presumably reached Italy (Otranto: 207.16) shortly thereafter. See above, pp. 463f and 490f.



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